

Effects of Forest Land Allocation on the livelihoods of the local Co Tu men and women in central Vietnam



Source: (Dalton Voorburg 2010)

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Co Tu men and women in central Vietnam*

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Table of content

Foreword	5
Executive Summary	6
Acknowledgements	7
List of figures, tables, boxes and appendices	8
List of abbreviations	9
Introduction	11
Societal and scientific value	12
1. Theoretical Framework	13
1.1 Sustainable development and nature conservation	13
1.2 Development versus Conservation	15
1.3 Common Pool Resources	17
1.4 Tropical Forests	19
1.5 Livelihoods	21
1.5.1 Sustainable livelihoods	26
1.5.2 Indigenous knowledge	27
1.5.3 Forest dependent livelihoods	28
1.5.4 Forest devolution and decentralization	31
1.6 Gender	33
2. Regional Framework	38
<i>Vietnam</i>	38
2.1 Geography and population	38
2.2 History, economy and poverty	38
2.3. Political system	40
2.4 Deforestation and land degradation	42
2.5 Forest land allocation	45
2.5.1 The Development of forest land allocation	45
2.5.2. Conflicts in the central highlands	47
2.5.3 Opinions on the outcomes of FLA	47
2.6 Forest dependent livelihoods	49
<i>Central Vietnam</i>	52
2.7 Forest dependent livelihoods in Central Vietnam	52
2.7.1 Traditional land use in Central Vietnam	52
2.7.2 Co Tu	54
2.7.3 Bach Ma National Park	56
3. Methodological Framework	60
3.1 Research objectives and questions	62
3.2 Research methods and materials	64
3.3 Operationalised Concepts	69
3.4 Conceptual Model	71
3.5 Limitations	73
3.6 Supportive Organization: Tropenbos International	74
3.7 Research Area	76
Research Findings	79

Chapter 4. Most important FLA policies	79
4.1 From central management to social forestry	79
4.2 The Land Law and Forest Protection Law	80
4.3 Target Groups under the Land Law and Forest Protection Law	81
4.4 Programs and Projects	86
4.5 The most important FLA policies in the Nam Dong district	87
<i>Conclusion</i>	93
Chapter 5. The contemporary livelihoods of Co Tu men and women	94
5.1 The research villages	95
5.2 Financial capital	96
5.3 Human Capital	99
5.4 Natural Capital	105
5.5 Physical Capital	111
5.6 Social Capital	114
5.7 Vulnerabilities	119
<i>Conclusion</i>	120
Chapter 6. Livelihood changes and the underlying causes for these changes after the implementation of the FLA	121
6.1 From shifting cultivation to sedentary lifestyles	122
6.2 Increased incomes	123
6.3 Training and information on agricultural practices and FLA	124
6.4 Knowledge on FLA	125
6.5 Improved Livelihoods?	127
6.6 Opinions on the Red Book's	127
6.7 Changing Co Tu culture	132
6.8 Effects of FLA on hierarchical structure of the village	134
6.9 Stakeholder analysis	134
6.10 Use and protection of the forest	136
6.11 Environmental awareness	137
6.12. Participatory meetings: problem trees	138
<i>Conclusion</i>	139
Chapter 7. Consequences for the forest use after FLA implementation	140
7.1 'The Old days'	141
7.2 Rules and Regulations	141
7.3 Hunting Animals and collecting NTFP's and Dry wood	142
7.4 Environmental Changes and awareness	144
<i>Conclusion</i>	145
Chapter 8. Intra-household livelihood differences in Co Tu families in the Nam Dong district	146
8.1 Education and Occupation	146
8.2 Role Division	149
8.3 Marital problems and violence	151
8.4 Women's rights and groups	152
8.5 Cultural Division and customs	153

8.6 Red Book and Land Inheritance	154
8.7 Prejudices	156
8.8 Participatory Meeting	157
<i>Conclusion</i>	158
Chapter 9. Conclusion and Recommendations	159
References	169
Appendices	175

Foreword

The research done in advance of writing this thesis was a part of the Master's program of International Development Studies at the University of Utrecht. It was also the last part of my studies. The preparation for the research in Vietnam started over a year ago. A research proposal was written and more and more information was gathered to get a good contextual framework for the start of this final master research. At first it remained unclear what the precise subject would be, where the exact research location was and who the research group would be. Most of my readings concerned the social economic situation, the environmental conditions and the political situation and policies instead of reading about the country as a place to visit. In fact it would be my first time in Asia and a totally new experience. Apart from a country with a very rich and also violent history, Vietnam was a beautiful country to be as a researcher and as a visitor. The City of Hue, our place of residence was a small but nice city with an old center that once belonged to the emperor. The road from there to the research area was a rough and long road, but also one with amazing views coming as a surprise every time the sun was shining. Two hours on the back of a motorbike driving pass the mountains in a green surrounding was not a punishment when the weather was dry. Passing all the green rice fields, beautiful trees and flowers one would almost forget the severity of the environmental situation Vietnam is dealing with. Nevertheless, it was a great experience to do a research in Central Vietnam and staying with a Vietnamese family. As a researcher but mostly as a person I always felt welcome in Vietnam and I am absolutely planning to come back someday.

Summary

In the 80's Vietnam encountered serious problems of deforestation, partly due to the devastating effects of the Vietnam War. As a reaction to these deforestation problems and the internationally growing popularity of the concept sustainable development, the Vietnamese Government reformed its forest management, and the Forest Land Allocation (FLA) policies were developed. The main goals of the FLA policies were to protect the forest and to develop rural livelihoods. The policies are focused on the decentralization of land rights from the national to the regional and local level and on the allocation of land to different actors. Within this thesis the focus lies on the allocation of land on a household level. The Land Law and the Forest Protection Law form the basis of the policies as created and managed by the central government. It is the task of the district and the commune to divide and allocate the land among the different communes and villages. The research villages described in this thesis are located in the Nam Dong district in the province of Thua Thien Hué in Central Vietnam and are inhabited by the ethnic group called the Co Tu. In both villages researched, people received forest production land and garden land, and in most cases field land. Through the receiving of 'Red Books' people obtain their own documented land rights. The majority of the people living in both villages are farmers with a low level of education, and a lack of alternatives to find another occupation. In the past the Co Tu's lifestyle was based on shifting cultivation. After most people got resettled to the villages in the lower mountainous areas they had to adapt to a sedentary lifestyle. Nowadays, most farmers are largely dependent on the profits obtained from the products cultivated on their land for their daily income. After the receiving of forest production land, people's average incomes slightly increased and the villagers became less dependent on the products from the natural forest. In addition, due to the increased incomes and general economic development in Vietnam, people's living standard slowly increased. The increase in living standard can be seen in improved housing, infrastructure and social and health services. The education level nowadays has improved and there is more equality between boys and girls than in the past. However people can still be considered poor and women do not have the same rights as men do. The Red Books are only inherited through the male line and the men's name is often the only one written down in the Red Book, making the women dependent on their husbands.

Most of the FLA documents are written in the national Kinh language which is not familiar to all Co Tu villagers making it hard to get access to clear information about the policies. Apart from the information on the policies, the spreading of agricultural information has increased since the implementation of the FLA. Whether the policies are actually fulfilling their goals in a sustainable way remains debatable.

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Of course, as a researcher it is a duty and an honor to give my gratitude to a couple of people. At first I would like to thank my respondents in Cha Mang and Ta Lu for being so helpful and willing to cooperate with my research, even though their time was scarce. I would also like to thank my supervisors Mr. Burgers (Utrecht University) and Mr. Tu (HUAF University) for their supervision and support and Mr Nghi, program director of TBI Vietnam, and all the people working at TBI Vietnam; their office was always open for me and they were always prepared to help. Further I would like to give my gratitude to Mr. Bierbooms for his useful advice and patience during my thesis writing process. Last but not least I would like to thank my housemates in Vietnam: Michelle and Yustina and Mucahid for their tips and advice and of course my friends and family in the Netherlands for their support during the writing process, I could not have done it without you. Thank you.

List of Figures and Tables

Box 1.1: Household Livelihood assets

Figures

- Figure 1.1 Livelihood Framework
- Figure 2.1 Political system in Vietnam and central-local relation
- Figure 2.2 Thua Thien Hue, Central Vietnam province
- Figure 2.3 Location of Bach Ma national park
- Figure 2.4 Reported forest value among surveyed households
- Figure 3.1 Stakeholder analysis / Venn diagram in Cha Mang
- Figure 4.1 Decentralizing responsibilities
- Figure 6.1 Venn diagram in Cha Mang
- Figure 9.1 = 1.1

Tables

- Table 1.1 Types of forest-based livelihoods
- Table 2.1 Characteristics of forest and other wooded land
- Table 4.1 Overview of FLA policies for households and individuals
- Table 4.2 FLA procedures to households and individuals
- Table 4.3 The existing legal document on FLA
- Table 5.1 Poverty scales according to commune and village officials
- Table 5.2 Education in Ta Lu and Cha Mang village
- Table 5.3 Division of education levels between Cha Mang and Ta Lu
- Table 5.4 Average land size
- Table 5.5 NTFP's collected in Cha Mang and Ta Lu
- Table 5.6 Animals hunted by the villagers of Cha Mang and Ta Lu
- Table 6.1 Benefits of the RB system in Cha Mang
- Table 6.2 Benefits of the RB system in Ta Lu
- Table 6.3 Stakeholder analysis in Ta Lu
- Table 8.1 People with another occupation besides farming in both research villages
- Table 8.2 Red Book inheritance and naming in Ta Lu
- Table 8.3 Red Book inheritance and naming in Cha Mang

Maps

- Map 3.1 Thua Thien Hué province and its districts
- Map 3.2 Research communes in Nam Dong district
- Map 5.1 Location of Thuong Nhat and Thuong Lo in Nam Dong district

Appendices

- Appendix 1. Problem tree of men in Ta Lu
- Appendix 2. Problem tree of women in Ta Lu
- Appendix 3. Problem tree of men in Cha Mang
- Appendix 4. Problem tree of women in Cha Mang
- Appendix 5. Semi-structured question list for farmers
- Appendix 6. Questionnaire

Abbreviations

5MHRP	5 million hectare reforestation program
ADB	Asian development bank
BMNP	Bach Ma National Park
CFM	Community forestry management
CPC	Commune people's committee
DFID	Department for international development
DONRE	Department of natural resource and environment
DPC	District people's committee
EPA	Environmental protection agency
FAO	Food and agriculture organization
FBPA	Forest based poverty alleviation
FLA	Forest land allocation
FPU	Forest protection unit
GDI	Gender development index
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global environmental facility
GNP	Gross national product
HDI	Human development index
HH's	Households
HUAF	Hué University of Agriculture and Forestry
IDS/UU	International Development Studies / University of Utrecht
MADR	Ministry of agriculture and rural development
MDGs	Millennium development goals
NGO	Non governmental organization
NTFPs	Non timber forest product's
PAM	United Nations World Food Program

PROFOR	Program on forests
PRSPs	Poverty reduction strategy papers
RBs	Red Book's
SD	Sustainable Development
SFE	State forest enterprises
TBI	Tropenbos International Vietnam
UNDP	United Nations development program
UN	United Nations
VND	Vietnam Dong
WB3	World Bank 3
WRI	World resource institute

Introduction

Vietnam, a country characterized by rice fields, spring rolls, typical round hats and green rice paddies. But Vietnam is also the country of the Vietnam or the American war. Remarkable is that specific cultural aspects mark the country, not its economy. Also within the country much emphasis is placed on the importance of culture within their society. This sounds logical, but often when talking about policies and the outcomes, the importance of culture seems to be easily forgotten and the discussion will mainly be focused on economic outcomes. This has partly been the case with the Forest Land Allocation (FLA) policies in Vietnam. These policies are focused on the decentralization of land rights from the national to the regional and local level and on the allocation of land to different actors, like State Forest Enterprises (SFE), Communities and Households. There has been much research on the topic but most of it seems to focus on economic growth and financial increases; moreover the attention is given to ‘material’ outcomes. However this is not the whole picture.

The Forest Land Allocation started after the big reforms called ‘Doi Moi’ around the 1980’s. As the name already implies, these FLA policies apply to the forest as well. After being colonized by the French and bombed by the Americans and other involved players, Vietnam turned to a socialist (communistic) Republic. The damage of these historical wars has been enormous, not only to the economy and the population but also to the environment. Empty devastated lands can still be found within the middle of the woods, caused by bombing and chemicals like agent-orange. Because of its historical legacy and the over-exploitation of the forest and others factors, Vietnam was encountering serious problems of deforestation in the 80’s. This was around the time that conservation and sustainable development were highly placed on the ‘development agenda’.

A combination of disappointing agricultural output and economic decline and the serious deforestation in Vietnam led to the development of the Forest Land Allocation policies. With the Doi Moi reforms the centrally planned communistic economy was turned into a market economy and from industry-based to a modernized agriculture-based economy. These reforms and FLA policies have indeed led to economic growth and shown stabilizing and at some places even recovering forest. In a few decades Vietnam moved from one of the poorest countries in the world to a lower middle income country.

This all sounds very positive; however one should not focus too much on these general figures, since they are not showing the whole picture. Even though it seems that the national forest cover is increasing, this is not the overall case for the quality of the forest and its traditional species. In addition the fact that poverty rates are dropping and the economy is growing does not mean that everyone is profiting from this development. In fact the inequalities between different population groups have increased and especially the rural

population did not get the positive outcomes that were promised with the implementation of FLA. It is important to look at these underlying processes and developments to get the whole picture of what is going on and of how ‘successful’ these policies actually are.

For the improvement of the FLA policies and the developmental aims of the policies it is of high significance that more attention is given to the rural ethnic population and the influences of these policies on their livelihoods. The rural population, being the largest group, is important for the expression of the Vietnamese culture. Furthermore the agricultural sector is extremely important for the Vietnamese economy and even more essential for the society. The effects of the Forest Land Allocation policies on the livelihoods of the local ethnic population are the topic of this thesis and the research done in advance. Since it was impossible to focus on all the different ethnic minorities in Vietnam, the research was done in the buffer zone of Bach Ma national park within the province of Thua Thien Hue in Central Vietnam. The Co Tu population is one of the rural ethnic minorities living in this area. When underlining the importance of looking at underlying differences, this should also include the differences within a commune or on an even lower scale; within a household and between men and women.

Societal and scientific value

Much research has been done on the forest land allocation policies in central Vietnam and the effects on social, environmental, cultural, political and economic levels. Still much of this research is mainly focused on the conservation part and the economic benefits, instead of looking at the effects for the rural livelihoods. Though I see the importance of the ecological conservation part, I would like to argue that the livelihoods of the local ethnic minorities are highly important for the successes of ecological conservation. The Vietnamese culture (and its livelihoods) and ecology should not be seen as two separate entities but as combined and even reinforcing each other in combination. In the livelihoods of the Co Tu, the environment plays a major role, since they are dependent on it and have been for ages. Through the ages they gained a large amount of traditional knowledge about the environment of which we can still learn as ‘academics’.

The research focused on the livelihoods of the Co Tu and the importance of the environment to their livelihoods. Without the balance between these two categories, sustainable development will not be possible. Since I am not a biologist my research only describes the social value of the environment without going into ecological details. Hopefully with the eventual research a combination can be made between social and ecological research to come to a balanced combination.

In addition most of the research was not giving much attention to intra-household differences and the social construction of ‘women’ and ‘men’, like role divisions, rights and why these are the way they are. When investigating the effects of the FLA on the local rural population it is very important to include these differences. It may well be that certain effects may turn out more positively for one than the other. For example in the case of inheritance right, it is important to know whether women can also claim their rights to land-parts. If this is not the case, it will lead to increasing differences between women and men and will make the policies unsustainable.

1. Theoretical Framework

The introduction gave a short description of the Forest Land Allocation policies and the context in which these policies were formed in Vietnam. Within this chapter the different concepts that are important within the research proposed are described. An overview is given of the different concepts and the mainstream definitions of and discussions around these concepts. In the Regional chapter that follows these concepts will be used in relation with the specific subjects and area in Vietnam and in the methodological chapters theory and regional information are combined.

1.1. Sustainable Development and nature Conservation

Nowadays everywhere you go, every project you see, it says something about sustainable development (SD), no matter if you walk into a car-shop or an organic fruit-shop, the word sustainable is ‘hot’. This is also the case in the field of Developmental work. What sustainable development entails can be exceedingly wide-ranging and dependent on the context. Sustainable development has many aspects, including economic and financial, environmental and ecological as well as social aspects, and besides it is a multidisciplinary concept (Rogers, Jalal & Boyd 2008). For the purpose of this thesis the main focus will lie on the social aspects in relation to environmental issues. The relation between nature conservation and (sustainable) development is one that is often discussed within different disciplines, and frequently linked to traditional livelihoods, as will be described in this chapter. However, first some of the highlights in the evolution of the concept Sustainable Development will be discussed where it relates to nature conservation.

The last few decades have seen a rapid growth in the movement of modern environmentalists. Not only in the academic but also in the human world people became more and more concerned about the degradation of the local and global environment (Baker 2006;Xii). Already in the 1960's after the media began to show satellite photographs of the World in combination with some environmental disasters, an environmental movement stood up and started to express their concerns about overpopulation, pollution and other environmental problems (Barrow, 2005; 3). From the 1960's onwards up to the mid 1970's the main focus of environmental concern was on pollution, explosive population growth and the increasing use of destructive technology. These concerns were fuelled by Malthusian thoughts. On the other hand, many people around this time were skeptical about the environmental concerns, perceiving it as blocking development or even as a strategy to hold back the poor countries. In addition to this some critics argue that these concerns should be considered a luxury, which poor countries could not afford to be involved with. Later on the focus shifted and various countries established environmental ministries and organizations and businesses became interested and involved with environmental issues. Because of this, the environmental issues became more known among the general public (Barrow 2005;12). Different disciplines started to point out the urging need for good environmental management and conservation and attitudes towards the environment changed increasingly, as people started to realize that development and environmental interests are no separated conflicting issues but are in fact interrelated. (Barrow 2005;12).

In 1972 the Club of Rome published 'The Limits to growth' in which it was argued that humankind could pass the carrying capacity of mother earth with catastrophic consequences as a result if there would be no effective environmental and development management. In this realm the idea of allowing development without exceeding the limits by developmental and environmental management came up (Barrow 2005; 8). In 1972 the United Nations (UN) conference on the human environment in Stockholm emphasized the importance of protecting the human environment as a crucial element of the development agenda. At the same time, the US established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The 1972 conference in Stockholm contributed to countries setting up or improving their environmental institutions and the establishment of the United Nations Environment Program Secretariat to promote international environmental cooperation. Probably the strongest pointer for the start of the concept of Sustainable Development was the Brundtland report in 1987 named 'our common future'. The report from the World Commission on Environment and Development created a formal definition and referred to the concept as: sustainable development. The definition of sustainable development according to the Brundtland Report is probably the most famous definition, namely: 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising

the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Potter, Binns, Elliott and Smith 2004; 117). The report argues that the environment should be part of all development policies and not a separate policy on its own. (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008; 9). Tyler Miller (2007:9) adds to this, that a sustainable way of living means that human beings provide themselves in their basic needs by using natural resources without degrading the earth's natural capital that supplies this income. In this way, the ecological environmental part is actually already inherent within the concept itself.

So even though the public use of the concept of Sustainability seems something from the last decade it has actually been used for over 30 years now in the academic world (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008; 9). The concept of sustainable development also gave more attention to nature conservation, which became known to a wider public. People became more aware of the importance of wildlife, plants and forests. In addition, environmental programs were broadened to include natural resources management and different environmental disciplines developed like 'environmental economics' (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008; 10).

In 1992 the UN conference of Environment and Development was organized in Rio de Janeiro, the Earth Summit. The main importance of the summit was an equal focus on the environment and development. Among other things, the 'Agenda 21' developed from this Summit. Latter big contributions to the evolution of Sustainable development were the UN Climate Change Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the biodiversity convention. Agenda 21 was implemented after the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008;9).

1.2 Development versus Conservation

One of the main discussions about sustainable development is how to relate environmental management and conservation with development and what is the relation of human beings with their environmental surroundings.

Baker (2006; xi) argues that in order to achieve environmentally sustainable development a critical understanding of socio-economic, political and cultural processes and structures is needed, to get a good understanding of environmental problems and development. Besides she argues that (2006;1) sustainable development should be promoted globally instead of different projects being implemented at different places and in different countries. In contrast with this line of thinking stands the conventional modernization thinking of development as Baker (2006;2) describes, where development was seen as the modernization of the world according to Western standards and a main focus put on economic growth. One of the direct effects of this kind of development is the transformation of nature, a form of development in which human beings take control over their natural environment. This line of thinking is still

present nowadays and contrasting with modern environmentalism which is aimed at protecting the environment but also creating an ecologically sound society that lives in harmony with the natural environment.

The difficulty lies in trying to find a balance between the protection of the environment and the eradication of poverty and the development of humans (Baker 2005;4). Among various ecologists and environmental economists there is little consensus on the ways how to achieve this balance (Chokor 1993;15). Rogers et.al. (2008;11) state that human beings and the environment do not exist apart from each other, and because of that every change in the environment will lead to changes in people's lives. When looking at environmental projects and programs, social issues should also be taken into account. To achieve this balance good governance and sustainable institutions are needed. Chokor (1993) already mentioned in the 90's that environmental quality should not be seen as the contradictor of economic growth and development and a more holistic concept of the relationship between the economy and the environment is needed (1993;11). The traditional conservation thinking is based on the physical and psychological separation of humans and nature. This is often shown in protected area policies (Dandy 2004; 658). Different authors (Dandy 2004) have critiqued this focus and advocated a more creative conservation approach in which culture – defined by the British Anthropologist Taylor (1871/1985, p.1 in Kottak 2006) as: 'That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society'' - is also included in the construction of nature.

The separation between human culture and the environment is often referred to as the 'nature-culture dichotomy' by environmental Anthropologist and ecologists like Hawley (1986) and Dove and Carpenter (2008). The concept originates from the field of environmental Anthropology; the underlying thought of this division is that nature and culture should be separated because human culture would be degrading the environment. This dichotomy can have severe political consequences for certain population groups when it is presumed they will be degrading their environmental surrounding and their access to environmental resources and places should be denied (Dove and Carpenter 2008; 2-3). Important arguments that stride with this dichotomy were made in the 80's by the ecologist Hawley (1986; 1-10). His arguments are based on the idea that the ecology is made up out of three elements, namely; ecosystems, population and the environment. These three elements are continuously interacting to find their equilibrium, something, which is not possible when people and nature are separated. Besides, people need the access to their natural environment and its ecosystems for their survival. The natural environment is the only source of existence and knowledge people need for their survival, this relation of dependency will continue their

whole life. Though Hawley (1986;1-10) admits people do have the resourcefulness to adapt to changing circumstances and extend externally forced borders.

This stand in contrast with the idea of Ehrlich (et al. in Dirgha 2006;33) that large parts of the ecological degradation are caused by the ongoing food strides for growing populations. This stride can erupt the balance of Hawley (Ehrlich et.al. in Dirgha 2006;33). This is in particular the case in developing countries, where large portions of the population highly depend on natural resources for their survival. In addition Dirgha (2006; 55) says that people are concerned about the environmental condition and will adapt their livelihoods and behavior. The strategies used are dependent on the social, economical and political context in which people live (Dirgha 2006;55).

Over the last years the interest for environmental problems and conservation in the politics of environmental protection has not been limited to Western ‘developed’ countries only. Though claimed differently by western conservationists and environmentalists, developing countries are starting to show more interest in preserving natural areas in the South. Chokor (1993;15) mentions that the emerging view is that developing states have to be encouraged or constrained by developed countries to show greater interest in preserving natural areas, through western economic incentives or pressures. An example given by Chokor (1993) is linking development aid or debt relief measures to the implementation of environmental programs (Chokor 1993).

Another way of stimulating the interest in environmental protection in third world countries is the use of the concept sustainable development, which has been introduced and strongly promoted by Western organizations, agencies and research study groups. The idea, according to Chokor (1993; 16), is that by this way a more ecological basis for effective natural resource use and conservation and a balance between environment and economy is achieved (Chokor 1993;16). This is especially important in regions where tropical forests exist, as these tropical forests are home to a wide biodiversity and people are dependent on the natural resources provided.

1.3 Common Pool Resources

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the opinions differ whether the human population is necessarily good or bad for the environment. Probably one of the most famous articles about this subject is Hardin’s ‘Tragedy of the Commons’ (1968). Within the article Hardin discusses the ‘common pool resources’, where a community is together in charge of the natural resources of a certain environmental habitat. Hardin argues that the situation

always ends up in a case where one or a few persons exploit the resources and others will end up with less than their equal share and eventually the resources are overexploited. To put it rather simply, one or a few persons spoil it for the rest. His article has been of high influence in general environmental and development thinking. Many authors have been inspired by ‘the tragedy of the commons’ of Hardin, and even though the article is more than 40 years old it is still inspiring authors and researchers. One of these authors is van Laerhoven (2010) with his description of ‘common pool resources’

According to Hardin (1968) freedom for all will bring ruin, and it is control and the understanding of necessity which can only bring us real freedom. Interpreting his article, individuals are seen as self-interested and aiming only for their own needs; without any governmental interference in natural resource management this will lead to overexploitation of the world’s resources and eventually to destruction (Hardin 1968). His conclusions led to environmental governance proposals advocating privatization or centralized government. Still many of the world’s forest is communally owned and governed. Gibson, Williams and Ostrom (2005) disagree with the idea that the users of a commons are unable to engage in adequate collective action which will lead to overuse and destruction. They argue that for all sorts of ownership regimes, both success and failures are found, weather this was common or private property. Local users themselves can have constructed institutions, according to Gibson et.al (2005), to use their natural resources sustainable. They grouped the multiple identified factors that can lead to successful outcomes, into 4 categories; characteristics of the resource, characteristics of the group, institutional arrangements, and the external environment (Gibson, Williams and Ostrom 2005). One of the condition considered as necessary by Gibson et.al (2005) for successful resource management is the regular monitoring and sanctioning of rules, otherwise rule enforcement. Other factors often mentioned by scholars are; well-defined boundaries for the resource; they should reduce uncertainty who will benefit and who has to pay the costs opposite to poorly defined boundaries which increases uncertainty and the chance of finding a collective solution. Another factor is the level of dependence on a resource. A person being highly dependent on a resource will place more value on the long-term use of the resource than someone who is less dependent or not dependent at all. The individual being more dependent is considered to be more willing to pay higher costs and to make sure he or she and others will obey the rules, than someone who is less dependent. Also the level of social capital within a group is considered to be of influence on the certainty and costs for individuals. A high level of social capital within a group should make it easier for members to maintain the regular monitoring of rule conformance needed for long-term sustainability. These factors can all increase or decrease the chances of reaching and maintaining a collective solution, and there are many more variables identified. Next to the argument that it

is necessary to enforce rules and monitor, Gibson et.al (2005) raises the question of how rules must be enforced. For example he mentions that a park without clear boundaries is an easy target for illegal harvesters, especially when few resources are allocated for monitoring and rule enforcement. For poorly paid staff it is attractive to accept extra payments offered by rule breakers who get caught. That raises the next question, who should be the one doing the monitoring and rule enforcement? Where some argue that it is best when governments invest in national parks (Bruner et.al. 2001), others argue that it is important to involve local forest users in protecting the area, monitoring and enforcement (Stevens 1997; Wells & Brandon 1992). An important theorist on this matter is Olson (1965) arguing that one should not put any effort in the monitoring of an unprotected place or engage in monitoring and rule enforcement unless they get paid to do so. As Heckathorn (1989) describes “ Voluntary provision of monitoring and sanctioning is clearly a second-order, free-rider problem. Or to put it differently, when some one voluntarily does the monitoring and sanctioning, others who have the same rights will profit from his or her efforts without putting in any extra effort.

Based on the theory of Hardin (1968), Ostrom (2005), Gibson (2005), et.al. Van Laerhoven (2010) also advocates the use of common pool resources by the emergence of institutions preventing individual use that leads to over-exploitation. There is a need for local collective action to prevent forest degradation. Clear property rights and secure tenure are important factors for sustainable resource use. He agrees that monitoring and maintenance are needed for good governance of the forest (Van Laerhoven 2010; Gibson, Williams and Ostrom 2005). Other important factors Van Laerhoven mentions are leaders and having the autonomy to create an own governance regime giving the group the ability to overcome collective dilemmas. The development of institutions for collective action of resource user groups and to give user groups their autonomy is important and should be promoted instead of policy approaches aimed at privatization or centralization that have followed by Hardin’s conclusions, according to Van Laerhoven (2010). These user groups could also be translated into communities, and are related to the livelihoods of the households living within the communities and their traditional resource use and management systems.

1.4 Tropical forests

Nowadays one of the most eminent issues within the realm of global environmental concern is deforestation of tropical rainforests. The highly increasing deforestation is considered a serious global threat. Around 38 million square kilometers of forest comprises around 30% of total land mass. Most of the forests are found in Europe and Central Asia, followed by America and the Caribbean (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008; 166-167). Between 1990 and 2000 already 73,5 million hectares of closed tropical forest were shattered (Tomich et.al. 2006). Of

this 'forest' land 70 percent has been completely converted to other land cover types, mostly pasture and agriculture and about 23 percent still has some tree coverage remaining (Tomich et.al 2006).

In the 90's Chokor (1993) has made a distinction in three main factors that led to this increased interest in deforestation: First, the role of deforestation in climate change, and especially the greenhouse effect; second, the loss of valuable natural habitats, plants and animal species; and third, the loss of biodiversity of tropical land, and the high potential of the tropical forests in preserving the world's environmental heritage (Chokor 1993). In addition Sunderlin et al. (2005b) highlights the key role forest play in the world carbon cycle and the fact that forests have the highest species diversity. Besides he argues, many aspects of the stability, functioning, and sustainability of global ecosystems depend on the diversity of its flora and fauna. As Myers (1997, 271 in Sunderlin et al. 2005b) puts it:

' The world's biodiversity functions as a 'genetic library' that supports important human welfare functions such as the improvement of existing crops, introduction of new crops, and the creation of medicines and pharmaceuticals''.

Sunderlin et al. (2005b) also emphasizes that poverty and deforestation are related problems and should be treated together to come to better solutions.

The UN food and Agricultural organization (FAO) and the World Resources Institute indicated in 2005 that between 1990 and 2005 the global forest cover loss was between 0,2 and 0,5% a year and another 0.1-0.3% of the global forest was degraded. Not surprisingly the concentration of these losses, is in the developing countries, especially in the tropics (Miller 2007;196). It should be kept in mind that certain data are not simple facts, since most data differs per source. Different stakes can be of high influence on the data to be shown.

The high amount of deforestation and forestland degradation has different causes. One of the causes is destructive and excessive logging. This has also partly to do with national forest policies. An example is given by Rogers et.al. (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008) about Japan, which imports all its timber and other forest products from Southeast Asia and the Pacific to keep its own forests intact. This kind of policies can be positive for the own country, in this case Japan where 67% of the country is covered with forest, and negative for exporting countries. Another cause is large scale crop and livestock expansion. Another cause is increased migration of rural populations into the forest; clearing forestland for cultivation, fuel wood and cattle food (Rogers et.al. 2008). These forms of degradation are mostly gradual and unplanned in contrast to the planned conversion of forest to other land uses as part of government-driven programs to stimulate resettlement, cattle ranching and permanent

agriculture, and very important the commercial plantations. These are the main driving force behind tropical deforestation (Tomich et.al.2006). In addition to this, the building of roads through the forest is encouraging poachers and loggers to come in. It is not only the rural population that is part of these activities, Governments can also contribute to the process, encouraging large logging companies to settle by various financial incentives and low taxes. What is certainly a big problem in many developing countries according to Rogers et.al (2008) is the lack of ownership of local forest communities. Most often it is not clear who owns the forests and the local forest communities don't want to invest their time and money in forest management when the forest officially belongs to the government. This will become clearer in the regional context chapter. Last but not least are the forest fires. The fires caused by human action or naturally occurring, can spread over amazingly large areas of land, destroying much of the forest (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008;168). Tacconi et.al. (2004) state that there remains a lack of clarity about 'fire problems'. The lack of knowledge about the fires has sometimes led to the adoption of policies that can have negative impacts on livelihoods, the environment, and the economy. Examples are the temporarily bans on all fires in some Asian and African countries. Tacconi (et.al.2004) points out that a distinction should be made between different kind of fires. The forest fires are not only caused by shifting agriculture, other important actors and factors are; commercial companies, land use changes and the climate can also play a role. These factors can be combined; for example when the canopy (top of the forest) is opened up for logging or road construction, the sun and heat enter the forest, which eventually makes the forest more vulnerable to fires. The fires caused by forest communities are often lit on purpose for livelihood needs. Most of the times human induced fires are the cause of: a combination of lack of knowledge, financial and economic interests and livelihood activities (Tacconi, Moore, Kaimowitz 2004).

What should not be forgotten is that the environmental damage caused by this kind of factors, can also have severe consequences for the human population directly. The clearing of mangrove forests for example, leads to the destruction of an important defence mechanism against typhoons, making people more vulnerable (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008;168).

1.5 Livelihoods

In the 90's as a reaction to disappointing results in development and poverty alleviation within the development sector, the livelihoods approach was created (Appendini 2001 in Zoomers 2008;147). The approach not only gained popularity among researchers but also among development practitioners. Researchers tried to gain a better understanding of (rural)

livelihoods and to decrease the gap between (rural) development strategies and the actual priorities of the (rural) population. The main objective of the livelihood approach was to look for more effective methods to support people and communities in ways that have more meaning to their daily lives and needs, instead of leaning on interventionist instruments (Appendini in Zoomers 2008;147 de Haan 2006;139; Bebbington 1999). Thuan (2005) describes the livelihood as a combination of resources and capabilities which a person has in connection with decisions and activities they are performing in an effort to earn a living (Thuan 2005;18). Ellis (2000;10) defines livelihood as: “that which comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial, and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutional and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household.” Describing different assets, Bebbington (1999) lists produced, human, natural, social and cultural capital as the five capitals (Bebbington 1999;2022). Even though the definitions may differ, in general the livelihood approach brought to the foreland different dimensions of (rural) livelihood and helped to achieve a more holistic understanding of livelihoods, by showing the importance of non-material well being rather than focusing on material wellbeing. Bebbington (1999) states, that a person’s assets are not only material means but are also giving meaning to a person’s life.

“Assets are not simply resources that people use in building their livelihoods; they are assets that give them the capability to be and act” (Bebbington 1999 2022).

Assets can give people agency; they give people the power to act and to produce and challenge or change the rules that administer the control, use and transformation of resources. As Bebbington (1999: 2022) described it; assets can be seen as vehicles for instrumental action (making a living), hermeneutic action (making a living meaningful), and emancipatory action (challenging existing structures under which one makes a living). The livelihood approach gives a multidisciplinary view on poverty, as poverty not only caused by economic problems but also involving political, cultural, social and ecological aspects (Kaag et. Al. 2004:52 in Zoomers 2008). No longer are poor people seen as passive victims, but as active players who have the agency to shape their own future. Instead of focusing on what people lack, the approach focuses on what people do have, their so called capital and capabilities (Sen 1981; Chambers and Conway 1991 in Zoomers 2008;148). In the view of the livelihood approach, people’s livelihood largely depends on the opportunity to access capital. These capitals are the bases of their livelihood strategy and according to Zoomers (2008), consist out of; human capital, social capital, financial capital, natural capital

and physical capital and in some cases cultural capital is also included. As there are different definitions for the concept of livelihoods, there are also different definitions for these capitals used in the livelihood framework. For this thesis we will use the definitions of Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002) as defined in Box 1.

Box 1. Household Livelihood Assets

Human capital

The labour resources available to households, which have both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The former refer to the number of households members and time available to engage in income-earning activities. Qualitative aspects refer to the levels of education and skills and the health status of households members.

Social capital

The social resources (networks, membership of groups, relationships of trust and reciprocity, access to wider institutions of society) on which people draw in pursuit of livelihoods.

Physical capital

Physical or produced capital is the basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, water, energy, communications) and the production equipment and means which enable people to pursue their livelihoods.

Financial capital

The Financial resources available to people (including savings, credit, remittances and pensions) which provide them with different livelihood options.

Natural capital

The natural resource stocks from which resource flows useful to livelihoods are derived, including land, water and other environmental resources, especially common pool resources.

Source: Carney 1998 in Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones 2002 p.11

Next to these five capitals, the cultural capital is sometimes used. According to Kottak (2006; 271-279) culture can be perceived as a system where ‘changes in one aspect will likely generate changes in other aspects’. The core values for a culture are: sets of ideas, attitudes, and beliefs which are basis in that they provide an organizational logic for the rest of the culture.

Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002) explain that the capitals from Box 1 are influenced by internal and external factors, for example levels of social capital and the ability to call on the social networks involved may fall apart because of repeated shocks, economic crisis or physical insecurity. An important remark Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002) make is that social networks are considered stronger in rural areas than in urban areas because of a lower level of mobility and heterogeneity of the populations living in these rural areas (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones 2002; 10). The surrounding in which a person lives is an important factor for all the capital, also for the cultural capital. As Kottak (2006) explains, people learn their culture by growing up in a particular society where they are exposed to a specific cultural tradition instead of culture being part of people's biological inheritance.

