The ‘De’ of Development

Ecosystem Services, Societal System State Shifts, and Our Transmuting Human Condition in Context with Northern Thailand’s Top-Down Highlands Development

Master of Humanity and Environmental Science Thesis

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Thank you, Taiwan's National Dong Hwa University. This is for your pivotal role with opening space for me to enter into your nourishing academic environment in order to solidly develop and credentialize a long-time project and vision.

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This thesis, in addition to being a journalistic and academic exercise, has been an eight-year analogous quest of exploring the human condition. This process has required tenacious resourcefulness, while interfacing seemingly insurmountable challenges that have led to profound and life-changing blessings. A countless number of people have supported me throughout this journey.

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Tanya: you are a primary reason this body of Work has come to fruition and is now sharable with others. Thank you for your community planning efforts, the brilliant Thai-English translations, and for your resilience and much-needed patience. Thank you for your selfless generosity, warm friendship, and seemingly endless, wholehearted, support. We have walked as project partners in both familiar and new territory, through open doors and also into those places that took some time to locate keys to understanding. I am forever indebted to you, as is the rest of the world for your gigantic heart and genuine love for people.

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Gargantuan gratitude is being channeled to my unwaveringly supportive family. I also hold deep thanks for the countless friends who have extended support throughout this at-times arduous and always wholesomely adventurous journey and alchemic Life process.

Thank you, all.

The ‘De’ of Development

These two ethnic *Lahu* boys are perched beneath this satellite dish: one is using his hand for creating a focused glimpse; the other is peering through a manufactured object. Synthetic blue pipes are wrapping around their bamboo constructed home. What is the significance of this looming satellite dish, channeling messages from an essentially foreign “outside” world? What is *really* being piped in? Metaphorically speaking, how much longer before they both become wholly plugged into and engulfed by the global market matrix system and a homogenizing modern world culture? What does the mean for us all?

Indigenous peoples are knowledge keepers of nature and, in many ways, perhaps those who remain the representative core of what it truly means to be a human being. If their traditional knowledge becomes lost, what hope is there for any of our survival?

Perhaps, it is not too late. The time-window through which we can experience a glimpse and ponder this is closing…


— — —

"We need to devise a way to address the social impact of globalization, which is neither the mechanical expansion of welfare programs nor the fatalistic acceptance that the divide will grow wider between the beneficiaries of globalization and those unable to muster the skills and meet the requirements of integration into the global system" (Schwab and Smadja.1999).

The 'De' of Development: Abstract and Synopsis

We, as a global community, are perhaps at a pivotal point in our history. The economic market related decisions that humans have been making for generations are rendering like never before notably tangible effects on our natural environment and overall societal functioning.

Micro-scale "development" impacts are evermore conglomerating and generating tangible macro-scale global footprints, and visa-versa. Our human condition is transmuting — changing in form, nature, and substance. This is perhaps an alchemical transmutation, as we are interacting with a globalized world to the extent that humanity has never before seen. If we are going to find creative solutions to global challenges, is it prudent that we consider the roots of prominent global issues?

This mixed methods thesis explores this inquiry by focusing primarily on the 'de' of development. This notion is linked with how capitalism's tenets of land, labor, and capital impact relationships amongst ourselves and with our "natural" ecosystems. What are development and modernity related processes essentially taking away from human cultures and traditional ways of life; what are the societal replacements? What are the short-term and potential long-term environmental and societal ecosystems impacts of this supposedly glorious capitalism-linked, seemingly with no destination, march toward progress?

As a micro-scale socio-ecological context for investigating how perhaps all of humanity is continually being impacted by development related phenomena, we proceed on an expedition to somewhere rarely seen by the public eye, into the high mountains of northern Thailand. There, communities of ethnic indigenous peoples have for generations been living fairly traditional lives. Many of these communities are using millennia-old knowledge to maintain what could be considered a natural interaction with their surrounding environment and with one another.

This is rapidly changing, however, with the encroachment of the globalized modern world. Traditional cultures are literally vanishing as capitalism-driven development and technology centered modernity is perforating their socio-fabric and shifting centuries of learning and indigenous knowledge aside. For at least awhile longer, though, both what could be considered modern and traditional lifestyles can still be observed.

This is not an isolated phenomenon. Many researchers have articulated this. This study aims to acquire further step-by-step knowledge, though, about some of the deeper impacts that development has had on these communities. We hear what some villagers have to say about this. We explore what this may mean for us all. We holistically consider *our* modern human condition.

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I am convinced that, while humans may predominantly perceive nature as something external, we, alike all sentient beings are inextricably connected with nature's laws and cycles. This multi-disciplinary study aims to further define and reveal these notions by conjoining social capital building civil documentary journalism and storytelling with the academic lenses of environmental and social science. As tools for illustrating how changes in our environment impact relationships amongst ourselves and with our natural world, I employ primarily two theoretical frameworks: 'ecosystem services,' and 'panarchy.'

Ecosystem services pertains to the necessities that "nature" — plants, microorganisms, and animal communities interacting as a living unit ecosystem — provides for human benefit and well-being. This includes the food, water, wood, medicine, fibers, and other natural resources required for our survival. Our societal environments are also part of this dynamic. 'Panarchy' is about the four-phase life cycle of birth, growth and maturation, death, and renewal. This simultaneously transpires throughout our natural as well as our built environments and societal ecosystems.

By overlaying and hence connecting the societal with the ecological in this way, I probe, unearth, and concretely bond notions of humans' intimate connection with each other, with our environment, and how changes in one aspect resultantly impacts the others. This is about our global village.

I congeal these concepts by considering holistically — as a context for the 'de' of development — how an agrarian indigenous ethnic community is linked with the urban and global market systems via the road, information technologies, etc. How has this dynamic for villagers longitudinally created notable environmental and socio-ecological transformations?

This case study reveals that State top-down rural development policies are, in many ways, actually most useful for controlling resources (including people) and bolstering the capitalism-driven GDP money market economy. This is rather than development's supposed purpose of solving problems and nourishing civil society by providing more choices (Pieterse; 2001).

The replanting of this rural village community's encompassing forest, as well as the central government territorialization of areas prior outside of the State's gaze, is surely a successful government initiative. However, villagers' livelihood aspects — from biodiversity and access to sufficient and clean water and food, sense of life security, to overall cultural and hence societal and personal health — are consistently degrading. A form of ethnocide is ensuing.

What this thesis suggests, then, is that even rural agrarian communities remaining intertwined with the nature that regulates them are experiencing now more than ever blatant and arguably precarious social degradation phenomenon. Considering this context, we can perhaps only contemplate the magnitude of environmental and societal degradation ensuing within the realms of supposedly more "advanced" and "civilized" societies that are synonymous with notions of progress. Acquiring more money, collecting more stuff, having more choices — more development — does not necessarily equate to human well-being. This is perhaps because while organic goods can be distributed to materialism-driven societies, synthetics and their symbiotically linked modern livelihoods cannot be abruptly introduced into the socio-fabric of an inherently agrarian society; they are, perhaps, simply not compatible.

The root and ultimate goal of this research project is to illustrate our communion on Planet Earth, and how we are together being affected by our collective actions. This has great potential for cultivating intercultural understanding, nourishing human healing, and building social capital.

Humankind, as it always has, can determine its destiny. … May we choose wisely.

The 'De' of Development: Table of Contents

This thesis is organized as follows:

Chapter one introduces the 'de' of development related concept and rationale for this intellectual endeavor. We consider notions of modernity: while its technologies and related lifestyles have become commonplace in modern-day "developed" societies, there are world populations that remain functioning on the margins of globalization and related modernization phenomena. Both 'modern' and 'traditional' lifestyles can still be observed. For how much longer?

Chapter two builds a framework for deeper digging by revealing my methodology for this mixed methods research. I unveil where my fieldwork was conducted, for what was I seeking to learn about, and who contributed to cultivating some answers. I also articulate the theoretical foundations used for opening a focused lens pointed toward considering how changes in environment impact relationships amongst ourselves and with our "natural" world.

Chapter three further establishes this study with notions that if one wants to understand more deeply about where people are at, especially their societal trajectory, then what is required is historical insight into how they arrived to their current situation. This chapter, for overarching policy context, perhaps boldly delves into what I maintain is a politically constructed and widely communicated fairytale that Siam was never colonized/imperialized by countries such as England and France during the Western colonial development era. First came socio-political and territorial takeover and natural resource extraction; later ensued Thailand's domestic "development."

Chapter four investigates the more detrimental societal impacts of "development" via a primary case study area that I consider a template for the 'de' of 'development. This study ethnographically illustrates development related changes that over the past one hundred forty years have transpired there in relation to how arguably heavy-handed top-down central government directed policies have impacted villagers' geographical environment, socio-ecological conditions, and psychosocial functioning. I reveal a longitudinally considered 'development timeline.'

Chapter five transforms this 'development timeline' into a qualitative and quantitative examination of this case study's ecosystem services (ESS). This is so that we, while considering the 'de' of development, can actually measure and see and how these communities' socio-culture and livelihoods have transformed (arguably not for the better) and how this has impacted their overall well-being. A qualitative analysis presents ESS factors respectively, while a quantitative presentation graphically displays the ESS change trends and opens space for focused discussions.

Chapter six concludes this thesis with considerations of direct and indirect drivers of ecosystem services changes. I offer some critique of the United Nations Ecosystem Services Millennium Assessment, which states that cultural services and good social relations are not strongly linked with human well-being! Finally, we contemplate: can we humans choose our destiny?

Keywords: development, capitalism, modernity, ecology, socio-ecological systems, ecosystem services, resilience, panarchy, indigenous, Thailand highlands, natural resource management, top-down government, rural development, environmental governance

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Concept: Glimpses into the Societal Margins of 'Development'

Modernity: While its technologies and related lifestyles have become commonplace in modern-day 'developed' societies, there are people located in the Asia-Pacific region, and globally for this matter, who remain functioning on the margins of globalization and related modernization phenomena. Both 'modern' and 'traditional' lifestyles can still be observed.

Communities living amid these 'developing' world areas — which I consider 'the periphery of globalization' — although modernizing are, at least in-part, using millennia-old 'traditional' (indigenous) knowledge to maintain what could be considered a more 'natural' interaction with their surrounding environment and also with each other. This is rapidly changing, however, as industrialization and related capitalist expansionism perforates their societal fabrics.

These 'traditional' cultures, their rooted ways of life at least, are literally vanishing as development-driven modernity is further shifting centuries of learning and indigenous knowledge aside. People are departing from their inherent connections with nature (also with each other) and for survival are depending evermore upon capitalist global market linked systems. Ethnically traditional lifestyles are being dissolved and replaced by a homogenizing modern world culture.

What could this unfolding (worldwide) scenario potentially mean for all of us humans?

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

1.2 Rationale: A Study of Our Modern-Day Human Condition

We, as a global community are perhaps at a pivotal point in our history. The economic market related decisions that humans have been making for generations are rendering like never before notably tangible effects on our geographical environments and overall societal functioning.

Micro-scale development impacts are evermore conglomerating to generate tangible macro-scale global footprints. Our human condition is transmuting, changing in form, nature, and substance. This is as we are interacting with a globalized world to the extent that humanity has never before seen. If we are going to find creative solutions to global challenges, should we focus on the roots of prominent global issues?

What is transpiring in 'developing' parts of the world, for example, has long-since happened in what is considered as "First World" developed, supposedly more advanced, societies. This is pertaining to urbanization related issues such as natural resource depletion, materialism, and social stratification leading to poverty and societal degradation. Moreover, generation by generation, people worldwide are losing the intricacies of their 'traditional' cultures and what facilitates the behavioral norms essential for maintaining the social fabric associated with a cohesive society. While surely what is transpiring globally in these regards is not an entirely new phenomenon, we must choose how we will respond to what appears to be a somewhat precarious forecast of our future.

Although this 'de' of development related thesis study comprises many related aspects, its root and ultimate goal is to illustrate how we are all on Planet Earth together and being effected by our collective actions.

We, in my opinion-view, must metaphorically dissolve these nationalistic borders and bridge prominent understanding gaps between people. This can be accomplished by first looking at human culture — our human condition. Then the micro-details of Group culture can be best shared and understood. This has great potential for cultivating intra and intercultural understanding, nourishing human healing, and building social capital.

1.3 Hypothesis

I hypothesize that what could be considered as "traditional" societies, particularly those of rural indigenous) peoples — knowledge-keeper stewards of nature, whose communities I maintain represent a nature intrinsic to us all — can serve as a micro-scale social-scientific measurement of how societies globally have been and are being core-impacted by macro-scale "development" related phenomena.

This thesis — as a context for considering the 'de' of 'development' — therefore investigates and longitudinally illustrates some development related changes that have ensued throughout some of these rural agrarian communities. They have been subjected to mega-development related stressors (e.g., central government policies, modernization impacts, climate change, etc.). Analyzing how the rural village is connected to the urban areas (i.e., the global market system) via the road (and information technologies), and how this globalized connectivity results in root societal transformations can reveal some root realities about our human condition.

1.4 Objectives

This multi-disciplinary study conjoins social capital building civil documentary journalism and storytelling with the academic lenses of environmental and social science. This is for the purpose of investigating how changes in physical landscape (i.e., natural and infrastructural) affect relationships amongst ourselves and with our natural world.

Using this methodology for shifting the global "development" related conversation to being about our overall human condition — by revealing modern-day realities about our global-wide environmental and societal commonalities — has great potential for providing community-centered solutions regarding the issues that humanity overall is facing. This insight can be tangibly utilized for hindsight-mitigating development related societally detrimental phenomena, particularly in the early stages of community development planning.

This said, a core motivation of this research project is to gain more in-depth understanding of the human condition. An objective is to further develop research and theory as to how rural, urban, and regional planning worldwide can co-exist with at least relatively maintaining natural resources and the integrity of communities' cultural makeup. The goal is to cultivate collaboration across cultures and throughout government and non-government sectors, with a mission of ultimately improving quality of life for current and future generations in a rapidly changing world.

This information could be channeled to world areas (such as the "developed" West) that could ironically learn a lot from communities that are too often overlooked, especially nowadays

This thesis, then, with some of rural northern Thailand's indigenous communities offering a societal context for observing and understanding the societal 'de' of 'development,' is not meant for being an anthropological study of Group culture per se. While this study surely looks at the ideas, customs, and social behavior, this is about human culture overall. How, over time, have we been psycho-socially root impacted by global economic 'development' phenomena?

This is actually an exploration and articulation of humans' inherent nature. I want to provide a story that links people who are not familiar at all anymore with these "traditional" ways. If I can cultivate in folks anywhere around the world an empathetic realization of the human condition, then I can collapse the barriers created by people believing that we are so different.

1.5 Taking a Moment's Pause

I believe that a global revival, or at least an awakening, is happening where humans are becoming reminded of our true connection with "nature" and with each other.


Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

As prior articulated, this thesis study aims to explore, and perhaps illustrate, that people of more traditional world cultures, particularly those of indigenous peoples — knowledge-keepers of the natural world, also representing a nature intrinsic to us all — remain the representative core of what it truly means to be a human being.

This notion, and related dialogue, must be placed into a context container that people can relate with, such as the human condition overall. This social research project is likewise a conglomeration of my long-term culture preservation and social capital building initiative that — during a global era of increasing political tension and societal unrest — is tending to this world We all as a global community share.

This is about taking a moment's pause to observe and to become reminded of the socially binding commonalities that all humans share. These are our core needs to be loved and accepted, to be accepting and loving, as well as our necessity for having a nourishing natural environment that includes familial and community connections. This is about momentarily slowing down from our seemingly incessant state of being "busy."

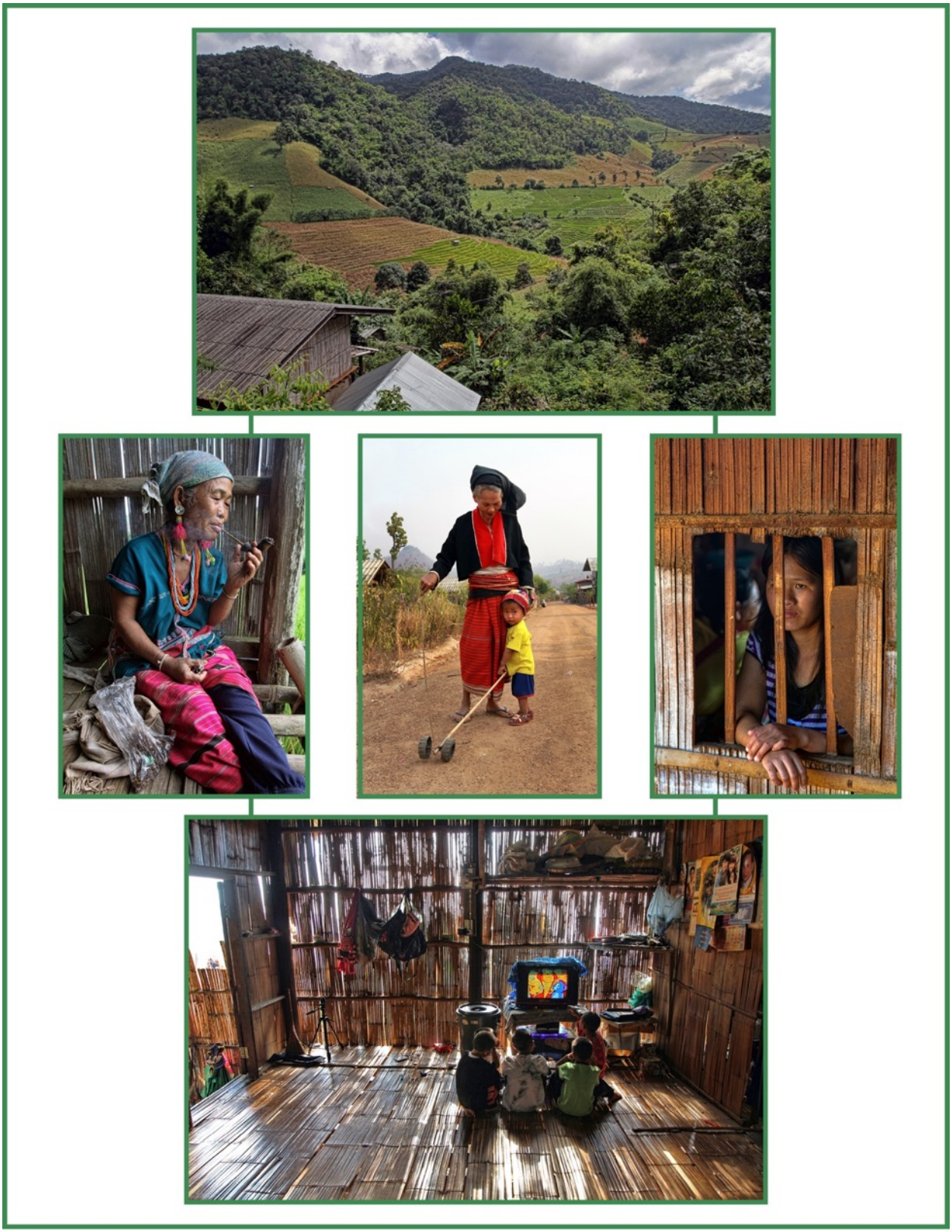
This is about thinking introspectively, before we entirely destroy our life-sustaining planet (and each other), and about meditating on the natural goodness that remains.

Can we, if even for a short time, contemplate the importance of our varying cultures and the intrinsic value of our heritages? How about the significance of and capacity for our inclination to live in harmonious community with one another — perhaps (once again) regulated by our natural environment? Can we observe, listen to, and learn from the voices of people from an age range and from different ethnicities comprised of those who still represent ways of life, and harness vitally essential indigenous knowledge about these aspects, inherent and fundamental to Us all?

For with each older generation that the modern world is losing — their 'traditional' knowledge with them, amidst our supposed capitalist 'development progress' and a resulting homogenizing world culture — it is as though monumental segments of an ancient societal iceberg are sliding into the sea.

I am feeling a dire emergence to do what I can to document and reflect upon these 'de' of development related phenomena — communicating a message about this, before it's too late.

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner



Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

Chapter 2: Digging-In: Who, What, Where, When, and How?

2.1.1 Study Area

Figure 2.1: Thesis study country (Source: freeworldmaps.net)

The Kingdom of Thailand, formerly Siam, is considered the center of the Indochinese peninsula in Se-Asia. Thailand. Formally comprised of about seventy million people, it is the world's fiftieth largest country and the world's twentieth most populous country. This country is bordered to the north by Myanmar and Laos, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, and to the south by Myanmar, Malaysia, and the Gulf of Thailand; to the west is the Andaman Sea. This country, nowadays, is comprised of seventy-six (five groups). Bangkok is the provincial level capital and thus often counted as a province. Each province is divided into districts, and the districts are further divided into sub-districts (*tambons*).

Thailand in the Thai language meaning, 'land of the free,' which is oddly similar with the United States' motto. All of surrounding countries were officially colonized by either or Britain or France respectively. This country is considered a constitutional monarchy. This is a form of monarchy in which the "sovereign," a supreme leader, exercises authorities in accordance with a written or unwritten constitution. Thailand, prior to 1932, existed as an "absolute monarchy," which is a system by which the monarch holds absolute power. The modern-day government bodies consist of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Thailand, arguably as a pseudo-democracy, has for decades switched between parliamentary democracy and military junta.

A reason for focusing on Thailand as a modern-day context for studying about development is because, according to Kelly, Yutthaphonphinit, Seubsman, and Sleigh (2012):

> Thailand has often been deemed a model [for studying planning and development] because it has retained much of its cultural traditions while adopting development practices that have succeeded economically and lifted the nation from its poor agrarian background to become a modern industrialized Southeast Asian state. Moreover, especially since the disruptions caused by the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Thailand is further evolving from post-WWII top-down (industrial) development practices to more bottom-up (participatory) development ideals. Thailand is also further decentralizing its political operations and therefore its planning practices" (p. 1).

While these author's optimistic outlook of rural 'development' in Siam/Thailand is surely one relevant perspective, I am inclined to adopt and support Philip Hirsch's viewpoint on the root motivations for Thailand's rural 'development.'

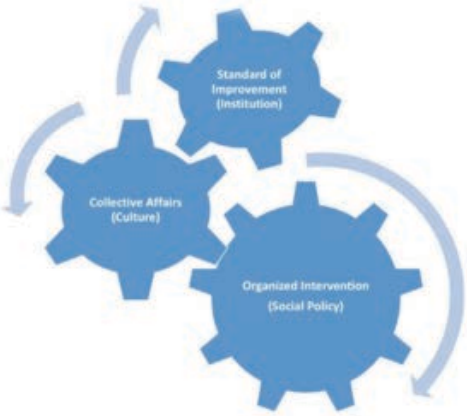
Hirsch (1989) reveals that the Thai language term for 'development,' *kaan phatthana,* covers a broad range of general improvements in the welfare of society. However, there is another layer to this supposedly human rights related phenomenon.

> In the discourse of development at the district and village level, it is often equated with 'prosperity.' This concept is associated with development of communications, material comforts, and the cash economy. It is very much a consumerist, urban-oriented side of development.
>
> State-led rural development programs provide the key to State entry into the village via institutions governing many domains of life, and they do so within the ethos of development as a process by which the village benefits by becoming part of national modernization.
>
> The contradiction inherent in the process stems from unequal power relations between what was State and what was village, a power gap that is being shifted and absorbed into the village itself. A key point is that this contradiction is obscured by a particular development discourse that has emanated from these programs, and aspects of this discourse are now treated briefly in the form of selected lexical items (p. 50).

My aspiration is that the insights gained from this rapidly "developing" world region can be used for an extrapolated sociological model of development related impacts on people amid other world areas experiencing similar global market-system fueled phenomena.

2.1.2 Research Questions

Jan Nederveen Pieterse in his book, *Development Theory: Deconstructions/Reconstructions (2010)*, defines 'development' as "an organized intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement."



Model by Jeffrey Warner, with concepts from development theory articulated by Pieterse (2001)

I interpret his notions of "organized intervention" as being about social policy (i.e., economic, political, cultural; international, national, and local); "collective affairs" as being about culture (i.e., accepted ideas, customs and social behaviors, as well as other aspects that people care about: policies, education, the economy, etc.); and "standard of improvement" as being about the Institution, in-terms of State-centered modes of organized law or practice (e.g., Colonialism, and other State-centered societal directives). While surely "development" means different things to different people, this definition articulates the status quo "development" model.

Pieterse (2001) additionally says that "In the age of globalization, 'local culture' represents the last treasure trove. The indigenous peoples are the last custodians of paradise lost to late capitalism, ecological devastation, etc. With ecological pressures gaining worldwide, this (phenomenon) is gaining ground as it is queuing up for the last exit.

I maintain that this definitional framework can be used as this thesis study's foundation.

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This research project focuses on the 'de' of development — denoting removal or reversal. In related attempt to understand deeply and to communicate affectively about how certain changes in our physical environment affect our relationships with our surrounding 'natural' ecosystems and ultimately with each other, I pursue three primary questions: (1) What are development and modernization related processes, in relation to capitalism's tenets of land, capital, and labor, essentially taking away from humans' cultures and 'traditional' ways of life; what are the societal replacements? ; 2) What are the short and potential long-term impacts of status quo 'development' processes? ; and (3) What can possibly be done, particularly in the early stages of community planning, to mitigate development related, perhaps societally detrimental, phenomena? This third question is particularly concerning bottom-up, 'other development,' or 'alternative development' related principles related with post-modern globalism.

2.1.3 Fieldwork Methodology

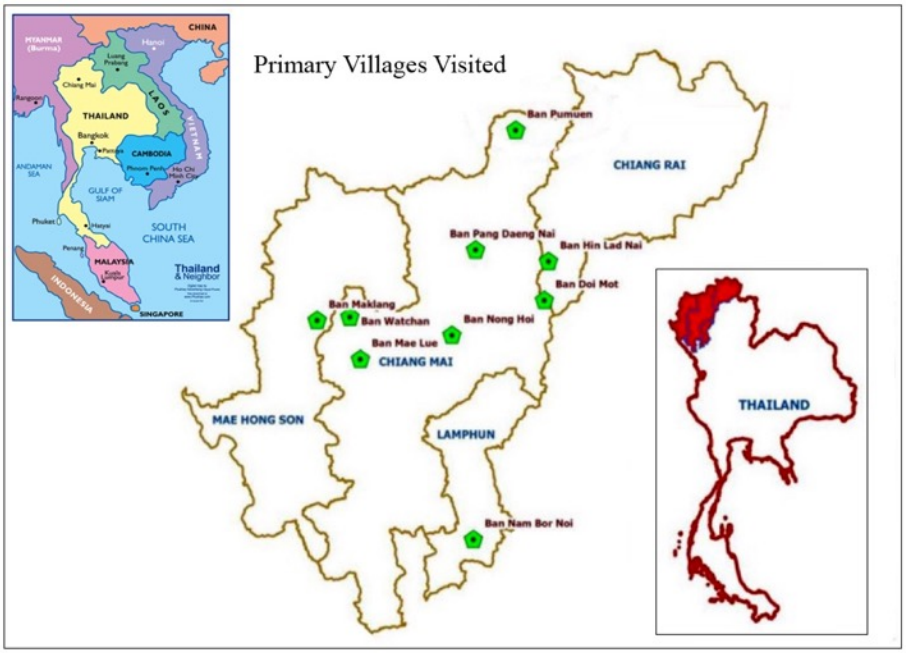

Figure 2.2: Study area (Source: thesis author)

From December 2010 until December 2018, I visited indigenous ethnic "hill tribe" villages scattered throughout the northern Thailand region. They are comprised of different ethnicities and existing amid three (cline) stages of what I maintain is a societal (and global) 'development' continuum; this is in-terms of overall environmental and societal and transformations

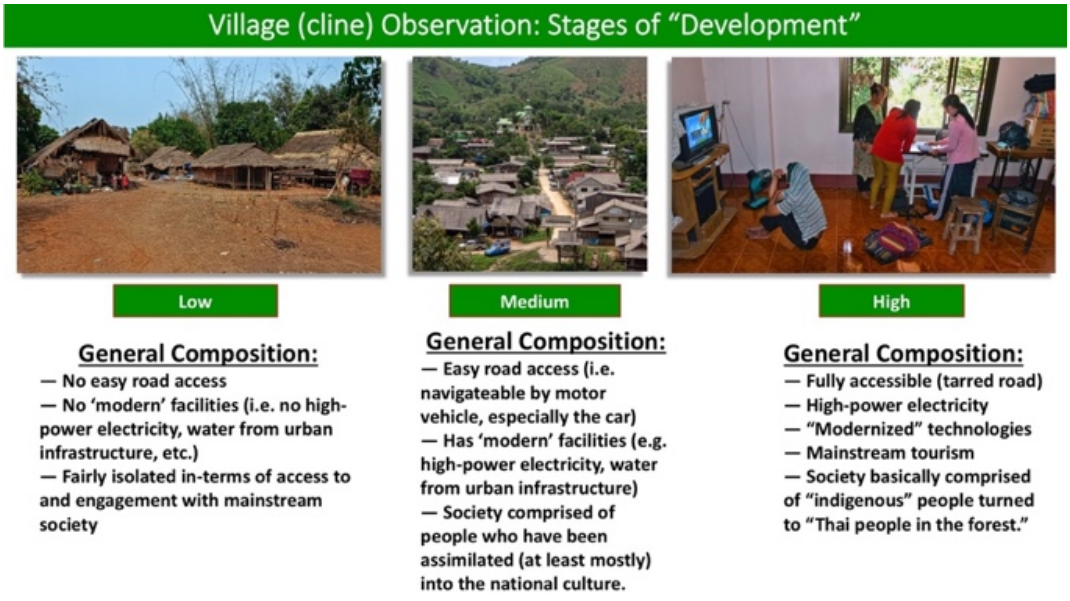

Figure 2.3: Development stages of villages visited (Source: thesis author)

Figure 2.4: Age range of primary informants (Source: thesis author)

While media documenting villagers' overall environment and ways of life, I acquired the informing voices of villagers from 14-84 years old (i.e., youth, middle-age, and elder). I utilized qualitative and quantitative data analysis from in-field observations, documentary-style photography, as well as informal and formal structured (sometimes tri-language) interviews.

The purpose of this approach is to gain holistic insight some of the effects that modern economic development has had on their communities. Each age group harnesses a respective mindset about and worldview toward development and their transforming sociological and geographical environments.

Primary case study: template for the 'de' of development

While this study overall includes a range of villages comprised of different ethnicities, one village area is utilized for what I consider a template for the 'de' of development. I illustrate how this rural community area has transformed over a one hundred forty-year timespan. This is in relation to how global market influences and central top-down government rural development policies have impacted this community area's natural environment, socioeconomic conditions, and psychosocial functioning.

Qualitatively collected and also quantitatively visualized societal factors are used for revealing longitudinal environmental and societal change trends. This village community is perhaps on a trajectory toward socio-ecological collapse and the creation of another socio- system state — one that is arguably not for the better, at least in the short to medium-term.

I maintain that by illustrating effects that development has had, and continues having, on one community area, one society, we can conceptualize, understand, and extrapolate status-quo extractive development's impacts on socio-ecological relationships and hence humanity overall.

2.1.4 Communities Engagement: How, and with Whom?

The majority of my fieldwork was conducted with the help of Ms. Tanya Promburom. She is a Thai government level researcher who remains my primary research colleague in Thailand. I began working with Promburom in 2012, when she was employed as head of research at Chiang Mai University. She holds a Master's Degree in agricultural systems, with interests in the research areas of socioeconomics, gender studies, natural resource management, and community based tourism. Promburom has fifteen years of experience working with rural communities located in northern Thailand's highland and lowland areas. Promburom primarily focuses on community development, with emphasis on culture preservation through community empowerment. She at the time of writing this thesis was pursing a PhD in gender studies, with focus on development impacts.

Methods of information gathering

Most of the data contained in this thesis that is derived from interviews was accomplished through bilingual (English-Thai) and sometimes tri-lingual (English-Thai-ethnic tongue) translation. I purposefully maintained this dynamic throughout my fieldwork tenure.

Some people may criticize work involving translation methodology. They may have a viewpoint that information offered by an interviewee via translation becomes diluted through this communication process, that somehow the researcher is not receiving fully the most accurate information. While this calculation may be relevant in some cases, I maintain that this notion is impertinent to my thesis study. My reasoning pertains to: 1) the nature of my work, which has mostly been about the observation of societal patterns, requiring some highly focused ethnography related information; 2) the historical and modern-day socio-dynamics of my interviewees (i.e., worldview toward "foreigners;" and 3) my and Promburom's combined talents and skillsets.

Promburom and I, over time, constructed customized techniques for affectively working together. I have a developed background in psychology, sociology, and international journalism. Promburom is a well-educated local Thai, experienced researcher, and skilled linguist who has a plethora of experience working with northern Thailand's highland ethnic communities. She is highly competent at adapting her language dialect and meeting the mindsets and (often non-proficient) Thai language skills of our rural dwelling informant-friends. Promburom's level of linguistic proficiency is not accomplishable by just anyone who knows some Thai words; this is

especially applicable to most foreigners such as myself who do not harness the lifelong regional cultural knowledge required to accomplish such a feat.

Moreover, most of the village communities I visited are those that Promburom had for years prior invested considerable time building trusting relationships. Many villagers call her "*ajarn*" (teacher). They feel reverently comfortable talking with her. Therefore, the interview conversations and overall social interactions that ensued throughout this research project — including how villagers viewed me, within a relationship-centered Asia culture context — were essentially an extension of Promburom's built social capital.

My directing of this research project somewhat from the periphery capacitated Promburom as a conduit — not a filter-barrier — between interviewees and myself. This technique therefore most often (not always) nourished their trust and comfort levels enough to share often sensitive information with us, certainly not all of which is contained in this thesis.

2.1.5 Positionality Statement

> Researcher positionality within ethnographic studies, specifically the position of being an insider or outsider to the culture being studied, is never clearly demarcated and fixed. Neither perspective offers a better or more 'truthful' view than the other (Holmes, 2014; p. 23). "What an insider 'sees' and 'understands' will be different from, but as valid as what an outsider sees" (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey et al. 2001:415).

I am a 42 year-old Caucasian male from the north-central United States. Although my hometown was once a bustling community known for ethnic diversity and industrial advancements, it now exists as a quiet semi-rural place similar to many other American communities. This majestic silence, however, is interrupted weekly by earth-rumbling blasts coming from some of the world's largest open pit iron ore mines.

Interviewing villagers. Photograph by Tanya Promburom

Over forty languages were once spoken there as European immigrants in the 1880s flooded to the area, annexed the indigenous peoples' lands, reaped fruits of industry, and pioneered a "better life." Yes; I was taught both explicitly and implicitly that 'development' is most good. "Progress" and personal "success" is a societally competitive process measured and determined predominantly via one's financial income and materialistic possessions.

Parts of my youth involved observing cowboy and "Indian" movies with my grandma, binge-watching National Geographic specials (back when they were actually about "exotic" animals and people), and Indiana Jones movies. "Oriental" Asia was surely something terrifying. Yet, equipped with one formal language, a small town mentality, well-developed sense of ethics, and a supportive family — very little money, but big dreams and an adventurous spirit — I set off to gain a front row seat to the world. For some reason, I aspired to understand the human condition, and my place in this world. This madness somehow brought me to Bosnia and Europe. Eventually, I landed in rapidly developing Se-Asia.

I initially felt so free in northern Thailand, seemingly away from the materialism driven societal pressures I had spent decades enduring. Eventually, I found myself in a rural indigenous village about one hour's motorcycle ride from the big-city-small-town of Chiang Mai. In this village, there was no electricity or other facilities. People were wearing colorful clothing and living in bamboo huts. Whoa! How could this be, this contrast, I thought. It seemed as though I was actually living those National Geographic films. I had to learn more.

Initially, this was an analogous quest to reconnect with my natural root system, back to what I perceived as a point of natural innocence. This was an adventure that took place literally on the opposite end of the planet from where I was born and base societally programmed. This journey stemmed from an inner driving force to access what I consider to be the heart of humanity. I mean the nature intrinsic to us all, and which perhaps manifests more in the hearts and lives of indigenous peoples living in their natural environment.

I was exposed generally to rural village life as I at-first attempted to detach myself from a modern world environment and relish real Thailand, which is about nature and rural life. I did this while acclimating to and learning from a distance about highland village life and how it is being deeply impacted by outside influences. All I could do at-first was observe, pose questions, and reflect. The experience got evermore deeper as I went along.

Naïve to village life, my worldview became forever transformed by those who are living in the mountains of northern Thailand. In the first part of this journey, I saw villagers forage both for food and medicine from the forest, tasted their way of life, and learned how they stand proud of their heritage. This is, their life. I experienced the nuances of village life with its wisps of wood smoke, early morning rooster crows and clucking chickens, and chilly nights as cold air streamed through the walls of thatched bamboo huts.

This, at least for a time, was what I perceived as a true taste of heaven. I was warmed by open-air fires and the wholesomeness of villagers' families and communities. I labored at picking tea and corn with them, even scoured a mountain stream for fish! We laughed and took part in ceremonies together. I certainly didn't understand at-first how their lives had been drastically impacted by development. Maybe a part of me didn't care. Maybe I didn't know how to care. All I could do at-first was observe from afar and learn more — one step at a time.

Villagers embraced me in various ways, including everything from a respect worthy journalist-researcher to the stupid "foreigner" to "a member of our family." Whichever my role, I listened to their woes as their weekend holidays in the village were followed by a return to the city, how their lives had changed so rapidly, how their future is uncertain. Each village experience taught me something new. This, was my initial exposure, the onset of my education. I had become exposed to many nuances of village life; it certainly wasn't what I had expected or believed it to be.

What was at-first an endeavor of personal curiosity evolved into an independent journalism project, which has transformed into this academic endeavor. With many semi-informed questions, I wanted to learn more about villagers' ways of life — to hear their voices — and details, the bad and good, about how economic "development" was impacting them and their cultures. How were they adapting?

Perspective, therefore my reflexivity, shifted

A few years later, my experience became evermore as though I was a 'foreigner from the future,' observing the very development related phenomena that had already transpired in my once culturally vibrant hometown.

I vividly recall while doing research in an indigenous ethnic Karen village (not my primary case study area) what it felt like there to truly labor under the relentless Thailand sun. At day's end, I lied exhausted and sweaty upon the rock-hard floor of a bamboo-constructed house; all I wanted was a soft bed. The air was hot, muggy, and still. There was no electricity available to power a fan. There was no shower for soothing my skin, which was itching as a result of the ravenous mosquitos that had used me earlier as their pincushion.

I had *finally* after several years of field research come to the point of empathetic realization of why villagers, after generations of living a certain way, would exchange some of their traditional ways of life for some of the more life-easing convenience options available through modernity.

Yes; this positionality statement is a reflexive window into my background and worldview 'bias.' And oh how our worldviews can and often do change, our sharp-edged opinions smoothened, in proportion with travel-linked experiential understanding.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks, and Some Aspects of Literature Review

This multi-disciplinary study conjoins social capital building civil documentary journalism and storytelling with the academic lenses of environmental and social science. As tools for illustrating how changes in our environment impact relationships amongst ourselves and with our 'natural' world, I employ primarily two theoretical frameworks: 'ecosystem services,' and 'panarchy' theory.

Ecosystem services pertains to the necessities that "nature" — the plants, microorganisms, and animal communities interacting as a living unit ecosystem — provides for human benefit and well-being. This includes the food, water, wood, medicine, fibers, and other 'natural resources' required for our survival. Panarchy is about life: the four-phase cycle of birth, growth and maturation, death, and renewal. Life is initiated. It then grows, is maintained for a time period, ends, and becomes further part of Earth's holistic ecosystem; another cycle, perhaps in similar or different form, ensues. This process transpires simultaneously throughout our "natural" as well as our built environments and societal ecosystems.

By overlaying and hence connecting the societal with the ecological in this way, I probe, unearth, and concretely bond notions of humans' intimate connection with each other, with our environment, and how changes in one aspect resultantly impacts the others.

2.2.1 Ecosystem Services: A Tool for Measuring Socio-Ecological Transformation

The following section references primarily chapter one (Millennium Assessment Conceptual Framework) of the book, *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Current State and Trends.* It was authored in 2005 by Rashid M. Hassan, Robert Scholes, and Neville Ash.

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This thesis employs primarily a qualitative and quantitative utilization of the ecosystem services (ESS) theoretic framework. By and through this methodology, I further illustrate how changes in environment impact relationships amongst ourselves and with our 'natural' world. This ESS framework, which is about 'the benefits that people obtain from ecosystems,' was defined and developed by and for the United Nations 2000 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). The MA assessed human impacts on the world's environment. It was collaboratively created by

governments, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and scientists for analyzing possible options related with human needs and ecosystems conservation.

An 'ecosystem' is a dynamic arrangement of non-sentient as well as plant, microorganism, and animal (including human) communities interacting as a living unit. ESS is about human 'well-being,' which is about the basic things that humans need for a good life. Well-being is at the opposite end of a continuum from poverty, which is 'a pronounced deprivation in well-being.' The ESS conceptual framework places humans at the center of this, while acknowledging the intrinsic value of ecosystems and biodiversity. ESS also acknowledges the dynamics between people and ecosystems, and changes in one aspect will directly and indirectly drive changes in the others. Many natural forces are influencing ecosystems and therefore the linked human condition.

The MA mentions that, in addition to ESS and their economic value related aspects, there is 'intrinsic value,' the value of something irrespective of its utility for someone or something else, importantly involved when considering human well-being. An example is a spiritual sanctuary positioned on land that could actually be converted to commercial agriculture. The MA stresses that "sound ecosystem management thus involves steps to address the utilitarian links of people to ecosystems as well as processes that allow considerations of the intrinsic value of ecosystems to be factored into decision-making" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 27).

Ecosystem services model revealed

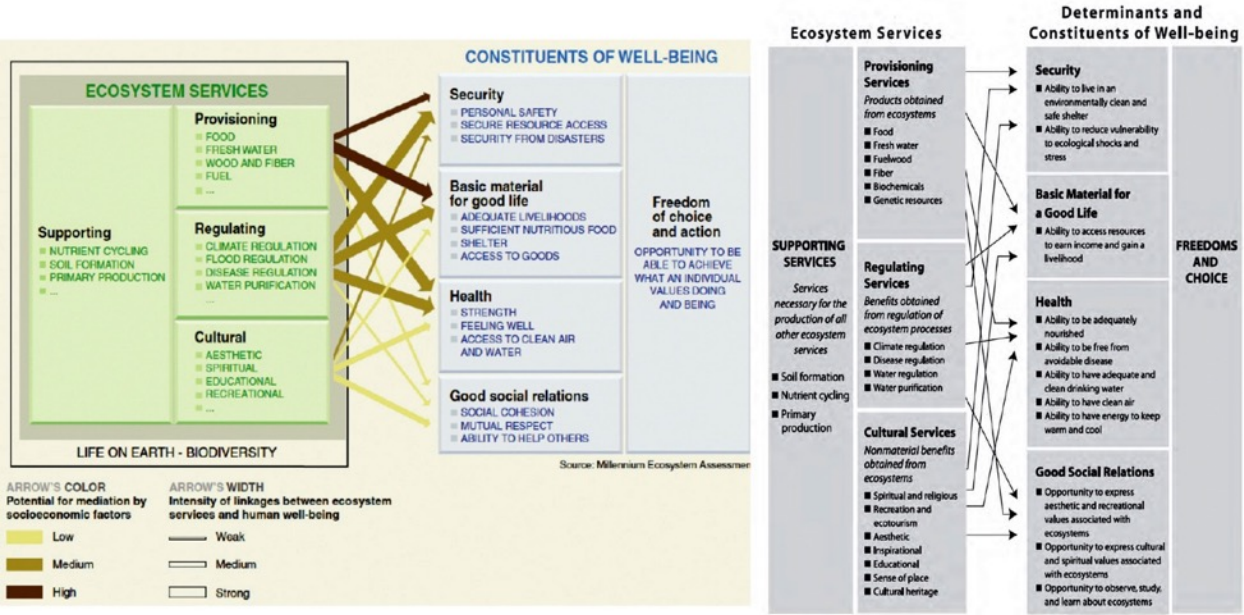


Figure 2.5: Ecosystem services framework (Source: 2000 UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment)

This ESS framework includes four aspects: 1) provisioning (e.g., food, water, wood, fiber, fuel); 2) regulating (e.g. climate and disease regulation, water purification, etc.); 3) supporting (e.g., soil formation, nutrient recycling, food production); and 4) cultural (e.g., spiritual, education, recreational, aesthetic environment, etc.).

Compiling these ecosystem services into a livelihood body that is nourished and balanced provides someone (or a community) with freedom and choices that cultivate well-being otherwise inaccessible. This includes: 1) a tangible sense of security (e.g., a clean and safe environment, and resilience to ecological (life) shocks); 2) basic materials for a good life (e.g., resources accessibility and ability to have a livelihood); 3) health (e.g., adequate nourishment, being disease-free); and 4) good social relations, (e.g., a supporting community that capacitates social cohesion, mutual respect, as well as personal expression and learning).

Changes in any of these services affect human well-being, which will resultantly affect the overall natural ecosystem. "This multi-scale assessment framework developed for the Millennium Assessment (MA) provides a new approach for analyzing policy options at all scales—from local communities to international conventions" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 26).

According to the MA, the ESS framework can: 1) identify options that can better achieve core human development and sustainability goals, such as those related with meeting growing demands for food, clean water, health, and employment; 2) better understand the trade-offs involved — across sectors and stakeholders — in decisions concerning the environment; and 3) align response options with the level of governance where they can be most effective; prudent management of ecosystems will require actions at all scales, from the local to the global.

ESS demand will increase evermore with human population and capitalism market growth. The MA reveals that people because of supply and demand often juggle ecosystem services; however again, each aspects impacts the others. For example, a forest can be converted to land used for agriculture; however, this will decrease ESS such as clean water or flood and drought regulations.

Excessive ESS demand will degrade the entire ecosystem. This "seriously diminishes the prospects for sustainable development. "In many parts of the world, this degradation of ecosystem services is exacerbated by the associated loss of the knowledge and understanding held by local communities— knowledge that sometimes could help to ensure the sustainable use of the ecosystem" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 27).

The MA reveals it is not just ESS supply and demand gaps that comprise primary issues. Individuals, communities, and nations together are facing increased vulnerabilities to strife. Resilience (i.e., the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties) is crucial for withstanding catastrophes and related social upheaval. Good management of ESS decreases risks.

"Ecosystem degradation tends to harm rural populations more directly than urban populations and has its most direct and severe impact on poor people" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 27). Wealthy people often control ESS and therefore are positioned to purchase hardship buffers. Poor people, however, are often vulnerable to ecosystem services changes, especially those resulting from environmental catastrophes such as floods, draughts, and disease. They often live in areas sensitive to environmental threats, and lack the financial and institutional buffers necessary to cope with situations that "affect their very survival" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 27).

I question: Is this wealth privilege mentioned above not a form, if not the root, of the societal injustices that are systemic of the social stratifying capitalist global market system? Perhaps community managed ESS truly can provide a buffer zone particularly for socially marginalized peripheral communities.

Roots of ESS degradation

The degradation of ESS has many causes that are mostly rooted in excessive demand. With economic initiatives being a social policy related motivator and enabler for social change (Pieterse; 2001), this scenario can be linked with economic growth resulting in demographic changes; personal choices can also be(come) a factor. The MA reveals that market mechanisms do not always exist for cultural and regulatory services. If they do, policies and institutions do not always capacitate benefit to those living within the ecosystem. These markets may even produce undesirable results socially and ecologically. Moreover, "markets are often unable to address important intra- and intergenerational equity issues associated with managing ecosystems for this and future generations, given that some changes in ecosystem services are irreversible" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 27).

The MA stresses that recent decades have brought forth "dramatic changes to ecosystems and the opportunities to respond" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 27). This also involves profound changes in the social systems that shape the pressures placed upon related ecosystems. Due to advanced globalization, the institutional power-capacity for individual nation States to

influence global processes has diminished due to "a far more complex array of institutions, including regional governments, multinational companies, the United Nations, and civil society organizations" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 27-28). The good news is that the frequency of multi-level governance initiatives in both demand and practice have increased; stakeholders have become more involved in ESS related decision-making. This has also surfaced a new challenge: delivering needed ESS management related information to decision-makers and actors.

> At the same time, the new institutional landscape may provide an unprecedented opportunity for information concerning ecosystems to make a major difference. Improvements in ecosystem management to enhance human well-being will require new institutional and policy arrangements and changes in rights and access to resources that may be more possible today under these conditions of rapid social change than they have ever been before (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 28).

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

The MA states that significant progress toward sustainable management of biological resources is being made in civil society, in the private sector, and also in indigenous and local communities. Alike the benefits of and from education or improved governance, there are "multiple and synergistic benefits" to the enhancement of ESS. Governments on all scales and levels are recognizing and acknowledging the vital importance of effectively managing these "basic life-support systems" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 27).

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and ecosystem services (ESS) framework focuses on linkages (nodal points) between ecosystem services and the elements required for a holistically healthy human life. Again, an ecosystem is a dynamic mixing of life forms which together create a functioning 'natural' unit, especially when balanced. "Biodiversity and ecosystems are closely related concepts…Products of biodiversity include many of the services produced by ecosystems (such as food and genetic resources), and changes in biodiversity can influence all the other services they provide…This is why ESS is a valuable framework for analyzing and acting on the linkages between people and the environment" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 29).

Further conceptualizing ESS, human well-being, and socioeconomics — in the real world

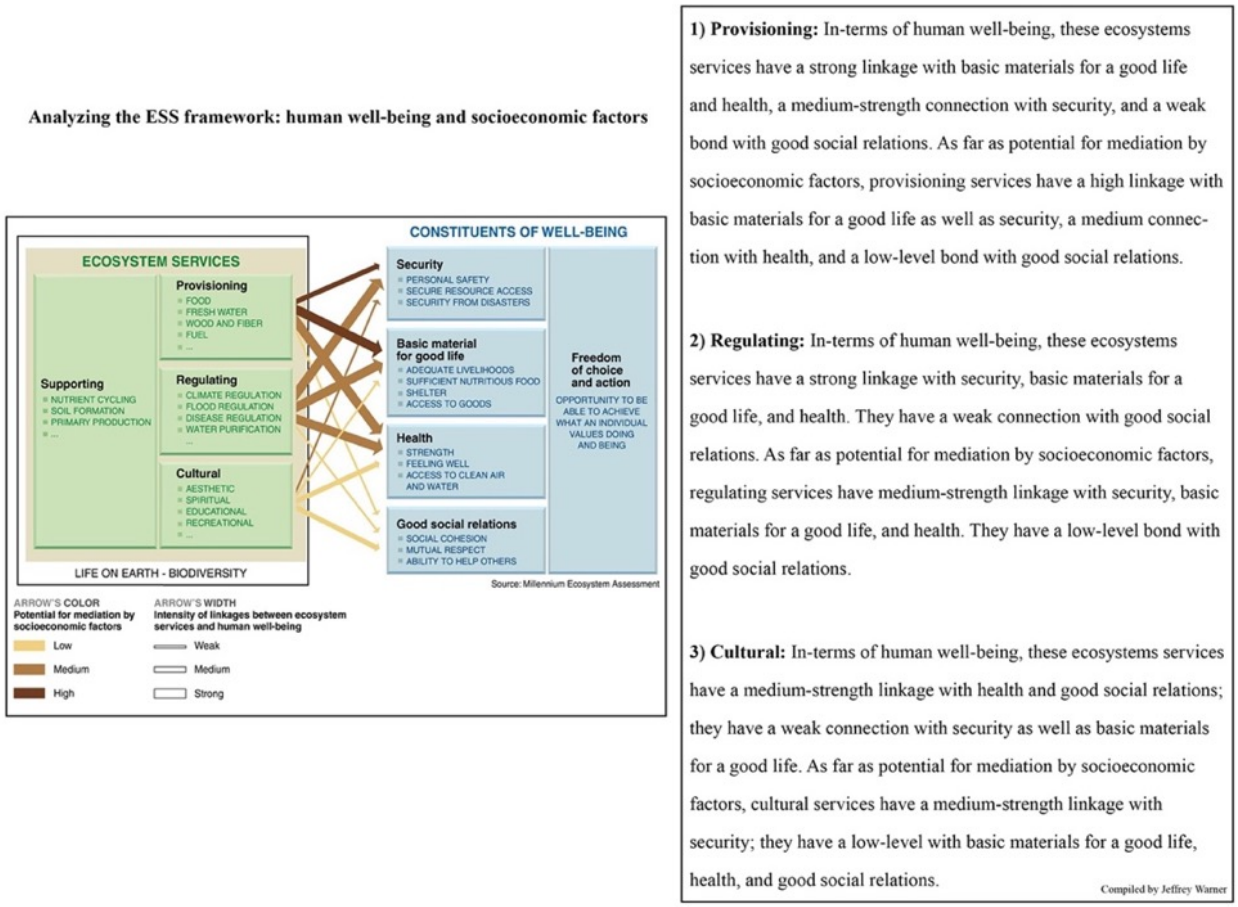


Figure 2.6: I have clarified (above) the ESS framework and well-being models. I articulate this with the text below.

1. Provisioning: If someone lives in an environment where food, water, shelter and additional basic survival necessities are readily accessible then it is understandable why he or she has enhanced opportunity for well-being (including physical health). This is at least more-so than someone deprived of basic materials for what is considered 'a good life.' This is especially true when the surrounding socio-environment and geographical landscape are adequately fertile for providing these provisioning resources (i.e., primary production). Someone living in a socially marginalized position who does have available these provisioning services also has some enhanced capacity for resilience to ecological (life) shocks.

Considering a small rural agrarian community in context with how the ESS framework determines weak bondage between provisioning services and social relations: while social relations surely are important, they are not necessarily vitally essential. People *can* maintain a livelihood while living a solitary lifestyle, although not easily and especially not in most rural

communities. Low quality social relations may affect mental and emotional health, which often filters into other life aspects. However, social cohesion is not necessarily relevant when considering life or death and the basic materials needed for well-being. Moreover, having food, water, and a place to live does not necessarily equate to a non-impoverished situation. People can have basic necessities, including a good community, and still be suffering. Just because someone harnesses foundational life supplies does not mean he or she feels (or actually is) fully secure in life — enough to have freedom of choice and action. You will see observe this in my case study.