Which capital is considered the most important depends on the author or person asked. Within the approach the emphasis lies on the flexibility of combining the different capitals. There should be a balance between the various capitals, since the increase in access to one capital can mean a decrease in access to another capital (Zoomers 2008;148; Bebbington 1999:). In addition de Haan (2006;139) mentions that people build their livelihoods on these 5 capitals, and that especially the natural capital is highly important in most rural areas in contradiction to urban areas where there is more need for physical capital like good infrastructure and energy. The capitals do not necessarily have to be someone's own possession; it is all about the access a person has to a certain capital when it is needed. This access can also be referred to as claims. Bebbington (1999;2022) argues; that it is important to have a wide notion of the resources people need in order to have access to the process of composing a livelihood, especially when people's livelihoods are changing from primarily based on natural resources to livelihoods based on a range of assets, income sources and product and labor markets.

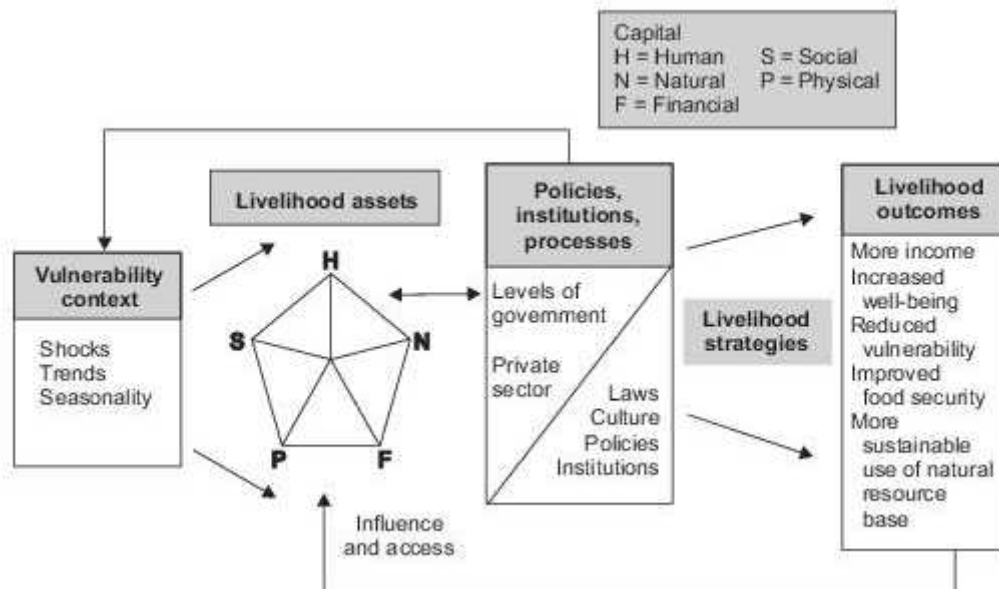
Livelihoods are considered sustainable when it is possible to meet people's needs and offering security against shocks and stresses, also called 'the vulnerability context'. In this case shocks can be unexpected violently where stress is less violent but is long lasting. In times of shocks and stress, livelihood strategies are temporarily reformed into safety mechanisms, so called 'coping strategies'. De Haan (2006;141) mentions the example of relying on international disaster relief as a modern form of coping strategy. This all shows that capitals and livelihood strategies are embedded in structure (see figure 1). Changes in livelihood structures are caused by external as well as internal factors as can be seen in figure 1. In this context 'agency' is the capacity of people to integrate experiences into their livelihood strategies and to reach certain goals and overcome obstacles. As de Haan (Ibid;141) puts it, human agency means that people are able to respond to certain social conditions and to act upon these changes.

“Agency is embodied in the individual but embedded in social relation through which it can become effective. Individual choices and decision making are embedded in norms and values and institutional structures. But structures may change through human agency, leading to long-term livelihood changes” (de Haan 2006; 141).

This means that access to social capital, is needed to put the agency in progress and that livelihood changes can also be put in progress from within the group by human agency. One of the disadvantages of the livelihood approach is the strong focus on the ability of people to cope with a crisis and who are able to stay in the same position rather than focusing on social upward mobility and development. Besides often too little attention is given to structural limitations, like the lack of certain assets (Zoomers 2008;148).

The most applied conceptualization of the livelihood approach is the livelihood framework, designed by Farrington et.al. (1999 in Zoomers 2008;145) for the British government’s department for international development (DFID). Nowadays the framework is widely used in research and development interventions. The framework can be translated into a model, where the livelihood capitals are arranged in the form of a pentagon, which is also shown in figure 1. The livelihood strategies have to achieve livelihood outcomes that are formulated in a material way. The ‘vulnerability context’ box contains external conditions that can have a great impact on capitals and livelihoods. Another box shows the transforming structures and processes, which could be considered as the structural constraints. De Haan (2006) criticizes the model for not showing any dynamism. A point he mentions to improve on for the effectiveness in poverty eradication interventions, is to include more intra-household differences instead of considering households as a single decision unit. Also more attention must be given to multi-locality. We are living in a globalizing world where migration is increasing worldwide which can lead to diversification, also in livelihoods. Already multi-local and multi-national livelihoods are emerging; however it seems that the poorest people are still excluded from this development. This brings us to the key problem, namely the lack of access to livelihood opportunities. In many cases the access is in control of large institutions and organizations that hold the power (de Haan 2006).

Figure 1.1: Livelihood Framework



Source: Ashley and Carney 1999;47

Human livelihoods have always existed and evolved in interaction with their surrounding environment. According to Jacobs (2008;335) many indigenous societies live in harmony with their environment mainly because their production systems are not based on accumulation. Another reason she gives is the traditional believe systems of some societies, where the environment is respected. Many of these traditional societies are characterized by spiritual believes in which preserving the environment where humans live is encouraged. Most of the traditional livelihood systems used to be based on hunting, gathering, pastoralism and swidden agriculture. These systems allowed for the partial re-growth of the forests and vegetation. With the shifting to permanent settled agriculture forest are cleared for a long time, creating long lasting effects for the environment (Jacobs 2008; 335).

1.5.1 Sustainable Livelihoods

Now it is clear what defines a livelihood, it is time to look at the combination of sustainability and livelihoods, as to say ‘sustainable livelihoods’. A following clear definition is given by Zoomers:

“A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resources base.” (Zoomers 2008;147)

To elaborate on this, sustainable livelihoods should concern types of livelihoods that are stable over a long period of time. This means that a certain security is needed for a livelihood to maintain its characteristics. Some criteria for a stable livelihood mentioned by Thuan (2005) are food security, natural environment improvement, socio-community environment improvement, material condition improvement, protection from shocks and risks. Sustainable livelihoods need to be in the possession of enough financial, physical, natural, social and human capital. Especially for the forest dependent livelihood the natural capital, which means natural resources as land, forests, water and pastures are exceedingly important. The access to these resources is one part of the deal, the other part is to keep and secure this access. When, for example, the natural resources are diminishing and land is degraded, the access and possibilities of using these resources is at risk. This leads us to another aspect, namely being able to adapt to maintain the productivity of natural resources. So besides having access, it is also important to adapt and protect oneself from shocks and risks. At the end a sustainable livelihood has to be independent from external support unless this support is economically and institutionally sustainable (Thuan 2005; 18-19). An important discussion within the academic field and the developmental field is concentrating on the role of indigenous livelihoods and whether they can be seen as sustainable or not. Some scientist argue that the lack of knowledge and shifting cultivation activities of indigenous livelihoods will degrade the soil where others argue that they have traditional knowledge and resource management systems which are much more adapted to the environment than modern techniques.

1.5.2 Indigenous Knowledge

In the last decades the attention for the role of traditional societies and rural ethnic groups has increased within the field of development. This can be found as well in theory as in practice. Concepts like ‘human-based approach’ and the ‘grass-roots approach’ came up and are still regularly used. A wide amount of various projects started to include the local indigenous groups (De Jong 2006; Dove and Carpenter 2008; Gröniger 2009; Richards 1985). Also within the field of Anthropology and even within environmental Anthropology the so called ‘indigenous knowledge’ approach came to the fore in the 80’s and 90’s. The approach is focused on indigenous (ecological) knowledge. Posey argued (1998 in Dove and Carpenter 2008;4) that the local indigenous or, in the context of this chapter, rural ethnic groups possess important knowledge of their environmental surrounding that plays an important part in nature conservation. Various researches have been done on the impact of the local knowledge on land use and conservation and donors started to give more attention to the traditional societies in regard to the environment. More often traditional ethnic groups are included in

projects and programs on nature conservation (Dove and Carpenter 2008). Most of these traditional livelihoods are often described as ‘forest-dependent livelihoods’.

1.5.3 Forest dependent Livelihoods

The loss of natural forests in developing countries negatively affects the livelihoods of people dependent on the forest products and services. Sunderlin et al. (2005b) talks about the strong link between severe rural poverty and remaining natural forests in developing countries. As Hulme states (2003 in Sunderlin et al. 2005 b), it is the chronic poor that mostly live in remote rural areas. Sunderlin et al. (2005b) assumes there is a strong connection between poverty and natural forests. The five elements he mentions that are part of the explanation are;

- People living in or nearby forests, often live quite remote from places with rapidly changing socioeconomic systems. In these remote areas people’s contact with the market economy and technological progress is limited and slowed.
- Some of the forest inhabitants are traditional/indigenous people whose dependence on forests is deeply rooted in their history.
- Other forest dwellers are rural in-migrants who colonize the forest frontiers as a source of new agricultural land and for other economic opportunities.
- For a long time the forest were used for poor and powerless people on the run for war and conflicts.
- Another reason is the open-access of many forests, which make forests a place for survival and a place of economic opportunity for people with limited options.

There are various ways to identify ‘forest dependent-people’ and thus the numbers indicating the amount of forest dependent-people in a country can highly differ dependent on the methods used to identify. For instance, Thuan (2005) has described that the number of forest dependent people in Vietnam lay’s between 15 and 25 million people. Thuan (2005) describes four categories that are normally used, namely:

- Poor communities and villages located in remote, upland and border areas that contain large amount of land that is legally designated as protection forest and that are generally remote from industrial commercial opportunities.
- Areas where State Forest Enterprises (SFE’s) or Watershed Management Boards are the primary land holders, and where particular circumstances apply for existing and former SFE employees and indigenous communities in the area.

- Communities and villages located on the borders of or within Special Use Forests, National Parks and Protected Areas of high biodiversity value, where special regulations and prohibitions apply with respect to land allocation and the use of forest products.
- All people who in one-way or another are dependent on the products from the forests: e.g. furniture makers, no matter if they are located in urban areas or in the uplands, are forest dependent. (Thuan 2005; 18-19)

Taken together the four categories, this is a rather broad definition of forest dependent livelihoods. In general it includes mostly poor people who don't have much economic alternatives and for that reason are almost completely dependent on forest resources.

Within time, the different types of livelihoods of forest dependent people have changed. Looking at forest use, table 1.1 gives a clear oversight of livelihood and forest use changes. Sunderlin et al. (2005b) emphasizes that especially in the last two stages, forest are basically relied on as a source of products (timber and NTFP's) that are used to create a financial income. Although the different stages are in historical order, this does not mean that earlier stages are totally abandoned. Many households still combine swidden and sedentary cultivation and hunting and gathering continues to be important for many farmers engaged in swidden and sedentary cultivation (Sunderlin et al. 2005b). The overall majority of the forest dependent communities worldwide are concentrated in categories B and C (see table 1.1). With the changing livelihood systems also the forest cover has changed through time. The forest became less dense and forest cover has decreased in most areas. Next to the growing population and higher market demands this is caused by changing types of forest use by the local communities. Other things that have changed is that the forest dependent populations became more integrated with the new market economy (capitalism), within this time forest resources increased in value but lowered in direct household use. This is also due to the decreased availability of forest resources. Though there are some hunters and gatherers who get quite a substantial income from the products (Sunderlin 2005b;1388).

Table 1.1 Types of forest-based livelihood modes

Type of livelihood	Associated attributes of forest use			
	Main type of forest use	Density of forests	Mode of forest use	Forest product income as share of total income
A. Hunting and gathering	Food: capture and collection of forest fauna and flora	High	Use value: high Exchange value: low	High
B. Swidden cultivation	Source of agricultural land restored by forest fallows Use and marketing of forest products	Medium	Use value: medium Exchange value: medium	Medium
C. Sedentary agriculture at forest frontier	Source of new agricultural land Marketing of forest products	Low	Use value: low Exchange value: high	Low

Source: Sunderlin 2005b; 1387

Most of the forest dependent people belong to the ‘swidden cultivators and/or sedentary agriculturalists in forested region. Other livelihood types Sunderlin et al.(2005b; 1388) mentions, but that were not put in the table are agriculturalists and pastoralists in open and dry woodlands, smallholders occupied with cultivation of domesticated forest products like timber, poles, firewood and NTFPs and timber company workers, small-scale loggers, urban fuel wood sellers and woodcarvers. Though some of them may be living in more ‘peri-urban’ areas, they are dependent on forest resources (Sunderlin 2005b;1388). The poorest forest-dependent people are categorized by Sunderlin et al. (2005b;1388) into 3 categories; the first are the traditional indigenous minorities living on their ancestral land; the second are people who have long lived in a given forest area, but who are not considered traditional or indigenous, for example the Kinh people in Vietnam; third are the people who have been displaced because of quick modern social changes, and who have migrated to forested areas.

Forest dependent people living in or close by the forest are often politically weaker or powerless compared to more powerful actors outside of the forest who compete for access to the forest resources according to Sunderlin et al. (2005b;1388). Examples of ‘competitors’ are; the national governments aiming to nationalize natural forests; forest concessionaires, agro-industrialists or other commercial farmers looking for land expansion; entrepreneurs trying to appropriate high-value NTFP’s; operators of mining concessions. Also some forest dwellers collaborate with different large actors to open up the frontier and exploit the forest resources.

Within the research field and in different publications a strong link is made between poverty and forest-dependent people. Thuan (2005) argues that a better understanding is needed of the real situation of persons, groups and places before an analysis of poverty can be made. The simple definitions focused on financial incomes are only part of the realities of everyday life, which is in fact much more complex and should include opportunities, capacity and resources too. In addition Sunderlin (2005b) speaks of a reciprocal relationship between the fast transformation of rural livelihoods and the character (quantity and quality) of forested landscapes; suggesting that forests should be taken into account when it comes to improving livelihoods of people living in the forest or forest areas, and that livelihoods of people living in the forest should be taken into account when it comes to improving forest management. He criticizes PRSP's who do not pay attention to this reciprocal relation, which he defines as forest-based poverty alleviation (FPBA), a term used to define the use of forest resources for the purpose of lessening deprivation of well-being on either a temporary or lasting basis.

1.5.4 Forest Devolution and decentralization

As Meinzen-Dick and Knox (2001) mention, there has been a shift in paradigm in the natural resource sector over the last two decades; meaning the devolution of control over resources from the state to local people. But what is devolution within the subject of forest management? A definition of the World Resource Institute (WRI) uses the word decentralization which they define as the process where a central government relinquishes some of its management responsibilities or local powers to a local government, local leader, or community institution''. In addition, Merriam-Webster's Collegiate dictionary defines devolution as 'transference as of rights, power, property or responsibility, to another'' or 'the surrenders of powers to local authorities by a central government''. Nguyen (2005) defines it as the transfer of power, rights, and responsibilities to user groups at the local level. Although decentralization and devolution both refer to the transference of rights, responsibilities, and power away from a central location, devolution involves the transference to individuals or user groups at the local level, while decentralization is about a transfer of process from higher to lower government levels. Shackleton (2002 in Nguyen 2005:33) argues that true devolution should also involve a transfer of the benefits from the resource away from the government since both property and access are related to the benefits from the resource. The reason for the paradigm shift in the forest sector in many developing countries was the ineffectiveness of state forestry. According to Edmunds (et al 2003 in Nguyen 2005) state forestry has failed to deal with forest degradation and rural poverty in most developing countries. Though it was assumed by state foresters that only they had the knowledge and the skills needed for forest management. Often the traditional subsistence activities of forest dependent communities are considered as degrading for the natural forest resources. This line

of thinking leads in many areas to the exclusion of the local population from the local forest. Devolution is introduced in many countries to increase the involvement of the local people in the decision making and management of local forest resources. For the context of this thesis it is important to have a clear image of what is devolution and what is decentralization when looking at the effects of forest policies for those forest dependent communities in developing countries. It is important to see what rights and what role the local population has in local forest management.

The forest can be seen as one of the important livelihood capabilities for those who are dependent on the forest. Besides finding what capabilities are important, it is of great significance to look at the way people can use the forest for their daily life, in what way they can benefit from this capital and make decisions over it. In other words it is good to underline the importance of 'access' to the land and the capability to make use of the land.

For the context of this thesis it is essential to describe the differences between 'owning' land, also; having the legal rights to a property, and 'having access' to and 'control over' land even may it be without legal rights. As Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines: access is 'the freedom or ability to obtain or make use of' and control is 'the power or authority to guide or manage' (in Nguyen 2005;12-14). However property is defined as 'a set of rights'. Nguyen (2005) warns to pay attention to the difference between 'right' and 'ability' the first one associated to 'property' and the latter to 'access and control'. In a certain way access and control can be linked to 'capabilities'. One can have ownership but not the capabilities to fully access the land. According to Ribot (in Nguyen 2005) access should be defined as a bundle of power whereas control implies power over others. In that sense access is different from control, even though both refer to ability or power; access is about the ability to benefit from a thing while control is the ability to mediate others access. Access is about power over things while control is about power over other people. Therefore there is a big difference between having the legal rights over a piece of land or having access.

“Together with access to resources, effective control over others shapes a person's ability to benefit from these resources and enhances a person's bargaining power.” (Ribot in Nguyen 2005).

Access to and control over resources is managed by different sets of institutions, which can be formal or informal. To gain access to and control over natural resources formal and informal directions can be used. The formal way is through legal institutions and informal mechanisms; customary laws and traditional institutions like a membership and status in social units or through marriage. Another way to achieve power or access to land is by occupation or encroachment. An example of formal institutions can be the state, the law, etc.

Control over a resource is not only defined by the person being in control, but by the surrounding environment with socially recognized rules and principles that defines who the ‘owner’ of the resource is. Control over resources is different from but not less important than legal ownership, as clearly stated by Nguyen (2005):

‘Legal ownership of land without effective control over its use and the disposal of its produce need not leave a person better off than if she or he had control without legal ownership.’

1.6 Gender

Within the 90’s gender became an official development issue and gender mainstreaming started. Gender mainstreaming is a process of ensuring that all of the development work and the way it is done contribute to gender equality by transforming the balance of power between men and women. At the turning of the century gender was even included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s). One of the MDG’s was ‘Promote gender equality and empower women’. With the growing popularity of gender mainstreaming the Gender Development Index (GDI) was also developed, reflecting the gender imbalances in basic health, education and income, the greater the gender disparity the lower a country’s GDI was in comparison with the human development index (HDI). In addition a Gender Empowerment Index/Matrix is developed; examining whether women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life. It is important that these sorts of indexes are developed because growth and even development are not always good indicators for gender equality or even equality at all, according to Abdella (2010). She argues that without human agency growth is not adequate. An example she gives is ‘Voiceless growth’ referring to economic growth without an extension of empowerment and participation and growth that gives women a minor role in management and direction of the economy. It could be said that without addressing inequalities this kind of development will not be sustainable and the quality of growth should be more important than the quantity of growth (Abdella 2010).

Nowadays more and more programs and policies for economic development are incorporating gender-specific components as a way to improve overall human capital outcomes (Peterman 2011). In 2009 the World Bank identified gender equality as a objective on its own as well as a key means to promote growth, good governance and reduce poverty (World Bank 2001a 2001b in Peterman 2011).

As Peterman (2011) argues, next to marginalization due to their socioeconomic status, women are also facing a set of challenges including discrimination and gender-based violence, reproductive health and childcare distress. In addition, women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS showed by higher infection rates caused by the fact that they are often primary care givers (see Peterman 2011). These issues make it even more important for development policies to incorporate gender specific elements.

Abdella (2010) notes that when gender inequalities are present, economic deprivation is intensified for women by their sex since they are being disadvantaged by being a woman and also by being poor, which makes the effects of poverty even worse (Abdella 2010). Besides, she argues, there is also a difference in the way men and women perceive poverty, for women 'time' is often an important aspect of their deprivation. As Abdella (2010) points out:

“Gender inequity and poverty are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing.”
(Abdella 2010).

Chant (2000) acknowledges there is lots of debate on what entails gender and there is little consensus among individuals and agencies about the meanings of Gender and Development. Gregson et al. (1997:53) defines gender as ‘A social construction organized around biological sex. Individuals are born male or female, but they acquire over time a gender identity, that is what it means to be male or female’. (Gregson et al., 1997: 53). Abdella (lecture 2010) describes gender as the opposite of sex, essentially; as a social construction, something that is changeable and context specific, which can be different over time and place and in different cultural settings. This is opposite to sex, which she describes as something biological, fixed and unchanging that is not affected by its context. Sex entails the biological characteristics of male and females whereas gender entails the social differences constructed by a society’s perception of appropriate roles, rights, responsibilities, accepted behaviors and status of women and men in relation to each other. An important tool within gender studies is the ‘Gender analysis’, which gives a better understanding of our own and other societies divisions, by analyzing socially constructed differences related to gender roles and identities. In addition with this tool important contextual information to identify and re-address social inequalities and gender in policies and programs can be gathered. Abdella (lecture 2010) argues that it is important to use the gender analysis to understand whether and how socially constructed differences in women and men’s living conditions; roles, behavior and perceptions affect a specific dimension.

The gender analysis can also be used for defining risks and vulnerabilities within livelihoods. With this tool differences within a livelihood can be identified between men and women. This

is very important since they often exist certain stereotypes, according to Abdella (2010), about the differences between men and women, depicting women in developing countries for example as 'home workers' while the reality may be totally different (Abdella 2010).

An important example in the context of this chapter is the access to resources, the access to land, inheritance, property ownership *and political participation* (Abdella lecture 2010; Currie and Vernooy 2010). For example Peterman (2011) discusses the property and inheritance rights in sub-Saharan Africa. Though different authors claim there is a lack of quantitative evidence on the subject of women's property, inheritance rights and the specific affects, there are some interesting general findings from qualitative resources (Peterman 2011; Currie and Vernooy 2010; Thu, Scott, Kimberly and van Niel 2007).

Peterman (2011) argues that women lag behind in property and inheritance rights, and that restrictive customs and policies concerning property rights have hindered the economic advancement of women (Peterman 2011;2). In addition she states that women living in communities where they have high property and inheritance rights are more likely to engage in non-agricultural, self-employed work and have higher savings and individual and household-level expenditures than women who have less property and inheritance rights. When looking at the individual level, an increase in these rights results in a bigger change for women working outside the home and earning higher incomes (Peterman 2011).

Thu et al. emphasize the importance of land tenure, defined as 'a bundle of rights held by an individual in relation to land' (Thu et al. 2007). He explains how land tenure actually represents the relationship between people, and the responsibilities and restraints tied to people, whether legally or customarily.

The importance of land rights is not so much the relationship between individuals and land, but a relationship between people with regards to land. The right of access to, control of, and the right to exclude others are central. (Thu et al. 2007;239).

Though Thu et al.(2007) add that land tenure systems are not only about who has access to land, but they also define gender relationships within communities, advocating that gender issues need to be included at a household level (Thu et al. 2007;239).

Currie and Vernooy (2010) give an example of Asia where the integration into the global economy has led to changing values, norms and organizational practices that define rural production and reproduction. Even though the way of living by rural social units is undergoing frequent adaption, rural women are still dealing with problems like limited access to and control over land, labour, financial support, and other services like training and education. It is the identities and relationships based on gender, class and ethnicity that shape

the reconstitution of these basic units and institutions explain Curry and Vernooy (2010).

In addition, Currie and Vernooy (2010) state that in most countries within the region land titles and tenure rights are still controlled by men through formal and/or customary laws. These are often the chiefs or elders within a community and village who allocate the land and regulate the tenure system (Thu et al. 2007). Also Peterman (2011) concludes that economic development cannot guarantee improvements in property rights for women, especially in rural regions. While especially in these areas the land rights for women are so important. As Agarwel (1995 in Peterman 2011) concludes from her case study in India, land rights for women are good for economic efficiency, welfare, equity and empowerment. For achieving a secure livelihood, access to, ownership of and control of property are fundamental elements because they provide for a place to live, for social and economic activities as well as a way to create an income and benefit from other resources and services. So even if women in rural areas do have access to land, they are often constrained in their ability to transfer, sell, indicate, and loan land to others.

In addition Buckingham-Hatfield (2000) describes the relationship between gender and the environment, partly based on the idea that women's work is often linked to the environment and made harder in recent times because of environmental degradation. This relation seems to be more at hand in developing countries where people (women) are in closer contact to their environment than people in the West. Besides she states that those people and communities who are most poor, or most undervalued, are most likely to be exposed to environmental hazard.

Within this thesis not only gender on its own but 'Intra-household' differences are an important subject.

Citing Peterman (2011):

“ Women's rights to land and tenure are often thought of in the context of their relation to men: as wives, daughters, mothers or sisters.”

Blood and Wolfe (1987 in Luan, Rydstrom and Burghoorn 2008) point out that the power between husband and wife in the family is based on three different categories, namely: income, occupational prestige and educational achievements. They underline the idea that men often have easier access to these categories than women in most cultures, which gives them more power within the family (Luan et al. 2008). For example in Vietnam, a case study from Yen Bai, Tien Giang and Thua Thien Hue showed that the Vietnamese men have on average higher grades and a higher level of education, in addition twice as many women as

men are illiterate. Although the case study results showed that one out of 6 wives contributes the most to the household expenditures it seems that the main breadwinners in the rural areas of Vietnam are still men. Of the people included 51,9 percent of the husbands makes the decisions in the family compared to only 16,4 percent of the wives, indicating that the rest of the family also have their influence in decision making. According to Luan et.al (2008) the fact that the men are mostly making the decisions is strongly related to their contribution to the family income. It seems that the more one contributes to the family income the more rights they have to make decisions. Indeed, the case study also showed that the more economically independent a woman became, the more independent she became from her husband and in general. An important aspect of gender is power relations between men and women. French and Raven (1959 in Luan, et.al. 2008; 371) mention six bases of power in the family including:

“legitimate power” arranged by the believe system in the family, “information power” achieved by knowledge and speech ability, “reference power” achieved by affection and attraction, “coercive power” achieved by using physical force over other members in the family, “expert power” based on education, qualification or experience that is relevant to family issues and as last ‘reward power’ based at the ability to have influence over other family members by bringing them the benefits they desire.

Within this chapter the most important concepts have been discussed for this thesis. In the following chapters these concepts will be linked to the research group, area and subject. This chapter will form the theoretical base for the following chapters but also for the ‘fieldwork’ chapters that follow. In the next chapter I will discuss the relation of deforestation and reforestation and the development of FLA policies in Vietnam, the changes that have taken place within the Vietnamese economy, society and environment and the effects of their history of wars and colonization. In addition Bach Ma national park, its buffer zone and the local Co Tu living in this area, and the changes that have taken place in the local livelihoods in the Central region of Vietnam in the last decades, will be discussed. All together these subjects form the context and backland for the empirical chapters. Without such a theoretical backland and context it is very difficult to draw any conclusions from the research done, or to place this research within a wider scientific debate.

2. Regional Context

Vietnam

2.1 Geography and population

Vietnam lies in the east Asia pacific region (Worldbank 2010) bordering the Gulf of Thailand, Gulf of Tonkin, and South China Sea and lies alongside China, Laos and Cambodia. Vietnam consists of 331,210 square kilometers with a length of about 1700 km and measures only 50 km across its narrowest point. The country is characterized by a tropical climate in the South, monsoonal in the Northern part with hot and rainy seasons from May to September and a warm dry season from October to March. The South and North are low, flat with delta, and the central highlands is hilly, and mountainous in the most northern and north western part (CIA 2010). Around 90.000 million people are living in Vietnam making it the 13th most populous country in the world. The largest part of the population consist of people at an age between 15-64 and 0-14, and less than 10% of the population is aged above 65 years. Of the population, 28% is referred to as urban in 2008 with an urbanization rate of 3,1% a year between 2005-2010. The infant mortality rate lies at 21.57 deaths per 1000 live births and the life expectancy at birth is 71,94 years. Vietnam has many different ethnic groups, de largest group, about 86%, consists out of Kinh, besides them there are the Chinese migrants called Hoa, and 53 other ethnic minorities spread around the country (CIA 2010; Wulf 2010). Vietnam knows 60 different districts, all with their own political local authorities (Wulf 2010). The country can be divided in three different parts all with their own district capital, namely; the Northern part with Haiphong, the Central part with Da Nang and the Southern part with Ho Chi Minh city (Wulf 2010). The main capital city of Vietnam is Hanoi, in the North. The land consists out of 20.14% of arable land, 6.93% is covered with permanent crops and 30.000 square kilometers is irrigated land (CIA 2010).

2.2 History, economy & poverty

Vietnam used to be a colony of France and became part of French Indochina in 1887. After the Second World War Vietnam declared independence, which they got after 1954 when Communist forces under Ho Chi Minh defeated the French. Vietnam got divided into the Communist North and the anti-communist South in the Geneva accords of 1954. From 1957 onwards these two parts of the country were in war, where the US and the North (Vietcong) were militarily supporting the South and the North (Vietcong) was supported by China and the Soviet Union. The war ended in 1975 and is known under the name 'Vietnam war' and

within Vietnam as the 'American war'. In July 1976 North and South were United into the Socialistic Republic of Vietnam. The name of the city Saigon was changed into Ho Chi Minh city till today onwards but is still known as 'Saigon'. The war had devastating effects for Vietnam. More than 2,5 million Vietnamese died, many others got severely injured or handicapped, and the chemical sources like Agent Orange and Napalm used by the Americans in that time, still have their negative consequences for the population's health. Aside from that, these chemical weapons have caused severe damage to the environment and the economy. The use of Agent Orange still has negative impacts on the quality of the land (Tinh 2009) and is one of the causes for the deforestation in Vietnam. According to Zuilhof (2008) the US army has sprayed 42 million liters of the herbicide known as Agent Orange, over Vietnam. After the war Vietnam got stuck with a huge debt to China and the Soviet (CIA 2010;Wikipedia2010). In order to overcome the dramatic effects of their problematic past, in 1986 the Vietnamese government enacted the 'Doi Moi' policy to increase economic liberalization and structural reforms in need of modernizing the economy and to support the export industries (CIA 2010).

In the period of 1993-2002 the total poverty rate in Vietnam decreased from 58 to 29 percent according to the ADB (Sunderlin 2005a) and the food poverty rate from 25 to 11 percent. While in the mid-1970's still seven out of ten Vietnamese were living in poverty. Sunderlin (2005a) mentions several reasons for the decrease in poverty in the early 1990's , i.e. the restoring of macro-economic stability, rapid export-led growth, growth rates of GDP reaching 9-10 percent, reduced inflation rate. Given reasons for this economic growth are the conversions of a centrally planned economy to a market economy. This started in 1986 when the Government's Sixth Party Congress was deserting the socialist industrialization model, a legacy from its socialistic past, and turned to agricultural led-growth. The most striking policy has been the Doi Moi policies (renovation) of 1988. With this policy the government stopped the enforced grain-purchase quota's to implement a free market model and by ending the collectivized agriculture, and the distribution of farmland to individual households. The Doi Moi policies also legitimate foreign direct investment and reduced trade barriers. Through this reforms the prices of rice and other agricultural products increased, motivating rural land holders to increase their production. Indeed in 1988 the per capita rice production was strongly increased till 25 percent above the actual level of subsistence (Sunderlin 2005a).

According to Sunderlin (2005a) the low output in rice in the time before the Doi Moi policies, was the result of forced collectivization after the end of the war which led to a decreased agricultural output and hyperinflation.

Nowadays Vietnam is a socialist single-party republic, it is moving to a liberalized economy with relatively fast economic growth indicated partly by a GDP growth rate of 6.2 percent in

2008 and a further integration in the world economy (CIA 2010). According to the World Bank (World Bank 2010) Vietnam is considered a lower middle income country with a poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line of 28.9 percent in 2002 and 15.5 percent of its people living below the national poverty line. The literacy rate has ranked up to 93 percent in 2008 and a GDP is achieved of \$90,090,966,131 2009 with \$930 GNP per capita in 2009. The unemployment rate in 2004 of 2.1 percent was slightly higher than the 1.9 percent of 1996.

The agricultural sector is an extremely important one for the Vietnamese economy accounting for 22% of the sectors share of GDP in 2008. The service, and industry and construction sectors respectively accounted for 38% and 32%. The most important export products of Vietnam in 2007 were crude oil (17.5%), garments and textiles (16.1%), sea products (7.9%), footwear (8.3%), rice (2.9%), coffee (3.7%) and others (43.6%) (CIA, 2010).

Even though the agricultural sector is one of the most important sectors for the national GDP, poverty in Vietnam is fundamentally a rural problem where 90 percent of the poor live in rural areas. These poor people are mainly dependent on the forest and the natural environment for survival. Vietnam has been ranked 105th on the Human Development Index out of 177 countries in 2007 compared to 120th in 1995. This shows that the poverty status of Vietnam is improving (CIA, 2010; UNDP Vietnam 2009).

2.3 Political System

The history of Vietnam is characterized by turbulent political times, from colony to communism to a more socialist country. Though it seems as if everything has changed within the political system of Vietnam, there are still some characteristics left from the 'old days'. Nowadays Vietnam is a one-party communist state, with the Vietnam Communist Party as the leader and director of all actions and ideas of the National Assembly and the Government. They are the only legal political party in the country. Many of the Party members are also members of the National Assembly and the Government, even though the elections are done separately. The party decides on the course for managing and developing the country; while the National Assembly makes the law and the Government is responsible for formulating the papers for guiding the implementation of the law. Even though the political organizations of the Party the National Assembly and the Government have their own mission, they have to follow the lead of the party (Hoang 2009).

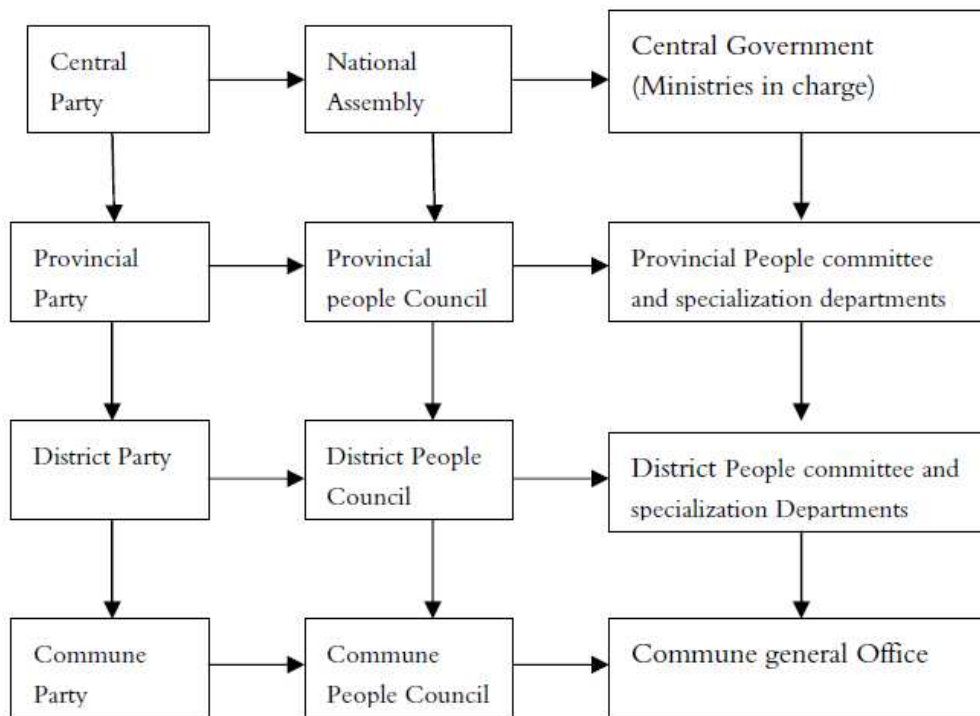
Like in many other Southeast Asian countries, the politics have partly been decentralized to provinces, districts and communes (Zuilhof 2008 and Hoang 2009).

A lot of power lies with the so-called People's Committees, even though these committees need approval from the central government (BUZA 2007 in Zuilhof 2008).

The Vietnamese Political system includes four administrative levels.

At the central level, the Party has a horizontal relationship with the National Assembly and Government, but the Party is leading. Vertical linkages include the Provincial Party under the Central Party and then the district Party and the lowest level is the Commune Party. The Central party leads the Party at all levels. As the central leader the central Party develops the decisions to establish the right land for development in all dimensions. The parties at the local level from province to commune, have the duty to develop the motion to direct development for the same level based on the motion of the central Party. Also the local Party has to spread and carry out the policies from the Central Party to all its members. The National Assembly has to approve the laws and national programs, aside from that is has to monitor the law enforcement of the Government. To give a better overview of the political system in Vietnam and the vertical and horizontal relations see figure 1.

Figure 2.1: Political System in Vietnam and central-local relations



Source: Hoang 2009

Notes: - Some people are members of Party, National Assembly as well as Government

- Some people are member of both Party and National Assembly

- Some people are member of both National Assembly and Government

- Some people are member of both Party and Government

2.4 deforestation and land degradation

It should be kept in mind that most of the data given in this chapter are estimates, which can differ among different sources. Unfortunately there is not one source containing all the ‘right’ data.

Besides dealing with socio-economic problems as poverty, financial debts and illiteracy, as ascribed above, Vietnam has to cope with forest loss and land degradation, especially in the Mountainous regions (Gomiero 2001). Around two-thirds of the Vietnamese land is mountainous with a large portion of steep slopes and easily erodible soils. Much of these soils used to be covered by tropical forests. At the end of the 90’s about 60% of the territorial area was classified as forest by the central planning authorities while actual forests covered only 25%, the rest of the land could be considered bare land (Gomiero 2001). In the early 90’s Konink (1993 in Sunderlin 2005a;3) states that the loosing of two-thirds of its forest cover makes Vietnam the country with the most rapid deforestation in South-east

Asia. The indicator of two third is only one of varies estimates about the loss of forest coverage. Though the data differs, it was clear that Vietnam was experiencing rapid deforestation and land degradation. In contrast to this, since the last decade different actors suggest a substantial increase in forest cover in Vietnam (Sunderlin 2005a:3; Boissiere 2009). In the 90's the government considered rural poverty as the main cause for environmental degradation. The unclear property rights on forestland, and the use of shifting cultivation, also slash-and-burn activities, were seen as the main factors (Gomiero 2001). Boissiere (2005;2749) also mentions the degrading impact of wars, fire, overexploitation and other activities. Storm and fires can disturb the natural vegetation and forest cover and structure. Also the illegal cutting of wood for construction material and firewood collection contributed to the forest degradation. According to the Asian Development Bank deforestation is mainly caused by Vietnam's population-driven demand for forest products and agricultural land, along with the logging of large tracts of forest by State Forestry Enterprises. Furthermore, the excessive reliance on swidden agriculture by different ethnic minorities, agricultural expansion and illegal and legal logging and the collection of forest products for subsistence needs are some of the factors seen as causing or increasing deforestation (Sunderlin 2005a). Other authors like Lang (2001 in Sunderlin 2005a) place more emphasis on the role of governments and commercial enterprises in explaining the causes of deforestation. For example the Vietnam war, Government resettlement programs, migration and internal colonization in the post-war period but again also the logging of State Forest Enterprises are some of the suggested causes of deforestation. Considering these different factors it are not the ethnic minorities who have the leading role in deforestation in Vietnam.

Deforestation is a serious problem for Vietnam leading to soil loss in the uplands, siltation of downstream irrigation systems, increased severity of floods and droughts and serious biodiversity loss (Sunderlin 2005a).

Reforestation

As a reaction to the deforestation problems, the Vietnamese government has responded by reforming its forest management since 1986, for example by shifting from timber production to conservation approaches and developing large-scale reforestation programs. In addition they claim to have favored local participation (Boissiere 2009).

According to World Bank data, the forest coverage of Vietnam has indeed increased from 35,3% in 1999 to 43,3% in 2007. This is striking compared to the loss of forest cover worldwide, from 30,8% to 30,3% (WorldBank 2010). In addition to this, the Vietnamese government claims that a substantial increase of forest recovery has taken place, according to them due to a slowing rate of deforestation and reforestation efforts. Within the development field however some have raised their question marks at this and argue that forest cover data

can differ highly, depending on the context in which its shown (Sunderlin 2005a). For example, an important remark Gomiero (2001) makes, is that although it seems that forest recovery is taking place, the quality of the forest has declined. The high and medium quality primary forests, which are mostly located in the central highlands, make up only 8% of the forested area. The remaining area belongs to the degraded so called ‘secondary forests’. The eroding of the soil leads to the forest degradation and is threatening the livelihood systems of the highland inhabitants dependent on the forest and the structure of its natural ecosystem. The FAO has also divided the forest into different categories according to their ‘naturalness’. For this see table 2.1 (FAO 2005).

Table 2.1

Characteristics of forest and other wooded land

FRA 2005 categories	Area (1000 hectares)					
	Forest			Other wooded land		
	1990	2000	2005	1990	2000	2005
Primary	384	187	85	-	-	-
Modified natural	8,012	9,488	10,151	-	-	-
Semi-natural	-	-	-	-	-	-
Productive plantation	664	1,384	1,792	-	-	-
Protective plantation	303	666	903	-	-	-
Total	9,363	11,725	12,931	-	-	-

Source: FAO 2005

Table 2.1 shows indeed a decrease in the amount of primary forest and an increase in modified natural forest and the other categories in 2005. So even though the forest coverage has increased in the last decade, this does not mean that the quality of the forest has also been maintained or increased.

2.5 Forest Land allocation

2.5.1 The Development of Forest Land allocation

Forest Land Allocation (FLA) is a radical policy shift, which often involves the decentralization of forest management authority from the state to the local level.

The idea behind this form of decentralization in Vietnam, was that the local population would get more interested in forest protection and management if they would have formal rights to their own forest land (Sunderlin 2005a;17;Sikor 2007). The Vietnamese government has promoted FLA as a top priority issue in the forest policy to encourage the protection and restoration of forest cover. (Gomiero 2001:122; Sunderlin 2005a; Sikor 2007). The priority consists out of 4 sub-priorities;

1. Reallocating bare and eroded forest land, as well as land still covered by forests.
2. Implementing agro-forestry activities¹
3. Regulating extractive activities under the local authority policy
4. Expanding and managing plantation in a sustainable way. (Gomiero 2001;122)

In the last couple of decades Vietnam has gone through several land reforms. From 1986 to 1996 the agricultural reform was implemented in Vietnam, followed up by a process of agricultural land allocation in the Mekong and Red River deltas (Gomiero 2001;122; Sunderlin 2005a;17). In 1991 the Forestry Protection and Development Act was taken on; three steps characterized the act. At first a division was made between forestland with forest and land selected for forest plantations. Second a classification was made between Protection Forest (including critical watersheds), Special use forest (including formally protected areas such as national parks), and Production forest (Thang 2010). Forestry development refers to the creation of new forest plantations and the protection and improvement of existing forests (Thuan 2005:117). It was decided that production forest should be allocated to state enterprises, households and corporations (Thang 2010).

It is said that these reforms led to an increase in land productivity and were of high influence for the successes of the Doi Moi policies and economic growth and poverty alleviation since the 1980's (Gomiero 2001; 122; Sunderlin 2005a;17). The reforms were based on the dismantling of central authorities and decollectivization of agriculture and focused on the allocation of land to individual families. It gave families tenure security, freed

¹ Forest plantations

them to sell their products on the markets, liberalized domestic rice trade and removed administered prices (Gomiero 2001). In addition it gave farmers the right to inherit, transfer, exchange, mortgage and to lease their land (Sunderlin 2005a). Later on the land was allocated on the basis of the number of family members for a period up to 30 years (Gomiero 2001;122). The so called 'Red Books' gave people the formal rights to the forest land (Bayrak 2010;11). In 1999 around 10 million family households had received land use certificates, but the allocation was still mainly focused on the lowland areas (Gomiero). However people were still not the main owners of the land since the state could still decide how the forest was going to be used and managed (Bayrak 2010;11).

This was done with the revision of the 1988 Land Law. Forestland was allocated to individual households. With the Law for the Protection and Development of Forests in 1991 and the Land Law of 1993, a new legal and organizational framework for the FLA implementation process was created which provided incentives for sustainable forest management (Gomiero 2001). Under the Land Law of 1993, land was classified into different categories. Land classified as forest, should not be used for other purposes and it was said that natural forest and forests in sensitive watersheds should be allocated to communes², districts and State Forest Enterprises (SFE's) but not to households.

Those local families who got forestland were given small financial incentives for protecting the forests on their land. In addition they would get subsidies for tree planting, though this would only count for protected and special use forests and not for production forests. Especially in the northern and the central highlands, most of the forest land consisted out of protection forests (Sunderlin 2005a;17). In 2004 the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MURD) started with reformulating a National Forest Strategy for the period of 2006-2020, which put special emphasis on connecting forestry development to poverty reduction and rural livelihood improvement by focusing on the relationship between forestry development and poverty reduction and how to improve rural livelihoods through sustainable measures. The strategy had to reflect the policy changes at macro level (Thuan 2005). Eventually in 2006 the National Forestry Department started the launch of a Community Forestry Management (CFM) pilot program. The CFM was established in 10 provinces and later on in 40 communes. The Land law of 2003 and the 2004 Forest Protection and Development law had already defined local responsibilities and regulated the overall management of local authorities over forest resources and recognized local communities as legal recipients of land use rights (Thang 2010).

² A Commune is located at the sub-district level, and is rooted in Vietnams socialist past

2.5.2. Conflicts in the Central Highlands

Although the land reforms seem to be successful in the low lands and the delta region, the allocation to the central mountainous region gave some problems as will be described in this paragraph. Gomiero (2001;122) perceives the land allocation as a ‘privatization process’ where land can be transferred, exchanged, leased and inherited by paying a tax. He argues that the FLA policy should be revised and has to take into account the social and environmental factors that typify the farming systems of the upland population groups to avoid conflict and increasing problems of food security and environmental and social problems. An example he mentions is the migration of farmers into the forest and further degrading activities of forest clearing. (Gomiero 2001;122). In addition also Boissiere (2009) mentions the conflicts over land (use) rights and natural resource management. There is a tension between the government control through management decisions over forests and land use needs of the local community in the Central highlands. Besides there are conflicts between ethnic minorities and migrants living in the area over the use of land and resources. One of the causes for these conflicts is the Government program that resettles ethnic minorities and provides ‘traditional tribal lands’ to the migrants. They are often placed outside of and nearby protected areas, where they have limited opportunities for extracting resources (Boissiere 2009; 2745). Other causes are the contradiction between traditional laws and the principles of land allocation but also changes in peoples understanding of the value of land. The allocation of land has even created conflict and discussions among household within and between villages. This is why it is of great importance to take into account the historical boundaries between villages (Tinh 2009). Hjörts (2005) argues that including the stakeholders and people mostly affected by changes in the management and decisions making and by using a participatory approach in the developmental projects is important for successful outcomes and obtaining effective management of natural resources. The ones that are affected by the changes are the ones that can exceedingly influence the process.

2.5.3. Opinions on the outcome of FLA

Various opinions come to the fore in the literature on the FLA in Vietnam. It is hard to draw a conclusion on the question if FLA led to a positive development for the local population and to poverty reduction since the outcomes are so divers. To provide at least an overview of some of the opinions and outcomes, a few examples are given from different authors about their opinions on the FLA policies.

The allocation of ‘forest’ land is based on the financial ability and willingness to reforest the land when needed and to manage it sustainably. In some cases families are even obliged to

share their profits deriving from timber exploitation, if the former owner or manager has invested in reforestation on that land (Gomiero 2001). Gomiero states (2001;..) that most farmers in the upland region don't have the financial resources for high input agriculture. Besides, the up-land locals and particularly the ethnic minorities are used to community-based management of forestland, and natural resources. Traditional activities of slash-and burning land make it difficult to stay at one place, and the traditionally household ownership of the land is recognized from within the community. With the implementation of the FLA, locally community-based forest management was no longer legally possible which can cause conflicts within the community and between the community and the authorities Gomiero argued in 2001 (Gomiero 2001). Besides these problems for community-based forest management, most families only got allocated barren lands and planted forests where natural forests are mostly allocated to local government units. These local government units sometimes contract local households to protect the forest. Moreover, most of the land that has been allocated is given to SFE's. Estimates of 2002 are that 61% of the 10.8 million hectares of forestland has been allocated, but two-thirds of the total amount has been allocated to SFE's, who have the task to reallocate the land to households. Only 10% of the total land area has been allocated directly to households (Sunderlin 2005a;18).

Sunderlin (2005a) on the other hand, notes that a part of the allocated forestlands is often converted to agriculture or other non-forest land use, some illegally and others under the recent adaptations of FLA regulations that allows conversion. The conversion leads to an important source of income.

Tinh (2009) points out that with regard to the Land Law of 1993 and 2003, it was only the state that had land ownership, the household and individuals solely got land use rights. Though 'land use' does not refer to the rights to transfer, sell, lease, inherit and mortgage land of the individual households. He argues that it would be better to use the term 'land tenure' to avoid misunderstanding on the real meaning of these land allocations (Tinh 2009). According to Sikor (2007) the FLA in Vietnam has failed to decrease the gap between the state and customary regulations, which led to conflicts among local actors, and in the end led to forests loss. The current FLA policy has taken on an exclusive approach to allocation through the system of assigning ownership-type rights on forest to local actors, who are obligated to protect the forest against others. Sikor (2007) advocates a more inclusive approach to FLA that brings about diverse claims made by different actors. He believes that the key elements of such an inclusive approach should be proprietary rights instead off ownerships rights to individual users and integrated governance relations with state and customary actors. Hjortso (2005) adds that the protection of natural resources in certain areas will lead to conflicts between environmental protection advocated and economic development promoters. The

management of certain areas can be very complex because of the interactions between political, cultural, biological, and economic issues and aspects. There are many different stakeholders involved, all with their own interests and perspectives. He agrees with Sikor (2007), that there is a lack of involving local people and others concerned about the land and or the resources, in planning and decision making processes (Hjortso 2005). An important concluding remark Sunderlin (2005a) makes, is the lack of available information, literature and research on this subject, and the need for this.

Thang (2010) states that the gains from the forestland allocation, which he refers to as devolution, are limited and the poor people are often still neglected. This leads to the loss of their livelihoods in contradiction to wealthier groups getting the benefits at their expense. Besides, most of the land allocated to the poor consists out of degraded forest. He sees community forestry as a more sustainable approach for natural resource conservation and livelihood improvement. Most of the CFM's pilot projects have been successful. In addition he claims that the legal rights did not translate into the actual changes in rights and practices at that same level and that FLA disrupted local institutions and collective land use systems. Not only nature conservation but different political and economic interests were involved in the 're-growth' of the forest which caused the total forest area to remain stable but at the same time led to major transitions of forest and non forest categories (Thang 2010). Thuan (2005;20) in contrast is much more positive, mentioning that the allocation of land to some households has had positive effects on poor farmers within the community and household. He admits that some inequalities have remained and wealthier households indeed got more land than poor households and of better quality, and that only a very small part of the allocated land has been implemented from the original Government land-use plan (Thuan 2005;20). Also Tinh (2009) argues that the land allocation in the central region has been delayed.

2.6 Forest dependent livelihoods

As described in the beginning of this chapter, Vietnam has about 53 ethnic minorities spread across the country. These ethnic minorities account for 30 percent of the poorest people in Vietnam. More than 70 percent of the population is categorized as rural. Poverty is mostly concentrated in the mountainous areas, of which 29,2% is in the Central Highlands. The central highland population consists mainly of ethnic minorities who are mostly subsistence farmers highly dependent on the use of forest resources (Gomiero 2001; Tinh 2009;11). The ethnic minority groups possess a wide range of knowledge and skills they need to live from the forest (Rerkasem 2009). According to the UNDP (UNDP 1997 in Gomiero 2001) in 1997 about 1,2 million of these ethnic farmers are non-permanent residents, meaning they don't

have a permanent house and keep moving around. Even though Vietnam has adopted a market economy for over 20 years now, land continues to be the most important livelihood aspect for ethnic minorities in the central mountainous area (Tinh 2009). Their main income comes from farming and husbandry and sometimes from forest products. The condition of the soil is one of the most important factors for the rural household food security (Tinh 2009).

The level of forest resource use has been highly influenced by growing rural population with a lack of economic opportunities. A lot of these people are poor and landless and migrate into the forest areas looking for land. This development has intensified agricultural cultivation and exploitation of forest resources. As a result forests are depleted and degraded. These changes have also resulted in emerging conflicts between different groups and stakeholders. As a reaction to these conflicts the Vietnamese government has implemented new policies on environmental protection and conservation. Even though, local communities living in or close to the protected area continued the use of forest resources to supply their incomes, especially in 'difficult periods'. These households use the forest as energy for cooking, construction materials, animal fodder and traditional medicines (van Lan et.al. 2002). According to Tinh (2009) the allocation of agricultural land has influenced farmer household investments and caused increased productivity for farmers with we rice fields in the last ten years.

There is a general discussion on the possible positive and negative effects of FLA for the environment and the local traditional communities, and whether it should be seen as a development opportunity for the local poor or as a constraining policy. This discussion also has to do with the conflict between conservation and human development as discussed in the theoretical chapter. Traditionally local community needs have been perceived as a threat to conservation efforts. This involves the risk of leaving local people out of the benefit sharing of the protected area (Van Lan 2002). For an effective policy implementation aimed at forest conservation it is exceedingly important to get a good understanding of the use, management and dependency on forest resources of the local population living in the area. A large amount of information and research on situations of forest conservation in areas where local inhabitants are dependent on the resources shows these situations require local participation and understanding. Knowledge about the site specific characteristics, property rights of the local communities, forest use patterns and forest dependency is crucial for formulating co-management programs and for sound 'participatory management' that may be sustainable. Summarizing, it is important to understand the livelihoods of the local communities living in the specific area and how these livelihoods are affected (Thang 2010). In addition Thang (2010) underlines the importance of property rights by arguing that it can offer incentives for management, provide authorization and control over resources, and

reinforce collective action by assigning rights to the users. The property rights are an important policy development that alters the governance structure (Thang 2010).

The current FLA policy in Vietnam has led to significant changes in the relationships between people and the forest in the central highlands of Vietnam (Thang 2010). Shifting cultivation has been replaced by other forms of land use as permanent cropping, tree crops and plantation. This will require adaptation of indigenous forest management skills and knowledge to the new forms of land use (Rerkasem 2009).

Van Lan (2002) argues that the people living in the buffer zone of Bach Ma national park are positive about nature conservation. A possible explanation for this could be the fact that local people in the area are mainly engaged in subsistence farming where water and soil are very important resources needed for survival. This could cause their focus on non-consumptive values. Another explanation given was the floods of 1999, which caused several landslides and destroyed hundreds of hectares of agricultural land in the region. This could have raised the awareness for the need to conserve the forest (Van Lan 2002).

Central Vietnam

Figure 2.2 Thừa Thiên-Huế, Central-Vietnam province



Source: Amat et.al (2010)

Before the Land Law was introduced, the mountainous regions in central Vietnam, also referred to as ‘uplands’, only had two kinds of land tenure: state ownership and collective ownership (Tinh 2009;8). At the beginning the FLA implementation between 1986 and 1996 was hardly involving the central highland areas (Gomiero 2001;122; Sunderlin 2005a;17).

Eventually, because of the successes in the lowlands and the need to stop land degradation and alleviate poverty, it was decided to extend the land allocation to the central highlands in 1993 (Gomiero 2001).

2.7 Forest Dependent Livelihoods in Central Vietnam

2.7.1 Traditional land use in Central Vietnam

For a long time shifting cultivation used to be the main form of land use in the central mountainous region in Vietnam. These systems were supplemented by various other traditional land use systems. However studies have found that households used to manage various livelihood activities at the same time. An example is the Paddies (rice fields) which have been developed where possible, from mountainous areas to upland valleys, even though flatland and water supply suitable for wetland rice are scarce in the mountains. Next to agriculture the forest was also used for hunting and gathering. Some ethnic groups were using mixed farming systems including shifting cultivation fields, permanent rain fed and irrigated fields (Rerkasem 2009: 2037). The use of shifting cultivation by farmers in the region are also differentiated. Rerkasem (2009;2037) makes a division in two basic types; pioneer and rotational cultivators. The pioneer shifting cultivators used to be migratory, clearing pieces of forest for field crops, and after a couple of years of yield, the whole village moved on to a new area. This form of pioneer shifting cultivation has practically disappeared in the region. Rotational shifting cultivators usually settled at one place to grow rice and other crops in systems of crop rotation which involved one year of cropping and a few years of fallow. Fallow indicated the land on which the forest is allowed to regenerate between cropping periods. These systems are mostly found at altitudes below 1000 meter which seems to be the limit for upland rice growing in the area due to low temperatures. Nowadays it seems that all shifting cultivation in the central highlands region has shifted to rotational cultivation. The success mainly depends on the management of the fallow periods. This accounts especially for the harvest of food and firewood. As Rerkasem (2009) argues: ‘forest regeneration is the key component in determining sustainability of shifting cultivation systems and productivity of subsistence crops’ (Ibid; 2037). The changes in cropping systems are not all the same but they do show similarities like the move towards shorter rotation for shifting cultivation and

conversion to permanent cultivation. Another one is the conversion from production for subsistence towards more commercial production (Rerkasem 2009; 2038).

Farmers adapting to new cropping systems have to change their organizational management of the community and in some cases the relation with neighboring communities, and their technical knowledge and innovations systems that have to do with the local resources and the environment (Rerkasem 2009).

Nowadays the mountainous areas in North and Central Vietnam are characterized by differentiated kinds of land: wet rice land, garden, flat land (Na) along rivers or by the foothill, swidden land, forest land, etc. Though the central highlands and lowlands are mainly populated by poor ethnic minorities, there are many differences between and even within groups in income and livelihood. The rich households mostly own different kind of land types, especially land of high quality that is good for cultivation like wet rice field, Na land, garden, forest land, hill land, etc. In contrast, the poor households often have fewer land types and mostly of less quality like swidden land and degraded forest or bare land (Tinh 2009). This is important since land is considered as one of the most important capitals that directly impact the livelihood and poverty level of farmers. Not only the farming techniques but even more importantly, the rights of farmers to land, and the relationship between different kind of land-use rights are defining for a large part the level of impact on livelihoods and poverty (Tinh 2009). The productivity of the land is thus influenced by the policies related to land rights. The implementation of conservation and protection forest systems in many areas has limited the conversion of forestland to agricultural land, causing a loss of production land for many farmers. This reduced people's self-sufficiency in food and reduced the income of people dependent on the cultivation of forest and industrial plants (Van Lan 2002). In addition, with the implementation of new land policies and socio-economic changes, farmers had to adapt their traditional systems of knowledge and resource management.

The already existing differences in land use and possession among ethnic groups have increased after the implementation of land policies and laws since the Doi Moi period. These differences have various causes, for example the claims to ancestral land following the implementation of policies and land transactions. Tinh (2009) mentions the differences in income are playing an important role for increasing differences. Rich people from the Kinh group who have businesses often have fertile land useable for cultivation or for trading. An example is the popular production of coffee in the Central highlands, which makes plots near roads and water areas attractive for Kinh business people. They buy the land from ethnic minorities to grow coffee. Other reasons are the investment policies of the state and the process of urbanization. When the Land Law recognizes land use rights as a transferable

commodity, especially plots close to urban centers, big roads and waterways will increase in value (Tinh 2009).

Increasing migration from densely populated lowlands to the highlands has increased the pressure on land cause of population pressure. In addition, land use has been restricted by the different land policies implemented for forest and watershed conservation and by development of industrial plantations of fast growing trees, rubber, coffee and tea (Rerkasem 2009). Tinh (2009) mentions that next to the flood of migrants from the Northern provinces, the increase in coffee prices also led to more dynamic land transactions. The coffee area in the Central Highland increased dramatically from 50.000 ha to 500.000 ha in the period of 1990-2000.

Research in different areas, among which Bach Ma national park, found that the establishment of special-use forest and watershed protection forests reduced the areas and production space of local communities and households (Thuan 2005). This can have serious consequences for the household incomes of the rural ethnic minorities living in the area. About 13,7 percent of the household incomes in the rural areas comes from additional non-forest product collection, differing per region. Numbers are higher in areas with more natural forest and where many ethnic minorities are living. Of the non-timber forest products, firewood is the most used, accounting for 2/3 of the products (Thuan 2005).

2.7.2 Co Tu

The Co Tu also referred to as Ka Tu, are indigenous people living mainly in Central Vietnam. They are one of the officially recognized ethnic minorities in Vietnam and according to estimates accounted for about 50.458 people in 1999. The Co Tu people live in mountains and natural forests of Quang Nam and Thua Thien-Hue provinces and their official language is Co Tuic which belongs to the Mon-Khmer subgroup in the Austro-Asiatic language family (Bayrak 2010; Thang 2010). It is believed that they are one of the oldest ethnic minority groups in central Vietnam and they are related to the Cham and Kinh. The Co Tu are significantly dependent on the forest for their subsistence livelihoods based on the surrounding forests. They were traditionally semi-nomadic farmers who practiced swidden agriculture and hunting and gathering in addition. Gathering means collecting non-timber forest products (NTFPs) (Bayrak 2010;Thang 2010). The swidden cultivation was based on various highland crop cycles, centered upon hill rice, but also corn, beans, cassava, sweet potatoes, banana, vegetables and fruits. Next to their daily income, the forest is also very important for Co Tu culture, which can be seen in their creation of knowledge, and forest management systems, that are interlinked with their culture, worldviews and social and

political systems. The Co Tu have made forest classifications based on practical, religious and cultural aspects. However their culture is not static and they have to readjust to their changing environment (Bayrak 2010).

The Co Tu society is based on clan and kinship and maintain social ties between other villages. In their traditional society the village is the grassroots administrative units with clearly stated boundaries defined by traditional institutions. In a traditional Co Tu village there are different clans and families who are governed by a village patriarch, elected by the village's elderly. The village patriarch has a leading function in social and natural resource management and in solving problems. His role is of great importance for the existence of the village (Bayrak 2010). In the contemporary society next to the patriarch there is also a village headman. The village headman is nominated by the Commune People's Committee (CPC). The loss of various traditional customs and activities has led to a weakening role for the village patriarch and his role as advisor. The local government has gotten more authority, often making top-down decisions on village problems and conflicts (Tuan 2009).

The religious role of the forest for the Co Tu, could be described as a spiritual role also. They believe in the 'spiritual essence of all things'. The customary laws deal with forest management which is integrated into their whole way of life. They have divided the forest into four types:

- Ghost forest – which has to do with their spiritual believes.
- Spirit forest – where their gods and spirits live.
- Headwater/water protection forest – the forest that are used to protect water resources
- Forest for exploitation – in these forests it is allowed to cut wood for firewood and other use.

Another division is made between land and forest tenure; there is common property and private property. Common property can be assigned to the community, the clan or family, and family branch levels. The Ghost, spirit and headwater forests and grasslands are owned by the village. The land for swidden cultivation, gardens and resident land are seen as private property. The village divides the forest for exploitation. The village patriarch distributes the forestland among the clans and clan-heads, which have to distribute it among the village households. There is no limit to the amount of plots on the household level, as long as their own villagers only use the plots. For the findings of NTFP sites there is the rule 'who comes first gets first' (Tuan 2009).

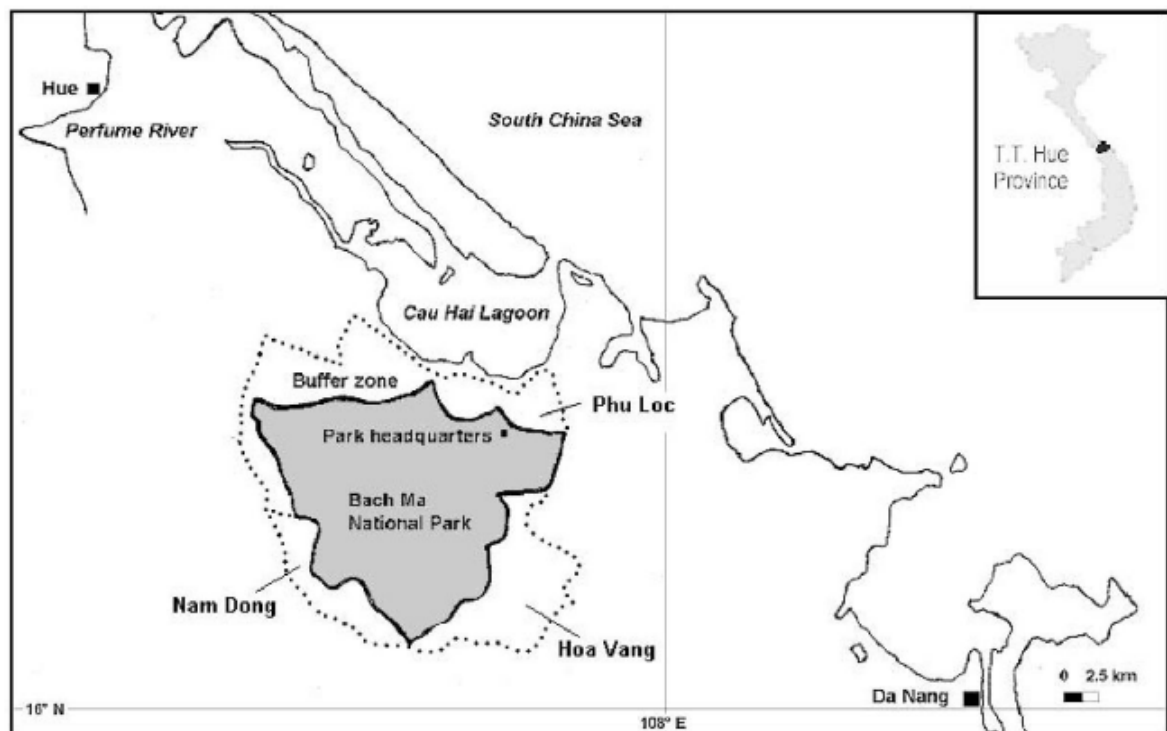
One of the difficulties in identifying Co Tu or Ka Tu is the fact that this name means ‘Savage’ or ‘something not very noble’ in local dialect. This name could also have been giving to people outside of the ethnic group living in central Vietnam (Bayrak 2010).

Within the program of FLA, a few villages within a commune get selected for allocation, based on the geographic condition of the forest resources and the traditional possesses over forest resources. The still experimental allocation of forest land to villages has divided the Co Tu commune into two groups; the forest recipient villages and the non-recipient villages. The division of the communes has changes the relationship between villages (Thang 2010).

In the provinces of Thua Thien-Hue province and Quang Nam province, where the Co Tu people live, lies a protected forest. This protected forest is also known als Bach Ma National park, discussed in the following paragraph.

2.7.3 Bach Ma National park

Figure 2.3 Location of Bach Ma National Park



Yen et al. (2005, p. 2).

Bach Ma National park (BMNP) was created in 1991. The park is also located in central Vietnam in the provinces of Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam and situated about 40km south-east of the old imperial city of Hue. According to the official website of the park, the national

park covers around 37,487 ha. It was created in 1991 and extended in 2008 with the aim to protect and conserve the green centre of the last corridor of forest left in Vietnam, stretching from the South China Sea to the mountain range at the border with Laos. Within Vietnam's biodiversity action plan, the park is identified as one of the last remaining 'Type A' primary forests. That is why such a high priority is placed on the protection of the area with its high biodiversity value. The park is home to a large amount of various animal and plant species. It is estimated that there are more than 1,4000 different flora species living in Bach Ma from both the south and the north of Vietnam. This stands for 19 percent of the entire flora of Vietnam in only 0,07 percent of Vietnam's total land area. Moreover the park is considered to be an important 'Floristic Biodiversity Centre' for Indochina. The area is dominated by tropical evergreen monsoon forest in the lower areas and subtropical evergreen monsoon forest in the higher areas with altitudes above 900m. Bach Ma is characterized by mountains and dense forest. The protected area of the national park is surrounded by a buffer zone of about 21,300 hectares.

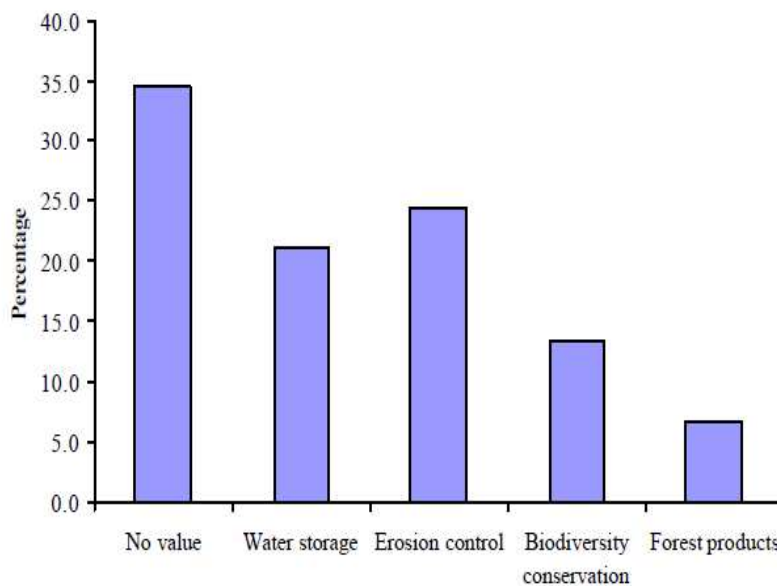
In the summer months the climate in the higher areas of Bach Ma is pretty cool. In the colonial time the French built some villas and guesthouses around this area, which got destroyed during the Vietnam War together with parts of the forest. (Bachma national park 2010; van Lan et.al. 2002)

The population number is estimated around 65.000 people spread over 12,285 households in Bach Ma. Especially in the buffer zone the population density is high with 158 inhabitants per square meter and it is still increasing. The local communities are highly dependent on agriculture and mainly cultivate wet rice. However, high agricultural outputs are difficult to achieve because of different constraining conditions and natural disasters in the area. An example is the flood in 1991 which reduced the growth rate of the agricultural sector by almost 4percent that year. The average income per person is 250 USD per year, which is equivalent to 70 percent of the national income p.p. and 40 percent of the households are classified as poor. This is comparable with other protected areas in Vietnam.

Another problem is the lack of economically attractive alternatives, farmers see no financial benefits and continue to use and commercialize mostly illegal forest products such as timber, firewood, and non-wood forest products (Van Lan et.al. 2002). Van Lan (et. al.2002) argues that the utilization of forest products still plays an important role for livelihoods support of poorer households. He notes that although the National Park has undermined the legal exploitation of natural resources by local communities, it has also improved environmental benefits like water storage, erosion control, and in a lesser way biodiversity conservation, environmental services useable as common goods for the

communities (van Lan et.al.2002). In 2001 a case study is done among 70 households in two communities in the buffer zone of Bach Ma national park to examine the utilization of forest products and to quantify the exploitation of forest products. The results showed that the use of forest products is especially of crucial importance for marginal households. The different households used all different sorts of forest products. A crucial factor of this form of income is that it needs no material investment. Of the 90 people interviewed, about 35 percent reported to see no value in the forest (figure 2.4) while 25 percent reported to consider the erosion control as an important forest value and 20 percent considered the water storage as an important forest value. Biodiversity conservation and other forest products were less valued according to the household survey results, which is quite striking since it seems that forest products are still widely used and it was concluded that marginal households are strongly dependent on these products.

Figure 2.4 Reported forest value among surveyed households.



Multiple Answers were possible per interviewee; n=90

Source: van Lan et.al. (2002)

Bach Ma's buffer zone

In 1991 a buffer zone of 22,300 ha was established as a ring surrounding the park. Later on the zone got expanded. Officially it is the Park Management Board that is responsible for the management of Bach Ma national park and the districts, communes and former SFEs are responsible for the management of the buffer zone (Luxbacher 2009). Within the Buffer Zone the land is divided according to its use and on the responsibility of technical and administrative supervisory bodies which can be divided into:

- a) Land managed by timber companies – the forest guards department supervises the forest works of the companies, but the company itself is on the responsibility of the provincial Forest and Trade departments.
- b) Land managed by the Forest Protection Department - includes all other forested land not managed by timber companies. Technical management is in the hands of the district forest guards, communes and districts have control of administration and policies.
- c) Farming Land- runned by farmers, technical aspects are administered by agricultural department of the districts. Administrative and political aspects, land tenure is on the responsibility of the communes and the districts.
- d) Special use land - Include areas for government buildings, lines of communication, hydraulic works, watercourses or pools, historical and cultural buildings, military land, mines exploitation sites, salt marshes, cimetarys and other.. – administered by state administration at a provincial and local level.
- e) The Lagoon - The aquaculture department of the province is in charge of the technical aspects. Communes and districts have control of administration and policies (WWF/EEC 2001).

Gilmour and San (In Luxbacher 2009) have divided the buffer zone land into 3 zones, namely: lands managed by SFEs, lands managed by District Forest

Protection Stations, and farming land (land of Red Book Recipients). The officials from BMNP are not directly involved into the decision-making in the buffer zone. Though they are involved in a collaboration with the districts and communes for the implementation of government development programs to reinforce the link between the park and the buffer zone. The buffer zone is not distinguishing itself from other areas outside of the zone by any specific rules for resource use (Luxbacher 2009).