Considering socioeconomics, while some people assert that money does not (or cannot) buy happiness, financial resources make a significant difference in life quality (and duration). This is especially true in the capitalism driven 'developed' and 'modernized' world, where cash money is required to purchase things that used to be self-grown or sewn from nature. When someone has enough money (or access to multi-scale and multi-level resources) for acquiring the basic materials for a good life (e.g., food, clothing, infrastructure, education, etc.), this surely instills in someone a sense of life security. He or she will feel less burdened and life-stressed, and this filters into other life and ESS aspects (i.e., psycho-social). However, this does not necessarily mean he or she will be holistically healthy. Some people do not know how to use money efficiently, or they squander it on temporary goods and pleasures; this is particularly true if someone has been living in a prolonged poverty state. Having ample financial resources merely means that he or she could potentially be more personally empowered and secure-feeling and therefore able to have more freedom of choice and ability to take independent actions.

Maybe a villager merely needs some cash money for purchasing a water pipe that will be used for growing crops for eating and for selling. If this financial resource is available, is this not going to additionally nourish other aspects of this person's life? If a flash flood (i.e., a byproduct of climate change) decimates someone's freshly seeded rice field, for example, having a self-owned place to live, a banked (or readily available) supply of food and water, financial resources, and a supportive community *will* cultivate resilience and may render the difference between life or strife. Again, since survival is essentially a singular motivation, good social relations are not vital for provisioning resources. Money can make things happen. Considering again a small rural agrarian community, people can live independently — community labor exchange could be replaced with hired labor or machinery, for example — or they can depend on each other for survival without having familial quality relationships.

2. Regulating: We humans, alike all sentient beings, are environmentally responsive creatures. While having adequate shelter, food, and water supply is surely amongst the basic materials needed for a good life and therefore holistic health, having well-managed ESS related provisioning services is also strongly linked with human well-being.

Our food needs to be nutritious and our water clean, padding us from debilitating disease that would incapacitate someone from having a good life. It is also best if our overall natural environment is comprised of clean air and other environmental factors that render us feeling (and actually being) healthy and secure overall. Likewise, our home (and overall community) needs to be safe from dangers posed by poorly managed ecosystems (e.g., flooding, land slides, and ecosystems altering environmental warming). Again, while social relations are important for us humans, it is not necessarily vital for actual survival. Although I would argue that while someone may be able to independently work the farm, factory, or office while he or she is physically strong, this would not be possible when stricken with physical ailment — hence, poverty. Therefore, ESS factors related with social relations is situation dependent.

Considering socioeconomics, while financial resources surely impact a community or individual's capacity for managing provisioning services (e.g., farmland or a job position in the labor market), having money does not guarantee that food, fresh water, housing, and other basic needs required for holistic health and a sense of security will materialize. Knowledge of provisioning services is required in order to make basic materials for a good life become reality. Moreover, even if someone has financial resources, the overall environment must be suitable for providing the provisioning services that can facilitate well-being. This is also considering that both personal decisions as well as naturally occurring phenomena are part of the ESS regulating dynamic. Sometimes, people are selfish and do self-serving things; other times, phenomena (including accidents) just happen.

Again, while social relations overall are important they are not necessarily vital for survival or a sense of life security. Considering all of the above, this is especially relevant for wealthier people who are able to purchase ecosystem services and hence position themselves into a situation where they have the basic materials for a good life as well as safety from precarious circumstances. In this sense, money actually can purchase well-being (at least for awhile).

3. Cultural: Our environment impacts (perhaps even dictates) relationships amongst ourselves and with our natural world. If our overall environment is nourishing — including a supporting community that capacitates social cohesion, mutual respect, as well as personal (including religious) expression and learning — so will transpire the enhanced quality of other ecosystem services (e.g., supporting, provisioning, and regulating). This is because an ecosystem is a dynamic arrangement of non-sentient as well as plant, microorganism, and animal (including human) communities interacting as a living unit.

This said, it is important if not essential that, in addition to nourishing our physical body and overall environment, we take care of inner self; input equals output. While cultural services are essentially non-material — and, at least according to the MA, weakly linked with a person's actual ability (or capacity) to acquire the basic materials for a good life, and hence a tangible sense of security — these services (i.e., aesthetic, spiritual, or educational) are strongly linked with social relations and hence important for cultivating overall environmental and psycho-social health.

Considering socioeconomics and cultural services, financial resources have a fairly strong linkage with someone's sense of inner security. If he or she lives amid a supportive and socially cohesive community — perhaps united via an intact religious belief system, which is intangibly supporting of a livelihood that capacitates one's ability to produce the basic materials for a good life — then he or she more likely will experience an overall sense of life security (i.e., even if living in a precarious situation).

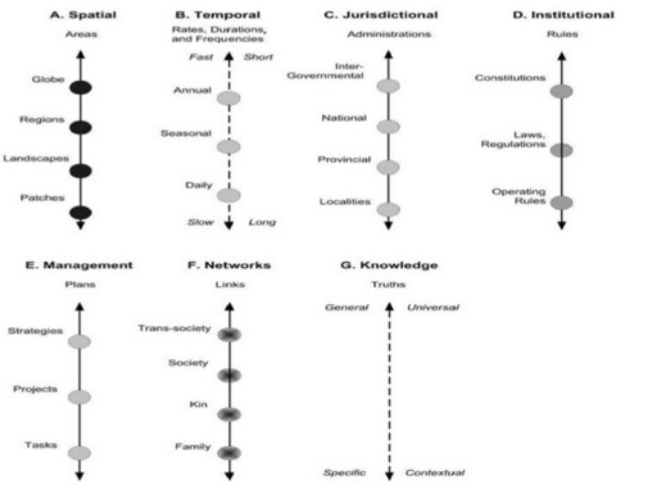
However, while good quality cultural services (e.g., spiritual) can surely impact a community's response to ecological shocks (on both personal and community scales), money in regards to cultural services will neither provide for provisioning services and good social relations nor an improvement in cultural services and overall health. Cultural services perhaps must be initiated and maintained separately from economic motivation; this is likewise more of a primal motivation that requires both intra-individual and interpersonal management.

In conclusion of this section, ESS is about both dialectic and symbiotic relationships, how one phenomenon causes another amidst an energetic feedback loop. Most humans nowadays are not living subsistence existences (at least not in the traditional sense); money has become the primary provisioning service. Likewise, much of the above phenomena is situation dependent.

Scale and level related drivers of change

Holistic consideration of ecosystem services and human well-being requires mindful contemplation of how various stakeholders in a post-modern globalized world impact (or are impacted) by decisions. There is a long history of issues related with policy, management, and assessment of human environmental (and socio) ecosystems. This is particularly true when considering scale, cross-scale, level, and multi-level dynamics (Gibson et al. 2000)

Fig. 1. Schematic illustrations of different scales and levels that are critical in understanding and responding to human-environment interactions.



'Scale' is the spatial, temporal, quantitative, or analytical dimensions used to measure and study any phenomenon. There are jurisdictional scales, which are clearly bounded and organized political units (e.g., towns, counties, states or provinces, and nations). Institutional scales not only have specific jurisdictional characteristics, but also fall into a hierarchy of rules, ranging from basic operating rules and norms through to systems of rules for making rules or constitutions.

'Levels' are the units of analysis that are located at different positions on a scale. Cross-level refers to interactions among levels within a scale. Cross-scale is about interactions across different scales (e.g., between spatial domains and jurisdictions. Multi-level means the presence of more than one level. Multi-scale is about the presence of more than one scale, but without implying that there are important cross-level or cross-scale interactions.

Cross-scale and cross-level interactions may change in strength and direction over time. We refer to this type of changing interaction as the dynamics of the cross-scale or cross-level linkages. Changes may arise from the consequences of those interactions or be caused by other variables. Scale challenges also arise when a situation in which the current combination of cross-scale and cross-level interactions threatens to undermine the resilience of a human-environment system.

This can involve: 1) ignorance: the failure to recognize important scale and level interactions altogether; 2) mismatch: the persistence of mismatches between levels and scales in human-environment systems; and 3) plurality: the failure to recognize heterogeneity in the way that scales are perceived and valued by different actors, even at the same level.

(Source: Cash et al. 2006. Cash, D. W., W. Adger, F. Berkes, P. Garden, L. Lebel, P. Olsson, L. Pritchard, and O. Young. 2006. Scale and cross-scale dynamics: governance and information in a multilevel world. Ecology and Society 11(2): 8. [online] URL: http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol11/iss2/art8/)

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In practice, decision-makers must holistically consider the potential impacts of their decisions. "In order to implement the ecosystem approach, decision-makers need to understand the multiple effects on an ecosystem of any management or policy change" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 29). Likewise, a holistic analysis of a country's entire economic system, before making decisions about financial policy is essential before making single sector policy decisions. The MA provides an example. For instance, a government subsidies fertilizer, but this may result in water quality degradation and impact downstream fisheries. "A well-defined ecosystem has strong interactions among its components and weak interactions across its boundaries." (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 29). Decision-makers in this case must decide which ecosystems/industry is more beneficial: the one bolstered by fertilizer subsidies or the harvests of downstream fisheries.

Again, the fabric of human well-being has many threads. Poverty essentially is the opposite of well-being, and how poverty is experienced or even perceived is subjective and situational. Humans' proper management of ecosystems can nourish benefits to human society. Considering this and ESS related analysis and management, "human impacts on ecological systems worldwide raises concerns about the spatial and temporal consequences of ecosystem changes detrimental to human well-being" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 29).

The importance of, and intimate connection between various components of ESS, can be illustrated in the following ways. Security is affected both by changes in provisioning services (e.g., food and other life-sustaining goods) as well as regulating services. Declining resources can initiate and perpetuate conflicts (e.g., war). A decline in regulating services quality can result in a greater frequency and magnitude of floods, droughts, landslides, or other catastrophes, which impacts people's sense of security. Reductions in cultural services, such as spiritual ceremonies, can reduce community cohesion, resilience to ecosystems shocks, and therefore overall well-being. Access to basic materials for a good life is largely state-dependent on all aspects of provisioning

services. These changes in-turn affect material well-being, health, freedom and choice, security, and good social relations (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005).

Human well-being can be enhanced via transparent ESS supporting instruments, institutions, organizations, and technology. This can cultivate more freedom and choices supported by economic, social, and ecological security. "By ecological security, we mean the minimum level of ecological stock needed to ensure a sustainable flow of ecosystem services" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 31-32).

According to the MA, "a full assessment of the interactions between people and ecosystems requires a multi-scale approach because it better reflects the multi-scale nature of decision-making" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 29). Moreover, this capacitates the examination of how external factors can (or do) create different impacts on ecosystem changes. This can assist with policy related directives, particularly across different regions and groups. People seek multiple services from ecosystems and thus perceive the condition of given ecosystems in relation to their ability to provide the services desired. Various methods can be used to assess the ability of ecosystems to deliver particular services. With those answers in-hand, stakeholders have the information they need to decide on a mix of services best meeting their needs.

The ecosystems framework likewise offers an "integrated" and holistic ecosystems assessment, with each category being assessed somewhat differently. A full assessment of any service requires considerations of stocks, flows, and resilience of the service" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 29).

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Direct and indirect drivers of change

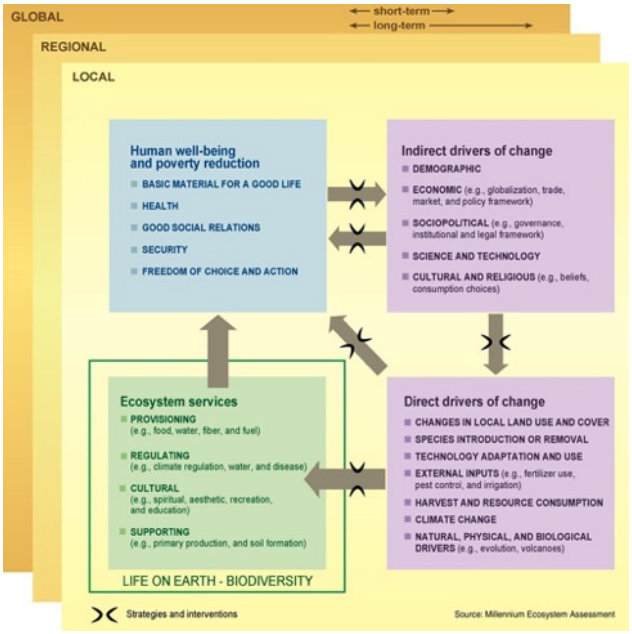


Figure 2.7: Ecosystem services: direct and indirect drivers of change flowchart

Changes in factors that indirectly affect ecosystems, such as population, technology, and lifestyle (upper right corner of figure), can lead to changes in factors directly affecting ecosystems, such as the catch of fisheries or the application of fertilizers to increase food production (lower right corner). The resulting changes in the ecosystem (lower left corner) cause the ecosystem services to change and thereby affect human well-being.

These interactions can take place at more than one scale and can cross scales. For example, a global market may lead to regional loss of forest cover, which increases flood magnitude along a local stretch of a river. Similarly, the interactions can take place across different time scales. Actions can be taken either to respond to negative changes or to enhance positive changes at almost all points in this framework (black cross bars).

Responsible governance and multi-stakeholder participation is imperative, yet this is difficult to achieve largely due to challenges posed by resources management and overall expense. Perhaps ironically, the MA reveals that rich countries often reap the most benefits from institutions and ESS related technologies. “Unequal access to ecosystem services has often elevated the well-being of small segments of the population at the expense of others” Some technologies and institutions even “mask or exacerbate environmental problems.”

Species that have become decimated (or extinct) cannot be replaced. Also, substitutions are situation-dependent, particularly regarding economic, social, and cultural conditions. Again, the most socially marginalized (which can, and often does mean the most financially poor) often have the most limited choices (if any at all). And of course “those who are better off, substitution may be possible through trade, investment, and technology” (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 30-32).

The impacts of making drastic ecosystem services (ESS) changes can take decades to materialize. Therefore, a mindful and comprehensive understanding of the longitudinal (short, medium, and long-terms) impacts of human activity is required. In the least, some foresight is required to avoid compromising future ESS availability and sustainability. The MA stresses that achieving sustainability requires "effective and efficient institutions" providing human rights related mechanisms related with freedom justice, fairness, basic capabilities, and equity that capacitates ESS access. Sometimes, conflict mediation is also required.

> The best way to manage ecosystems to enhance human well- being will differ if the focus is on meeting needs of the poor and weak or the rich and powerful. For both groups, ensuring the long-term supply of ecosystem services is essential. But for the poor, an equally critical need is to provide more equitable and secure access to ecosystem services (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 32).

In order to create healthy ecosystems that cultivate human well-being, and operate in-balance with all of nature's ecosystems, a deeper understanding of ESS related functioning is essential. This is particularly true when it comes to the factors, the 'drivers,' that cause changes in ecosystems and their services. A 'direct driver' is easily identifiable because it is blatantly influencing an ecosystem; it can be identified and measured. A direct driver is something physical, such as climate change, environmental pollution, fertilizer usage, landscape alterations such as irrigation, harvesting, and the introduction of alien invasive species, etc.

An 'indirect driver' is more inconspicuous as it is often affecting multiple direct drivers; it is measured by understanding its influence on the direct driver. "Both indirect and direct drivers often operate synergistically. Changes in land cover, for example, can increase the likelihood of introduction of alien invasive species. Similarly, technological advances can increase rates of economic growth" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 32).

The MA explicitly recognizes the role of decision-makers who affect ecosystems, ecosystem services, and human well- being. Decisions are made at three organizational levels, although the distinction between those levels is often diffuse and difficult to define: 1) by individuals and small groups at the local level (such as a field or forest stand) who directly alter some part of the ecosystem; 2) by public and private decision-makers at the municipal, provincial, and national levels; and 3) by public and private decision-makers at the international level, such as through international conventions and multilateral agreements (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 32).

Spatial and temporal scales determine whether a 'driver' is managed (or caused) by internal or external decision making processes. A local decision-maker can directly influence the choice of technology, changes in land use, and external inputs (such as fertilizers or irrigation), but has little control over prices and markets, property rights, technology development, or the local climate. National or regional decision-makers can control property, trade markets, prices, and technology development policies.

> But on the short time scale, that individual has little control over the climate or global population. On the longer time scale, drivers that are exogenous to a decision-maker in the short run, such as population, become endogenous since the decision-maker can influence them through, for instance, education, the advancement of women, and migration policies (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 32).

According to the MA, the indirect drivers of change are primarily: 1) demographic (e.g., population size, age and gender structure, and spatial distribution); 2) economic (e.g., national and per capita income, macroeconomic policies, international trade, and capital flows); 3) sociopolitical (e.g., democratization, the roles of women, of civil society, and of the private sector, and international dispute mechanisms); 4) scientific and technological (e.g., rates of investments in research and development and the rates of adoption of new technologies, including biotechnologies and information technologies); and 5) cultural and religious (e.g., choices individuals make about what and how much to consume and what they value).

These drivers, as well as their interactions, are constantly changing, especially if considering a globalized post-modern rapidly changing world is changing (i.e., population growth and technology advances). Of course, increased ESS consumption is going to increase demand, which is going to impact ecosystems and particularly exacerbate detrimental, unmitigated, impacts. "Changes in these indirect drivers are projected to increase the demand for and consumption of food, fiber, clean water, and energy, which will in turn affect the direct drivers." Meanwhile, "the climate is changing, species ranges are shifting, alien species are spreading, and land degradation continues" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 33).

Any ESS related decision can create impacts external, and both beneficial and detrimental, to the decision-making framework. For example, the usage of subsidized fertilizers can increase crop production but degrade water quality for downstream stakeholders. However, in another case perhaps a person's agro-activity creates an ecosystem for another person's agro-business that is beneficial and wouldn't otherwise be possible. This is what is meant by an ecosystem is a 'dynamic

arrangement of non-sentiment as well as plant, microorganism, and animal (including human) communities interacting as a living unit.' Likewise, the inter-mingling of direct and indirect drivers of ecosystem services related changes result in related feedback loops that reveal how "the many processes of globalization lead to new forms of interactions between drivers of changes in ecosystem services" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 33).

ESS scales and assessments: further rationale for using this framework

An effective ESS and human well-being assessment must be conducted using a non-singular spatial and temporal analysis. Some ecosystems changes require years or decades before their deeper impacts are revealed (e.g., soil erosion or nutrient depletion). Localized ESS changes (e.g., deforesting a land plot) may have little impact on a community's water supply, for example; however; patches of deforested plots combined may significantly impact the regional ecosystem (e.g., downstream flooding, climate change, or food production).

Particular scales (spatial and temporal) can be used for assessing ESS processes. This is particularly relevant when seeking observation of when an ESS related event (or a process duration) reveals an impact. Ecosystem processes and services are typically most strongly expressed, are most easily observed, or have their dominant controls or consequences at particular (often closely related) spatial and temporal scales. "For instance, food production is a localized service of an ecosystem and changes on a weekly basis; water regulation is regional and changes on a monthly or seasonal basis; and climate regulation may take place at a global scale over decades" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 33).

An ESS assessment must be congruent with the process being examined, especially regarding scale. A topographical analysis covering a large land area can overlook phenomenon transpiring on a micro (village or household) scale and visa-versa. Phenomena and processes that occur at much larger scales, although expressed locally, may go unnoticed in purely local-scale assessments (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 33). My fieldwork has been in a top-down government country. Likewise, I have observed this multi-scale and level disconnection phenomenon.

Humans, in-terms of ESS time scale assessment, or life for this matter, tend to think within the realms of their lived experience. For example, generally we in a lifetime have the opportunity to interact with (and perhaps learn from) our grandparents and parents and our children and grandchildren — about two generations or so. Therefore, assessing highly long-term ecosystems

cycles is challenging. Perhaps this is a true-value component of oral traditions and linked 'indigenous knowledge.' This said, "Slow changes are often harder to measure. … Both ecological and human systems have substantial inertia, and the impact of changes occurring today may not be seen for years or decades" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 33). An example of this is climate change impacts.

Characteristic scales in these regards are also relevant to economic, political, and social processes that are also subject to extent and duration. What transpires on a political level does not always match what is actually happening on an ecological level. "Many environmental problems originate from this mismatch between the scale at which the ecological process occurs, the scale at which decisions are made, and the scale of institutions for decision-making" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 33). Focusing on a single scale often results in missing the interactions with other scales (e.g., ecological, socioeconomic, and political) and the related impact on human well-being. A local-scale assessment may reveal that a national scale action is needed in order to stimulate localized societal responses (e.g., the removal of a subsidy). A global or regional level assessment, however, may not be able to stimulate changes. This is all determined by the relevance and credibility necessary to stimulate and inform changes on either level.

This said, assessing spatial and temporal scales is political in the sense that it can privilege (perhaps wealthier) groups; this is particularly related with knowledge availability and usage. For example, indigenous knowledge is often missed (or purposefully overlooked) when assessing larger scales. "Reflecting on the political consequences of scale and boundary choices is an important prerequisite to exploring what multi- and cross-scale analysis in the MA might contribute to decision-making and public policy processes at various scales" (33). Currently, for (at least some) policy makers the future deterioration of ecosystem services (ESS) is a primary concern. Conceptually understanding medium to long-term ESS related scenarios (and their direct and indirect drivers) is essential. This is so that foresight regarding future actions, consequences, and interventions might be holistically considered (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 35).

ESS assessment tools: further relevance for this thesis study

The MA reveals that "Models can be used to illuminate interactions among systems and drivers, as well as to make up for data deficiencies—for instance, by providing estimates where observations are lacking" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 34). Environmental as well as human

system models can be used to holistically observe ESS changes (e.g., production, consumption, and investment decisions by households) in a way that allows for assessment of a singular and related sector (e.g. agriculture). "Integrated models, combining both the environmental and human systems linkages, can increasingly be used at both global and sub-global scales" (34).

The MA aims to synthesize both formal scientific and indigenous knowledge and aims to consider local regional and global scales — hence, multi-level governance.

> This information often is unknown to science and can be an expression of other relationships between society and nature in general and of sustainable ways of managing natural resources in particular. To be credible and useful to decision-makers, all sources of information, whether scientific, traditional, or practitioner knowledge, must be critically assessed and validated as part of the assessment process through procedures relevant to the form of knowledge (35).

The core message is that human understanding is limited largely to experience and, especially in the past, is particularly blind to the long-term and irreversible impacts of collective decisions. Therefore, "adaptive management, social learning, safe minimum standards, and the precautionary principle" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash, 2005: 35) is essential for navigating our human journey in this rapidly changing world that in many ways we have created for ourselves.

2.2.2 'Nature,' Human Community Ecosystems, and Societal System State Shifts

'Balance of nature,' humans, and a potentially impending storm

It may be reasonable to state that 'nature' — this being 'the animals, plants, events, processes, and other world phenomena that are not made (or caused) by people — functions best when its ecological systems are operating as designed. This is particularly relevant when these 'natural' processes are devoid of most human activity-disturbances (e.g., commodities market related 'natural resources' exploitation, urbanization, pollution, etc.).

It could perhaps also be said that the baseline of human psychology toward 'nature' is that it is a collective whole — paradoxically from which we are separate, and even positioned above (as stewards, somehow…as some religion teaches). This self-prescribed humanistic viewpoint within us transpires even if while we are experiencing a deep-down intuitive knowing that this separateness is a fallacy, that without this 'nature' we cannot survive.

So what about this intuitive connection we share with nature's other sentient beings? Who does not experience a deep, intuitive, connection with air, fire, soil, and water? Tangibly speaking, compared with being amid urban chaos and pollution (i.e., purely human created phenomena), who

does not feel nourished by nature — such as while immersed in the forest or while near the expansive ocean? Can it be logically inferred then that if being within close proximity of this 'nature' generally cultivates humans' inner restoration and reverence then are we (also) not part of this nature? How, then, can humans, existing as sentient beings like all other living creatures, not also be 'nature?' Can it be said that modern-day humans generally believe 'nature,' as opposed to humans in-general, exists in a perpetual state of balance and is therefore somehow perfect? And if an ecosystem is imperfect (e.g., containing pollution) than something is, somehow, out of balance?

Daniel Simberloff in his 2014 article, "The 'Balance of Nature'— Evolution of a Panchreston," says that ecologists are actually evermore believing that 'nature' — therefore, from my viewpoint, humans as well — is predominantly imbalanced. While humans, compared with other species, with our monetary commoditization of nature surely adding a complication to this balanced (or imbalanced) nature dynamic, 'nature' is actually in a constant state of flux — of flowing, of change, of reinvention — that is operating within a range of fluctuations. This does not mean there is no balance but rather that the averaging of ecosystems' fluctuations is what can be considered as nature's actual equilibrium or 'balanced' state.

Simberloff (2014) articulates how humans' notions of 'nature as balance' has changed temporally, in conjunction with our belief systems, global positionality, and linked worldviews.

> The earliest concept of a balance of nature in Western thought saw it as being provided by gods but requiring human aid or encouragement for its maintenance. With the rise of Greek natural philosophy, emphasis shifted to traits gods endowed species with at the outset, rather than human actions, as key to maintaining the balance. The dominance of a constantly intervening God in the Middle Ages lessened interest in the inherent features of nature that would contribute to balance, but the Reformation led to renewed focus on such features, particularly traits of species that would maintain all of them but permit none to dominate nature. Darwin conceived of nature in balance, and his emphasis on competition and frequent tales of felicitous species interactions supported the idea of a balance of nature.
>
> But Darwin radically changed its underlying basis, from God to natural selection. Wallace was perhaps the first to challenge the very notion of a balance of nature as an undefined entity whose accuracy could not be tested. His skepticism was taken up again in the 20th century, culminating in a widespread rejection of the idea of a balance of nature by academic ecologists, who focus rather on a dynamic, often chaotic nature buffeted by constant disturbances. The balance-of-nature metaphor, however, lives on in large segments of the public, representing a fragile aspect of nature and biodiversity that it is our duty to protect (p. 1).

With this articulated, humans' viewpoint of (and therefore attitude towards) 'nature' has seemingly — in conjunction with the seemingly ever-expanding 'natural resource' extractive global market system — mirrored our evolving needs to exploit nature for hedonistic means. Humans likewise justify global commodities market driven actions, and seemingly without-end keep raping this life-sustaining planet of the essential 'resources' and linked ecosystem services needed for sustained survival.

This said, I do not uphold the viewpoint that humans are not part of this nature. While humans may predominantly perceive 'nature' as something external, we, alike all sentient beings, are inextricably connected with nature's law and cycles. Life is initiated. It then grows, is maintained for a time period, ends, and becomes further part of Earth's holistic ecosystem; another cycle, perhaps in similar or different form, ensues. This transpires throughout our natural as well as built environments and societal ecosystems.

I do maintain that we humans do things that are not natural (e.g., cities, designed to feed global economic market 'development'), and this results in non-natural environmental and societal phenomena. The longitudinal results of these collective actions create environmental and societal degradation that — considering the modern-day global state of increasing political and societal tensions — is continually leading to environmental societal state shifts that are arguably not necessarily for the better.

This does not mean that development, modernity, and post-modernity phenomena are not leading to newfound innovation. I mean that humanity overall is perhaps likely on the cusp of a devastating shift in our existential reality.

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

2.2.2 'Nature,' Human Community Ecosystems, and Societal Systems State Shifts

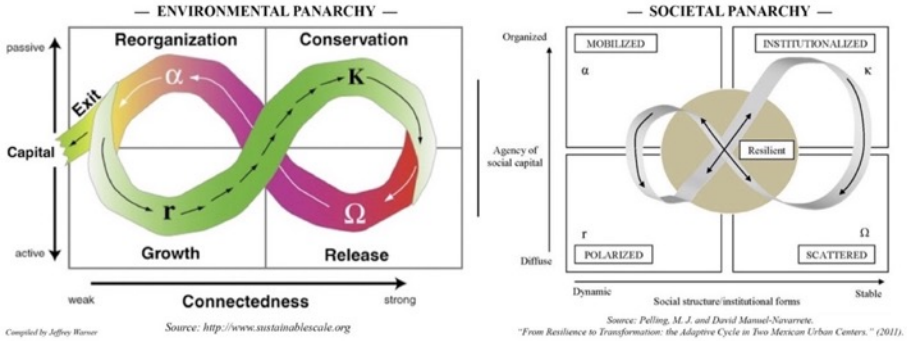


Figure 2.8: 'Environmental panarchy' and 'societal panarchy' models (compiled and titled by the thesis author)

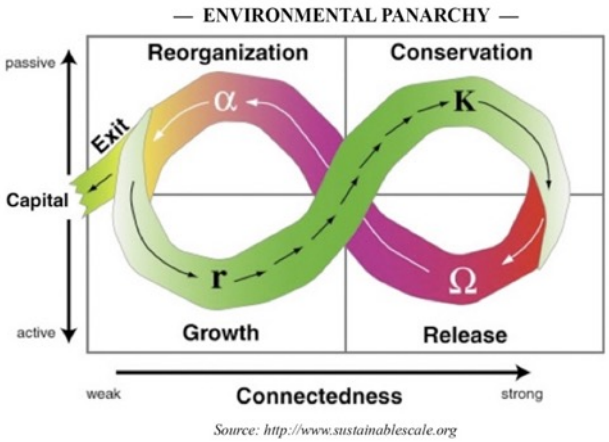
Although it may appear to many people that 'nature' is in a perpetual state of balance and perfection, perhaps even somewhat static. Earth's lifeblood ecosystems, including human society, constantly experience a multi-phase 'adaptive cycle' — the cycle of life and death — called, 'panarchy.' Is it peculiar that the above-depicted cycle (Figure 2.8) replicates the DNA strand?

"Panarchy" is a conceptual framework that accounts for the dual, and seemingly contradictory, characteristics of all complex systems – stability and change…and how they interact. This is an integrative framework bringing together ecological, economic and social models of change and stability, to account for the complex interactions among both these different areas and within different interacting scale levels.

Essentially, this cycle is nature's engine used for generating the ecological (and human socio-ecological) system variances and experimentations that capacitate evolutionary growth. Larger and slower moving levels (e.g., old trees in a forest, or human village elders) stabilize and conserve accumulated memory of system dynamics; this sets the ecosystem's overall operating conditions. Concurrently, smaller and faster moving nested levels (e.g., a forest's temperature variations, or a human village's youth) test the current system while inventing, experimenting and testing new possibilities. This adaptive 'panarchy' cycle is hence a periodic process that protects the overall ecosystem by isolating the transpiring socio-ecological experiments (Gunderson and Holling; 2002)

While this ecological theory is generally applied to the natural/Earth sciences — what I am naming, 'environmental panarchy' — it also illustrates complex systems of people (i.e., societal panarchy') and nature as "dynamically organized and structured within and across scales of space and time" (Allen, Angeler, Garmestani, A.S. et al.: 2014). I maintain that we can articulate the 'human condition' via these 'environmental panarchy' and 'societal panarchy' conceptual models.

Nature, and 'environmental panarchy'



The characteristics of the ecological adaptive cycle metaphor include *growth (*i.e., *exploitation), conservation*, *release*, and *reorganization*. This is also known *as* creative destruction (Schumpeter. 1943). 'Growth' (i.e., 'exploitation') and 'conservation' are rooted in standard ecological theory.

According to Gotts (2007), an ecosystem's growth/exploitation stage is dominated by some species (or major event), for example, that is tolerant of this environment's ecosystems related variations and inherent tendency toward conservation (i.e., defense mechanisms). However, two additional processes are required to complete the adaptive cycle. The 'release' phase is much briefer (e.g., a fire or insect outbreak) that frees/reduces nutrients from biomass, leading to a 'reorganization' stage that adaptively involves soil (rebuilding) processes that limit nutrient loss (Holling and Gunderson. 2002).

> The adaptive cycle involves changes in three variables: resilience; potential in the form of accumulated resources in biomass or in physical, human, and social capital; and connectedness, meaning the tightness of coupling among the controlling variables that determine the system's ability to modulate external variability (Gotts; 2007:2).

Gotts (2007) says that in the 'growth' phase "potential and connectedness are low but resilience is high," and in the 'conservation' stage "resilience decreases while the other values increase." At some point, a 'release' transpires and potential further growth collapses. This leads to an ecosystem(s) reorganization stage when "resilience and potential grow, connectedness falls, unpredictability peaks, and new system entrants can establish themselves" (p.2)

Another (perhaps simpler) way of articulating the above cycle, experienced by all ecosystems and on all scales from cellular to global: 1) *exploitation*: one of rapid expansion, as when a population finds a fertile niche in which to grow; 2) *conservation:* slow accumulation and storage of energy and material is emphasized, as when a population reaches carrying capacity and stabilizes for a time; 3) *release:* occurs rapidly, as when a population declines due to a competitor, or changed conditions; and 4) *reorganization*: can also occur rapidly, as when certain members of the population are selected for their ability to survive despite the competitor or changed conditions that triggered the release (source: http://www.sustainablescale.org).

This cyclic 'panarchy' process is essentially about 'resilience,' which can be defined as the magnitude of disturbance that can be absorbed before the ecosystem changes its structure by changing the variables and processes that control behavior (Holling and Gunderson; 2002:28). The four stages of the adaptive cycle described above — analogous to birth (growth), life (conservation), death (release) and renewal (energetic reorganization) — have three properties that determine the dynamic characteristics of each cycle:

- *Potential* sets limit to possibility: the number and kinds of future options available (e.g., high levels of biodiversity provide more future options than low levels)
- *Connectedness* determines the degree to which a system can control its own destiny through internal controls, as distinct from being influenced by external variables.
- *Resilience* determines how vulnerable a system is to unexpected disturbances and surprises that can exceed or break that control. (Source: http://www.sustainablescale.org)

There is also an interconnectedness of levels — this being the smallest and the largest, as well as the fastest and the slowest occurring. The large and slow cycles set the operational conditions for the smaller, faster cycles. Each facet can impact the other and in various ways.

Regarding ecosystem sustainability, there are several points of particular interest:

1) "Revolt:" This occurs when fast, small events overwhelm large, slow ones, as when a small fire in a forest spreads to the crowns of trees, then to another patch, and eventually the entire forest; this occurs when the system becomes too rigid (i.e., low diversity).

2) "Remember:" This occurs when the potential accumulated and stored in the larger, slow levels influences the reorganization stage. For example, after a forest fire the processes and resources accumulated at a larger level slow the leakage of nutrients, and options for renewal draw from the seed bank, physical structures and surrounding species that form a biotic legacy.

3) Change (i.e., reorganization) is episodic and corresponding with both fast and slow variables. Phenomena transpire on different scales and levels, while concentrating resources in different ways. Moreover, ecosystems do not harness singular processes that have a single threshold point where a collapse and reorganization (and increase in diversity and resilience opportunity) subsequently occur.

Management systems (both ecological and human) must take into account these complex dynamics and maintain adaptive flexibility particularly regarding critical ecosystem functions.

***

Versus harnessing a humanistic viewpoint, I assert that we humans are social animals that are as much part of nature's ecosystems as any other 'natural' sentient being. *This is our 'human condition.'*

Alike a 'natural' ecosystem that reaches a threshold point before transforming into a new existential state, human society (in direct response to environmental factors) also cycles and reaches threshold boundary points resulting in societal state shifts. Therefore, I maintain that this 'adaptive cycle' analytical framework can also be applied directly to human societal-ecosystems.

This said, 'panarchy' theory is essentially about "connecting ecosystems dynamics with economics [i.e., a driver of social change] and how these two components are managed by human institutions. Likewise, "the adaptive cycle [also] offers the possibility of an analytical frame for tracking social systems through sequential stability states and their intervening periods of collapse and reconstruction, but missing is the role of power in determining the character of systems dynamics" (Pelling and Manuel-Navarrete; 2011: 2).

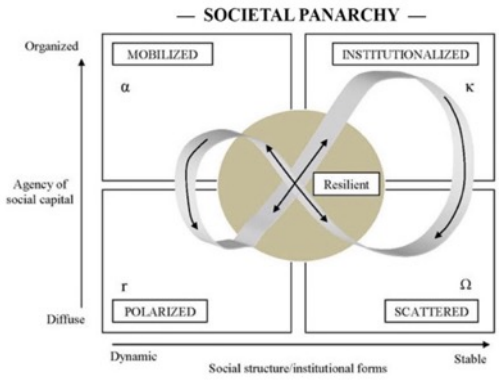
Giddens (1984) addresses power in context with agency of individuals acting with social structures. There are three kinds of power structures: 1) structures of legitimation: institutions (norms and rules) that regulate social interaction and enforce conformity; and 2) structures of domination, revealed through control over mechanisms determining resource distribution in society and symbolized by centers of authority; and 3) structures of signification, which produce interpretations or meanings used to make sense of experience.

Scott (2001) contemplates how the majority of contemporary social systems are unsustainable. Therefore, understanding power dynamics is essential for how transformation is blocked or may be facilitated. Likewise, social systems require a nuanced understanding of these power structures.

Scott's Zomia related notions relevantly coincide with my thesis study's focus on top-down (government) versus bottom-up (governance) managed community 'development' initiatives. Moreover, how can rural (particularly indigenous) communities serve as a social-scientific microcosm measurement of how all of humanity has been impacted at our by 'development' related phenomena?

Nature, and 'societal panarchy'

Pelling and Manuel-Navarrete; 2011: 2-3:



1) The 'societal panarchy' cycle begins with a state of highly '*institutionalized*' stability (i.e., 'conservation') in which dominant social structures and social agency are well aligned and reinforcing. Change is catalyzed by shock; we are interested in the role played by the identification of novel environmental pressure or its impact, caused by emergent hazard, vulnerability, or changes in risk tolerance with underlying dynamics that can be internal to the system or result from contagion across a policy or geographical boundary or governance scale. If the new pressure is large enough to cause shock then while established social structures of legitimation, domination and signification formally remain, social behavior may begin to de-link, expressed for example, through spontaneous acts of solidarity, dissent, or violence, until the affected components of the system are contained and dominant institutions reassert themselves, or become *scattered*;

2) '*Scatter*' (i.e., crisis/collapse) turns into 3) '*mobilization*' (i.e., reorganization) when diffuse social action generates its own internal structure, or is massaged into doing so externally in an act of, potentially exploitative, panarchy. Interest groups form as bonding capital draws the like-minded together (organized social capital). Groups vary in their tolerance of existing structures and may live out alternative forms, such as post-disaster community organization established as a break from centralized governance;

4) '*Polarization*' (i.e., growth) marks a firming up of social capital positions and coalition building such that differences become fewer but more marked. This results in diffuse social capital and dynamic social relations with contradictory institutions potentially coexisting and an increased likelihood of conflict and backsliding towards scatter. … If new institutions are built that better suit the values and risk preferences of emergent, dominant social actors, again under the influence of external/higher scales of power and interest, a new of phase of '*institutionalization*' (i.e., conservation) is established offering a new equilibrium between agency and structure symbolized in a new risk social contract, and indicated by changes in the application of technological as well as social organization, legislation, or policy.

The transition from an 'institutionalized' (conservation) stage to 'scattered' (release/crisis) stage depends largely on the flexibility/resistance of the established societal structure. If considering a community, for contextual example, this transition involves the level to which people are involved in the development discourse. Are stakeholders, particularly leadership structures trying to preserve near-term stability, covering up (or denying) risk that could result in overall resistance to change even at the detriment of long-term sustainability (Handmer and Dovers; 1996). This variable could perhaps also be relevant to whether government or governance related pressures are at-play.

The movement from 'scatter' to 'mobilization' involves a plethora of what are in many ways stakeholders' subjective attributes. Personality traits and hence opinions, religion, personal history, values, etc. become part of the mix and therefore shape decisions that determine (and comprise) future movement. This said, the transition from a mobilized to a polarized society, particularly its rate and cohesiveness, is dependent on organization capacity. The history of stakeholders' relationships can greatly influence this critical time. This is particularly true when considering prior established shared interests and power and how this can influence social contracts moving forward (Pelling and Manuel-Navarrete; 2011).

'Societal panarchy' essentially overlays the purely ecology based adaptive cycle model with four idealized states in human systems evolution. It abstractly (hence theoretically) refers to actors and the (government or governance) institutions that affect these structural relations and their subsequent social capital. Transition periods between these (cline) stages are neither static nor linear, particularly regarding their overall outcomes. I maintain that this conceptual 'societal panarchy' model, overlaid with the 'natural environmental panarchy' model, can provide a general framework for understanding humans' existential states in conjunction with ecosystem services (SES) transformation. This is relevant to 'development' as an 'organized intervention in collective affairs based on a standard of improvement' (Pieterse; 2001).

Pelling and Manuel-Navarrete (2011) express that human history has always experienced institutional stability, challenge, crisis, and reorganization, "with the possibility for social systems to become locked into any one phase." This occurs at scales from household formation across the life cycle, to local communities living with economic or other forms of restructuring, and larger political units from municipalities to nation states. Such patterns echo the adaptive cycle proposed by Holling et al." (p.2).

2.2.3 Further Informing Development Researchers

The following briefly articulates some, but not all, additional and primary research review that this thesis includes.

Greatly informing for this research project is the work of Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2001; 2010) and his comprehensive book, *Development Theory*. Pieterse is a distinguished professor of Global studies and Sociology. He focuses on global political economy, development studies and cultural studies. This book deeply informs about trends in development theory, 'development' as 'an organized intervention in collective affairs,' dilemmas, modernity, globalization and globalism, alternative development (if there is such thing), how this relates with the soup of globalizing culture, and introspective ideas related with the past, present, and future.

Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Lee Peluso, via their 1995 article, "Territorialization and State Power in Thailand," build this thesis' development policies related foundation. This is relevant to chapter two, which covers the territorialization of Siam/Thailand's land and people.

I include in this thesis the work of Philip Hirsch. He is an Australian researcher and professor of Human Geography. Hirsch specializes in natural resource management, rural change and the politics of environment in Southeast Asia. He brings to this thesis' conversation thoughts about Thai state-village relations. Hirsch is quite critical of the State's development related motives. He accentuates how rural peoples become subject to "an implied sense of citizen-belonging in the State, and they become subjects versus objects to State policy." Moreover, the true purpose of rural development is "to establish an increasing monopoly in terms of legitimacy of State institutions." Hirsch's work suggests that the 'penetration' of the State into rural areas like is really about capitalist surplus extraction versus for the betterment of rural communities.

Ouyyanont (2012) establishes a foundation for my case study. He talks about Thailand prior to its fuller engagement in the post WWII global market system. This is important because around the time that my study area was established (late 1800s Siam) a high percentage of the country's population was living in rural areas, with limited industrialization and urbanization being prominent. That was much different than modern-day Thailand.

Preston and Ngah (2012) bring references of their rural development related work in Malaysia; they for the sake of my study establish a comparative regional view to a global development continuum. Preston and Ngah say that rural development is seen as a varied series of responses to the formerly dominant model of modernization, which are complex in that they take

place at various levels, involve multiple actors, and create or arise with the emergence of new practices, and new social and economic networks. Preston and Ngah talk about movement from the rural to urban and the societal impacts of this, and how communities adapt and create new forms of culture and economy.

Crooker (2005) talks of Thailand's "steadfast commitment" to opium reduction in northern Thailand. He addresses how "hill tribes," like primary case study area *(Pumuen)* were for a time a focus of strong interest by the international news media and foreign governments in terms of opium production. However, what was (and remains) hidden largely from view are the poverty-related social problems such as drug trafficking, heroin addiction, prostitution, and AIDS that are prominent as a result of a post-opium rural countryside. From my view, this is a related result of development and related social stratification.

Olsson (2008) says that the popular theory is that road improvement will lead to direct community benefits. However, the direct and indirect benefits are determined by context. Olsson says that development implies a structural shift, where a new social and technical environment or a new set of economic opportunities emerges, and the pattern of relationships between the environment and social actors changes. This can be linked with panarchy and societal state shifts.

Bryceson and Bradbury (2008) say that in early modernization theory, roads were considered to be an important catalyst of economic development, that physical isolation sustains poverty and accentuates vulnerability, and that rural road investment is logically assumed to alleviate the poverty associated with spatial isolation. They address the idea that infrastructural investment, with road projects being exceptionally prominent, are a "double-edged nature of mobility improvement."

Shigetomi (1992), who has studied village communities in rural Thailand, says that the impact of the market economy on rural villages has subjected them to significant changes. Shigetomi says that each farming household as an economic unit increases its degree of dependence on the buying and selling of commodities. This has changed the way villagers interact with one another, creating what Shigetomi refers to as 'market' and 'cooperative' transactions — the former being about profit and the latter being more about long-term benefits of social unity and communal relationships

Kelly, Yutthaphonphinit, Seubsman, and Sleigh (2012) say that Thailand has often been deemed a model (for studying planning and development) because it has retained much of its cultural traditions while adopting development practices. These authors address the *supposed* changing of the Thai government's status quo top-down development policies to that of being more bottom-up and grass roots. Kelly, Yutthaphonphinit, Seubsman, and Sleigh say that development experience over many decades in Thailand has revealed that community learning and empowerment is most effective when the process is truly participatory primary challenges with grass roots has been the country's centralized bureaucracy, with the powers at be "reluctant to devolve power over decision making."

Dominique Van De Walle (2002) brings to the discussion a skeptical view of whether the road to a rural community really does result in significant social benefits. The general consensus is that with the road comes the eventual flow of important social benefits. However, unfortunately there is little convincing empirical evidence that rural roads affect social outcomes beyond what they would have been without the road. Measuring the benefits of rural roads is fraught with difficulty.

James Scott, a distinguished professor of Political Science and Anthropology and author of the book, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia (2009)*, refers to the term "Zomia" — involving parts of China, Vietnam, Ne-India, Cambodia, Laos, Burma and northern Thailand.

Scott, putting into context my thesis study's contextual focus on northern Thailand rural highland communities, says that those living in the highlands are people who have fled State-making projects and have made conscious choices about how and where to do so on the peripheries of the centres of global power.

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

Chapter 3: The Policy-Art of Controlling People with Land

If one aspires to acquire understanding about people, including their potential societal trajectory, historical insight into how their current socio-situation was created can be helpful.

Serving as this thesis study's foundation, the following chapter is a historical investigation into the international and national policies whereby Siam/Thailand's geographical and socio-political landscapes have been forever transformed by both externally and internally directed forces. I address this by illustrating — within the framework of definitions, such as 'State, 'development,' 'colonization,' 'imperialization,' and 'concessions' — some significant dates that are linked with territorialization related land, political, social, and cultural policies.

Part one perhaps boldly delves into — and perhaps dissolves, at least in-part — what I vehemently believe is a politically constructed and widely communicated fairytale that Siam was never colonized/imperialized by countries such as England and France during the western Colonial development era. I am referring to the time period of the Fifteenth Century to 1914, when countries such as Spain, Portugal, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Britain established colonies outside Europe.

Part two reveals an on-the-ground, northern Thailand focused, picture of how those living amid the societal (and geographical) peripheries were (and continue being) sucked into the mainstream State system. They, like all other citizens comprising this world region, have become forever-impacted, and arguably not necessarily for the better.

***

I am suggesting that Siam was first externally 'imperialized' and later internally 'developed.' While Siam/Thailand surely harnesses subtle differences with encompassing formally colonized countries, how — or more importantly, why and for what purpose — was Siam not transformed formally into a Western colony (unlike all surrounding countries) but rather into a "buffer State?" How is that Thailand — a country with a traditionally agrarian, monarchy dominated society and economy, which was essentially forced into the capitalist global market system by the British after they colonized Burma (and beyond) — was, even by all definitions, never colonized/imperialized? These are some of the questions that this chapter poses.

I am hoping that this endeavor reveals a fairly wide-angle picture of why and particularly how the lives of the rural indigenous ethnic communities comprising my thesis study have been impacted, if not dictated, by external international and domestic State forces.

3.1 Was Thailand *Really* Never Colonized? … How About Imperialized?

Introduction: modern-day Thailand overview

Thailand, which in the Thai language means, 'land of the free,' or 'free man, is considered the center of the Indochinese peninsula in Se-Asia. Thailand is the world's fiftieth largest country. It is the world's twentieth most populous country (around 69 million people). Thailand is bordered to the north by Myanmar and Laos, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, to the south by Myanmar, Malaysia, and the Gulf of Thailand; to the west is the Andaman Sea. All of these surrounding countries had been officially colonized by either or Britain or France respectively.

Thailand is considered a constitutional monarchy. This is a form of monarchy in which the "sovereign," a supreme leader, exercises authorities in accordance with a written or unwritten constitution. Thailand, prior to 1932 when this political State was initiated (and fully adopted this Western-style socio-political transformation) existed as an 'absolute monarchy,' a system by which the monarch holds absolute power. Thailand, a pseudo-democracy, has for decades switched between parliamentary democracy and military junta. The modern-day government bodies consist of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The country, nowadays, is comprised of seventy-six provinces comprising five groups. Bangkok is the provincial level capital and thus often counted as a province. Each province is divided into districts, and the districts are further divided into sub-districts (*tambons*). Nowadays, Thailand (following a 2014 coup, one of many in recent decades) is under the heavy-handed control of the Thai military.

Siam/Thailand's first flag was officially *created in 1855,* by King Mongkut (Rama IV). Its original composition was of a plain bright-blood red rectangle, with no emblematic symbols. Its design drastically changed in 1917, to include colors red, white, and blue. The color red represents the blood spilt to protect Thailand's apparent independence (amidst a region of formally colonized countries) and often more simply described as representing the nation. White represents Buddhism, the nation's predominant religion. Blue represents the Monarchy, which is recognized as the center of Thai hearts. It is also believed that the blue color is because in 1917 King Rama VI entered into WWI as an ally of Britain and France.

Perhaps the purpose of this new red, white, and blue color composition was (and is) to make the flag (and therefore the country) more distinct. This could facilitate international relations for a country that prior had been fairly autonomous in-terms of the global(izing) profits game of

capital 'resources' trading. Regardless, a country's flag is arguably the epicenter of its socio-political relevance, also a mirror of its inner workings. This said, in my opinion, Thailand's flag construction (in addition to the timing of its creation) is eerily too akin to the Unites States, France, and Britain's flags for me to observe its construction as a mere coincidence. When a flag is changed, so also is a country's inner workings, which is a main purpose of this article and thesis.

3.1.1: Commodification of Land and People Through Territorialization

It can be said surely that the Kingdom of Thailand (known as Siam, prior to 1932), has never existed as another country's formal colony. However, does this mean that this country has really never been colonized, as is the popular belief? Is it fathomable that Siam, versus using the term 'colonized,' was actually imperialized by Britain? Regardless of political terminology, whatever happened in Siam, and regionally, in the mid-1880s resulted in a socio-political revolution that forever overturned both the soil of the land and the country's socio-fabric. Let us consider that this initial colonization/imperialization process led to a second stage of territorialization via a concocted political State (i.e. Thailand), which evolved into an internal 'development' scheme that perpetuated globalization (and related modernization) trends.

Each of these paradigms resulted in a respective political, environmental, and psycho-social residue that remain affixed to the country's national culture socio-fabric. This phenomenon, in my view, remains most visible in and through Thailand's rural ethnic forest-dwelling "indigenous" peoples. This is while they, somewhat broadly speaking, are continually enduring a form of ethnocide (i.e., the deliberate and systematic destruction of the culture of an ethnic group). I focus on these communities for this very reason, both as a societal study and metaphorical context.

Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Lee Peluso address elements of this through notions of 'territoriality' in their 1995 article, "Territorialization and State Power in Thailand," which I maintain is a solid foundation for addressing my above sentiments about Siam/Thailand's sociological turnovers. I reference Vandergeest and Peluso's article extensively.

'Territoriality:' defined and revealed

Jan Nederveen Pieterse in his book, *Development Theory: Deconstructions / Reconstructions (2010)*, defines 'development' as "an organized intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement" (3). I interpret Pieterse's notions of "organized

intervention" as being about social policy (international, national, and local); "collective affairs" as being about culture (i.e. accepted ideas, customs and social behaviors, as well as other aspects that people care about such as policies, education, the economy, etc.); and "standard of improvement" as being about the Institution (i.e. State-centered modes of organized law or practice, as well as 'local' actor/agent 'stakeholders'). This definition articulates the status quo "development" model. Max Weber defines the 'State' as "a political organization that claims and upholds a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force in a given territory" (1978; 54). Let us consider further Stein Rokkan's addressing of 'territoriality' as being about (created) space subject to variations in political power across institutions (1975).

For further framing this overall conversation, let us also look at the terms 'colonialism' and 'imperialism.' An appropriate definition of 'colonialism' as 'the policy of a polity seeking to extend or retain its authority over other people or territories, generally with the aim of developing or exploiting them to the benefit of the colonizing country and helping the colonies modernize in terms defined by the colonizers, especially in economics, religion and health' (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonialism). Oxford Dictionary reveals that to 'colonize' means 'to send settlers to (a place), settle among, and establish political control over it (i.e. such as a country, or the indigenous peoples of an area); to appropriate for one's own use: to establish in an area. 'Colonize' can also in similar words be 'the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.' COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary defines 'colonialism' simply as 'the practice by which a powerful country controls less powerful countries and uses their resources to increase its own power and wealth.'

Let us add another important part to this definitional context. 'Imperial,' according to Merriam Webster dictionary, means 'of, relating to, befitting, or suggestive of an empire or an emperor; *of or relating to the United Kingdom* as distinguished from the constituent parts; of or relating to the Commonwealth of Nations and British Empire.' And Encyclopedia Britannica defines 'imperialism' as 'state policy, practice, or advocacy of extending power and dominion, especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas.' … Summarized: *'imperialized' essentially means, colonized by Britain.*

Completing this definitional and explanatory framework, Margaret Kohn and Kavita Reddy, via an article entitled, "Colonialism," published in the Fall 2017 edition of *The Stanford*

Encyclopedia of Philosophy, address 'colonization' and 'imperialism.' The authors state that the literature is not consistent regarding these two terms, and that colonialism is not a modern phenomenon. However, 'colonialism' is surely used to describe the process of European settlement and political control over the rest of the world, including the Americas, Australia, and parts of Africa and Asia. Recall, though, that by definition 'imperialism' refers specifically and solely to the Commonwealth of Nations and British Empire.