Forest Units;

The forest land that is controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture and rural Development (MADR) is divided into different forest units, each numbered. These units serve as a base to management decisions, logging, plantations, allocations, etc. These units can be divided into sub-units. BMNP is divided into 23 forests units, one of them which is overlapping the park boundary and the buffer zone. The buffer zone consists out of 26 forest units, of which 13 in

Phu Loc district, 6 in Nam Dong district and 7 in Hoa Vang district in the Province of Quang Nam Danang.

At the time this report was written there was one administrative building and 8 forest guards stations in the park. Boundary stones mark the limits of the park and between the different zones. Each of the stations is responsible for certain area.

Seasons in the area:

The area knows 4 different seasons through the year.

- a) The Typhoon season and floods from September to November
- b) The cool and humid season from December to February 16, 2011
- c) The Spring and intermediate season from March to April
- d) The dry and hot season from April to August

(WWF/EC 2001)

This chapter has given an overview of the general characteristics of Vietnam, Central Vietnam and the research area and the Co Tu people living in this area. Furthermore the FLA has been described and explained, and the role of deforestation problems. The link between the contextual chapters and the research will be explained in the following methodology chapter. In this chapter a short explanation shall be given of what is important from the theory and the geographical context for the research subject and how the questions that are formulated in the next chapter were formed by the information and theories that were discussed in the previous chapters.

3. Methodological Framework

In this chapter the theory and geographical context of the previous chapters are connected and used to define the research questions and objective. Furthermore, an explanation will be given of the use of different research methods, why and how these methods have been used, which materials were used, what is the research objective and what are the research questions. In addition I will describe the operationalised concepts and the conceptual model. Since no research goes precisely as planned, a short description of the limitations of the research and difficulties in the field are also given. First we will look back at the previous chapters.

In the theoretical chapter the growing popularity of the concept Sustainable Development was explained. The growing discussion around the question ‘how to achieve a balance between nature conservation and livelihood development’ was described. This same question plays an important role in the formation of the FLA policies as described in the geographical chapter. The creation of FLA policies was initially fuelled by the growing concerns on deforestation. However, the concluding goals were to develop livelihoods and protect the forest, and not only to focus on nature conservation. From the theory it became clear how important natural resources are for certain groups of people. Rogers (et.al. 2008:11) stated, that ‘human beings and the environment do not exist apart from each other, and because of that every change in the environment will lead to changes in people’s lives’. Looking at his statements gives the idea that the FLA will certainly have its effects on the livelihoods of the people living close to the forest, especially when it concerns forest dependent livelihoods. If such a relation does exist, it must mean that a change in livelihoods will also cause a change in the environment. This seemed an interesting topic to explore. Another of Rogers argument referred to in the theoretical chapter is ‘to achieve this balance [between humans and nature] good governance and sustainable institutions are needed’. The Vietnamese government tried to realize this balance by FLA decentralization and the creation of a control system at a local level. This brings us back to the theory of common pool resources and the situation in the past for Vietnam. In the previous chapter it was explained that in the past the Vietnamese forest was owned by the government but in reality accessible to everyone. The concept of ‘common pool resources’ could be used to describe the forest use in the past when most forest dependent livelihoods were based on shifting cultivation. Because of deforestation and environmental damage the government decided to act by implementing a new control system on the use of the forest. One of the arguments was that the local population was depleting the forest by overusing the forest resources. New policies (FLA) were implemented for regulating the use of the forest and forest rangers were hired to control the forest use by local populations, in order to protect the forest from the communities living in or near the natural forest. This change in situation has raised the question: what are the effects of such changes for the local livelihoods and for the way they make use of the forest? In addition another question that came up was: if the natural forest used to be so important for the livelihoods of the local population living in or close to these forests, than how will they adapt to these ‘rules and regulations’?

The idea of this research was to also support the PHD research of Mr. Tu, a PHD student from the HUAF University in central Vietnam, which was also our guest organization. Because Mr Tu’s research was involving the livelihoods of the local Co Tu people living in Thua Thien Hue Province close to the border of the protected Bach Ma National Park, we decided to

focus the research questions on this ethnic group living in the buffer-zone of Bach Ma national park. Out of the previous two questions the following question was formed, central for the research:

Have FLA policies affected the livelihoods of (Co Tu) men and women in the buffer zone of Bach Ma National park, and if so, in what way?

To be able to answer this question I decided to make use of the Livelihood framework as a tool to describe the contemporary livelihoods of the Co Tu, by using the livelihood strategies as the main pillars, and to define the changes that have taken place within the livelihoods of the Co Tu living in the buffer zone of Bach Ma National Park and also on their livelihood outcomes. The five livelihood strategies will be described in the conceptualised concepts paragraph. Before that, the research objective and questions will be discussed. The reason for including both men and women is linked with the theoretical paragraph about gender. As Abdella (2010) argued: without addressing the inequalities between both sexes, development will not be sustainable, besides the quality of 'growth' should be more important than the quantity of growth. In this case the same could be said about the FLA policies, without addressing the inequalities between men and women in the outcome of the policies, the development caused by these policies can not be sustainable.

3.1 Research Objective and questions

Objective

The objective of the research was to give a description of the (assumed) effects of the FLA on the livelihoods of the local Co Tu people living in the buffer zone of Bach Ma national park. The focus was placed on the social, cultural, economic and environmental characteristics of their livelihoods by looking at the way the Co Tu are organized, create their livelihood income, are dependent on the forest and forest resources and what knowledge and management systems they have, and how these characteristics have been influenced by the FLA. Since the Co Tu people are known to live and work close to and in the forest, a special focus was put on the role of the forest and its resources for their livelihoods. For the various characteristics I looked at the intra-household differences between the men and women of the Co Tu. The aim of this thesis is to give a clear image on what kind of opportunities or downfalls the FLA have brought to the local population in the region and to what direction it has pushed them. In order to achieve this objective the following central question was formed, as mentioned above followed by 5 sub-questions:

Central Question: Have FLA policies affected the livelihoods of Co Tu men and women in the buffer zone of Bach Ma National park, and if so, in what way?

Q1. What are the main FLA policies in Bach ma national park's buffer zone?

Q2. What are the contemporary livelihoods of Co Tu men and women?

Q3. Have livelihoods changed compared to the livelihoods before the FLA, and if so, what were the underlying causes for these changes?

Q4. What are the consequences for the natural forestland use after FLA was implemented?

Q5. What intra-household livelihood differences can be identified between men and women of the Co Tu?

Though FLA is implemented on both a commune level and a household level I decided within my research to focus only on the household level. By focusing only on the household level it was easier to speak with both men and women within the village. Besides, my subject was already quite broad, including both the commune level and the household level would be too much for the short period of three months research.

Adding to that, I would like to underline that my research and this thesis are not focused on forest based poverty alleviation. Though poverty is something that can't be ignored when looking at livelihood effects of the FLA policy it will certainly not be the main focus of this thesis.

3.1.1 Formulating and answering the sub-questions

Question one (Q1) was formed to give an overall image of what the FLA policies entails. Describing the main policies is important for this thesis to get an overall understanding of the policies, what the rules are, what is changing, what is the system and what kind of policies are we actually talking about? By answering these questions, a better understanding is created of the effects the policies can have on the lives of the Co Tu villagers. Chapter 1 forms an exception on the other chapters, were chapter one will mainly be answered based on the information obtained from policy documents and theory. In addition the information obtained from the interviews with the respondents will be used. More on this is described in the paragraph 'research methods'.

Question two and three (Q2 and Q3) derived directly from the central question and were solely based on the data gathered during the interviews and participatory meetings. Chapter two will mainly be a descriptive chapter to give an overview of the livelihoods nowadays of the Co Tu people living in Cha Mang and Ta Lu. This information will be obtained from semi-structured interviews and the participatory meetings. Chapter 3 will partly be a descriptive chapter, and for a part an exploring chapter. Chapter three will describe the underlying causes as to explain why people's livelihoods have changed and what was of influence? Did these changes occur only because of a certain policy, or are there other external factors playing a role? What role did the people play themselves in these changes? Question 4 was formed since one of the goals of the Vietnamese government, with the implementation of the FLA, was to make the local population more interested in forest protection and management by giving them formal rights to their own forest land, as described in the theoretical chapter. In addition, the use of the natural environment, and especially the forest, is an important part of the livelihood system. Besides, as described above, a change in the forest (resources) can also lead to a change in livelihoods and visa versa. If livelihoods and environmental conditions are connected, than this connection should also be researched and described within this thesis. Next to giving a description of the livelihoods of the Co Tu people living in Cha Mang and Ta Lu village, and the effects of the FLA on their livelihoods, this thesis is aimed at giving an image of the effectiveness of the FLA policies. To see what the outcomes are of the FLA policies it is important to look at both men and women to see weather both groups are included and if both groups are receiving/achieving the same benefits from the policies, as will be discussed in Chapter four. This information is important to give a conclusion on the effectiveness of the policies and in order to come up with advice or recommendations on how to improve the implementation process of these policies.

3.2 Research methods & materials

3.2.1 Methods

Collected Data

Before I left for Vietnam I decided to use only qualitative research methods by conducting semi-structured and open interviews and holding participatory meetings. During the research I decided to hold one participatory meeting in each village where I would try to collect a problem tree and a stakeholder analysis with a Venn diagram and a Prime Mover Septagram.

Later on in the field I got the opportunity to also collect 20 household surveys. Two students from the HUAF University collected the 20 household surveys in both research villages together. At the end of the research period in total 43 semi-structured household interviews have been conducted with the villagers of which four of the villagers were of another ethnic group and six interviews have been conducted with leaders and officials. Next to the interviews in the village and the Commune, information has been gathered during interviews with officers from the Forest Protection Unit, the District department of natural resources and environment and the vice director of the management board of Bach Ma national park. In addition information has been gathered during informal conversations with Mr Nghi from Tropenbos International.

Qualitative

For the collecting of research data I decided to focus mainly on qualitative research methods including (semi-structured) interviews and participatory meetings. In my backland as a Cultural Anthropologist I learned the importance of the 'voice of the local' and that the influence of the researcher on the answers given should be limited as much as possible. In my opinion this is most reachable with semi-structured- and in certain situations unstructured interviews and participatory methods. Besides that, I think it is important to respond spontaneously to certain answers and ask follow up questions. The methods used are also dependent on the context of course. For this research the time was limited and some of the subjects - domestic abuse for example - are too sensitive too solely lean on structured interviews and questionnaires.

Other reasons to focus mainly on interviews was because I needed to know more than only the direct data obtained from questionnaires. In order to answer the research questions the information behind a direct answer, the underlying causes and reasons and additional information, was needed. For example when it comes to the level of education, it was not only useful to know the education level of a respondent but also the education level of his family members and especially his wife and children and the opportunities and limitations education can bring. Overall, qualitative research methods were needed to find out what the perceptions of the local population were on: what education means to them, what opportunities it can give them, what are the villager's reasons for going to school, etc. In order to get an image of the whole family situation, in stead of only that of one person, certain flexibility was needed to ask questions in between. In addition I wanted to get an image of the whole village situation and the diverse social relations. For these reasons using interviews seemed the most suitable research method next to participatory meetings. In addition people were often giving socially desired answers when a question was asked; in this case we needed to ask more about the subject in order to find out what a respondent's real opinion was.

The participatory meetings gave space for people to interact and discuss subjects with each other. Participatory meetings can increase new ideas and stimulate people to speak up. Sometimes a respondent feels more secure to speak up when he or she is in a group.

To answer the central question of chapter five (Q5) the idea was to interview both the male and female members of every household. Unfortunately, this was not realistic and at the end we were happy with every person in the village that was willing and able to cooperate with us. Based on the information received from the interviews, we still tried to compare the differences between men and women within a household but also within the village. For the other chapters we also had to take every respondent willing to cooperate for granted.

Another point that is important to mention, is the fact that the question lists for the interviews have been adapted to the situation in the field. For different people we used different question lists since we changed the questions in response to the interviews. At the beginning I found out that not every question was use-full and that some subjects needed further questioning. This means that for some questions there were only a few people who answered it. I kept this in mind while analysing the data and writing the chapters. We also adapted the questions to those subjects the respondents themselves defined as important. We defined this simply by looking what subjects were most mentioned by the respondent during the interviews. An example is: alcohol use, this subject was added to the question list later on after people mentioned this as a problem several time. The question-lists can be found in Appendix 5 and 6.

Participatory Meetings: Livelihood Problem Trees and Stakeholder Analysis

In both Villages a participatory meeting was organized. The reason for organizing such a meeting was because villagers get the chance to interact with each other and to discuss different subjects. Besides, the meeting was announced by the village leader, giving people the change to be present, while at the days that we were conducting the interviews this was not always announced and many times people were not in the house when we came by. The idea of the meeting was to get a better image of the livelihood issues of the villagers. Because of a 'no-show' in both villages, the help of a HUAF University teacher and his students was asked. Eventually I was invited to join a meeting in both Ta Lu and Cha Mang that was organized by the students of the faculty of forestry. Two students were appointed to help me organize the meeting and collect the data. Although their involvement helped me to get some villagers to cooperate, it turned out that my role in the meeting was very limited and existed mostly out of collecting data from the different students instead of directly from the villagers themselves.

Besides, the selection criteria were not met, since it was the students that invited people from the village which they thought were useful. The meeting was also meant for the students themselves to apply different participatory methods. Because of this, most of the villagers were already busy with other participatory methods organized by the students. Before the meetings a list of selection criteria was formulized and a planning of methods to be used. In the end, every villager that was willing to cooperate was welcome.

Initially the following Selection Criteria were supposed to be applied in both Ta Lu village and Cha Mang village.

Participatory meetings: Livelihood Problem Trees and Stakeholder Analysis

Have a meeting with about 13 to 14 people, dividing them into 3 groups:

- 1) 4 women to make a problem tree

Criteria:

- both people considered 'poor' and 'better of'
- both persons with a Red Book for forest land and without a Redbook for forest land
- all Co Tu

- 2) 4 men to make a problem tree

Criteria:

- both people considered 'poor' and 'better of'
- both persons with a Red Book for forest land and without a Redbook for forest land
- all Co Tu

- 3) Both men and women (together) to make a stakeholder analysis with a Venn Diagram and a Prime Mover Septagram. → +- 5/6 people

Criteria:

- both men and women
- both people from households considered 'poor' and 'better of'
- all Co Tu
- People who received Redbooks for field, forest and garden (3RB's)
- People who have No Redbook for Forest land

The following methods were used to gather information from the villagers:

A Problem Tree:

- 1) Let people define their core problem for their livelihoods
- 2) Let people define what problems are causing this core problem
- 3) Connecting the different problems
- 4) Let people define what the consequences/ effects are from the core problem
 - Using a big board and let people write down on yellow sticker papers/ drawing on the paper.

A Stakeholder Analysis: (natural forest and forest land)

- Defining who are the players involved (people, institutions, organizations) in the forest land allocation (land division) process & and what are their interests (why are they involved)
- Let people write down who they think are the different stakeholders involved within and outside the village
- Discuss it.
- Let people tell or write down what the roles and interests of the stakeholders are in the process of FLA (writing all down on a big piece of paper)

A Venn Diagram:

- Defining the relations between the villagers and different stakeholders
- People have to place the Stakeholder on the big paper indicating the relation between the village and other stakeholders by putting the stakeholders close to the villagers in case of a strong relation and further away in case of a weak or no relation.

In the end the meeting in both villages provided: a problem tree from the women and the men; within Cha Mang a Venn Diagram and within Ta Lu a description of the different stakeholders and their role within the FLA. Another limitation was the fact that the students making the stakeholder analysis with the villagers were focused on 'forest resources management' and not on livelihood changes and FLA. However the stakeholder analysis from Cha Mang gives some insights on the role of different stakeholders in Forest Resources Management as described in chapter 6.9.

Fortunately the problem trees gave me enough useful information and were done separately for women and men. See Appendix 1, 2, 3, and 4 for the different problem trees of Cha Mang and Ta Lu.

3.2.2 Materials

Although I planned to use my voice recorder instead of writing everything down, I have not used it. When my translator was busy translating there was enough time to write things down. Sometimes this delayed the interview a bit but most of the times it was working fine. Even during the participatory meetings the voice recorder was not used. Most of the times I have used my notebook to write everything down, at the same moment as the interview was conducted. Later on I typed everything on the laptop as soon as possible. Next to the notebook a logbook and a diary for personal use have been used to give a good overview of the different methods used and activities done.

3.3 Operationalised Concepts

The research was an actor-oriented research, focusing on the local Co Tu as the central actors. The main focus was put on their livelihoods, how their livelihoods are shaped and how they perceived the policies on land allocation and its effects. In order to get a good understanding of the perceptions, visions and opinions of the local Co Tu it is also important to understand what processes are going on, who is involved, what policies are there and what are the internal and external influences. In addition to get a clear image of how the Co Tu's livelihood is built up it is important to identify the different characteristics of their livelihoods. To be able to answer the central research question it is essential that this information gives us an idea about the livelihood outcomes. For this research objective the livelihood framework model as shown in the theoretical chapter is used. However since the model has its limitations, the research was not entirely based on the model, but the model was used as a tool to find the livelihood outcomes with the final data gathered in the research field. For the gathering of data it was very useful to focus on and try to identify key concepts to facilitate the division of information in different categories. The following concepts which have been derived from the livelihood framework have been used for this research:

Livelihood Strategies: A livelihood system consists out of patterns which are created by livelihood strategies of similar actors. People build their livelihood strategies on five fields that are referred to as 'capitals'. Though it can differ per context, they mostly consist out of the following capitals, also called 'assets': Human capital, Natural capital, Physical capital, Social capital and Financial capital and these are the capitals to be used for this research. The definitions used for the five capitals, were already given in box 1 in the theoretical chapter. The operationalization of the five capitals was loosely based on these definitions:

- **Human capital:** Access to labour resources, household members, skills, education, knowledge and information.

- **Natural capital:** Access to land, forest products, water and other environmental resources.
- **Physical capital:** Access to basic infrastructure (like transport, housing, water, energy, communications), tools and machinery, food stock or livestock, farm equipment and personal belongings.
- **Social capital:** Access to social resources (networks, membership of groups, relationships of trust and reciprocity, access to wider institutions of society) and relationships. These social relations can be between people or groups within the village but also between villagers and with external players. The social-cultural structure in the village is an important factor to focus on.
 - *Cultural Capital:* Though Culture as a capital was not used in the research, culture was discussed as a part of social capital, using Taylor's (1871/1958;p.1 in Kottak 2006) definition of culture in combination with the additional explanations of culture from Kottak as defined in the theoretical chapter and chapter 2 (2002 & 2006).
- **Financial capital:** Access to financial resources including money, savings, credits, remittances and pensions. These resources are closely related to labour.
- **Transforming Structures:** Can be specified as the levels of government and private sector. In this case the focus will be on the national, regional and local governments.
- **Transforming Processes:** Laws, policies, culture and institutions can include transforming processes. For this research the FLA policies are very important and the laws related to land-rights and natural resource use.
- **Vulnerabilities:** Can be divided into two groups namely: shocks and stresses.

Shocks and stresses can be described as follows

 - shocks: are mostly violent and unexpectedly.
 - Stresses: are less violent but the effect may last longer.

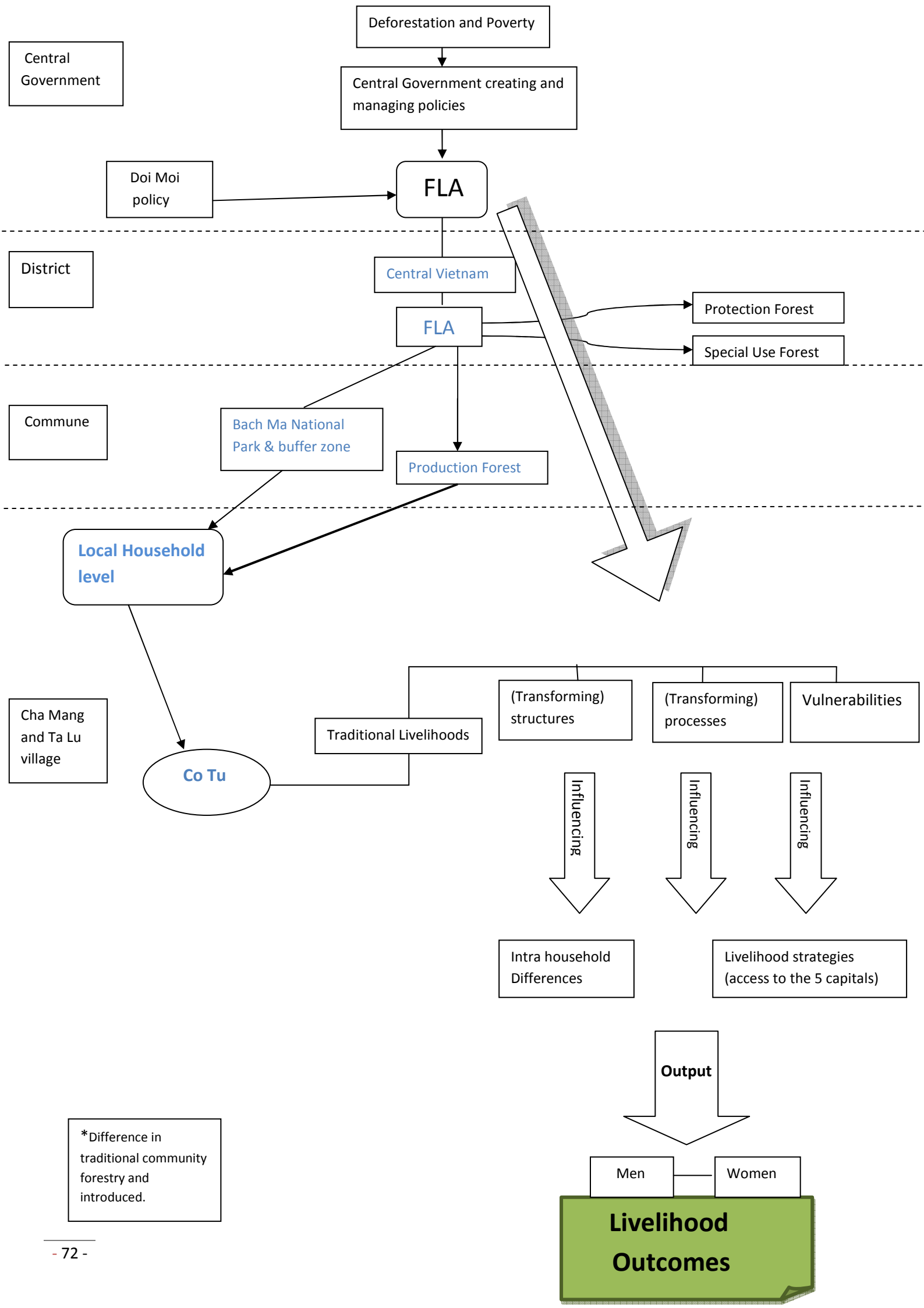
Vulnerabilities also included internal and external risks & high and low level risks.
- **Intra household gender differences:** this category is actually important to all the other ones. For all the other concepts it is important to look at the differences between

women and men and what are the underlying causes for these differences. For example if women have the same opportunities for access to land rights (physical capital) and to financial income (financial capital). Another example could be the vulnerability to shocks and stresses, is there a difference in vulnerability and the length of the effects? For measuring this I will make use of the gender analysis and look separately at all the different concepts.

- **Gender:** is the opposite of sex and is a social construction, something that is not biologically determined but is changeable and context specific. This social construction between 'men' and 'women' can be different over time and place in different cultural settings.
- **A Gender Analysis:** gives a better understanding of a societies division, by analyzing socially constructed differences related to gender roles and identities. Information to identify social inequalities, and gender in policies and programs can be gathered. This is important to see how gender can play a role in women's en men's living conditions, roles, behaviour and perceptions.

3.4 Conceptual model

See next page.



3.5 Limitations

One of the biggest limitations of this research was the subject itself. Observing and studying the livelihoods of a rural ethnic group in two villages and at the same time at the FLA and the different rules, regulations and key players was probably a bit too much for the short time period of three months. The FLA on its own is already quite a broad and difficult subject. Apart from the subject there were also some practical ‘research’ dilemmas.

Household surveys

Two students each went to one of the two research villages to conduct 10 household surveys, forming 20 household surveys together. Unfortunately I found out later on during the translation that no one wrote down on the surveys in which of the two villages the surveys were conducted. For this reason, the data from the 20 household surveys could only be used for general remarks and not for specific information to compare the two research villages.

Translation

Within Vietnam it is not easy to find someone who speaks good English. The HUAF University arranged us (me and the other students from the University of Utrecht) two students from the school of languages. My translator was a girl around my age whose vocabulary was quite broad but whose pronunciations were difficult for me to understand as was my English pronunciation for her. This led to quite some misunderstandings and miscommunications. The translator was also very concerned with her health and often not available because of physical complaints and study obligations. Aside from this, it was clear that she had a bias to Co Tu people living in the rural areas. Almost at the end of the research I had to change from translator because of her health problems. The second translator was also a girl. The fact that both translators were girls worked in my advantage, especially during the interviews with the women. The female respondents were more freely to speak about personal problems than with a male translator. The second translator showed a strong bias towards the Co Tu people too.

Distance

One of the biggest practical limitations was the distance of my place of residence to the research location. Since the road was going into the mountains and was under construction the motorbike was the only suitable way of transport. By motorbike it took us 2 hours to get to the location and 2 hours to get back to my place of residence. Because of heavy rainfall and wind in combination with the bad road it was too dangerous to visit the research location for a

period of two weeks. The reason for not staying in the Nam Dong district was: because I had to stay close to the HUAF University and the TBI office where I worked on my data and theory.

3.6 Supportive Organization: Tropenbos International

The organization Tropenbos International Vietnam (TBIV) was our supportive organization offering help and information during the research period. Tropenbos International (TBI) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in the Netherlands. It was established in 1986 in response to the ongoing concern about the disappearance and degradation of tropical rain forests all over the world. The idea was to mobilize the research capacity and knowledge of Dutch Universities, and it is initially focused on the establishment of research programs in a few countries in the tropical 'south'.

TBI Vision and goals

The main goal of TBI is to make good information available to forest actors in the partner countries for the use of creating and formulating policies and managing forest lands for conservation and sustainable development. Their main objective is to ensure that knowledge is used effectively in the formulation of good policies and for managing forest for conservation and sustainable development. In addition, their general mission is to improve tropical forest management to benefit the people, and conservation and sustainable development. So the general key issues are conservation, sustainable development and poverty. Knowledge and skills play a central role.

Tropenbos International Vietnam

TBI Viet Nam has implemented a project in cooperation with the Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAF) and the International Development Studies of Utrecht University (IDS/UU). The regional university lies in the north-central region of Vietnam and forms one of the strategic partners. The project goal as TBI describes it is; to enhance the capacity of staff and students in integrated, participatory socio-economic research and methodologies related to livelihood development and integrated natural resource management. The project links institutional strengthening with capacity building and socio-economic research.

The project is mainly focused on forest land allocation and provides a joint learning environment for Dutch and Vietnamese staff and student. Already 20 student and staff members of IDS/UU and HUAF university have done field research in the Thua Thien-Hue province. Also other disciplines have joined the research group. Adding up, a network has

been established with various members participating, including international senior experts, researchers, lectures and students from HUAF. These members can exchange knowledge, information, give each other feedback and cooperative working on topics of shared interest. The research opportunities for students and staff members are development-oriented, interdisciplinary and in an international context.

Green Corridor

Other organizations that are involved in the Thua Thien Hue province in forest management and livelihood development is the WWF and SNV in the project called ‘The green corridor project’. In June 2004, the Green Corridor project was established (see: www.huegreencorridor.org). The four year project was implemented by the WWF Vietnam program and Forest Protection Department of the Thua Thien Hue province, and supported by the World Bank - Global Environmental Facility (GEF) with co-funding from the Dutch Development Organizations (SNV), the People’s Committee of Thua Thien Hue Province, and WWF. The Green corridor is the area between Bach Ma National Park and Phong Dien Nature Reserve in Thua Thien Hue Province in Central Vietnam. The forest in this area has been identified as one of the highest conservation priorities in Vietnam. The aim of the project is to reinforce the capacity of local stakeholders and to conserve the landscape of the Green corridor area. The project will apply a landscape-level approach, identifying areas of biodiversity and forest conservation importance. The project aims are divided into four main projects:

- 1. Strengthening conservation and illegal activity prevention**
- 2. Forest landscape restoration and supporting local communities**
- 3. Capacity building and awareness raising**
- 4. Forest landscape monitoring and evaluation**

The project mentions the importance of the local communities and their role in forest management. One of the activities the project focuses on is ‘supporting forest land allocation processes’. The project is also working together with the 661 program to restore degraded forest (Hue Green Corridor Project 2010).

3.7 Research Area

The area where the research was carried out is located in the Nam Dong district in Thua Thien Hue Province. The T.T.Hue province lies in the central coast area of Vietnam and is divided into nine administrative districts. One of those districts is the Nam Dong district which is shown on map 3.1 Forest and forestry land occupies 72.12 % of the total physical area of the province (Zuilhof 2008; Hoang 2009; 22). The province consists mainly out of mountainous areas reaching heights of 1500 meter in the western part. In 2008 FLA had taken place in four districts in the province: Nam Dong, Aluoi, Phong Dien and Phu Loc (Zuilhof 2008).

Map 3.1 Thua Thien Hue province and its districts



Source: Wunder, The and Ibarra, 2005 in Zuilhof 2008

The Nam Dong district is located in the South West of Thua Thien Hue province, 65 km away from Hue city, as you can see on the map. There is one town (Khe Tre) and there are ten communes with a total of 67 villages in the district. The town is quiet small and has some shops and places to eat. The district consists of 21,438 people who can be divided into two different ethnic groups, namely; the Co Tu and the Kinh. The Co Tu make up about 41% of the total population living. They have been resettled by the government after 1975 and used to life in the mountainous forests. Also the Kinh people have been resettled, but they came from the coastal areas (Zuilhof 2008; Bayrak 2010).

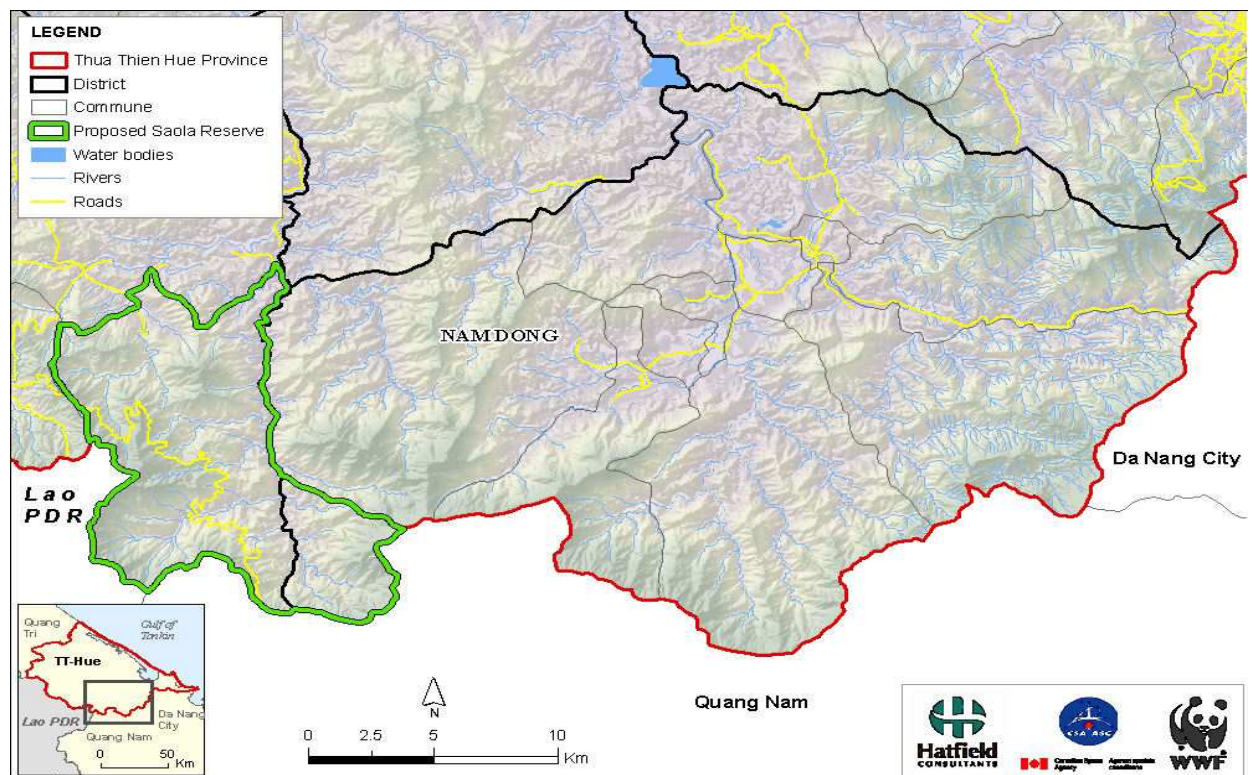
Nam Dong is considered to be one of the poorest districts in the area with an estimated annual income of \$156 per capita according to the commune people's committee (CPC) of the Thuong Nhat commune. One of the reasons that could be part of the explanation, mentioned by Zuilhof (2008) is the fact that around 5% of the district land is agricultural land


while the biggest part of the population is dependent on agriculture. The lack of agricultural land in combination with the yearly occurring natural disasters can make it hard for people to pursue their livelihoods while trying to climb out of poverty. On the other hand, the district is for a large part covered with forest; the total land area was 65.051,8 ha in 2008 of which 53.777,5 ha was forest land. Close to 84% of this land is classified as natural forest by the FPU in Nam Dong (Zuilhof 2008). The tropical evergreen monsoon forest and the subtropical evergreen monsoon forest are the most common in the district. Nam Dong has a good infrastructure and transport system compared to other mountainous districts (Bayrak 2010).


From 1991 till present, the forest land allocation has been implemented in Nam Dong. It took many years before people actually received the Red Books and the allocation of natural forest started from 2003 onwards (Zuilhof 2008).

Within the district the Thuong Nhat and situated next to it the Thuong Lo communes are located. Two villages located in both communes are the focus of this research, which are Ta Lu village in Thuong Nhat commune and Cha Mang village in the Thuong Lo commune. Before going into detail about the research results I will first give some general information about these commune and the two villages. Map 3.2 shows the two communes within the Nam Dong district.

Map 3.2: Research Communes in Nam Dong District



 = Thuong Nhat Commune

 = Thuong Lo commune

Source: Huegreencorridor.org, 2010

Ta Lu village

Ta Lu village is the 4th village in the Thuong Nhat commune in the Nam Dong district. The commune has 7 different villages. Ta Lu village consists of 49 households and according to the Village Leader there are only Co Tu households and no Kinh households in the village. Within Ta Lu, nineteen household interviews have been conducted; containing interviews with twelve men and seven women, next to those, interviews have been taken with the village and the commune leader who are both men.

Interviewed: 21 villagers of which 12 men and 7 women, the commune leader and the village leader.

Cha Mang Village

Cha Mang village is the 5th village in the Thuong Lo commune within the Nam Dong district. The village consists of 68 households of which 20 belong to the Kinh group and 48 households to the Co Tu. The village leader is a men and his assistant is a women. Within Cha Mang, 20 villagers have been interviewed of which nine are men and eleven are women. Aside from those, interviews have been done with the commune leader, the village leader and his assistant.

Interviewed: 22 villagers of which 9 men and 11 women, 1 commune leader, 1 village leader and 1 assistant of the village leader

Next to the interviews in the village, information has been gathered during interviews with the Forest Protection Unit, the District department of natural resources and environment and the vice director of the management board of Bach Ma National park. In addition information has been gathered during informal conversations with Mr Nghi from Tropenbos International. Also ten questionnaires were filled in per village, 20 in total.

Until now, 43 semi-structured interviews have been conducted with villagers and nine with leaders and officials.

Research findings

Chapter 4: Most important Forest Land Allocation policies

There are several laws regulating the Forest Land Allocation (FLA) policies, these different laws also have various articles and decrees making it difficult to give a short overview of all the related FLA policies. For that reason only the most important FLA policies will be discussed in this chapter. What can be considered as ‘most important’ is based on the information from books and articles as well as the opinion of the households from the two research villages and information from Tropenbos International (TBI) Vietnam. Since most of the villagers did not have much knowledge of the FLA policies, which will be elaborated on later, this chapter is mainly derived from theory rather than empirical data.

4.1 From central management to social forestry

“Forest land allocation and forest leasing to individual households and organizations for permanent forestry purposes are a vital policy by the Party and State. This policy is aimed at carrying out the forestry socialization program on forest protection and development, fostering the strength of the whole society, and integrating forest protection with economic development and poverty alleviation” (TBI 2008).

This was said by Mister Hua Duc Nhi during the Opening Speech at the Vietnam national forum on forestland allocation. The speech not just indicates that the FLA policies are formed by the state. It also emphasizes the main objectives of the state, namely: the protection of forests; increasing the contribution of forestry to the economy; and improving the livelihoods of people living in or near the forests. Objectives, which can be linked to different interests: forests can increase the national income when the contribution of forest leads to economic gains. In addition, the protection of the forest can help achieve the long-term goals of disaster reduction, watershed protection and the reduction of erosion. Furthermore, by protecting the forest and the conservation of biodiversity, the Vietnamese Government may acquire financial support from international organizations committed to the promotion of forest protection. Moreover, programs committed to reduce poverty, linked to improve livelihoods, became internationally popular with the Millennium Goals. Besides, the reduction of rural poverty can reduce the need of the Vietnamese Government to provide aid to rural areas, which indirectly can increase the support for the Government and indirectly the national economy (Zuilhof 2008).

Zuilhof (2008) states that even though forest land allocation has been decentralized to the provincial and district level, forest land allocation takes place within the national policy framework of the Ministry of Agriculture. However Hoang (2009) explains that the policies are made up out of all the written documents from the Party, the National Assembly and the Government at both the central and local levels, and so the policies are not only formed by the Ministry of Agriculture. It is important to keep in mind these different political powers at the national, provincial and district levels. For more information on the different stakeholders involved in the policy formulation see Zuilhof (2008) and Hoang (2009).

4.2 The Land Law and Forest Protection Law

As discussed in the regional chapter, the Doi Moi policies have led to many changes in the Vietnamese society. This was also the case for Forest management, shifting from a traditional approach with central management by the state to a social forestry approach with participation of other non-forestry organizations. This shift occurred with the implementation of the first 1987 Land Law, which was replaced and revised in 1993, 1998, 2001 and in 2003 by the national assembly, and the Forest protection and development law in 1991 which was revised in 2004. Eventually, the Land Law was more focused on the transfer of land to individuals, households and organizations than in 1993 (Hoang 2009; UN Report 2005; de Jong, Sam and Hung 2006; p.38). According to Tropenbos International in 2008 the latest revision of the forest protection law in 2004 considered forest as a property that could be recycled and developed. The 2004 Forest protection and development law was focused on protection of natural forests and forest plantation lands that are established by the state budget and considered as state property. This is why the state is seen as the one responsible for managing and making decisions in relation to these forests and production forests classified as plantations. However, TBI (2008) described the land law of 2003 as the most relevant legal document indicating land related regulations. The Government developed nine 'Decrees' to guide the law enforcement. Around 58 documents were issued about the instruction of the land law implementation with about 142 articles related to the land law system (TBI 2008). The land law states that land belonged to all the people and has to be managed by the State. The state provided the land use rights to target groups through the land allocation program (TBI 2008; De Jong, Sam and Hung 2006). De Jong, Sam and Hung (2006) state that the land law of 2003 defines the rights of land users in terms of land use, exchange, transfer or inheritance of land use rights, or use of the land as collateral for bank loans. Production and protection forest are allocated to Households and Individuals. In addition the state leases forest and forest plantation land to other economic sectors for production and business objectives (De Jong, Sam and Hung 2006;38).

According to TBI (2008) the 2003 Land Law is characterized by the following features: (p.10)

- a) Land tenure should belong to the people and the state should be the representative to manage the land:

Though the people received the land rights, it is the State that is the most powerful agency and makes the eventual land decisions based on its specific functions and roles. In addition the State also regulates the benefits derived from the land through financial policies.

- b) The state has the right to allocate, lease and change land use purposes:

Land allocation was done by State agencies through administrative decisions on allocation of land use rights to people with demand for land and the State also leased land based upon a contract. The law described two land allocation options which the State could use depending on the specific land use demands and characteristics of each land type; the State can allocate land with or without collecting fees and land use fees can be paid on an annual or periodical basis.

- c) Land re-collection, compensation, and resettlement for impacted people:

In the land law, cases were divided in cases in which the State could re-collect land, compensate and conduct re-settlement for people whose land was re-collected, and cases in which the state can re-collect land without compensation. Within the land law a legal foundation was defined for land re-collection.

- d) Financial policies

These policies include: ‘Policies on payment for land use, land leasing, and tax for transference of land use right, compensation in case the State recollected land, tax for agricultural land use, financial policies in estate business.’’ The land law also regulated the rights and responsibilities of land users; land price, land registration, issuance of land use right certificate, registration for conducting estate business, and control and/or management of estate business activities’’ (TBI 2008).

4.3 Target Groups under the Land Law and Forest Protection Law:

There are different groups to whom forest and forest plantation land is being allocated, for the context of this thesis we will mainly focus on the household and individual level since this is

already a very extended subject. The various groups that receive land according to the 2004 law are:

- FLA to the local community
- FLA to economic entities for forest production
- Forest and FLA to administrative forest organizations
- Forest and FLA to overseas Vietnamese people
- FLA to Household and individual level.

(TBI 2008)

Under the land law of 2003, the State allocated mostly production forests (plantation land) and protection forest to households and individuals. This group is allowed to practice agriculture and forestry activities without the obligation to share in their benefits. In this case, the land allocated will contain a maximum of 30 ha and the time frame of the land use is maximum 50 years (De Jong, Sam and Hung 2006;38; TBI 2008). When the land is containing more than 30 ha the user of the extra land is obligated to lease the land by paying a certain amount of money on a yearly basis. TBI (2008) described barren and hilly land as an unused land category which should not be included in the land allocated to the households as forest production land. After the period of 50 years households can ask the state to extend their period of land use again on the condition that the household has followed the rules of the land law (UN report 2005; TBI 2008). Also within the forest protection and development law of 2004 it was indicated that the State allocated production forests without giving fees for households when they live and conduct forest production on the allocated land for permanent purposes (TBI 2008). Furthermore the land law regulated that households allocated with production forest land classified as plantation land have the right to exploit forest products as regulated, transfer, inherit, mortgage, lease and use the land use right certificate for joint business activities (TBI 2008; De Jong, Sam and Hung 2006;38).

However the forest protection and development law of 2004 indicates that households that are allocated with forest plantation land that do not invest in plantation land are only allowed to use the land, and in case of allocated natural forest households are only allowed to use the forest instead of becoming an owner of the land and forest. In addition, the National Assembly pronounced by the end of 2003 that farmers who are in the possession of less than 30ha of land and who are investing in a forest plantation do not have to pay agricultural land

use taxes (de Jong, Sam and Hung 2006; 31). In other words, people are obliged to plant trees when they receive the forest land and to invest in forest plantation (TBI 2008; 12).

Mister Nghi the program director of TBI Vietnam comments that when people do not have the money to invest in plantations they can get a loan from the bank or they can choose to refuse the land (Nghi TBI during conversation 28-02).

For a clear overview of the FLA policies and procedures for the Household and individual level see table 4.1 and 4.2.

Table 4.1: Overview of FLA policies for HH's and individuals

Criteria	Land Law	Forest protection and development
Allocation form	Allocation of production forest land, and protection forest land without fees.	Allocation of protection forest and production forest without fees.
Forest/land area	Land area allocated to each HH should not exceed 30 ha for each type of land. If allocated land exceeds 30 ha, the increased area of land should be leased. - Use of barren and hilly land was encouraged	- Forest area allocated to each HH should not exceed 30 ha for each type of forest. - Allocated forest area exceeding 3 ha should be leased
Period	- Production forest land: 50 years – possible extension - Protection forest land: stable and permanent use.	- Production forest: 50 years – possible extension - Protection forest: stable and permanent use
Forest status		No identification (rich, medium and poor)
Relevant rights	- Common rights - Other rights included transferring, offering, leasing, mortgage, and conducting joint business activities based upon the value of land use rights; HHs were allowed to inherit.	- Transferring, offering, leasing, mortgage, conducting joint business activities - If production forest were natural forests, forest recipients were only allowed to mortgage and conduct joint business based upon the added value

		of forest use right. - Forest recipients were allowed to inherit.
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Source: TBI, 2008

Table 4.2: FLA procedures to HHs and individuals

Procedure	Land Law	Forest protection and development
Step 1	HHs prepare and submit the registration form to Commune People's Committee (CPC)	HHs prepare and submit the registration form to CPC
Step 2	CPC revise and include the ideas of HHs in the papers, which were then sent to the land registration section (under the district office of natural resource and environment)	CPC revise, approve and send relevant papers to authorized agencies to advise DPC in forest management.
Step 3	The land registration section checks the administrative land maps, makes copies of land related papers (administrative land maps; location; land plot), and sends them to the district office of natural resource and environment	Authorized agency at district level undertakes a field check, makes field report and sends all relevant papers to DPC (administrative land maps, version VN 2000, scale of 1/5000; 1/1000; and 1/25000); location, forest plot.
Step 4	The district office of natural resource and environment checks and sends related papers to DPC for making decision on FLA and land use right certificate	DPC decision for forest land allocation
		Implementation of FLA decision
	50 working days	36 working days

Source: TBI 2008

At the beginning of 2007 the Prime Minister approved the National Forest Development Strategy for the period of 2006-2020. The strategy emphasized the important role of forest and forest plantation land allocation to households, individuals, and communities to use the forest permanently. For a clear oversight of the different legal documents on FLA see 4.3 from TBI.

Table 4.3: The existing legal documents on FLA

Order	Name of legal documents	Title
I.Law		
1.1	Land law issued in 2003	Law 13/2003/QH 11 approved by National Assembly XI, meeting section 4 dated 26 November 2003, including 7 chapters, 146 points. (The land law was revised five times, in 1998, 1993, 2001 and 2003)
1.2	Forest protection and development law issued in 2004	Law 29/2005/QH11 replaced the forest protection and development law issued in 1991
1.3	Civil law issued in 2005	
2.Decree by the Government		
2.1	Decree 135/2005/ND-CP dated 8 November 2005	“Allocation of agricultural, forest land and wetland for aquaculture production in SFE’s (replaced Decree 01/CP dated 04 January 1995)
2.2	+ Decree 181/2004/ND dated 29/10.2004 on Implementation of land law (in 2004)”	“Decree on implementation of land law (in 2004)”, replaced Decrees 163/1999/ND-CP dated 16 November 1999 and other related Decree on FLA for HHs, communities for permanent use purpose in forest production, and replaced FLA related Decrees)
3.Decision by the prime minister		
3.1	+Decision 202/TTg dated 2 may 1992	“Contract based forest allocation for protection and forest rehabilitation.”
3.2	+Decision 178/2004/QD-TTg dated 112/11/2001	“Right, responsibilities of HH’s, communities in FLA”.
3.3	+Decision 186/2006/QD-TTg dated 14 August 2006	“Issuance of forest management regulations” (existing and replaced the regulation on management of special use and protection and production forests. This decree was issued at the time of Decree 08/2001/QD-TTg dated 11 January 2001
3.4	+Decision 304/2005/QD-TTg dated 23 November 2005	FLA was trialed in communities, HHs in Central Highlands, which were the target groups of Decision 132 and 134
3.5	+ Other Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of contents, policies on FLA under programme 327and project 661 (shorten statement: forest allocation for protection, protection fees of VND 50.000/ha). - Regulations on land management according to the SFE’s reform.
4.Circular by MARD, Ministerial level agencies		
4.1	+ Circular 102/2006/TT-BBN dated 113 November 2006” by MARD.	Guidance on implementation of some term/points under the Decree 135/2005/ND-CP dated 08 November 2005 on ‘Allocation of agriculture, production forest land and wetland for aquaculture production development in SFE’s”
5.Policies on FLA issued by PPCs and applied within the Province.		

Source: TBI 2008

Forest and Forestry land

To avoid confusion later on in this thesis it is necessary to explain the difference within the policies between natural forest land and forest plantation land. The Land Law only speaks of one term for forestry land, however there are two different terms for land, one is intended for planting and one for rehabilitation. The one term referred to as natural forest land is only given to household groups, villages or communities and not as private property whereas forestry land, meant for the planting of trees, is given to both non-forestry organizations as individual households (Hoang 2009). Within this thesis the natural forest land will be referred to as natural forest and the forestry land will be referred to as forest plantation land.

4.4 Programs and Projects

From 1993 until 2003, 628,900 land use right certifications were issued of which 515,000 certifications were for households and for a total area of 3,546,500 ha in Vietnam (35 % of total forestry land area). The devolution of natural forests started later than the forestry land devolution. From June 2001, 669,750 ha of natural forest have been allocated to the villages for management. The devolution of this land took place through project and program related mechanisms, mostly funded by international organizations according to Hoang (2009). The United Nations World Food (PAM) Program has been one of those internationally funded programs in Vietnam for over 24 years (De Jong, Sam and Hung 2004; Hoang 2009). Aside from internationally funded programs there are national programs reflecting the attention given to forest rehabilitation on a national scale. The National Assembly and the Government have approved the national objectives that came forward out of these programs. Two principal national programs are two prime ministerial Decisions: 327 and 661 from 1993 and 1998. These decisions have resulted in efforts to restore degraded forest lands. Decision 661 formed the beginning of the 5 million ha reforestation program, explained further on (De Jong, Sam and Hung 2004; Hoang 2009; UN report 2005). According to Hoang (2009;3) all the forest restoration projects in Vietnam after 1993 are under these two programs. The internationally funded World Food Program and the 327 and 661 projects are together the main projects in Vietnam.

PAM

The World Food Program, from now on referred to as 'PAM', became active in Vietnam in 1975; about US\$500 million was invested in Vietnam. PAM's three main domains in Vietnam were forestry, irrigation and primary health care. The forestry program started in 1975 and ended in 2000 (de Jong, Sam Hung 2006; de Jong et.al. 2004). In total 6 forestry projects

were implemented costing \$160 million. The money was used to supply food to rural communities, provide equipment and materials for forest plantation land, construction of forest roads, to organize fire protection teams and improve the forest extension services. The focus of the program was on demonstration plots and agro-forestry production on steep slopes. Farmers were supported in selecting their own crops and species for planting by looking at the market potential of the different species (de Jong et.al 2004). In order to be of assistance to the PAM project, the Government allocated forest land to farmers while the project supported household investment in the farmers' land. (de Jong et al. 2004;5)

Decision 327

Program 327 (1993-1998) named after the decision 327 of the Prime Minister, involved policies and objectives in utilization of barren land and hills, alluvial coastal areas and water surface areas. The 327 program was implemented nationwide within the domains of forestry, agriculture, aquaculture, fixed cultivation and resettlement and new economic zones. Within the forestry domain the program was centered on re-greening barren land and hills, including protection of existing forest areas, natural regeneration and forest plantations (de Jong et.al. 2004; UN report 2005). In 1994 the program shifted its focus primarily to forest protection in critical areas, and areas where slash and burn cultivation continues, which is mostly the case in the Northern and Central Highlands. Re-greening of barren land and hills activities were mainly implemented in the mountainous and midland regions. From 1995 onwards the 327 program started to narrow its objectives and concentrated more and more on forestry. The main focus was put on conserving existing protection and special use forest, and the rehabilitation of special use forests through natural regeneration and new forest plantation (de Jong et. al. 2004). The objectives were pursued in the 5 Million Hectare Reforestation Program (5MHRP). Most of the funding for Program 327 came from Vietnam State funds. These investments changed in their objectives: whereas initially international sponsors primarily engaged in direct investment in timber production, later on they started to financially support forest reforestation and protection of special use forests and protection forests, and to support social forestry activities. (de Jong et.al. 2004; P5)

The Five Million Hectare Reforestation Program (5MHRP)

The Five Million Hectare Reforestation Program (5MHRP) was launched in 1998, after receiving the approval by the Parliament and Prime Minister with Decision No. 661/QĐ-TT. The initial aim was to increase the forest cover from 9 million ha, forming 28 percent of forest cover, to 14, 3 million hectare of forest cover. Two million hectares of this planned increase were meant for production forest, two million for protection and special use forest and one million hectares was planned for perennial tree crops(de Jong et.al. 2004;5). The

project was planned for the period of 1998 to 2010. Many reforestation projects are referred to as Decision 661 projects because of the ministerial Decision. The three main objectives of the program were:

1. To protect and rehabilitate watershed functions and to mitigate soil erosion and water discharge fluctuations (environmental).
2. Improve the role of the forest sector in overall economic growth (economic).
3. Promote livelihood security among the most vulnerable groups in the society (social) (Sunderlin 2005b; de Jong et.al. 2004;5).

4.5 The most important FLA policies in the Nam Dong district

The Nam Dong district is located in the Thua Thien Hue province which belongs to the North Coastal Central region of Vietnam. The forest and forestry land in the province holds 72,12% of the total land area of the province. According to Hoang (2009) 14,229 households were allocated forestry land between 1997 and 2002, a total of 18,085 ha of forest plantation land and 4,800 ha of natural forest was devolved to villages for management. Most of the natural forest and forestry land area was allocated through program or projects funding arrangements such as the global Program on Forests (PROFOR), the Project of Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) for Thua Thien Hue Province (FORHUE-SNV), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Finland rural development project and the Social Forestry Support Program (Hoang 2009).

Within the research villages, allocation of forest land has taken place, though not every villager has received the Red Books yet. We can however assume that every respondent is aware that land allocation has taken place in their own village. Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents were not highly informed on the policies but they were informed about the Red Books and some general rules on land use. Most of the information the respondents gave during the interviews was related to the implementation process of the policies rather than on the policies themselves. The following part of the chapter is based on the information the respondents gave mostly when they were asked about the FLA policies and the Red Books.

In the following section the opinions and knowledge of several concerned local parties on forest land allocation are described, based upon interviews and conversations. Those parties are:

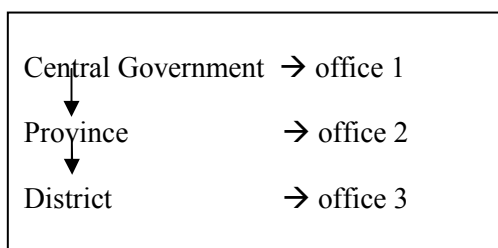
- representing the district management level: the vice-manager protection forest

- representing the local management level: commune and village officials
- representing the household level: villagers

4.5.1. Forest Protection Unit & SUB District Department of Natural Resources and the environment

Within every district there is a forest protection unit (FPU), the district of FPU is steered by the Province, which gets its instructions from the central Government. Each of these three Governmental scales has an office as shown in figure 4.1. The district and office two and three have meetings once a week. The District discusses their plans with the Province. According to the Vice manager of forest protection of the district and manager forestry management the natural forest is divided into four sub parts. There are four offices and every office is held responsible for another part of the forest within the district. Those 4 offices are concerned with Bach Ma national Park, the Households, Forestry Management and the private individuals. The FPU of Nam Dong district has around 22 Forest Rangers also referred to as safeguards. According to the Vice-manager Forest protection of the district some of the staff members of the office originate from the commune, and have been introduced with the office to learn how to teach or train the villagers in protecting the forest. The function of the forest rangers is patrolling the natural forest. The households are allowed to take out non timber forest products (NTFP's) to earn some money but in general they are not allowed to cut trees. The natural forest is given directly to the village and people from another village are not allowed into this forest. He mentions there are no Red Books for the natural forest.

Figure 4.1 Decentralizing responsibilities



The Vice Manager of the Department of Natural Resource and Environment (Donre) explained that the Red Book can be seen as a certificate to prove ownership, meaning that someone can use and own the land. This includes land and materials on that land. Even though they speak of 'ownership', the Government can still claim back the land if they have a special interest in it. In this case the Government has to pay the owner or give him or her a different piece of land. Another character of the Red Book is that both men and women can

have their name in the Red Book. Some of the married couples in the two villages had indeed both their names in the Red Book. The costs or fee for the Red Book differs per length and purpose of the land. Sometimes villagers even have to pay for the commune to measure their land. According to the Vice manager of Donre people inherit their field and plantation land, but when this is not the case they have to buy or rent it. From 2004 the rules have changed and the district no longer divides the land anymore. People could receive land from the commune by getting their permission. Before this, the land was divided according to the size of the HH's.

Unfortunately an interview with an official of the Sub Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) at the district level was refused.

4.5.2. Implementing the FLA policies at commune level

According to the commune leader of the Thuong Lo commune (Cha Mang village), all the villagers in the commune have land rights and all the families received 3 Redbooks; one for garden land; one for forest plantation land and one for field land. Later he corrects himself explaining that not every family has 'field land', while telling at the same time that every family received 1.500 m² of field land and 1 hectare of forest plantation land. According to the commune leader the division of the land was very equal, which has led to some conflicts in the beginning because some families used to have more land and some used to have less land than before while everyone is getting the same size now. This is in contrast with the words of the assistant of the Cha Mang village leader; claiming that the size of land a family gets depends on the quality of the land. For example, when the quality of the land is bad or it is in on a steep, the family will receive a bigger piece of land. Also, the people in Cha Mang village only have garden land and a small piece of forest plantation land and they do not get field land, she said. It is debatable whether the commune leader is twisting the truth or if he is badly informed about the land rights in Cha Mang village. Both agree that after the late 90's the local authorities collected the land of the villages all together and gave it to the commune; the commune on its turn followed the instructions of the authority above them and the land was being divided.

Also within the Thuong Nhat commune (Ta Lu village), the village leader of Ta Lu village argues that the division of land is based on terrain features and that families have no red books for the natural forest land. The traditional leader of Ta Lu village states that the land is equally divided by looking at the situation of the household. The division differs per type of land and goes as follows;

For the garden land; dependent on how much land the household can manage.

For the field land; dependent on the size of the household (each member gets a certain size)

For the forest plantation land; dependent on the amount of land a household can manage

As a forest management leader, the village leader explains that he trains people to manage the natural forest; he has divided a group of his village people into 4 groups; of which each group patrols the natural forest for one week every month. Their duty is to find the people who cut down the trees and punish them based on how they destroyed the forest. The fine can range from 500 to 2 million VND. In this way they might still feel responsible for the natural forest even though they are lacking the official ownership over it. According to the Thuong Nhat commune leader, the so called '4th' and '5th' village in the commune are more developed in forest land allocation than the other villages, of which research village Ta Lu is one. Within the Thuong Nhat commune not every family received a red book for the field land but most families did receive the red book for forest plantation land and all received the red book for garden land. During conversations with the commune leader of Thuong Nhat it came to the fore that some households in the villages had land allocated by the commune to them without having a red book. In this case after about 5 years they have to return the land to the commune. The commune leader of Thuong Lo commune states there are no strict rules for the use of the forest plantation land, except that after the crops are harvested the farmers have to burn the land following the boundaries. Aside from that, after 50 years the farmer has to turn back the land to the commune. Later they can receive the land back again in stages of 50 years.

4.5.3. Implementing the FLA policies at the household level

Since most of the villagers were more familiar with the Red Books than the FLA policies, the information gained from the interviews is not only focused on the forest plantation land but as well on the garden and agricultural land, given that these are also part of the Red Book system.

What part of the FLA policies the villagers perceived as most important, was defined by the different subjects they mentioned most regarding the land, the Red Books and the rules about the natural forest. Foremost, people are aware that it is not allowed to move around anymore after having received their piece of land. Slash and burn activities are no longer permitted and the Government instructed people where to live during the 90's. When people were asked what kind of rules existed about the use of the Red Books, many either did not know what rules there are or they thought that there are no rules at all. In some cases villagers mentioned the rule that they could only keep the land for 50 years, which is the

case with forest plantation land, while the field and garden land can be kept for permanent use. However other people in Ta Lu and Cha Mang said they could keep the field land for 5 years before they have to give it back. After this period the Government takes the land back and divides it again. The Government makes the policy but it is the commune that implements the policy on a local level. Other villagers mentioned they have to grow Rubber and Acacia trees, although it did not become clear whether they were given the option or advice to grow them or if it was obligatory to grow these kinds of trees. The answers seemed to differ from person to person. One more rule that was clear in both villages is that the hunting for animals and cutting of trees is no longer allowed. A number of villagers even mentioned that it was no longer permitted to collect non timber forest products (NTFP's) in the natural forest. Yet, it was still approved to get dry wood from the natural forest and in some cases they can get permissions to get wood.

“From the natural forest, we get dry branches there. One time a year the commune tells us we can cut a certain amount of trees in the natural forest.” (men from Ta Lu).

When people in the village feel they need more wood than they are allowed to cut they can make a proposal on paper and hand it in at the commune. When the commune agrees, they are permitted to cut more trees. Responsibility for the forest is mostly for the forest rangers and the Forest Protection Unit (FPU). The Forest rangers are the ones that should control and regulate the rules regarding the use of the natural forest. Their role is to protect the forest, patrol, look if people are cutting trees or are involved in any illegal activities and if so to punish them. It was mentioned by a couple of people that the severity of the punishment is often dependent on the relation between the ranger and the person caught. An example was given where the forest rangers would allow their family to cut trees without informing anyone.

Support

With the implementation of the FLA policies it became possible to borrow money at the bank for those who hold a Red Book. The loans are given to people who want to invest the money in their land. For example the money can be used to buy new seeds or chemical fertilizer. When someone can not pay back the loan to the bank the bank or the Government can take a person's Red Book until the debt is repaid.

An important part of the FLA policies and projects in Vietnam and in the Nam Dong district in this case, is making people aware of forest conservation and trying to make people feel more responsible for the land and the forest. One of the ways the Government is trying to achieve these goals is through different projects and organizations that come to the villages

and organize meetings to spread knowledge and give information. Besides giving information, some of the projects also offer support by giving loans, seeds, trees, fertilizer, etc. One of those projects often mentioned is the WB3 project from the World Bank. In Cha Mang seven of the 20 people interviewed mentioned the WB3 project, while only two people mentioned it during the interview in Ta Lu village. This could mean that the project was more active in Cha Mang village than in Ta Lu village. In many of these interviews people mentioned that one had to grow rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*) or acacia (*Robinia Pseudoacacia*) trees to get involved in the WB3 project. In numerous cases, households borrow money to be able to grow rubber or acacia trees. The project provides the villagers with seeds to grow trees and NPK fertilizer and tells them how to grow and how to use the fertilizer. Eventually the villagers have to pay everything back. A couple of people joined the project because it gave them the right to a RB for their forest plantation land.

Limitations

There were several problems mentioned about the FLA Policies. First of all, to get a Red Book the families have to wait until someone from the commune comes by to measure the land. Next, the family has to wait for the commune to hand over their Red Book. Some people had to wait for over 4 years to get the Red Book and several families in both villages are still waiting for it. Second of all, according to several villagers they had to pay a lot of money to get a Red Book. In most cases the family's financial status was for them the main reason not to get a Red book. One of the Professors of the Huaf University held that this is not according to the rules that states people have to receive the RB without any payment. During the interviews, some people also mentioned they had to pay taxes for the land, others have not heard about taxes and some said there are taxes but they never paid it. Further, the traditional leader of Ta Lu village explains that the Co Tu population cannot understand hundred percent of the Government policies. Nonetheless, the Co Tu people in both villages understood that they have the right to use, give and sell the land and grow on it whatever they want although the Government can tell them what trees they should grow. This, however, only accounts for the garden, field and forest (plantation) land whereas the natural forest is not perceived by the villagers as their possession, even though the village had a Red Book for it. This is because of the strict regulations from the FPU and the rangers. Nevertheless one of the older farmers in Ta Lu apparently knew that the Natural Forest was given to the village. The village is divided into two groups, and everyone is responsible for the protection of this piece of forest.

Conclusion

In this chapter it became clear that a shift has taken place in forest management from a traditional approach with a central management by the state to a social forestry approach with

participation of other non-forestry organizations. When the Vietnamese Government started to create the FLA policies they had three main objectives in mind: the protection of forests, increasing the contribution of forestry to the economy and improving the livelihoods of people living in or near the forest. The most important laws were the Land Law, last revised in 2004, and the Forest Protection and Development Law, last revised in 2004. Together these two laws have formed the basis of the FLA policies. After several revisions the Land Law was most focused on the transfer of land to individuals and organizations', stating that land belonged to all the people but has to be managed by the state. The rights of land users were defined in terms of land use, exchange, transfer or inheritance of land use rights, or the use of land as collateral for bank loans. Under this law, the State allocated mostly plantation forests and protection forest to households and individuals, which can be used for a maximum of 50 years. The forest protection and development law focused more on the protection of natural forest and forest plantation land established by the state and considered as state property. Individuals and households have the right to use, sell, or lease their land. However, they do not have the full owner rights since the state has the right to allocate, lease and change land use purposes and thus the state keeps the control and management over the land. The commune is responsible for implementing the policy on a local level. There seems to be so much inconsistency in the explanations of the village leader, commune leaders and the FPU and Sub Donre officials about the way land is being divided and allocated, showing a lack of clarity on the implementation process in both villages.

For the villagers themselves the most obvious rules were: they can keep the forest plantation land for a period of 50 years, while the field and garden land can be kept for permanent use, it is allowed to take out non timber forest products, although there remains some confusion on this, and hunting animals and cutting trees in the natural forest it is no longer allowed. The Forest rangers are the ones that should control and regulate the rules regarding the use of the natural forest. The villagers land rights are defined in the Red Book, in which both the names of the husband and wife of a household can be written down nowadays.

5. The contemporary livelihoods of Co Tu men and women

As described and explained in the theory at the beginning of this thesis, the livelihood framework is used as a theoretical basis to gather information. The question list (see appendix 5) has been built up out of the five capitals, also known as 'livelihood strategies'. Aside from the five capitals the questions were focused on the key concepts derived from the livelihood framework as described in the operationalization part of the methodological chapter. Since the five different capitals in the livelihood framework can be perceived as mutually reinforcing,

all of them are included in the research. However, most attention is given to the natural and physical capital since the focus of this thesis lies on the impact of the FLA policies. Before discussing the impact of FLA in detail, some general information about the location and populations of both villages will be given.

5.1. The research villages

Cha Mang, Thuong Lo commune

Cha Mang village is the 5th village in the Thuong Lo commune within the Nam Dong district. The Thuong Lo commune lies closest to the village of Nam Dong and the ‘big’ road, leading to the town of Nam Dong and to the main road which leads to the city of Huế. The village lies at the border of Bach Ma national park, close to the forest and the Perfume River. The village consists of 68 households of which 20 belong to the Kinh ethnic group and 48 households to the indigenous Co Tu. Within Cha Mang, 20 villagers have been interviewed of which nine are men and eleven are women. Aside from those, interviews have been done with the commune leader, the village leader and his assistant. For more details on this, see the methodological chapter.

Map 5.1: Location of Thuong Nhat and Thuong Lo in Nam Dong district



Source: Based on Google Maps 2011

Ta Lu, Thuong Nhat commune

Ta Lu village is the 4th village in the Thuong Nhat commune in the Nam Dong district. Thuong Nhat commune lies a bit further away from Nam Dong town and Bach Ma, the forest and the perfume river; though the river is still within walking distance from Ta Lu. The commune has seven different villages. Ta Lu village consists of 49 households and according to the village Leader there are only Co Tu households and no Kinh households in the village. Within Ta Lu, nineteen household interviews have been conducted; containing semi structured interviews with twelve men and seven women. Next to these interviews, interviews have been taken with the village leader and the commune leader who are both men.

Following these descriptions of Ta Lu village and Cha Mang village, we shall take a closer look at the different capitals that make up the livelihoods of the households in these villages. Starting with a description of the financial capital gives an overview of the financial and economic situation of the Co Tu people in the two research villages. The financial situation in the area of Nam Dong, and especially the financial situation of the ethnic Co Tu people is one of the reasons why the government selected this area to implement the FLA policies, since this is an area known for its poverty. Besides, as mentioned before, one of the pillars/goals of the FLA policies is to develop the livelihoods of different rural ethnic groups (in this case in Central Vietnam).

5.2. Financial capital.

Financial capital comprises among others things : access to savings, credit and debt and remittances. In case of the villagers of Cha Mang and Ta Lu the main focus was put on their income, savings and spending.

Besides analyzing the income people earn on a monthly basis, we also tried to find out if the income of the respondents has changed positively or negatively as a result of FLA policy implementation in both villages. However, many respondents could not explain exactly how much they earned; trying to analyze the change in their income was even harder to find out. When people were asked about their savings, a few mentioned that they had savings, but most could not tell how much they had saved.

The leader of the Thuong Lo commune, where Chang Ma village is located, explained that people are considered poor when they earn about 400.000 VND a month per person and a near poor person earns around 500.000 a month. This seems quite consistent with the claim of

the Vice leader of the Nam Dong district, saying the new classification set by the commune, consider people with a monthly income under 400.000 VND as poor and near poor when people's income stays under 600.000 VND a month. According to the leader of Thuong Lo, the average income is around 520.000 VND a month per person. While data gathered from the interviews and questionnaires show an average income for both villages above one million VND a month, the village leader also mentioned that people get a 'poverty certificate' from the Government. This certificate indicates when someone is poor and thus belongs to the category of people earning less than 400.000 VND a month. The specific function of the certificate remains unclear although it was mentioned by several respondents that poor people could get a small amount of money or food from the Government once a year and that in some cases a specific Government program supports the construction of houses in the village for people who are considered very poor.

Table 5.1 Poverty scales according to commune and village officials

According to	Poor (VND a month)	Near poor (VND a month)	Average (VND a month)
Leader of Thuong Lo	+ - 400.000	< 500.000	520.000
Vice leader Nam Dong	< 400.000	< 600.000	
Collected data of Ta Lu & Cha Mang			> 1 million

Source: Houben, 2011

Cha Mang

Within Cha Mang, most villagers did not know how much they earned. Of the persons that did know how much they earned, only one person earned less than the 'near poor' category with 250.000 VND a month.

Ta Lu

In Ta Lu none of the villagers earn less than 500.000 VND nowadays and only one person fell into the category of 'near poor', meaning earning less than 600.000 VND a month (according to the Vice Leader in table 5.1).

People explained that it was hard for them to make an estimation of their monthly income because of the different seasons and the fact that most of the trees take a long time before they can be harvested. In addition, when asked, almost everyone answered that it was the forest plantation land that gave the most income because of the Rubber and Acacia trees. Though, people pointed out that it will take a long time before they are able to harvest the trees; which was the reason why most people are mainly dependent on their garden and field land for their daily income.

5.2.1. Additional Income and access to finances

Apart from working on their own land, some villagers of both villages earn an (additional) income by working for others in the village. For example like working on the field or in the forest and do some work in and around the house like repairing, cleaning and other tasks. This is done by men as well as by women. For instance, one of the women in Ta Lu village is a widow who had no land at all. She depends on jobs others give to her. Some of the men in both villages also earn their income with a job next to or instead of farming. Often they are employed by the commune administration office or the district office.

Another way to get access to money is by getting a loan from the bank. However, when people do not have enough money to pay back the loan, the bank or the Government can take their Red Book and hold it until they have paid all their debts. These debts can limit a person's spending budget.

5.2.2. Expenses

The majority of money and time aside from working is spent at the market where they buy vegetables and when there is enough money meat, fish and other supplies are bought. The money people earn or possess is used to pay for food items, school fees and furniture. Buying clothes is very seldom done, and does not take much of the household budget. As one of the respondents from Ta Lu mentioned, the frequency of visiting the market is dependent on their financial situation; the same can be said about the supplies bought at the market. When there is not enough money for a family to buy their food at the market they have to find other ways

to supplement their income and food supplies, for example by collecting non timber forest products. Many households do not have enough money to buy items for their daily live, often caused by the fact that people need to repay debts. For instance, one of the families in Cha Man village borrowed five million VND from the bank to build their house. They have to repay the money within three years. However, there are also people in the village who are able to save money. The savings can be seen as a protection mechanism against vulnerabilities and can be used in times of sickness, death or with a bad harvest. The more people save the less vulnerable they get.

5.3. Human Capital

Human capital can be perceived as education, information, knowledge and job opportunities. Within this thesis the main focus lies on access to education, information and the relation between these subjects and the access to occupation. First, information will be given on the level of education, school attendance and the differences in this between the two villages. Then a description will be given of the villager's occupation and the access to alternative occupations after which the subject of information' will be discussed.

5.3.1. Education

Most of the villagers in Cha Mang and Ta Lu find it very important for their children to go to school. However, in the past the education attendance was lower than the attendance and education level of adults nowadays in Cha Mang and Ta Lu, according to the villagers. Table 5.2 shows the education level of the respondents in both villages of 35 of a total of 39 persons that was interviews. For the other four, of which two in Cha Mang and two in Ta Lu, these data were missing.

Table 5.2 Education in Ta Lu and Cha Mang village³

Ta Lu	Men		Women		Total N	Total %
	N	%	N	%		
Education level						

³ Only the people that were interviewed directly in both villages are included, meaning no children were included. The men and women were not directly compared in % since the number of male and female respondents was not equal.

no school	2	19%	3	50%	5	29,4%
primary	6	55%	1	17%	7	41,2%
Secondary	2	19%	1	17%	3	17.6%
High-school+	1	9%	1	17%	2	11.8%
Total	11	100%	6	100%	17	100%
Cha Mang	Men		Women		Total	Total %
					N	
Education Level	N	%	N	%		
no school	1	13%	2	20%	3	16.7%
primary	1	13%	3	30%	4	22.2%
secondary	4	50%	3*	30%	7	38.9%
High school +	2*	25%	2*	20%	4	22.2%
Total	8	100%	10	100%	18	100%

Source: Houben, 2011

Cha Mang

Of the eleven women interviewed in Cha Mang, three went to primary school, three went to secondary school, two did not go to school and two persons went to High-school. For one person these data are missing. Looking at the male members of the household, one went to primary school, four to secondary school, two to high-school and one man did not go to school. It should be noted that one of the two men who went to high-school is Kinh and one of the three women who went to secondary school is also from the Kinh group. It is even so that of these eleven women, the only one that went to high school and the one that continued studying after high school, are both from another ethnic group than the Co Tu. This means that the average education level in Cha Mang of Co Tu women only is even lower. The amount of interviews with non Co Tu people is not big enough to draw any conclusions yet,

but it should be kept in mind that their education level seems to be higher than that of the Co Tu women. For a better overview of the division in education between the two villages see Table 5.2 and 5.3

Ta Lu

In Ta Lu village, of the seven women that have been interviewed on the topic of education only one of them went to secondary school, one went to primary school, three did not go to school at all and one woman went to High-school; missing the data of one person. Of the twelve men interviewed; only two went to secondary school and one of them to high-school. The rest of the men only went to primary school, except for two men who did not go to school at all, and for one person it was not clear. Overall the image is clear that of the 35 persons answering this question, only sixteen persons went to secondary, high school or higher, four out of these sixteen were people from the Kinh or another ethnic group, meaning only twelve persons from the 31 Co Tu people answering the question had an education higher than primary school.