> One of the difficulties in defining colonialism is that it is hard to distinguish it from imperialism. Frequently the two concepts are treated as synonyms. Like colonialism, imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory. The etymology of the two terms, however, provides some clues about how they differ. The term colony comes from the Latin word *colonus*, meaning farmer. This root reminds us that the practice of colonialism usually involved the transfer of population to a new territory, where the arrivals lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political allegiance to their country of origin. Imperialism, on the other hand, comes from the Latin term *imperium*, meaning to command. Thus, the term imperialism draws attention to the way that one country exercises power over another, whether through settlement, sovereignty, or indirect mechanisms of control (Kohn and Reddy; 2017).

Kohn and Reddy (2017) say that political theorists during the colonization era struggled with notions of "reconciling ideas about justice and natural law with the practice of European sovereignty over non-Western peoples during when Europe was exerting its socio-political power worldwide…

> One way of reconciling those apparently opposed principles was the argument known as the "civilizing mission," which suggested that *a temporary period of political dependence or tutelage* (i.e., instruction; tuition) was necessary in order for "uncivilized" societies to advance to the point where they were capable of sustaining liberal institutions and self-government. …
>
> The term *imperialism often describes cases in which a foreign government administers a territory without significant settlement*; typical examples include the scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century and the American domination of the Philippines and Puerto Rico.

Before moving on and forward to revealing a longitudinal policy-related timeline of Siam/Thailand, we will capstone this terminology related discussion with another excerpt from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy about this "civilizing mission" that Kohn and Reddy mention. I will then complete this section with some related development theory that potentially puts this this "mission" into perspective with some root motivations of Western 'development' and

'modernity.' This refers to the engineering of industrialization, capitalism, and urbanization in conjunction with 'primitivism' and the Christian Enlightenment (i.e., paradise, fall, and redemption).

Kohn and Kavita (2017) remind us that this "civilizing mission" was by no means the invention of the British in the nineteenth century.

> The Spanish conquistadores and colonists explicitly justified their activities in the Americas in terms of a religious mission to bring Christianity to the native peoples. The Crusades provided a legal doctrine that rationalized the conquest and possession of infidel lands. Whereas the Crusades were initially framed as defensive wars to reclaim Christian lands that had been conquered by non-Christians. The resulting theoretical innovations played an important role in subsequent attempts to justify the conquest of the Americas. The core claim was that the Petrine mandate to care for the souls of Christ's human flock required Papal *jurisdiction over temporal as well as spiritual matters*, and this control extended to non-believers as well as believers.

Evolutionary schemes of 'development'

So how is the relevant to this Siam/Thailand related discussion about development and colonization/imperialization? Pieterse (2010) says that "Nineteenth-century social science was profoundly preoccupied with mapping and conceptualizing Europe's Great Transition, which was variously associated with the Enlightenment industrialization, capitalism, urbanization (p. 20).

This Great Transition to which Pieterse is referring, simply put, is regarding a global shift from a global "pre-modern" psyche, which is about people's sense of self and purpose being expressed via staunch faith in a deity. What evolved from this was societal notions of *"modern," which is about the creation of and belief in the use of scientific methods* (e.g., developments in technology, warfare, politics, etc.) that would lead to knowledge that was formerly inaccessible via reason and intuitive knowledge (Boulding; 1988).

Elements of this "modernity" include egalitarian social and ecological values, increased inter-human connectivity, improved quality of life (perhaps according to Pieterse's definition of 'development' and this "organized intervention of collective affairs based on a standard of improvement") and a healthy planet; this as well, of course, supposedly includes development goals related with the absence of poverty, war, and environmental destruction.

Pieterse (2010) explains:

> The basic scenario of the scripture, Paradise–Fall–Redemption, comes replicated in *evolutionary schemes*. Primeval simplicity and innocence (the pastoral past and the good savage), followed by the fall from grace (corruption, decay, capitalism, urbanism, varying according to the discourse), which is in turn to be followed by a redeeming change (modernity, technology or revolution) (p. 27).

Considering that in 2018 there is an increasing prominence of globally tangible political and societal tensions, it appears that these lofty 'heaven on Earth' policy-level notions related with 'development and 'modernity' have not actually transpired — perhaps, on the total contrary. I mean that is the model of capitalism, with its fabric comprised of a system based on perpetual growth (fueled by using finite 'natural resources, which is futile), not actually based on this paradise-fall-redemption model — this being the transference of profits from one area to new areas where more land, labor, and capital can be acquired?

I will complete this section by fastening these definitional notions of territoriality, colonialism, imperialization, and the First World Enlightenment mission of civilizing the noble savage(!) with additional development theory by Pieterse. I aim to further connect this with notions of our human condition. I am referring to the societal 'de' of 'development,' how this transpires in cline(d) stages, and why I have chosen Thailand and its rural indigenous communities as a social-scientific measurement of development impacts.

Pieterse (2010) talks about the "center of power" in conjunction with the "diffusionist school of evolutionism" and how notions of "the center and periphery" [which is surely relevant to the political power structures of Siam/Thailand] is rooted in nineteenth-century political geography (p. 25). "A central issue is the relationship between knowledge and power. That every truth is a claim to power and every power is a centre of truth is the point of discourse analysis and part of postmodern understandings of knowledge" (p. 9).

> In his analysis of what he calls the post-totalitarian system, Václav Havel observes: 'the principle involved here is that the centre of power is identical with the centre of truth' (Havel 1985: 25). This also applies to the centres of power and leading truths in the western world. The central thesis of developmentalism is that social change occurs according to a pre-established pattern, the logic and direction of which are known. Those who deem themselves furthest advanced along its course claim privileged knowledge of the direction of change. Developmentalism is the truth from the point of view of the centre of power; it is the theorization (or rather, ideologization) of its own path of development and the comparative method usually serves to elaborate this perspective (Pieterse; 2010:19).

Pieterse says that developmentalism conforms to a Christian format and logic in viewing history as a salvific process. “Thus it merges Christian and Enlightenment discourses so the momentum of faith corresponds with the logic of reason – reason and rationalization operating toward the fulfilment of the expectations of faith (Pieterse; 2010: 27).

I will link some additional thoughts with Kohn and Kavita (2017), their articulation of Europe’s Christianity fueled “civilizing mission,” and Pieterse’s reference to the Great Transition. I question, in relation to personal and global power dynamics, is people’s religion not their center of truth, and therefore radiated outward via a manifested power?

‘Territoriality’ revealed

Considering the timeframe that I am asserting Siam was actually colonized/imperialized by Britain, Pieterse (2010) says that “from the point of view of the centre, global space appeared transformed into a time sequence, with Europeans as the only contemporaries, the sole inhabitants of modernity. *Empire*, then, was a time machine in which one moved backward or forward along the axis of progress. This Eurocentric perspective also served as a manual for *the imperial management* of societies at different evolutionary stages (p. 20).

This said, let us move forward and contemplate Siam/Thailand through our established definitional and theoretical framework. If Thailand was colonized — or imperialized, if this is what we must term it — then this transpired through several stages of territorialization, first of the country’s land and then its peoples.

Consider again that territorialization is “about excluding or including people within particular geographic boundaries, and about controlling what people do and their access to natural resources within those boundaries” (Menzies, 1992). By ‘territorialization’ I am also referring to an individual or group (e.g., State actors) creating and executing influential control over people by creating an institutionally recognized (and enforced) geographic area and then asserting control of the people and their specific activities within this spatial boundary (Sack, 1986).

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) explain that territorial sovereignty constructs and defines socio-political identities and forms the political base on which the State can claim control over people and the resources under their feet. Moreover, “all modern political states divide their territories into complex and overlapping political and economic zones, rearrange people and resources within these units, and create regulations delineating how and by whom these areas can be used” (p. 4).

I suppose this happens particularly in world areas where land has been acquired from people for the purposes of commoditization and also under the guise of 'national security,' hence the real motives of 'colonization' and the impetus of 'development.'

Territory and space

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 4) reference Bulpitt and his article, "Territory and Power in the United Kingdom" (1983) by saying that he "exemplifies the understanding of territoriality as center-periphery (socio-political power) relations."

Bulpitt (1983) defines territorial politics as:

> that arena of political activity concerned with the relations between the central political institutions in the capital city and those interests, communities, political organizations and governmental bodies outside of the central institutional complex, but within the accepted boundaries of the state, which possess, or are commonly perceived to possess, a significant geographical or local/regional character (p. 6).

Vandergeest and Peluso make a related point about how the political State is based on 'abstract space' (Tuan; 1977), and how land is carved up into "discrete units" of abstract linear space dimensions (e.g., degrees of latitude and longitude) and scientifically measured. This is also known as the Torrens system of land titling, which Siam adopted via its 1901 Land Code. "This made State-guaranteed land rights contingent on a cadastral survey and registration (Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 20).

> Abstract space is homogeneous in that it is represented as uniform within any given territory; any unit can be compared and rendered equivalent to another unit by spatial categories. The construction of such abstract, comparable grids permits the location or nesting of an area in a larger abstract space. The territory of a national park is nested in national territory, which is nested in a global territorial grid (Anderson; 1991).

Considering development theory in-terms of how science and technology is the basis of 'modernity,' what this idea of 'abstract space' means in-terms of global(ized) scales and levels is that placing land (and therefore people) within a local, regional, national, and global grid network serves a particular purpose. … This constructed socio-political 'territory' becomes recognized by, and therefore integrated into, the capitalist global market structure by and through which is operating via this same scientific classification and measuring system.

In other words, in order for a country's socio-political (and hence market) system to function amid a (globalized) territory outside of its home borders, then 'foreign' systems must be

concocted to facilitate these transactions. This structure is programmed and justified by "the need to make claims on territory to protect access to people and income from taxes and natural resources, in a world in which only territorial claims were recognized as legitimate" (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995; 7). This notion potentially justifies why the flag of Siam was changed in 1917, after King Rama VI entered into WWI as an ally of Britain and France.

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) illustrate further that this territorialized system composed of boxed units is then filled with census and geological (commodities) classification data (e.g., forests, minerals, water, soils, etc.). "Maps do more than represent reality; they are instruments by which the State agencies draw boundaries, create territories, and make claims enforced by their courts of law" (Harley). Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) refer to this territorialization phenomenon as a form of "market liberalism" because people most often don't have access to these State created maps. Moreover, people do not actually experience 'abstract space' but rather "the histories of their interactions with the land" (p. 6).

Vandergeest and Peluso express that rulers territorialized State power to achieve a variety of goals: 1) make claims on territory to protect access to people and income from taxes and natural resources; 2) acquire a regular money income necessary to finance permanent militaries (among other reasons); 3) fund modern territorial bureaucracies composed of officials who demand regular salaries. For those European colonies, where the majority of the population was engaged in agrarian livelihoods, this was accomplished via a head tax, and was often disastrous for the peasantry population (Scott; 1976).

> Although the initial impetus behind territorialization was the need to make territorial claims, protect resources, and collect taxes, most States later employed territorial administration to organize surveillance, gather information about the population, force them to settle down (important among the peasantries of Southeast Asia), and organize close control over people's everyday activities (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: 7).

The authors remind us that States have had to rely on open coercion (i.e., political pressure, or military-led violence) against rural residents to implement territorial control. The State's territorialization of resource control mobilizes "the means of coercive enforcement inside national boundaries as well as against foreign intruders…"

> In many parts of the world, the state is far from achieving a monopoly on the internal use of physical coercion. However, more powerful states and international non-state groups often supply military hardware to help poorer or strategically important states to repress

> anti-state insurgency, eliminate the cultivation of illegal drug crops, and protect natural resources (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: 6).

I can confirm with my fieldwork (in Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar) that this "coercive enforcement" is a fairly common occurrence, much more than what is reported. What I mean here is about rousting rural people from their forest-bound homes under the justification of 'forest management' and 'national security.' This will become especially relevant later when I articulate how Siam was carved up territorially, especially starting with the 1855 Bowring Treaty and later by internal development initiatives such as Thailand's Royal Project.

We can capstone this theoretical and foundation section about territorialization by further articulating Vandergeest and Peluso's sentiments that while territorialization was a process spanning centuries in Europe and North America, this is not the case for Southeast Asia and its interfacing with rapidly growing "global processes." The evolving dominance of globalized capitalism resulted in "a territorial state consolidation" whereby both colonial and non-colonial state agencies in Southeast Asia began to represent and express territorial state sovereignty (9).

> Most pre-colonial states in Southeast Asia would fail to qualify as states in the Weberian sense on the grounds of lack of territorial integrity. The modern concept of national boundaries did not exist in Southeast Asia until the nineteenth century. Southeast Asians were not much concerned with the demarcation of frontiers. It is only quite recently that the rulers of the traditionally dominant societies have sought to establish a modern sense of allegiance to the notion of a nation-state identity, with its concomitant demand of loyalty from all citizens living within sharply defined national boundaries (Steinberg; 1987: 5).

Siam/Thailand's stages of externally-led internal takeover

The territorialization of Siam/Thailand was accomplished in three stages:

1) The creation and mapping of land boundaries. All "unoccupied land" within the national boundaries became State "forest;" this allowed cultivators (i.e. commercial) to classify land within these forests by means of mere possession and use. … I suppose this setup channels by which the British could remove the teakwood, for example, that this country actually wanted from this world area (i.e. for shipbuilding as well as for selling on the global market);

2) "Reserve" and "permanent forests" were concocted. The allocation of land rights to so-called private actors was granted. This was initiated in the 1930s and "accelerated" after 1964, which as you will see below is peculiarly timed with both the construction of the Thai political

State (i.e. a national culture), and later the enacting of the Royal Thai (development) Project. This redefined what is "forest" and created large areas legally off-limits (at least temporarily) to occupation and cultivation;

3) Lastly came 'functional territorialization,' such as the designation of specific resource (including land) uses by both state and "private" actors according to territorial criteria. This involved the mapping/remapping of forest areas and other land according to scientific criteria such as soil type, slope, and vegetation, which have become the basis for laws prohibiting and prescribing specific activities in these areas. (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995)

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During the colonization era in Se-Asia — except for (French colonized) Vietnam, where local powers controlled both land and people — the administrations in most Southeast Asian areas were based on *control of labor, not land* (Steinberg et al., *In Search*). Moreover, Siam (what is now considered Thailand) was strewn with principalities (*muang*), ruled by landlords or minor-Monarchs who were allegiant to the Bangkok-center king, sometimes as well to kings in Cambodia or Burma. Populations claimed by these various rulers were registered with Bangkok as individuals or large extended households.

Important to note is that Bangkok dwelling ruling monarchs and nobles had fairly low involvement with the socio-political affairs transpiring amid these serf-controlled *muangs*. This is with the exceptions of requiring tax payments for labor and goods, the receiving of reverent tribute and periodic ritual, and displays of blood in the form of conscripted fighters (Steinberg et al., *In Search*). These phenomena depended upon proximity. Human labor was also controlled by slavery (Reid; 1987: 15-16). "Women were not required to register with a master, but they could be enslaved. People were not registered and not obligated to provide labor or tax-in-kind to the nobility. "The exceptions in the nineteenth century included upland "hill-tribe people and many recent Chinese immigrants" (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995; 10). The 1805 Law of Three Seals articulates in-detail these legal codes related with land people and land related property rights.

The constructing of a westernized Siam: when and how? … A series of treaties

I wish to avoid becoming too fully entangled in the complex ball of factual yarn that comprises the labyrinth of socio-political history of what is now Thailand (and the Se-Asia region). Let us remain focused on how Siam/Thailand and the region was compromised by Western forces

in a way that affects people even nowadays; this way we establish further a general yet relevant reference point framework for illustration.

The Burney Treaty was signed June 20, 1826, between *an agent of the British East India Company* and Siam's King Rama III. This agreement positioned Siam at that time as an ally of Britain against the Kingdom of Ava (a.k.a. Burma), with which Siam was at war. I maintain that this brief mentioning is enough to provide some balance-insight into both Siam's internal interests in becoming involved with Britain (even if Siam was being threatened) and potentially Britain's negotiations chip used in lieu of direct military force (i.e., 'gunboat diplomacy'). A point is that the Burney Treaty did not adequately address commerce, which was later covered via the Bowring Treaty (Source: wikivisually.com/wiki/Burney_Treaty).

Another foundational Treaty that is perhaps relevant here is the Siamese–American Treaty of Amity and Commerce, also known as the Roberts Treaty of 1833. This was the first treaty between the United States and an Asian nation (Source: National Archives blog: *Pieces of History*; Sep. 28, 2013). This Treaty established peaceful and friendly inter-country relations and commerce that was meant to last forever, and may have granted Americans more favorable trade partner terms than the British secured with the Burney Treaty of 1826.

Regardless of details, this somewhat vaguely illustrates the complex relations happening both within Siam as well as internationally. According to a May 2012 publication by the Thai Bureau of Public Affairs, "The treaty is no longer in force, having been replaced starting in 1921 by a series of subsequent treaties, but the successor treaty signed in 1966 remains in force."

A major turning point: The Bowring Treaty

Perhaps a most significant policy that forever transformed the land and lives of people living in Siam/Thailand is that of the Bowring Treaty. This Treaty was signed by five Siamese plenipotentiaries (i.e., a diplomat, which is vested with the full power of independent action on behalf of his or her government, typically in a foreign country) and by Sir John Bowring — an English political economist, who perhaps most notably was the Governor of Hong Kong (1854-1859).

> The changes at the turn of the century in [Siam] were…made in the context of economic pressures set off in part by the Bowring Treaty with the British in 1855. The Bowring Treaty *was signed under military threat, particularly demonstrations of British military might in the attack on China over trade issues*. Treaties with the other *imperialist* states followed on the model of the Bowring Treaty. These opened up internal markets by making most monopolies illegal, and by limiting import and export duties and internal taxation.

> External trade increased, with rice from the Central Plains quickly becoming the major export although teak and tin were also significant (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: 15).

Barton and Bennett (2010: 27) add to this story:

> Nineteenth-century Europeans visiting Southeast and South Asia eulogised teak trees (Tectona grandis) for their value and beauty. Diplomatic diaries, travel memoirs, literary descriptions and geography books for children described the teak as a universal sovereign of the sylvan world, the regal "lord" of the forests. With dwindling supplies of oak in Britain, British elites saw teak as a vital component of the country's global naval supremacy in the nineteenth century. The fear of a dwindling supply of teak during the late eighteenth to the mid nineteenth centuries encouraged the creation of forestry departments and laws in British India that attempted to preserve the finite amount of teak in the sub-continent. Yet the finite ecologies of India and Burma could not supply all the teak required to fuel expanding demand. Britain would have to look beyond its formal empire in Asia to find more teak.

According to a National Archives of Singapore (2004) document called, "Ode to Friendship, Celebrating Singapore-Thailand Relations: Introduction:"

> The Bowring Treaty ensured that foreign powers would not intervene in Siam's internal affairs, and allowed for Siam to remain independent. The Bowring Treaty is now credited with having led to the economic development of Bangkok, as it created a framework in which multilateral trade could operate freely in Southeast Asia, notably between China, Singapore, and Siam.

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) mention that commercialization and (an arguably forced) dependence on foreign markets

> put pressure on the Bangkok administration to increase its money income to pay for the infrastructure (e.g., railways, irrigation) needed to compete with exports from nearby colonies as well as military expenditures…They replaced their own reliance on serf-derived income as well as slave labor by promoting the immigration of wage laborers from China, whom they hired for state projects and exploited through gambling and opium monopolies (15).

Laohachaiboon and Takeda (2007; 3):

> In Siam, conflicts over teak logging were not dissimilar to those in Burma during the mid-1880s. The result of the Bowring Treaty in 1855, *a British treaty that forced Siam to open up to Western colonialism*, was that the country became more vulnerable to the extraction of its raw materials, including teak timber. Under the provisions of the Bowring Treaty, the Siamese government lost the right to stipulate its import and export duties, and was forced to concede extraterritorial rights to the British (Lysa 2004, 328).
> In the 1880s, after teak forests in British Burma had declined, Europeans began

> scrambling for teak forest concessions, *especially in Chiang Mai and other areas in northern Thailand*, then known as "Western Laos" or the "Siamese Shan States" (Brailey 1999, 514).

Laohachaiboon and Takeda (2007; 7-8) continue:

> By 1887, the sphere of influence of the British and French colonial empires had expanded to the point that confrontations were likely at the geopolitical margins. Siam was diplomatically forced by the British to function as a buffer between the French colonies to the east and the British ones to the west, but Siam was reluctant to cede the east of the Mekong River.
>
> Partly at the suggestion of the British, the Siamese government eventually acquiesced to the French ultimatum that Siam not only cede to France the left bank of the Mekong River, including the greater part of Luang Prabang and the islands in the river, but also compensate the French for losses incurred.
>
> On 15 January 1896, the rivalry between the British and the French for Siam was cordially settled through the Anglo-French Declaration. This pact also endorsed the independence of Siam…As stipulated in the declaration, both Britain and France would observe a mutually agreed limit on the extent to which they could trespass on Siamese territory, and would pledge not to enter into any agreement with any third power to intervene in this area (Jeshurun 1970, 116).

This said, regardless if on-paper the Bowring Treaty ensured that foreign powers would not intervene in Siam's internal affairs, and supposedly allowed for Siam to remain independent, this Treaty, while liberalizing trade rules and regulations by creating a new system of imports and exports, allowed the British to:

- Embark freely upon foreign trade in all seaports and within four miles from Bangkok's city walls. This was commercial activity that was either prohibited or was previously subject to heavy royal taxes;
- Enjoy the abolishment of measurement duties and fixed import and export duties;
- Reside permanently in Bangkok and establish a British consulate there — *with full extraterritorial powers*. British subjects were under consular jurisdiction. Thus, for the first time, Siam granted extraterritoriality to foreign aliens;
- Allow Englishmen to own land in Siam, with merchants enjoying the right to buy and sell directly with individual Siamese without any interference.

(Source: Encyclopedia Britannica; "Siam")

By all means of definition (revealed in the beginning of this thesis chapter), does this not fit the criteria for colonization/imperialization?

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 3) inform that this territorialization phenomenon transpired in stages: (1) The territorialization of Siam's civil administration during the colonization/imperialization period; (2) Attempts by the Thai State to take over the administration of rights to land through mandatory registration of land titles based on surveys; (3) State attempts to control the use of major portions of national territory by demarcating it and defining it as "forest." The State agency given jurisdiction over this territory (i.e., Thai Forest Department) also claimed exclusive rights to allocate and enforce use rights (i.e., logging, grazing, or mining rights) while setting conditions and refraining from allocating the right to sell the land.

1. Siam's territorialization under the Burney Treaty (i.e., a significant injection of the Western socio-political model) was initiated during the 1890s and involved a massive program that enabled Bangkok to territorialize and centralize government administrations throughout the national territory.

It is noteworthy that during the time of the Bowring Treaty land (and communities) located within a specified periphery of Bangkok were considered the Monarch's territory. Areas (and people) existing beyond this realm of direct control were dictated by feudal minor Monarchs and landowners. Taxes were paid accordingly, both to Bangkok and to the local overlords. The perspective, and priority, of the Monarchy *at that time was to have control of the people and not control of the land*. People were controlled by the land and visa-versa, through the taxation system. Therefore, there was no land coding; regulation of land was likewise socially created and enforced. People at-large, as serfs or as slaves, were largely subject to the desires and the demands of the Monarchs and landlords. Power-players located on the Kingdom's peripheries resisted the country's central Monarchy control (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995).

> The government system throughout the country was reorganized by functional specialization. This transformed layers of nobles and local lords, among the others, into salaried officials, which through economics placed prior unexperienced power unto their lives. In other words, they became employees, with Bangkok as the boss. Of course there was resistance, but this was quelled by Bangkok's newly bolstered and coercive [British backed] administrative powers.
>
> The lords of the principalities were displaced by provincial governors who took over local administration. Provinces were subdivided on the basis of territory into districts,

> and one of the local nobility was transformed into a district officer. Schools were set up in Bangkok and major principalities for training the children of the nobility to become salaried government officials, who during their careers were rotated through a series of positions in different provinces so as to minimize the development of local loyalties. All indirect taxes, labor obligations, and tax farms were eliminated or replaced by a direct poll tax collected throughout the territory now claimed by Bangkok. (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: 15-16).

This restructuring further involved serf masters being turned into, or replaced by, village heads and sub-district chiefs (*kamnan*). The newly formed Bangkok-centred Ministry of Interior with top-down control directed them accordingly.

This, is essentially how the territorialization of people was created. The (elected) *kamnan* were ordered to formulate villages and sub-districts (*tambons*). Peasants formerly operating as serfs attached to a landlord master became "villagers" under jurisdiction of the *kamnan* (also known as the "village headman"). Villages are comprised of houses (i.e., cells). The people living in a house-cell became a "household" and therefore became the measuring unit of the village cell. This cell was filled with mandated information about the village address as well as about these households including gender, age, marriages, births, and deaths. The now-registered "village" hence became the territorial box that fit inside of the regional box. Everyone, formerly off the grid for the most part, became a measured unit of and by the central government — a State subject.

"All modern states have reorganized local administrations on a territorial basis characterized by spatial boundaries, territorial definitions of communities, and territorial administrative hierarchies (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: 18). These authors add that a century of related land codes in Siam/Thailand has been "aimed toward private property as the inevitable endpoint for modern development" (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: 32).

> This territorial village and household registration was the means by which persons were fixed in the national territory where they can now be located, identified, counted characterized, categorized, and mapped (Foucault; *Discipline and Punish)*. When the system was first implemented, the Ministry of Interior (of Siam) used it to collect the poll tax and to mobilize people for the military and police draft, which was slowly implemented region by region after 1905. Now they use it to collect information through censuses and surveys, to allot land rights, and administer development projects (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: 17)

Another significant element of Siam/Thailand's territorialization under the Burney Treaty was initiated in 1896. Essentially, all land that was not comprised by a "village" was deemed

"unoccupied" by the State and placed under the jurisdiction of the also newly formed Royal Forestry Department. These 'unoccupied' areas became "forest." While the Ministry of Interior (later to become the Department of Agriculture) and the related registration of villages and households was the means to territorialize people, this Forestry Department was (and remains) the administrative means by which the land under these newly formed "communities" became territorialized (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995).

In-brief, Siam's newly defined "forests" quickly became under heavy-handed control of this newly established forestry and national parks institution. It is notable that this establishment was led by a forester (initially by H.A. Slade, from India; who was followed by Englishman, W. F. Lloyd, until 1923). Through this, Siam was coerced to sell its natural resource assets (e.g., teakwood) into the global capitalist market stream (which Siam was not part) that was essentially setup by the British (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995).

> The immediate purpose was to take over income generated by local lords from teak concessions to the British, and to head off a possible British takeover of the areas with teak forests. Regardless of the purpose, the most important aspect is that at Slade's recommendation, the control of all forest lands was transferred from local lords to the Forestry Department…
>
> This new "forest" included most of the land area in Siam, probably about 75 percent at this time. A variety of acts created a legal framework for the Forestry Department's claims to forests, the most important of which were the Forest Preservation Act of 1897 and the Forest Conservation Law of 1913. Under the latter law, the Forestry Department could declare any forest product to be "reserved." Those who wanted to take reserved forest products had to obtain permits, pay fees, and follow a series of very specific regulations on how the product was to be cut, tapped, or whatever. Local people could still legally use forest resources for domestic needs (Vandergeest and Peluso, 25)

Essentially, this allowed concessions companies, such as those from Britain, to legally possess and use this land (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995). This also set the foundation for related social and cultural polices that remain in effect today.

The Bowring Treaty — via executing an "an organized intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement" (Pieterse, 2001, 3) — essentially at the ethnocidal expense of anything sacred to Siam's socio-fabric, dissolved the rules and created new ones that of course were in the best interests of the Colonial powers. "In terms of the balance of power, the world of colonialism involved multipolar competition among the western powers, that is, among countries that shared the same civilizational framework" (Pieterse; 2010:p. 51).

3.1.2 Construction of the "Thai" Political State: 'Development' from Within

The territorialization of Siam/Thailand transpired in two stages: 1) externally forced colonization/imperialization, as covered in this chapter's section 2.1.1, and 2) domestically directed national (and rural) 'development.'

The constructing of the Thai (socio-political) State surfaced in 1932, when a military coup overthrew and replaced the absolute monarchy system with that of a 'constitutional monarchy.' "Thailand" was born, comprised of Western socio-political structured DNA. The country was on its way to becoming "developed" and later "modernized."

As prior mentioned, the word "Thai" means "free man," which perhaps relevant to Siam's newly territorialized landscape, without serfs and slaves, and arguably a cultural (Christianity) values based enactment that the British (and French) preferred. This new State required a national identity. Therefore, a social policy was enacted in Thailand that was swept thoroughly over the people's minds and linked ways of life.

Arguably, there essentially three primary elements of a 'culture:' food, language, and dress. If these elements are drastically altered (or eliminated) it can perhaps also be said that a culture has collapsed, forming something new (i.e., societal panarchy).

This said, after the Thai State was created, a cultural policy called "Thaification," or "Thai-ization" was enacted. This involved twelve culture mandates (i.e., state decrees) — *rathniyom*; literally means "state fashion" or "state customs' — issued by the new government and promoted between 1939 and 1942. This initiative was aimed toward creating a uniform and 'civilized' Thai culture at the time when the country was allied with Western Axis powers via entering World War II. 'Thaification' remains in effect today.

These mandates — issued with the new creation of a supposedly "free" Thailand — forced a newly constructed "Thai" society to look, speak, and eat differently. These directives completely altered the country's socio-fabric — especially for the highland "indigenous" ethnic groups who for the most, at least before 1939, were living outside the State's heavy hand.

> This was [and remains] essentially the process by which people of different cultural and ethnic origins living in what became Thailand were systematically assimilated into the dominant culture of Thailand, or more precisely, to the culture of the Central Thais (i.e., Bangkok, the point where the global market system could tap in). Thaification was a step in the creation in the Twentieth Century of the Thai nation state where 'Thai people' occupy a dominant position, away from the historically multicultural kingdom of Siam. A related term, "Thainess," is held to describe a characteristic that persons and things

> possess when they are Thai. Thaification is the process by which groups at the fringe of the Thai State become (or are made) more similar to the Central Thai heartland. To an extent this a natural result of these groups being part of a modern State in which central Thais occupy a dominant geographical, economic, and cultural position, but it has also been actively encouraged by the Thai government. (Thailand Education System and Policy Handbook; 2014: 43).

The Thailand Education System and Policy Handbook (2014) further reveals that central Thai language became the standard for media and business. "The related values became the national values. Central Thai's culture's being the culture of wealth and status made it hugely attractive to those on the end economically and socially" (43).

> A nation which frees itself from foreign rule will be only culturally free if ... it recaptures the commanding heights of its own culture, which receives sustenance from the living reality of its environment and equally rejects the harmful influences which any kind of subjection to foreign cultures involves. Thus one sees that if imperialist domination necessarily practices cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture. (Miller 1990: 46)

The "Thai" culture mandates

(This is a Thai poster from the cultural mandate era demonstrating prohibited dress on the left and proper dress on the right. Source: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thai_cultural_mandates.)

While I for the sake of writing space will refrain from listing these mandates' details, here is a framework:

1) People are to be called "Thai;" 2) all interactions with foreigners (personal or business) must never in any way endanger the country; 3) can no longer use names such as "northern Thais, southern Thais, or Muslim Thais;" 4) the national anthem will be honored at all times, and anyone who is "not paying proper respect" should be "admonished;" 5) all produces such as food, clothing, for agriculture, industry, etc. should "Thai products; 6) the national anthem will be comprised only of lyrics submitted by the army; 7) every Thai person should help build the nation, and anyone without a career is "unhelpful to the nation;" 8) For the national anthem, the original song including the word "Siam" will be replaced by the word Thai;' 9) Thai people must "extol (praise), honour, and respect the Thai language," and all "Thai people have the same Thai blood and speak the same language;" 10) This mandate mandates a change of dress; 11) Thai people should divide their time between work, personal, and for rest or sleeping;" this mandate tells people how many meals they should eat per day (no more than four) and how many hours of sleep to get; they should never complain about their jobs, and free time at night should be used to finish their work; days off should be spent listening to attending religious services; and 12) people should always protect children, the elderly, and the handicapped.

I will share here from my experience of living in Thailand that the above mandates — this socio-political construction of the Thai State, particularly with a revered King at the helm — remains a powerfully and thoroughly successful social and cultural policies program. Likewise, large photographs of the King (sometimes with the Queen) are placed at intersections located in both urban and rural areas, as a constant reminder.

Nearly every household and business throughout Thailand has a reverent image of King Rama IX (or other Monarch, especially King Rama V) pinned to the wall. When the image of the King is placed on the wall of a home or business it must to be placed in the highest position spatially, even above a Buddhist shrine and related images. This alone reveals the psychological programming involved. The King is (must be) revered in even higher regard than someone's God.

Particularly true of the permeating power that these mandates harness is that of the Thai National Anthem, also known in Thailand as "the King's song." Considering the history articulated above regarding the Bangkok centered and British-led initial territorialization of Siam's socio-political system, I have observed people in the Thai North as being less obedient to this socio-

political directive than, for example, in Bangkok. Still, it is quite a perplexing sight to observe (and personally experience) when everyone around you transitions suddenly from being animated by daily life to the stopping of whatever he or she is doing in order to heed the Song. Regardless of location — and whether at the beginning of the school or work day or at home — one is constantly reminded, *even if you forgot for a mere moment, that there surely is a parenting force that is really actually the nation-State show.*

Pieterse (2001) addresses 'national culture.' He says that culture as "an arena of struggle" has "instrumental overtones" in the sense that it is used as a tool for nation building. What is meant by this 'arena of struggle' is that in Western 'developed' countries, for example, nation building involved "intense strife" as Pieterse put it. This is largely because of the processes required for intervening in the affairs of existing cultures in order to create a division of labor. National identity is hence a matter of 'cultural' struggle because it is conducted along lines of language, religion, region, etc. … *"The politics of nation building involves the marginalization of aliens, suppression of minorities, and of indigenous peoples — a process that is internal colonialism"* (p. 63)

> Nationalism, then, is a step towards cosmopolitanism (cf. Cheah 1998). Fanon, likewise, devoted a chapter to 'national culture' in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967). This outlines three phases in the cultural development of colonized peoples: (1) assimilation of the nation's culture to that of of colonizer; (2) recollection of original cultural resources, but removed from the masses; and (3) combat, revolution and the formation of a national culture in which the artist 'rejoins the people' (Pieterse (2010: 65)

Pieterse (2001) further reveals that what is often required, particularly true for 'rural development' initiatives is that there must be a root, central, and societally accepted philosophy that encompasses people's belief systems and a person bestowed with power who personifies this (e.g. a King). In northern Thailand, for example, it is both an agricultural as well as Buddhist "middle-way" lifestyle.

Pieterse (2010) says there are several strands in this discourse: identifying cultural identity with the nation; subsuming culture under a political agenda; and nominating politicians as custodians of culture. Culture is denied autonomy and encapsulated in the political discourse of 'anti-colonialism equals nationalism" (pp. 65-66).

Pieterse (2010) references 'dependency theory' and how the the role of the state in this perspective is to facilitate world market access into society.

> The state in the periphery has the function again to remove economically as far as possible the political border between the world market and the national economic area that this same state brings into existence' (Tilman Evers, quoted in Frank 1981: 234). Thus, in effect, the interests of the metropolitan bourgeoisie are viewed as being preponderant over indigenous interests (p. 26)

> Neo-Marxism, dependency theory, and world-system theory follow the external model: capitalism flows in, travels from the centre to the periphery, 'external areas' are incorporated into the world system (p. 46).

This said, 'Thaification' — at least for rural ethnic groups such as those included in this thesis study, while with purposes of nation-building and creating a unified public body — was, in my opinion, also an ethnocide Program, perpetuated by these national and sub-national policies.

This was conducted in four strands: 1) Policies were targeted at fringe groups. An example is Thailand's 1964 Accelerated Rural Development Programme; 2) National policies that disproportionately affected the fringe groups. This includes mandating Thai language instruction. This did not impact central Thais so much as it did these socially marginalized folks, such as the ethnic communities living in the peripheral (highland) areas; 3) Policies promoting Thai nationalism, particularly related with the promotion of *Bhumibol Adulyadej* (Rama IX, also known as "King *Bhumibol* the Great") as the national figurehead. As part of Thaification, the twice-daily trumpeting of the national anthem has become a national ritual. This ritualized nationalism, as with the Bowring Treaty's restructuring of Siam/Thailand's socio-political system, discouraged loyalties to anyone other than the King; and 4) Increasing school attendance, even by proscription (i.e., the action of forbidding something; banning) the usage of any minority languages in these schools.

> The main subjects of Thaification have been the ethnic groups on the edges of the Thai state, geographically and culturally: The Lao in *Isa*, *the hill-tribes of the north and west*, and the Muslim minority in the south. There has also been a Thaification of the immigrant Chinese and Indian populations. However, Thaification has been, to a considerable extent, a byproduct of the nationalist policies consistently followed by the Thai State over the Twentieth Century. The promotion of Thai nationalism in the country as a whole took the form of reinforcing the Thai identity in the heartlands, *while creating a Thai identify on the fringes* (Thailand Education System and Policy Handbook; 2014: 43).

More land (and people) territorialization

After the creation of the Thai State (and cultivation of national culture) came the Protection and Reservation of Forests Act of 1938, which provided for the demarcation of "reserved" and "protected" forests.

> The first category, "protected" forests, prohibited clearing and burning; other uses were permitted as in the past. In the "reserved forests" local inhabitants were also forbidden to graze animals, damage the forest in any manner, and they needed to apply for permits to extract legally any forest product, including non-reserved products such as all animal products, soil, rock, gravel, oils, and so on (Vandergeest and Peluso, 26).

While World War II certainly brought with it a plethora of changes within Thailand's borders, regarding territorialization, land demarcation proceeded slowly until the mid-1960s, due to elaborate procedures (now) required for local land consultation and related veto powers. These were new complications resulting from the 1930s constructed Thai government system (Vandergeest, 1995).

> Although the 1954 Land Code took away [people's] right to convert forest without permission from the government, the slow demarcation meant that most forests were in practice negatively defined as unoccupied land until the 1960s. The territorial boundaries of the forest remained ambiguous, changing, and unenforceable. The early 1960s marked an acceleration of the territorial strategies initiated in the 1930, and legally altered the local-central power nexus. A series of new laws were enacted (e.g., The 1960 Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act, the 1961 National Park Act, and the 1964 National Forest Reserve Act) that committed the government to maintaining forty percent national land area in reserved forests, and to demarcating the reserve forests rapidly (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: 409).

While the creation of 'reserve' and 'permanent' forests was initiated in the 1930s, it was stepped-up after 1964 (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995). For example, the first national park, *Khao Yin*, was created in 1961. This came after the ratification of the National Park Act, under His Majesty King *Bhumibol Adulyadej* (Rama IX).

> According to a "Transitory Provision" in this National Park Act, section 30:
> A concession and logging license or a license is for collecting forest products under the law on forest, a license to live in, or the utilization of, land in restricted or reserved forest under the law on forest protection and conservation, a slaughter license, lease and permission under the law on mineral resources, and a concession under the Land Code granted to any person before an effective date of the Royal Decree enacted under Section 6 shall be in effect throughout a period of such concession,
> slaughter license, lease and permission.

I mention this because these "national park" lands were set aside in such way that did not allow for logging and other Colonial-led resource extraction, without permission. However, this arguably capacitated future socio-publically charged activities relating with both the Thai Royal Forestry and particularly the Thai Royal Project (founded in 1969, also described briefly later in this article). I am unsure at this time whether this "reserved" territory is relevant to the Thai Crown Property Act of 1936. This Act, which came after and as a result of Siam's colonization/imperialization, addresses land that is the "King's private property."

According to Section 4 of the Act:

> This is property that belonged to the King before ascending to the throne, property conferred on the King by the State or property acquired by the King by any means and at any time other than property acquired on account of Kingship, including any fruit accrued therefrom.

This Act also addresses "public property," which means "property of the King which is used exclusively for the benefit of the State (e.g. the palace); it also defines "Crown property," which is "property of the King other than the King's private property and public property."

I suspect, that while rousting out the details related with this would require considerable effort, this is also linked with Siam's negotiations with Britain during this country's colonization/imperialization related encroachment.

The Royal Project: 'development' from within

Next to the Bowring Treaty, arguably the most significant land and people Program that transformed Thailand is that of the Royal Project. This rural development policy was (at least formally) initiated in 1969, by King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX; reigning from 1946-2016). The Royal Project Foundation is listed as a Thai non-profit organization that is based in northern Thailand, with initiatives that involve Thailand's most far-flung areas (i.e., away from the Bangkok government center).

This Project continues to serve the explicit purposes of 'improving the lives of hill tribe people' — meaning, indigenous ethnic groups prior living fairly autonomously amid the mountainous areas — while offering plant and animal stocks such as lychee, plum, chickens and other agricultural products. In addition to providing agriculture related training and a market for agricultural products, this Project's purpose is to prevent the destruction of natural resources, which include forest and water resources, and to increase prevalence of alternative agriculture. In-terms of the global market, this is also (and perhaps mainly) for the benefit of Thailand's economy.

> The new approach was what we call the third stage of territorialization of forest regulation — functional territorialization. Functional territorialization means controlling what people do according to detailed land-classification criteria. This approach was initiated during early 1960s with legislation for creating Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks. By 1985, nine percent of national territory was in one of these two categories, and demarcation has continued since (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: 29).

Opium was being used by the British around the time of the Bowring Treaty as a means of suppressing China (i.e., Opium War). Later, opium and these rural peoples (many originally from China and Myanmar) were being utilized by the China Army during the China War (1945-1949) as a means for funding war efforts. Likewise, another primary goal of the Royal Project was to expunge opium cultivation that was prominent amid upland rural areas.

Therefore, it was in the interest of the Thai government, as well as international forces who were fighting the perpetuation of communism in the area (e.g., Britain and the USA) to now engage these rural peoples more systematically. Until then, these communities were pretty much being left alone, or they at least had not yet become fully part of the terriorialization scheme initiated by the Bowring Treaty. This surely changed with the Royal Project.

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) say that "Although the [Thailand] forest had been defined territorially since the administrative changes [i.e., Bowring Treay], it was the demarcation of the forest through mapping that shifted state regulation of forest use to a territorial form of control" (p. 27). The authors say that this occupation had many purposes.

> They included the enclosure of many prior occupants into the forest by demarcation, policies encouraging upland settlement and agriculture, and (probably most important) logging concessions. Other government agencies also promoted the occupation of reserved forests. Those government agencies more concerned with the administration of people than natural resources believed that the government could more effectively control people and territory when they were settled and organized into villages (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995: 27).

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) say that "the early 1960s marked an acceleration of the territorial strategies initiated in the 1930s, and legally altered the local-central power nexus" (26). This committed the government to 40 percent of national land area to become "reserved" forest and to rapidly demarcate the remaining.

> The process took place in two stages. First, in 1961 "permanent forests" were mapped by officials in Bangkok using military maps. Then, the National Reserve Forest Law of 1964 initiated the demarcation of forest land through on-the-ground checks. Since for some purposes the definition of reserve forest did not supersede that of permanent

> forest, there are in effect now two separate territorial definitions of the forest. Local forestry officials have maps of both, and the double definition adds to a general confusion about boundaries and about how to implement various policies (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: reference 125 in their article's bibliography).

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) reveal that the Thai Forestry Department ramped up its surveillance of agricultural areas not suitable for commercial agriculture, such as areas (and people) amid the highland national parks; included wildlife sanctuaries and "sensitive watershed areas." Keep in-mind that this is where the indigenous ethnic groups reside. The Thai government was attempting to contain their forest cultivation within 2.4 ha cells and to regulate cultivation practices within these cells. The government, "funded by a World Bank loan, which in effect aided the government in this latest phase of internal territorialization...setup programs for moving people out of these areas, with the help of the military, which were only partially implemented due to resistance by peasants, NGOs, and academics" (30).

> In the context of the way that some theorists believe that increased global integration is weakening the capacity of national states, we should note that direct military aid from foreign sources has been central to the increased capacity of the Forestry Department to enforce territorial controls. Beginning in the early 1950s, the Thai military was armed and trained by the United States as a bastion against Indochinese communism. The United States CIA also set up a paramilitary police unit, the Border Patrol Police, as a non-military counter insurgency force, By the middle 1980s, however, communism could no longer be presented as a threat. Instead, a series of environmental threats has allowed the military and para-military police to frame forest protection as a national security issues.
>
> As technical capacity of the government was increased by foreign assistance, government agencies classified land throughout the kingdom according to suitability for agriculture during the 1960s and 1970s. During the early 1980s, the government also developed a watershed classification system, which it used to map the entire country. Beginning in the early 1980s, the forestry department gave out limited land rights in the form of a so-called STK certificate in areas classified suitable for agriculture. In 1985, a new National Forest Policy directed the Forestry Department to reclassify the forest reserves into conservation forest and economic forest (Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 30).

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) say there were (and remain) many reasons for this occupation; however, the primary rationale is for people's "enclosure into the forest demarcation policies" as well as for encouraging (or forcing, as is generally the case) upland settlement and agriculture (27). While the Ministry of Interior was concerned (and purposed with) the administration of people (i.e., through land, village, and people registration), the Thai Forestry

Department "by territorializing its jurisdiction, had claimed ownership of reserve forest territory on behalf of the State, and remain the sole agency that could legally allocate land rights in these areas" (Vandergeest and Peluso; 1995: 28).

This popular Royal Project 'development' phenomenon was and continues happening throughout northern Thailand's highland indigenous ethnic communities. Internationally, this Project was essentially helping with the West-led 'drug war,' expunging the region's opium production and market (or perhaps moving it to another location).

Thailand domestically, the "hill tribe people" were (and in some ways still are) believed by the Thai national culture to be opium growing 'destroyers of the forest.' Therefore, Rama IX's royal development program was (and continues) to be heralded as the savior of Thailand's beloved forest areas beloved agrarian historical background. The Royal Project in these regards is arguably also the means for the country's social homogenization into a State of 'Thainess.'

While these efforts may seem well-intended, Hirsch (1989: 36) says that "Recent history of Thai State-village relations have been marked by a shift from large-scale rural neglect in a context of rapid urban-dominated growth to an apparent concern to spread the material fruits of development and involve the rural populace in national affairs by means of an accelerated State-led rural development program [e.g., The Royal Project], particularly under the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1982-6)."

Peripheral areas under central government control

Thus, the indigenous ethnic villages, such as those included in my thesis study, had become placed on to the map per the land mapping System initiated by the Thai Forestry Department in the late 1800s (i.e., by the British). They were going to be fully penned into this global coordination system. By 1985, Thailand's areas mapped as 'reserve forests had reached forty-two percent of the national territory (Hirsch, 1990).

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) share that "this forest mapping allowed the Thai Forestry Department to displace undefined and uncategorized territory and, through mapping and categorization, shift the resources classification to justify more territorial forms of control" (27). For example, "After the 1989 flooding the government imposed a ban on logging, and began to take an increasingly militarized approach to watershed conservation" (30).

> This shift was intended to make control of forest uses easier. But by the 1980s this policy had failed. Instead, the Forestry Department has had to come to terms with millions of

> forest occupants. By the 1980s twenty to thirty percent of all cultivators in Thailand worked land that was mapped as reserve forest (Tongroj, "A Land Policy Study," and Hirsch, *Development Dilemmas*).

It is important to make clear here that the Royal Project and the Thai Royal Forestry Department are not the same, although surely they are connected. This said, I have learned during my field experience in northern Thailand that some villages welcome Royal Project initiatives because villagers utilize the collaborative opportunity as a buffer between them and the often harsh militant actions of the Forestry Department.

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) say that while one government arm (e.g., the Ministry of Interior) is specifically about territorializing people, and the Forestry Department is about natural resource management, the latter is likely to have a much less accommodating view of forest settlers.

> The Forestry Department and military initiated a program that was intended to move millions of people out of areas classified as conservation forest. Relocation was strongly opposed by villagers as well as NGOs and intellectuals, and the result was chaos and open resistance. The program was canceled by a new civilian government shortly after the May 1992 events forced the military out of power. The civilian government that replaced this military government has indicated that it intends to avoid the use of force; however, newspaper reports and case studies indicate that the military, Border Patrol Police, and Provincial Police have continued to augment the enforcement capacity of the Forestry Department and involve themselves in the protection of forests. The overall result is a period of intensified conflict over land rights in Thailand (p.31).

3.1.3 Post-Concessions Central-Power Revolution, or Just Timely Coincidence?

With this two-stage colonization/territorialization and internal 'development' process articulated, it can be said that the frontiers of Siam/Thailand's peripheral territories have largely been mapped, coded, and classified. It has, and the people have, by all means, become 'developed' and under full control of a Monarchy-led pseudo democratic State.

While the Se-Asia region (namely, Siam/Thailand) in the last two hundred years has surely endured a plethora of changes, the modern-day socio-politics in Thailand are in a peculiar state of affairs. With the 2015 passing of King Rama IX, and with the long-time 'development' scheme that he personified complete, I hypothesize that Thailand nowadays is, in ways, essentially functioning under a pre-1932 'absolute monarchy' system. This is in relation to waning Western influence per the maturing of 99-year land concessions deals initiated around 1917, when in WWI Siam allied with Axis powers.

On May 20, 2014, the Thai military declared martial law nationwide with the purpose of explicit purpose of stopping politically fueled societal strife that included street violence. I observed while living in Thailand during this time that this staunch military move followed a "yellow shirt" (i.e., pro-Monarchy) buildup of anti Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra (i.e., "red shirt") propaganda connected with some potential corruption schemes.

Thailand's first democratically elected government via coup was eventually forced out. The stated objective of the coup and the newly established National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) was (and remains) to restore order to Thailand and to enact political reforms. I argue that this was not a coup, alike so many that have transpired since Thailand's 1932 conception. This 'coup' is rather a socio-political revolution. This supposed coup also brought with it the junta censoring the broadcasting system in Thailand, suspending the constitution, and detaining members of the government Cabinet.

> On April 6, 2017, a new constitution drafted by the NCPO was promulgated. The transitory provisions of the 2017 constitution state that the NCPO will come to an end when a cabinet established after the first general election under this constitution takes office. But, until then, the NCPO retained its sweeping powers under the 2014 constitution. These provisions also constitutionalize all the actions as well as the announcements and orders of the NCPO.
>
> Since taking over, the NCPO has made full use of martial law to prosecute opponents, ban political activity, and censor the media. More than 1,000 people, including academics, political bloggers, activists and politicians, have been detained or sent for "attitude adjustment" at military installations. There are allegations of torture. Prosecutions under the country's strict *lèse majesté* laws, which protect the monarchy from insult, have risen sharply. In its annual report in January 2015, Human Rights Watch said military rule had sent human rights in Thailand into "a freefall."
>
> (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Council_for_Peace_and_Order.)

It perhaps is an appropriate reminder that on May 26, 2014, beloved King Bhumidol Adulyadej (King Rama IX) endorsed this coup/revolution — formally appointing General Prayut Chan-o-cha, who obviously authorized the coup, to "take charge of public administration…The Royal endorsement was seen as key to legitimizing the coup" (BBC; 2014-05-26).

Article 44: the return to a form of pre-1932 absolute power?

On March 31, 2015, now Thai Prime Minister Prayut announced that he had taken the required step of asking the King's permission to revoke martial law, which had been in-place since the May 2014 coup. Importantly, marshal law was to be replaced with Article 44 of the interim

Constitution. Article 44 authorizes the junta chairman (i.e., Mr. Prayut) to issue "any order to suppress any act that undermines public peace and order or national security, the Monarchy, national economics, or the administration of state affairs, whether that act emerges inside or outside the Kingdom."

> The section has no constraint, no oversight, no checks or balances, and no retribution. It says forthrightly that anything done by the NCPO chief is 'legal, constitutional and conclusive.'" Article 44 essentially means Prayut *is* the law...It needs to be added that the junta leader can also insist on staying on *in absolute power* indefinitely." (Source: The Straits Times; April 4, 2015).

Did this Article 44 policy, at least at that time, revert the country back to an "absolute monarchy" state, only this time with the 'prime minister' as head of State?

It is perhaps also peculiar that on April 6, 2017, the NCPO drafted a new Constitution. Moreover, in September 2017 a new version of Thailand's flag was made official, with the red (i.e., blood spilt for the country) deepened slightly. *Both of these significant (revolution-style) phenomenon transpired one hundred years after the 1917 creation of the first flag* — again, when Siam entered into WWI as an 'ally' of the West.

Whether that series of 1800s arrangements between Siam and western colonial powers such as the United States, France, and Britain was voluntary or forced (or a mixture of both) is a mystery of sorts. What is true is that a 'concession' is 'a grant of land or property especially by a government in return for services or for a particular use; a right to undertake and profit by a specified activity; a lease of a portion of premises for a particular purpose' (Source: Merriam-Webster).

Note that under historic common civil law, a 99-year lease is the longest possible term of a lease of real estate property. It is still heeded as a matter of business practice and wisdom. Relevant to my argument that Thailand was (at least in ways) colonized, this 99-year lease concept is most common under civil law particularly in-terms of territorial concessions. In international law, a concession is a territory within a country that is given by an entity (i.e., an institution, such as a forestry department) other than the State which holds sovereignty over that territory. This is historically related with a colonizing power, or at least demanded by one, in the case of colonial chartered companies (such as the British East India Company). This territory, its resources, is conceded (or even surrendered) by a weaker State to a stronger power.

Something even more peculiarly timed is the June 2018 repealing of of the 1936 Crown Property Act. “The assets previously registered to Thailand’s Crown Property Bureau will now be held ‘in the name of His Majesty,’ the Bureau said on its official website on Saturday, the latest shake-up in royal affairs under King *Maha Vajiralongkorn.*” (Reuters, June 16, 2018).

According to a June 18, 2018 report by CNN.

> The [repealing of the] Crown Property Act, passed in 1936, reorganized the Thai royal family's assets into separate categorizes for royal assets. The shares are worth more than $7 billion, and tied up in millions of shares of two companies - The Siam Cement Public Company and The Siam Commercial Bank Public Company. Repealing the act meant that the Crown's and the King's personal holdings would be placed into a single category to be administered by King *Vajiralongkorn* (Rama X). The move means the assets will also be subject to "the same duties and taxation as would assets belonging to any other citizens," the palace said in a note accompanying the news release. It also said the funds and assets would be managed in a manner that is "transparent and open to scrutiny."

Has this current socio-political situation materialized after a matured 99-year land concession deal? Was the land, or at least the profits from commodification, just returned to the rightful owner(s)? A related question I still have is whether the “reserved forests” territory established via the 1855 Bowring Treaty and beyond was *actually* Royal property later used for the Royal Project. What would be required for a further investigation is, if available: a map of Siam and the then-created ‘reserved forests” overlaid with a modern-day Thailand map depicting Royal Project areas. This would provide clarity.

In conclusion:

I have, within the frameworks of definitional and theoretical contexts, illuminated a series of international treaties have transpired between Siam, France, the United States, and Britain. These agreements were arguably brought to fruition by threatened force from Colonial powers, at least initially. This process began in the early 1880s, and created for Siam land/territory classification systems. This involved policy directives that, while country-core-transforming the socio-political workings related with managing this territory, are still being exhibited today.

I have also articulated the 1932 concocting of the Thai political State, which brought with it — for the first time in the country’s history — a ‘constitutional monarchy.’ Under the guise of a pseudo-democracy, a new national identity was formed. The country has likewise been transformed from a predominantly agrarian into an industrial economy. This is with a ‘developed’

rural countryside, territorialized and subdued rural (and formerly autonomous indigenous ethnic groups), and a homogenizing mainstream society. Further proof of this 'development' is that post-2014 (i.e., the most recent coup/revolution) landscape demarcation continues. In July 2018, Thailand's National Legislative Assembly approved the country's National Strategy plan, with the aim of turning Thailand into a developed country by 2037 (Sources: Bangkok Post: July 6, 2018, and October 13, 2018).

Thailand's new constitution — concocted entirely by a post-coup/revolution military government, calling for a general election in 2019 — makes no mention of the word "indigenous," as did the previous constitution. Notable that those living in the most peripheral areas, whom have been historically labeled derogatorily as *chao khao* ("forest people") — alike the term 'untamed savages' used in other colonized countries — have a new name and hence social status. These same peripheral society-dwellers are now called, *ratsadon bon puen thi sueng* ("Thai people in the forest"). With them being further assimilated into the nation State and hence the international economic system, is Thailand's 1932-initiated internal 'development' essentially complete?

Considering the above definitions and articulations, how is it that Siam/Thailand — a country with a traditionally agrarian, monarchy dominated society and economy, essentially forced into the capitalist global market system by Britain — was, even by all definitions, never colonized? Either way, *something* was worked out between Siam (later Thailand) and the West that enabled Siam to save face and maintain at least a global perception of cunning independence.

This said, international and domestic socio-political policies stemming from the 1800s, 1930s, and beyond are still governing this country's overall functioning. This modern State's leaders are surely doing their best to guide this post arguably forced-to-westernize country in ways they believe most prudent and agreement with the country's root socio-fabric. Still, considering Siam/Thailand's socio-political history, I am concerned about how Thailand's marginalized peoples — such as those contextually revealed in this thesis study — will have to resiliently adapt further to top-down central government policies.

— — —

"Thai people tell foreigners that we have never been colonized. But we all know that we have been colonized. We just don't admit it or talk about this because we don't want to admit our sadness. We need to conceal our country's mistakes and pretend like we don't know about the hidden evils in our country, deceiving us like we are blind to maintaining peace and security for ourselves. We want to try and preserve, something."

— Suwanya; Bangkok resident: interview; June 19, 2018

3.2 Focusing in On Northern Thailand: Glimpses into the Societal Margins

Now with overarching policy foundation established, the following section focuses in on the northern Thailand region. Through story, the region's rural peoples, as the societally marginalized of the marginalized remain, are placed into the context of Siam/Thailand's development saga. The following section includes 2013 interview data from "*Tior,*" and 2014 interview data from "*Kubawa*." Both of these indigenous ethnic Karen men were interviewed in their northern Thailand village called, *Baan Nam Bor Noi*.

3.2.1 Back to the Basics: Can't Buy This Way of Life

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Tior, 49, has for the entirety of his 52-year life lived without modern amenities such as electricity and running water. He was sitting solid and patient upon the well-worn floor of an airy bamboo constructed Buddhist temple-house. Behind him was a separate room sheltering "the sacred well." The mouth of this water spring is barely large enough to scoop from it a small wooden ladle's worth of water; yet, it symbolically serves as the cultural heart-center of *Baan Nam Bor Noi,* a fifty-three household 200-person ethnic *Pakagayor* (also known as 'Karen') village community located in northern Thailand's *Lamphun* Province.

"This is sacred land," said *Tio*r, who has resided in *Nam Bor Noi* (in the Thai language means, "village with the little well") since it was established nearly twenty years ago. "It belongs to *Kru Ba Wong*, the great monk whom we worship from our core. He taught us to follow Buddhist principles, be good people, eat vegetarian, not modernize, and maintain our culture. I want to preserve this."

Baan Nam Bor Noi is a one-of-a-kind place, at least within the realms of northern Thailand. It is sociologically comprised of people like *Tio*r who are proud of their organic and ethnically traditional ways of life. Adhering to *Kru Ba Wong*'s teachings, this community of devout Buddhists and strict vegetarians exists essentially apart from the 'modern world' and without its material trappings. Those who live here use no electricity. Villagers utilize a hand-crank operated bucket to draw water from holes that they had manually tunneled through the volcanic lava bedrock beneath their feet.

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

The environment of *Nam Bor Noi* is (almost eerily) peaceful. While sauntering through this village one may reverently appreciate the organic base of the land and its people. This hamlet-like settlement seems to be growing upward from the ground; it is alive. It feels, normal — flowing from the Earth's elements. The village appears to function smoothly and naturally. There is a distinctive yet unidentifiable odor here; perhaps it is the lava rock. Complemented by the sweet scent of wood-fire smoke, adults doing embroidery and crafting other textiles can be observed.

Meanwhile, children can be seen playing games using the simple wonders of their natural environment as their playground. Some children amuse themselves via some kind of contest using puffy yellow flowers and a water puddle; others are racing to climb dark green stocks of bamboo that are leaning upward toward the rich blue sky. Gentle laughter while the young and the old interact with one another is pleasing to the ear, heart, and soul.

The feeling one might get while in this village is that of being in the present moment. It appears evident that everyone here is actually living, here — not wishing so much that they were somewhere else. Perhaps a reason for this is that the machine world is totally absent in *Nam Bor Noi*. What is moving here is largely only the machinery of the human body.

Like many human communities in our world, even those with peaceful and natural environments, there are social problems in this village. However, there is far less apparent stress than life in the city, which involves fighting with the madness of traffic jams or an office clock. None of this exists in *Nam Bor Noi.* That said, there is a noticeable difference between this village and the modern city hub — the lack of noise racket! There are no airplanes flying overhead; there are no sounds of construction equipment or industrial factories; there is nobody in cars or on motorcycles competing for the roadways; there are no airwave sounds of television or attention sucking internet distractions; and there are no local bars with karaoke machines or other riff-raff.

There is the occasional cackling of a battery-powered radio. There is the sound of wood being chopped. There is the hammering and grinding sounds from ethnic handicrafts being forged. There are the footsteps of villagers, as they carry buckets of sloshing water across their shoulders. Muffled conversations coming from thatched bamboo homes with teakwood leaf roofs can also be heard, in addition to the peeping birds fluttering about overhead. By the day's end, the bird's songs are replaced with the chirping of jungle bugs.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

"This village is very special," said Tior. "It's not just foreigners who want to observe our way of life. Other Karen villages need to see this as well. We want to teach others how to live like this "We want to preserve our way of life…This way of life is healthy. It's something that money cannot buy."

There is more to this story

Additional components comprise this seemingly idyllic cultural landscape, where life here is outwardly peaceful. The other side of this coin is that life is damn hard, as the ability to earn a living is not there – a price to pay for lack of 'development' and lack of noise. Moreover, it is very difficult to grow crops in *Nam Bor Noi*, largely due to the lava bedrock.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

This situation, in addition to villagers' overall social marginalization and related poverty, forces all work-capable *Nam Bor Noi* residents to scrape by on a day-by-day living basis by working in urban areas or doing hard labor for private landowners or for corporate agro-companies. The villagers barely make enough money to survive, about US$9 per day (when there's work). This is quite similar to the general world population who is subject to gaining employment in the global market economy. The difference is that not long ago villagers like those in *Nam Bor Noi* used to be able to live relatively sustainably off from their surrounding environment.

From January until March, villagers harvest corn and maize by hand, collect leaves and grass for roofs, and dig lava rock (which is largely used for construction purposes). April through June is Thailand's 'dry season,' so there is no agriculture; villagers clear land or do any kind of jobs that they can find. Some of them work various jobs in the city, performing many tasks of which are less than desirable (and foreign to their culture). These may include construction and restaurant work, cleaning services, or in nightclubs.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Others during this time stay at home in the village. Both men and women make handicrafts, such as necklaces and utensils made from coconut shell. The women weave textiles that they and other villagers wear. Some of this clothing, along with the handicrafts, is sold as a source of supplemental income. Economically speaking, they will sometimes work on a dress, a shirt, or other type of craftwork for a week or more and then sell this product for whatever the 'market rate' allows, which is usually only a few dollars.

Textiles offer evidence of civilization. These types of cloth or woven fabric are a glimpse into the depths of a society, revealing the cultural knowledge and wisdom needed in order to produce its art and crafts. This said, it is rare these days to witness the weaving of a traditional Karen dress, as the younger generations for the most part no longer know how to make their traditional clothing. Nowadays, what we can see is only cultural shards — remnants of what really was. Perhaps it's just the beauty that remains.

From July to September, villagers harvest *longan* (a fruit that is cultivated in Southeast Asia), prune trees, tend gardens, dig lava rock, or plant rice. October to November brings more garden tending. December is rice harvesting time. All of the farm work they do is on land that does not belong to them.

With this hard-earned money, *Tior*'s fellow villagers purchase food predominantly consisting of white rice, which they complement with chili, salt, and humble variations of vegetables that they acquire from the local markets. Some of their foodstuff is grown in scant gardens placed outside of their thatched bamboo houses or collected from the sparse jungle forest that surrounds them. This all depends on how much money they have, most of the time not much.

Occasionally some locally harvested honeycomb (that they are always willing to share because the Karen are the epitome of a sharing culture) complements their candle-lit meals. The beeswax that villagers use for some of their handmade candles carries with it spiritual meaning, particularly the scent while it's being burned. It is a wispy gateway to the heavens, and a remaining element of this ethnic group's spiritually animist foundation.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Villagers also purchase lamp oil, some clothing, shoes, toiletries, and school uniforms for the Thai government school that the children must attend as part of Thai public policy requirements. For a five-person family, total monthly expenditures are on average about US$80. Some households can save between $30-$150 per year, which they generally reserve for medical expenses. Villagers may not have much in terms of material possessions, but they do have a sense of dignity and humble gratitude entrenched in their social unity. One assessment that can be made in these regards is that this community is well intact, with exception to a noticeable generation gap (a story in itself).

Few teenagers are present in the village; perhaps they are off venturing in the more urban areas. Villagers now interact with the modern world and its consumerism. Along with this, trash now can be seen along village pathways and nearby roadways where once it was pristine and clean. Perhaps villagers don't think much that the plastic wrappers from candies and other processed foods won't disintegrate like the banana leaf wrappings they used to use for their foodstuffs. The resulting societal rubbish related to modernity is another yet connected matter.

Some *Nam Bor Noi* villagers exhibit signs of malnutrition, evident in some by their hair having red roots. Regardless, they appear to live a clean life. The village has an intact social structure. There is 'formal leadership' that holds a Thai State government position — the 'village headman,' for example. He serves as a village representative when interfacing the Thai government. There are also 'informal leaders.' They, for example, may be a village elder, a monk or other spirit man, or someone else whom the villagers revere. These informal leaders do not hold any real power in terms of the institutional State government; however, on a village level they can

at times be the gatekeepers when it comes to village affairs both internal and external. When all is said and done, villagers govern themselves via their natural environment and available resources.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Nam Bor Noi, and villages like it that are scattered throughout northern Thailand (and beyond), is one of the few places in the world left that if the electricity grid or the material supply chain that feeds the modern industrialized world were to fail us all, these people would be some of the few on Earth who could, and probably would, survive. Does this alone not make them wealthy? In addition to knowing how to live off the land, what about their social organization, integrity, social values, and caring for one another, even while having few resources? What does it really mean to be poor then? This community has very little in terms of material goods. However, could it be said that it inherently functions in a wealthier way than the rest of the modernized world? Setting aside speculation, I view these villagers as rich in purpose, living a mostly autonomous traditional Karen way of life that is beautiful and pure, in spite of some challenges. All cultures have challenges, but some cultures seem to handle life with more grace than others.

"We are not suffering," said Tior. "Living like this is fine. It is a quiet and peaceful life…Other people feel like they need material things to be satisfied in life. I think the most important thing for a happy life is to have my own space and food; I can survive. Having a car is a small thing compared to this. … Eighty percent of the villagers living here in *Nam Bor Noi* don't need (or want) electricity or running water," added Tior. "If someone in this community has money and needs these, or if they don't follow the rules (that prohibit modernization), they can buy land elsewhere, build a house and do whatever they want…If I had to move: The reality is that I am here. If I'm not here, it means I'm dead."

Tior said that the Thai government surveyed this village and asked the community if it wants solar cell technology and other utilities. He said that most of the villagers believe that electricity is dangerous, a fire hazard, for the type of houses that comprise *Nam Bor Noi*. It is perhaps not unreasonable to question whether Thai government employees told the villagers this potential myth in order that the community chooses to remain "traditional," which is good for Thailand's national tourism industry.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Regardless, "We asked (the government) who would pay for the electricity, water and infrastructure repairs," said *Tior*. "For me, I would, however, like to have more light when I'm eating. But I am okay. A major challenge I face nowadays is finding roofing materials for my house. The climate has changed, and the grass is now hard to find. The leaves used as an alternative (from grass) last only a couple years…I worry most about land ownership. I don't have any rights to this land; the government owns it [and the village is allowed to stay on the property]. … If I don't have land for growing rice, for eating, this is a big problem. Sometimes, there is no (farm) work. I worry about this too, and getting sick, but not too much."

Tior said that when all of us humans were born, we didn't have anything; life was fine. But if we are greedy and selfish, it ruins our life and our relationships. "Our culture is becoming like this," said Tior. "Actually, the natural world around us is just fine; people ruin themselves. Everyone should be a good person. I don't know if I'm a good person. I'd like to know how to be one. I do know that I'm not greedy or selfish. … I want to transfer to my children what it feels like to live in the traditional way. … We (villagers) support preserving this traditional way of life…We want to keep it special. We are preserving our way of life."

***

A foundational element of their way of life that is being preserved at *Nam Bor Noi* is that on each evening many residents, including most of the children, reverently congregate near the sacred well while clad in traditional Karen clothing. The females wear near ankle-length hand-woven intricately embroidered cotton dress or a sarong and V-necked shirt — white for the unmarried and colored (usually black and red) for the married — and a sarong and shirt for the males.

Unified, with little or not much to offer in-terms of financial means, those attending this ceremony place clippings from nature such as flowers or another plant, candles, and incense sticks atop a gold colored tray. *Nam Bor Noi*'s spiritual man (equivalent of a priest, or a shaman)

ceremoniously offers these gifts to *Kru Ba Wong*, the aforementioned late monk who founded this Karen settlement area forty-five years ago. After this ritual is complete, the congregation turns about-face and directs its energy toward a temple about one kilometer away (where *Kru Ba Wong*'s embalmed body is displayed). They then meditate for about fifteen minutes. All that can be heard while they make this 'merit' is the chirping jungle bugs, airy whispers of devotion coming from the villagers, and clicking sounds while some of them roll prayer beads between their fingers.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

"This nightly tradition is very important for our cultural protection," said Tior. "There are many things with development that are surrounding us now. We don't know about the future, how things are going to change."

Preserving this traditional livelihood is becoming evermore difficult for Tior and his village family. While this community is doing its best to maintain traditional ways of life, it exists as an anomaly of sorts. *Nam Bor Noi* is part of and surrounded by nine other Karen villages that constitute a lowland Karen settlement called, "*Phabat Huaytom*."

Nam Bor Noi serves as a reminder for the people of this overall area (and perhaps all of humankind) of the way life used to be for the Karen. This area's total population of about 13,000 people, like its surrounding mainstream urban Thailand counterparts, is well underway to succumbing to a modernizing trend. *Phabat Huaytom*'s outer appearance is further transforming to that of modern-style wooden houses equipped with electricity and satellite dishes fastened to their walls. Inwardly, core elements of traditional Karen culture are dissolving. They are succumbing to outside influences that are foreign to villagers' traditional ways of life. This is transforming both the ways in which they live and how they interact with one another**.**

We can more thoroughly understand what is happening with Tior and his community members in terms of cultural transformation by learning generally about how development processes (both physical and socio-political) have altered this global region's both physical and cultural landscapes.

3.2.2 Northern Thailand's 'Development:' Altering Society from Within

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

Converting land to a new purpose by constructing buildings or making use of its natural resources, or making something, a society, more advanced (i.e. 'development') is arguably more often than not thought of as a positive thing, especially in the global West. Development does often bring, especially to rural communities nowadays, positive human rights related elements such as healthcare, education, financial income, as well as farming techniques and equipment that can produce more and better crops. The modernization of homes can make life easier and more physically comfortable. However, the seductive nature of modern 'convenience' also comes with a price. What about the 'de' of the word 'development' — denoting removal or reversal? What is development taking away from our cultures and our traditional ways of life? What are the societal replacements? What are the short and potential long-term impacts?

For further context about this topic and how *Tior* is part of this, there exists in northern Thailand a dwindling number of rural Thai communities that still exhibit what could be considered 'traditional Thai' ways of life. These villages still function in a similar fashion to how all of our human ancestors once did, before the prominent onset of urbanization. They live more integrated into their natural environment. However, this is changing rapidly as the essence of these communities is being further dissolved as the global market system and various lifestyles associated with the modern world perforate their social fabric. Homogenizing 'modern world' culture is replacing the ethnically 'traditional' lifestyles of the developing world. This is affecting everyone, both those living in rural areas and in the city.

In northern Thailand overall you can, for at least awhile longer, observe the traditional way of life of the older generations in contrast to the modern lifestyles of the younger generations. However, Chiang Mai, Thailand's rapidly developing capital city of the North, has, for example, in less than one decade evolved dramatically from its traditionally slow-paced and conservative

culture — what one could have once considered a ‘big city, small town’ — into a city, a mini-Bangkok in a sense. This is particularly evident with worsening traffic congestion, increasing environmental pollution, and social tensions. Similar urbanization related phenomena have long-since happened in Western cultures and communities that include, in part, the social construction of race, social gentrification, land grabbing, and the rise of enforcing social institutions (e.g. legal bodies and mainstream education).

Younger Thai generations are abandoning their traditional agricultural economy based customs for those of industrialized modernity — the I-Phones, designer clothing, new motor vehicles, and modern style houses. They are subsequently incurring financial debt they oftentimes have difficulty repaying. This is drastically altering the landscape of traditional communities and is having a profound effect on how families and individuals interact with one another. Older Thai farmers are subsequently selling their generations-old properties to both domestic and foreign investors.

Rice paddies are being filled with concrete, and the rural landscape is transforming. A growing number of Western style businesses, condominium complexes, and shopping malls are now gracing Chiang Mai’s mountainous Buddhist temple-topped skyline. Thailand, both with its infrastructural appearance and social functioning, is morphing into something that which the older Thai generations can for the most part no longer identify.

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

Northern Thailand has ethnic groups, indigenous to the high mountainous areas, that are in a sense being forced to become part of this modernizing trend. They, not unlike the Native Americans' history and that of other indigenous peoples worldwide, now largely must depend on local and world market systems alien to them in order to survive. Although many of these communities have for generations lived in northern Thailand's mountains they are still not considered Thai nationals.

Therefore, many of them don't have Thai citizenship necessary for receiving government social benefits. This situation is having a profound impact on their ways of life, making their future uncertain. For the most part, villagers can no longer live in their traditional manners, like what *Nam Bor Noi* somewhat exhibits. Instead of living traditionally off the land, villagers now either work on their own tea and coffee (mono-crop) farms, do hard labor for the Royal Thai Forest Department, or, like those in *Nam Bor Noi* work for private or corporate landowners, or indirectly for the Thai government.

It is important to address here that in Thailand the names used to refer to these ten officially recognized 'indigenous' groups (e.g. *Karen*, *Hmong Akha*, Lisu, Lahu *H'tin*, *Khmu*, *Lua*, *Mien* and *Mlabri*) totaling over 926,000 people have changed over the years (source: https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/focus/section2/2010/12/indigenous-peoples-of-thailand.html. Although they are commonly referred to as "hill tribe people," they have also carried the label of *chao pa* (*chao* meaning 'people;' pa (pronounced, "baa") meaning 'forest,' the connotation being "wild people" or the opposite of "civilized." Another name that has been used is "*chao khao*" (meaning, "hill/mountain people").

A more recent perhaps politically correct terminology used for these ethnic groups is "highlanders" or "highland Thais." According to the Asia Pacific Human Rights Information Center and Network of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand, "In opposition to these negative connotations of the official designation "*chao khao*" or other commonly used derogatory terms, indigenous organizations and indigenous peoples' rights advocacy groups began to promote over ten years ago the term *chonphao phuenmueang* as the translation of "indigenous peoples."

However, the government of Thailand has rejected the use of the term 'indigenous peoples,' and has stated that these groups are as much Thais as the other Thai citizens, able to enjoy fundamental rights, and are protected by the laws of the Kingdom. However, until today the indigenous peoples of Thailand continue to suffer from the same historical stereotyping and discrimination like other indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world.

Zomia

Scott, a distinguished professor of Political Science and Anthropology and author of the book, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (2009).

Map of the "Zomia" region.
Source: http://www.geocurrents.info/cultural-geography/where-is-zomia

He says that those living in the highlands are people who have fled State-making projects and have made conscious choices about how and where to do so on the peripheries of the centres of global power. Scott says that those living in the highlands are people who have fled State-making projects and have made conscious choices about how and where to do so. His work puts into context northern Thailand rural highland communities, such as *Baan Nam Bor Noi.*

Scott refers to the term "Zomia," coined in 2002 by historian, Willem van Schendel in 2002. This word refers to a location in Ne-India called, "*Zo*." The word means 'hill' or "a place far from the center." Zomia is referring to an area encompassing eight different States and is at the center of none.

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The following section refers to an April 2013 lecture that Scott conducted at the University of New England (Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNkkEU7EoOk).

"Zomia" involves lands above three-hundred meters, stretching throughout slivers of China, Vietnam, Ne-India, Cambodia, Laos, Burma and northern Thailand. It covers about 2.5 million sq. kilometers and comprises about one hundred million people.

Scott says that this has involved fleeing conscription, disease, slavery, warfare, and taxes. They are "fugitive runaways" in "non-State spaces" and have been fleeing this oppression for two thousand years. In Se-Asia, for example, they have gone into the mountains. Other places have involved swamps, for example.

"Zomia is the last remaining region of the world where people have not been incorporated into nation states, but it's days are numbered." He says they represent "a last frontier" of sorts. They are humanity's living ancestors, what we were like before civilization. Scott says that their choice to not have a written tradition, for example, is about strategic life choices. Likewise, their traditions related kinship structures, social organizations, physical dispersion, cropping strategies, etc. are solely to keep the State at arm's length.

Scott asserts that highlanders have mainly been running from the Han Chinese State. Ming and Chin dynasties' military campaigns, especially in the mid-1800s, forced them to seek refuge. This notion definitely supports the ethnic *Lahu* who comprise my thesis' primary case study area. Scott says they are part of a history of "deliberate reactive statelessness," those who got away. Zomia is hence the last great enclosure of non-State peoples. He says that throughout the two hundred thousand years that people have been on Planet Earth, any notion of a State is fairly recent. For example, the small states of Se-Asia arose about three thousand years ago. Life has generally been lived outside of the State. Agriculture is required for States to exist.

All areas outside of early States involved a dispersed and nomadic population. This was the "barbarian sovereignty," which means they were not under the State's tax regime. They had relationships comprised of trade between the barbarians and their lowland trade partners. It was a relationship of exchange from which could be withdrawn. The other relationship was that of slavery, particularly involving people who did not have State citizenship. *Most trade in Se-Asia involved slave trading, in an effort to sweep in a population and make them State subjects for labor*

and grain tax. This in Se-Asia became a reality about four hundred to five hundred years ago. Hill people were even caught by each other and for these purposes sold to the valley kingdoms.

After 1945, two things changed. One is the ideology of the nation State, as it projected its powers to the peripheries of the nation State. Before, States controlled small portions of the State. Infrastructure and technologies involving roads, land vehicles, helicopters, and telephones allowed the central State to project itself all the way to the borders. The second change is that after 1945 it came to be that the State further realized that these peripheral peoples reside on natural resources that could be used for foreign exchange (e.g. timber, hydroelectric sites, precious minerals, etc.). Suddenly, these areas became interesting and important to control for advanced capitalism.

Scott says that in some Zomia areas the State exists in the higher elevations. But in Se-Asia, it is not like this. In Se-Asia, the valleys are the locations of States — of social hierarchy, taxes, kings and permanent clergies, large scale warfare, self-described civilizations, and above all: wet rice agriculture. The hills, rather, involve swidden/shifting (slash and burn) cultivation. There are no permanent States, and the population is dispersed. It is relatively egalitarian involving zones of cultural and linguistic variety (i.e. "shatter zones" involving many different cultures), and there are no taxes paid to kings or a permanent clergy.

He says that most people in Se-Asia think of these different people living in different zones almost as though they are a different specie from the themselves. However, people have for a long time been transferring themselves between the lowlands and highlands, as "regions of refuge." People have moved for many reasons, including famines linked with the accumulation of grains. Some people even believe that people in the mountains have no civilization, that this is purely a lowland achievement.

Scott argues that the "tribes" in the hills made themselves over time. The idea was to concentrate grain and people within a reasonable distance from the State center. Wet rice cultivation concentrates populations because it grows above the ground, so the State can relatively easily take or destroy it. Wet rice stores well, has high value and can be carried quite far. However, this is not the case in the highlands where it is mostly upland rice.

In 1700, the Zomia related population was five people per square km. Therefore, people could not be controlled by controlling land. So they had to be roped in and confined. Navigation by water was very important in Se-Asia when it came to States. So the States in Se-Asia are created around river systems (e.g., the Irrawaddy in Burma/Myanmar). States stopped at the mountains

and the marshes where it was difficult to extend power beyond. This power would vary with the weather seasons, nearly stopping during the wet season.

Scott says that villagers in some areas, if they can, choose the best forms of agriculture. He says that root crops, such as tarot, yam, sweet potatoes, and cassava are the best because this way the government cannot easily destroy these life-sustaining crops. These crops are likewise a "State resisting" forms of livelihood … "agriculture of evasion" and "escape crops." I will add that in northern Thailand there is no cassava; however, there are potatoes.

Scott says that historically speaking cultivation where people cut the brush, burn, plant crops in the ashes, grow for some years, and then prepare another spot means that the fields (and the people) move over time. This creates a situation where people cannot be taxed. These fields can sometimes grow twenty to thirty kinds of crops, with only some crops mature at any given in time. The State cannot appropriate this. Scott says it is a form of agriculture that keeps them out of the "clutches of the State" and is politically chosen for its advantages in State evasion.

Speaking about oral tradition, or lack-thereof, Scott says that the hill peoples in Se-Asia almost all have a story about a book they had that was stolen or that was lost. I have personally heard this story when learning from the ethnic Karen who have been deeply infiltrated by Christian missionaries.

Scott says that texts are permanent. Oral tradition can easily be changed, especially if you are a weakened peoples and need to adapt to the times. Scott says that some people in the hills have erased their histories, or have retained as much as they want to retain. Physical dispersal, no permanent rulers, oral traditions, simplified social organization, shifting cultivation, remote inaccessible places, religious practices are always different from valley people. This makes them "barbarians" to the valley people but very advantageous to them, says Scott.

While not all of Scott's research is entirely applicable to current status of the northern Thailand indigenous folks from whom that I had had the privilege to learn, surely this information is relevant to northern Thai villagers' long-term history. It may even reveal what the root motivations of rural 'development in Thailand has been and remains really about.

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In-terms of these indigenous communities' ability to fully live in their traditional ways, the beginning of the end began in the 1950s. Opium cultivation during that time (and prior) served as a primary income source for these fairly isolated ethnic communities. Thirty years ago, while there

was road access to many villages, travel to them was precarious. About once per month, for example, residents of some villages would pile into the back of a truck and journey to the city to acquire necessities such as salt in exchange for the opium they had cultivated. Contrary to popular belief, not all opium-growing highland villagers were addicted to opium (or were drug dealers), although addiction (and the social problems that come with it) was definitely a major problem.

As mentioned in the first part of this thesis chapter, the Royal Project was initiated in 1969, with the primary purpose of solving the problems of the highland deforestation, poverty and opium production of these rural ethnic groups by promoting and growing alternative cash crops such as tea, fruit, flowers, and vegetables. This highly commended (both domestically and internationally) rural development program has indeed expunged opium from Thailand's countryside. Economic hardship and sanitary conditions for many villages has been greatly improved. Related development processes have for many of northern Thailand's rural ethnic communities also drastically transformed their physical environments and social functioning.

Like other modern world communities, they must now generate funds for life necessities, as well as the perceived material needs offered by Western style consumerism, such as processed foodstuffs and electronics. Many villagers with home communities located up in the mountains now live and work in the lowland cities, which creates a particular set of issues both outside and inside of the village.

In the village, alcohol and meth addictions are an ever-growing sociological by-product of this brave new world that co-exists with those villagers who are still attempting to live a quiet village life and are struggling to maintain the norms and values associated with their traditional culture. This is transpiring while village community members dressed in traditional clothing mix with younger generations wearing colored hair, T-shirts, and name brand shoes. They are mimicking mainstream Thai (and therefore, modern world) culture.

Overall, the villagers appear to be in shock, desperately trying to maintain their traditions while adapting to the encroachment of a modern lifestyle that is pulling them in, particularly the youth, one television program at a time. For many villagers it's as though they're simultaneously living fundamentally different ways of life — a mixture between their cultural heritage and that of the mainstream modern world. In some villages, like *Nam Bor Noi*, both open cooking fires and glowing television sets comprise standard furnishings in bamboo huts where families eat meals still containing food collected from the nearby forest. Sometimes a baby's cries meld with the

thumping of a karaoke machine, a result of electricity having been installed. Shiny new motorbikes are parked next to the satellite dishes pointing towards the sky, plugging villagers into what some of them call "the outside world." With the new roads, used largely for transporting cash crops, traffic jams are sometimes even an issue in some villages!

Many villagers, much like in what people may consider more 'civilized' or 'advanced' cultures, want to keep up with their modernizing neighbors but don't really know how to cope with their rapidly changing environment. The younger generations are looking to the outside world for examples of how to survive in a modern society. They have little to no clue which world existence paradigm they should identify with or to which one they belong. For example, one can witness the stark contrast of a young Thai-speaking villager clad in his or her traditional ethnic clothing while also wearing caked-on makeup or a hairstyle mirroring modern Korean hip-hop culture. The middle-aged villagers want to preserve their culture for which they feel responsible; however, these folks are also being enticed by modernity related conveniences. Most of the elders can't identify with any of this. Most all of these villages are enduring what is a very real and tangible identity crisis.

Although it is likely impossible that what could be deemed 'traditional' or 'modern' can truly exist simultaneously, these more traditional communities *can* potentially serve as a contemporary social-scientific measurement of humankind in terms of how it is has been and is being affected at its core by modern development related phenomena. This includes how physical environment related changes alter relationships among ourselves and with our natural environment. The residents of *Ban Bor Noi* and *Phabat Huaytom* are no exception.

3.2.3 Bringing This Discussion Back Home: Roots of Transformation

Tior said that back in the early 1970s there were four Karen elders who were seeking "a healthier way of life" away from hardship and opium addiction. They held *Kru Ba Wong*'s Buddhist teachings in high esteem and pioneered a new path by pilgrimaging to *Phabat Huaytom* from the Thai town of *Tak* about 250km. away and in order to learn from the sage.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Kabuwa, 84, is one of these first-four pioneers. He tells the background story of this area and delivers with it a message that complements this regional overall development story and how rural Thai communities and the region's indigenous ethnic groups are part of this.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

"Nearly fifty years ago, I lived high in the mountains," said *Kabuwa*, while perched in a hut-like structure placed in the middle of a watery rice field. *Kabuwa* is old but still works agriculture with youthful vigor. "My life wasn't comfortable. The transportation (up in the mountain) wasn't good. I had to walk on the steep and mountainous slopes, go up and down. It wasn't good. But it was easy to hunt and find wild food."

I was inspired to change my lifestyle for *Kru Ba Wong*, the great Buddhist monk who visited my village many times," added *Kabuwa*. "He brought with him many wise teachings. He taught about the Buddhist code of ethics, the five precepts (i.e. don't steal, commit adultery, lie, drink alcohol, or harm animals). This philosophy was different from that of my traditional animist beliefs and related customs. However, I gained deep respect for him, and I accepted his teachings."

Kabuwa explained that when *Kru Ba Wong* offered for him, and those in other villagers, to come live in *Phabat Huay Tom*, "I left my highland home and followed him. The only criteria for living here was that I had to accept and maintain the regulation of strictly following the Buddhist principles. I had to become a vegetarian as well. Despite these lifestyle changes, my life here remains much more comfortable than it was while I was living in the jungle forest."

When *Kabuwa* arrived at *Phabat Huay Tom*, there were only two houses. Soon after his arrival, however, many Karen people began migrating to here, and so did the modern infrastructural development. "We all came specifically to follow *Kru Ba Wong*, to make merit, to follow his teachings," said *Kabuwa*. "When I moved here, there was abundant shading from large trees (unlike nowadays). The houses were constructed of bamboo and grass, Karen style.

"Everyone lived in harmony," he added. "We were sharing, not selling things like we do today. However, the biggest limitation at that time was water scarcity. There was only one water source, the sacred well located at the Buddhist temple that *Kru Ba Wong* had initiated. The well was a small pot, but it could support all of us villagers, as a community. This is why we call it a

sacred well." *Kabuwa* recalled that there wasn't enough water available at that time to grow the amount of vegetables required for the expanding community, so they (perhaps for the first time in their life) had to buy food from the local markets that were being established.

"To pay for this, I worked in the fields for two to five Thai baht (less than US $.15) per day," said *Kabuwa*. "I became firmer about my working rate and eventually received ten baht per day for my labor. I gave half of it to the temple, for making merit to *Kru Ba Wong*." *Kabuwa* shared that *Kru Ba Wang* "was a wise man" who "had a good plan" and created a residential zoning system as well. "The roads here were made from dirt and lava rock," said *Kabuwa*. "We Karen hand-built the roads, while the Thai people watched us construct them.

"In the past though, we had no modern technology," he added. "We hand-washed our clothing. We used organic material such as roots and charcoal to clean our teeth. All of our food was cooked using a wood-fueled fire, and we used candles for lighting our homes. We walked everywhere. Only the wealthier people could afford a bicycle. Still, everyone was in harmony, unlike nowadays…Everything has to be purchased. People are more selfish now, and they buy more things."

Kabuwa reiterated that ten primary villages now comprise *Phabat Huay Tom*. "We had to cut down all of the trees to build all of these houses, and the grass for the roofs is very difficult to find now. Only two villages are maintaining our traditional Karen ways of life," one of which is *Nam Bor Noi*.

Roots of this transformation


Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Just thirty years ago, all villagers in *Phabat Huay Tom* still lived traditionally like those in *Nam Bor Noi*. Moreover, most all of the men during that time knew how to play the traditional music. This is in addition to other facets of traditional Karen culture (such as language and dance) that are passed between generations and serve as a cultural lifeline. This livelihood, including in *Nam Bor Noi*, has near totally vanished here. Social degradation, such as interpersonal conflict, theft, alcoholism and other drug use, is becoming evermore prominent. Some reasons?

"Thirty years ago, many outsiders, tourists from within Thailand and from other parts of the world, came here to observe our traditional ways of life," said Kabuwa. "They brought foreign objects, and ideas. This changed us. It transformed our traditional ways of life." *Kabuwa* said that things really began to change here about ten years ago when the road was changed from dirt to tar. "This brought the outside world to us even more," explained *Kabuwa*. "In some ways, things did change for the better after *Kru Ba Wong* asked the King (*Bhumibol Adulyadej*) to bring academic people here to *Phabat Huay Tom* and teach us about what plants we can grow during the dry season.

"*Kru Ba Wang* also asked for a variance regarding Thailand's government requirement that all men must serve two years in the military," said *Kabuwa*. "We are true Buddhists here. We don't eat meat, and we don't kill people. The King agreed and also initiated additional development projects here. Now we have a reservoir and a crops irrigation system. We can grow rice. This started about twelve years ago.

"There used to be one man here who could teach Karen writing, but now he is blind," he added. "We proposed these teachings be part of the curriculum offered in the local Thai school. However, this idea was rejected. We were told that if we are to be Thai then we must learn Thai. We are not Thai!

What can be done to preserve these ways of life?

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

"Nowadays, we can and do maintain the traditional Karen ways of life," said Kabuwa. "We still, for the most part, keep the Buddhist precepts. We still speak Karen with each other. We still weave and often wear our traditional clothing. Our houses still have no fences around them; we welcome our neighbors. We aren't forcing anyone living here to do this. Everyone is doing it by himself or herself. I believe that by people staying t*ogether like this, we can keep ourselves together through community connection*."

Kabuwa said that the older and middle generations are okay in terms of culture (perhaps because they have learned about traditional Karen culture), but "It is up to the parents to teach the younger generations." *Kabuwa*, like *Tior*, doesn't know if the newer generations will continue the

Karen's traditional ways. *Tior* actually said that he doesn't expect that the newer generations will preserve this culture. "However, once you've been in this environment, it will be with you forever…Because the younger generations here have lived like this, it will be with them forever…If we take care of our children, equip them, then we will protect our culture."

"I don't know how much longer I will be alive," said *Kabuwa*. "I don't know what will actually happen here once I am gone. I don't know if their lives will have more suffering, how much they will be so busy. It's not like in the past. I know I feel sad, if they don't keep a simple life like in the past." *Kabuwa* explained that the main thing that is different about the newer villages being erected in this area — the primary shift in their culture here — is that the Karen who live in these newer areas have come here just to live, not to make merit and follow the ways of *Kru Ba Wong*. And that he does "feel upset that the newer generations no longer strictly obey *Kru Ba Wang*'s instructions."

Kabuwa was asked if he had a specific message that he wanted to share with the world. "I want the Karen to come back and keep our traditional ways of life," he said, with controlled but tangible emotion. "Don't leave it! Don't see capitalism, the outside, as more important than our traditional ways of life! Our way of life is simple, not busy like those people in the city. Keep the good relationships that we have with each other… "I want to say to the Karen people that if you have lost your way, please come back."

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They are the bearers of indigenous technologies that often reflect a worldview and an understanding of our relationship to the natural world that is more realistic and sustainable than those of western European heritage and provide the basis for 'revalorizing rural cultural-ecology as a global good" (McMichael. 2006).

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Chapter 4: Case Study — A Template for the 'De' of Development

4.1 Study Villages Overview


Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

This chapter, while looking into the 'de' of 'development,' frames, or perhaps reframes, aspects of what researchers, academics, community workers, *and at least some policymakers* know regarding the root problems associated with capitalism-driven "development." By "root problems" I am referring to mega-development's prevalent environmental and societal degradation phenomena, which impact mostly societally marginalized peoples residing.

As mentioned in prior chapters, the societal laboratory I contextually utilize for this study is comprised of rural ethnic (indigenous) communities residing throughout the northern Thailand region. This chapter likewise involves a qualitative and quantitative social and ecosystem services assessment of a primary case study area. My contributive academic goal is to assess how (or whether) enhancements of their environmental and economic situations has actually improved their overall well-being.

The State: 'top-down' versus 'bottom-up' 'development'

The nation State is 'a territorial political community with an independent and organized government.' "A State's relations with its subjects are to some extent stable and include respective responsibilities…A nation state is a State whose primary loyalty is to a cultural self-identity, which we call a nation or nationality" (Pick; 2011: 5). For the sake of this thesis study, 'bottom-up' State-led development involves initiatives that stimulate 'comprehensive community participation' that motivates communities to expand their opportunities, improve local resource management, increase communication and engagement and interchange, and localize financial access" (Larrison; 1999: 68).

Northern Thailand indigenous "hill tribe people," ten recognized ethnicities and totaling about one million people, are by all means State subjects. They, particularly due to the 1932 creation of the Thai political State and the 'Thai-fication' phenomenon, have been being systematically assimilated into the national Thai (and global) culture blob by means of institutional policies and predominantly top-down development planning processes. They have no central government representation and their capacity to lobby policy related matters is relatively nil.

While Kelly, Yutthaphonphinit, Seubsman, and Sleigh (2012) make claim that Thailand is supposedly a glorious garden of bottom-up and community supporting societal nourishment, the approach and the extent to which these indigenous communities have experienced 'comprehensive community participation' that is supposed to come along with 'bottom-up' development, or have received 'professional leadership' and 'access to resources' supposedly synonymous with the top-down development initiatives (Larrison; 1999) is, in my opinion, questionable — if not, pretty much null. I have rather seen that, for the most part, these marginalized societally peripheral groups are pretty much on their own, coping with what they are being top-down told to do or else suffer some consequences.

In-context with *Pumuen* and the others residing amid the peripheries

This thesis' primary case study area is called, *Pumuen*. I consider this two-village area a 'template for the 'de' of 'development.' My study likewise illustrates, somewhat generally, the actual 'development' related changes that over the past 140 years have transpired throughout this geographically and socio-politically sensitive area. This is primarily in relation to how top-down and arguably heavy-handed central government directed development policies have impacted this community area's natural environment, socioeconomic conditions, and psychosocial functioning. I also utilize this temporally modeled analysis of socio-culture, government policy, and environmental factors for looking at directly and indirectly driven changes that have this community area's ecosystem services (e.g., provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting).

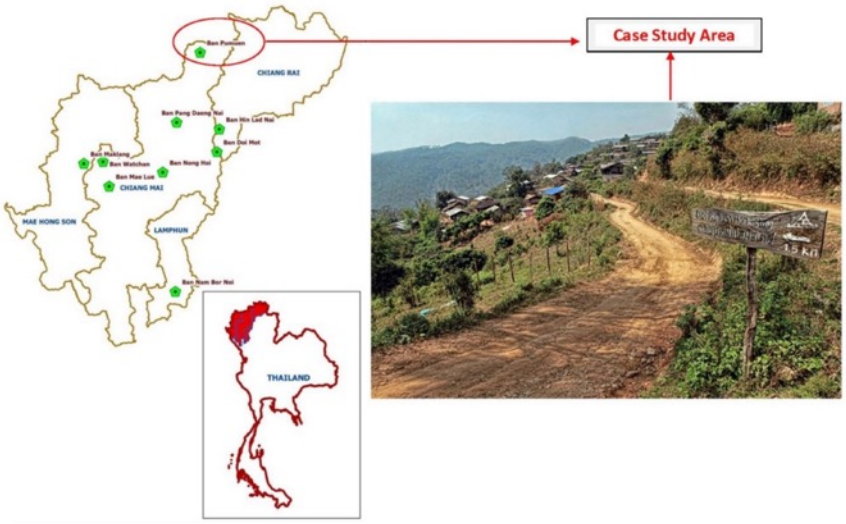

Figure 4.1: GIS map of primary case study area. (Source: thesis author)

While I did visit many villages in Thailand from 2010-2018, I have focused on this area because, in addition to its very high profile with the Thai government (and Monarchy), this area's development related transformation can be longitudinally observed and can therefore potentially

serve as a planning and development learning model. Moreover, the people here are socially marginalized. They are not fully considered "Thai" citizens and therefore have little to no social rights and surely no central government representation. Many of them are essentially only permitted to reside in the country and be fully subject to the political State's will; however, this is gradually changing as a post-imperialized Siam/Thailand becomes further established amid the capitalist global order.

This said, these rural ethnic communities have for decades experienced top-down Thai government directed development directives and with miniscule involvement in the major decision-making processes that have directly impact them. Changes within these communities' perceptions, behaviors, and ultimately their livelihoods have ensued.

***Pumuen*: a template for the 'de' of development**

Figure 4.1: *Pumuen* villages area. (Source: Google Maps, and compiled by thesis author)

The primary case study area is located in far northern Thailand's *Fang* District in Chiang Mai Province. It is amid *Fah Hom Pok* National Park formerly known as Mae Fang National Park. Within close proximity of the Burma/Myanmar border, this has historically been a politically sensitive area. This is especially true when considering concerns that Western powers had (and perhaps still have) regarding 'natural resource' acquisition and also with what what was perceived by the West as a post-WWII communist expansionism threat.

Pumuen Nai village is a 58-household approximately 300-person community comprised of *Lahu Na* (Black Lahu) peoples. Established in the 1970s, *Pumuen Nai* is positioned nearby another *Lahu* settlement called *Pumuen Nok*, which is a 54-household approximately 250-person community comprised of the *Lahu Nyi* (Red Lahu) peoples. The earliest inhabitants of *Pumuen Nok* (and this upland area) arrived around 1880. They are originally from Tibet and China. Most of the original villagers of immigrated to this location from Myanmar.

Villagers' land and natural resource tenure situation, as well as the linked socio-power dynamics, is complex. This area's initial settlers experienced relatively freestyle land usage. Slash and burn upland rice and opium shift cultivation was central to their 'traditional' livelihoods. They did this relatively autonomously for approximately seventy years, until when this area was arguably government force-converted to that of sedentary orchard agriculture.

Particularly since the 1950s when the central Thai government enacted land use regulations, the soil underneath villagers' feet is State-owned national park "reserved forest" territory. Likewise, although villagers have no de jure legal rights to this land, they (with the paramilitary Thai Forestry Department never far away) have been granted de facto permission to cultivate this land for both community and private (i.e., household) purposes. Villagers, using informally secure household land plots positioned within what is essentially community shared territory, nowadays cultivate cash crops primarily that of tea and other orchard produce. Forest products, regarded by villagers as common pool resources, are also collected for personal use and sometimes financial income purposes.

In-terms of central government and local level power relationship dynamics, both *Pumuen Nai* and *Pumuen Nok* are, since the 1990s, registered villages within the Thai central State system. This means they are subject to State government regulations, while also experiencing some publicly funded services such as formal education and infrastructure maintenance. Villagers requested projects such as that of a tarred road and high-power electricity. Therefore, this suggests villagers' in-general maintain a favorable viewpoint of government managed development projects; this is as a means to an end, involving personal gain and also appeasing the government.

The *Pumuen* communities engage this System by and through those whom are formal (i.e., village elected) leaders that are often influenced by informal leaders (e.g.., elders); this dynamic is essentially a conjoining of their traditional cultural socio-fabric and a political State system. This creates a semi-symbiotic, at-times turbulent, socio-political situation whereby villagers maintain forms of governance structures utilized for maintaining some civil and civic freedoms while essentially coping with staunch rural development related top-down central government directives.

While this case study addresses the trend of this entire village area's one hundred forty-year history, *Pumuen Nai* (Black Lahu) village is the primary focus.

***Pumuen*'s longitudinal 'development' transformation overview:**

This temporally analyzed study, covering a timeframe spanning from the 1880s until 2018, is not intended as a detailed anthropological analysis. It is rather for indicating societal *trends* concerning multi-level relationship factors related with socio-composition, infrastructure, some government policies, socio-economics, as well as villagers' natural environment and socio-culture. This analysis likewise considers how villagers' ways of life have longitudinally transformed according to their actual and perceived needs.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

This said, I am neither romanticizing nor glorifying (anymore) the 'traditional' ways of life that villagers once fully lived. This notion of 'traditional' is at least considering autonomy from national policy directives (e.g., the Thai Department of Interior (people territorialization) and the Thai Forestry Department (land territorialization), as discussed in chapter two, a slash and burn shifting cultivation lifestyle and cultural fabric, usage of oral tradition and related indigenous knowledge, and an intact socially regulating societal structure. … I am rather merely asserting that villagers' culturally 'traditional' values and norms have been essentially dissolved, or at least greatly transformed. This is continually resulting in a form of ethnocide (i.e., the deliberate and systematic destruction of the culture of an ethnic group).

The 'development' related phenomena that have ensued in *Pumuen*, and also throughout the secondary villages included in my study, has resultantly surfaced societal transformations that reveal societal phenomena that has long-since happened in fully "developed" and 'modernized' world areas. Likewise, I vehemently believe that the trends revealed throughout this case study transpire when humans at least make attempts to unplug from 'nature' and hence perpetuate the onset of societally dictating surplus driven competitive market systems. This is when considering urbanization phenomena such as materialism, the hedonistic desire for personal territory, material acquisition, land grabbing, environmental degradation, economic inequality, ethnic gentrification, poverty, and a resulting increase in societal division and conflict.

Looking closer at *Pumuen* and the 'development' model

Considering Pieterse's (2001) definition of 'development' as 'an organized intervention of collective affairs based on a standard of improvement,' figures 4.2 and 4.3 (below) reveal a multi-factored overview of *Pumuen* area's 'development' related transformation. A detailed ethnographic narrative of *Pumuen* area's 'de' of 'development' is revealed in chapter five, with a qualitative and quantitative analysis of *Pumuen*'s ecosystem services.

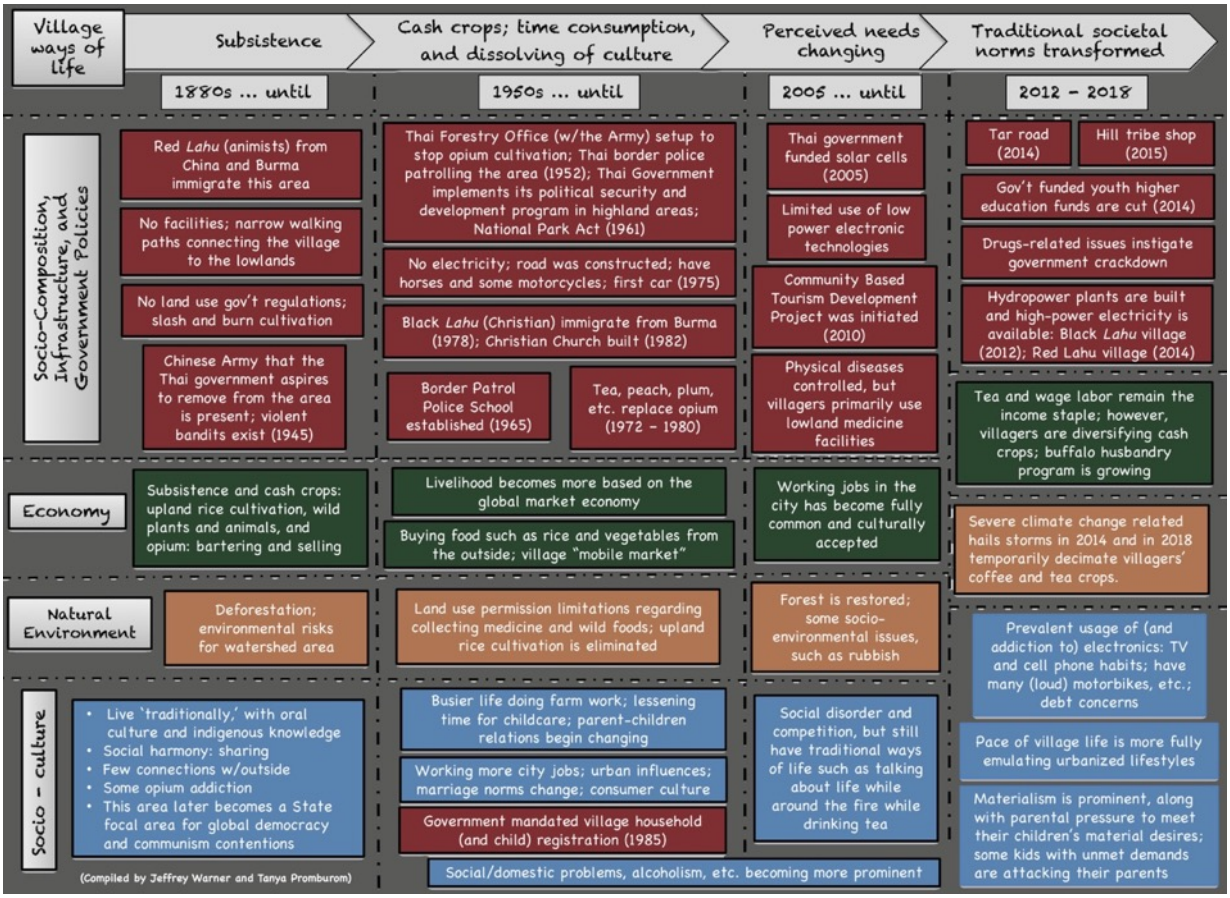

Figure 4.2: 'Development Timeline' of the *Pumuen* case study area. (Source: Tanya Promburom and thesis author)

Reading Figure 4.2 from its upper-left to its lower-right reveals that while villagers' natural environment, physical health, and livelihood means have consistently improved, it is perhaps reasonable to assess that their overall situation in-terms of socio-aesthetic composition and overall societal functioning is quite bleak. I have likewise been observing throughout five years of visiting this community area that their societal scenario has been (and is) drastically worsening. Most recent observations, particularly related with societal degradation (e.g., drugs prominence, youth rebellion, domestic abuse, etc.), rendered me pondering what further will soon happen there.

When considering panarchy and the adaptive cycle (i.e., growth, *conservation, release, and reorganization),* I assess that the *Pumuen* communities' area throughout this temporal scale has experienced several major societal system states, with multiple minor state changes.