Table 5.3 Division of education level between Ta Lu and Cha Mang in the Nam Dong district

Nam Dong district	No n	%	School Primary	Secondary	High-school+
N			11	10	6
Ta Lu	5	62,5 %	63,6 %	30 %	33,3 %
Cha Mang	3	37,5 %	36,4 %	70 %	66,7 %
Total	8	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Source: Houben, 2011

Table 5.3 shows the division of school attendance and education level per category. For example, of all the respondent that did not go to school, 62,5% came from Ta Lu and 37,5% from Cha Mang. The two tables 2.2 and 2.3 show a clear difference in the level of education between the two villages. In Ta Lu the highest percentages of education can be found in the category of ‘no education’ and ‘primary education’ opposite to Cha Mang where the highest percentages lie in the ‘secondary’ and ‘high-school+’ category. These tables show that the average level of education was higher among the group of people from Cha Mang than Ta Lu.

In general, when looking at the differences between no education and education, about 84% of the men have at least finished primary school, and this is the case for 69% of the women. So there is still a difference in education attendance between women and men and a slight

difference in education level. I will discuss the gender differences further in the ‘intra-household differences’ chapter. The level of education turned out to be an important factor for the access to employment.

5.3.2. Occupation

The fact that only a small proportion of the population in both villages has continued school after secondary school, makes it difficult for most respondents to find a job aside from farming. Unfortunately even when people do have the right education it is not always easy to get a job because of the political system operating at the national, regional and local level. This system implies that people get a certain certificate before they are allowed to search for an occupation. One of the examples is a young farmer from Cha Mang village who wants his wife to have a job in a kindergarten. His wife has the certificate to become a school teacher but before she can get a job she needs permission from the commune. Aside from that she needs a medical check to get a health care paper. The husband said that such a paper is required and costs him 600.000 VND and must be paid to the commune. The husband and his wife tried to get this paper three times; which costs him 1.800.000 VND to get his wife a job. Two times it failed and the third time his wife got a temporary contract which ended after a couple of months, after which they had to start all over again. Why it failed two times was not clear.

Another problem related to the employment market is the lack of work in the region where the villagers live. Since Nam Dong district is a rural district, moving to some of the larger cities, like Hué is often the only option to find work. Many villagers have lived in their village for a long time and the younger villagers mostly their whole life. Therefore, there are no social networks in place for villagers, who have already migrated, which would allow other villagers to make the move to the city, using these networks. In that case they are often not prepared to leave the region to find a job, and instead often stay unemployed or work as farmers. Within the region of Nam Dong jobs available are mostly low skilled jobs for which people do not need much education..When people are planning to stay in their own village or district the chance for them to become motivated to continue their education will be smaller than when they are planning to find a high skilled job in the city.

5.3.3. Household Members

In the theoretical chapter, the number of household members was referred to as an aspect of labour resources in the category of human capital. Unfortunately not for all households it became clear how many members the household was counting. These data were however collected during the 20 questionnaires showing an average, for both villages, of five members per household, according to the families themselves. The collected data from the interviews in Cha Mang showed an average of 4 members in a household and 5 in Ta Lu. For only sixteen people of the 39 villagers interviewed the amount of household members became clear. The different members of a household often included children under the age of eighteen and parents of the husband or wife (mostly of the husband). When the (grand) parents and children were fit enough they sometimes helped in the house and with the work on the garden and field land, though most of the children went to school and did not have to work on the land. It was never mentioned that one of the couples parents or children contributed to the household income with an official job besides the farming work.

5.3.4. Information

A further aspect which can be seen as ‘access to human capital’ is the access to information. In every house visited in Ta Lu and Cha Mang, there was a television and in most cases a stereo set. This means that people have access to information; they can watch and listen to the news, even though tv programmes are censored by the state. Internet seemed not to be available in the villages, as there was only one household of all the households that were visited, that owned a computer. Whether they had internet or not is not sure.

Other information that people receive is the information about farming practices from: different organizations, the commune, the farmers association, the women group and from relatives. Many people mentioned that agricultural organizations come to the village to instruct the villagers on how to use the fertilizer, how to grow trees and what crops were most suitable to grow on what kind of soil. The commune leader was also mentioned as an actor coming into the village to hold meetings and give information about the farming work. In some cases the bank spread information, as one of the villagers in Cha Mang mentioned;

‘‘The commune office who has the agricultural duty, comes and tells people how to use fertilizer. one time a year every year there is a village meeting the people from the commune come to the village, hold a meeting where they tell people how to use fertilizer and spread information’’

(Women from Cha Mang village)

Besides the commune leader, the villagers of Ta Lu mentioned that the Party leader has the responsibility for holding meetings and transferring information to the villagers from the commune. How often these meetings were held and what precise information was given remained unknown.

Overall the villagers receive a lot of information from many sides; nevertheless it is striking to note, that even though we discussed the information sources with the villagers, apparently no one mentioned any information given about the Red Books or the land allocation process. When villagers were asked about the rules of the use of the land or why they grow Acacia or Rubber trees, the villagers said that it was the Government or the commune who told them to grow these trees and that the commune would come to measure the land and who told the villagers for how long they could have the Red Book. It seemed as if the implementation of the FLA in the villages was not a participatory process but that it was all implemented and pushed by the Government.

5.3.5. Limitations in information

One of the limitations for people's access to information is their lack of knowledge of the Kinh language. Since most of the villagers are not Kinh, they do not speak the official Vietnamese language as most of them did not attend school to the level of being able to speak Vietnamese or Vietnamese was not taught at their school. However, all of the Red Books and related documents are written in the Kinh language, so there is a lack of official documents in the Co Tu language. Villagers that do not have enough knowledge of the Kinh language cannot understand the Red Book or other FLA documents written in the Kinh language. These people have to rely on others who are able to read the Kinh language. This makes them very dependent. The inability to speak Kinh language can also limit a person's access to certain resources. An example comes from a couple in Ta Lu village who give their money to their neighbours to buy their food because they can not speak the Kinh language, which is spoken at the market.

Another limitation to have access to information is the average education level in both villages which was mentioned before in this chapter. There are still enough people, even from the younger generation, who are not educated. Like one of the older Farmers from Ta Lu mentioned, that people in his village do not have the knowledge to become anything else but a farmer. However, it seems that nowadays all children go to school; both boys and girls in both villages, and some of the older children go to Saigon or Hanoi to get higher education or to work there. The school fees parents have to pay vary between 400.000 to 500.000 VND a year, dependent on the level of school.

To summarize, because people had little to no education in the past, people notice that their knowledge is limited and that it is difficult to find another occupation aside from working on their own land. What was also discussed is the lack of clear information on the FLA policies, even though the agricultural information the villagers received has increased. This paragraph partly showed how important the land is for the villagers in both Cha Mang and Ta Lu and how dependent people are on their land because of the lack of access to employment. This dependency becomes even clearer by looking at the access to and the perceptions of the villagers on natural capital.

5.4. Natural Capital

Natural Capital can be perceived as the land, the forest, water, wildlife, trees and forest products, wild food, etc. Within this thesis the main focus lies on the different sorts of land people have and the use of the forest, its products and services and the environmental surrounding in which the villagers of Cha Mang and Ta Lu live. It became clear from our field work, that people do not only receive natural forest and forest plantation land from the commune but they also receive the Red Books for garden and field land. The garden can often be found around the house, where people grow their crops. The field land is often further away from the house but still within walking distance. The distance from the house to the field varies between 10 to 30 minutes walking. Though it differ what people grow on the field land, the overall majority is cultivating rice. There are some differences in the size of land people received between Ta Lu and Cha Mang as we will discuss in this paragraph. In the following data that will be given, the interviews conducted with people from other ethnic groups within Cha Mang village are not included.

Ta Lu

In Ta Lu the average amount of forest plantation land people received was 1.57 ha; 924 m² of field land and 1141.6 m² of garden land. The average amount of land is higher for garden than for field land, and four persons of the nineteen interviewed have no Red Book to field land but they do have field land they can use. Only four persons out of the nineteen did not have any Red Book's to forest plantation land, and two persons claimed they only had a RB for a part of their forest plantation land. Except for four persons, everyone claimed they had access to the forest, field and garden land with or without Red Books. See also table 5.4.

Cha Mang

In Cha Mang, the average amount of forest plantation land is 1.35 ha; 600m² of field land and 1128m² of garden land, this is less than the amount of field and forest plantation land in Ta

Lu village as shown in table 5.4. In Cha Mang more than half of the people did not have any Red Book for field land and eight people did not have any field land at all. This is in line with the claims from people during the interviews, that there is not enough land for field land. Only a few households received field land. Some farmers explained that when a household does receive field land it will receive less forest or garden land to make it more equal for the rest of the village. This equalizing mechanism does not show in the average land sizes of people owning or not owning field land with a Red Book. The results show that two persons only have garden land, this can be explained by the fact that one is a teacher (Kinh) and one person is a retired woman whose children have a job and are not farmers.

Table 5.4: average land size

Average		Forest land <ha>	Field land <m2>	Garden land <m2>
Ta Lu	N = 19 respondents	1,57	924	1141,6
Cha Mang	N = 16 respondents	1,35	600	1128

Source: Houben, 2011

5.4.1. Farming

Aside from the Kinh people, most of the households that have been interviewed for this research in Cha Mang and Ta Lu work fulltime on the agricultural land. Some of the men work in the village as a guard, or forest ranger, or work for the administrative office at the commune; but in that case their wives were still doing the farm work. Most of the households are for a large part still dependent on the income received from the work on the farm. The people cultivate different crops for their basic food needs and to sell at the market. Most of the crops are cultivated on the garden land. The different crops people grow among other things are banana trees, vegetables, sweet potato and pineapple. The crops on the field can be divided into dry ‘traditional’ rice and wet rice, of which the latest is most common. Even though the villagers consume the rice they grow themselves, it is in most cases not enough and most of the household income is spent on buying food at the market. On the forest plantation land the villagers grow Acacia tree or Rubber trees. These trees have to grow at least five years before the villagers can get a harvest. People rarely mentioned growing crops on their field land. Some did grow cassava between the trees. This is the case for both Ta Lu village as well as Cha Mang village.

5.4.2. Constraints

Most of the complaints people expressed about their land had to do with the quality and fertility of the land. In general it was concluded during the participatory meeting that the land use was not effective enough for their livelihood. Different reasons mentioned were the limited land area people have, a lack of fertilizer, and the location and physical features of the land. The cultivation of different crops and trees is found to be more difficult on hilly land. According to one of the farmers from Ta Lu, flat land better holds the fertilizer, while on the hilly land fertilizer is lost quickly because of floods washing away the fertilizer. However many people have received hilly land to grow their crops or trees. The quality of the soil itself was also a subject of complaints. The average label that people gave to the quality of the fertility of their own soil varied from alright to bad in the five categories ranging from very good to very bad. Some blame this to not being able to use enough fertilizers, others to bad seeds and in some cases too much fertilizer was given as a reason. In addition also the size of the land was a constraint, according to the respondents. Many respondents said their land was too small to cultivate enough crops and some of them thought the division of the land was not equal. It is argued that the size and quality of someone's land is also dependent on ones socio-economic and socio-cultural position, historical role during the war and connections to the officers of the DPC and the CPC. As an older farmer from Ta Lu village illustrates:

“ The ones who work in the Government keep the large size of land to themselves”.

In Ta Lu it was also mentioned by several respondents that the building of a new road which runs from town all the way into the village, narrowed their arable land without getting any compensation from the commune or the district. In fact, after the size of their land had changed because of the new road, it was not changed within their RB's. This means that the size of land noted in their Red Books does not always match the reality. However, the road also has its positive sides since it makes it easier for people to reach the town and market and increases their mobility. When asking about the distance to the field, garden and forest plantation land, most of the villagers replied that the forest (plantation) land, and in many cases the field land, are too far away from their house. The forest plantation land on average takes about 30 minutes to one hour walking and the field land takes about 15 to 20 minutes walking. A motorbike cannot be used, as the area is too hilly. The garden land on the other hand is mostly around the house. For the natural forest land people take their motorbike because it is too far walking.

5.4.3. Natural Forest use

Aside from the field land, garden land and forest plantation land, information was gathered about the use of natural forest land which both Ta Lu village in Thuong Lo and Cha Mang village in Thuong Nhat have received from the commune; with a Red Book for the whole village. In the Red Book the land rights to the natural forest are defined, describing the size of the land and its location.

Ta Lu

In Ta Lu village everyone is responsible for the protection of the natural forest. The village leader explained that he is also the forest management leader and that the total size of the natural forest land belonging to the village is estimated by him to be around 102,9 ha. He explained that he trains people to manage the forest, dividing them into four groups. Every week another group goes around the forest to protect it. These groups consist out of twelve to thirteen people and each family has at least one member to join a group.

Cha Mang

Even though the Red Books are for the entire village, one of the women from Cha Mang showed that this does not mean that they all perceive it as their own.

''Is the natural forest given to the whole village?''

''No the FPU keeps the natural forest and the trees''

This woman did not perceive the natural forest as village property since her village is not allowed to make use of the forest. Indeed the rights of usage people had, have changed, nowadays they are not allowed to cut the trees anymore or hunt on animals. Aside from that it seems that the control on the collecting of Non Timber Forest Product's (NTFP's) has become more strict, although the district and the commune did not mention the collecting of NTFP's as an illegal activity. These are important changes, since these forest 'products' formed an important part of the additional income and food supply for many households in both villages as will be described in the next section.

Table 5.5: NTFP's collected in Cha Mang and Ta Lu

NTFP's
Firewood
Fruits
Leaves
Honey
Rattan
Animals
Mushrooms
Wild grass

5.4.4. Forest Products

In both villages the non timber forest products that are taken out of the forest are mostly leaves to make the traditional hats and honey. Honey is a very expensive product in the area and people can get a substantial income from it. However, it is hard to find, and collecting the honey from the trees is a dangerous activity, while the honey season is limited to several months a year only, from January to May. To collect the honey, the men have to climb high into the trees and burn the comb to collect the honey. Collecting of edible leaves from the forest is more common. However, collecting leaves also becomes more difficult nowadays. As one man from the Ta Lu village explained; sometimes they stay in the wood for more than a week to collect

leaves or honey and he even stays for a month when he is not lucky enough to find the honey right away. To the question why he stayed so long in the village instead of going home and go back another time he replied:

“Because I need to provide for my wife and children,I need to get an income, if I come back with nothing I am useless so I can only come back when I have the honey.” (young farmer from Ta Lu village of Thuong Nhat).

The risks people take and the time and energy people spent on the collecting of NTFP's shows how important it is for some families to get their additional income from the natural forest. These are families that do not get enough income and food supplies from their own land.

5.4.5. Dry wood and Firewood

Aside from NTFP's, people collect dry wood from the natural forest. Although, most of the respondent said they collect the dry branches and some fallen trees from their own plantation land. The majority of the respondents in both villages declared not to cut any trees in the natural forest because it is too far and they are not allowed anymore while others mentioned to only cut some small and dry trees in the natural forest. Surprisingly, when people were asked whether this was legal or not, a couple of respondents explained that they are allowed to cut a certain amount of trees if they have a sensible reason, like ‘building a house’. The respondent explained that they have to create a plan on paper and give this to the commune; the commune gives the plan to the district that has to accept it and give the villagers the

permission to cut some trees. Indeed at the forest protection unit and the Commune People Committee (CPC), they confirmed this and explained that the cutting is only on a small scale for household use. When the district gives the permission they are allowed to cut trees. This only account for the natural forest that is given to the village, people from other villages are not allowed to go into ‘their’ natural forest.

Every time we ride down the road on our way to the villages and back we see people cutting trees and carrying big tree trunks. It is hard to tell whether this is plantation forest or natural forest where people got permissions to cut or maybe even a company who has the permission to cut in a certain area. (Personal logbook Houben 2011)

5.4.6. Proteins from animal hunting

Table 5.6 Animals hunted by the villagers of Cha Mang and Ta Lu

Forest animals	<p>Some of the people interviewed admitted they also catch animals now and then even though most of them are aware that it is not legal. Two persons said it was legal, and one farmer from Ta Lu explained that the commune leaders showed people a list with animals they are allowed to hunt and not to hunt, but that he forgot which animals. Different animals mentioned by the villagers were; snakes, wild pigs, monkeys, birds and squirrels. However in many cases it was mentioned that the natural forest was too far away, and mostly the young men go there since the older people are too weak or sick and the women are not strong enough. Most of the animals they hunt are being sold, but some of them, like the wild pigs, are also used for their own consumption.</p>
Fish	
Frogs	
Monkey's	
Forest pigs	
Snakes	
Birds Squirrels	

Now that we have looked at the different sorts of land people have access to and the products and services they obtain from this land, it is useful to look at the possessions people own to make use of their land and the materials and belongings people use for their daily life, to give a more complete picture of their daily living. An example of such a possession that has been given before was that most villagers in Cha Mang and Ta Lu have a motorbike which they use to get to their land and the market. A motorbike is part of some ones Physical Capital and is an important possession to increase someone’s mobility.

5.5. Physical Capital

Physical capital can vary from infrastructure to fertilizer to even animals. Within this thesis the main focus is put on livestock, housing, transport and products used for farming. Since there were hardly any differences found between Cha Mang and Ta Lu, both will be discussed together.

5.5.1. Livestock and other animals

The majority of the people interviewed own livestock, like ducks, chicken, pigs, cows and water buffalo's and almost all families own one or more dogs. In Cha Mang, of the fourteen Co Tu people spoken to about livestock, eleven people are in the possession of livestock and other animals compared to twelve out of sixteen in Ta Lu. The livestock is used for the meat, eggs, selling, celebrations and sacrifices. Aside from that the manure of animals is used for making compost. Remarkably, even though most households have some form of livestock, they still buy their meat on the market. Having livestock can provide a household with additional income on top of their garden, field and forest plantation land income. During the participatory meetings it became clear that many farmers lost their livestock to diseases. An example was the bird flu which killed many chicken and ducks. For some farmers the loosing of their livestock to diseases persuade them to only focus on their land instead of on husbandry.

5.5.2. Farming Materials

Important inputs for farming activities are fertilizers, bought or as compost, and good quality seeds. Hardly any family within Cha Mang or Ta Lu is in the possession of machinery to cultivate the land or to separate the wheat from the chaff. The villagers who do have machinery can enlarge their income by increasing their output or by renting their machinery or services (done with the machinery) to other villagers. For the most part the villagers use simple tools like a hoe and axe for their land. In some cases people believe their crops are not growing well because the soil needs fertilizers or compost, or the trees are not growing well because they do not have the good quality seeds. In some cases they mentioned about a project giving them the wrong seeds, like the WB3 project. Many of the farmers in Cha Mang and only two in Ta Lu are engaged in this project and have to grow Rubber trees or Acacia trees dependent on the positioning of their land (whether it is hilly or flat). The project has given seeds to the farmers involved to grow these trees. It is not totally clear how voluntary the project is and how positive the outcomes are for the farmers. Some farmers actually

mentioned they can only get a Red Book for forest plantation land when they are involved in the WB3 project. They have to lend money from the bank which they can pay back as soon as they have had their first harvest.

The chemical fertilizer (NPK) is used by most farmers, often in combination with compost. The fertilizer is said to be expensive. For some farmers, that is the reason why they do not use the fertilizer because they do not have enough money for it, or why they use it sparsely. When they join different projects like the WB3 project they often get fertilizer from the organization, sometimes even for free to promote the use of this product.

5.5.3. Housing

Most of the villagers in Ta Lu and Cha Mang have a house made from stones and bricks; generally there is a kitchen area attached to the house made out of wood and corrugated plates. However there were also houses solely made of wood. Sometimes the kitchen is also the area where people keep their animals. The size of the house itself differs, dependent on the money available for a household. A few of the houses are actually build by the Government, it has been said that this is the case for some really poor households holding a 'poverty certificate'. A number of families in both Ta Lu and Cha Mang, of which a family member has fought during the war got a house build by the Government to remember and honour them. Like one of the young farmers in Ta Lu village said:

"It < the house > was build in 2004. My father fought in the war, he died, and the Government memorized and builds this house for him."

(Farmer in Ta Lu village int.32)

Since most houses are about the same size, the luxury was measured by the state of the floor and the furniture; some persons only have a concrete floor while others have shiny tiles or carpet squares. Most houses contained a simple closet and simple furniture for the television and stereo set. The beds are from wood and bamboo without a mattress and mostly stand in the living room and sometimes the beds are separated through a small curtain. Rarely there are separate rooms in the house. All the houses visited during our research are in the possession of electricity and most households have piped water too, although some people mentioned that they did not get the pipes because their house is relatively new or because of disagreements on the payment for the water use. In some other cases the water pipes are just not working due to bad construction.

5.5.4. Transportation and Infrastructure

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Ta Lu and Cha Mang village are both located close to the town of Nam Dong, from a walking distance of the river and close to the road. Ta Lu is located further away from the road as Cha Mang. The road is paved and leads from the villages all the way to the city of Hué. The main form of transport in both villages is by motorbike and most villagers have one. The respondents also mentioned that more and more people are getting bicycles, though it is mostly the children that drive around on them. The motorbikes increases people's mobility and has made the market for example, relatively closer to Cha Mang and Ta Lu.

5.5.5. Market Food

As mentioned, the market is close to the town of Nam Dong and easy to reach with the motorbike from both villages. Especially from Cha Mang it will only take a couple of minutes to reach the market. It is dependent on how much money and time a family has, but in most cases the men or wife (mostly the wife) will go to the market every day. Families buy meat, fish, vegetables, seasoning, milk, fruit, rice and sugar on the market.

Summarizing, in both villages most people have access to firm housing, to some basic furniture, television, stereo, motorbikes and bicycles. Aside from that both villages have a good infrastructure, the main road in both villages is paved and leads to the bigger road which will lead them to the town. Especially Cha Mang is very close to town. Every house has access to electricity but the access to piped water is less reliable. Not only the fact that people have access to firm housing is important for their daily live, also the location of the house within the village and the owning of a motorbike are important parts of a person's livelihood strategies.

Within our research it became clear how important the relation with neighbours and family is for a household. Also the mobility can play an important role for the social contact a person has with his or her family, for example: when someone's family lives in another village, the access to a motorbike can reduce the time needed to reach the families house. The relation with family and neighbours is part of the last capital or livelihood strategies, namely; social capital as we will discuss now.

5.6. Social Capital

Social Capital is probably the most difficult capital to ‘measure’ since it is not always visible, especially not for an outsider. It can entail all different kind of relations within a village and between a village and external networks. For this thesis it is important to look at the cultural characteristics of the Co Tu people in Cha Mang and Ta Lu, the way their village is socially constructed and what the hierarchical role divisions are since this forms a great part of people’s daily life. Who is connected to whom and what kind of networks are there within the villages?

5.6.1. Village structure and organized groups

Within both villages there are different organized groups of which people can become a member. For example, there is a women group for the women; all the women in both villages are actually a member of this group. The Women group organizes meetings and gives advice and tips about work and social problems. Examples of subjects that were mentioned during the interviews where tips on how to use fertilizer, how to grow trees and crops, how to deal with your husband and how to raise your child. The women have to pay a small fee for the meetings for food and drinks, and pay a small fee so that the women group can help women in need. This group also has a leader who is chosen once in every three years. Next to the women group there is a farmers association, all farmers in the village are a member of this group and the association also holds meetings and give each other advice. Sometimes neighbours can also form a small group. These groups were present in both Cha Mang as in Ta Lu; the function of this group is comparable with the women’s group and the farmers association.

Aside from the groups there is a village oldest, a village leader and a village party leader in the village. There is some confusion about the different ‘leaders’ in the village, since the villagers themselves only spoke about the traditional leader (village oldest) and the village leader. It was the village leader of Ta Lu who explained there is also a party leader in every village. According to his explanation the village party leader has officially the highest position in the village where he builds the policy to be managed by the village leader. The party leader is also the chairmen of the village within the commune.

The Village leader has the highest position in regard to the Government; he implements and manages the policies within the village. Nowadays it is the village leader that makes most decisions. Unfortunately, the information on what kind of policies there are in the village was missing in this research. The village leader is being chosen every three years and everyone in

the village above 15 years old can vote for him, both women and men. The voting is introduced in 2000.

The traditional leader referred to as the 'village oldest' has the highest position with regard to culture and tradition and is seen as the traditional leader holding the knowledge of traditional customs and the Co Tu culture while the village leader is seen as the official leader of the village that carries out the policy implemented from a higher scale.. When there is a problem which has to do with culture or customs and not with the law, it is the traditional village leader that has to solve the problem. When there are festivals or celebrations like a wedding or a funeral the village oldest will be asked for his help and advice on how to organize it.

Even though the village leader is seen as the official leader, the village oldest is still for many villagers in both Cha Mang and Ta Lu the most important person in the village, this is especially the case for the older persons in the villages. However when there is a problem in the village most people will go to the village leader first but when it comes to trust and respect one of the men from Cha Mang said:

'The eldest person in the village is the most respected one, everyone listens to him, he is the traditional leader and he has a function at traditional days, holidays etc. Everyone trusts the oldest.' (men from Cha Mang; village of Thuong Lo).

Who do you see as your village leader?

Both are important, the oldest is there to maintain the traditional customs and the village leader who is voted has a duty to the Government and the commune. He has social and economic duties. (middle-aged men from Ta Lu)

5.6.2. Asking for help

When the respondents were asked which people will help them during difficult times or in case of a problem, the overall majority of the respondents mentioned their family. It seems that the relation with the neighbours is less tight as expected. People do ask their neighbours for help but only after they have asked their relatives for help first. In some cases households said they do not ask their neighbours for help. For example, the people from the Kinh group living in Cha Mang, said they help their neighbours and vice versa but they do not help the Co Tu people because the Co Tu will never ask their help because all the Co Tu are poor and they do not have anything to give back in return to the Kinh people. The Co Tu people in Cha Mang said indeed that only their Co Tu neighbours will help them when they have a problem, and not their Kinh neighbours.

Besides the village groups and leader, there are also organizations outside of the village who offer help to the village, like the described WB3 project in paragraph ...Aside from those organizations there is the commune and the higher scales of Government. When people have a problem which the village leader can not solve, they can go to the commune. None of the respondents in Cha Mang or Ta Lu has been going or will go to the commune itself. A woman from Cha Mang said that she told a representative from the commune during a village meeting that the rubber trees are not growing well but she never got a respond from the commune. When there is a problem within the village, the village can invite someone from the commune to come and discuss a problem. During the research it was difficult to collect opinions from the respondents about the commune; it seemed as if people did not like to talk about the commune. However, it was the CPC who build the commune house in Ta Lu village of the Thuong Nhat commune.

People in the District People's Committee (DPC) or Commune People Committee (CPC) only come to the villages when someone is sick for a long time. One of the farmers from Ta Lu village mentioned the CPC giving him a small amount of food when he was sick. Even the women group and other groups within the village often do not come when someone is sick for a short while. When people get sick they have to rely on family members or neighbors to help them do the work. Another option is to live from ones savings for a while.

5.6.3. Co Tu Culture

For this research we used Taylor's (In Kottak 2006;271) definition of culture: that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.' For this thesis the 'society' in this case should be understood as the traditional Co Tu society. In addition Kottak (2002;62) adds that culture is learned and passed to the next generation through the process of enculturation. Memories, experiences, values and beliefs are shared as a result of common enculturation.

Even though modernity highly influenced the traditional Co Tu culture, culture is still an important part of Co Tu live. Most of the villagers have been living in the same village all of their lives, and they do not want to move to another town or city because they perceive their village as their roots; the place where they belong and where their families come from. As mentioned before, it is the village oldest that holds responsibility for the Co Tu culture in the village. Culture is a very important aspect for the Co Tu life and their social capital. The villagers from both villages mostly mentioned the traditional festivals, music and cloths when they were asked about their Co Tu culture. As Bayrak (2010) describes in his thesis after

completing his research done in the Nam Dong district about the indigenous culture of the Co Tu; ‘The traditional clothing of the Co Tu reflects rank, status and clan identity, with a wide range of natural motifs, colors and designs.

An example of a traditional festival is the Buffalo and TET festival, which were mostly mentioned in both villages. During the buffalo festival a buffalo is killed and the villagers drink and dance during the day and night. With the Buffalo festival people worship the God of the Forest and their ancestors and pray for a good crop and health. Nowadays the festival is happening every four or five years. Other characteristics of Co Tu culture are different rituals mainly connected to worshipping. As one of the men from Ta Lu highlights, the role of worshipping is a part of their culture in which they differentiate themselves from the Kinh people. The believing in and worshipping of trees and holy forest is slowly decreasing. This was not the only thing villagers mentioned that changed in their culture but since ‘transforming’ processes and structures already indicate a livelihood change, these will be treated in the next chapter.

5.6.4. Village Problems

When people in both villages were asked about their problems they will almost immediately talk about poverty, unemployment, lack of land or bad quality land. It will be a subject that is linked to their work and income. When asking people about difficulties inside families and between neighbours, the use of alcohol was defined as a problem in both villages. The majority of men and some women too, drink too much alcohol. The problems attached to this drinking are; aggression, shouting, fighting with other villagers, men beating their wife and not showing up at work. When the alcohol situation is getting out of control someone from the village and the commune will go to the person and discuss his or her problems and give advice. In the worst case if the person is not responding to this, he or she has will be summoned by the commune and receive a punishment. These subjects are also discussed within the different social groups as mentioned before.

5.6.5. Social Inequalities and Corruption

During different interviews and meetings it became clear that within both villages there are inequalities between people and privileges for some people. The different leaders within the village and the position and power these leaders have, already show the hierarchical character of the village. But not only inside the village these inequalities and power imbalances come to the fore, also the connection between the villages and the commune and district has its limitations.

It is obvious that within the district, people who have joined the war get more privileges than other villagers. This was clear in both Cha Mang as in Ta Lu. When someone has joined the war they get a monthly income from the Government; the amount depends on their efforts during that time. Aside from the money they often get special jobs or positions appointed and received bigger pieces of land. One of the examples is an old war veteran from Cha Mang; an organization appointed him for different positions because of his past and the Government gave him food, money and land. For those who did not get the same chances during the war or were born later in time, this could be seen as unfair though it was never mentioned by anyone. In fact the word 'corruption' was hardly ever mentioned at all, though there are several villagers who showed their dislike about certain practices which could be perceived as corruption. One of these examples was given by an older man from Ta Lu village. He gave his opinion during a commune meeting and since that day the commune does not like him anymore which results in refusing him help and denying him access to projects. The man mentioned the strong group division within the village and how the village leader and the persons working in the Government want to keep all the benefits to themselves. In addition the man explained that if the commune does not like you then changes are small the district will ever help you. An important comment he made on this subject was that the problem is that some people in the commune do not know about these problems, and that it is only a select group of people who are involved in this 'selection' and do not inform others.

*''Government would like equality but in the village there is only inequality.
'Life is not fair''.* (old men from Ta Lu)

Another example was given by a woman from the Ta Lu Village who started to whisper when she talked about the commune and the fact that they accepted money from 'gold diggers' polluting the water with chemicals, in search of gold. The people from her village have complained about the polluted water but the commune did not listen to the villagers. The gold diggers give money to the commune in order for them not to act and let the 'gold diggers' go their way. She explained how it affects her and the village life because they can not use the spring anymore for washing and playing with the kids. A farmer from Cha Mang also argued that if a person has relatives or friends in the commune or district it will be easier and cheaper to find a job. Other people complained about the commune taking their land and selling the land to others without repaying them.

The fact that many villagers do not trust people from the commune and or the district can intensify the relation between villagers because they become more dependent on each other. Indeed as this paragraph showed, most people rely on their family, friends and neighbours when they have a problem. In other cases or when it concerns a problem they cannot manage

themselves they will ask the help of one of the village leaders. The bigger and tighter their social network is, the less vulnerable people are to external shocks. Vulnerability is interlinked with the five capitals discussed above. The better the access to the five capitals is the less vulnerable people will get. The kind of vulnerabilities the people in Cha Mang and Ta Lu deal with will be discussed now.

5.6.6 Languages

Finally, language could be considered as a form of social capital since the Kinh language can give access to certain sources of information and it gives people the possibility to communicate with different officials while those who do not speak the Kinh language can become more isolated since they do not have this access. The reason for including language as a part of human capital is the fact that the Co Tu are not being isolated solely based on their language skills but mostly based on ethnicity.

5.7. Vulnerabilities

As described in the methodological chapter, next to the five capitals the livelihood is influenced by shocks and stresses, also defined as the 'vulnerabilities'. Vulnerability is characterized as insecurity in the well-being of individuals, household and communities. Shocks are mostly violent and unexpectedly, while stresses are less violent but the effects may last longer, which will be discussed in this paragraph.

Shocks that were mentioned frequently by the people from both Ta Lu and Cha Mang are mostly caused by the weather or diseases. Cha Mang and Ta Lu are located in the buffer zone of Bach Ma national park. This area knows four different seasons through the year:

- a) The Typhoon season and floods from September to November
- b) The cool and humid season from December to February 16, 2011
- c) The spring and intermediate season from March to April
- d) The dry and hot season from April to August

(WWF/EC 2001)

The weather seems to cause many shocks and stresses, making people more vulnerable. For example; floods destroy the garden and field land close to the rivers, and takes away the fertile upper soil and washes away the fertilizer. In combination with droughts the soil is eroding and natural fires can come up. Another problem people mentioned was the breaking

of trees through the Typhoons and floods. Since the weather is varied and extreme it makes it hard to adapt. In 2006 there was a big storm destroying many crops and plantations. Other vulnerabilities are sickness and elderliness, which can be referred to as ‘stresses’. Different people in Cha Mang and Ta Lu said they or their partners wanted to go to the forest to get NTFP’s and wood but that they are too weak or too old to go there and so they are totally dependent on the harvest from their garden land and field and/or forest plantation land. The working in the forest is hard work and considered too heavy for the women. This can make it difficult for a widow to create her own income. One of the widows from Cha Mang village emphasized her dependence on others for giving her work since she has no land and no education. The ‘dependency’ factor is coming back in many ways. Other examples are the dependency of villagers on Governmental agencies for getting their Red Book and so their land rights. People are also heavily dependent on the weather for their income, food and in general their life. Other vulnerabilities are related to the subjects discussed before in this chapter. Examples were the lack of other job opportunities and the lack of education making people more dependent. In addition, animal diseases form a big health risk for people’s livestock and crops are vulnerable for pests destroying the harvest.

Conclusion

Within this chapter an overall image was given of the livelihoods of Co Tu people living in both Cha Mang and Ta Lu defined by the 5 capitals and vulnerabilities of the livelihood framework. It became clear that the Co Tu people from Cha Mang and Ta Lu have in some way access to all five capitals though there are differences in access between the capital and between the two villages. In both villages people have access to financial capital, gained from the yielding of the trees, crops and rice of their land and in some cases by doing additional work for other families. Only a few people, mostly men, in both villages were having an alternative occupation working for the commune, district or FPU, but the majority of the villagers were farmers. When people’s income is not enough it is possible to get a loan from the bank or to sell or lease a Red Book in exchange for money. Many of the respondents have a loan at the bank since the income from the farming is often not enough and other employment is scarce in the Nam Dong region. The low education level of most adults makes it also difficult to find alternative employment. Nowadays almost all children go to school, both boys and girls. In addition there is a wide access to agricultural and environmental information given by different organizations, projects and the Government and all the villagers have access to media resources, making information very accessible. However, access to clear information about FLA policies is limited.

Looking at the natural and physical capital, most people have access to forest, field

and garden land and the majority of the villagers in both villages have a Red Book for at least two of the three land types. The quality of the land, the condition of the soil and the need for more and more chemical fertilizers are some of the biggest complaints of most farmers. However, people are pleased that the Rubber and Acacia give a relatively high income making it possible for them to buy motorbikes, bicycles and bigger houses. The measuring of access to social capital showed mixed results. On the one hand there are different groups within the village where people can go to in case of a problem. Besides these groups the villagers can go to neighbours, family and the village leaders. On the other hand people do not trust the commune or the district with their problems; while it is the commune and the district that have the power to make a change for the villagers. The subjective acting of the commune and district makes people vulnerable since they are highly dependent on these institutions. What makes the Co Tu people in both Cha Mang and Ta Lu especially vulnerable is the weather conditions. Floods and storms are destroying people's crops and land and are costing them their income, besides the weather makes the animals sick.

Chapter 6: Livelihood changes and the underlying causes for these changes after the implementation of the FLA

Chapter two has given an overview of the livelihoods of the Co Tu villagers in Cha Mang and Ta Lu village based on the five capitals of the livelihood model as described in the theory and the methodological chapter. In Chapter one and partly in Chapter two, the FLA policies have been explained and the perceptions of the villagers on these policies were described. In this chapter we will look in what way the livelihoods of the villagers in Cha Mang and Ta Lu have changed, what the underlying causes for these changes are and what the role of the FLA policies in these changes was. Important to realize is that most of the information in this chapter was given by the villagers themselves, and so the changes described should be comprehended as the perceptions of the villagers.

The villagers of Ta Lu in Thuong Nhat and the villagers of Cha Mang in Thuong Lo seem to be unfamiliar with the term 'forest land allocation' but they are familiar with the Red Book that gave them their land rights. For that reason the term Red Book was used as a way to ask the respondents questions about the land allocation during the interviews. To find out in what way the FLA has affected the livelihoods of the Co Tu people in Cha Mang and Ta Lu, it is important to look at the Red Books to describe in what way the receiving of land rights has changed people's livelihoods according to their perceptions. This will be the main subject of this chapter.

It is difficult to make a distinction between the effects of the FLA and the effects of development in general in Vietnam and in the district of Nam Dong. Incomes increased, tourism is developing and it seems that the government has paid more attention to the well-being of villagers by the building of schools and health facilities and in that way services have improved. The new policies and the opening up of the market have its effects, but the boundary between what is caused by the forest land allocation and what is caused by general development is often not clear. But some connections are found during the research between certain livelihoods changes and the FLA policies as described below.

6.1. From shifting cultivation to sedentary lifestyles

The biggest transformation processes in the two villages have been the implementation of the Doi Moi policies, where the government took a different direction. Markets and their access improved together with the development of the forest land allocation policies. After the Vietnam war in 1975, people in the Nam Dong district have been resettled from forest areas in the mountains to lower land villages, a change that had a major impact on the livelihoods of many villagers in Cha Mang and Ta Lu. Since the resettlement took place a long time ago, we were able to interview twelve people in total in the two villages, who were aged above 50 years and therefore old enough to explain the changes that took place since the resettlement. In addition, some younger people were able to tell us the stories they still remembered from their parents. After the implementation of the FLA people in both villages had to change their lifestyle from shifting cultivation to a sedentary lifestyle. None of the villagers interviewed in Cha Mang or Ta Lu moved around from land to land, like they did before. When the respondents were asked why they did not move, when for example the soil was not fertile anymore, they gave several reasons. Some respondents mentioned that it was the government or the commune who did not allow them to move anymore, others mentioned that the commune gave them their land or that it was now defined by the Red Book what land they did or did not own. Most villagers from Cha Mang and Ta Lu pointed out that they did have more freedom and could move to more fertile land in the past, but that it was also very far from their house and different social services. They mentioned that nowadays they live closer to schools, hospitals, the market, shops and the road. Overall it appeared that people preferred their current lives over the nomadic lifestyles in the past because of the access to services and the security of land obtained through the FLA.

6.2. Increased Incomes

For most people who received forest plantation land, their incomes have positively changed. Even though the income for most people increased, they do not know the exact change. Of the eight people that did know how much their incomes changed, in 75% of the eight cases (n= 8) – of both Cha Mang and Ta Lu together - their income increased opposite to 25% of the cases where the income stayed the same. Not one of the villagers interviewed in both villages mentioned a decrease in income after having received the RB's. This was different from the questionnaires showing a percentage of 20% (N=20) of people whose income lowered and around 70% of the people whose income increased. The differences that were mentioned in the interviews varied between 200.000 to one million VND more income per month than before they were allocated forestland. There are some exceptions of people whose income increased dramatically with more than one million VND a month in both Cha Mang as in Ta Lu.

Cha Mang

Of the sixteen Co Tu people in Cha Mang only three people knew or mentioned the difference in financial income between 'before the RB's' and now. Two of these three people said their income increased and one said it stayed the same.

Ta Lu

In Ta Lu village, of the nineteen Co Tu people only five people mentioned the difference in their income before and after they received the RB's. Of these five people, four people mentioned his or her income increased and one person said his or her income stayed the same.

The increase in incomes in both Cha Mang and Ta Lu can be explained since the cultivation of Rubber and Acacia trees give a much higher income compared to the crops on the garden land and rice on the field land. One harvest of trees can give an income up to ten million VND, depending on the size of the land and the amount of trees. Because of the tree selling people got enough money for example to build a house, to increase the size of their house, to buy a motorbike and to pay for the school fees. The improvements in living standard were for many households in both Cha Mang and Ta Lu the case. A woman in Ta Lu also said they were able to buy more groceries now and other supplies at the market. Another woman in Ta Lu mentioned that people now had the money to buy machines. However, from the villagers interviewed in both Ta Lu and Cha Mang, the people with machinery seemed to be more the exception than the rule. The fact that people now have enough money to buy machinery or

have access to a loan is partially an effect of the FLA, since more money got available through the forest plantation land. Nevertheless, this increased income only counts when the trees are harvested, which happens no more than once in every five years and some trees take even more than seven years to reach a size that can be harvested and marketed. This means that in the meantime people have to live from other incomes, mainly from the harvesting of crops. In addition, with the reallocation of the land, people are now forced to use the same piece of land, which does make them more dependent on the quality of this land. For that reason the farmers in Cha Mang and Ta Lu are very dependent on the quality of the land and also because they only have one or two pieces of land to grow their crops on. Especially in Cha Mang where many people did not receive field land. Since people have been harvesting for years and years on the same land, the soil is losing fertility and erosion worsens the situation; with the result that the farmers have to invest more in their land. However, people did not get more dependent on their land because they only received the forest plantation land, but the forest plantation land needs investment to become profitable. Fortunately, another change that has taken place in recent years is the ability to get a loan at the bank. In the past, people did not have access to a loan but now they can borrow money to invest in their land or buy machines or other things they need, like fertilizer. It seems that the villagers get the message from different sides to use fertilizers because it would be better for the soil. Apart from the advice to use fertilizer, people received other agricultural information from different groups and institutions.

6.3. Training and information on agricultural practices and FLA

Several respondents from Cha Mang and Ta Lu noted that they received agricultural information from commune officials and different projects and agricultural organizations that came to their village and held meetings. During village meetings, information was given on what is best to harvest, what is most suitable for the soil and especially on how to use fertilizer. However, other respondents explained they change things themselves with the idea of 'learning by doing', what they referred to as experience, instead of only learning from others. A woman from Cha Mang explained that the women group is also organizing meetings in Cha Mang to share information on agricultural issues and strategies to loan money from the bank and to discuss new planting methods, besides subjects as family planning and marital problems. However, it is the commune officer who has the agricultural duty to inform people on agricultural subjects.

Overall it became clear that from inside and outside the village the use of chemical fertilizer by the villagers is promoted. One of the women from Cha Mang even mentioned that the commune introduced fertilizers and compost by giving it for free for the first time, but later on the villagers had to buy it themselves. The World Bank 3 project also gave fertilizer which people eventually had to pay back to the bank. One of the problems that occurred is that the soil got used to the fertilizer and the villagers got dependent on the relatively expensive product. In addition, it remains to be seen whether the use of chemical fertilizers will be favourable, as much will depend on the training they might receive on how to use fertilizers. If used without proper training, the use of fertilizers and other inputs can have adverse effects for the soil.

With the use of fertilizers and the increasing agricultural information villagers received, other changes that occurred in the livelihoods of the Co Tu people in Cha Mang and Ta Lu, are related to the crops people grow. Several farmers in Ta Lu and Cha Mang changed their crops, started to grow crops that are doing better or gave more profit on the market. More people said the way of cultivating has changed. As a woman from Ta Lu explains, that compared to her parent's generation the women's generation changed the food they eat and the way they eat it. In the past it was common to eat mainly cassava while now their diet contains mainly rice and nutritious food like different vegetables.

The majority of the villagers from Cha Mang and Ta Lu claimed to have more knowledge nowadays about farming because of the spread of information by different groups within and outside of the village. The increase in agricultural knowledge makes the villagers less dependent on the forest resources. Indeed this is what most of the people in Cha Mang and Ta Lu mentioned themselves. The increased knowledge helped the villagers to adapt to sedentary farming. This resulted in people starting to invest more into their own land and spending less time and energy in going to the natural forest. Information was also gathered through the mass media. Radio and television informed people in both villages about the forest policy of the government, about prices of Rubber and Acacia trees and ways to get more profits. This would not have been possible if families had not received the forest plantation land from the commune.

6.4 Knowledge about FLA

Although people seem to get a lot of information about the farming work, this was somewhat different for the information about the FLA policies. During the participatory meetings and from interviews and questionnaires it became clear that the information people receive about, or have access to, the forest land allocation policies and implementation, is limited. The

villagers do not really know how to get access to this information or they think it is irrelevant as long as their land is of good quality and they received the Red Books. As one of the men from Ta Lu explains:

<...> I do not know anything about rules, they did not tell me this when I got the RB. When I got the RB they did not give me any information.(men from Ta Lu)

In Cha Mang the lack of clear information on the FLA was actually one of the core problems that came to the fore during the participatory meeting in the ‘Problem Tree’ exercise. During this exercise, the villagers were asked to define what they saw as the core problem in their daily lives related to the role of FLA policies. Furthermore, they were asked to define the causes and effects of these problems. One of the core problems that were mentioned was: ‘No understanding of the FLA policies and what benefits they can get from the policies’. When people in Cha Mang and Ta Lu do not understand what benefits they can get from the policies, the policies can never be as efficient and effective as planned. In addition when we asked the respondents what rules there are regarding the use of the land, many answered that there are not aware of any rules. However, one of the rules that was clear in both villages, is that it was no longer allowed to hunt animals and cut big trees in the natural forest. A number of villagers even mentioned that it was no longer allowed to collect NTFP’s in the natural forest. It was still allowed to get dry wood from the natural forest and in some cases they can get permissions to get wood directly from the trees. Another related problem that was mentioned during the exercise was that with the coming of the FLA and the planting of Rubber and Acacia trees, people did not have the exact knowledge how to work with these trees since they always have worked with crops and rice. Another related problem was that people do not have enough knowledge of the functioning of the new market system. The market system took a capitalist turn and is now much more based on commercialism than simply a trade system. This means that people have to adapt their whole trade system to the new rules of the market.

According to the respondents of Cha Mang and Ta Lu, the lack of information of the FLA policies and the benefits they can receive from the implementation of these policies is causing the fact that the use of the land and the forest is not as effective as expected and the outcome is disappointing. The problems defined in the problem tree gave the impression that most of the respondents are very negative about the FLA and the implementation of the FLA policies. However, even though people are negative about the clarity and the outcomes of these policies, they also see improvements which will be described in the next paragraph.

6.5. Improved Livelihoods?

For most of the farmers in Cha Mang and Ta Lu, land allocation has increased their income which made their lives relatively easier. For others the land allocation was difficult because they need to use the same piece of land for years as the land is losing fertility because the soil nutrients are depleted as a result of continuous cropping. The situation is aggravated by increased erosion of the top soil. Many farmers complained about the condition of the soil, since it is affecting their farming life because it reduces their harvest and hence the income that can be earned from farming. Therefore, they need to use fertilizers (this is also advised by the commune) but the fertilizer is rather expensive. Manure and compost are used instead sometimes, but are less effective. Besides, for the manure cows, pigs or buffalo's are needed, which not every household has access to.

In general, for both Cha Mang and Ta Lu, most of the farmers pointed out that their work was still hard but it became easier compared to the life they had before the FLA policies were implemented. They can use fertilizers, they have trees to grow and they get a wide extent of agricultural information on what to use and how to grow crops. Besides, more money became available because of the yielding of Rubber and Acacia trees. People explained differences can be seen; villagers are building bigger and 'better' houses, they buy motorbikes and there are much more bicycles in the village. Furthermore, people's diet improved from mainly eating cassava to rice and nutritious food. Besides, children can go to school and most households got piped water from the government. Indeed, there are many houses in the village that look quite new, there is electricity and in every household interviewed in both Cha Mang and Ta Lu all the children go to school and, some even to university. So overall it seemed that life has become easier since the villagers of Cha Mang and Ta Lu live at the same place and have Red Books, although the disadvantages mentioned before, should not be forgotten.

6.6. Opinions on the Red Book's

The overall majority of the respondents in Cha Mang and Ta Lu saw the Red Books as a positive thing because it gives them the right to use their land, rent it, sell it, and it gives them stability. After receiving the RB's the villagers were not afraid anymore that another person would come and take their land. One of the villagers mentioned:

'Before when you got sick and you could not work on the land, other people could plant their crops on your land and then say that it was their land, but now that does not happen anymore, now everyone knows that it is your land' (farmer from Ta Lu).

Stability and security were the most mentioned factors for being positive about the Red Books. Connected to these factors was the decrease in conflicts, which used to occur more often when people had no formal land rights. Nevertheless, conflicts also occurred when the land borders got redefined. Other factors mentioned for being positive about the Red Books were: increasing incomes, distance between the land, services and living area, and the receiving of forest plantation land. As mentioned before, when people were asked what the rules were about the Red Books, most of them did not know what rules there were or they thought that there were no rules. In some cases villagers from Cha Mang and Ta Lu mentioned the rule that they could only keep the land for 50 years, which is the case with forest plantation land, while the field and garden land are for permanent use. However, others said they could keep the field land for five years before they have to give it back. To give a more detailed prescription about the opinions of the villagers a division per village is made.

Cha Mang

In Cha Mang the majority of the respondents saw the Red Book as a positive item that changed their life in a positive way. The different advantages that people mentioned of having a Red Book are described in table 6.1. The data in this table is based on eighteen household interviews collected in Cha Mang village; these include all the household interviews that have been conducted in Cha Mang village except for the four villagers that do not belong to the ethnic group of the Co Tu. In these eighteen interviews the leader of the Thuong Lo commune and the village leader are both included.

Table 6.1: Benefits of the RB system in Cha Mang

Benefits of the RB system According to the villagers of Cha Mang			
Benefits			
<N = times mentioned>	N		N
Increased production	1	increased living standard	6
Higher incomes	8	Borrowing money from the bank	1

More land rights and security	7	Work became easier	4
No more or less conflicts	3	Increased agricultural knowledge	2
More land (N=1)	1		

Source: Houben, 2011

Ta Lu

In Ta Lu most of the reactions were positive as well when respondents were asked about the Red Books. For all the different benefits people mentioned about receiving the RB's, are described in table 6.2. The data in table 6.2 is based on 20 household interviews collected in Ta Lu village; these include all the household interviews that have been conducted in Ta Lu village including the interview with the village leader plus the commune leader of Thuong Nhat.

Table 6.2: Benefits of the RB system in Ta Lu

Benefits of the RB system According to the villagers of Ta Lu*			
Benefits			
<N=times mentioned>	N		N
No more/ less conflicts	4	Life more stable:	4
Clear land border, no more stealing	3	Knowledge and awareness is higher on how to protect the forest	1
Land is equally divided	1	Land rights:	6
Increased incomes	7	Work is less hard now/ became easier	5
Work is more effective	1	Borrow Money	2
More agricultural knowledge	2	Services/facilities close by	2
More land	1	Increased live standard	1

*One person could give several answers. N is not corresponding with the amount of people but the amount of times the benefit was mentioned.

Source: Houben, 2011

Even though the majority of the villagers in both villages experience the Red Book as a positive change, there were enough people who criticized the way the FLA policies and the Red Book system were implemented.

6.6.1 Issues about the Red Books

Cha Mang

Although table 6.1 and 6.2 show a positive image, there were also negative reactions to the new system. For example some people complained about the land in the village being too small. Other complaints included land erosion and the decreasing size of usable land. As one of the men from Cha Mang explained;

'Before we got the land it was good land but after that it became bad because of the many harvests'.

Another point of criticism about the FLA policies involved the way the land was divided among the villagers. As mentioned before there have been conflicts about this division. One of the younger farmers mentioned that his parents and grandparents had a better life because they had more land before the implementation of the RB's. They did not receive any RB's and their land was taken away and given to other villagers. The last complaint was about the new rules on the forest use, since these rules made it more difficult for people to cut trees or hunt animals.

Ta Lu

The farmers in Ta Lu also complain about the erosion of the land. They mentioned a change in weather with an increase in natural disasters. One of the men explained that this change is caused by the 'gods'. In contrast to the opinion that the RB's have increased the incomes of the villagers, one of the men from Ta Lu argues that newly married couples that leave their parents house and lose their land, have to wait too long for new land and RB's from the commune. In addition he points out that the fee for receiving a RB is much too high. A further complaint is that the size of the land written in the RB's does not always match the reality. The building of a new road had decreased the size of people's land, but this size was not changed in the RB's. Another important remark made by one of the men from Ta Lu is that people can not read the RB's because they do not have enough knowledge of the Kinh language in which the RB's are written as was already explained in chapter two.

Nam Dong: Thuong Lo and Thuong Nhat

The vice leader of Nam Dong explained that the problem of newly married couples who have to wait for a long time before they can get a Red Book, occurs in both communes. In general, when two persons get married they move to a new house away from their parents, and therefore have not received any Red Books for land. Newly wedded couples and other young people, who did not receive forest plantation land in the past, have to pay money to the commune for receiving forest plantation land. The fee for this and for receiving a Red Book is very high. Some people in both Cha Mang and Ta Lu pointed out that they could not afford to buy a Red Book so they still used the land they had in the past but without a Red Book. Others have to wait too long; some villagers are waiting for over eight years now for receiving their Red books. One of the women in Ta Lu mentioned the time limit for paying back the loans to the bank; they should get more time to pay it back. In general when people were asked if they thought it would be better if everyone or no one had a Red Book they all preferred the Red Books over no Red Books because of the reasons mentioned in table 6.1 and 6.2. The advantages mentioned in these tables are all connected to the Book itself and the rights defined within the book. The criticism on the Red Books on the other hand has more to do with the way Red Books have been implemented within the village. In other words, people preferred a Red Book over no Red Book but explained that the system should be improved.

So far, the changes in financial capital (increasing incomes and working opportunities), human capital (information and education), physical capital (housing, services and transport) and natural capital (land condition, size and natural resources) are discussed. Further, a part of the social capital is discussed with the subject of people's changing lifestyle after they moved from one area to another and were forced to change their lifestyle from nomadic to sedentary. During the shifting cultivation period people were more dependent on each other and on the communal land ownership. It was the village head who took the decisions on the management and use of the land. With the implementation of the FLA policies people started to receive forest production land on an individual or household level with their own rights. This means that individual ownership has replaced the communal ownership creating a more individualistic lifestyle for the Co Tu. The benefits of this new lifestyle were different for every household, creating social differentiation. All these aspects together have highly influenced the communal village of the Co Tu as was common in the past, changing the roles of different village leaders and officials. However, social capital entails more than only a person's lifestyle. As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, there is no consensus in the livelihood framework and in some models culture is also used as a capital. However within this research we chose the model of Ashley and Carney (1999:47) and decided to deal with cultural features as if it is part of social capital.

6.7. Changing Co Tu Culture

To link the FLA with livelihood changes becomes even more difficult when it involves the social cultural sphere of the Co Tu villages. Due to time constraints during the research, this paragraph is mainly focused on what Co Tu people from Cha Mang and Ta Lu explained themselves about the changes in their culture. A full understanding of their changing culture would take much longer.

“ Culture, the traditions are fading and decreasing” (women from Cha Mang)

When the villagers in both villages were asked about the changes in their Co Tu culture, they often mentioned that the traditional festivals, singing and dancing have changed. Though the traditional dances are still used, these dances are used less frequent and are now combined with modern dance. Besides, the festivals are celebrated less frequent. For example the buffalo festival, described in chapter two, was once celebrated every year but nowadays it is celebrated only once in every four or five years. This means that people are spending less time on the worshipping of the god of the forest and praying for a good crop. There is however quite a difference in perception on changing culture, especially in the village of Ta Lu.

Ta Lu

One of the older farmers in the village explained that already in the 1960's their culture gradually started to change. From 2001 onwards more and more aspects of their traditional culture changed, because of new government policies and the changing economy. Different perspectives were offered: two men from Ta Lu mentioned that only some cultural aspects have changed because they are combined with more modern habits. Others saw their culture fade away. Another farmer from Ta Lu village argued that Co Tu people have their own channel on television and radio where they even speak the traditional Co Tu Language to maintain their traditions. This was established because of community cultural policies, indicating the importance of their own traditional language and customs. Another cultural factor that was often mentioned is the way people dress. Especially the younger generations of Co Tu are starting to dress more and more like Kinh people which the younger generation referred to as 'more modern'. Of course the more modern look of the Kinh people is largely based on the people from urban areas, instead of Kinh people living in the rural areas. Contradictory, mostly the older women above 50 years were wearing the blouses and skirts

combined with large necklaces referred to as Co Tu clothes. Not everyone sees these changes necessarily as good or bad. As one of the men mentioned, the Co Tu youth is increasingly communicating with other 'worlds' and thus with other cultures. Because of the increased contact with the Kinh culture the Co Tu youth starts to mix their own traditions with those of the Kinh people. In other words, diffusion is taking place between the Co Tu and Kinh culture.

Cha Mang

Within Cha Mang the people that noticed changing aspects of their culture seemed to be more pessimistic about these changes than in Ta Lu. Like a man from Cha Mang for example:

The Co Tu culture has changed a 100%, the traditional customs have almost completely disappeared, like the 'welcome the rice festival'. People forget the way how to dress with the traditional cotton; they forget the traditional musical instruments, before there used to be all this different clothes and holidays. .(68 year old men from Cha Mang)

The man was not the only one that mentioned the decreasing number of traditional dances and festivals. One of the reasons for these changes would be that no one is organizing anything to maintain or preserve their culture. Contradictory, one of the women mentioned that the government is trying to help them to sustain their culture by giving money to buy instruments for making traditional music and to use for the celebration of festivals. A different fear people expressed about their culture was the loss of the Co Tu language. In the past there were teachers who taught the Co Tu language, but nowadays the children only learn the Kinh language at school. In fact, the high influence of the Kinh on the Co Tu culture can partly be explained by the fact that more and more Co Tu children are going to school with Kinh people, on a school where only the Kinh language is taught. This was mentioned by Ta Lu villagers as well as by Cha Mang villagers. Not only do the Cha Mang children go to the same schools as Kinh people, the Co Tu people of Cha Mang are actually living in the same village with Kinh people, which is not the case for Ta Lu. However, it did not come to the foreland that the villagers from Cha Mang show more concerns about the influence of the Kinh culture than the Co Tu villagers in Ta Lu. It is clear that the exposure to television, internet and outsiders has had its effects on the traditional culture, but whether this is linked to FLA or not is hard to tell. Though the increase in income made it possible for most families to buy a television and in some cases even a computer in Cha Mang and Ta Lu. These new media articles brought families in contact with other cultures and ideas and showed them images they never saw before. On the other hand, the increase in income of many families also gave

them the opportunity to stay in their village instead of looking for another income in another town or city.

6.8. Effects of FLA on hierarchical structure within and from outside of the village

A further aspect of the Co Tu culture that changed both in Cha Mang and in Ta Lu is the hierarchical structure within the villages. In the past the village eldest, also the traditional leader, used to be the most important leader in the village. Nowadays, the highest position in the village is the village party leader, as described in chapter two. Another important change for the villages that is more directly linked to the FLA is the 'new' role of the commune and the district. The national government argued that the FLA implementation was being decentralized by giving the responsibility for the management and the division of the land and the Red Books to the district and the commune. Even though the commune and the district are held responsible for the FLA on a local level, it seems that the government still decides what happens to the land and how the land must be used. Besides the government still has the power to take back the land when they have other plans for it. The government also has the power to take back land when they have other plans for the use of that land. In that sense 'decentralization' may not be the right term for the FLA policies. However, it is not the government but the commune people did complain about mostly.

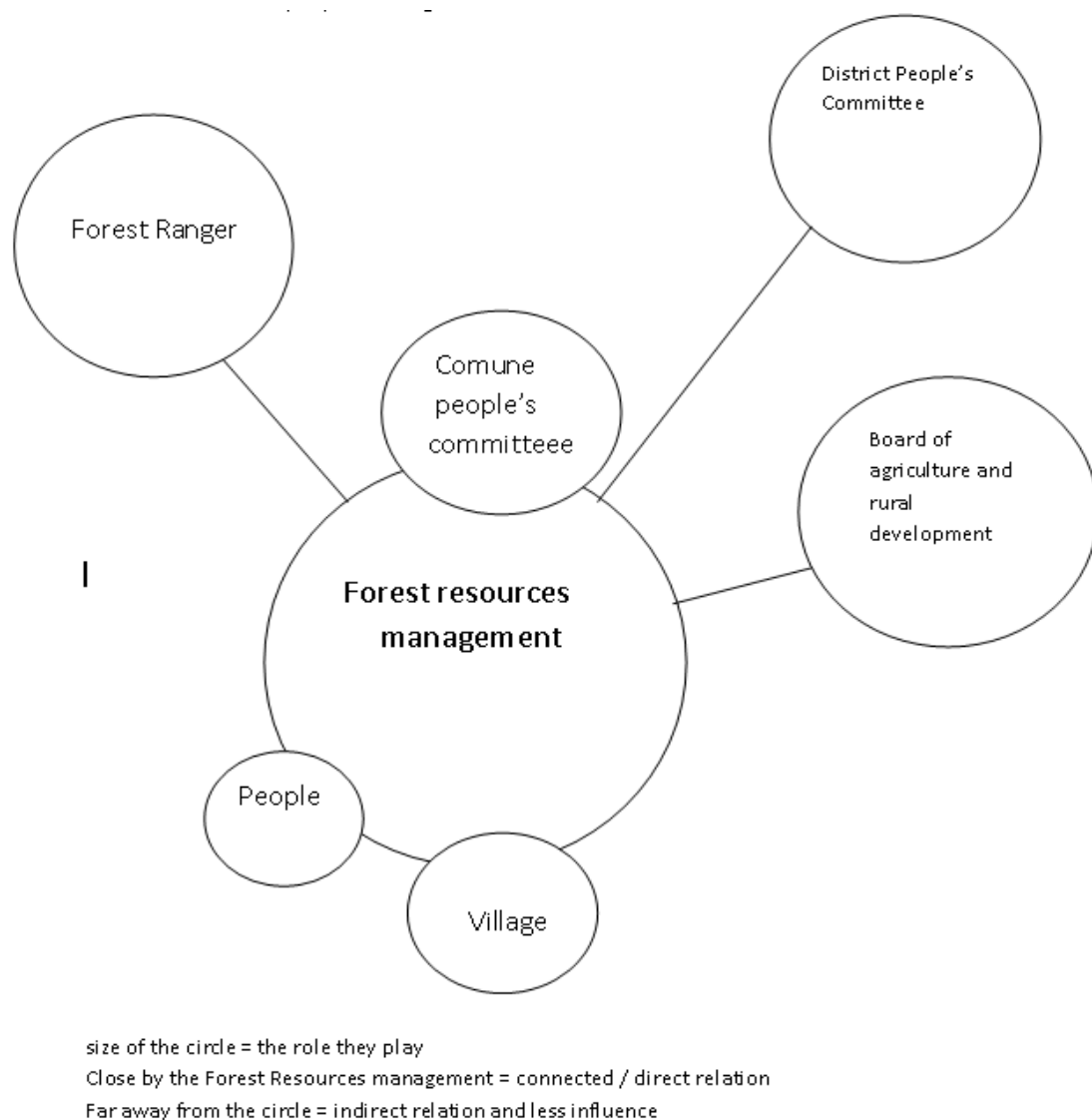
During the time of reallocation there were people who had more land than others and some families did not have any land; in this case the land was taken from one family and given to another by the commune. People complained about this reallocation saying they did not get any compensation from the commune. One of the farmers from Ta Lu village explained that some changes after the Red Books were introduced were not positive; giving the example of people relying on the commune to give their family more land than others. Practices of the commune giving more land to their friends and families and especially to themselves have been mentioned by several villagers. It became clear that the trust in the commune after the introduction of the FLA policies and the Red Book has not improved.

6.9. Stakeholder analysis

To take a closer look at the roles of different actors within and outside of the village, according to the villagers themselves, a participatory meeting was organized within Ta Lu and one within Cha Mang. During these meetings we represented the information of the different stakeholders in a model, creating a Venn diagram. The development of a Venn Diagram succeeded only in Cha Mang and not in Ta Lu because of communication problems. Within

Cha Mang the diagram was made by five villagers with the help of three students from the University of HUAF. Unfortunately, as explained in the methodological chapter, this Venn Diagram was focused on forest resources management and not on the FLA. Furthermore, different stakeholders were identified though without any explanation what their role was. However it is still useful to take a look at the diagram to get a picture of the role these different stakeholders play in the forest resources management since this is important for the villagers and their use of the forest. Unfortunately there was no diagram for Ta Lu village though there were some stakeholders identified in table 6.3 See the diagram in figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Venn Diagram in Cha Mang village



Source: Houben, 2011

Table 6.3: Stakeholder Analysis Ta Lu

Stakeholder Analysis Ta Lu	
<u>Stakeholder</u>	<u>Role</u>
Head of the District	Makes the Red Books
DPC	Collaborate with the land officer to measure the total land size of people and to redraw this data in a diagram or map for each household. They transfer all the documents to the head of the district
CPC	Held responsible for the reallocation of the land and the creating of the declaration for people to receive the land. They implement the land policies in the commune.
Forest Ranger	Determine the area where people are allowed to grow their trees and where the protected area starts.
Villagers	Develop the Forest protection regulation proposal in collaboration with the forest ranger
WB3 project	Support people to grow trees by providing loans to people to grow trees and providing people with the right seeds in exchange for money.

Source: Houben, 2011

6.10. Use and protection of the forest

Besides the village life, the use of the forest has also changed. In the past people used to hunt animals and cut trees as much as they needed and people went to the forest for NTFP's and they could move around freely. With the implementation of the FLA policies more attention is given to forest protection and nature conservation. New rules were developed and institutions implemented. The Forest Protection Unit is playing an important role in the daily life of the villagers in Cha Mang and Ta Lu. Nowadays people are officially not allowed to hunt animals and cut trees in the natural forest. One middle-aged man from Ta Lu even said that the FPU is very strict on the collection of NTFP's and that they are not allowed to collect the leaves since people would cut them from the trees. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the villagers from Cha Mang and Ta Lu do not always trust the FPU officers and have doubts about their reliability and honesty. An example of this distrust and the image several villagers in both villages have of the FPU officers is:

''One person is in the forest protection group, but when his relatives go into the forest to hunt an animal he or she will let them because they know each other.'' (Older farmer in Cha Mang Village)

Some of the villagers from Cha Mang and Ta Lu said they are scared to go into the forest to cut trees because of the risk of getting caught by the FPU. Besides it is easier and more accessible to get wood from the forest (plantation) land closer to their house. On the other hand, it was said that more education and information also led to an increase in awareness of the laws on forest protection and the importance to protect the environment among the villagers of both Cha Mang and Ta Lu. Though this does not account for all villagers, some actually found it useless to protect the environment as long as they would not receive any money for it. More on this subject and the role of the forest will be discussed in the following paragraph and in chapter five.

6.11. Environmental awareness

The increasing inflow of information people received in Cha Mang and Ta Lu through the mass media and different institutions and organizations, made them more aware of environmental protection and about the law of forest protection. Some of the poor families are interested in protecting the environment and this is not that surprising when one realizes how dependent these families are on the state of their land and the environment around them. As one of the villagers from Cha Mang mentioned:

'it is important to protect the environment because this will decrease natural disasters'

A woman from Ta Lu mentioned:

'In the past, storms and floods have destroyed many families their lands and broke thousands of trees on the plantations in the Nam Dong district.'

People start to realize that it is in their own interest to make sure that there are enough trees to protect their land against floods and storms. At the same time there are also a few households in Cha Mang and Ta Lu where they are discontented with the new forest regulations and the demand to take good care of the forest since they did not get any training in how to protect the forest and take care of the flora and fauna. In addition, people did not receive any financial support for this. Indeed as one of the older women from Cha Mang argued in response to the new policies:

'The government teaches people how to protect the forest, and if they do not do it that same people will be affected by the natural disasters, but they do not

give any money to protect the forest. I cannot protect the forest from natural disasters’.

Not only did the government pay more attention to the villager’s use of the forest and the land but they also focused more on people’s access to facilities like education, water, roads and health facilities. Hospitals and schools were built, and roads were being constructed.

6.12 Participatory Meetings: Problem Trees

Looking back at the livelihood changes that have taken place in Ta Lu and in Cha Mang, not many differences were found, that is why it can be useful to take a look at the ‘problem trees’ of both villages to see what the villagers themselves identified as the causes to their main problems and what the effects are of these problems. Since this thesis is also focused on the intra household differences between men and women, the problem trees are conducted separately for men and women.

Cha Mang

Problem tree men:

The men defined the following four core problems: no understanding of the FLA policies and what benefits they can get from these policies; no alternatives for the farming work; use of forest and agricultural land is not as effective as expected and the loosing of livestock. Some of the causes for these problems that were mentioned included: natural disasters, lack of help from the government and the rangers, low level of education, lack of farming land, non-modern ways of cultivation and a lack of fertilizer. In the end, the core problems led to low outputs, low incomes and a lack of understanding of the new market system. All together, this leads to the fact that people are still relatively poor.

Problem tree women:

The women in Cha Mang defined their core problem as ‘land use may not be highly effective’. Some of the causes, see also appendix, four women mentioned for the ineffectiveness of the land use were: limited land area, population raise, lack of fertilizer, intensive cultivation, and the difficulties of cultivation on complex terrains. The effects of these problems are leading to soil degradation and thus the narrowing of usable cultivation land.

Ta Lu

Problem tree men

For the Men in Ta Lu it was clear what their main problem was: ineffective land use is effecting the way of living of the villagers in Ta Lu. Different causes referred to were: out of date cultivation methods, disconnection with the market needs, limited land area, distance to the land and an unstable market. According to the men these causes together leads to degraded soil, low prices and thus low incomes.

Problem tree women

The women in Ta Lu defined their core problem as ‘difficulties effecting people’s way of living’, what they meant with this difficulties became clear after they referred to the different causes and effects. A few of the causes mentioned were: too many children, lack of cultivated land, soil erosion, low education, natural disasters, lack of water and weak techniques. Most of the causes mentioned deal with the farming work, materials and the quality of the land. The quality of the land is connected with many different factors like the weather, cultivation methods and fertilizer use, together leading to a low living standard, destroyed forests, low level of education and a low level of school attendance.

Taking all these problem trees of women and men together, it seems that the women as well as the men in both villages are mostly concerned about their farming work. However, the women did not mention the lack of occupation alternatives or inequalities between women and men. In contrast the men of Cha Mang did mention this lack of alternatives. Both trees show that according to these women and men of Ta Lu and Cha Mang, the condition of the land and the factors influencing the land and its productivity are the most important causes for their main problem, and especially the men underlined the importance of the market.

Conclusion

Within this chapter the changes that have taken place within the livelihoods of the Co Tu villagers were discussed together with the underlying causes for these livelihood changes. The most obvious change, was the rising income for many farmers in both villages, caused mainly by the high profits coming from the trees and the intensification of cultivation methods with the use of chemical fertilizers. These changes, partly caused by the FLA policies in combination with an overall economic growth, improved people’s livelihoods. Even though the incomes increased together with the average level of education within both

villages, the unwillingness of most villagers to leave their village or district in combination with the commune's demand for expensive permission papers makes it difficult for most villagers to find an occupation besides farming. In a way people have improved their living standard till a certain level, but they do not have the opportunities to raise their living standard much beyond this level. Though most people do not exactly know their income, it is clear that they are close to the poverty line.

Unfortunately the FLA policies are not as efficient as expected, partly indicated by the amount of households still waiting for their RB's. One of the reasons for this inefficiency is the lack of clear information on the FLA policies, aggravated by the fact that all documents are written in the Kinh language, making it less accessible for Co Tu villagers who are unable to read the Kinh language. Further, many households do not have the money to pay for the fee that the commune asks for the RB's. In addition, the subjectivity of forest rangers and commune and district officers regarding their own friends and family aggravates the weak relationship between the villagers and the commune, district and forest rangers. This weak relationship can eventually lead to distrust among the villagers, in the idea that they have the opportunity to improve their livelihood. When the villagers have problems they prefer to go to their family, neighbors and certain village groups like the women group or the farmers association. One of the positive changes that has taken place is the increase in information people receive. With the FLA policies more attention was given to the villages and their farming work and use of the forest. In addition more information became available through the media. The villagers themselves claimed to be more aware of the environment and the farming work than previous generations. Unfortunately the information about the FLA policies is too vague for people to understand what their rights are and how they can benefit from the land allocation. However, in general the Co Tu population of Ta Lu and Cha Mang are positive about the rights and security they obtained by receiving the RB's.