Likewise, I am suggesting that the primary phenomena (i.e., externally induced, direct drivers of change) that have internally affected these peoples and the overall area are: 1) when the Red *Lahu* immigrated to this area, which was a new start for their socio-ecological existence and overall functioning (1880s); this also pertains to the 1978 arrival of the Black *Lahu (*i.e., *Pumuen Nai)*; 2) when post WWII (1950s and beyond) global politics influenced Thailand's national policies, particularly involving, under the policy justification of "national security," the patrolling (and territorialization) of border and upland areas. This fully initiated the process of assimilating these rural and peripheral agrarian communities into the modernized global capitalism matrix; and 3) the central government funded and top-down policy directed implementation of road, electricity, and communications infrastructure (2005, and beyond).

— 'Development' History of *Pumuen* Area (simplified) —

1880s … until	1950s … until	2005 — 2018	
• Red *Lahu* from China and Burma immigrated to here	• Thai government begins patrolling this border area for 'national security' reasons; dirt road constructed	• Solar cells installed (2005): low-power technology usage, such as black and white television; villagers still meet in the evenings to talk	• New hydropower dam built, providing high power to *Pumuen Nok.* Tar road also built (2014)
• No government enforced land use regulations	• 1961 National Park Act: rural 'development' programs ensue in highland areas	• Hydropower dam (*Pumuen Nai*) built (2012): satellite TV programming ("outside")	• Unusual hail storms devastate tea and coffee crops (2014 and 2018). Villagers start more to diversify their crops.
• Culturally traditional ways of life: sharing; social harmony	• Border Patrol Police "school" for village children established (1965)	• Villagers living and working in the city has become fully accepted as village culture.	• "Hill tribe shop" created, supposedly so that villagers can sell their goods (2015)
• Subsistence lifestyle: slash and burn rice cultivation; hunting and collecting wild plants and opium; bartering and selling	• Land use limitations: upland rice and opium cultivation eliminated: major culture shifts to more cash crops; many traditions disappearing	• Environmental and societal pollution: trash from processed foods; noise pollution (karaoke); alcohol and other drug addictions	• Increasing prominence of materialism: many (loud) motorbikes; some cars
• Villagers are fairly autonomous, with few outside connections; have walking trails to lowland urban areas	• Urban (market) access; busier lifestyles; social problems begin	• Financial debt pressures	• Pace of village life has greatly increased as villagers emulate urban life
• Deforestation related issues	• Forest becomes restored	• Forest buffalo husbandry becomes allowed (2008)	• Increasing societal comparisons, social degradation and conflicts (some violent)
• China Army (communists) occupation, which the government desires to remove			

Figure 4.3: Simplified version of the *Pumuen* case study area's development transformation. (Source: thesis author)

1) 1880s – 1950: Based on interviews with villagers,' surely the Red Lahu then comprising Pumuen Nok village during the 1880s, and later in the 1970s with the Black Lahu of Pumuen Nai, lived a subsistence 'traditional' agrarian cultural lifestyle involving slash and burn (upland rice, and opium) cultivation. Villagers essentially lived without direct central government control or settlement. They harvested wild plants and animals, while occasionally utilizing walking trails for traveling to the lowland urban areas where they acquired livelihood essentials by bartering and selling forest goods.

British (and some French) timber firms feeding colonial lust for naval supremacy and global colonization during the 1880s and 1890s literally raked Siam of its teakwood (Barton and Bennett; 2010). Surely, during this time (from the late-1940s and well into the 1980s) intensive and extensive logging ensued, resulting in serious deforestation related issues. This scenario also cultivated a suitable topography for opium cultivation, which funded, among many stakeholders, the communist (and often pillaging and murderous) China Army militia groups that the later-created Thai government desired to flush from this area. The end of this 70-year era is really when the internal national 'development' began.

2) 1950s – 2005: Regional and arguably global West-led pressures ushered the (significantly American funded) Thai military, under the policy umbrella of the Thai National Park Act, to for "national security" reasons begin patrolling Thailand's upland regions. The 'development' of Thailand's peripheral areas and peoples ensued. Many villagers, non-Thai citizens and arguably under domestic military threat, were for a time also militarized and placed amid the front lines of the anti-communist movement. The Royal Project, a rural development scheme at least outwardly purposed for replacing opium with national GDP enhancing cash crops, was the fundamental policy program used for these socio-political directives.

Military-led Thai curriculum education schools were initiated in highland villages. Thai language and commercial farming skills were instilled into villagers' socio-fabric. Central government directed land use limitations for the most part banned villagers' traditional agrarian (shift cultivation) livelihoods, which became replaced with and by money market dependent cash crop systems. The encompassing forest was becoming evermore restored, with villagers being used as the labor force for accomplishing this national development policy initiative. Strict land use regulations were eased with increasing forest biodiversity and bolstered food security. However, along with rural village welcomed road construction villagers became evermore plugged into the urban matrix and its symbiotic global market system. Life became forever changed, for worse or for better.

3) 2005 – 2018: Installation of low-power solar cell technology and subsequent hydropower infrastructure sparked an ever-expanding technological revolution that forever transformed villagers' worldviews and cultural livelihoods. As communities replace their 'traditional' analog ways with an increasing usage of the electron and intimately linked digital modernity, their pace of life proportionately increases. The urban matrix has come to the village.

Energetically charging this phenomenon is materialism-driven media messages and villagers' increasing contact with "the outside world." This cultivates a dichotomous sociological ecosystem whereby they (somewhat falsely) attribute the urban global capitalist matrix system inherently foreign to them with "development" that is supposedly, or at least marketed to be, holistically beneficial. Likewise, although villagers' encompassing geographical environment becomes restored via central State directed reforestation initiatives (hence more 'natural' and nourishing) villagers' socio-fabric has been unraveling, reorganizing, and evermore growing into a new form (i.e., panarchy).

As rural villagers' 'traditional' (perhaps life-sustaining) cultural norms are exported via the newly built tar road, imported through the doorways of modernity has come societal and environmental pollution comprised of synthetic materialism, social stratification, debt pressures, as well as intra and interpersonal strife to the likes that they have never before experienced. Nowadays, they are essentially residing sociologically amid a multi-generational cultural identity crisis.

4.2 *Pumuen*'s Development:' A Socio-Ecological Transformation Ethnography

4.2.1: 1880s - 1950: A Subsistence Based 'Traditional' Paradigm

Immigration, subsistence ways of life, beckoning government control, and changes

Again, *Pumuen* area's 'development' can likely be divided into three periods in-terms of villagers' way of life: 1) subsistence/primitive: freedom of resources usage, before prominent Thai nation State intervention; 2) transnational (post WWII) modernization and top-down State intervention in cultural affairs (i.e. internal 'development'); and 3) capitalism and assimilation

The *Lahu Nyi* (Red *Lahu*) immigrated to this village area in the early 1880s. It is unclear to me exactly why they came to this upland area then. However, it is perhaps prudent to consider the regional conflicts ensuing at that time, including war inside Burma's borders and also the Western powers' regional colonization transpiring. It is likely, then, that Britain's actions and also Burma's internal strife were direct drivers for the Red *Lahu* to emigrate out of Burma (as they had done previously from China, Tibet, etc.) and to this upland "Zomia" area (Scott; 2009).

In-terms of livelihood, villagers from the 1880s (until after the 1950s) lived traditional subsistence ways of life (i.e., the action or state of having what is needed in order to stay alive, but no extra). They grew upland rice and other vegetables, as well as hunted and gathered food from

the encompassing (reportedly somewhat scarce) jungle forest. They lived a life relatively free of outside influences or cultural interventions from the central government. It is being assumed here that any community planning at that time was done so in culturally traditional manners (i.e., village leadership structures based on the traditional socio-fabric).

There certainly was no electricity or other facilities in *Lahu Nyi* (red Lahu) village. The only roadway connecting villagers to the urban lowland areas was a narrow trail carved through the thick forest that was passable on-foot or via horses and donkeys.

Photo courtesy of Dome Chaikor

Opium and maize were eventually grown here and used as cash crops. These goods were traded in the lowland areas and for life necessities (such as chili and salt) that in the highlands were not available. Villagers used the opium being grown in this area as a recreational feel-good drug as well as for traditional medicine. Pigs, buffalo, and cows (sustained via the surrounding forest) comprised the commercial animals. For decades, this way of life supported the village area's primary economic system of bartering. Villagers lived fairly autonomously from central Thai government regulations, and reportedly social harmony within the village was prominent. However, this would eventually greatly change.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Regarding villagers' encompassing environment, it is likely that they cleared some forest in order to make space for slash and burn rotational farming practices. I do not know to what extent this traditional livelihood practices at that time resulted in deforestation and environmental degradation. What is certain is these forests were bordering the Southern Shan states of then-British Burma and hence were an extension of that area both geographically and politically.

Siam (becoming Thailand in 1932) at that time was fairly autonomous in-terms of its engagement in the world economy. Thailand's economy before 1940 was marked by remarkably low long-term real economic growth, unusually high levels of the population living in rural areas, and limited industrialization and urbanization (Ouyyanont. 2012). The Thai government, at least at first, therefore hadn't much desire, need, or means — let alone in a highland forest watershed area — to regulate the lifestyles of the Red *Lahu* villagers living in this area; this is particularly in relation to their use of natural resources. However, "from the mid-Nineteenth Century, Siam's economy was increasingly shaped by international developments and drawn into the world economy through migration, above all through the arrival of many thousands of Chinese after the 1880s" (Ouyyanont; 2012: 44).

While this perhaps did not have much impact on the upland villagers of *Pumuen Nyi* at that time, this migration would become more prominent in ensuing years. What is important is to again accentuate the fact that Thailand at that time was becoming evermore engaged in the global market system and its related socio-political affairs. This was also resulting in social transformation within the country.

According to Laohachaiboon and Takeda in their 2007 article, "Teak Logging in a Tran-Boundary Watershed: A Historical Case Study of the Ing River Basin in Northern Thailand" (pages 2-3):

> In British Burma, the British quest for teak timber began in the 1820s, and led to three successive extensions of territorial control, in 1826, 1852, and 1886 (Jorgensen 1980, 81–3). … During these periods, various unsettled disputes about teak logging interests flared up between the British and the Burmese governments, eventually culminating in the third British invasion, into Upper Burma (Bryant 1997, 206). Due to the ensuing warfare and the concomitant decline of teak supplies in British Burma, the British shifted their sources of teak extraction from British Burma to the Lanna kingdom, a tributary state of Siam (Falkus 1989, 137–8).

In 1899, all of Siam's forests were declared government property, and all logging without payment to the Royal Forest Department was prohibited. Keep in-mind that per chapter two of this thesis, these forests were under the jurisdiction of an essentially British-led arm of government. This said, "the government of Siam preferred to lease the forests to any British timber firm possessing adequate capital to extract the teak trees" (Laohachaiboon and Takeda; 2007: 9). In 1909, Britain's Borneo Company indeed gained the rights to scrape Siam's forests of its teakwood. From 1912-1930, the company did so quite freely and with little to no Siam government

oversight. … I deem this historical information essentially important because it is linked with Siam's colonization/imperialization and the actual onset of the territorialization of the people residing amid the peripheral areas, such as the Red *Lahu*.

The Chinese Civil War (1927-1950) was ensuing during the early 1940s. Allegedly, some communist members of the the China Army moved into Thailand's national border areas (including Burma/Myanmar). Opium and whiskey was brewed and sold on the black market. Some say these opium cultivators were doing this for funding politically driven military efforts. Another possible story is that the opium being grown in Siam/Thailand's highlands was connected with the First and the the Second Opium War(s) (i.e., mid-1800s) involving engagements between the United Kingdom and Qing dynasty.


Photo: courtesy of Dome Chaikor

These colonization related phenomena transpired regarding diplomatic relations, trade, and the administration of justice in China (Tsang: 2007); later, this involved legalizing the opium trade, expanding additional trade, exempting British merchants from foreign important and internal transit duties. I mean, considering the 1855 Bowring Treaty that was essentially by the British used to colonize/imperialize/territorialize Siam, is it possible that the British Empire, was actually (at least initially) growing the Se-Asia opium and dumping it into China in order to suppress the domestic silver market and fund the tea trade??

Anyway, the point is that during this time the Red *Lahu* became part of this scheme. I was told that villagers were used as labor, and the soldiers also purchased goods such as rice and vegetables. Perhaps unfortunately, it is this collaboration with the Chinese that would eventually bring to villagers the top-down central government control that would forever transform their existence. This said, the Thai government, which did not have a prominent presence in the area at that time, desired to oust the Chinese. In 1945, the Thai military accomplished this by essentially militarizing the villagers. The leader of the Red *Lahu* village, Mr. *Taeng Tao*, was granted a soldier status ranking of "*muen*." *Pu* in the Thai language means "old man." *Pumuen* is also a Burmese *Tai Yai* (*Shan*) word used for describing a village or sub-district headman (source: Thailand Department of Social Development and Welfare; 2012: 109).

A Thai Royal Forest Department office was established in the *Pumuen* area. By 1952, border (military) police were patrolling this newly established military and forestry zone. The Thai government needed to further establish and cultivate good relationships with the Red *Lahu*, who were vitally needed as a barrier to chase out the China Army militia groups. Villagers were essentially militarized and placed on the front line of the region's anti-communist front. They watched for further Chinese presence and at the same time further developed plans to eradicate opium from Thailand's highland areas.

Development projects in the northern Thailand highlands effectively replaced opium with alternative cash crops and reduced opium production to a trickle during the final decades of the Twentieth Century.

> When they were cultivating the illicit drug, Thailand's hill tribes were a focus of strong interest by the international news media and foreign governments. To an informed observer visiting a hill tribe village, it is clear that the new "opium-free" economy is barely functioning in Thailand's northern highlands. Additionally, hidden largely from view are poverty-related social problems such as drug trafficking, heroin addiction, prostitution, and AIDS (Crooker; 2005: 289).

This is a key time regarding the development of the *Pumuen* area. formerly being considered by Thai government authorities as untamed savage "forest people," some of the *Lahu* villagers stood proudly while being noticed and made useful by the Thai government and military. Additionally, they were merely being used from the top-down and had to do whatever the Thai government directed.

Still, for awhile anyway, villagers during the 1950s lived without electricity or other modern amenities and with minimal contact with "the outside world," beyond these newfound interactions with the Thai military and the gun barrels armed by central government policies. Villagers, now living amidst the onset of a societal system state shift, were being fully utilized as an extension of the Thai government and hence the linkage with the upland areas that comprise their homes and urban lowland worlds had more formally ensued.

***

In a February 2013 interview, the then 64 year-old *Pumuen Nyi* (Red *Lahu*) village headman, who was born there in 1949, confirmed for me that his ancestors immigrated to this upland area from Burma about two-hundred years prior. He recalled his childhood. There were no electricity or other facilities; no written materials. All cultural knowledge was orally transferred, and everyone participated in this lifeline. While no human societal situation is ever idyllic, his

fellow community members cooperated while being entirely self-sufficient regarding their primary food sources, clothing, medicine, and additional livelihood aspects. With exception to some opium addiction issues, villagers were for the most part happy and healthy.

He was ten years-old when "the communists came" from southern China's Yunnan province, which borders Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam. "We grew upland rice and lived a subsistence way of life, not for selling," he said. "When the Chinese came, we sold our rice to them." He also recalled that the Thai government did not want the Chinese soldiers there, and this is when the Thai soldiers came. With the soldiers came the dirt road. Considering landscape ecology, it is this road corridor that initially plugged the village patch into the global market system. While the road eventually led to the ejection of the Chinese communist militant groups, it also successfully resulted in the injection of outside influences arguably incompatible with villagers' socio-fabric.

"The gods made the *Lahu* to be on the mountain, and we have to preserve the original culture," he said. "Before, we had wood and animals and wild plants and no technologies. But when the government came things changed…The officers told us that we have to do things. We had no choice but to change…Now with so much change, we have to have the technologies and the road in order to meet the needs of development and modernity. We need these things to sell our cash crops…Life has changed. It's not the same as in the past." Unlike before, they became subject to government mandated land limitations. This, he said makes it difficult for them to generate income. "We need money; we need income," he said. "We even used to be able to generate income from opium cultivation...Now we cannot do many things."

Some balanced perspective into why the Thai government made some heavy-handed forest policy related decisions is also needed here.

According to a 2015 report by the World Wildlife Fund, between 1945-1975 (perhaps peculiarly after WWII and amidst the Vietnam War), Thailand's forests — what remained of them anyway, after Britain and France swept out their share during the Colonial Era — declined sixty-one percent to include merely thirty-four percent of the country's land area. Thailand over the ensuing eleven years would lose an additional twenty-eight percent. My point is that, considering the massive amount of natural resource depletion Siam/Thailand had endured over the previous seventy years, it's understandable why the government would perhaps need to step-up its

conservation efforts; this is regardless of some potential other motivations related with the full creation of a nation State and national culture.

Still, per the point of this thesis study, the *Lahu* living in *Pumuen* (as well as the hundreds of thousands of other indigenous peoples living throughout northern Thailand's upland areas) were becoming evermore under the central government and its military's intensifying watchful eye. This is particularly true when considering villagers' forest activities and intimately linked ways of life.

4.2.2: 1950s - 2005: Top-Down State Intervention in Collective Affairs

In 1960, a group of villagers was flown by military helicopter to the coastal town of *Hua Hin* in Thailand's South. This was to meet and discuss directly with His Majesty King *Bhumibol Adulyadej* (Rama IX) about the future of the *Pumuen* area. There was a two-pronged strategy related to this communication and partnership with the *Lahu*. One reason was to further put the country's peripheral folk on to the front line of rural related political operations (e.g., removal of Chinese militants and also the opium serving as their financial lifeblood). I have yet to confirm whether this came as part of Thailand's royally sponsored Village Scout movement, the military National Defense Volunteers, or membership of district or provincial volunteer brigades.

Philip Hirsch, Professor of Human Geography in the School of Geosciences at the University of Sydney, did his rural development related PhD fieldwork (1984-5) in southern Thailand. Hirsch also has worked extensively in northern Thailand and throughout the Mekong River region.

Hirsch in his 1989 article, "State in the Village: Interpreting Rural Development in Thailand," writes quite critically of the Thai State's development related motives:

> "The discourse of rural development contains much that deals with villagers increasing their share of the fruits of development, their rights, duties, and responsibilities as citizens, and the unity of the Thai people. Implied is a sense of belonging, of the village as an integral part of the State, of villagers as *subjects rather than objects* of State policy, of farmers as the 'backbone' of the nation…
>
> Yet by the same token, the official discourse of nation, religion and Monarchy is reinforced by physical and institutional accessibility *afforded by schemes falling under the rural development aegis to establish an increasing monopoly in terms of legitimacy of State institutions and procedures affecting the everyday social and economic life of village and villagers*…

> In other words, just as State-led rural development in principle gives village and villagers access to the material and political resources of the State, with all the implications for citizen participation, modernization, and perhaps democratization, so the State is moving into the village. The latter move is through reformed (or co-opted?) village institutions as well as by facilitation of entry by state officials" (p.41).

This said, in 1961 the Thai State Park Act was ratified. This policy, in addition to the establishment of national parks and other forest conservation areas (all under strict authority of the Royal Forestry Department) came in unison with a countrywide political security and development program throughout all of northern Thailand's highland areas (and beyond). This further brought with it a plethora of major changes for rural highland communities, including *Pumuen Nai*. This included, and in some ways still includes, stringent land use regulations affecting villagers' traditional practices involving hunting, fishing, as well as wood, medicine, and forest food gathering. Remember always that for spiritually animist agrarian societies like the Red Lahu, all of these traditional practices are intimately linked with their belief systems. If these societal systems are drastically altered or severed, a form of irreversible ethnocide ensues.

In comes the State, through 'education' and 'development'

By 1965, the *Hieng Thai Thamrong* Border Patrol Police School was operational in *Pumuen Nok* (red *Lahu*) village. Village children absorb a Bangkok-directed mainstream Thailand education curriculum. This means no Lahu cultural education. Village children can study here until they are sixteen years-old but no high school graduation is offered. They must locate this in the lowlands.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

This government school initiative happened here, and throughout northern Thailand's upland areas, in conjunction with planning for The Royal Project. This highly popular (and arguably successful) non-profit organization was founded in 1969. It was masterminded by *King Bhumibol Adulyadej* (Rama IX), to 'solve the problems of deforestation, poverty and opium production' by promoting alternative crops in Thailand was underway. The explicitly communicated premise was and remains to replace the opium being grown in Thailand's mountainous regions with alternative cash crops such as cabbage, lettuce, kidney beans, tea, fruits, coffee, peaches, apples, herbs, and decorative flowers.

A Royal Project (RP) officer said in a May 21, 2014 interview with me that "The purpose of this Project is to develop the environment, the people and the economics." He stressed that this Project's objective is about agriculture. "Sometimes the villagers need support from the government," he said. "They need more development and good management…I am happy that along with the development I can help them be healthier."

This Officer said that regarding environment the government had (and still has) intention of replanting deforested areas as well as cultivating new forests. About the cultures of these rural peoples, he said this Project is mostly about "protecting" them from the perils of drug usage (e.g., opium and methamphetamines). Regarding economics, this Project is about promoting orchards and cash crops including plums, avocados, cabbage, persimmon, strawberries, tea, and coffee, etc. This agro-business system functions via multi-layered cooperatives.

He confirmed that this Project, in addition to its benefits, has also caused these rural ethnic groups to modernize (e.g., build modern-style buildings, adopt electronics technologies, etc.), which has transformed their cultural socio-fabric. "It's a trade-off," he said, regarding agro-business related rural development. "Villagers have improved well-being, but they lose some of their culture...It depends on the community. They have to take responsibility for themselves."

The Officer said some communities don't invest properly or know about the risks. They implement too much business perspective. Sometimes the city people also influence communities and perpetuate detrimental social change. This is especially true when villagers are asked to travel to urban areas and do cultural performances. The Officer said this isn't a good way. He said that many communities still practice their New Year traditions, and sometimes other communities come share about culture and other information.

"Everything has changed…There is more development everywhere. People are at risk," he said. "Children aren't learning in the agricultural schools anymore. They work doing other things or in the city. Communications have changed too...It (the development impacts) all depends on the tribe, the location, their history, and the overall dynamics…"

"The Hmong are business oriented," he added. "The Karen are conservative…It also depends on the village leadership…Villagers may act one way while in the village but act another way when they are outside the village" away from regulating cultural pressures. For example, people cannot be forced to where traditional dress while living in the city. He said that "One thing

creates another thing…What (villagers) have now is essentially not their original culture. Their new costumes are modern. The sewing machines are modern. Everything is their modern culture."

The Officer was asked directly about if, even though the essential design of the Royal Project may be to "help people," is this Project a means for the government to essentially suck these peripheral communities into a well-marketed 'development' policy scheme, with the ultimate purpose of socially homogenizing the country. Did this Project's founders realize the deep socio-impacts that this social policy was going to eventually have on these tribal cultures? This is as they abandon their traditional ways of life in exchange for development, modernity, and dependence on a globalized capitalism-fueled money market system?

After a thoughtful pause, this Officer said that all communities in Thailand's highland areas were surveyed. Villagers' Thai language skills among other aspects were assessed, government schools were established, and agriculture based vocational skills were transferred to the villagers. "The Royal Project was the way to make this happen." So, the answer to my somewhat rhetorical question: yes. [end of interview]

This 'development' phenomenon was and continues happening throughout northern Thailand's rural lowland Thai as well as in the highland indigenous ethnic communities. Meanwhile the popularity of the Royal Project has continually increased both domestically and internationally. Internationally, this Project was essentially helping with the West-led 'drug war,' expunging the region's opium production and market (or perhaps moving it to another location).

Thai domestically, the "hill tribe people" were believed to be opium growing 'destroyers of the forest.' Therefore, Rama IX's royal development program was (and continues) being heralded as the savior of Thailand's beloved forest areas. This Thai State mandated transition from opium to tea production in *Pumuen* was overall really the full onset of the area's 'modern development.' The Royal Project in these regards is arguably the means for the country's domestic development and hence a societal homogenization into a state of 'Thainess.' These rural folks of course exist on the societal margins. Crooker (2005) talks of Thailand's prior (and continuing) "steadfast commitment" to opium reduction in northern Thailand. Villages like *Pumuen* "no longer sell opium to local warlords or lowland drug traffickers. They live in permanent settlements, grow legitimate cash crops, and have a stake in participating in Thai society. However, their overall environmental deterioration threatens their livelihoods and tribal people constitute the poorest socioeconomic strata" (p.292).

Royalty visits *Pumuen*

In 1970, King *Bhumibol Adulyadej* (Rama IX) for the first time visited the *Pumuen* area. This was to observe the Royal Project related 'development' progress. Villagers were given plant and animal stocks such as lychee, plum, chickens and other agricultural products.

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While this central government visit, and many others all over Thailand, may perhaps have been well-intended, Hirsch (1989) says:

> Recent history of the central Thai State and rural village relations have been marked by a shift from large-scale rural neglect in the context of rapid urban-dominated growth to an apparent concern to spread the material fruits of development and involve the rural populace in national affairs by means of an accelerated State-led rural development program, particularly under the (1982-6) Fifth Five-Year Plan (36).

Hirsch further maintains that State involvement in and commercial penetration of the countryside have operated in tandem, facilitating or establishing new modes of surplus extraction (Higgott and Robison, 1985).

> Increasing agricultural production and surplus has mainly been a process of expanding agricultural land area, rather than of generating additional surplus by capitalization of agriculture in existing cultivated areas, and this has been at the expense of forested areas. Such a tendency has led to the common emphasis on the geographical rather than technological frontier in describing change in Thai agriculture in a period of rapid economic and population growth. This has placed penetration of State and capital in rather a different context than in more typical green revolution situations elsewhere (Ingram, 1971; IBRD, 1983; Hirsch; 1989: 37).

Hirsch's work therefore suggests that the 'penetration' of the State into the *Pumuen* area is really about capitalist surplus extraction versus for the supposed betterment of rural communities.

> "It is not simply the existence of a large forest land resource that accounts for peculiarities of the Thai case. Expansion into forest areas has also taken place *due to marginalization of populations in older agricultural areas* (for example through debt foreclosure), demands of the world market during the early 1970s for crops suited for upland areas (such as maize, tapioca, and sugar-cane, [or tea]) that provide substantial

> foreign exchange earnings, and State enterprise exploitation of valuable timber reserves under concession. Meanwhile, the nature of settlement of forest areas is such as to *produce a rapid evolution from isolated subsistence communities to villages whose internal differentiation is increasingly determined by capitalist relations of production and that are subject to a high level of State attention"* (cf. Collins, 1986; De Koninck and McTaggart, 1987; Hirsch. 1989, 37).

Hirsch says that "ecological conditions are such that early planting of subsistence crops mixed with commercial field crops soon gives over to a largely commercial village agricultural economy" (1989: 37). The deterioration of forest soils, which in northern Thai areas where deforestation and upland rice is prominent (e.g., in *Nan)*, equates to purchased inputs (e.g., fertilizer, farming equipment, hired labor, etc.) being increasingly required for agricultural production. In these regards, "State interest in these areas is aroused partly by their political sensitivity, as evidenced by their 'border' status irrespective of proximity to the national frontier" (Hirsch. 1989, 37). *Pumuen* village is near the Burma border.

In 1972, King Rama IX again visited *Pumuen.* This was to further initiate orchard cultivation, as well a tea planting pilot project led by *Pumuen* villager, *Jafa* Chaikor. *Jafa* could speak both Thai and Chinese. He, sharing more of a personal connection with Rama IX, quickly became a prominent contact for the Thai government. In 1978, the Black *Lahu* subsequently immigrated from Burma to this area and established *Pumuen Nai* village next to the Red *Lahu* village. The tea stocks came from *Doi Wawee*, about 120 km. away. While villagers report warm sentiments about the Monarch and this Royal/central Thai government's tea planting directives (versus the opium), and that the villagers did this willingly, the above photograph *perhaps* reveals an additional aspect of this story.

Photo courtesy of Dome Chaikor

> "Developmentalism is the 'truth' from the point of view of the centre of power…The central thesis is that social change occurs according to a pre-established pattern, the logic and direction of which is known…Those who claim themselves furthest advanced claim privileged knowledge of the direction of change" (Pieterse; 2001:18).

Jasuu Jamoo is a Black *Lahu* (*Pumuen Nok*) community member. Now this village's preacher (and amongst the informal leadership), he was amongst the first ten households who c ame to here. He moved to here from another northern Thai area (*Mae Salong*).

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Jasuu reported in an October 14, 2018 interview that there were no big trees in the area when he arrived; rather, grass was plentiful. Deforestation was prevalent. For survival, he and the others also cut some trees and performed slash and burn upland rice shift cultivation.

He initially worked hard labor for a landowner there, cultivating lychee, upland rice, and also buffalo tending. *Jasuu* said that villagers from the Red *Lahu* village also worked together. The problem was that villagers shared in the division of labor and also the pool of profit money. After being essentially forced to hand over eighty percent of these funds to the landowner, not enough remained for their livelihood; this is especially true since villagers at this time were transitioning to a more cash money based societal system.

Jasuu reported about Chinese militant "bandit groups that were robbing and killing people here…The Thai Border Police battled and also feared these people." However, the reason the Thai Army built the roads here and throughout the other border areas was "to chase these people away. After the road was built, the militia groups disappeared."

Jasuu confirmed that villagers were also militarized and placed on the front lines. This was for regional political purposes as well as for natural resource policies management (e.g., reforestation). He said that during that time the Thai government had a tree planting project. Therefore, in order to make more money he labored for the Thai Forestry Department, planting trees for about USD $1 per day. The laboring women earned about half this amount.

He said that Christians from Chiang Mai promoted coffee cultivation in this area, which was a new market in Thailand. Later, *Jafa* (prior mentioned for his connection with King Rama IX) was pioneering orchard-style farming in this upland area; this included tea. During the initial stages of tea, they could not harvest the tea because they did not know to grow or process it. The taste was bitter. There was no tea market for them, so they sold it to their neighbors. Some Chinese businessmen later taught *Jasuu* and others how to process the tea. *Jasuu* also independently studied

and learned well how to cultivate this cash crop. The Thai government offers trainings in which he has participated. Nowadays, villagers sell to the markets in Fang, Chiang Dao, and beyond.

Preston and Ngah (2012) say that "Rural change is a continuous process in many world regions, but particularly significant in those areas affected by rapid urban and industrial change [such as in Thailand] (362).

> We have acknowledged that change has affected people in different ways according to their age, gender and social position. This needs further investigation, in particular the degree to which change differentially benefits those with superior social and political power – whether by having more property or just belonging to the dominant political grouping" (362).

As the opium went out, new societal functioning grew

By 1980, opium was entirely expunged from this area. By 1982, the village had grown to twenty households, and the Church was built. By 1983, *Jafa*'s tea cultivation project was fully underway. Tea became, and continues being, the primary cash crop of *Pumuen Nai* (Black Lahu) village.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Jasuu reported that in the mid-1980s the Thai government came and surveyed the villages. Villagers, along with providing their household census data, were interviewed and photographed. Afterward, villagers were granted a house registration certificate. They don't pay property taxes.

Now that they had been registered with the State, and hence became State territorialized subjects, villagers were also required to register child births. Otherwise, they would be ineligible for a State ID card, linked with social benefits such as services at government healthcare facilities. This policy directive alone, while perhaps long-term leading to villagers' improved overall health, had a significant impact their traditional medicine practices (and the related belief systems). Villagers receiving that Thai ID card did not mean they became Thai citizens. It just meant that they were now registered with the State and granted conditional permission to remain in their territory. Their cultures were rapidly changing.

The medicine woman/shaman in *Pumuen Nok* (Red *Lahu*) village, Napoi, now in her early 50s, said in a 2013 interview with me that far fewer people come to see her nowadays. “When I was a kid, nobody went to the hospital.” She said that community members used to also come to her for child births.

However, largely due to the 1985 child registration mandate, “Now they pile into the back of a truck and rush to the city.” The herbs she collects heal many diseases (e.g., malaria), she said. *Jiagulan* tea, for example, is a highly powerful medicine. *Napoi* said those who nowadays visit the lowland allopathic hospital for treatment “don’t get cured, so they return to me for help.”

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

Napoi and her sister are the medicine people and the spiritual shamans in this village. Lahu tradition mandated that she wait until in her 40s before being eligible for receiving this sacred medicine knowledge. It passed to her via oral tradition. Nowadays, unlike before, no younger villagers are stepping up to adopt and practice this traditional cultural lifeline. I have in my many villages observed this rejecting of the traditional medicine practices.

Peculiar about this medicine woman and her overall situation was the two children living with her. *Napoi* said that for a fee of USD$30 this boy and girl were essentially purchased, as their methamphetamine addicted parents could not take care of them and had left the village. I have not confirmed this claim’s related details or truthfulness. I did observe is that it appeared this medicine woman was taking relatively good care of these children. She admitted to grooming them for taking over the traditional shamanism practices. I simply noted this as a fairly extreme case of social trends and ‘development’ impact related adaptation.

When this medicine woman was asked for reasons why people, especially the youth, are lacking interest in neither utilizing nor learning this indigenous knowledge, she said they now have modern medicine and electricity and have no interest to learn.

The aforementioned headman of this village confirmed that "things are changing," and it is not necessarily for the better. He same as the medicine woman said that the children are not interested in learning the traditions because there are technologies such as television and DVD's, etc. that "are more interesting to them" than the traditional medicine or the music. He said that God created "natural technology" such as the sun, moon, stars and people. But humans created these other modern and "unnatural technologies," such as electronics. He shared that watching television provides them with opportunity to see the news, to learn about what is happening outside the village world both domestic and international. "If we know about both inside and outside of the village we can combine the two worlds," he said. "I also want to know what is happening in the world."

He said that younger people nowadays seem to have "no clue of the long-term consequences" related with abandoning their cultural traditions. He admitted knowing it is his job as an elder to transfer (or restore) these traditions. He has tried to work with the newer generations but does not know how to do it. Another obstacle he faces is the lack of budget funds for hiring trainers. ... His daughter became Christian and has built a church in the village. (Note: Christianity and animism are not particularly compatible.) He has tried to talk with her about using this church as a place for teaching about traditional *Lahu* culture. They teach Thai language and some English there, he said. However, the Church literature changes the traditional stories.

He had particular concern over the reducing prevalence of the traditional music. There are few people left left who know how to play the music. Some people in this village know how to play the drum, but nobody knows how to play the flute. He said that the flute and the drum, for example, are very important. They need these instruments because they are used during ceremonies and for connecting with the gods. He was imagining one day that during the New Year festival the traditional instruments were turned into CDs and karaoke machines. "I do not want to see this picture in the future." [The following year, this village was plugged into high power electricity. By 2018, the village headman's nightmare had come true. His microphone for making village announcements is even used for late-night karaoke parties that torment the entire *Pumuen* area.]

This village headman was posed with the notion that this village has existed here for nearly two centuries, without the road and the dam and the technologies. Do villagers really need this stuff? "Technology is coming and changing things. But the village also has to develop in the right way…I want to have a meeting with the others to address what is happening."

"Outside Influences:" *Jasuu Jamoo, 66*

Issues addressed: technology impacts; children emulating mainstream culture; cultural traditions and indigenous knowledge

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

"When I moved here nearly forty years ago, only a narrow pathway carving through the jungle allowed us contact with the outside world. There was no electricity. Walking to the city about once a month took many hours. I didn't have outside influences. The road is good now, and the city life is coming in to the village. Villagers are copying behavior from the outside, especially the teenagers…

"To be *Lahu* is to collect your own food and respect the elders by giving them the first fruit. We used to do both. Everything has changed. It's not good. We want to preserve the culture. We are contributing to the changing of the culture. I wish the real sense of community through the cultural traditions would return. This would make the spirit of everyone come back into harmony…

"I know that we need to preserve the culture. However, I don't know exactly how to do it. All I can do is manage my time while teaching. The first thing I teach the children is how to play the flute. While I am still alive, I will reinstall and preserve the culture. If nobody preserves the culture, everything will be gone someday. If nobody helps, it will be gone. If we don't teach well enough, technology might become villagers' god…

"I remember the community relationship building activities, especially during the New Year's celebration when we would play courting games and dance together. Sometimes 30 people would be playing a song together. Now there are very few regular activities in the village for preserving the culture. People dance and wear the traditional clothing on the outside because of what they believe on the inside. They treat each other with respect because of what they believe. Now many villagers wear non-*Lahu* costumes…

"A problem is that villagers are marrying people from outside the village and staying in the city to work and live. When villagers move to the city, they lose touch with the feeling of being Lahu and don't believe anymore, enough to do the cultural activities from their heart. Now it seems like some people want to dance and some don't, because they have a motorcycle, a TV. They have many things and do whatever they want…

"I know that modernization is having an influence. My daughter also has electricity in her home, a cellular phone, motorbike and a color television. Before there was television here, we would visit and talk together. Now these relationships have been erased. You can get an education in the city. However, when you stay here in the village, it should be a *Lahu* life. Don't bring city life up to the village."

The animist medicine woman was asked further the reasoning for the middle-aged folks and particularly the youth being uninterested in learning the indigenous knowledge. She said there are spirits and ghosts around the village that look like humans, but they are not humans. "They don't like those who know about the medicine," she said. "They can attack you." She has fear, and sometimes goes with the accompaniment of her husband or nephews. Likewise, when she ventures into the forest and collects herbs, there is a procedure that protects her from harm. She said this for younger people is a major deterrent and why they avoid these traditional ways.


Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

She again said that "the spirits get very angry!" if she shares this sacred information. She was asked how she feels about this overall situation. I do not have any further information because upon later review of this interview conversation, my tape recording at that point turned into a screeching unintelligible mess! That night, to the surprised observation of my translator and research colleague, while attempting to sleep something happened to me that appeared as though I was being tormented by spirits; it was not fun. (this has happened to me twice, actually).

Anyway, I suspect that an additional reason for young villagers' lack of interest is due to Christian church influences. Supporting this idea is secondary information that *Jasuu Jamuu*'s daughter, *Farlae* (whom you will hear from later in this thesis), also wanted to know about the traditional medicine. However, her father, the Black *Lahu* village pastor, deterred her from learning deeply about these traditional ways. So here is evidence of traditional culture interfacing with modern development phenomena.

'Development' ensues

By the mid-1980s, the *Pumuen* area was surely underway to solidifying a new societal system state. This is particularly relevant to environmental panarchy,' this involving the ecological adaptive cycle metaphor of growth, *conservation, release, and reorganization* (Holling et al.; 2002). This also pertains to what I consider 'societal panarchy,' this being when people, or a community, becomes institutionalized, scattered, mobilized, and then polarized.

Development likewise "results in diffuse social capital and dynamic social relations with contradictory institutions potentially coexisting and an increased likelihood of conflict and backsliding towards scatter" (Pelling and Manuel-Navarrete; 2011: 3).

> "Rural development is seen as a varied series of responses to the formerly dominant model of modernization, which are complex in that they take place at various levels, involve multiple actors and create or arise with the emergence of new practices and new social and economic networks" (Preston and Ngah. 2012, 352-353).

Tea becoming *Pumuen* villagers' primary cash crop drastically progressed this area in-terms of its 'development.' Modern electronics technologies, the tarred road, and the plethora of additional socio-environmental changes linked with this, was yet to materialize. Regardless, these communities in a fairly short period of time transitioned (hence transformed) from their 'traditional' subsistence ways of life to that of 'an intervention in their collective affairs' (Pieterse; 2001). This was instituted via top-down Thai State rural development policies. Their economy and related social functioning was now prominently operating on this new system (i.e., a cash economy versus bartering). Villagers' existing social networks were also part of this dynamic. As of 2013, it had been thirty years since poppy plants were last seen blanketing this area. However, villagers were (and continue) spending their days picking tea and selling it in the lowland markets, like a wage job — versus living sustainably from the surrounding land.

While by the early 1970s there still was no electricity in the *Pumuen* area, the walking path that led to the city had been expanded by the Thai Forestry Department. Some motorcycles existed in the village, and the first car arrived in 1975. While the area seemed to be progressing in its 'development,' these phenomena were, and still are, altering peoples' relationships amongst themselves and with their natural environment. The village was evermore becoming a small town.

It appears that Hirsch (1989) implies there are ulterior motives behind the supposed betterment of rural peoples through development.

> "Concepts of 'development' and 'participation' have taken hold as catchwords have been used in a wide variety of contexts. Meanwhile, the rural development program has afforded the Thai State, through the government Ministries operating at the district level, increased access to village institutions. This is against a background of rapid spread of capitalist relations in the Thai countryside, which cannot be separated from other more explicitly State inspired facets of rural change (Witayakorn, 1982). The broad range of activities implemented by the State bureaucracy at the district level is generally labeled as 'rural development'" (36).

This supposed government support to *Pumuen* in-terms of the rural development related cash crop schema began evermore significantly impacting *Pumuen* villagers' lifestyle. Life was surely transforming, and it is particularly the elders that began taking notice of this.

"It's Just Not the Same;" *Nabue Sri*, 70

(Issues addressed: culture changes; identity; youth versus elders' behaviors; individualism; clothing changes; community cohesion; uncertainty and insecurity)

"I was very happy after moving from Burma to this village thirty-seven years ago. We were one of three households living here at the time. It was very quiet. Life was good. I worked in the tea plantation. I lived simply, growing rice and collecting food from the forest. I didn't have to buy anything, just salt. Now I have to buy everything including vegetables…

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

"It's just not the same. Everything feels different, except during the New Year's celebration. Villagers for the most part just don't live the *Lahu* way of life anymore. The cultural harmony isn't as it was. We used to do everything together as a cohesive group. When we left the village in the morning to work in the forest, we would walk together. Now most go to work individually. They use their motorcycles…

"We used to collect rice as a group and carry it together. Now many people use their own vehicles for this as well. Sometimes I experience that my neighbors went to the city to buy things, and I didn't even know they had left, even though I need something. Hunters before who killed a deer used to come and share the bounty. Now they often sell the meat…

"Many things are changing. People are becoming more selfish, thinking if they do things with others that there will be less for themselves in the end. Everyone is doing his or her own things, unlike in the past. It's about privacy now. And people used to work through issues more as well, especially during village meetings…

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

"It is the parents' responsibility to preserve the culture. I want to work with the newer generations in-terms of cultural preservation but don't really know how to do it. I have difficulty identifying and communicating with them. I view most young villagers as not being like real *Lahu* people because nearly all of them now wear modern Thai-style fashion (e.g., dresses, jeans and T-shirts).

"Some of the children don't have enough money to buy traditional clothing. However, I feel very upset when they have traditional *Lahu* clothing yet wear the Thai outfits. Maybe they worry that when they are in *Lahu* clothing they won't look good or don't wear it because it's too hot. I would like to wear a traditional dress, but my eyesight isn't good enough to make one. I need a young person to make one for me but nobody knows how…

"It's important to preserve the culture, but the new generations aren't interested anymore. If I were a teacher, I would educate young people about *Lahu* music and dance and about the morals needed to be a good person…

"It's not the same as in the past but still there is some good. For example, people such as my son do take care of me when I'm sick. However, my nephews and their friends often come to my house on Sundays and drink. They used to follow my instructions. However, they are often naughty now and don't listen to me…

"All people need in order to have a good life is to live together peacefully. However, in-terms of traditional *Lahu* culture being preserved, it's too late; it's too late…

What will come of this village and the *Lahu* people? I don't know; I am not a God."

[Nabu Sri passed away less than one year after this February 2013 interview.]

The expanded road: links with the city, and out goes some 'traditional' ways of life

Recapping a bit, in the 1970s the only infrastructure linking *Pumuen* villages with the lowland areas was a narrow trail and later a treacherous dirt road, sometimes impassable during the rainy season. If villagers wanted to get to the nearest town of *Fang*, and hence the market at which they could sell their cash crops, they walked. En route they had to stay in the forest overnight.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Although there was motorcycle transport, this option was privy to the Royal Thai Forest Department officers. While the lack of road access largely inhibited villagers' capacity for economic development this somewhat village isolation situation also served as a buffer of sorts to the ways of the modern world. This contributes to a cultural preservation of sorts. The road in *Pumuen*'s 'development' is surely a direct driver of change, and not necessarily for the better.

Hirsch (1989) says, "'development' comes with the implicit notion that prosperity lies in an urban lifestyle or at least proximity to such. This aspect helps obscure the double-faceted implications of, for example, road building or increased credit as instruments of rural development" (51).

Whereas, Olsson (2009) says:

> The theory is that a road improvement will lead to direct effects in the form of reduced journey time, reduced costs, and improved reliability. The benefits from these effects will in particular be passed on to previous road users, passengers and companies. The anticipation is further that these will lead to beneficial effects for the communities affected by the road. The extent to which different households and companies benefit, relocate and/or are established from any given road improvement will depend on a number of indirect effects which are in turn determined by context (477).

Well, in addition to increased government access to the *Pumuen* area as a direct result of the expanded road, villagers began more readily transporting their farm goods to the city. It is true what Pieterse (2001) said that economic development opportunities are primary drivers of social change. Having money (or lack thereof) motivates people to do things they would not otherwise.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

This said, *Pumuen* villagers also started visiting other village areas more often, which provided opportunities for courtship outside of their home village. They also began bringing to the village urban world commodities (e.g., processed foodstuffs, which also effected villagers' diet and overall health). Life was becoming more 'convenient' for villagers in terms of life necessities. *Pumuen* villagers for now-necessary financial income also evermore started taking jobs in the city.

Preston and Ngah (2012) share that these phenomena have also been happening in Malaysia. They reference De Koninck and Ahmat (2012), as they in their studies "summarize the changes affecting the 'original farming population' [of rural villages in Malaysia] and found that few now rely on farming as households diversify their livelihood strategies, often involving work away from the village" (355). Bryceson, Bradbury and Bradbury (2008) in citing the work of Rostow (1962) state that in "early modernization theory, roads were considered to be an important catalyst of economic development" (459), supporting Pieterse's development theory about finances and social change.).

Bryceson, Bradbury and Bradbury further say that the power of roads to stimulate development has largely prevailed.

> However, there is no consensus on precisely how roads become critical to economic development, and if they actually do provide as much benefit as believed. More recently, in the context of growing concern with the impoverishing effects of uneven spatial development, rural roads have been accorded an even more ambitious brief, that of poverty reduction…Chambers (1983, 1997) and Minot et al. (2003) maintain, "Physical isolation sustains poverty and accentuates vulnerability. Rural road investment is logically assumed to alleviate the poverty associated with spatial isolation" (459-460).

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It was 2013. *Jalae* and *Jaha* were perched on the ground alongside the dusty road connecting *Pumuen* with lowland urbanity. This was not long after this long-time roadway was transformed from a crudely constructed dirt pathway navigable by four-wheel-drive truck to that of a more developed and smoothened roadway easily passable via motorbike and even navigable by car (a couple of years before it was tarred).

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Jalae, 50, has lived here since he was ten years-old; *Jaha*, 36, moved to here when he was sixteen years-old. They recalled trekking the footpaths from here to the rural area below. When asked what life was life for them prior to the road, they expressed a sense of joy that now they can often go to the city. "It is very convenient" and good because before they "had to walk very far and then carry stuff back up to the village." They could not recall, however, exactly how long their monthly journey took, referencing how they didn't have enough money to buy a watch. Nowadays, they both navigate this road using a motorbike. [This fact alone reveals just how much this area has changed in such a brief time period — less than one generation.]

Jalae mentioned about the Chinese (Yunnan) soldiers that once occupied this area. He said it was "very dangerous" for villagers living around there. The soldiers would now allow villagers to pass into some zones [perhaps where opium was being cultivated]. He also confirmed that when he was a youth there were no big trees there, and that the Thai Forestry Department initiated the forest rehabilitation program.

Jalae and *Jaha* worked Monday through Saturday planting trees and doing other hard labor forestry tasks. They attended Church on Sunday and then returned to another work-week. This is before the tea came.

They said that many *Lahu* people lived around there. "But the Forestry Department set new regulations, not allowing us to do slash and burn cultivation. We couldn't expand our land or move from plot to plot." When they could no longer live in their traditional ways — also when *Jafa*, who later started the tea cultivation, was murdered (likely by the mafia bosses from Myanmar who were previously running the opium trade there) — they said "there was nobody here to support us…This forced many villagers to migrate."

On the other hand, *Jalae* and *Jaha* revealed that so many people living there created natural resource conflicts. Now that there is a road and also fewer people, they have more resources. They believe "it is a better life" for them now. They they grow an orchard and do other livelihood things. "We can bring our tea to the lowlands and sell it, and we can bring people to the hospital when they are sick."

Impacts of these direct and indirect drivers of change

Jalae and *Jaha* were asked how the road, motorbike usage, Thai school "higher education," modern technologies, etc. has affected them. Now they are "more educated and can communicate with Thai people…Now that I can communicate, I can even do jobs outside of the village." *Jalae*'s parents could only speak *Lahu*. Likewise, particularly with capitalism ever-encroaching their highland villages, a villager who cannot speak Thai will be inhibited on a multitude of levels, degrading their overall sense of security their freedoms of choice and actions.

The guys mentioned about the village youth attending Thai government schools. "Some youth even have a bachelor's degree." Regarding the school in the village, I will share that the catch of this "higher education" is in order for students to achieve graduation they must leave the village and finish in a lowlands high school. I personally maintain that this is a deranged policy. Most of the village youth cannot afford this luxury (more is covered later about this topic).

Jalae and *Jafa* admitted that youth living in the lowlands, learning Thai language, and adopting mainstream national culture deeply impacts them. They have become deeply changed and cannot fully adapt back to the village paradigm. "They return to the village and have lost parts of their culture and also some skills. Some of them don't even remember how to pick tea. They become like city people living a city life." For example, some returning youth can still understand

Lahu language but forget how to speak it [or perhaps they choose not to speak in their native tongue]. "They speak Thai and cannot communicate with other villagers, especially the elders." While there are good things about 'development,' this particular phenomenon "doesn't feel good" for them.

"If villagers stay with their families and don't leave the village," they maintain their socio-fabric. They expressed quite passionately about how some village parents nowadays literally cannot control their children; this is especially regarding marrying people from "the outside." Some villagers get married while away and never return to village life. The key factor regarding all of this, they said, is whether or not a community member has lived in the city and the duration.

It was obvious they both have witnessed (and endured) a great deal and in a short time period. When asked about "preserving culture," they could not grasp this concept. When asked how they would feel if this dirt road were someday tarred, it appeared that to them this was an impossibility. However, they talked again about how if the road were paved they would have more capacity for bringing sick people to the city hospital. This said, it is perhaps obvious that lowland market access (i.e., cash money livelihood) and health security are their primary concerns.

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For *Pumuen* indeed the road expansion from a trail to a road passable by four-wheeled vehicle enabled the construction of the Thai school, and hence a direct injection of mainstream Thai (and globalized) society.

Most people would maintain that "education" is good for villagers, right? However, the children in *Pumuen* are allowed to attend the (greatly underfunded) Thai school only until they are thirteen years-old. The primary limitation for *Pumuen* youth is the finances required for them to travel beyond the village and attend a lowland school. Therefore, especially in recent years, many of the youth are essentially forced to remain in the village and tend to the family tea farm (the 'opportunity cost' that De Walle mentions).

This said, *Pumuen's* Thai government school provides youth with a rudimentary education, which is just enough so that they have been exposed to mainstream "education" but not enough so that they can evolve beyond their current socio-status. This essentially renders them lost and between two existence paradigms. They become in Thailand base functional and perhaps even more marginalized than when the agrarian village paradigm entirely comprised their socio-fabric.

Resultantly, the youth in *Pumuen* are evermore hanging out on the village periphery, drinking alcohol or doing *yaba* (i.e., methamphetamine, meaning "crazy drug" in the Thai language. This social marginalization phenomenon is also evident in the adult population, who are also sort of trapped in their circumstances. In 2016, *Farlae* (my main informant in this village) reported to me that over half of the village (especially the youth), with little hope of moving beyond the village, is now drug-addicted. How is *Pumuen*'s sociological situation so much different from that of a dilapidated rural town in the United States or Europe or Australia that has been run through capitalism's cyclic process?

This I maintain is a great injustice and humanitarian disaster— cultivating an identity crisis of sorts. No wonder most of the youth no longer see the value of maintaining their cultural traditions. Rhetorically speaking, where is its value in a modern capitalist world? From a government-business perspective, if not as a tourism commodity or to pamper the remnants of a peasant economy, is there a 'market' for traditional culture?

Increasing social stratification

Dominique Van De Walle in her 2002 article, "Assessing the Excluded Benefits from Rural Roads," said, "recognizing the possibility that some potentially important benefits arising from rural roads are not included by conventional methods of measuring benefits" (579).

> There have been efforts to quantify social gains and add them to transport cost savings. For example, in attributing education gains it has been assumed that better road access will increase enrollments by an amount derived from mean national rates; previously non-attending children are assumed to complete school, and their life-time earnings predicted based on a comparison of earnings for educated and non-educated individuals nationally. Total additional earnings, appropriately reduced to take account of the costs of education, are then added into the road benefits measure. Such methods require strong assumptions…
>
> *Implicitly, road access is treated as the sole constraint to children attending school*. Yet, there could be a host of contributing reasons that may in turn partly explain why that particular road has not previously been built. *Demand for schooling could be low as a result of high local poverty and the opportunity cost of children's time*. Alternatively, there may be cultural reasons keeping girls away, the returns to education may be perceived to be low, or the quality of the school and teaching may be affecting the schooling decision (p. 579).

The building of the Thai school in *Pumuen Nok* (red *Lahu*) village, the Thai mainstream education overall — including for those village youth who receive the chance to study, if it *is not actually* a chance at receiving a (cultural) de-education— has had a significant influence on the *Pumuen* community, both negatively and positively.

While children have the opportunity to travel the road and learn to read and write Thai (at which many aren't successful), "The village children who have a chance to go to the city learn about city life," said Promburom, in an interview with me. "This has greatly affected the village traditions and changed villagers' attitudes, which has had an impact on the new generations, particularly on culture preservation in terms of the *Lahu* way of life." Something, is happening in *Pumuen* that is alike nothing villagers have ever seen.

"Division;" *Jarunchai*, 31

(Issues addressed: education; language/culture changes; urban social influences; children are being left to themselves; labor; family dynamics; materialism and community division)

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

"I've been teaching the Lahu language to the village children for thirteen years. It seems like everything has changed here in one generation. The girls are much more interested than the boys in learning. And the boys do not obey like the girls. Teaching is not easy…

"Things have always sort of been this way. However, villagers now have electricity, cellular phones, motorbikes and exposure to the outside world. They have to earn money to survive. This has changed children's psychology and villagers' relationships with each other…

"Many parents no longer force the children to learn the *Lahu* language. Families wake up in the morning, eat breakfast and then the parents go work in the farm, like a job in the city. Parents don't take their children to me anymore. They tell them to go to school, but the boys often go to the forest instead.

"The main change I've noticed is that relationships between villagers are not the same. People are comparing themselves with the others. Conflict is increasing. Some people no longer want to see or sit next to each other in church. Villagers marrying people from outside the village is also becoming common. Alcohol is replacing the church. It's like the world is in the end times, the tribulation…I hope children will preserve the *Lahu* culture. If they copy the city, they will lose their culture."

[*Jarunchai* passed away about one year after this February 2013 interview.]

Global market forces, market dependency, and internal transformations: a trickle-down

Pieterse (2001) says 'dependency theory' in that the true role of the State is to facilitate world market access into society (i.e., people living in a particular country or region and having shared customs, laws, and organizations). In the case of indigenous peoples, such as those comprising *Pumuen*, "The interests of the metro bourgeoisie are viewed as preponderant over indigenous peoples' interests" (25). Ferraro (2008) explains that dependency theory is about how external (exogenous) influences heavily influence a State's national economic 'development' policies in-terms of political, economic, and cultural factors. This is particularly true for poorer countries when they are coerced to export primary commodities to the richer countries who then manufacture products out of those commodities and sell them back to the poorer countries" (58). I suppose in the case of Thailand, colonization (imperialization) and the ensuing global market system related policies can constitute this reality.

Pieterse (2010) says "In development sociology the leading paradigm has been modernization" (45) and 'functionalist modernization' transpires when you 'subtract the ideal typical features or indices of underdevelopment from those of development, and the remainder is your development program' (Andre Gunder Frank in Worsley 1984: 18).

> Most forms of evolutionism conceived of development as being natural and endogenous, whereas modernization theory makes room for exogenous influences. Modernization theory is usually referred to as a paradigm, but upon closer consideration turns out to host a wide variety of projects, some along the lines of *endogenous change*, viz. social differentiation, rationalization, the spread of universalism, achievement and specificity; and others involving projects of *exogenous change*: the spread of market relations or capitalism, technological diffusion and industrialization, westernization, nation-building (nationalism as a derivative discourse) and state formation (as in postcolonial inheritor states). If this diversity *within* modernization is occasionally recognized, still the importance of exogenous influences is considered minor and secondary (Pieterse; 2010: 45)

Much of rural development has to do with international investment, or perhaps the pressure that governments may experience to invest in rural development projects. Bryceson, Bradbury and Bradbury (2008) state, "World Bank lending, for example, in the 1950s and 1960s was heavily biased worldwide towards infrastructural investment, with road projects being exceptionally prominent. This was the era of belief in the power of roads to 'bring' development to remote areas" (461). However, these authors also asserts that a succession of field studies beginning in the late 1970s started documenting the realities of rural transport, suggesting that rural road investments

had a limited impact on the lives of rural dwellers because the major share of rural travel and transport is bound up in domestic tasks such as water and firewood collection which generally involve walking on off-road paths (Howe and Richards, 1984; Barwell et al., 1985; McCall, 1985; Curtin, 1986; Mehretu and Mutambirwa, 1992; Bryceson and Howe, 1993; Porter, 1995; Fernando and Porter, 2002).

Walking off-road paths may for decades have been the case in *Pumuen*. However, as part of this area's (and arguably the world's) temporal development continuum, this is just simply not the case in regard to the societal impacts being 'limited.' The expansion of the road to *Pumuen*, or any community for this matter, has had a direct impact on the involved communities, both detrimental and beneficial. The road is the link that Bryceson, Bradbury and Bradbury (2008) suggest is the "double-edged nature of mobility improvement" (478). In rural situations, they say, "where long distances are the norm, people are likely to have a strong preference for improved accessibility, which reduces their travel distance to basic services and economic activities rather than seeking to increase the overall distance they travel" (478).

On the other hand, Preston and Ngah (2012) talk about similar changes in rural Malaysia.

> Increased human mobility which includes movement into, out of, and between rural areas (particularly with use of mobile communication systems…can paradoxically both stimulate and even make unnecessary some physical movement of people. Urban-based children with parents living in rural villages can call to check that they can buy enough durian fruit (for example) to fill their vehicle when they come to visit in order to sell on to friends and neighbors on their return to the city, potentially for the benefit of all concerned (p.360).

Olsson (2009) talks about the relationship between the direct and indirect effects of 'development' by citing Garrison and Souleyrette (1996).

> Transport improvement stimulates and enables, rather than creates, innovations (companion innovations) outside the transport sector, as it allows old things to be done in new ways and new things to emerge. In turn, these companion innovations drive social and economic advances. That old things can be done in new ways and new things can emerge implies. As pointed out by Lakshmanan and Chatterjee (2005), long-term changes in scale, composition, and location of economic activities induced by transport investments are more like development effects than growth effects. *Development implies a structural shift, where a new social and technical environment or a new set of economic opportunities emerges, and the pattern of relationships between the environment and social actor changes* (p.477).

To what Olsson is referring is the environmental and societal 'panarchy' process cycle.

Societal state shift: materialism, "convenience," and an altering village

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

Convenience, this material fruit of capitalism and modernity, was (and continues) becoming evermore part of their modern(ized) culture. Urban influence infiltration likewise had a near immediate and deep-seeding effect on villagers, creating an oil and water-like mixing of traditional *Lahu* and mainstream Thai societies.

Resource conservation for rural communities like *Pumuen* is necessary for survival. This all changes with 'development.' Convenience, along with the 'modern technologies,' has become the behavioral drug of choice. Moreover, villagers now, versus maintaining high skill in hunting and gathering local food, have become more dependent on the enticing elements of modernity.

Villagers were (and continue) depending more on this new market system, buying things that they used to grow such as rice and vegetables. They were (and are) becoming increasingly dependent on the timely arrival of the mobile market as well. Someone from the city operates this mobile market; he in the early morning uses a motorcycle to bring goods (mostly vegetables and occasional special order items, such as ice or whiskey) to the village.

Partially due to Thai government regulations related to what *Pumuen* villagers could and could not do in what had prior become a protected forest area, and especially because of the increasing intensity of villagers' engagements with money market related phenomena, a village grocery story was later developed. Villagers with these newfound opportunities for financial income also began purchasing motorcycles and other material goods. They began incurring financial credit debt (including at the village grocery store). They were adapting to accept and perpetuate a lifestyle of working in order to pay bills; this for them is a new form of economic slavery likening that of 'developed' world areas.

Hirsch (1989) talks about how road construction or village resettlement is often marketed as a means for villagers to access more 'convenience,' I suppose implying that, somehow, their lives would become easier once plugged into the urban matrix.

While I suppose this may be partially true:

> The question poses itself, convenience for whom? Not so much for the majority of villagers who have little occasion to leave the village for most of the year and who cannot afford electricity, as for the district and village administration, whose access to village and villagers is increased, and for whom development enhances 'ease of administration' and for the owners of transport among the village elite who stand to gain materially (Hirsch; 1989:51).

Luxny, 31, at sunset in February 2013 was sitting beside a species-diversified pile of aquatic critters placed atop a banana leaf. She had collected this grub from the mountain stream about an hour's walk away. This was enough food for one meal, yet she (with a hesitant giggle) shared a significant portion of it with another woman villager.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Luxny admitted that she cannot forest forage like this everyday because sometimes there is no fish available, unlike in the past. She sometimes purchases foodstuff from the market; she even had some processed foods (e.g., noodles) that she acquired from the village grocery store. However, she doesn't often use this store or the "mobile market" [or cannot perhaps because she has no money]. Besides, for her the urban market food "is not delicious;" nature-food "is more fresh and better to eat."

Luxny revealed that she has no land or money to build a house and lives with her sister. She used to have a small plot of land here that her mother gave to her; she sold it to another community member who now pays her to pluck the tea that is growing on this land. However, "the income is not enough" to make a livelihood. [Note: This, per the UN Millennium Ecosystems Assessment, is an example of exploitation by a wealthier someone who can purchase ecosystem services.]

She, who couldn't speak Thai well and clearly a bit embarrassed about this, did receive some formal education at the village's government/military school; however, she stopped studying there when she was fourteen years-old. She wants to learn more Thai language, though, so that she can "make friends with Thai people."

When asked about the technology changes that have recently and rapidly transpired here, she reported liking the television drama movies; "they're fun to watch." She enjoys the characters, but doesn't want to be like them. Regarding the electricity, *Luxny* shared a memory about not having much light while cooking rice. About her cellular phone, she "doesn't feel good" when considering the idea of not having this object because it allows her to contact other people. When asked about any aspirations she may have about the future: "I am satisfied to stay here like this…But I can make money while in the city; this is the only reason to go there."

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So with this new money market system in full-force, most villagers pick tea during the day versus living traditionally off from the land. This generates immediate expendable income, an addicting short-time reward for their hard days' work.

Pumuen villagers are evermore moving toward being 'busy' with daily life working on the farm. This was (and remains) alike having a day job at an office or factory. Just as in mainstream global (developed) societies, there arose for the *Pumuen* community members this social situation of having far less time for their spiritual practices, for taking care of their children, and for passing on traditions and indigenous knowledge. This is altering their societal core.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Preston and Ngah (2002) while referring to 'rapid development' and case studies of rural agrarian change in Malaysia, which they maintain is a country that is rarely referenced in recent debate about rural change in Southeast and East Asia, reference Ploeg and Renting (2004) as they "imaginatively conceptualize rural changes as 'broadening' – diversifying on-farm activities including helping to manage the immediate natural environment – and 'deepening' in focusing on quality (often organic) production" (353).

Considering notions of panarchy, particularly related with 'reorganization/mobilization:'

> Both authors [Ploeg and Renting] emphasize localities of production and the use of shorter market supply chains or 're-grounding,' involving existing social networks in communities to facilitate the inclusion of non-farm work into the household economy and developing new activities using skills less dependent on urban proximity. There may also be newcomers in rural communities who take up farming or engage in new, rural-based

activities. This view of rural change incorporates the viewpoint of those based in rural areas while, at the same time, recognizing the major national and global economic and political influences on rural change" (p.353).

Shigetomi (1992), who has studied village communities in rural Thailand, says the impact of the market economy on rural villages has subjected them to significant changes.

> This means essentially that each farming household as an economic unit increases its degree of dependence on the buying and selling of commodities. The changes that come about involve people ceasing their cooperative mutual relationships and related functions, and the individual households are placed into competition in order to cope with changes in their economic environment. This change is not unidirectional toward the dissolution of cooperative unity. The most significant impact has been the vanishing of abundant forestland, and the commercialization of labor. This has removed the need for some types of cooperative labor activities (e.g., families helping each other with the rice harvest), while also creating new forms of cooperation" (e.g., perhaps one household has a vehicle and shares the transportation of agricultural goods to the market) (p.154).

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

This situation is a melding of what Shigetomi refers to as 'market' and 'cooperative' transactions — the former being about profit and the latter being more about long-term benefits of societal unity and communal relationships. While Shigetomi's observatory hypothesis in many ways runs parallel to that of my observations in *Pumuen*, I would add that unity and communal relationships surely, at least in the past ten years, have not been nor are they currently *Pumuen* villages' societal trajectory. I have observed, and villagers have reported, that people are becoming more selfish both with the sharing of goods and cultural services as well as with their overall social behavior (e.g., domestic abuse, noise pollution, etc.).

In *Pumuen*, national and global economic and political influences (i.e., the global market system) is definitely evermore affecting villagers in the sense that they are evermore emulating city life, taking jobs in the city, inter-marrying across ethnicities, and buying things from their neighbors with cash money. Especially due to the road, and later the electricity, teenagers, for example, can now ride their motorcycles to other villages; whereas, they used to stay in their own village more. This also increased their access to alcohol and other drugs (and comparing themselves to other perhaps more economically well-off areas).

I maintain that this phenomenon overall could be argued as a detrimental byproduct of urbanization and the primary root of environmental and societal degradation. This is called social stratification, referring to a socio-system by which a society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy. The dynamics of this is dependent on an individual's lot in life. Their freedom of choice and action is intimately entwined. People make life based upon their related worldview. Likewise, a society that claims equality for all is not necessarily an equality opportunity for all.

"It's All About Knowledge;" *Jan Muu*, 18

[Issues addressed: social pressures; oral tradition; lack of options for some village youth; some positives of 'development;' outside exposure impacts]

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

"Life is all about having knowledge. I am studying high school in the city. My only goal now is to graduate, regardless of how difficult it is. If I have a good education, life is better. Only education can change the future. I want to have good food, a good life and help my community…

"Education will help my family too, if I have a good job and salary. When I lived in the village, I put my power toward survival. When I am in the city, I put my power toward education. I can now have a good chance to come back and help develop the village…

"Villagers must receive a Thai education until we are sixteen years-old. Many hill tribe children don't graduate from high school. Fewer than ten percent get to study in the city. The other ninety percent stay in the village but are at high risk of becoming a drug addict. Even if we don't have anything, having a higher education can help…

"I am one of the few who has a chance to study in the city. I want to know about everything, especially foreign languages. I want to speak Chinese. I can have more opportunities. I miss life in the village when I'm away. I never forget about it. When I feel sad, I think of my family and home. However, I feel good when I come back here and see that there is more development…

"Life for villagers now is a lot about having an income for supporting the family. I think people can keep their life more with development. The development of tourism is good. I feel good that there are tourists in the village, creating income for the villagers. We also now have things like toilets. It's all about having a good road…

"Currently there is a balance between the older and younger generations. I think older generations are cleverer than the newer generations. Young people are clever about technology. However, older generations know how to live…

"There needs to be a connection between the old and new generations. Newer generations must learn from their elders, and the newer generations should exchange knowledge with the older people. It's about balance. If there is no example, we will not know what we look like…

"Everything is changing. A bad thing I see happening is villagers are selling their land to people from outside the village. The new generations don't care as much about the cultural traditions.

"They are mostly interested in new technology and sometimes don't know how to use this technology in a good way. They now can easily use their motorcycles and travel outside the village. Many are getting into trouble or dying due to accidents…

"Technology can help develop people's lives faster. Villagers are also competing with each other and becoming more private. They are adapting themselves to be like someone else, like they are just wearing costumes. People want many things, more and more…

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

"As far as television being in the village now, if you watch good programs, you will get good knowledge. If you watch a bad program, you will get bad knowledge. Everyone thinks differently…

"The way of the world is endless. I think about why the world is lost and how we can walk in this world. We should live a sufficiency economy where people have good food and a job – not rich and not poor."

(February 2013)

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A posse of *Pumuen* teens, all of them around eighteen years-old, were perched near a newly founded village grocery store. It was Sunday mid-morning; music from the Christian church service was resounding throughout the village. When asked why they weren't at church, one youth said "Sunday is a holiday. This is the time to hang out around the village and watch television…I already believe in God. Why do I have to go to the Church?" The others admitted to just simply not wanting to attend services.

One of the youth stopped studying when she was thirteen years-old. The others said they had only finished elementary school. One male youth said that tomorrow he would ride his motorbike to the lowland city (*Fang*), where we would attend high school. When asked of their life aspirations, some said they will go find work in Bangkok. Most of the boys, however, said they upon turning twenty-one years old will become a soldier or Forestry officer.

I suppose these are their options, which their worldview limited aspirations provide at least provide for them some hopeful thoughts of structure and hope.

In February 2013, *Ana* (16), *Wichai* (17), and *Yo* (14) were hanging out.

What are you doing today?

It's Sunday. We're taking a holiday, hanging out around the village. We just returned from the Thai forestry office and got paid for our labor. We get 140 baht per day (US$5) when we work, doing things like clearing grass and brush. Tomorrow, we will go to school.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

What do you do with the money you earn?

We buy things like food and stuff for our parents.

Most of the village is at church right now. Why aren't you?

I believe in God. Why do I need to go to church?

What are your life dreams?

We want to continue learning, but our parents cannot support this. We will quit high school soon and join the Thai military. We don't have many options. The military will pay us 9,000 baht (US$270) per month. We will train for three years. Every man should become a soldier.

Do you feel pressured to be more like a Thai than a *Lahu*?

Because I live in Thailand, I have to follow the Thai rules.

What's it like being able to speak Thai?

It's awesome. I can go everywhere because I know how to speak Thai.

How come you aren't wearing your traditional *Lahu* clothing?

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

It's not the New Year's celebration. We participate in the cultural activities but don't regularly wear the traditional dress. We know the cultural traditions. We play music and dance when the tourists come.

What are your reasons for wearing the stylish hair and modern-style clothing?

It's from the city. It's Korean style. We want to look like those in the music bands. It's cool!

What's so cool about it?

It just is. It will attract a girl. In this village, there aren't many beautiful girls.

What about modern technology? Do you actually need it, or do you just want it?

We want a cellular phone, mostly to call home. We need a motorbike for traveling to work and school. We need a television because when we were younger we never saw a television. We'd be lonely without a television, especially when staying alone.

Do you want to live in the village when you are older?

Living in the village is much better than in the city; we feel free. When in the city, we think a lot, especially about our parents. However, we have our sights set for living outside of this village.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

4.2.3: 2005 - 2018: Capitalism, and Societal Roots of Transformation

The road brings: more power…more technology…more choices…more, vanishing culture

In 2005, the dirt road connecting *Pumuen* into the urban matrix also brought with it the solar cell. Glowing white flickering "clean" light bulbs quickly replaced the golden yellow glow of candles that *Pumuen* villagers had for decades been using as their light source.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

While villagers now had electricity, it's low-power limited villagers' usage capacity. They could operate black and white analog television, for example, but not (yet) satellite dishes, color television, karaoke machines, or other high-power requirement technology (which would later in many ways plague them). Watching television was not popular at first. When there was no television, they would walk to their neighbor's house, sit around the fire and talk together about life. This would also soon change.

By 2010, the beginning of a Thai government organized community based tourism project (which Promburom was assigned by the Thai government to research and initiate) was operating in *Pumuen* village. Foreigners (both Thai domestic and international) stay with a household that has passed a central Thai government-set quality standard and experience facets of village culture (e.g., food, music, and dancing).

Preston and Ngah (2002) address tourism in rural Southeast Asia areas. They reference Leksakundilok (2004) who says:

> While staying with village families has for some time been possible in countries with an important tourist industry such as Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, the provision of services such as village homestays as a coordinated part of community attempts to earn money from offering hospitality to tourists are more recent. Although ecotourism has become a term commonly associated with village-focused visits, and has grown in importance since the 1990s, such initiatives have often been driven by national and regional governments, and villagers have not necessarily actively participated in ensuring collective benefits" (p.358).

Promburom, an expert on community based tourism and handicrafts marketing, reported that by 1977 traditional handicrafts practices, particularly those involving silver, were completely gone from the *Pumuen* village area. The silversmith, for example, moved to another village because of land shortages. Actually, land scarcity was the main reason for villagers to emigrate to other villages such as *Huay Born*, *Nong Pai* and *Pong Hai* villages in Fang district. They had again become displaced, even after their families had lived there for a century.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

While Promburom asserts that community based tourism (CBT) is a tool that can provide *Pumuen* villagers with helpful "supplemental income," I maintain from observation that government organized tourism operations in highland villages, generally speaking, also are predominantly another form of business exploitation that often brings more direct financial benefit to those other than villagers (e.g., tourism operators). Tourism also brings even more city life to the village, which also has its cons and pros. However, CBT in rural villages like *Pumuen* differs from Thailand's mainstream tourism in a sense that tourism in the Thai lowlands is a fundamental element of modern Thai society and also serves as a substantial part of the national economy (ten to twenty percent of GDP).

Observing *Pumuen* and other villages throughout northern Thailand has led me to maintain that the traditions of one ethnicity (e.g., lowland Thais) cannot be weaved into that of another whose socio-fabric is far different and still synonymously maintain what is considered 'traditional' culture, regardless of marketing efforts. I supposed, though, that tourism does bring positive elements to highland areas. The CBT project that Promburom helped install in *Pumuen* village, for example, has brought with it the reinstallation of the traditional flute as a part of regular life there; whereas, these traditions were previously lost. Some children in *Pumuen* have learned how to play the flute, the drum, and how to dance. There likewise still exists in *Pumuen* area's Black Lahu village, with Christianity as this village's societal binding force, a palpable sense of community social cohesion and, for the most part, intact cultural traditions. The New Year's traditions including several days of dancing, food (e.g., sacrificing of many pigs), and communal sharing in *Pumuen* are being maintained. This is their time, for themselves.

Coming to a point of no return?

By 2011, villagers working in the city and the related lifestyle and social behavioral changes had become commonplace and culturally accepted. Moreover, adults aren't necessarily correcting the children's poor behavior. Social disorder is likewise also becoming more common as villagers begin to compete with each other more, using material possessions as a means of comparative measure. This is surely a prominent sociological trait of Western countries arguably as a result of the capitalist systems and material cultures that drive them.

In 2012, high power electricity was installed in *Pumuen Nai* (Black Lahu) village, while the traditional Red Lahu (animist) village nearby remained unpowered, for the time being.

All able community members of *Pumuen Nai* village were essentially forced by the Thai government to help build this small hydropower plant. If villagers refused, they had to pay a daily fine equating to about half of what they would make if they were to spend the day working in their tea farm. Furthermore, villagers who wanted, or perceived that they needed, electricity installed in their home paid US$100-$150 for the installation, which for them is a lot of money.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

While high power electricity has certainly brought to villagers modern conveniences (such as the light bulb) and perhaps a more comfortable life, this onset of electric availability has also brought with it a profound transformation of the village in-terms of social functioning. They are powered up, functioning ever-faster, trying to keep with the rest of the market driven world.

While the Black *Lahu* villagers still use fire for cooking and have yet to purchase machines such as a refrigerator or a rice cooker evident in other highland ethnic villages where high power electricity exists, "This electricity capacity has changed the villagers by giving them more choices related to technology such as color television, karaoke machines, and DVD players," said Promburom. "It's not like the solar cell. I observed that all households changed from black and white to color television, and with more satellite programming…Villagers now routinely watch movies at night-time, for example, and this has changed their way of life…The technology changed the way they interact with each other. They used to sit by the fire together. Now they all have their own television."

Villagers who do not have a satellite go to a neighbor who does. Now they don't use a candle because a light bulb does the job. Many of the children are watching television instead of playing traditional games outside. They imitate, even emulate, what they see on TV, including aggressive actions. The movie and soap opera channels are the most popular amongst villagers. This information is coming to them via their interpretations of media and also from their children who are living and working in the urban areas; they visit the village and also report via cellular phone.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Moreover, there is now what could be considered noise pollution in the village. Residents are playing music loudly, singing karaoke until late at night. Due to the walls of their homes still being constructed of thatched bamboo, this disturbs everyone Surely, related conflict that was not part of this villages' aesthetic environment has surfaced and will intensify. This materialism has also brought about social competition mirroring aspects of Western culture.

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Prior to modern technology, especially television, becoming part of village life, villagers commonly gathered in the evenings around a fire; they drank tea, and conversed about daily life. This for centuries has been their tradition. *Lahu* people are hunters and gatherers. When gathering the men would discuss perhaps discuss matters of family and hunting, the women about household activities such as catching fish or collecting vegetables. This was also a time for addressing more serious matters, including community conflicts. The natural element of fire was likewise a neutral space for the community to come together amid a safe space.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Television has since largely become their electronic campfire. They gather and laugh about what they are observing, particularly the commercials and the fighting scenes. It is a lighthearted

way of peering into a way of life that villagers never get to see otherwise. In 2013, I received a chance to talk with fourteen villagers doing exactly this.

"In the past, we used candles or gas lanterns," a villager said. "We'd hang out...And later when there was no electricity (besides solar power), we used the black and white television. Many people would come watch; sometimes there wasn't even space for the house owner" exclaimed a villager with a shared laugh.

"We love to see the Thai people in the city," said one villager, adding that they know what they are watching "is not creative television that will bring us knowledge...We don't completely understand what they're talking about. We know from their actions that they're fighting but don't understand why. We just look. It's for fun…

"Not many of us go live in the city," another villager said. "We prefer to stay with family. There are many bad men in the city...It's dangerous there. We watch the mood and see bad things. We go to the city only to get more knowledge...It's safer here in the village; there's no pollution."

Preston and Ngah (2002) talk about how "different generations of rural people experience and adapt to changes in different ways. Older people are less likely to migrate and are increasingly mindful of how difficult life is in the city" (355).

These authors additionally say:

> This increasing awareness that some amenities taken as normal by urban people (e.g., good roads, not suffering from regular flooding, organized waste disposal, access to postal services and communal facilities for meetings and recreation, technologies and other modern conveniences, etc.) has resulted in the inadequacies of such facilities in these rural areas" (p. 356).

"We want the stuff we see advertised on TV, but it's too expensive," said another villager. "Now we just look at it...If we have a salary, we can buy things. If I have money, a car, a house, my life will feel better." Regarding language, "When we go to the city, we don't speak *Lahu* language. However, now even when we are deep in the forest, we use our mobile phone to connect with each other, and we speak *Lahu*."

Before, they "hadn't seen the outside world...It didn't fit into our ways of life. We thought this was better but have learned differently. Now we have bills to pay and worries we didn't have before." They are seeing the impacts that outside influences are having on their culture, especially with their children. Still, they feel like they "need to look like those on TV," said one villager.

So, what if their television access were suddenly removed? “We don’t want to go back to not having TV...Everyone else also wants to know how much things cost and how much people on television make for a salary. But we don’t want to see the bad things, like Coca-Cola, shampoo, and other material goods. We know how to live without all of this material stuff. We’re used to not having it.”

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

I maintain that traditional ways of village life and a modern technological society cannot authentically exist simultaneously; they clash. In addition to global economic market forces, outside influences are essentially tearing villagers’ traditional culture apart because they are receiving and accepting ideas that life may be better out there, somewhere else.

They joke about what is happening on television because they are at the earliest stages of modern ‘development’ and modernity respectively and related materialism; they likewise cannot tangibly identify with the media messages that are deeply influencing them. They are seemingly in shock, desperately trying to maintain their ways of life while slowly adapting to the encroachment of a modernized way of life that is pulling them in one television program at a time.

A villager stated that people collecting a salary have “a better way of life.” And a man while watching television mentioned “the end of the world” before asking me, “If someone has a big house and big money, why does he kill himself?”

Without much hesitation at all, this is how I responded to his question:

> “Having all of those material things will not make you happy; this is a lie...Those people have established their sense of security in material goods. However, people who can take care of themselves, live off from the land, and not be dependent on others can perhaps be happier and more secure.
>
> “It is an illusion that everybody in America, for example, is rich and happy. Most are economic wage slaves and work very hard to pay for the things they don’t really need. The idea that American life is one of relaxed privilege is simply untrue…
>
> “There is actually much poverty and violence in America. It is social inequality that causes this scenario, particularly when people compare themselves to others. When one household has a color television set and another doesn’t, this naturally becomes the basis of desire to work more, get more, and justify working jobs they may not enjoy.”

Considering my words, he said: “But we want to have the things we see on television and travel because we’ve never had a chance...Now I am old and have never gone anywhere. We don’t have money.” Yet, with this implementation of modernity, “our culture is changing.

Q: Then why do you turn the lights on?

Because the light makes our life more convenient. With fire, we can see only as far as the fire will allow. We also had to buy candles and batteries, which are expensive. With the electricity, we pay once per month.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Q: Are you exchanging your culture for convenience?

Yes. But we will stay with the convenience. We can do many things.

Q: Can you balance using modern technology with maintaining your culture?

We know things will change, and we do want to preserve our culture.

[end of interview]

In a (*Lahu*) culture that is based in gender and social equality, a family in *Pumuen* that sees its neighbor has electricity now believes that they also must have electricity. *Farlae*, whom you will hear about and from shortly, said in an interview with me that, “I can’t really afford this electricity. However, I want my children to have what the others have.” This alone is a signifier of a societal system state change. Does this sound familiar to mainstream ‘developed’ and *supposedly* more ‘civilized’ society?

These village youths on a beautiful sunny day were planted in front of this television set. When asked if they want to go outside and play games with the others, one of them said they “are lazy today” and “this is more fun than playing outside.” They do also like to walk through the forest and play in the waterfall. If no television is available, then they will go play outside.

When asked what is so intriguing about watching TV, they said it is the characters — the danger, adventure, and the heroes. This is especially true regarding those fighting against the devil.

They especially remember Superman. They also admitted to not understanding everything they see; “We just look at the picture.” They quickly lost interest in talking further with me.

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In June 2014, the dirt road connecting *Pumuen* village area with the lowlands was paved, shortly before the installation of a second Thai government funded hydroelectric power plant that now powers the Red *Lahu* village that has existed there since the 1880s. So, a traditional animist village community that has never had any modern amenities was abruptly plugged into the high power grid. According to a villager, the tarred road and high power hydro-plant has resulted in the community members near immediately purchasing vehicles (resulting in loan debt), washing machines, rice cookers, and color televisions. The infrastructure was quickly overtaxed, resulting in power outages (and community confusion). Moreover, the previously mentioned Red *Lahu* headman’s nightmare came true.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

The tar road is good for farming logistics though, making it far easier to transport their tea products to sell in the city. It’s also easier to take sick people to the clinic or hospital. However, in the case of *Pumuen*, the theory that the road surely leads to education opportunities I maintain is a farce, as funding was cut off for the lowland Thai school that used to provide extended high school education for *Pumuen*’s older youth. This, as previously mentioned, has rendered the younger generations essentially lost amid the cracks of a marginalized society.

Preston and Ngah (2012) say, “It is also necessary to observe, in the context of personal and cultural history, the process whereby rural areas, physical resources and people are remembered and sometimes idolized (as remarked particularly in Thailand)” (359). They continue by referencing studies reviewed by Rigg & Vandergeest (2012), which “demonstrate how the village retains both symbolic and physical importance but different trajectories of change may in some circumstances revitalize existing economic and social activities or, in others, fundamentally change the nature of villages/communities. This underlines the need to recognize the complexity of change over time, and the limitations of generalized conclusions” (p.357).

Wrapping-up this 'de' of development story

If there is one person in *Pumuen* village who can help us capstone this ethnographic story with more detail and current information, this person is *Farlae*. She has since 2012 been my primary village contact. We have shared in countless conversations. This has been over meals, while walking on the road or in the forest, and especially at night-time lying there in the dark readying for sleep. Even though a thatched bamboo wall stood between our two rooms, it seems that few barriers existed in-terms of the information that *Farlae* shared with us.

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It was late evening in February 2013 when I had one of the first conversations with *Farlae*. We sat atop well-worn wooden stools placed upon her kitchen's dirt floor. Before starting our conversation, with *Farlae*'s permission I shut off the stark white fluorescent lights that she (with the high power electricity) had installed three months prior.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Knowing that when *Farlae* was born in this village thirty-four years ago there were no such facilities, I (with intensions of psychologically warping her back to her childhood) also lit candles and placed them throughout our interview location. *Farlae*, noticeably weary from a long and tiresome day of farm work and taking care of her growing family, became near immediately sacred-medicine-pacified by these candles' flickering yellow glow. Now, almost like a hypnosis session, we had a good talk.

Farlae recalled her childhood involving candlelit evening-time dinners with friends and family. Afterward, they would sit around the fire and sip tea; this daily ritual was their time to talk and to regroup. Warm and relaxed, they would go to bed early, wake up at sunrise, prepare food for breakfast and lunch, and then have a productive day.

However, now with the electricity this is changing. *Farlae* said that many villagers, including her own family members, eat quickly and then watch television. They stay up late and in the morning "feel lazy." She said that staying up late with the television makes her feel sick. About using candles versus electricity, *Farlae* said that "the candles are more natural" and help her relax at days' end. However, candles are expensive, even more-so than the electricity.

Fifty percent of the villagers wanted the high-power electricity installed. She said one reason this community wanted the electricity is because they observed others villages having this modern convenience tool. *Farlae* admitted that she "needs" the electricity (and the electronics) because she does not want her children to be among the kids in the village who don't have it. In the USA, for example, this material "have and have-not" phenomenon is called, "keeping up with the Jones.'" I have for nearly eight years in Se-Asia been witnessing this in its earliest societal stages. Anyway, *Farlae* is happy to have the electricity. The fluorescent bulb emits more light. However, she complained a bit that now she has a monthly for the electricity, the satellite, the motorbike, and her children's education. She said that now she has no money.

Farlae explained about her daily life, which I over five years have observed become evermore hectic. Her routine still involves waking up just before sunrise, washing dishes and brushing her teeth before lighting a fire and cooking breakfast. Her children awake, eat, and then scurry off to school. *Farlae* and her husband then go to the farm. Sometimes she goes to the forest and forages for food such as fish and herbs. She especially likes the taste of the stream fish. She "needs this sometimes," as this is her base cultural diet.


Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Sometimes, the mobile market doesn't come, so she has no food stuffs. This is especially the times when she goes forest foraging. She does this accompanied by other village women or just with her children. Sometimes she goes alone, and friends watch her children (i.e., cultural service). With the mobile market, villagers can also acquire processed foods ("dessert"), which they also like. Regardless of the circumstances, she said that "When you come to the *Lahu* village you can have food; no problem." With synthetic products coming in from the city, this also brought about more trash strewn throughout the villages area. I have observed that villagers are seemingly unaware that the glass and plastic won't deteriorate as did their food's previously organic wrappings (e.g., banana leaves).

Walking with Farlae one day we discussed about this, how there was trash strewn all over the roadside, mostly from "dessert" brought from the city. She said the kids mostly do this while walking home from school. They don't listen to the parents who tell them not do this. But the adults throw trash too. She said the villagers don't think about it; they just do it. In the past, villagers raised the pigs and walked down the road. It was dirty with feces.

The teenagers get drunk nowadays and then throw trash around, she said. It used to not be like this. She said that the merchandise "from the outsiders" affects them, including the alcohol. She said the youth respect the elders when they are sober. But they get drunk and sometimes do bad things to other people. When *Farlae* was a kid, young people here didn't drink. She said the kids imitate the adults. She is worried that the newer generations are going keep imitating this "terrible behavior" and doesn't want to see it.

Farlae confirmed that *Pumuen* villagers in the past were growing rice and had domesticated pigs, buffalo, and cows. "It was natural, and we didn't have to buy anything." Villagers later had orchards. However, the Thai Forestry Department mandated villagers' land use regulations impacted this. For example, the pigs (at least initially) had to be kept in a pen and buffalo were not allowed to freely roam. The government's concern is/was that the roaming pigs and buffalo would destroy the orchard or the recently planted trees.

She said villagers nowadays do not entirely depend on the mobile market. If they need something, they ask their neighbors to share. *Farlae* often talked about how there used to be "an abundance of food" that they never had to purchase. Nowadays their food is expensive, which seems to be her primary annoyance and concern. Some villages use fertilizer and pesticide, but here they do not. They raise pigs for consumption, which are especially eaten during the new rice festival in October. She talked about her tea farm and how the tea doesn't grow well during the dry season; this is when she has to find other income provisioning goods.

Farlae shared that her mother died during labor. Her father, couldn't take care of her because he was opium addicted. She was adopted by *Jasuu Jamoo* because he did not have children. She at eleven years-old went to the city for study. Her father (*Jasuu*) worked for the Forestry Department and would buy milk for *Farlae* and walk all the way from the village to the city and visit her. *Farlae* said that she always wanted to "go back home" with him. When she was thirteen, she had to return to the village and attend the government military school here because her father ran out of money. After she studied in the village school, *Jasuu* sent her to a Chinese language school for one year. Then she returned to the village and got married when she was seventeen years-old, which is a traditional time for the *Lahu* to marry. She and her husband, *Jafa,* had to stay with her father for two years. Then she had to stay with her husband's family. This is the *Lahu* tradition. Her father eventually helped them with acquiring the wood necessary for building a house.

Farlae recalled as a youth rarely receiving a chance to have things like dessert (e.g., processed food). The village's house-roofs were made from grass. All food was natural and organic. She enjoyed her childhood, including the toys she used to play with. It was a slow life. People took care of each other. She said that the road and the electricity are the primary drivers of this change. Now villagers are busy busy busy, and have had to alter their life accordingly.

Survival

In April 2014, *Farlae* and family were cleaning up what remained of their orchard. The hail storm that happened a week prior — a climate change related phenomenon villagers here had never before experienced — near totally decimated their tea and coffee trees. "It was like snow coming down," said *Farlae*. She and the others were giggling about this event. Maybe this was a nervous laughter, while trying to stay positive. Little did they know that in 2018 another devastating hail storm would ensue.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

This storm happened when the tea trees aren't producing much, and not much Forestry Department hard labor work is available. It is challenging for them during this time. Therefore, this is when villagers catch fish and hunt animals. During these times of year, villagers rely on credit at the village store. They also go to the city and look for wage labor jobs, pretty much "any job." Villagers live and work in the city during the week, but many return to the village on the weekend. [So, without the market or the need or ability to earn paper money, they return back to the traditional ways. The market/cash is another indirect driver of change.]

Does *Farlae* have a hard life up here? "It's hard, but we can stay alive," said *Farlae*. "The main thing that makes life hard here is not having money." She added that if her children graduate with a bachelor degree, this will make life easier. This is so that the younger generations can do something else and send money back to their family. Modern-day villagers see "higher education" (versus their indigenous knowledge) as the key to survival in this modern world. *Farlae* would also like to gain a higher education, but her family could not afford it. She had to choice but to return to the village and take care of her family. … Yet, this also creates a situation that perpetuates this overall phenomenon. So formal "education" is both a direct and an indirect driver of change.

When asked during another interview about the traditional textiles (e.g., clothing and handicrafts), particularly regarding their usage by the youth, *Farlae* said that some village kids regularly wear traditional clothing. All of *Farlae*'s kids have traditional clothing. Parents must buy their children this clothing. This is the local policy that all children \wear traditional *Lahu* dress at the village's school. The clothing is expensive, though, and most villagers have only one set. When parents buy from the *Lahu* market down in the lowlands, it is more difficult buying clothing for the younger kids because they quickly outgrow them.

Villagers "are lazy" to make the clothing," said *Farlae.* Moreover, nobody really knows how. She said that people don't want to teach and nobody wants to learn. The children are not interested in learning the weaving (and other traditions). They see the "many processes" (e.g., small pieces to the back-strap loom) and "don't want a headache." Villagers also do not have time nowadays because they are so busy during the daytime doing farm work. One day if these sacred skills are gone they are gone, said *Farlae*.

One village woman who knows how to weave wants to share her knowledge, but she doesn't know how to teach. Also, she is paying attention more to their businesses nowadays than the traditional knowledge, said *Farlae*. Maybe, even though her mother taught her how to weave, does not believe it is her responsibility. *Farlae* revealed that this woman said if someone comes to teach her then she will pass forward her knowledge. [Villagers not knowing how to pass on the indigenous knowledge, and also youth not being interested, are indirect drivers of ESS changes.]

On another day, *Farlae* was sitting upon her living room floor. She and a group of lady friends were making handicrafts. *Farlae* can make some simple handicrafts, a simple pattern, but cannot do traditional weaving. She is dismayed by the fact that she cannot weave. Her grandmother knew how but was very old and passed away. *Farlae* shared about receiving a traditionally weaved textile from her grandmother. She said it would be nice if someone would come to the village and teach, but the villagers do not know how to make this happen.

Farlae explained that when was a kid pretty much all villagers made their clothing. These skills disappeared from here thirty years ago. She said villagers used to wear their traditional clothing every day, even to work. Now they mostly only wear them to Sunday church service. [So the traditional dress became formal wear.]

Farlae's traditional dress wearing habits changed when she was a youth, during when she studied in the city. The youth, including her, were not allowed to wear their *Lahu* dress, so she

adapted. In the three years she was studying, the village had already changed regarding the traditional clothes wearing. [So urban dwelling is another indirect driver of change]. She said the village headman nowadays tries to persuade villagers to wear their traditional dress.

If people are not wearing their traditional dress, is this a signifier of greater changes in the society? What does this phenomenon mean to her? *Farlae* said that villagers feel the same inside regardless of whether they are wearing the traditional dress. But "it's better" if they wear the traditional dress. Her father, *Jasuu Jamoo*, as the village preacher every Sunday talks about culture. He said many people come to *Pumuen*. It is good if when they come that they see people here are Black *Lahu*, explicitly evident by their clothing.

Farlae said the traditional clothing is one thing. However, it is mainly the *Lahu* language that reveals their culture. Many *Pumuen* villagers speak *Lahu*. However, the younger generations are no longer speaking *Lahu* as much as before. This is alarming.

Mono-cropping, shifting society, and resilience (October 2018 interview):

While Pumuen villagers are evermore diversifying their livelihoods, tea cultivation remains their primary livelihood source. Considering the global and national market, as well as climate change (e.g., those two hail storms), Farlae admits that mono-cropping is not the most prudent community planning idea. Recognizing the related dangers with mono-cropping, villagers are now growing other crops such as avocado, cherry, plum, and persimmon. Many villagers during July and August when there is low tea yield leave the village and do farm jobs elsewhere.

Fortunately, *Farlae* is equipped with indigenous knowledge tools that provide her with a true and sustainable sense of security and overall well-being. Her overall freedom of choice and action is somewhat limited, though.

Farlae is highly resourceful and diversifies her livelihood; she is exemplary of resilience. Likewise, her traditional upbringing is her true bank account and grocery store. This is not the case with many villagers, especially the youth who do not seem to realize the potential doom that is looming not far from their villages' doorstep.

She admits that having enough rice is her primary provisioning concern. However, when things are bad for her, such as when her cash crops were decimated by a storm or when she is low on cash money, she can revert to her bartering skills and trade wild forest plants with rice lowland farmers. *Farlae* said she can always acquire provisioning services from her surrounding natural environment, but "this puts pressure on the forest." She said that villagers have their own

management system and related cultural norms, such as taking only the big plants. She regularly brings her kids into the forest and shares her knowledge with them. They camp overnight and cherish doing this together. They collect many things, and use the motorbike to carry it all back to the village. She said that she "doesn't know about the future, but I show my children how to do this. Not all parents do this."


Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Nowadays, the Thai Forestry Department allows this village to collect forest goods (non-timber forest products), but people from other villages are not allowed to come here and collect. Local people also know if someone is not from there, said *Farlae*. Villagers help the Forestry officers manage the forest, particularly with creating a buffer zone for regional burning season forest fires. Villagers receive a small fee. [This illustrates a core motivation for the central government to allow these people to live here: not necessarily about helping people but rather national resource management policy.]

What about (top-down) government involvement in *Pumuen*?


Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

All *Pumuen* villagers, nowadays, have Thai citizenship (or at least have Thai ID cards). However, two families from Myanmar came to there. They didn't have Thai ID cards and were eventually arrested and jailed.

Regarding infrastructure and facilities, the lowland Thai electricity office maintains the power infrastructure. Repairs are free; however, the community pays for the municipal vehicles' and workers' transportation costs. *Pumuen* manages its (ample) water supply. The *Tambon* Administrative Office (TAO) provides garbage services three times per month. Villagers sell the recyclables.

What is mandated by the Thai District Governor is 'community service development' initiatives, such as forestry work, cleaning the Church and government school, picking up garbage strewn throughout the village, working on the dam, etc. Villagers are divided into task-oriented and color-coded groups, which compete for prizes and prestige. *Farlae* (leader of the yellow team)

once earned second place for an organic food cooking contest. Each group has rules. People, if they are lazy or refuse to participate, have to pay a fine to the *Amphur* (district) government.

The District government office has provided villagers with trainings for making soap from tea. The new village "hill tribe shop" was created in 2015, which is supposed to be a place for villagers to sell to tourists these goods (along with their other crafted textiles). The problem now is that villagers do not have money to buy the base materials. Three years later, this building is empty and dusty; however, villagers make it look nice during the Monarchs' annual visit. [I met Thai Princess *Chakri Sirindhorn* in 2015, during her visit to initiate the hill tribe shop; she took a copy of my book unto her helicopter.] Villagers also get paid a small amount to attend lowland cultural events. They learn new skills and also share about their indigenous culture; the Thai Tourism Authority arranges this.

Many Thai government departments are competing for funds. There is likewise more quantity now but not as much quality. Sometimes, villagers are essentially used for many national policies related initiatives. They are targets for this, subject to budget motivated directives. I suppose, all stakeholders are doing their best to manage this overall 'development' situation.

Farlae said that although the Government is never far away she feels free in *Pumuen*, that the government does not control the village too much. The Thai military does come into the village sometimes. In addition to checks regarding protected animal species, they organize drug enforcement and education trainings at the school, as the school master is a Thai Army soldier. This three-day exercise involves villagers getting paid about US$3 per day to attend this three-day training. [So this area surely remains as an international border buffer zone.]

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

For provisioning services and overall sense of security, a good thing happening in *Pumuen* is that a buffalo husbandry project has been re-organized by the *Lahu* Baptist organization. This started ten years ago. Villagers are selected for participation via a lottery. The first and fourth baby buffalo belong to the participating villager; then the mother is returned to the Church/Organization and the lottery is re-initiated.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Farlae once had two of these buffalo. When things got tight financially, she sold one for about USD $1,000. She spent half this money on debt. The other half went for a down payment on a new motorbike as well as a grass cutter for clearing weeds that grow around her organic tea trees. About twelve households now have buffalo. Now that *Pumuen* villages' encompassing forest has been restored [improved ESS regulating services] the Forestry Department allows these buffalo (as well as cows) to roam the forest.

So with development's perils there is some good; it is a mixing of multi-layered reality. This notion, however, is really about the question: development for whom?

Socio-ecological degradation and an uncertain future

It is not as idyllic here as some outsiders may believe (as I used to as well). *Farlae* does suffer. However, she appreciates that she "has freedom" in some degree to "not be controlled by city life." She lived in the city, but feels more secure here in *Pumuen* because she knows that she can always collect food. Her indigenous knowledge is her capital. In the city, she has to purchase everything. *Farlae* admits to know knowing much about city life, or what the future may bring for her and *Pumuen* village. She has, though, seen that "city people live alone…no mother, father, family, or community."

She was asked why she laughs so much. She tries to "let go" of her suffering. If people keep it inside, they won't be smiling and will become sick. Moreover, if they don't manage their misery than it is culturally considered "a bad performance," she said.

Farlae was asked what is a good life to her and for other villagers. She said that ninety-five percent of *Pumuen* villagers are "poor farmers; five percent are rich." Regardless of wealth, "having dinner together is important," she said. "Many people come to join, and they care about each other…It makes them feel happy when they have health and warm family. It makes the food more delicious."

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Farlae over the last five years has continually (and privately) shared with me some aspects of *Pumuen*'s societal illnesses. She feels "sad" that the village has changed so much. While their encompassing natural environment has improved, their access to natural provisioning services enhanced, their socio-fabric is arguably degrading. She explained again that the television has had a big influence. Before, only one person in the village had a television. If people wanted to watch they had to pay a small fee. Her father, *Jasuu*, didn't allow her to watch television and movies. Sometimes, though, she would see movies anyway. Any violence, especially with guns, would make her scared. [This reveals the innocence.]

Life for her is now "more convenient." They have a mobile phone and other technologies. She uses the phone to communicate with her son while he is in the city. However, "The teenagers are addicted to their phones. They don't want to work." The community is doing is best at adapting to so much change.

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Jasuu Jamuu said in an October 2018 interview with me that he agrees that tea mono-cropping is not a smart idea, as the tea price fluctuates. He also talked about how twice in four years this village has experienced a devastating hail storm. It took two months for their crops to recover. This used to transpire maybe every ten years but now is happening more often. He said that the government after these storms gave to villagers only a small amount of money to fix their house roofs but did not provide agricultural support. He says that "life is hard here."

Preston and Ngah (2002) emphasize that "de-agrarianization as a concept does recognize the decline in the importance of farming as a part of household livelihoods. This filters into other

aspects of village life. It is one element of a relatively longstanding and widespread rural change process" (361). *Pumuen* villagers essentially have yet to experience any notable 'bottom-up' community development processes. Yet, as Kelly, Yutthaphonphinit, Seubsman, and Sleigh point out in their article, "Development Policy in Thailand: From Top-down to Grass Roots," the "most effective development processes in Thailand have historically been those which rely on the least amount of outside promotion and the most organic spontaneity in the creation of community development groups" (Kelly et al; 2012: 11).

In-terms of multi-level governance, *Jasuu* said there and no non-government boundary organizations working in this village, only the *Lahu* Baptist organization. This organization hires people to teach about four cultural pillars (i.e. *Lahu* culture overall, language (*Lahu* and Thai), music, and about religion). *Jasuu* said he is looking for further outside support, particularly related with buffalo husbandry. This is important especially during the time of year when villagers cannot receive sufficient income from cash crops. The income earned from selling a buffalo can help them for many months. About social degradation and this village's future, every Sunday he as the Church pastor teaches about *Lahu* culture values and ethics. Fifty percent of the villagers are bad and fifty percent are good, he said. "But those who drink alcohol and do other drugs don't attend church nor listen to me," he said. "They don't like me."

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Jasuu said the newer generations are emulating city people. He said that just twenty years ago there was no alcohol or drugs in this village. Nowadays, some villages even have heroine. He explained that alcohol and other drugs came to *Pumuen* most prominently about four years ago. This started with one household, when a group of gangsters from Myanmar arrived with drugs, weapons, and money. They were shooting automatic weapons into the sky. Not long afterward, the Thai Army came to the village and chased them away. *Jasuu* said that some of *Pumuen*'s elders are trying to teach their children the traditional ways. However, the youth say they "know" everything. Nowadays, neither he nor the other adults can control this social degradation phenomenon. This is happening throughout many villages, he said.

A disturbing aspect of *Jasuu*'s report is parent-child violence like he has never before seen. You, especially the males, are demanding money from their parents (especially from mother). If the parent disagrees, it has happened recently that the youth physically attacks his parents. This has happened with several families.

When asked why this social degradation is happening, in *Pumuen* and seemingly throughout the 'developed' and 'modern world,' *Jasuu* said it is prophesized in the (*Lahu*) Bible that "in the future there won't be any good people in this world. They will all have been gone…Seven women will be fighting to get one good man…There is going to be war around the world, war around the village, war around the household, war around the family, and war with father and son."

Jasuu "prays every night" for his fellow village family, "asking for blessing and that they think more about this."

In conclusion of this ethnography

I have since 2013 been annually coming to this village area. Facets of what I have observed throughout this time remain in-terms of a nourishing natural environment and a fairly intact social fabric. Also, every time I come here it has become a more chaotic place, further reinforcing my hypothesis about the societal perils of economic capitalism — the 'de' of 'development.'

The most recent time in December 2018 was by far the starkest manifestation of this reality. Between the loud music playing day and night and many of the teenagers behaving like wild animals while racing through this village with their loud-piped motorbikes, it is obvious that people here are becoming evermore selfish and caring less about how their individual actions are impacting those collectively around them.

The new year as well as the new rice ceremonies, even amidst the modern madness that these people must interface nowadays, is a time for them to return to their roots and regroup. However, this year in *Pumuen* urban-like chaos ensued. There was onslaught of motorbikes and cars, droning city dance club music to which the village children were jumping around mindlessly (the village leader directed this noise to be shut off). Another notable phenomenon was the plastic junk available for the children, which the parents were pressured to buy. After the traditional dinner, nobody helped pick things up. They just left everything for the laboring women and then when to the football field.

I had never before seen this. I did not realize just how chaotic it was until I retreated to a village elder's house placed above the village, where we both decompressed. I could barely recognize this place; I wanted to leave as soon as possible.

A village informant there told me that one of the most prominent problems now is the alcohol. Even the women drink nowadays, which has generally been a rarity. This is especially noticeable during the cultural ceremonies, when before alcohol was prohibited. I have seen this in other villages to, with drinking and fighting (crazy stuff).

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

In addition to the aforementioned phenomenon of children attacking their parents when denied their money or material demands, one household involves a youth waking up every day at sunrise and cranking up the music, which then blares throughout the village. He stands outside, screaming into nowhere like a crazy man. He does this even though his parents don't want it and try to stop him. It was reported me that this boy's brain is fried from methamphetamines. It was reported that one man recently killed himself by drinking pesticide; this came after a fight with his wife. Are people here going insane?

Quantity of life for this community in-terms of money and stuff may be increasing; however, quality in-terms of overall societal environment is definitely decreasing. This community is fairly cohesive, though, or at least it appears as such. Either way, the era here of gentle quietude, an inherent personality of these rural village communities (and human beings, perhaps) is just simply no more. I mean, what is transpiring in this place in order for these societal phenomena to surface, and to semi-solidify in such a short time period?

While core elements of 'traditional' culture remain in *Pumuen*, for now, this village area largely as a result of government top-down development policies is becoming evermore plugged into mainstream Thai and global society, dissolving their root socio-fabric that is being replaced by incompatible threads of development modernity. Considering societal panarchy, it appears this community is near the collapse release stage; their future is uncertain, to say the least.

As illustrated in Figure 1, *Pumuen* has functionally transformed from that of nature-subsistence ways of life — arguably more in-balance with its natural surroundings than people living in what is considered the 'modern world' — to that of being near totally dependent on a cash economy and its global market driven systems.

This villages area, for now, does maintain socially nourishing positive attributes in-terms of its overall functioning. This including intact core beliefs attributed to some traditional *Lahu* ways of life (e.g., language, dress, some ceremonies, forest activities, etc.) and particularly a healthy village church. This community as well has community cohesion in micro-level decision-making. However, villagers have particularly in the last sixty years experienced marked changes in both their socio-environment and overall functioning, and not necessarily for the better.

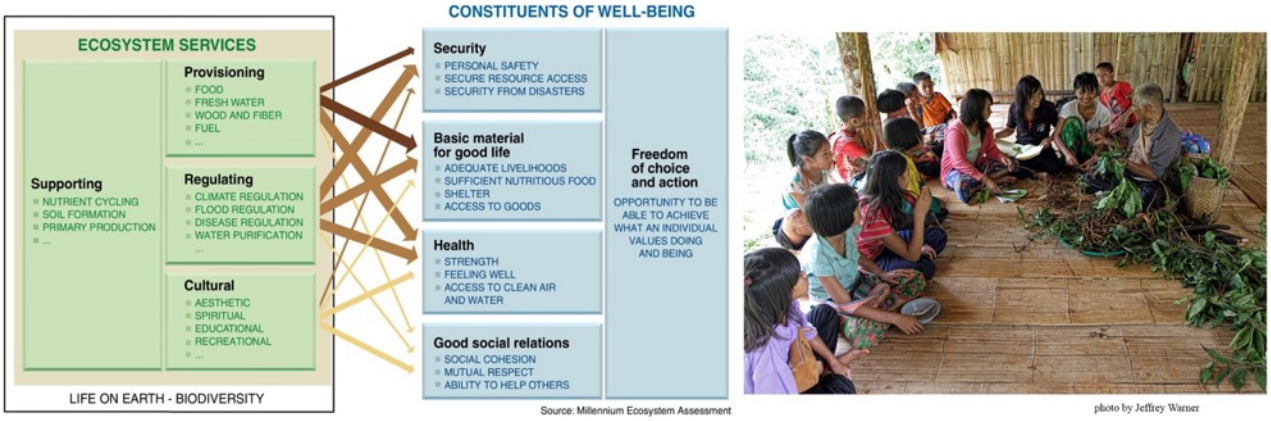
This development process has happened one decade, one development policy, one primary and secondary change at a time. This is gradually building into a transformed societal system that is totally normal to some villagers (the youth), recognizable by some (the middle-aged), and as though another world to the elders. It has become a semi-functioning mess, if baseline compared to an era in their cultural histor y where their societal functioning was ordered by indigenous knowledge based principles governed by finite natural resources.

"These are the consequences of developing this village area over the past one hundred and forty years," said Promburom. "You can see the holistic elements of the village, what is going to change, what has changed…I have now come here since doing my initial research and see the impacts that development has had on this village," added Promburom, with evident emotion. "The electricity has changed a lot of things. It used to be a peaceful area (and still is in most ways). Now there is noise from the music, the DVD players, and there are drunken people walking around in this village. These are behavioral changes, in a bad way that I don't want to see…

"I know that when change (modernization) comes, the villagers have to change as well. But I would like to see this village not change so much…We should have a management system, so that the community changes slowly and their ways of life are sustained. Culture is the core, the root of the human species; it says who we are…We will do what we can do to preserve this."

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

Chapter 5: Analyses of Ecosystem Services



Ecosystem services and human well-being model. (Source: www.researchgate.net; photography by thesis author)

This chapter considers factors included in the 'development timeline' (Figure 4.2), created from ethnography based research of the *Pumuen* villages primary case study area and transplants them into an ecosystem services qualitative and quantitative analysis. In doing so, I continue looking at three distinct panarchy related societal system state changes that this area has undergone: 1) subsistence/primitive (1800s-1950); 2) the area's 'development' in-terms of a top-down State intervention in collective affairs (1950s – 2005); and 3) capitalism and modernity, particularly related with road and electricity impacts (2005-2018).

Part one of this chapter performs a qualitative consideration of *Pumuen*'s ESS-related provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting services respectively. Real life factors learned from in-field observations and interviews are placed into the three timeframes meant for representing societal system state changes that the case study area has experienced.

Part two transforms this ethnographic based organization into a graphed quantitative analysis meant for displaying the case study area's ecosystem services' longitudinal change *trends*. This pictorially articulates what has actually happened there over the past one hundred-forty years, and also what this may mean in and for the bigger picture.

This methodology, while imperfect, at least capacitates theoretical space for discussions related with specific ecosystems systems service factors. Part three reveals trends in *Pumuen* villagers' overall human well-being.

5.1: Perusing *Pumuen*'s Transforming Ecosystem services

5.1.1 Provisioning

	1880s … until	1950s … until	2005 - 2018
PROVISIONING	• Clean and ample water supply; perhaps, some issues with water quantity due to deforestation • Staple foods are upland rice, forest plants and hunted animals • Some domesticated animals (especially) pigs) are used for consumption and income • No (or minimal) cash economy: barter and sell forest goods and opium • Wood (for cooking/heat) • Bamboo (and some wood) for house construction, tools, and other livelihood aspects • Forest products used for clothing and medicine	• Upland rice is the staple food; however, this is greatly reducing (i.e. lowland paddy rice is later acquired) • Solidifying transition to orchard cultivated cash crops (e.g. lychee, coffee, tea, peach, plum, etc.) • Increasing cash market economy: barter and sell forest goods (opium is eventually eliminated); wage labor • Natural foods from wild plants and hunting; some domesticated animals. This is reducing due to government land use restrictions (e.g. no forest dwelling animal husbandry, collecting or hunting of "protected" species) • Wood used for cooking and heat (with Thai Forestry Dept. restrictions) • Bamboo for house construction, but lessening frequency for other livelihood aspects (i.e. technologies use change) • Reducing biodiversity with forest restoration (i.e., non-compatible trees). However, natural foods are available (i.e. wild plants and hunting, *when necessary*)	• Clean and ample water supply is decreasing, largely because of cattle husbandry and increasing draw from others' commercial farming. • However, most food (including rice) is purchased from the urban lowlands; processed foods (e.g. "dessert") are prominent • Full transition to cash economy; cash crops plum, avocado; wage labor for government or in the city Community based tourism and forest buffalo husbandry used for supplemental income • Some domesticated animals used for ceremonies and selling. Not much traditional pig husbandry, mostly because of food costs. • Wood still used for cooking, • Bamboo, wood, and some concrete used for infrastructure

Figure 5.1: The case study's ecosystem services history (qualitative) — provisioning (Source: thesis author)

1) 1880s – 1950: Villagers live a subsistence lifestyle. Nearly all livelihood/provisioning services are derived from the encompassing forest. This being a watershed area, water that is clean and ample is available. It is possible that deforestation or culturally related phenomena create intermittent water supply issues. Regardless, villagers freely collect wood, food, and fibers. All staple foods are cultivated including upland rice, forest products, and domesticated animals. Bartering (including opium) is their economic source, which is occasionally used for acquiring and purchasing urban lowlands based goods such as rice and chili. Bamboo and wood was used for infrastructure, as well as for other livelihood aspects such as hunting and fishing tools.

2) 1950s – 2005: Villagers still experience an ample and clean water supply. However, government instituted land use restrictions inhibit villagers' ability (and capacity) for traditional staple food production. This includes diminishing ability for opium and upland rice cultivation. Additional restrictions on animal husbandry (especially forest dwelling) as well as the collecting of forest resources such as "protected" plants and wild animals was realized.

'Traditional' provisioning services are gradually being replaced with sedentary agriculture involving orchards-cultivated cash crops and wage labor for the central government (e.g., trees planting), which is feeding an ever-growing cash money operated (and motivated) socio-fabric. Wood and bamboo are still being used. Selling one's time via wage labor is ever-increasing. Pig husbandry, although a core component of the *Lahu*'s traditional socio-fabric is nearly eliminated. Cattle/buffalo husbandry serve as a replacement, particularly as a bulk cash income source. Upland rice cultivation is dissolved. As self-sufficiency is decreasing, the need for purchasing provisioning services (e.g., food and clothing) formerly provided by 'nature' is becoming prevalent.

3) 2005 – 2018: For provisioning, cash money for villagers is a prominent societal centerpiece. Orchard based cash crops, wage labor, and other forms of cash money income are hence desired and used. Rice and vegetables remain the staple food; however, their staple food is no longer that of upland rice. This sustenance good — along with most of villagers' food, unless there is a dire necessity (such as having no money, or following a climatic disaster) — has become a purchased commodity.

Community based tourism (i.e., engagement with national development policies) has come to the Black *Lahu* village, although villagers are not highly motivated by this income provisioning resource. A replanted forest, and subsequent government mandated land use policy relief, offer a bolstering of villagers' allowance for forest food collection as well as animal husbandry; this is good for supplemental income and sustenance. An issue is that increasing usage of cash crops, particularly in the lowland areas, is resulting in decreasing water supply. Increasing prominence of buffalo husbandry is degrading water quality.

5.1.2 Regulating and Supporting

— *Pumuen* Area's Ecosystems Services —

	1880s … until	1950s … until	2005 - 2018
REGULATING	• No water or air quality issues • Minimal land use restrictions; Therefore, deforestation is prominent; high environmental risk for a watershed area dwellers (e.g. erosion, climate change, flooding, etc.), particularly for lowland/urban • Villagers experience disease (e.g. malaria, yellow fever, parasites)	• Minimal water or air quality issues • Disease reduction (i.e. eliminated or greatly reduced cases of malaria, yellow fever, and parasites	• Increasing water and air quality issues, largely due to upstream activities (e.g., cattle husbandry), burning, and water sequestration from lowland commercial farming • Forest restoration leads to improved climatic conditions overall (e.g., flood and climate regulation) • Diseases controlled, although obesity and mental illness increasing); Full usage of urban allopathic medicines • Increasing frequency of climate change phenomena (e.g. heavy rains and crop devastating hail); new environmental (and societal) risk factors are being evermore introduced • Increasing erosion because of road
SUPPORTING	• Land degradation: land is fertile but has low bio-diversity (e.g. small trees, shrubs, and grass • Steady soil formation and nutrient recycling • High primary production	• Decreasing bio-diversity • Soil formation and nutrient recycling continually improving with forest restoration • Primary production declining slightly	• Forest is restored and therefore greater soil formation and nutrient recycling. Steady primary production • Biodiversity that villagers can harvest is reduced with reforestation

Figure 5.2: The case study's ecosystem services history (qualitative) — regulating and supporting (Source: thesis author)

1) 1880s – 1950: For regulating services, water and air quality are generally a non-issue. However minimal (or no) central government mandated land use restrictions is reality during this era. Any deforestation in this area (although not severe) was likewise caused by opium and upland rice shift cultivation. Air and water quality, while perhaps there are some annual air quality issues from rice fields burning, are optimal. For supporting services, the land is fertile and with high bio-diversity. Villagers experience diseases such as yellow fever, malaria, and parasites (and opium addition). Lowland dwellers' interests begin to incompatibly interface with highlanders' traditional lifestyles.

2) 1950s – 2005: For regulating services, central government mandated forest restoration efforts, while perhaps reducing watershed related risks and animal species decimation (especially related with population increases), drastically impacts the local overall ecosystem. Plots of land used for shift cultivation later created an environment of grass, shrubs, and small trees. Perhaps, lower-level soil formation and nutrient recycling, at least in areas no longer being used for shift cultivation, stimulate medium primary production. This, at least from the perspective of the Thai central government and lowland dwellers, posed environmental risks for erosion, flooding, and other climatic factors.

While government-led domestic policies including education and allopathic medicine is eliminating for villagers the prominence of physical diseases such as yellow fever and malaria, overall societal health evermore declines. For supporting services, soil formation, nutrient recycling, and therefore primary production is continually remaining consistent. However, biodiversity, at least the natural forest goods that villagers can (or know how to) harvest is decreasing; this happens in conjunction with tree planting involving species (e.g., pine) that negatively impact the native ecosystem.

3) 2005 – 2018: For regulating services, villagers are experiencing degraded levels of water and air quality, and an improvement in climatic regulation. Physical diseases such as malaria and yellow fever have been largely eradicated. This is although villagers are beginning to evermore experience obesity (i.e., from synthetic "dessert" foods, and mental illness). Traditional medicine cures have for the most part been replaced with allopathic medicine.

Climatic regulation improves; however, water and air quality degrade due to fallout from from increased prominence of cattle husbandry (i.e., feces in the water supply) and cash crops cultivation (i.e., pesticide usage in other areas that is carried via the wind). Devastating climate change phenomena (e.g., rain bursts, cold air, and hail storms) are increasing in frequency.

For supporting, the forest has been replanted; however, while soil formation, nutrient recycling, biodiversity, and primary production remain consistent, biodiversity has notably decreased to the point that villagers have drastically altered their means of acquiring their basic needs for a good life. According to villagers' reports, biodiversity has decreased due to the introduction of non-indigenous tree species into the prior ecosystem (further explained later).

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

5.1.3 Cultural

Livelihood and Education

	1880s … until	1950s … until	2005 - 2018
CULTURAL	**LIVELIHOOD** • Subsistence/traditional way of life (i.e. no seeking of having extra, or wastefulness) • Freestyle land usage (without government intervention): practicing of slash and burn cultural harvest cycle • No (or very little) cash economy: villagers life off from the land, with very few outside connections (i.e. no or low capitalism market social influences) • Artisans create (and repair) clothing, hunting tools, and instruments **EDUCATIONAL** • No written text studying • Intact cultural education in the form of oral traditions: generationally passing forward *Lahu* language; folklore stories related with history, societal norms, and indigenous knowledge pertaining to livelihood; environmental conservation; natural medicines, etc.	**LIVELIHOOD** • Subsistence/traditional ways of life are declining (or changing forms) • Beginning of cash crops and capitalism related cash market economy; "development" and modernity related psychology and societal norms are forming • Still have artisans and clothing production, but this rapidly declining with the youth **EDUCATIONAL** • Declining of cultural (oral) education and traditions, as villagers integrate into the nation State • "Thai" culture, including language and mainstream education (i.e. the border patrol police school, and lowland exposure) is evermore becoming villagers' socio-fabric • With national culture "education" comes cultural de-education. … Villagers become more 'Thai' and hence adopt globalized mind-sets, norms and values	**LIVELIHOOD** • No slash and burn, or upland rice, cultivation (or traditions) • Fully implemented cash economy lifestyle; capitalism has become a societal centerpiece • Materialism and "convenience" has solidified (i.e., wants versus needs) • All clothing, and most daily life material goods, are purchased **EDUCATIONAL** • Oral tradition (e.g. language, hunting, societal norms) is no longer a main cultural element • Cultural education, such as *Lahu* language and music, is taught by some parents. Otherwise, it's offered weekly via the Church, both in the red and black *Lahu* villages. • Central Thai government granted college education funds for youth are slashed (2014) • Due to territorialization, and a responsive means of survival adaptation, villagers perceive national Thai education as a life necessity; they assess wealth and social status accordingly.

Figure 5.3: The case study's ecosystem services history (qualitative) — cultural (Source: thesis author)

1) 1880s – 1950: Villagers are living traditionally by means of a no-waste subsistence lifestyle. Their socio-fabric is comprised of and predominantly revolves around freestyle land usage, which involves slash and burn shifting cultivation and the harvest cycle. Villagers have few outside connections. Cash money, for the most part, is not a societal motivator. Facets of language, folklore stories, herbal medicine, livelihood, cultural norms, and conservation is reverently passed forward via oral tradition teachers who have earned this millennia-old right of passage. Indigenous knowledge-educated artisans create tools, clothing, and other life necessities required for supporting cultural composition sustainable physical survival.

2) 1950s – 2005: Traditional knowledge equipped artisans and other cultural masters still comprise villagers' socio-fabric. However, traditional societal behaviors involving subsistence and agrarian ways of life are rapidly declining, especially with the newer generations. Capitalism related societal norms are forming and solidifying as State 'development' policies are evermore percolating villagers' ways of life; this is altering their livelihoods. Cash money, therefore cash crops and the commodities market system, are becoming societal motivators.

While villagers are integrating more into nation-State societal systems, oral tradition communicated cultural knowledge is declining. Thai mainstream "higher education" is evermore replacing villagers' desires for education attributed to cultural 'traditions.' This is creating a form of de-education rendering the *Lahu* with a "Thai" mindset and globalized norms and values.

3) 2005 – 2018: Livelihood aspects intertwined with traditional slash and burn shift cultivation, hence the nature-regulated harvest cycle, has for the most part become dissolved. Cash economics has become villagers' socio-cultural centerpiece. Villagers are living to work more-so that working to live, evermore perpetuating an urban matrix lifestyle and its related consumerism "convenience" wants versus actual livelihood needs. Some cultural education is being offered via the village Church and its outside affiliations.

While some villagers are still living elements of analog lifestyle and self-sufficiency, villagers are primarily purchasing livelihood aspects (e.g., clothing and food) prior supported by their encompassing natural and community environment. Oral tradition education is becoming more about the perpetuation of capitalism than about sacred indigenous knowledge designed for self-sufficiency and socio-political autonomy. As a traditional livelihood decimated responsive coping mechanism, youth are seeking State-led national education, which has become a social-wealth status. Adults now have new affordability pressures, which is creating newfound societal tensions.

Spiritual and Recreational

	1880s … until	1950s … until	2005 - 2018
CULTURAL	**SPIRITUAL** • Animist spiritual traditions (e.g. land spirits and shaman) surrounding the harvest cycle • Belief in natural medicines Traditional music and dancing • High prominence of villagers' participation across the age spectrum **RECREATIONAL** • Forest environment is their playground; entirely analog lifestyle • Some opium, alcohol (over) usage • Gather around the fire and drink tea	**SPIRITUAL** • Animist spiritual (e.g. spirits and shaman) in the Red *Lahu* village. … The Black *Lahu* village (1978) devoutly practices Christianity. Villages are religiously separate but do share friendly and cooperative relations. • Declining devout beliefs in traditional animism as the culture transforms from being about the harvest to becoming more about money harvest **RECREATIONAL** • Children and youth forest-frolic play football, and go camping • Some textiles creation (for personal usage and for selling) • Reduced (and eventual eradication of) opium usage, but increasing use of alcohol and methamphetamines • Evening fire and tea (i.e. relaxing and talking about village and life matters)	**SPIRITUAL** • Spiritual/religious services are still strong, with the Church in the Red *Lahu* serving as a cohesive force. • Animist spiritual services are held in the Red *Lahu* village every Sunday. A Church has been built in this traditionally animist village. • Many youth and others, especially drug addicts, avoid weekly spiritual services. **RECREATIONAL** • Children and youth forest-frolic, play football, drive into the city, etc. • Some parents take their children camping, especially to collect forest goods for consumption and selling. • Some textiles creation (for selling) • Tea culture (around the fire in evening) • Karaoke/TV/mobile phones (addiction) • No opium, but high prominence of alcohol and methamphetamines use

Figure 5.4: The case study's ecosystem services history (qualitative) — cultural (Source: thesis author)

1) 1880s – 1950: The community holistically lives a socio-fabric comprised of 'nature' and harvest cycle worship. Animist beliefs cultivate reverent respecting of land spirits and shamans. Traditional usage of natural medicines, along with music, dancing, and ceremonies perpetuate this societal reality. Recreationally, the encompassing natural environment is their playground. Textiles are a form of livelihood-leisure. There is some opium and alcohol usage (and addiction). However, societal cohesion is still being supported by traditions involving fire, tea, and traditional style socializing.

2) 1950s – 2005: Nature-based animism practices remain in the Red *Lahu* village. The Black *Lahu* village (founded in 1978) is entirely Christian, with the Church as their spiritual center. Spiritual beliefs (while declining in holistic prevalence) remain relatively strong; this is even while villagers' socio-fabric is transforming from being about the harvest cycle to about cash money harvesting. For recreation, the forest remains their playground; however, incoming is 'development' technological modernity. The karaoke machine, while an affective inlet and outlet for the youth, has become many villagers' nightmare. Opium (for selling and for recreation) is expunged; however, alcohol and methamphetamines (*yaba*: "crazy drug" are becoming evermore prominent both for leisure and societal pressure coping mechanisms). Evening fire and tea gatherings remain a socio-centerpiece for community cohesion.

3) 2005 – 2018: Religious/spiritual services maintain strong presence and as a societal binding force for both villages (animist and Christian respectively). A Church was built in the traditionally animist Red *Lahu* village, representing a traditional norms and values shift. In both the red and black *Lahu* villages, it is common that an increasing number of youth are avoiding religious services. They (including some adults) are rather using Sunday as a "holiday" for leisure (including alcohol and other drugs consumption); this is perhaps to relieve pressures from urban dwelling.

Recreationally, youth still use their forest playground and play traditional analog games (e.g., football); however, this is becoming evermore replaced with electronics (e.g., television, cellular phones, and karaoke machines). Some of the women villagers make simple textiles for recreation and for selling. Evening tea and fire culture still exists; however, villagers are becoming individualistic, with their televisions becoming their campfire.

Aesthetic and Socio-Environment

	1880s … until	1950s … until	2005 - 2018
CULTURAL	**AESTHETIC / SOCIO-ENVIRONMENT** • Slow jungle pace of life • Minimal or no "outside" cultural influences (e.g. technologies and cultural attitudes) • Social harmony (e.g. reverence for traditional culture and lifestyle, sharing; respecting of societal age hierarchy • Have land and air pollution (temporary, from burning), but no noise pollution • Some opium addiction and social strife (e.g. robbery and murders from Chinese communist militia groups)	**AESTHETIC / SOCIO-ENVIRONMENT** • Still quiet and peaceful, but with the road comes motor vehicles, some synthetic rubbish, and increasing pace of life (i.e. cash money desires) • Minimal "outside" cultural influences at-first. This changes with exposure to military and Forestry Dept. forces; then lowland/urban national culture. • Villagers perceptions and needs begin transforming, as the norms of urbanity begins setting into villagers' minds, especially the younger generations. • Social harmony (e.g. sharing; respecting of societal age hierarchy, etc.). However, the culture is changing with perceived wants and needs • Have land and air pollution (temporary, from burning), but no noise pollution • Traditional music and dancing is eventually gone.	**AESTHETIC / SOCIO-ENVIRONMENT** • "Busy" and "working" urban matrix (no traditional agrarian) lifestyle • Materialism: junk food, plastic toys, electronics, karaoke machines and motorbikes. Also: debt culture. • Village encompassed by forest: cool and clean air • Strewn ynthetic rubbish and noise pollution • There is social harmony (e.g. friendly relations and sharing). However, social degradation is prominent with materialism-worshipping. • Alcohol, heavy drugs, and domestic abuse is greatly rising. Mental illness is likewise becoming more prominent • Some rehabilitation/reinstallation of traditional culture (e.g. textiles, music, and *Lahu* language). • Traditional socio-fabric is largely gone, replaced by a modern world culture in a rural village environment. • Youth upon money demands are attacking parents • 'Subsistence' ways of life, like in the "developed" and "modern" world, become attributed to economic poverty rather than to a conservation belief system

Figure 5.5: The case study's ecosystem services history (qualitative) — cultural (Source: thesis author)

1) 1880s – 1950: Villagers experience minimal to no "outside" technological or socio-cultural influences. Therefore, they live a slow-paced relatively isolated lifestyle determined largely by their natural and societal environment. While surely all human societies have interpersonal conflicts, it is reasonable to assume that villagers' social harmony in-terms of reverence for their traditional ways of life (e.g., livelihood, social hierarchy, etc.) is intact. Villagers shared with each other and acted accordingly to their societal norms and contracts. Some air pollution existed, particularly related with slash and burn cultivation; however, there is no noise pollution.
Opium related strife (e.g., addiction and threatening/pillaging foreign gangsters) was present.

2) 1950s – 2005: This villages area remains fairly quiet and peaceful. However, with the road has come exposure to central nation-State powers and its related territorialization. Opium cultivation, and any related foreign operations is expunged. Motor vehicles, especially motorbikes along with urban rubbish (physical and societal) is encroaching its way into the communities' societal center. Capitalism and consumer culture is evermore perforating villagers' socio-fabric. Migration (both temporary and permanent) become part of villagers' world.

Villagers' pace of life is also increasing proportionately with cash money desires. Their worldviews and hence their perceptions and needs are transforming as capitalism and urbanity is rooting itself. Societal harmony, including sharing, is still prominent. Some air pollution exists from local and regional seasonal burning. Villagers, especially the newer generations, are evermore abandoning their traditional ways, including music, dancing, and language (to Thai) replacing these prior-sustaining cultural facets with "modern world" perceived needs.

3) 2005 – 2018: Villagers in both the Black and Red *Lahu* communities are "busy" exemplifying a (seemingly incompatible) mixture of traditional indigenous highland life and the urban lowland capitalism matrix. Materialism related synthetic junk food, electronics, and debt is becoming their new reality — working to "pay bills." Their encompassing natural environment, post-forest restoration, is nourishing in-terms of its ability to semi-support villagers' life. However, it is also becoming evermore polluted by synthetic rubbish and noise pollution (especially from karaoke machines and motorbikes); likewise, the overall aesthetic environment has been greatly degraded.

Social harmony and cooperation still exists here. However, as villagers have now cash-valued their time (driven by materialism), relationships and community initiatives are more maintained by cash money exchange. Blatant mental illness and its related alcohol and heavy drug usage, aggressive societal and domestic abuse, and materialism worshipping has also become reality. Selfishness is on the rise. The entire community is holistically responding accordingly.

There is some rehabilitation of traditional culture such as music, dancing, and language. However, the traditional socio-fabric that existed here one hundred forty, or even thirty, years ago is for the most part dissolved. Villagers do still maintain their harvest cycle traditions (e.g., new year, new rice harvest, provisioning goods offering to the gods, etc.); however, these traditions are becoming evermore blanketed with a synthetic skin (e.g., alcohol; loud music).

Whereas subsistence ways of life, and their related environmental and societal conservatism, used to represent community wealth here, these cultural facets have in ways become flipped to now represent poverty. Likewise, a new societal state system evermore replicating the 'developed' and 'modern' world is solidifying and arguably hampering villagers' capacity to live here sustainably.

This is particularly true when considering the village youth. First, they have been pressured, essentially forced, to leave their village and reside in the urban lowlands for work, studying, or other purposes. They often return to the village for "holiday." When doing so, they release their stored urban chaos energy into this agrarian village environment — creating a form of hell for everyone. Many elders claim they "cannot control" them. I intuit that they just do not know how to do it. … Unless the youth at least begin to see and acknowledge the modern world value of their millennia-old traditional socio-fabric and supporting villages' geographical and sociological environment, their future truly is uncertain. Perhaps, ethnic peril is on their doorstep.

5.2: Qualitative Articulations of Quantitative Valuation

Considering the multi-era and multi-factor compilation of Pumuen's ecosystem services in relation with societal transformation, this section graphically (quantitatively) reveals Pumuen communities' socio-ecological system trends. While what is articulated in this section about each graph is somewhat general, the final part of this chapter reveals villagers' detailed explanations of these ecosystem services change trends.

Of course there is no Pumuen villager who was alive between 1880-1940. However, I am not measuring fish or human population here; this is about socio-ecological change trends. This said, villagers equipped with their oral historical knowledge passed forward by their ancestors know generally enough what life was (and is) like there.

Methodology for this ecosystem services' quantitative analysis

Ecosystem services: Three *Pumuen* villagers of different ages and village status were asked to consider the forty-four ecosystem services (ESS) related factors revealed in section 5.1 (i.e., the 'development timeline') and valuate them based on their prominence (i.e., 'ecosystem services factor intensity') during each respective time period. The compiled scores are averaged and placed into a bar chart, revealing the change trends (i.e., increasing or decreasing) for each ecosystem services factor.

Examples of these ESS factors: 1) provisioning: fresh and ample water supply, wild forest food, cash crops, cattle husbandry, and wage labor, etc.; 2) supporting: diversity and primary production, etc.; 3) regulating: climatic regulation, erosion, and prevalence of destructive climate change phenomena, etc.; and 4) cultural: agreeable pace of life, fire and tea socializing, societal cooperation and sharing, prevalence of alcohol and heavy drug abuse, cash money desires, traditional music and dance, noise pollution, societal cooperation and sharing, self-sufficiency, etc.

Human well-being: These forty-four ecosystem services factors were then assigned a respective "well-being code" that is in conjunction with the human well-being framework established by the Millennium Ecosystems Assessment; I adapt it slightly by adding a few factors pertaining to the case study. Examples of these well-being factors: 1) basic materials for a good life: adequate livelihood, access to goods, etc.; 2) security: personal safety, secure resource access, etc.; 3) health: strength and feeling well, access to clean air and water, and freedom from societal mental illness, etc.; and 4) good social relations: social cohesion, ability to help others, personal expression and learning, etc.

These human well-being components are applicable to multiple ecosystem services factors; therefore, the factors were grouped accordingly. The well-being scores (determined via the averaging of the villagers' valuations) is articulated via a 4-factor human well-being line graph. While the ecosystem services related bar graph reveals the longitudinal change trends of specific factors, the well-being related line graph reveals the longitudinal trends of the case study's overall socio-ecological functioning overall.

The purpose of this analysis format is so that we — while considering the 'de' of 'development,' and how changes in environment impact relationships amongst ourselves and with our 'natural' world — can actually see (and measure) how this communities' area has changed socio-ecologically over-time. What, comparing the past and present, are villagers' levels of security, basic materials for a good life, health, and good social relations? Do they feel as though their overall situation is providing for an overall sense of well-being? Let's see.

5.2.1 Supporting

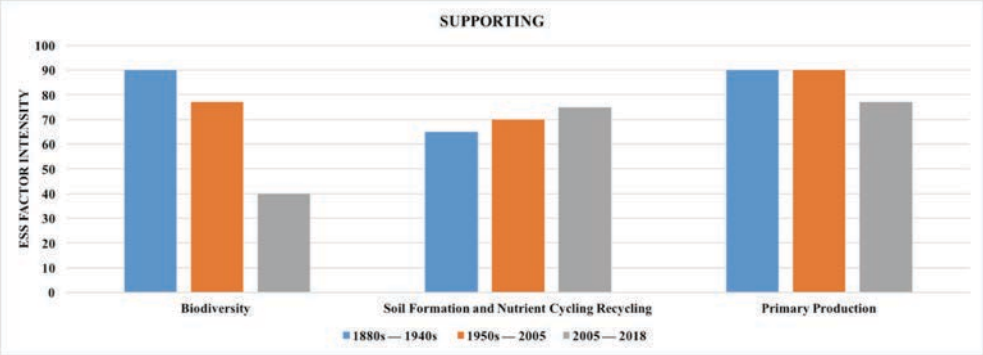


Figure 5.6: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — supporting (Source: thesis author)

I begin this assessment by somewhat simply looking at *Pumuen*'s supporting services trends. Soil formation and nutrient recycling, and hence primary production have slightly increased or have remained relatively stable. Due to central government mandated natural resource policies, *Pumuen*'s encompassing forest has since the 1950s implementation of land use regulations, and reforestation efforts become restored. However, biodiversity, at least that which villagers can (or know how to) harvest, has greatly decreased (reasons explained in another section).

Villagers can still harvest forest goods; however, this is providing a villager is actually equipped with the indigenous knowledge necessary for cultivating and harvesting the biodiversity provided by this supporting landscape. In modern times, primary production is connected with cash crops which is linked with financial income that is bonded with someone's sense of security. This (nowadays) is packaged with materialism and social degradation.

5.2.2 Regulating

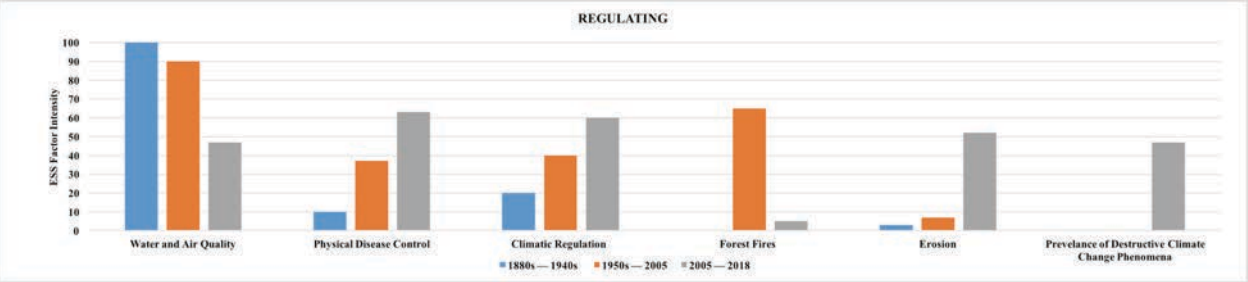


Figure 5.7: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — regulating (Source: thesis author)

Supporting and regulating services are symbiotically related. A bolstered forest ecosystem has also improved the *Pumuen* area's climatic regulation, hence rendering villagers blessed year-round with clean cool water and air. This is entirely not the case with many other northern Thai lowland and highland villages. The opposite scenario ensues as communities are facing serious deforestation problems largely related with extensive logging which led to intensive commercial farming (e.g., maize). Climatic warming, flooding, and water shortages are common, which alter both environmental and societal ecosystems.

In the *Pumuen* case, water and air quality have reduced largely because of increase in the prominence of animal husbandry (i.e., feces runoff into water source) and increased air pollution from nearby agro-business farm and their usage of pesticides. Villagers also reported increasing pollution from forest burning and from vehicle exhaust.

I include physical disease control with ESS regulating services as the socio-component of regulating services. This is done with intention of linking natural environmental with societal functioning. Villagers' physical disease control (e.g., yellow fever, malaria, parasites, etc.) has been bolstered (i.e., fewer diseases). This undoubtedly has a stronger correlation with government-led social education policies (e.g., 1980s initiative mandatory household, child registration, and mainstream health education) than it does directly about environmental regulation. Villagers before did not use lowland allopathic health care and experienced prevalence of diseases such as yellow fever and malaria. Villagers still use natural medicines; however, they now have more choices, which is also connected with modernity. Improved physical health does not necessary equate to a healthy overall ecosystem (including societal).

Even though the encompassing forest is replanted and full, erosion has increased. This is particularly relevant to, and caused by, the road. Climate change related events phenomena including hail and heavy rainstorms are also on the rise, adding to infrastructure related erosion.

5.2.3 Provisioning

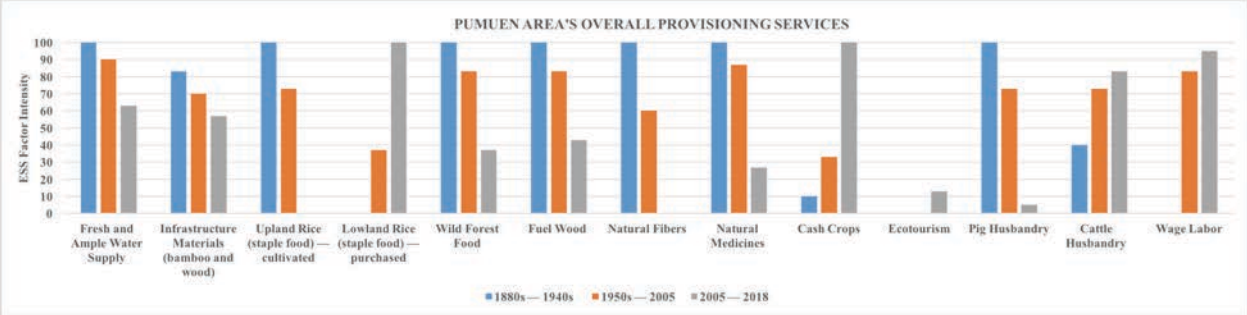


Figure 5.8: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — provisioning (Source: thesis author)

I divided consideration of *Pumuen*'s provisioning ecosystem services into two respective parts: 1) sustenance (i.e., food, drink, and clothing, regarded as sources of strength, nourishment, and other material needs); and 2) income, which is a fairly new village concept that is derived both directly from these provisioning services and from external sources (e.g., wage labor). This divided analysis is largely because notions of 'provisioning' (i.e., 'providing or supplying something for use…financial or other arrangements for future eventualities or requirements') have in the *Pumuen* area (and globally for this matter) greatly changed over time. In other words, their livelihoods have implicitly and explicitly changed meanings and motivations.

The Thai government's 1950s initiation of top-down land use regulations is surely the most significant underlying factor that overturned villagers' socio-fabric and related livelihoods. This national policy limited villagers' ability and capacity for doing many things related with natural resource utilization. Villagers literally had the choice to transform their livelihood to being cash crop (and wage labor) centered, or societally suffocate and starve.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

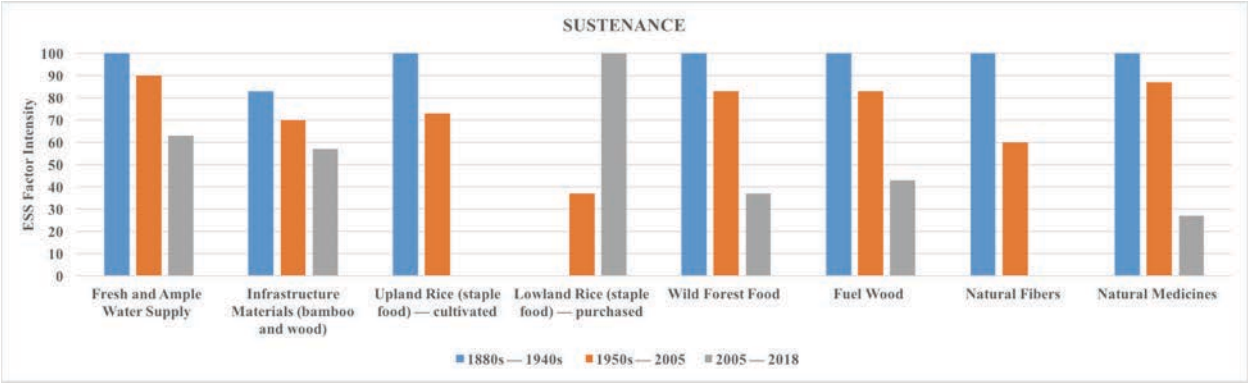


Figure 5.9: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — provisioning/sustenance (Source: thesis author)

Villagers' fresh and ample water supply has consistently decreased, which is linked with an overall decreasing sense of security. This is transpiring even though the encompassing forest has become full and lush. The water supply is also connected with their livelihood. This ecosystems service is more related with their overall health and consumption and in-terms of bathing, cooking, drinking, food sources (aquatic creatures), etc. *Pumuen* villagers do not use irrigation for their cash crops, and their water comes directly from the mountain, so water supply is not necessarily relevant to their orchard cash crops cultivation. Other villagers, especially those in the lowlands, do use this watershed's supply directly for the provisioning of irrigated cash crops.

It is notable to mention that since 2012 the water supply flowing through *Pumuen* has been used for the hydro-power dam(s), which is connected with 'development,' electricity and modernity. Linking this with socio-dynamics, water supplied by the watershed was used entirely for villagers' traditional (analog) ways of life. Nowadays, villagers have become addicted to the hydropower dam's electricity generation, for their home consumption. Nowadays (and in just six years) life for Pumuen villagers becomes greatly hampered if and when something happens to the power supply. For example, the frequency of climate change related phenomena is increasing. Sudden and heavy bursts of rain have on several occasions resulted in sediment runoff that has clogged *Pumuen*'s hydropower dam. Blackouts have occurred. While older and middle-aged villagers can cope with this situation, reverting back to their more traditional ways (e.g., fire, and maybe even going to sleep early), this was reportedly not the case with the younger villagers now deprived of their light bulbs and electronic devices.

While villagers for the most part still use bamboo and wood for infrastructure and other analog technologies, this has been declining slightly with the implementation of concrete usage. Population increases and natural resource over-harvesting is also an issue.

Probably the starkest holistic change with *Pumuen* is the literal elimination of upland rice cultivation and its replacement of purchased lowland rice; culturally speaking, this is a staple food. A foundational alteration in this provisioning resource arguably represents a holistic transformation of the village's socio-fabric. However, the *Lahu* are hunters and gatherers; wild forest food is intimately linked with their livelihood; it is who they are. Villagers therefore still dance with the forest; this trend, while perhaps changing forms, is decreasing; villagers are becoming addicted to the 'convenience' that the commodities market provides.

The forest for villagers can (and has) also become an income source, especially during market system fluctuations and extreme climatic phenomena. This considered, reductions in biodiversity and therefore wild forest food has decreased villagers' security which has in-turn decreased their resilience to shocks that might render them in a despaired state. Natural fibers and medicine collection and usage has also declined. This is largely connected to reduced available biodiversity, and with reduced cultural relevance. Fuel wood, mostly necessary for their cooking, is becoming evermore difficult to find; however, it appears that *Pumuen* villagers are not (yet) lacking this resource.

A fundamental shifting of provisioning services: "income"

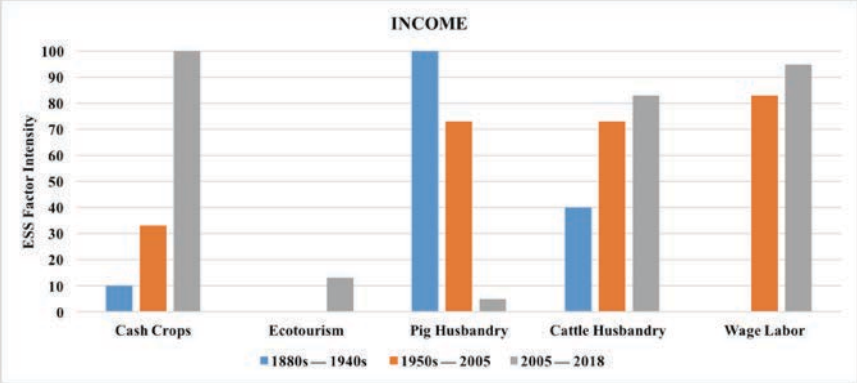


Figure 5.10: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — provisioning/income (Source: thesis author)

For provisioning services income, the trend in *Pumuen* is that cash crops, versus depending on upland rice and forest products regulated by nature's holistically connected ecosystems, have evermore become villagers' socio-economic centerpiece. This, is a major culture shift.

Upland rice traditionally constituted villagers' sustenance; their related security depended on rainfall and other elements of climatic regulation. Whereas, upland rice used to be villagers' cultural grounding staple, tea at least for the Black *Lahu* village has evermore become villagers' primary sustenance source. With an analogous notion in-mind, upland rice and other forest goods

was their sustenance, their food-income. However, tea (and other cash crops) has now become their food. This is not in the sense that they literally consume the tea, but rather that this cash crop is used solely for cultivating the paper money now required for purchasing their provisioning services (e.g., food, clothing, etc.).

It could arguably be said, then that tea has replaced the upland rice. I can carry this notion perhaps even a step further and state that money has replaced nature. 'Sustenance' has therefore changed definition, from constituting the food that they eat to instead being about the money they make from the crops in order to capacitate purchasing of the food that they eat. Money has therefore additionally replaced other livelihood aspects they used to value. Now they buy the things that they used to get from nature. Regardless, the motivation is the same: survival.

With the ever-increasing trend of cash crops has also ensued a near elimination of pig husbandry (related with villagers traditional cultural/spiritual beliefs) but an increase in cattle/buffalo husbandry (used for bulk cash income). Regarding the ever-increasing wage labor prominence, this is arguably linked with a drastic decreasing of self-sufficiency (e.g., 'traditional' indigenous knowledge based livelihoods) and societal transitioning to the global maternity matrix. As revealed in this thesis' chapter four, villagers worry now about money (alike those in 'developed' countries) and therefore are subject to new forms of security issues (e.g., climate change and unstable market forces). Villagers, versus a monthly few-day pilgrimage to the lowlands, now migrate en masse during certain times of the year, such as when the hot and dry season comes and the tea yield is low. Some never return to village life.

Ecotourism part of the community ecosystem but not much. Tourism here is its own peculiar phenomenon, strewn with local power player conflicts that have essentially rendered tourism here a non-significant factor. On the uplifting side, in addition to bringing to villagers' supplemental cash money income this provisioning resource has also made villagers more aware of the need for cultural preservation. Traditional dancing and flute playing was gone in this the Black Lahu. This was until around 2011 when villagers were trained via an outside teacher how to play the flute; one man is now the master of this cultural skill. Some encouraging news is that this has now changed in Pumuen with weekly cultural trainings that are Church organized. It is notable that *Pumuen* villagers initially did not restore these traditions because of explicit desires to restore lost cultural traditions but rather with motivations of monetizing their culture.

It is true what the ESS Millennium Assessment says that some people with financial capital have more ESS related choices; they can purchase ecosystem services. Some *Pumuen* villagers do not have to forage for wild forest food or even tend cash crops. For example, an increasing number of villagers are creating village grocery stores. One *Pumuen* villager is a middle-man for villagers' tea and coffee. Three times per year he sells the tea in-bulk to the lowland market and collects a profit margin. He is one of few *Pumuen* villagers who has a truck. He and his family are amongst the few villagers who are considered rich. The family recently purchased a washing machine and other convenience objects. Other villagers did not agree to this, but he did it anyway. They have on several occasions overloaded the village's electricity infrastructure. *Farlae* said, "Fine! Let it all break, and then we can all go back to the dark." … So here is a clear example of how modern-day wealth and its seemingly inevitable materialism leads to social stratification and conflict.

This middle-man villager also offers credit for villagers that are distraught for financial resources. While he may have an enhanced ability to help others in-times of dire need, this is good for people's overall sense of security. However, this creditor's community friends can (and do) become indebted. There is a two-edged trend in *Pumuen.* Alike people living in the 'developed' and 'modern world,' a bank loan is used for buying something someone does not actually need (e.g., a big house, new car, etc.). On a micro-level, *Pumuen* villagers also use this credit for feeding material wants versus supporting sustenance needs. For example, some villagers borrow rice from the village store, while others purchase Coca-Cola used for mixing with purchased whiskey or for simply quieting their whining children who now want the synthetic materials good they are seeing displayed in the color television set.

Overall with provisioning services, villagers' core motivations for their survival have changed with the need to fit into the top-down governed State system. What was essentially communicated to *Pumuen* villagers, and all highland peoples for this matter, is that 'you will become part of our national Thai culture, or we will starve you. You can try to independently continue doing your shift cultivation, but we are going to, through government policies, interrupt this. Now you have no land for movement. If you have no land for movement, then you have no secure access to resources. You will do sedentary agriculture that bolsters *our nation State*. You can resist. However, if you do then we will kill you in one way or another.' There are cases in Thailand where this death sentence was literally practiced.

Let's forward this analysis discussion to the primary focus of this thesis: cultural services.

5.2.4 Cultural

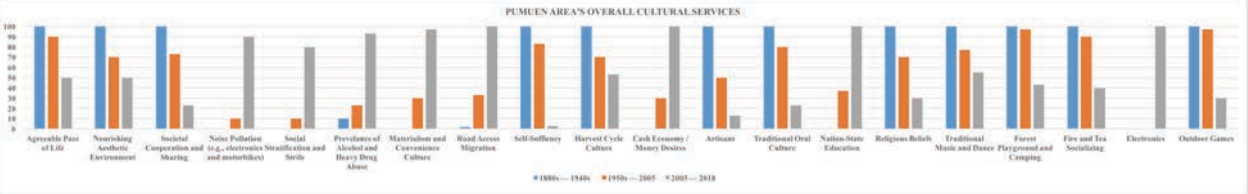


Figure 5.11: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — cultural (Source: thesis author)

I divided consideration of *Pumuen*'s dynamic array of cultural ecosystem services into five respective parts: livelihood; education; recreation; spiritual; and aesthetic/socio-environment.

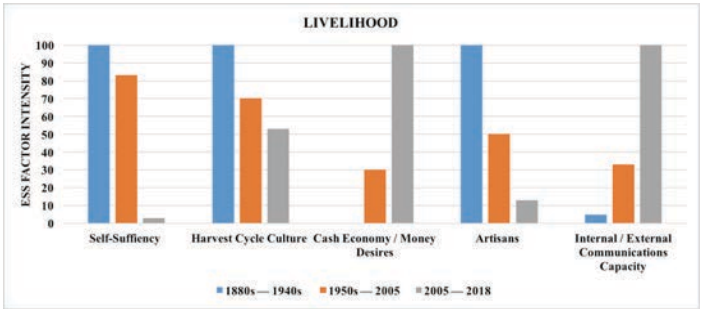


Figure 5.12: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — cultural/livelihood (Source: thesis author)

Economy is the primary motivator of social change (Pieterse; 2001). So if a State wants to alter people's behavior, especially those living on the societal peripheries, it must re-determine what is required for people to cultivate their livelihoods. In the *Pumuen* case, the government systematically concocting a socio-scenario whereby villagers literally must depend on cash money for their material needs is arguably the primary force driving the deterioration of *Pumuen*'s societal fabric. You can have security in one area (e.g., a forest), while being *degraded* in another.

As notably mentioned in this thesis chapter's section 5.1, villagers' modern-day necessity for purchasing provisioning services formerly provided by 'nature' has direct correlation with their continually reducing capacities for self-sufficiency and hence a hampered capacity for resilience to significant shocks.

We can first look at *Pumuen*'s trends related with artisans and shifting cultivation. The indigenous knowledge vitally required for making hunting tools and other life necessities has been continually decreasing; this is arguably in conjunction with the requirement for cash money based necessities. Let us, for example, couple artisanry and self-sufficiency. If someone is able to make his or her life-tools and cultivate the basic materials for a good life (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, etc.) then self-sufficiency increases. What, then, happens when money replaces sustainable traditions?

Looking further at the trends indicators, *Pumuen* villagers' cash income and money desires have greatly increased; harvest cycle culture has declined. Again, self-sufficiency also has consistently trended negatively in conjunction with the degradation of an indigenous knowledge based livelihood. One affects the other. Eliminating shifting cultivation culture created a societal vacuum-hole that required being filled with something else entirely — this being *"work."*

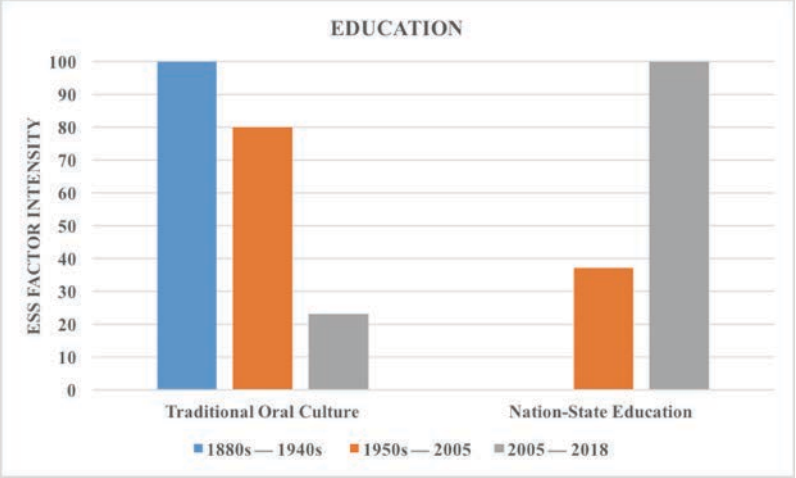


Figure 5.13: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — cultural/education (Source: thesis author)

For education, villagers used to utilize and depend on oral tradition in conjunction with their indigenous ways of life; they knew how to survive and be self-sufficient. This has largely been replaced by national culture education; whereby, youth are taught mathematics, English, and Thai language. This is information, and connected ways of life, not related with their foundational cultural traditions. This creates identity issues, which filter into macro and micro scale and level societal behaviors.

'Development' and 'modernity' represent different stages in the development continuum. First comes 'development,' the fall from grace and purity; then comes modernity, which is the redemption (Pieterse; 2001). Oral 'traditional' culture is analog. National culture is digital. Development is about the market system. Digital is linked with modernity (technology). Modernity is about technology and government policies meant to cultivate links to global market chains.

This said, 'education' for P*umuen* villagers is becoming more about the perpetuation of capitalism than it is about sacred indigenous knowledge designed for self-sufficiency and socio-political autonomy. National education is connected directly with industrial capitalism.
This modern 'education' is teaching villagers how to fit into the State economy and market system. This could also be linked with why their self-sufficiency is decreasing, why cash economy desires

are increasing, why there is less time to do artisanry and other facets of traditional culture. This connects with why their agreeable pace of life (addressed in a following section) is decreasing; they are laborers now, and there is less time for life aspects that do not generate "income."

Considering the ecosystem services indicator related with the increasing trend in national education, perhaps this is why villagers are abandoning traditional knowledge and desiring "higher education." This is also why I maintain that higher education for villagers has become a wealth status. It is not necessarily that they want to be Thai. It is rather that when they can fit into mainstream Thai society they are able to access the goods and services that the mainstream societal system offers. This includes all aspects from provisioning services to personal desires and needs.

In their home village, meeting requirements of a globalized 'modern society,' whatever this means exactly, is not possible. Just six years ago, villagers were not even able to watch a soap opera because the infrastructure was not there. Comparing themselves with others, this sense of 'lack' creates societal pressures, which needs to be and is relieved in different ways (both destructive and constructive).

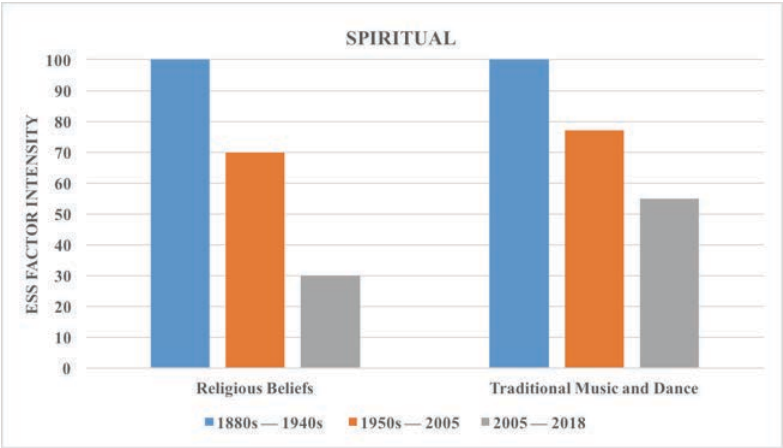


Figure 5.14: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — cultural/spiritual (Source: thesis author)

Spirituality is related with security and social cohesion. Traditional music and dance is also connected with spiritual practices. Normally, villagers especially practice these millennia-old traditions during festivals. However, it appears that after the road and the electricity came to *Pumuen*, along with the ensuing television and other technologies, their spiritual practices have become altered. It appears as though the television (and the cellular phone) has become their church; many villagers would rather watch television and drama shows. They used to come together, motivated primarily by living life as a village unit.

Pumuen villagers (particularly the Black *Lahu*) gather every Sunday and attend spiritual Christian services together. The Red *Lahu* intermittently practice their animist traditions. However, attendance is declining, especially with the newer generations. The New Year and other harvest based ceremonies remain relatively well intact; however, their content is evermore changing. In the past, for example, *Pumuen* villagers did not drink alcohol during ceremonies. This has changed because people are becoming more urbanized. Even women are drinking alcohol, which interviewees revealed is shocking; this is a blatant indicator of a societal systems state change.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

The trends reveal exactly as villagers *Jasuu* and *Farlae* told us in chapter four: technology is becoming villagers' god; this is also a societal symptom of modernity. Then again, have religious beliefs really declined in *Pumuen*? The Church body, for example, is quite strong. However, the youth say they believe in God yet do not actually attend Church and also do not necessarily live the religious moral principles. These spiritual practices are not actually part of their core beliefs and daily actions; whereas, the older generations had have authentically strong beliefs.

The prevalence of traditional music and dancing in *Pumuen* has declined, and now it is somewhat increasing. Perhaps this is a positive indicator resulting from the Black *Lahu* community independently restoring its traditions — a turn-around from what was originally a cultural monetization. The music and dancing in *Pumuen* is therefore once again becoming a spiritual beliefs based societal reality. Christianity is not the *Lahu* people's original belief system; however, ironically, it is the Church that is now fund-supporting the restoration of their traditional socio-fabric.

Core belief changes lead to behavior changes that lead to cultural norm changes, which transform into societal alterations. This, is how the 'societal panarchy' cycle is articulated.

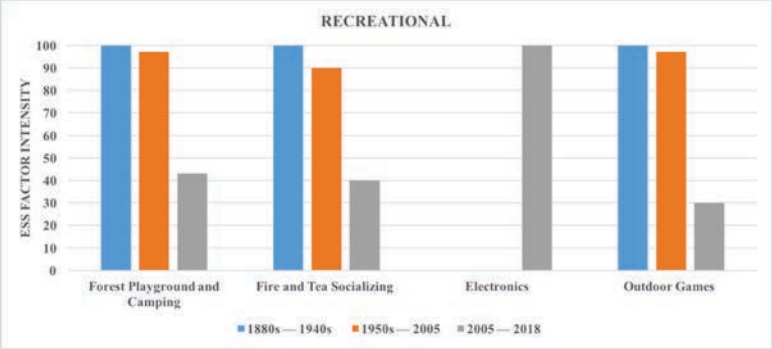


Figure 5.15: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — cultural/recreational (Source: thesis author)

For recreational services, the trends reveal that *Pumuen* villagers used to go into the forest with their friends — hunting, fishing, camping and finding forest goods. Outdoor analog games comprised of their environmental fruits were also prominent. While they still do this, the dynamics have changed because now there are other choices such as television and mobile 'smart phones;' analog activities have been substituted with electronics technology. Formerly sooden and bamboo toys are now comprised of purchased plastics.

Youth used to play together, but now the technologies stimulate individualism. I suppose it is as such all over the world, just in different cultural formats. I vividly recall growing up in the rural northern United States. The forest was our playground, but this changed when video games became available. Life is life everywhere; the material capitalism blob is seeping in, everywhere.

Evening time fire and tea socializing remains strong although declining. However, this foundation cultural component is also being replaced by, or at least including, television watching. I have observed that while villagers still rendezvous for tea time, the number of participants doing this together is decreasing. Most all of them now have their own TV and cell phones. Likewise, when societal behaviors become more individualist then this is where and when social exclusion becomes a part of the socio-dynamic, versus traditionally being more about inclusion.

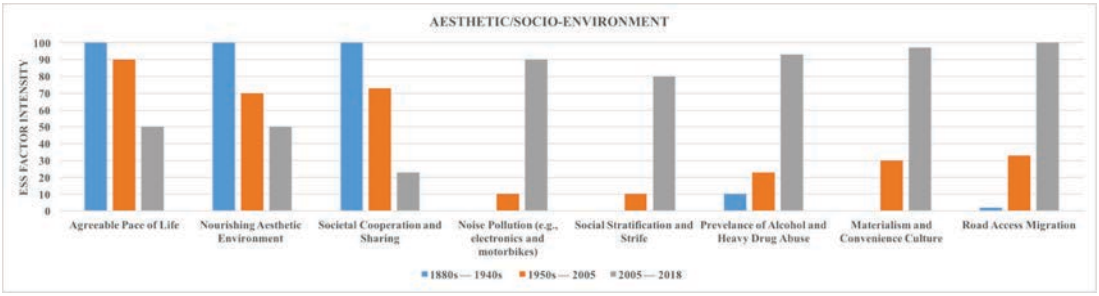


Figure 5.16: The case study's ecosystem services history (quantitative) — cultural: aesthetic/socio-environment (Source: thesis author)

A peculiar aspect of *Pumuen*'s aesthetic and socio-environmental factors when compared with other ecosystems service is that pretty much every increasing trend actually equates to a negative factor in-terms of social unity and long-term societal longevity. As you will see in this section, when considering *Pumuen*'s overall well-being it is perhaps reasonable to consider whether for *Pumuen* another societal systems state change is soon approaching.

Pumuen's aesthetic 'natural' environment in-terms of greenery has become enhanced. However, greatly bolstered road access and its ensuing materialism based social stratification and strife, noise pollution, alcohol and other drugs use have been continually increasing. This positive trend is actually a negative indicator of well-being. Societal cooperation and sharing are decreasing, which reveals a degradation of cohesive societal fabric. Agreeable (slow) pace of life is also decreasing, which is a negative indicator.

While I acknowledge that most aspects of *Pumuen*'s ecosystems are dynamically varying and semi-open for interpretations, it is undeniable that villagers' agreeable (i.e., agrarian and slow-paced) ways of life have declined. This has deeply impacted them, especially the elder and middle-aged folks. Most *Pumuen* villagers nowadays awake tired and semi-miserable, dragging their feet in order go go go, just like in the global West and throughout other 'developed' areas. *Pumuen* villagers now have to make money for food, for education, for the motorbike payment, and for additional material things. This arguably forced integration with the nation-State is a primary reason why they have a reducing of overall socio-environmental quality.

A "busy" life supposedly synonymous with 'progress' leaves little or no space for healing, for personal movement. Therefore, time for somewhat mindless recreation (e.g., television watching, drinking, social media perusing, etc.) are anticipated and arguably needed. Likewise, this urban-paced socio-culture creates for people internal tensions and are root motivators for becoming more selfish, less patient and more aggressive. This is why they do more drugs and alcohol, fight, drive fast, etc. It is a means of relieving stress and are symptoms of capitalism-driven social degradation. Nowadays, Pumuen villagers, just like those fully integrated into the urban matrix, rely on outside materials as a form of lifestyle justification. They use the mobile market. They used to grow rice and vegetables for self-sufficiency. Now they buy everything for their basic needs. Before they used to use only salt. Now they use monosodium glutamate (MSG) and other semi-synthetic outside resources. In the past, they lived a simple life; there was no need to buy anything – food, clothing, etc. This is all connected, revealed via the trends.

***

Pumuen has experienced several societal state shifts. Perhaps needless to say, their socio-culture appears to be headed in a downward direction. In addition to alcohol and meth, villagers are becoming evermore addicted to "convenience" and the electron. Materialism increases with cash flow; therefore, convenience culture has increased. Increases in cash money accumulation results in a decreased need for societal cooperation and sharing. Villagers buying more stuff such as motorbikes and electronics is a reason why the village noise pollution has increased. Karaoke machines have replaced traditional analog cultural music. Their need for more electronics has increased because of a new need for communication while community members are working in the city. This digitization of people's minds and ways of life also decreases the need for traditional indigenous knowledge based oral culture, or even its relevance.

Fast-paced electronics technologies are evermore replacing analog ways of life and linked behavior synonymous with their 'traditional' socio-fabric. Analog activities such as those attributed with fire, communication tools while in the forest, were not run by electricity. So let us consider electronics technology and its intimate link with 'modernity.' If looking at this from the perspective of Western 'developmentalism' and practice, the idea of 'development' is to first government execute an organized intervention in collective affairs. So take what people do, interrupt this with and through policy directives, and then through these policies behavior is changed arguably by getting people to participate in the global market system. In order for people to participate in the global market system, technologies are required such as those related with communication, crops cultivation, etc. Modernity is all about technology. Electronics are essentially replacing analog. This is all linked with the global matrix in proportion with access.

5.2.1 Following-up: villagers' explanations

The reason I have to use mixed methods for this research project is because in *Pumuen* the environmental and socio-politics is very complex. Each ecosystems factor has many aspects. Also, the quantitative trends allowed focused room for much conversation.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

I was initially perplexed upon learning how a replanted forest could result in environmental and societal degradation. How could more encompassing greenery

create notable reductions in biodiversity (e.g., edible plants), more polluted and less available fresh water, diminished air quality, and a less favorable aesthetic environment? This scenario is largely because each ecosystem component is holistically connected with the others; when one is altered so will be the others. Merely using theoretical tools is not enough. Sometimes what is required is that we talk further with stakeholders and ask them to confirm what we believe is true, based on the research. The following section comprises further information learned from three villagers of an age range who valuated the ecosystem services factors and helped determine the trends in context with *Pumuen*'s 'development.'

Provisioning:

Again, the most significant 'development' policy that has impacted these rural highland communities in northern Thailand is land use regulations. Villagers reported that while *Pumuen*'s encompassing forest may have been replanted where there used to be rice and opium being grown, pine trees (and other non-native species) were used. This decimated the native ecosystems, including making it a hostile environment for other trees and plants. Introducing alien species likewise changed the overall indigenous ecosystem, decreasing overall biodiversity (pun intended). The new tree species impacted traditional medicines' growth, for example. While for various reasons the pine trees around *Pumuen* have disappeared (e.g., harvested for fuel wood), because this is a 'reserved' Royal Project forest area designed for tea and other orchards, many pine trees exist further up the national park watershed.

The Red *Lahu* used to have troubles with wood supply. Prominent opium cultivation in that area required that they travel far in order to collect wood. This is not the case with the nearby Black *Lahu* village. Different contexts create different resource related situations within relatively the same socioecological system. Firewood availability is now decreasing because of land use regulations, population increase, and prolonged resource need requirements. There were fibers available for clothing, but they are gone. Actually, villagers sold them and then some species went extinct. I suppose this transpired during a transition time from a 'traditional' livelihood to cash money market society needs. Perhaps for the first time they realized that natural resource availability has limitations, especially when commoditized into an insatiable market.

For a transitioning time period, villagers' livelihood was comprised entirely of Forestry Department labor. This is particularly true with their involvement in tree planting programs.

However, this has greatly changed because of decreased necessity; villagers also have other options (e.g., private orchard cultivation, wage labor, or urban dwelling overall). Villagers' traditional labor exchange (e.g., planting and harvesting) and bartering, while being fully practiced in *Pumuen* just thirty years ago, has predominantly vanished. Villagers used to grow both rice and tea, but now tea is the staple (cash) crop.

The soil quality in *Pumuen* was tested, reported a village leader. It is healthy and produces good yield. It is relatively the same quality now as it has always been because different crops are being grown there (e.g., tea, and other orchard crops). Villagers reported difficult nowadays in finding certain forest foods that used to be plentiful. Wood and bamboo also used to be in ample supply. Nowadays, villagers have to ask permission from Forestry Department officers to collect some things. Increased human population is creating strain on the entire ecosystem. There is high competition. Moreover, people from other areas come to the *Pumuen* area and collect natural medicines and sell them in the lowland markets. Villagers therefore have to travel "deeper" in order to collect forest goods. They, at the end of a long work day, would evermore rather just purchase their provisioning goods from the mobile market or from the lowlands.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Another example of provisioning service changes is about the buffalo husbandry. Just because buffalo are being used as a provisioning source (as a resilience means) does not mean this phenomenon does not impact other ecosystem services factors such as biodiversity, water quality, or socio-cultural aspects involving land usage. There is now far more buffalo husbandry being utilized for money sequestration and security. This is arguably a good thing, versus working in a factory. However, these animals are eating the forest goods. Moreover, the buffalo feces are polluting the fresh water supply.

There is no longer much pig husbandry being practiced, a traditional *Lahu* culture norm. The Red *Lahu* are not keen on the pig husbandry because of worries that they will eat their cash crops. This reduction is also because villagers now have to purchase expensive pig food, which used to be forest-supplied. Moreover, villagers' pigs are no longer allowed to roam freely. There have been village conflicts over territory and roaming pigs, and the communities want to avoid this. "It's a trade-off," said one villager.

Regulating and Supporting:

Villagers reported that the land use limitation (e.g., prohibited slash and burn cultivation) hampers their ability to maintain the overall socio-ecological ecosystem. Villagers when practicing shift cultivation would frequently burn the fields, which prevented overgrowth. It also balanced the ecosystem. A result is now there more forest undergrowth and yearly forest fires. Air quality has decreased because of motorbikes, cars, trash burning and forest fires. There is also more smoke because of increased population. Orange orchards are contributing to air quality degradation because of pesticide spraying in other areas. A positive factor is that the air there is cooler and nourishing nowadays, perhaps because of increased climatic regulation from forest restoration.

Water quantity has always been maintained. However, older people in the Red *Lahu* village before told villagers not to pipe the water into the village. They said that villagers should go to the river and collect this resource. However, this has changed. The Red *Lahu* village uses a water filter and has storage infrastructure; whereas, the Black *Lahu* village while it uses storage does not have a filter system and is experiencing issues with decreasing water quality. The water quality, particularly in the Black *Lahu* village, is decreasing because of feces from over two hundred buffalo encompassing the villages. There is also more sediment from heavy rains (climate change phenomenon).

The road changed the watershed. Especially the tarred version, has messed up the water flow and is creating flooding and erosion. About health control, villagers have experienced improvements in personal physical health (i.e., not necessarily psychological). A villager reported that they never until fairly recently saw Thai government officials in the village about health issues. However, they started training villagers how to do health tests (e.g., for parasites).

Erosion near *Pumuen* village, caused by relatively new impervious road surface.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Cultural:

As all *Pumuen* villagers across the age spectrum have reported, life was very quiet there not long ago; there was no noise pollution thirty years ago. One villager said that "many birds and deer surrounded this village. Now there is noisy technology everywhere." Everyone was sharing

their provisioning resources, especially the meat. Nowadays most everyone is selling it to each other and to the outside markets.

Regarding societal cooperation, villagers consistently say village life is largely now "about money, money, money; no more volunteers." There is also rising conflict about land usage. People have a fence around their domestic and commercial territory, a new phenomenon. There was some materialism in the past. However, it was mostly about necessities, which villagers acquired by walking to the lowland urban areas. They bought chili, salt, chickens, etc. The opium and other forest goods were used accordingly. This has totally changed.

A further symptom of societal degradation is the alcohol and heavy drug usage. Surely opium addiction existed here before; however, opium was used for medicine and bartering. When asked directly why villagers in such a short time period went from a relatively healthy society to now doing heavy drugs, etc., one villagers said, "More development makes us want to consume more alcohol and other drugs." He said that these substances are also about availability. For example, alcohol was not easily available in the village until recently. Road access to the lowlands, or even the village store, and cash money expenditure (and credit) capacity changed this dynamic.

They do not grow rice anymore; however, although they purchase their rice nowadays, maintain the harvest cycle related beliefs and ceremonies. The traditional artisanry is lost because villagers did not transfer the knowledge. A teacher used to come there and pass on the traditional knowledge. However, he died and this teaching and knowledge went with him. Also, villagers can now purchase livelihood tools. Older people are still practicing the traditions, but not the youth.

The aesthetic environment has decreased mostly because of population growth and usage of loud-piped motorbikes and noise racket from electronics. There is not much traditional music and dancing left because villagers "are obsessed" with the karaoke machine. Their traditional play-toys have largely become replaced with plastics.

They used to communicate with fellow villagers, then with the Thai Forestry Department officers, and now they can communicate with the whole world. Villagers before did not even know there were other villages nearby. Later they walked to other villages. Now they connect via motorbike and cellular phones. These technologies are useful. However, they create societal pollution on many levels. On the other hand, one villager said that technology is good because "now we can see and hear other people as well."

This all said, top-down government can change what people do on the outside but not necessarily what they experience on the inside, at least not right away. Multi-level governance including inter-scale and level relationships are vitally important. The local people know about their environments.

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Culture is an agreed upon way of doing things. I maintain that culture must be connected and supported by both livelihood and overall environment (both 'natural' and socio). Core belief systems are the heart-center of a community. So if religious beliefs decline this is also linked with traditional knowledge and self-sufficiency (e.g., artisanry, such as hunting tools or clothing production). This is all linked with social degradation (or enhancement) because core belief changes result in social strife and visa-versa.

You can see through the indicators in *Pumuen* that technology/modernity is replacing villagers' traditional socio-fabric. They are becoming digitized and electronic. So what flows faster, a nicely flowing mountain stream (analog) or the electron? Electronics are fast; whereas, a river is slow and agreeable; it envelops and symbiotically wraps around the trees and the rocks and flows at the rate of the geological slope. Everything is in-balance, or at least in a perpetual state of balanced flux.

Using this analogy, villagers' agreeable pace of life is decreasing with the increasing prevalence of modernity and materialism, convenience culture, road access, and social stratification. This is increasing with cash money and materialism desires, with national education exposure. All factors that are increasing are connected with 'development' and modernity. Factors connected with analog and 'tradition' are connected with tea and socializing, outdoor games, traditional culture, shifting cultivation, a nourishing environment, cooperation and sharing; they are all decreasing. The increased pace of life is connected with modernity, which is about technology and digitization. Likewise, cooperation and sharing is decreasing with the increasing pace of life.

Traveling to the lowlands once a month, for example, likely involved traditions. When they spent a night in the forest, they likely discussed life's happenings and future oriented strategies, etc. Before when villagers lived more isolated, their behaviors were most centered around the community needs. Now their needs are more based on themselves (i.e., wants). It is more individualistic, arguably selfish. A villager's son for example uses social media to talk with his

girlfriend located in another village. It is all about him, Without the electronics technology, he would be doing something else more analog and connected with the community, maybe practicing traditional *Lahu* courting techniques (e.g., the flute). Villagers' boundaries have greatly expanded. Before they had no road or easy access to "the outside." They experienced strong societal cohesion and sharing. Nowadays, they are more individualistic and not thinking about the community as much. But the church is very important for community cohesion. Again, If religious beliefs collapse, everything else collapses.

Modernity has compressed the world. Everyone is connected with everything. *Pumuen* villagers use Facebook and social media, etc. to connect worldwide. It has opened their world. There is no longer any boundaries, at least in relation to villagers' non-tangible world. Electronics increases connectivity. Even though they have ability to connect with others now and get more information, does this not also render them more individualistic as well? Do they become more focused on the things that they are alone interested in, versus the overall needs of the community?

This is all connected. Nowadays, versus their lives being comprised of a 'moral economy' (i.e., slow rural agrarian life based on goodness, fairness, and justice, generally only possible in small, closely knit communities … as opposed to where the market is assumed to be independent of such concerns), *Pumuen* villagers, and most 'developed' people worldwide, have to make money, buy things, and depend on capitalist global market systems. This phenomenon is also a negative factor for sense of security and overall well-being.

It is becoming evermore difficult for *Pumuen* villagers to survive here, not because their natural environment (i.e., provisioning and regulating services) are greatly degrading. They even have more technologies and market access. Their survival is becoming more precarious because their cultural services are degrading. Their societal fabric is unraveling. It has reached a perhaps minor societal state shift, comprised of new (arguably incompatible) desires. The societal thread breakage/unraveling is coming from the youth strand, which is being impacted by money and material goods addiction.

Villagers play the music so loudly at night, for example, ironically as an outward illustration of their true inner misery, behaving like a wolf howling at the moon. It is like they want to forget for a moment. Considering social psychology, graffiti for example is done because people are subconsciously dissatisfied with their environment and therefore communicate with it by attacking or altering it in some way in order to suit personal tastes; this is deeply psychological.

So in *Pumuen* when we see certain cultural factors declining and people acting in this way, especially with the youth, they are emulating urban behaviors but are doing it in a socio-environment that does not support this. And this is why it is so contrasting to observe. This is where core belief changes (and preservation) come into play.

For perspective balance, just because people, or even a community's core beliefs change, or they are not entirely living their traditional ways of life, does not mean it is going to experience social degradation. However, the trend is generally that social degradation in-terms of cultural ecosystem services does stem from core beliefs change. This is especially true when someone's environment, and everything connected with it, does not support whatever this change is. For example, let us say that a *Pumuen* villager wants to be part of the mainstream national culture, or is being forced to become part (such as is the case in Thailand, with Thai-fication). However, this person is living in a socio-environment that does not support this desire (e.g., a rural indigenous village). This person's mindset says, 'I want that material stuff. I want to live like people in the city," but his or her community environment does not support this; this is the core of mental/societal illness.

So here you have a real life socio-situation where youth existing amid the *Pumuen* community. They want to be Thai. They want the stuff that city people (including their friends) have. However, 'I live in this village with these primitive people who live in bamboo houses and use a hole in the ground for a toilet, and they wear this clothing that I don't want to wear, and I am stuck here!" It is no wonder, then, why they are angry, why when they ask mom for money and when she refuses he beats on her; it is because he is angry not necessarily at his mother but more so is angry at his overall situation from which he cannot escape. … My view on the societal impacts of 'development' involves notions that this is what happens when a government enacts 'natural resource' ethnocide polices which sever people's ability to live and be as they have always known. In "modern times" it is especially the youth have to figure out how to fit into nowhere!

While *Pumuen*'s middle-aged and elder community members may have resilience to shocks, both environmental and cultural. The people who have survived here have been able to do so only because of their indigenous knowledge. *Farlae* at thirty-five years old may very well be the last generation who truly knows how to survive in this 'natural' environment. This is at least becoming not the case with the youth. They with their lust for modernity are perhaps ensuring their destruction. Seemingly blind(ed), they treat their lifeblood, their environment and fellow villagers,

with near disdain and while seemingly unaware that in thirty years, if this place even still exists, they are going to be in dire trouble. They will either literally be unable to stave off the calamities that are on their doorstep, or they will have found some way to adapt and/or create a restructured societal system. The same is true for anyone else in this material, plastic, world.

Some villagers seem to not see the true wealth that they still have. They are so rich in ecosystem services, in the capacity to insulate themselves from the wretched misery that most humans in the 'developed world' endure every day. Some people are so rich, yet are so poor in awareness. While their current resource levels may to some degree be sustaining their semi-modern lifestyle, some villagers — particularly those with traditional *Lahu* cultural knowledge — are adapting, or at least semi-adapting, to their ever-changing circumstances; this may not be the future case. Considering a rapidly developing world experiencing increasing prominence of environmental and societal degradation, villagers' full awareness of the vital importance of the ecosystem services they have available to them (at least for now) are literally their life insurance policy.

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A key point in top-down development is it is essentially about using people for nation-State motivations. Considering *Pumuen*, a positive correlation is with the increase of national culture education and significant enhancing of villagers' personal health (and maybe even their ability to make choices and take action. Still, provisioning services have also greatly increased. Another aspect is that the central Thai government's 'development' policies purposed for restoring the forest-watershed encompassing *Pumuen* are thoroughly successful. However, this is also because the *Pumuen* community, and throughout northern Thailand for this matter, have not been allowed to continue living in their traditional ways. This community was used by the State system to bring to fruition State development policie s, not human capacity development policies.

This said, top-down government is rooted in and governed by State interests. Bottom-up development schemes are projects planned and controlled by local communities to help their local central and periphery areas. In-terms of top-down development, the *Pumuen* area arguably represents a mixing of these two paradigms. The *Pumuen* community does have a sense of belonging here, though. Maybe this is the point of the central government employing the villagers to rebuild the forest. In exchange for being State labor, whether they signed up for this service or

not, the government allows them to forage for food, which overall produces food security. So it is not all bad with top-down directives; actually, in some cases it is necessary.

Somewhat regardless of this notion, the central government policy forces that the *Pumuen* community's area have been subject to, particularly since the 1950s, have been highly detrimental particularly on societal levels. In the end, the State forest has been replaced at the expense of the community. Once the State accomplishes its goals (of agriculture), then is there really any need for these labor-people to continue being in the forest, on State property? Considering Siam/Thailand's history, perhaps *Pumuen* (and other such rural village communities) are evermore becoming a hindrance to future State motivations! This case study area is a highly successful case of top-down 'development,' particularly as an organized intervention in collective affairs, which is more about GDP development than it is about civil and community development.

This all said, quantity of life in *Pumuen* may be increasing, but quality in-terms of overall socio-environment is decreasing. This community is fairly cohesive, though, or at least it appears as such (for now). Either way, the era here of gentle quietude, an inherent personality of these rural village communities (and perhaps human beings overall) is just simply no more.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

5.3 Considering Human Well-Being: On the Road to Nowhere or Somewhere?

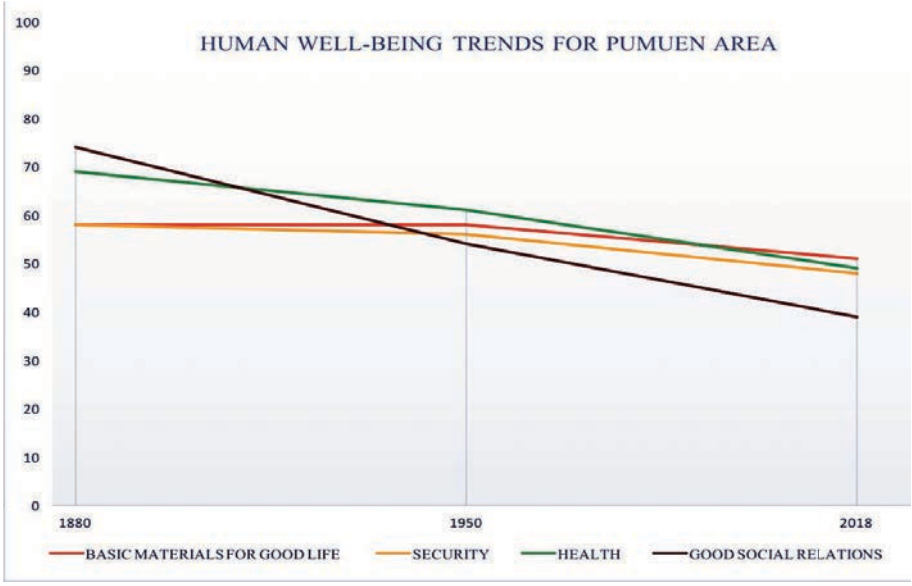


Figure 6.7: The case study's ecosystem services related human well-being trends (Source: thesis author)

Considering villagers' provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting ecosystem services (ESS) in context with human well-being, it is essential to holistically consider the ESS factors intensities and further connect them with the overall 'development' story. So how, then, can we interpret this graph? What is perhaps *Pumuen*'s socio-ecological trajectory?

The *Pumuen* villages' ESS related trends over the past one hundred forty years reveal that villagers' basic materials for a good life (e.g., resources accessibility and ability to have a livelihood), sense of security (e.g., a clean and safe environment, and resilience to ecological (life) shocks), and health (e.g., adequate nourishment, being disease-free) have *all* declined. This is particularly true since around the 1950s, when I determine the second major societal system state change (i.e., land use limitations, and the onset of 'development') ensued.

The declining health trend is slightly perplexing. Villagers are actually experiencing improved health conditions in-terms of eradication of physical diseases such as malaria, yellow fever, parasites, etc. Consider also villagers' degrading social relations, (e.g., a supporting community that capacitates social cohesion, mutual respect, as well as personal expression and learning). I guess this does not mean that their overall health — or even the socio-ecological system state — is not ailing. Look at (and between) the lines. Is *Pumuen* — particularly considering the villages' revolting youth — en route toward another entire socio-ecological system collapse?

This, is the stated objective of this thesis — to reveal and further contemplate these notions.

Photographs by Jeffrey Warner

Chapter 6 – Some Conclusion(s) and Introspective Discussion

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

This research project, intended as a nuanced multi-disciplinary investigation, delved into how we as a global community are perhaps at a pivotal point in our history. The economic market related decisions that humans have been making for generations are rendering like never before very tangible effects on our reality in-terms of our natural environment and overall social functioning.

Rural ethnic indigenous peoples in northern Thailand offered us a societal context for focusing on the 'de' of development. This revealing illustrates how capitalism's tenets of land, labor, and capital detrimentally impact relationships amongst ourselves and with our surrounding 'natural' ecosystems. We pondered what are 'development' and 'modernity' related processes essentially taking away from humans' cultures and 'traditional' ways of life, and what are the societal replacements? What are the short and potential long-term impacts of this supposedly glorious march of capitalism-linked 'progress?' What does this inquiry overall mean for Us all? Are we humans on the road to nowhere or somewhere?

This study journey began with an outlining consideration of while modernity related technologies and related lifestyles have become commonplace in modern-day 'developed' societies, there are world populations that remain functioning on the margins of globalization and related modernization phenomena. At least for awhile longer, both 'modern' and 'traditional' lifestyles can still be observed.

I established foundation for learning more about this via a socio-political policies related historical investigation into how Siam was initially internationally colonized/imperialized, and how Thailand was later internally 'developed.' This two-phase territorialization process essentially overturned the nation's cultural root systems. This is especially relevant nowadays for those still attempting to live ethnically traditional lifestyles amid the State's societal peripheries.

I illustrated 'development' as an organized intervention in collective affairs by revealing fairly in-depth about one indigenous ethnic community area — *Pumuen*. This is a case study template for the 'de' of development. Villagers from an age range and living with different life circumstances shared with us about their community and how one-hundred forty years of top-down government planning policies, global market influences, and infrastructural development have impacted their communities' geographical environment, socio-economic conditions, and psychosocial functioning. This is particularly relevant to the last seventy years, during when, during when top-down central State 'development' policies have perforated villagers' socio-fabric.

This ethnographic investigation provided the information for creating a 'development timeline,' which was used for framing a qualitative analysis of villagers' provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural ecosystem services. This study, which I quantified, reveals longitudinal trends pertaining to villagers' well-being. *Pumuen*'s socio-ecological reality is surely transmuting.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Pumuen's 'development' related socio-ecological degradation — serving essentially as a contextual case study for the country, and arguably of all humankind for this matter — has ensued one decade, one 'development' policy, one television program and policy scheme at a time. While fragments of the *Pumuen* communities' culturally 'traditional' socio-fabric remain, villagers as a result of top-down government policies are becoming evermore plugged into mainstream national and global society. They have, as a means of adaptive resilience, socio-functionally transformed from that of a nature-subsistence way of life — arguably more in-balance with natural surroundings than people living in what is considered the 'modern world' — to that of being near totally dependent on cash economics and its driving global market system. This has created a cultural identity crisis, of sorts.

The *Pumuen* villages area does maintain positive societal attributes including some intact core traditional *Lahu* ways of life and community cohesion in micro-level decision-making. However, this is spiraling downward as villagers have particularly in the last seventy years experienced marked changes in both their physical environment and social functioning, and not necessarily for the better.

6.1 Ecosystems Transformation: Direct and Indirect Drivers of Change

Further considering the ecosystems of this thesis' primary case study, I maintain that the *Pumuen* villages area has undergone three primary societal systems state changes. The following section respectively articulates some of the direct and indirect drivers of these ecosystem services changes that have impacted these services and and these communities' overall well-being.

1. Throughout *Pumuen* area's subsistence/primitive era (1880s-1950), the creation of a dirt road navigable by motorbikes and military vehicles (i.e., the State) is perhaps the most significant direct driver of change still fueling 'development' processes ensuing one-hundred forty later. During this timeframe, Siam was colonized/imperialized; later came the creation of Thailand as a political State. This socio-political and geographical territorialization cultivated indirect drivers of change involving regional and domestic international policy changes (i.e., anti-communism, and 'rural development' policy directives). Villagers' increasing engagement with the central government (e.g., military) ensued, along with the increasing usage of cash money (i.e., global market engagement). This contributed significantly although somewhat indirectly to villagers' ecosystem services related engagements. This at least began a socio-political process.

2. A top-down State intervention in collective affairs (1950s-2005) carried with it 'development' that forever changed *Pumuen* as this politically sensitive border area and the indigenous people inhabiting it. This included (and still includes) direct drivers of change comprised of staunchly enforced government land use regulations. This includes the expunging of opium cultivation (as well as opium addiction and black market related socio-issues), and most notably the systematic dissolving of traditional slash and burn upland rice agriculture. A new socio-political environment involving land use change (i.e., cash crops) required labor. The Black *Lahu* hence migrated to this area. Orchards based sedentary cash crops (i.e., tea mono-cropping) transformed the landscape. Eventually, the road was expanded. With bolstered urban (global market) access, the prevalence of modernity related cultural inputs also ensued.

This for the *Pumuen* communities brought forth indirect drivers of change including government mandated household registration; this formally transformed villagers from being fairly autonomous and self-governing to becoming State subjects. Being under the State's umbrella also has its social benefits, including modern health care, some secure access to resources related personal security (i.e., human rights). Pumuen's Thai government school (i.e., national culture education, and a *Lahu* traditional culture de-education) is also an indirect driver of explicit changes

that have ensued. Migration to the urban lowlands, wage labor and urban dwelling, cash money usage, marrying outside of the village, reduced practicing of ethnic traditions (i.e., indigenous knowledge for provisioning goods, medicine, music as well as dancing and *Lahu* language), resource consumption changes (i.e., financial spending, purchasing of foods villagers' used to harvest from the encompassing forest, and consumption of non-traditional foods, etc.), have all comprised indirect drivers of change that are leading evermore to a near complete overturning of the villages' socio-functioning.

3. With capitalism and modernity fully settling into villagers' socio-fabric (2005-2018), directly contributing to this continues primarily being the easily navigable road. The installation of low and then high power electricity that is continually being evermore utilized is also a direct driver of change; villagers are evermore plugging into the global market matrix. *Pumuen* has recently experienced some cash crop devastating climatic events that have resultantly encouraged villagers to consider alternative income sources involving multi-cropping and different forms of animal husbandry (i.e., a traditional *Lahu* livelihood trait).

The forest comprising the national park and watershed that *Pumuen* resides within has been restored, revealing a highly successful central government initiative. However, ironically this has directly led to relatively negative ecosystem services related changes related with biodiversity; this is particularly concerning harvestable provisioning services. There is also the increasing prominence of environmental pollution, both aesthetic and societal. These changes overall have cultivated indirect drivers of ensuing further changes such as a highly increased pace of life, cash money based socio-functioning, materialism and social stratification, increasing usage of electronics (e.g., television, cellular phones, and karaoke machines), credit debt, and environmental pollution including noise racket, synthetic rubbish as well as degrading water and air quality. Also ensuing is overall societal discontent resulting in increasing prevalence of materialism and social stratification, alcohol and other drug abuse, suicide, and domestic violence.

Community based tourism has indirectly contributed to provisioning and cultural services' improvement (e.g., supplemental income, cultural pride, etc.). Some restoration of traditions such as music and dance, as well as central government easing of land use regulations (i.e., capacity for natural foods foraging and animal husbandry), is somewhat helping these communities bolster their overall resilience while coping with a continuing onslaught of changes in a rapidly paced post-modern world.

Some of these direct and indirect drivers of change pertaining to villagers' access to potentially beneficial opportunities — migration via the road, "higher education," modern technologies, financial income, etc.) — not having access to these resources (i.e. poverty) is also resulting in an additional multi-layered gamete of directly and indirectly driven changes.

This all said, there may be major and minor (panarchy related) societal system state shifts in conjunction with direct and indirect drivers of change; this which would require even deeper levels of examination.

6.2 Offering Some Discourse: Are Good Social Relations *Really* Unnecessary?

A further contemplation of 'development' and its societal implications

Micro-scale "development" impacts are evermore conglomerating and generating tangible macro-scale global footprints, and visa-versa. Our human condition is transmuting — changing in form, nature, and substance. This is perhaps an alchemical transmutation, as we are interacting with a globalized world to the extent that humanity has never before seen.

This thesis research project likewise reveals that one rural indigenous ethnic community — as a social scientific measurement for considering how perhaps all of humankind has been core impacted by capitalist "development" — is experiencing now more than ever blatant and arguably precarious geographical and societal degradation. This is in-proportion with the injection of top-down capitalism-driven State 'development' policies that are actually most useful for controlling resources (including people) and bolstering the capitalism-driven GDP money market economy., among other aspects. This, is status quo 'development' in the sense of an organized intervention in collective affairs rather than for development's *supposed* purpose of solving problems and nourishing civil society by providing more choices (Pieterse; 2001).

Considering again this thesis' community case study, replanting of this village community's encompassing forest, as well as the central Thai government territorialization of areas prior outside of the State's gaze, is surely a successful government initiative. However, villagers' livelihood aspects — from biodiversity and access to sufficient and clean water and food, sense of life security, to overall cultural and hence societal and personal health — are consistently degrading. This is particularly relevant to the 1950s top-down government implementation of land use regulations. Later what arrived to villagers was the (somewhat abrupt) implementation of global market access (and reliance), modern technologies, and cash money reliance.

Resultantly, the ecosystem services related *trends* over the past one-hundred forty years reveal that the *Pumuen* villages area (and perhaps all of Siam/Thailand for this matter) have undergone a whirlpool of transformative changes. It is observable that many villagers, especially the middle-aged and youth, are evermore enacting a lowland urban lifestyle. This involves laboring, money and materialism coveting, materialism, electronic technologies usage, as well as participating in and becoming accustomed to an overall fast (and noisy) pace of life. This is while remaining sort of stuck in a rural village-life paradigm. Alike oil incompatibly mixing with water, these two societal lifestyle elements — 'traditional' and 'modern' — are seemingly shifting around beside and atop one another yet not congealing in order to create something sustainably new.

I have observed, in *Pumuen* and throughout other rural ethnic indigenous village communities, that many villagers want to, much like in what some may call more 'civilized' world cultures, keep up with their modernizing neighbors but don't really know how to cope with their rapidly changing environment. The younger generations are looking to the outside world for examples of how to survive in a modern society. They have little to no clue which world existence paradigm to which they should identify with or to which one they belong. The middle-aged villagers want to preserve their culture, for which they feel responsible. However, while their children know the cultural traditions, the middle-aged are also being drawn towards the conveniences of an enticing modern world. Most of the elders cannot identify with any of this. And most all of these villagers are enduring what is perhaps a very real and tangible identity crisis. I will boldly pose this question: Is it (really) okay that this is transpiring!?

I again stress that *Pumuen*'s "development" reveals a truly successful case of top-down natural resource and national economy directed 'development.' However, in-terms of human and social development, what is actually transpiring there (and throughout Thailand's socio-political peripheral communities) is arguably an ensuing humanitarian disaster — a form of ethnocide. For protection, *Pumuen*'s cultural services overall, at least for the time-being, are quite strong (e.g., Church activities, *Lahu* language, dress, food, music, activities, etc.). This is not the case for all of northern Thailand's rural villages; their resilience to detrimental development impacts depends greatly on leadership dynamics. Anyway, how long will this village's semi-unity endure if the newer generations keep harnessing such seemingly blind disdain for the traditional ways of life that may very well be their lifeline amid this accelerating modern world paradigm.

What this thesis reveals, and perhaps suggests, then is that even rural agrarian communities remaining intertwined with the 'nature' that semi-regulates them are experiencing now more than ever blatant and arguably precarious social degradation phenomenon. Considering this socio-ecological context, we can only contemplate the true extent of social degradation ensuing within the realms of supposedly more 'advanced' societies synonymous with notions of 'progress.'

This is perhaps because while organic goods can be distributed to materialism-driven societies, synthetics and their symbiotically linked 'modern' livelihoods cannot be abruptly introduced into the socio-fabric of an inherently agrarian society; they are, perhaps, simply not compatible. This said, acquiring more money, collecting more stuff, having more choices — more "development" — does not necessarily equate to human well-being.

Critique: Are social relations *really* weakly linked with ecosystem services and well-being?

The United Nations' Millennium Ecosystem Services Assessment (MA) states that both provisioning and regulating services have low-level bonds with good social relations (See Figure 2.6: ESS framework (and well-being) model clarified). The UN maintains this same determination regarding cultural services, that social relationships are not an integrally strong element of ecosystem services; this includes potential for mediation by socioeconomic factors.

With an opinion based entirely on my field research, I vehemently disagree with this UN assessment. Cultural services and human relations may not be vitally important for people living amid urban metropolis communities, or even for these "policy makers" perched in offices placed at the global centres of power. However, this preposterous notion of survival having low-level bonds with good social relations is *absolutely* untrue for those integrated into rural agrarian village communities. Social relations and indigenous knowledge is vital for their survival; this is especially relevant to arguably manipulated global market fluctuations and climate change phenomena. People living on the societal peripheries first and foremost experience the impacts.

The UN's placing of low priority relevance to cultural services reveals on some levels how out of touch with actual on-the-ground reality some of these policy-makers are. It is reasonable to consider also that those living on the village level often do not harness details related with regional and global scales. Either way, for rural agrarian communities, cultural services are soul food. They are as much important as, if not more vital, than any other ecosystem service.

Community unity cultivates hope. When a society is cohesive, it can, through informed resilience, survive through even the worst of calamities.

So what happened to us? … What can be done?

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Although the Earth's 'natural environment' and human society — in perpetual flux — has always changed, there is seemingly something fundamentally different about this global scale societal system state amid which we are experiencing. Really; what happened?

Regarding my primary 'de' of development related research questions about what are development/modernization related processes essentially taking away from humans' cultures and 'traditional' ways of life, and what are the societal replacements?

Development and modernity: they appear to bring order and comfort. Yet, particularly in the advanced stages, these phenomena in more ways than not actually also cultivate much so much environmental destruction as well as pain and suffering. This is everything that we — as a global community — do not inherently like.

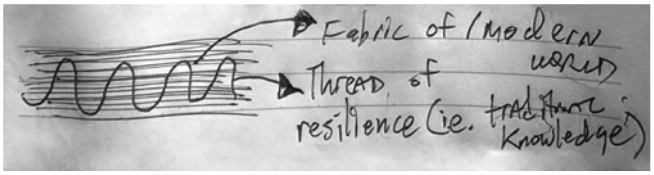
This is versus nourishing the socially binding commonalities that we humans love and mutually share. I am referring to our core needs of being loved and accepted, of being accepting and loving; this includes our necessity for having a nourishing natural environment that includes familial and community connections. This said, the capitalist global market system (i.e., the commodification of 'nature') breeds the very societal injustices and 'problems' that 'development' (discourse) is supposedly meant to solve.

Tangibly speaking, perhaps globally, an indigenous knowledge based socio-fabric was of greater prominence than the 'modern' world. However, a post-modern and globalized world has essentially reversed this paradigm, arguably creating a homogenizing global society. Whatever may be the roots causes, it is as though the machine world is evermore burrowing its way into the heart of humanity and Planet Earth's lifeblood ecosystems. Likewise, this capitalist 'development/modernity' paradigm madness globally just simply cannot continue as is — a "free market" fairly unchecked and unconstrained animal consuming everything in its path.

I ponder: will it take for humans to take a moment's pause, while we still have this chance, and temper this madness?

A vital need for multi-level governance and global cooperation

We must analyze precisely how topical matters are effecting society overall. Only then can we truly begin to untangle this mess that we humans have collectively produced. This is arguably since the onset of the Agricultural Revolution when we calculated that it is prudent to insulate ourselves from our natural world and create the very surplus driven market systems that now dictate our existence.



From this thesis author's December 2018 field research notes

Life is dynamic. Diversity is needed and multi-level governance collaboration is vital, providing society maintains its traditional socio-fabric. Perhaps culturally 'traditional' and 'modernized' ways of life cannot concurrently operate. This is at least true unless there is some multi-level socio-ecological management system.

The resilience exists in the stretch-ability of this fabric, and the socio-magic thread is the traditional/inherent knowledge that is comprised of the values and norms inherent to this society. This framework perhaps must be base programmed with an ethnicity's inherent (specific) indigenous knowledge directives and supported by and with modern-day globalized mindsets and technologies. Updated and innovative post-modern development strategies are required. Mindful intra-scale and multi-level governance collaboration is imperative. Local peoples, especially small and poorer farmers, must be consulted particularly prior to any outside-initiated development.

I suggest that what is most important, prudent, and affective, is that those working on global and regional scales and levels build solid and trusting relationships with folks on the local village scale, especially small and poorer farmer. This is in order to truly understand the multi-faceted dimensions of the local level and how forced changes in their physical environment impacts relationships amongst themselves and with their 'natural' world.

***

For a socio-political context like Thailand/Se-Asia — which again I maintain is a world region representing the periphery of globalization, where facets of 'traditional' and 'modern' can still be observed — Kelly, Yutthaphonphinit, Seubsman, and Sleigh (2012) say that one of the primary development related challenges in Thailand is centralized bureaucracy and intra-government competition.

These authors share that in Thailand community learning and empowerment is most effective when the process is truly participatory. “State agencies still have an important part to play in community development. They should support and encourage community activities financially and logistically as well initiating opportunities for self- empowerment by communities and listening and encouraging their participation” (2012:10)

Kelly, Yutthaphonphinit, Seubsman, and Sleigh (2012) refer to a Thailand “era of military dictatorship and top-down development favoring rapid industrialization and entry into a market economy often at the expense of rural communities” (p.11), as though this is a past tense scenario. They reflected in 2012 that Thailand’s central planning agencies now exhibit the “valuing of community cultures and local participatory development projects aimed at sustainable development” (p.11).

Well, as mentioned in this thesis’ chapter three, the 2014 military coup in Thailand — what appears more as a socio-political revolution — at least temporarily changed much of what Kelly et. al. wrote in 2012, about this country looking to actually decentralize its government powers and focus on bottom-up community development policies. Because while Thailand’s National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) is working diligently to establish a socio-political framework for 2019 elections, folks, rural ethnic villagers surely remain not part of this country’s policies related ‘development’ conversation.

Perhaps, this is representative of the global status quo and hence why we are now in this ensuing ‘de’ of development related mess, together!

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

6.3: Is It Just the Beauty That Remains? … We Choose Our Ways of Life.

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

Indigenous peoples, those with distinctive historical ties to a particular territory and therefore harness deep knowledge about humanity's intrinsic relationship with nature: what remains of them and their 'traditional' ways of life? Is what is enduring merely inherent beauty?

While lovely photographs and heartfelt stories depicting their life can be presented, this is, however, in many ways a façade. There exists another dimension in which everything may appear to be fine, but cultures have been shredded…fragmented…burned by global economics and greed — 'development,' this supposed progress! At least, we still can witness facets of traditional culture, in its ongoing stages of disintegration.

This questions the direction of humanity overall. Fundamentally different ways of life, these paradigms that nowadays define the existence of human beings, interact with each other as humanity overall relentlessly continues with this attempt to stitch together the natural with the synthetic. People do still have their cultural voices, and some good may even be forthcoming with modernity; however, there is malice amidst this grace. Stitches and scars remain from nails hammered into the coffins that contain precious cultural jewels, the proven mastery of how to survive on Planet Earth.

Yes. Fundamentally different ways of life — the 'traditional' and the 'modern,' these paradigms that nowadays define humans' existence — interact with each other as humanity overall relentlessly continues with this attempt to stitch together the natural with the synthetic. Societies do still have their voices, and some good may even be forthcoming with modernity, but there is malice amidst this grace. Stitches and scars remain from nails hammered into the coffins of 'traditional' cultures, of indigenous knowledge, of that proven mastery of how to survive on Planet Earth. At least, we still can witness facets of traditional culture, in its ongoing stages of disintegration.

Still, with warm welcoming smiles, curious gazes, and near selfless generosity, these mountain dwelling people revealed something to me that has perhaps been dampened by the supposed progress of modern development. This is a connection with our natural roots and with each other. The paradox is that indigenous peoples essentially choose to live like this, naturally, free, in a sense more integrated with nature: human. Many, however, not all, literally live hand-to-mouth. Yet, they are able to live like this because they do live as such. They just, live. This is a way of life, their way of life.

I also realize that if the world's global market grid were to shut down, many of these indigenous-knowledge-equipped people would survive. This fact alone makes them very rich. Therefore, I must ponder: what does it really mean to be poor? While the people living in these rural agrarian villages have very little in-terms of material goods, barely enough food to eat or for the candles that illuminate their homes at night, I maintain that many of these villages are in-essence functioning in a healthier and perhaps wealthier way than the rest of the modernized world. Does this not make them rich?

What, really, needs to be "developed" here, in the natural world?

A global revival: We can choose our ways of life

While much of what this 'de' of development thesis study address may seem dismal, there is yet hope; something eternal for Us remains. This is life — the natural roots that all living beings share. These are our core needs to be loved and accepted, to be accepting and loving, as well as our necessity for having a nourishing natural environment that includes familial and community connections. Perhaps, this is the beauty that remains.

I believe that a global revival, or at least an awakening, is happening where humans are becoming increasingly aware, ore reminded, of our true connection with 'nature' and with each other. This dialogue must be placed into a context container that people can relate with ... such as the human condition overall. We are all citizens of Planet Earth.

We, must dissolve these nationalistic borders and begin to bridge the understanding gaps between people, by looking at human culture first; then the micro-details of group culture can be best shared and understood.

It is yet *finally* time for Us as a global community to take a moment's pause and regroup?

I conclude with saying that, while rural village life certainly involves challenges and hardships perhaps overlooked by those who may tend to romanticize this way of life, this livelihood in many ways appears fundamentally far more natural, and perhaps healthier, than the lifestyles generally associated with those of the 'modern' world. I believe that if they, indigenous and other rural peoples, choose to live like this then logically speaking the rest of the human world can and does also choose.

This said, people I have talked with appear to accept that status quo developmental degradation as a phenomenon will take place regardless of whether we as a global community want it or not. Perhaps, this manifest destiny is an untruth. Humankind, as it always has, can determine its destiny. We can choose how we live, and certainly within the boundaries of our available resources. … May we choose wisely.

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Appendix:

A.

(Issues addressed: pressure to "develop," to be "clean," and "survive;" trading traditional culture for comfort (i.e., "having a better life"); farming and food consumption changes; technology use changes (e.g., now using gas stove, refrigerator, and sewing machine, etc.); decreased safety in the village (e.g., theft); modernization)

"Now we have modernization. Everyone else is changing. How can we live without change? We have to change. There are people in the village who are maintaining the original Hmong way of life; it is difficult for them. We have to keep developing the modern way. We have to adapt to be like the others…

"We love to stay here in the village. We don't think city people have a better life. We don't really want to be like them. We do want others from the outside to see that we are developed. In the past, people from the outside would see that our Hmong way of life is undeveloped and dirty. We have to show that we are developing ourselves, becoming clean…

"In the past, we looked like tribes-people. We used wood for cooking; now we use gas. We use high technology, such as a rice cooker, and a machine for washing and sewing clothes.

"It's about comfort. Living in a bamboo house was cold and dusty. We have to keep developing and have a better life…

"Because of modernization and technology, our way of life has totally changed. Thirty years ago, only grass and trees surrounded our bamboo huts. There was no electricity and no paved roads, resorts or restaurants. This all especially changed about ten years ago. Now the trees have been cut and more houses have been built, mostly within the past two years…

"We used to grow upland rice for consumption. Now we have to buy it in the market. Now we grow cabbage and corn for income. Now we often eat corn instead of rice. The village shaman died eight years ago; now we see the doctor in the city…

"The New Year and wedding ceremonies are still the same though. However, we now have to buy the alcoholic beverage used for the traditions. We used to make it.

In the past, there was more safety in the village. We didn't lock the doors of our homes…

Photograph by Jeffrey Warner

"Now we have a refrigerator, DVD player and a TV. We need to lock the doors because we don't know who will steal our things. Safety first. As far as seeing many tourists here, having a tar road and traffic in the village, many of us love that people come to this village. The more people, the more fun…

"We like the present time. In the past, there wasn't a good road. We had to walk to the farm. Now we can use the car for work and easily travel to another village…

"We can have development and cultural preservation at the same time. We maintain our traditional culture. The Hmong dress shows that we are Hmong. We still do things like make rice cakes. We still make handicrafts and embroider to show that this is a Hmong village…

"We go to school and learn to speak Thai, but we speak Hmong with each other at home. If and when the older generations die, the new generations can continue the culture. Even if Hmong people live in the city, even if they don't know the Hmong language, they can still preserve the culture…

"The Hmong's way of thinking has totally changed. The picture that we can remember of the past, it's not like this way of life. The older generations have a different picture than the newer generations of what is really Hmong. In the past, a concrete house would not be Hmong. But now because of modernization, it is Hmong. Now we need to make money to build the concrete houses to replace the bamboo huts, to show that we are clean. We want to develop ourselves…

"If we think like a traditional Hmong, everything about our way of life has totally changed. However, for a modernized Hmong, our current way of life is just normal. If in our minds we can see that nothing has changed, we can enjoy our life…

"If someone were to come here with a magic wand and bring us back thirty years to the original Hmong way of life, we wouldn't want that. We don't like the past. We love this kind of environment. We don't have to live a hard life anymore. Our life is more comfortable…

"This, is the new Hmong."

B. The 'De' of Development — Cover Image Explained

These two ethnic *Lahu* boys are perched beneath this satellite dish: one is using his hand for taking a focused glimpse; the other is peering through a manufactured object. Synthetic blue pipes are wrapping around their bamboo constructed home. What is the significance of this looming satellite dish, channeling messages from an essentially foreign "outside" world? What is *really* being piped in? Metaphorically speaking, how much longer before they both become wholly plugged into and engulfed by the global market matrix system and a homogenizing modern world culture? What does the mean, for Us all?

Moving to this image's right and center, we encounter and transition through a fire-like boundary line. Perhaps, indigenous peoples (and even all of humanity) are nowadays dangerously positioned amid an ever-expanding global market system. At least ethnic folks still they have their handmade textiles — the authentic and remaining representation of their traditional cultures. They do still have their indigenous voices, particularly those of their traditional ways of life… perhaps for another generation or two anyway.

Observing this image compilation's far right-side, like a candle that's been lit on both ends, development linked modernity is relentlessly approaching traditional ways of life. All of this seems to exist on the periphery of something — this smoldering fire-riddled edge, where we can still clearly see the contrast between two worlds, two paradigms, of human existence. One paradigm may even represent socio-ecological death (of what?): the machine world. What about the other long-time remaining paradigm — our inextricable connection with nature?

Indigenous peoples are knowledge keepers of nature and, in many way, perhaps those who remain the representative core of what it truly means to be a human being. Where are these people positioned, as they diligently try to remain connected to their traditional ways of life amidst a quickly approaching modern world? If their traditional knowledge becomes lost, just what hope is there for all our survival?

Perhaps, it is not too late. The time-window through which we can take a glimpse and ponder this is closing. Perhaps, it is not too late. The time-window through which we can experience a glimpse and ponder this is closing.