Chapter 7: Consequences for the forest use after FLA implementation

In the previous chapters the main forest land allocation policies, the contemporary livelihoods, the changes that have taken place within these livelihoods and the underlying causes for these changes were described. In addition, in every chapter the role of the forest for the inhabitants of Cha Mang and Ta lu was shortly discussed.

This chapter will focus on the use of the forest by the villagers from Ta Lu and Cha Mang, the way the natural forest is managed and how this has changed since FLA implementation. Furthermore, possible reasons for these changes in forest use will be discussed. Since not

many differences in consequences are discovered between both villages, they will be discussed together, though referred to by village name.

7.1. 'The Old days'

As became clear from the previous chapters, before the Red Book system was introduced most villagers were dependent on the forest products such as NTFP's, animals and dry wood for a large part of their daily income. Though the largest part of the villagers interviewed in Ta Lu and Cha Mang were too young to compare the situation before the FLA policies and after, some of them did know the stories of their parents and a part was old enough to remember. In the past, the majority of the Co Tu farmers were using shifting cultivation as a way to cope with land erosion and the loss of fertility. Though people used to move around a lot, it was also believed that there was holy land that could not be entered without worship. For some 'holy' forests, people were only allowed to enter in case of a funeral or the visit of a grave. In addition people asked permission for hunting animals and entering the forest. Disease was believed to be a punishment from the gods of the forest. Nowadays it is still believed by some Co Tu villagers from Ta Lu that the gods of the forest will punish a person that hunts animals in the forest without asking permission.

7.2. Rules and Regulations

At the present time it is not allowed anymore to move from place to place and to clear land for own use. People in both villages admit that it became more difficult to go into the forest to cut trees because of the new rules, the forest protection unit and the forest rangers. In some cases when the villagers get caught they have to pay a fine, dependent on the sort of tree and the amount of trees. In other cases people lose all the trees and one villager from Ta Lu village even mentioned they took away his food ration and money. In both villages people indeed said they stopped cutting trees because, or partly because, of the punishments. Both in Ta Lu as in Cha Mang the relatively younger villagers said that it is also getting more difficult to collect NTFP's because of the strict surveillance of the forest rangers. This subject remained a point of discussion, since some villagers said it was allowed to collect honey and leaves while others said it was not. This discrepancy can have several reasons; one could be that people are not well informed about the rules, another reason could be that the rules forest rangers apply are dependent on the relationship the ranger has with the person he catches. Several people reported this discrepancy in the application of rules; a 39 year old woman from Cha Mang declared there was corruption among the Forest Protection group of forest

Rangers, and about three people from Cha Mang village mentioned that some of the forest rangers were not punishing their own relatives or friends when they catch those cutting trees or hunting animals. No corruption was reported during any interviews in Ta Lu. What caused this difference was not clear, but it could also be a coincidence because of the relatively low amount of interviews and an even lower amount of people talking about this sensitive subject. During the conversations on corruptive practices in general there were more stories from both villages. Corruptive practices meaning in this case; people in a higher position accepting money or other ‘bribes’ for allowing illegal activities or giving away positions only to family or friends. A good example of the first comes from a 35 year old woman in Ta Lu village. During an interview she softened her voice while saying the following:

There is a spring close by, a water spring where people from another village go to mine gold, this is illegal and it pollutes the water because they use HG (a liquid to mine the gold). The liquid (chemicals) affects the life of the villagers, especially the women, because they can't go there anymore to swim with their kids or to wash. But when the villagers complain to the commune they do not listen. Probably because these people that mine the gold give them money. (35 year old woman from Ta Lu village)

To summarize it, this woman thought the commune is accepting money from the gold diggers in order for them (the commune) to not act and allow the gold diggers to continue their illegal activities, even though the villagers complain about it. Another example was given by an older man from Ta Lu village

*Is the land equally divided in this village?
No, the ones who work in the government keep the large size of land to themselves.
(71 year old men from Ta Lu village)*

In Cha Mang village too, stories were told about village leaders who were only helping relatives and friends, leaders who gave themselves the biggest pieces of land and Forest Rangers accepting money for not punishing illegal activities. Though some people talked about this, it became clear that the functioning of the village leader, the commune and the district is a sensitive subject and the word ‘corruption’ itself was not used according to the translator.

7.3. Hunting Animals and collecting NTFP's and Dry wood

Within the FPU itself the border between what is ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ even remained rather obscure when it comes to collecting dry wood, NTFP's and the hunting for animals. At the

forest protection Unit they said the control on hunting animals was strict and that is was illegal, yet one of the households in Cha Mang had a cage with monkey's they had caught in the forest. It did not appear as though they were hiding the fact that they had caught animals in the forest. The monkeys could be seen upon walking by their house. This seems contradictory to the information that there is a control system and people get a high fine when they get caught. This could mean that people are not punished as long as the hunting is on a small scale and only for own use, or that the control is not done in the village itself but only in and around the natural forest. Another reason could be that this family that caught the monkeys is befriended with one of the FPU officers. An officer from the FPU said during an interview:

“ If people want to hunt some animals they have to pay some money to the district, but if you hunt a lot of animals you get a big punishment.”

It is unclear whether he meant the villagers have to pay a small price as a fine or if they just have to pay some money to the district if they want to hunt animals. It gives the impression that he is saying they have to pay some small ‘bribe’ to hunt animals. An older man from Ta Lu village expressed his concern about the decreasing number of animals in the natural forest. The ‘wild’ animals can only be found deep into the forest nowadays, he explained. The man used to hunt but, nowadays, only catches some fish and frogs and collects some honey. Some of the people interviewed admitted they also catch animals now and then even though most of them are aware that it is illegal.

Non Timber Forest Products

Some people are still highly dependent on the NTFP's for their income. One of the examples was the farmer from Ta Lu village described in chapter two; he admitted that he goes into the forest to look for honey and sometimes stays there for over two weeks or as long as necessary to collect the honey because he can't go home empty handed; that would make him feel useless. He was not the only one with a story like that, even though they do have forest plantation land, this does not mean that the income collected from this land is enough to sustain a whole family as the example shows. As mentioned in chapter two, the honey can provide families with a substantial income. For example, one bottle of honey is worth 200.000 VND; around ten dollars. The NTFP's that were most mentioned were honey and leaves. Both in Ta Lu as in Cha Mang the younger men collect the NTFP's, the elderly people are too weak or sick to participate in such heavy ‘journey's’. The distance to the natural forest was reason number one for people not to collect NTFP's next to the strict rules of the forest

rangers. The distance to the natural forest has indeed increased now people are not living in the forest anymore.

(Fire)Wood

Many of the people from both villages said they collect their fire-wood (referred to as 'dry wood') in their own forest plantation land. The reasons for not collecting the dry wood in the natural forest differ, though the distance and the new rules and regulations seem to be the main reasons. On the other hand, if villagers need wood from the natural forest, they can write a plan and give this to the commune, and then eventually the district will sign it, as described in chapter two. Not many of the villagers expressed any concerns about the fact that they are not allowed to cut trees anymore in the natural forest. They seem more concerned about the rule against animal hunting and the fact the natural forest is so far away. What is most surprising is that these villages are located in the buffer zone of Bach Ma National park but that no one has ever mentioned the national park, and when asked about it the villagers mentioned distance as a reason. Only one person of the 20 interviews, a woman from Cha Mang, did not use the wood because she already used gas for cooking since a couple of years. This woman belonged to another ethnic group than Co Tu.

7.4. Environmental Changes and awareness

When the villagers of both Ta Lu and Cha Mang were asked what has changed in the environment in the last 20 years, it became clear that people hold opposite opinions on this subject. Some villagers said there are less animals and trees left and that things are getting worse, while others said the situation is improving. Most elderly people thought it used to be much better and cleaner when they were young. A middle aged man from Ta Lu village expressed his concerns about the diversity of the trees in the natural forest. He explained that natural trees are cut down to grow Acacia and Rubber trees, causing a lack of different tree species in the environment.

In general people are going less into the natural forest than before and collect less NTFP's than before. It seems that receiving the plantation forest and the growing of Keo and Rubber trees is getting more interest from the villagers than the natural forest, which is not surprising, looking at the high profits gained from the trees, even though it takes a while before the trees are ready to be harvested.

One of the older villagers in Cha Mang village of Thuong Lo talks about the changing perceptions and the growing awareness of people on the importance of the trees and the profits that can be made in the wood industry. People start to understand that it is important to

protect the natural forest to eventually protect themselves and their land from natural disasters and in the end, get more profits. More villagers talked about this awareness, and many said that they themselves and the others in their village now know more about the environment and the forest than people in the past. They claim to know more about the farming work because the different organizations from outside and inside the village and the commune instructed them. Other factors referred to, were the upcoming role of the media and an overall increase in school attendance. Some even say they used to be 'ignorant' or unknowing in the past about how to manage the land and the forest. On the other hand, people complained about the fact that they are held responsible to take care of the natural forest. The natural forest was given to the village to protect it, but they do not get a reward for it or any professional training, so how should they protect the forest and why would they? As a 71 year old farmer from Ta Lu village states:

“Because protecting the natural forest will prevent natural disasters.”

Conclusion

With the receiving of forest plantation land and rubber and acacia trees people's incomes increased. Because of this they got less dependent for their income on the NTFP's and dry-wood. More and more people started to rely on the forest plantation land and the selling of these trees. A shift took place in the dependence of people on NTFP's to the dependence on the forest plantation trees. Nowadays people feel that the natural forest is too far to go there, the collecting of honey is too dangerous and the risk to get caught by the forest rangers is too big. It is mostly the young men that are still going to collect NTFP's and in most cases these men come from a poorer family who are more dependent on the incomes they get from selling the NTFP's. Aside from the NTFP's villagers are still collecting dry wood from the natural forest, though most claimed they only get their dry-wood from their own forest plantation land. At the end people in both villages assumed that they are more aware of environmental protection and environmental problems than the past generations. The reasons they gave were the large amounts of information they receive from the village, the commune and different projects and organizations and the media. So even though less people are going to the natural forest, for some families the natural forest is still an important source of income. The rules on forest use and protection are not working as well as they could because of corruption within the FPU and the commune. Different villagers are aware of the fact that some forest rangers allow their family members and friends to carry out illegal activities in the forest without getting punished. This can also undermine the authority and reliability of the forest rangers

and eventually this can cause that villagers do not trust and respect the forest rangers anymore.

Chapter 8: Intra-household livelihood differences in Co Tu families in Nam Dong district

In the previous chapters the following subjects have been discussed: main FLA policies, the livelihoods of the Co Tu, the influences of the FLA on the livelihoods of the Co Tu and their use of the forest. Within every chapter it became clear that there are differences between the women and men in both villages. A clear example was the difference in school attendance and education levels. Another difference that emerged was the role division between husbands and wife's for example in the case of collecting non timber forest products (NTFP's). These are some of the subjects that will be elaborated on more widely within this chapter. Since the main focus of the research was put on the livelihoods of the Co Tu in general and the influence of the FLA on their livelihoods, less information became available on the intra-household differences for all five capitals. It is for that reason that we decided to only discuss those changes that became most clear during the research, and the effect of FLA on these changes as far as this was possible. As already mentioned, education was one of these differences, which will be discussed below.

8.1. Education and Occupation

As described in Chapter two, there is still quite a large difference in school attendance between women and men. Unfortunately for this chapter, the information came solely from interviews with adults. It is therefore not possible to give first-hand information from the group concerned: the youth. The difference in schooling between boys and girls may be much smaller now than when the interviewed adults attended school, approximately ten or fifteen years ago. Inhabitants from both villages reported that the situation today, were boys and girls both attend school, is a change from only very recently. A young woman from Ta La village mentioned that it was only five years ago that boys were still prioritized over girls when it comes to school attendance even if the girl is achieving better academically. A teacher from the Kinh group in Cha Mang village reports that the old situation is still maintained: when parents do not have enough money to pay the school fee for all their children the boys will be favoured. He called it "traditional thinking". In contrast to what the woman declare, the men said that the traditional thinking is still in place in both the Kinh group as in the Co Tu group. The woman from Ta Lu village gave an example of her uncle who has a son and a daughter,

while the daughter was much better at school she was not allowed to study and her uncle said:

‘‘Why send a girl to school, if it has no use’’(uncle) referring to the fact that the girl will get married and stay at the house with the children and do the work at the farm’’. (Women from Ta Lu).

This opinion used to be common in the past. Even though it seems as if the difference in school attendance between both sexes is declining, with more girls attending school, the imbalance of the past still has its affects on the lives of women today. An example comes from a 35 year old woman from Ta Lu saying that the knowledge of women is limited compared to men. When she was asked why this is, she explained;

Because less women were going to school, and for a shorter time. Before only a few women use to go to school, there was not enough money. Nowadays more girls are going to school. (35 year old women from Ta Lu)

One of the women of Ta Lu formulated the problem as such: women lack the education and the information men received while they attend school. Another related problem sometimes mentioned by women was the difficulty in finding employment because of this ‘lack of knowledge’. The reasons as to why women did not attend school differed from: disliking going to school, having to work at the house, quitting school to get married and parents not having enough money to send all their children to school. It should not be forgotten that in the past it was more accepted to keep the kids in general at home and there was less Government interference, so also many boys had to stop school or did not go to school at all. Likewise men had to quit school when they got married and this is still rather common. In addition, men admitted to have difficulties in finding a job besides farming. However, no connection was found between the intra-household differences in education and access to employment and the implementation of FLA policies.

Most of the farmers in both villages said they could not get another job besides farming. One of the farmers from Cha Mang village explains how the commune makes it very difficult and expensive to get a job for his wife who studies to become a kindergarten teacher. They had to submit 600.000 VND every single time they tried to arrange a permission paper at the commune for her to be able to look for a job. They tried looking for a job twice, unfortunately both tries failed, leaving them with a bill the size of half a monthly salary covering the cost of the two job applications. This was quite an exceptional case were the men is working as a farmer, saving money for his wife to work as a teacher. In most cases in both villages it is the men who are working at the district, commune or village and the wives are

working on the land and at the house. Even though there were some cases where both husband and wife were having an occupation next to their farming activities, this was more the exception than the rule.

When one of the women in the village of Ta Lu was asked if women can also get a different job from farming like some men have, she said this was possible, for example women could work in an office or get another kind of official occupation. Though not enough household-interviews were conducted to give any statistical conclusions on this specific subject, it is quite noticeable that of the 40 household interviews that were conducted, only four Co Tu women, or the partners of the men that were interviewed, are having a job besides farming, while around eleven men and the partners of the women interviewed are working as a guard in the village or patrolling for the forest protection team or working at the commune level, while their wives worked on the land and at home. This division was almost equal for both villages, see also table 8.1. In addition, the commune leaders from Thuong Nhat (Ta Lu village) and Thuong Lo (Cha Mang village) and the village leaders are all male, while only few women have positions of power. The only Co Tu woman within Cha Mang village with such a position is the village leader's assistant. Still the largest part of the people interviewed was farmer. In most of the cases when the husband was working at the commune, the FPU or the District, the income was not enough for the whole family. This was also why their wives still had to work on the farm land to supplement the family income. The fact that the forest plantation land has increased most households incomes, can also play a role in the small amount of households where no farming activities were carried out.

Table 8.1: People with another occupation besides farming in both research villages

Other profession besides farming or instead of*			
		Women	Men
Cha N = 20	Mang	2	5
Ta N = 19	Lu	2	6

**These data are only the outcome of the interviews, it could be that more people have an occupation who did not mention this or only mentioned it about themselves and not about their partner.*

Source: Houben, 2011

8.2. Role Division

Though there are some Co Tu women and men in both Ta Lu village as well in Cha Mang who have an official occupation, the majority of the Co Tu people living in these villages are indeed farmers. What is than the role division within a ‘farmers’ household between husband and wife and what is the role of family and children?

Asking about the role division revealed much; women are supposed to do the cooking and perform the household tasks. Women do occasionally go the field to collect NTFP’s but this task is mostly done by the men as the distance to the natural forest is great and covering the distance requires strength. The women work in the garden, on the field, take care of the animals and work in the house. In many households both men and women claimed they share the work and divide it equally. When the women were interviewed alone they still maintained the fact that the workload was divided evenly. However, in both villages there were a few women who disagreed.

Cha Mang

A 40 year old woman from Cha Mang village explains that she has to do all the work on the land and in the house because her husband is working as a police officer in the province. During the week no one is there to help her, her parents and her husband’s parents are too old. Her husband occasionally helps her in the weekends. A young woman from the same village states that her husband is never helping her and that she has to work hard in the house. While she is telling this, she starts to get nervous and explains that it is hard for her to talk about the problems of women in this village. It seemed that she was not the only woman having difficulties describing their problems and talking or ‘complaining’ about their husband and other men in the village. Both of the women that complained were alone at the time the interview was held. In most interviews, however, the women were not alone and the husbands sometimes interfered during an answer or started answering questions for his wife. This renders it difficult to tell whether the answers most women gave were ‘socially desirable’ or truly meant. The majority of the women in Cha Mang village explained that, even though, the tasks between men and women are different, the workload is equal. In general it became apparent that women are assumed to do the cooking and the household tasks next to working in the garden, on the field and taking care of the animals. While the men work in the natural forest, the field land and the forest plantation land. In some cases the women or the men explained that they helped each other when possible.

Ta Lu

The situation on the role division in Ta Lu village is comparable with the situation of Cha Mang. Here too, the majority of the people interviewed see their role division as equal. The following description of a 21 year old woman from Ta Lu illustrated this:

“Women and men are equal in their work; women do more housework and men more heavy work, but we share the work. Both of us work.”

Another woman admits that it is hard for women to leave the house because they have to take care of the children and the house, but that they still share the work in the garden and the field while her husband also works at the forest plantation land. Another example is a middle aged man from Ta Lu who explained that the one who finishes first with the work can go back to the house to cook; this is sometimes the men and sometimes the women, but they help each other.

To summarize, in both villages the normal role division is considered to be: the women takes care of the house, children some of the garden work and the animals. The men takes care of the heavier chores like the work on the field land, the forest plantation land and the collecting of NTFP's and dry wood in the natural forest. Though the division can differ from family to family, in every family it was considered normal that the women take care of the children.

When both women and men in Cha Mang and Ta Lu were asked who is in charge of the money they all mentioned that the women are in charge because they have to go to the market to buy the food and other supplies for the children and the house. Surprisingly, the men remain seen as the head of the household, even though the women are in charge of the money since the men decides what happens and he is the one that makes the decisions within the household. Though some men admitted they discussed things first with their wife, but in the end their voice is final. In that sense it is disputable what ‘being in charge’ means when the decisions are not theirs to take. Overall none of the respondents mentioned a difference in the role division in the household compared to before the FLA policies were implemented aside from the fact that men nowadays have to work more on the forest plantation land instead of performing other tasks, and for woman it became too heavy to go to the natural forest because of the distance.

8.3. Marital problems and violence

It was hard to obtain information on inequalities within the household and between husband and wife, especially when it comes to the subject of marital problems and violence. When women were asked about problems between husband and wife they gave the impression that everything is equal and that there are not many problems. Even though there were a few persons in both villages that mentioned alcohol use as a problem within their village and within some households. Not only the women referred to the alcohol problem, even some men mentioned it.

Cha Mang

About five people in Cha Mang village mentioned the alcohol use within the village. All of them admitted that some people within the village drink too much and that this is a problem in the village. The majority of the villagers considered to be heavy drinkers are men although there are also a few women. Problems related to alcohol misuse are: absence from work, aggression (both verbal and physical) and domestic violence. It appeared as though there were not many steps taken to solve these problems. It also remains unclear if the alcohol abuse is only a problem within households or that it affects the whole village. Examples of both situations have been reported: A villager confirmed that in cases where the situation is uncontrollable people from the village and the commune approach the intoxicated person and try to calm him by talking to him. If the intoxicated person refuses to calm down he will be summoned by the commune. Another story illustrating this example was that of a young woman whose husband drinks too much. The man started fights with their neighbours and threatened them with a knife but did not hit his own wife. This is in contrast with the story of another woman explaining that alcohol misuse is a problem within the households and not between households. Rape within a household has also been reported by a woman, unwillingly pregnant with her second child. However, this is a very sensitive subject, and also for this woman it was not easy to talk about her husband and the way he treats her. Not one of all the women that were interviewed mentioned their husbands hit them, though several villagers talked about domestic abuse. It seemed that villagers were admitting the occurrence of domestic abuse within their village without being able to point out in which houses this took place.

Ta Lu

A middle aged man from Ta Lu describes the problems that occur due to alcohol abuse in his village. According to this man alcohol abuse leads to the following problems: wasting time, loss of relationships and character changes. Besides some small quarrels inside the family, he states that there is no fighting caused by the use of alcohol. A woman from Ta Lu village agrees that the alcohol is not causing too much problems besides some small quarrels. *'Mostly when the men are drunk they fall*

asleep' she says. She admits that in the past, men used to hit their wives when there was disagreement, but this took place over 20 years ago when she was young. Another young woman from Ta Lu village disagrees saying that it is a big problem within the village; a problem they also discuss within the women group. She estimated that about ten out of 50 households do not have the right awareness how to treat a woman and within these households the men hit their wife. During one of these meetings with the women group she and her friend came with the idea to invite the men at a meeting to discuss this problem with the men too, to teach them how to be a good husband.

In the end, no connection was found between marital problems and violence and the FLA policies.

8.4. Women's rights and groups

One of the women in Ta Lu spoke about how things have changed for the women in the village during time. It was only 5 years ago she said, 'the men were in charge of the women', women could not decide what they wanted to do and always had to ask permission from their husbands. An example the women gave was: when there would be a festival or a celebration with dancing and singing, the women was not allowed to join the festivities without her husband's permission.

Cha Mang

As mentioned before, it was difficult for women to talk about their marital problems and inequalities within the household. The only times these subjects were discussed was when the women were alone in their house during the interviews. A good example is the young woman from the village who talks about her husband forcing her to get pregnant. She was so scared to tell this that most of the time she was whispering. She concluded that within some household's husband and wives do have equal rights and in some households they do not.

Marital problems are one of the subjects discussed within the women's group. The women's group is the group where the women mostly go to when they have a problem. 'A problem' can include different things, among others: an intra-household problem as violence or alcoholism, a financial problem or problems with the crops or the soil. In case of such problems, the women often seek help at the family and the neighbours but also at the women's group, though the opinions on the functioning of this group differ among the women in Cha Mang. Like one of the women who mentioned that she was never going to the women group with her problems because there was no equality between the women. When she told them about her problems, they never responded, she explained. On the other hand she did see equality between women and men.

Ta Lu

Also in Ta Lu most women were a member of the women's group and go there when they are dealing with problems. The women's group has meetings to discuss these problems.

Within Ta Lu most men and women indicated that they are treated equal. During one of the conversations with a woman, about this subject, her husband came in and started to take over. In the meanwhile she had to take care of the child. This was not the only time that a husband was answering questions for his wife. In addition, more women explained that their task to take care of the children sometimes makes it difficult to leave the house; for example in case of a village meeting it is often the husband that participates because the wife has to take care of the children. In a certain way this decreases a woman's right and voice within the village. Another inequality that was found within the households and between men and women in general within both villages was the land and inheritance rights, discussed in paragraph 6.6.

Again none of the respondents mentioned how the above problems have been changed through time showing any link with the FLA policies. The respondent did mention how inequalities have changed through time, and women are now having more rights than in the past. Most of the intra-household differences however are strongly connected to culture instead of being connected to policies.

8.5. Cultural Division and customs

The division between men and wife within a household also has to do with the traditional Co Tu culture. The Co Tu culture shows the characteristics of a Patrilineal descent group, meaning that people will join the fathers group automatically at birth and stay members throughout life, though the female members of the group are excluded as defined by Kottak (2002;208). Within the Co Tu culture for example, it is tradition when a couple marries the woman is expected to leave her parents house to come and live with the parents of her husband for a while. Further, the inheritance goes through the family line of the father. In addition the father is considered the head of the household as was also mentioned before in this chapter. Than what if a woman does not get married?

As a woman from Cha Mang explained:

If you do not get married you have 2 options:

- 1. Stay with your family and use their land.*

2. *Go to the city, go to Ho Chi Min and find a job there, like sewing.
(23 year old married women from Cha Mang).(int.14)*

As discussed in chapter three, some changes took place within the village when it comes to the Co Tu culture. However it remains unclear what the connection is between the FLA policies and these changes. In general both Co Tu villages defined their culture to have become more 'modern', even when it comes to marriage and pregnancies.

8.6. Red Book and Land Inheritance

As mentioned above, within the traditional culture of the Co Tu it is defined that inheritance goes through the family line of the father. In fact the inheritance of the Red Books goes from father to son and not to daughter. Besides, in the past, the name in the Red Book was always that of the husband. Nowadays the RB can entail both the name of the husband and the wife, but most of the times it is the husband that inherits land from his parents and it is the wife that shares this land with her husband. When a family has boys and girls it is the boys that inherit the land since it is assumed that girls will get married and use the land of their husbands. Only in a few cases it was the women that inherited the land from their parents. A reason could be that she has no brothers or for other reasons not mentioned. When a husband dies it is the wife that inherits the land first, followed by her son(s).

Cha Mang

Unfortunately the question whose name was in the RB was not always asked or understood. For this reason there are no data for all the interviews conducted, of whose name is in the RB. This should be taken into consideration when talking about the differences mentioned in the amount of women and men who have their names written in the RB. In total there were nine people who answered the question and who were in the possession of at least one Red Book within Cha Mang. Of these nine people only three women said their name was in the RB. It is noteworthy that none of the men interviewed mentioned that their wife's name was in the RB. It was mentioned eight times that a man or husband's name was in the RB and there was only one case where a woman said that both her and her husband's name were in the RB.

Ta Lu

The situation in Ta Lu seems to be a bit different. Of the nine people in the possession of a RB answering the question 'whose name was in the RB', there were six cases where it was mentioned that both the name of the husband and the wife were written in the Red Book. Though it is striking that in all cases the husband's name was in the RB while of the seven men interviewed, only in five cases their wife's name was also placed in the Red Book. Still

this seems to be more often than in Cha Mang. One of the reasons that were given for the fact that only the men's name was in the RB was; because the man is the head of the household.

For more details about whose name was in the Red Book and who will inherit the Red Book(s), see Table 8.2 for Ta Lu and 8.3 for Cha Mang.

Table 8.2: Red Book inheritance and naming in Ta Lu

Village	Gender	Name in Redbook	Inherited from or for	Wife	Parents Husband	Parents Wife	Brothers	
Ta Lu		husband	wife	Children 1=sons 2=daughters	Wife	Parents Husband	Parents Wife	Brothers
Age								
42	M	1	1	1	1	1		
37	M	1	1	1	1	1		
33	M							
55	M	1	1	1				
38	M							
30	M							
35	F							
35	F	1				1		
29	F							
30	F							
59	M							
50	M	1						
21	F	1	1			1		
30	M	1	1			1		
79	F							
61	M	1	1	1				
71	M	1	0					
40	M							
26	F	0	0					
Total		9	5	4	2	5	0	0

Source: Houben, 2011

Table 8.3: Red Book inheritance and naming in Cha Mang

Village	Gender	Name in Redbook	Inherited from or for	Wife	Parents Husband	Parents Wife	Brothers	
Cha Mang		husband	Wife	Children 1=sons 2=daughters	Wife	Parents Husband	Parents Wife	Brothers
Age								
30	F		1			1		
65	M	1			1			
40	F		1			1		
?	M	1	0		1			
45	M	1		1				

23	F	1	0			1		
31	F							
60	F	1	1					
61	M							
35	M							
24	F							
21	M							
25	F							
68	F		0					1
57	M	1	0			1		
30	M	1	0			1		
64	M	1	0	1				
72	F							
39	F							
36	F							
Total		8	3	2	0	5	2	1

Source: Houben, 2011

Again, the table shows that it is mostly the boys (sons) that inherit the Red Books from their parents and not the daughters and that it is more common that the husband's name is in the Red Book than the wife's name. The link between FLA policies and the Red Book inheritance is clear, since the Red Books are part of the whole policy. A person's right to put his or her name in the Red Book has changed through time, since only the husband of a married couple was allowed to put his name in the Red Book and not his wife's name. However, even though it is allowed today to write down both the husband and wife's name it is still more common for the husband to be in the Red Book than his wife. This makes it more difficult for a woman to claim her rights in case of a divorce for example. Besides, the husband gains more power over the land rights, and the profits received from the crops and trees on the land, when only his name is in the book. Even though no women showed any concerns about the fact that her name was not in the Red Book, it is important to focus on the underlying causes for this inequality. One of the reasons for this phenomenon could be the role pattern within both villages and the prejudices that are spread both from inside and outside the village about the role of women.

8.7. Prejudices

The majority of Co Tu men in both Cha Mang and Ta Lu see women as care givers, the ones that are predestined to get married and have the duty to take care of the house and the children next to their farming tasks. Not only the men but also the majority of the women saw this as 'the way things are' as was described in paragraph 6.2. The men on the other hand are defined as the strong person in the household. They have to provide the main income and take care of heavier tasks. Not only the villagers themselves have a fixed image of the tasks of men and women in the village, this is also the case for the Commune office and the District office. As

mentioned before it was obvious that within the District office and within both Commune offices the overall majority working there were men. Though these differences are changing, it is still visible today. In addition, as one of the students from HUAF mentioned during the participatory meetings, it is only the men that are supposed to visit the village meetings in the commune house.

In addition the Kinh people in and outside of the village showed many prejudice judgments on what the Co Tu people are like. Even within the cities, people seem to have a certain bias on 'Co Tu' features and on the differences between Co Tu women and men. What was most striking was the following quote from my translator during a household interview with a married couple.

“ The woman does not know anything, you should go to the men for good information.”

This was not the first time that my translator was more focused on the men than the women during an interview, even though she was a woman herself.

8.8 Participatory Meetings

In chapter 4, the participatory meetings in Cha Mang and Ta Lu have been discussed already. In this chapter the problem trees are discussed again to define the main differences that came forward between women and men. To be able to compare the differences the problem trees were separated for men and women.

Cha Mang

In Cha Mang there was quite a large difference between the problem trees of the women and men that were created during the participatory meeting. The problem tree of the men was much more extended than the problem tree of the women since the men mentioned many different factors, as discussed in chapter 4 while the women only mentioned causes and problems that are related to the farming work and population rise.

During the participatory meeting in Cha Mang there were only a small number of women present, compared to the amount of men in the room. One of the students from the faculty of forestry explained that the meetings at the commune house are normally only for men explaining why there were so little women. So apparently the meetings in the village are not as 'equal' as the women claimed during the interviews. In addition it was quite difficult to

incite the discussion since the women appeared quite shy and claimed they did not know anything in contrast to the men.

Ta Lu

Within Ta Lu the women seemed to be less shy and they mentioned more different causes and effects of their problems defined. Next to focusing on problems related to their farming work, the women focused on education and opportunities. Contradictory, the men were focused on the farming work and the working of the market system. They did not talk about lack of opportunities, education and population rise.

Together

It is quite remarkable that in both villages the women mention the population rise or the amount of children as one of the causes for their problems. None of the men mentioned this as a factor during the participatory meetings. This can be partly explained by the fact that women have to raise and take care of the children. Though the men did not explain, it could be for example that women do not have the opportunity to increase their income because they need to take care of the children, meaning that women are less mobile. Especially the women in Ta Lu mentioned the lack of opportunities and low education as limiting factors which is related to the imbalance in education between both sexes in the past. The men were more focused on the working of the market system and the condition of the soil. The concerns men showed about the market system have to do with the Doi Moi Policies and the allocation of Forest land. With the implementation of the Doi Moi policies the centrally planned economy changed into an open market economy, meaning that the farmers had to change their whole trading system. Also the selling of wood and trees was new for them, meaning another change.

Conclusion

Looking back at the subjects discussed in this chapter, leads to the conclusion that on the one hand things have changed for women in the villages but at the same time much has stayed unchanged. The decline in the differences in school attendance between both sexes and the increased education level of women gives them more opportunities for the future. On the other hand, women are still supposed to get married and become the main care givers of the family. Next to their children, women have to take care of the house and are often the ones that take care of the animals besides working on the garden and field land. Because this makes it difficult for them to leave the house, for example during a village meeting, this will also limit their involvement and position within the village. As long as these role patters do

not change the women within this region will never get the same information and decision rights as men. In addition men are still considered to be the head of the household, not only by themselves but also by the women in both villages, even if they do the same amount of work as the women. There will be no equality within the households and within the village between men and women as long as the man stays the head of the household. Still, most of the women described the relation between men and women within their village as equal. However it is difficult to decide whether this is influenced by the presence of their husband or because they wish to give a socially desirable answer. Another example of how things can change and stay the same is the inheritance of Red Books. Within the law it is defined that both the names of husbands and wives should be placed in the Red Book. In some cases this did happen, but in many cases it was only the husband's name that was in the Red Book. When the parents die it is always the sons who inherit the Red Books and not the daughters. In this way women are forced to get married if they want to stay in their village, because that is the way to get access to land rights, making them dependent on men. In the end the participatory meetings showed that women are concerned about their level of education and the amount of children there are in the village. The fact that the men did not show any concerns about these subjects illustrates the difference in responsibilities and tasks.

Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations

After a long period of war and destruction Vietnam encountered serious problems of deforestation in the 80's. As a reaction to these deforestation problems and the internationally growing popularity of the concept sustainable development, the Vietnamese Government reformed its forest management, and the Forest Land Allocation (FLA) Policies were developed. The main goals of the FLA policies were to protect the forest and to develop livelihoods, especially forest dependent livelihoods.

The policies were defined as 'the decentralization of forest management authority from the state to the local level' with the idea that the local population would get more interested in forest protection and management if they would have formal rights to their own forest land. In the 90's the FLA policies were implemented in the Central highlands and the local population received forest plantation land, natural forest land and land rights as defined in the 'Red Books' for field and garden land. Many rural ethnic groups were resettled to villages in the mountainous region where they had to change their lifestyle from one of shifting cultivation to a sedentary lifestyle. One of these local forest dependent populations was the Co Tu. The change of lifestyle was not the only change the Co Tu encountered after the implementation

of the FLA policies, as was discussed in this thesis. The effect these new policies have had, on the livelihoods of the Co Tu population living in the rural areas of Central Vietnam, formed the main subject of this thesis out of which the central question was formed and several sub-questions as discussed in the various chapters. The Central Question is:

Have FLA policies effected the livelihoods of Co Tu men and women in the buffer zone of Bach Ma National park, and if so, in what way?

In order to answer this question, several subjects from the different chapters in this thesis need to be discussed, deriving from the empirical chapters and the theory.

In the theoretical chapter it became clear that the concept of sustainable development has gained popularity over the years. One of the main discussions around sustainable development is how to relate environmental management and conservation with development and what is the relation of human beings with their environmental surroundings. The FLA policies are an attempt to create this balance and thus to achieve sustainable development. However, Baker (2006; xi) argued that in order to achieve environmentally sustainable development a critical understanding of socio-economic, political and cultural processes and structures is needed, to get a good understanding of environmental problems and development. To get a better image of these different processes and structures ‘on the ground’ and to explain the successes and downfalls of the FLA policies at the local level, we choose to use the livelihood approach for the research done in advance and for writing this thesis. In the view of the livelihood approach, people’s livelihood largely depends on the opportunity to access the five livelihood capitals or assets as mentioned in the framework, which are the bases of their livelihood strategy. However, not only the access was described, also the importance of the different capitals and the meaning these capitals can give to a person’s life were discussed, as Bebbington (1999) described in the theoretical chapter:

“Assets are not simply resources that people use in building their livelihoods; they are assets that give them the capability to be and act” (Bebbington 1999 2022).

Underlining the importance of ‘agency’ which de Haan (2006) defined as the capacity of people to integrate experiences into their livelihood strategies and to reach certain goals and overcome obstacles as described in this conclusion. Livelihoods are considered sustainable when it is possible to meet people’s needs and offering security against shocks and stresses, also called vulnerabilities. Mentioned shocks and stresses were the weather conditions, sickness and elderliness. As Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones explained in the theoretical chapter, capitals are influenced by internal and external factors, as can be seen in the effects the FLA policies (external) have had on the livelihoods of the Co Tu, as described in this thesis.

Forest Land Allocation (FLA)

In chapter four it became clear that the FLA policies are based on the Forest Protection Law and the Land Law. In these laws it was defined that people who received land, have the right to use land, exchange land, transfer and inherit land use rights or use the land as collateral for bank loans. It was also defined that land has to be managed by the state and that the state has the rights and power to recollect land when they have other intentions with it. In that sense, the government or state is the one creating the policies, while the local government; the district and the commune, implement the policies at a local level by collecting, measuring and re-dividing the land and Red Books among the villagers. The hierarchical structure shows that one should not speak of 'devolution of forest management', as used by Thang (2010) in the regional chapter, since it is not the local population themselves that got to participate in the formation and implementation process, but the power stayed with the governmental institutions even at the local level. It is the commune that received more power after the FLA policies were created. Although decentralization and devolution both refer to the transference of rights, responsibilities, and power away from a central location, devolution involves the transference to individuals or user groups at the local level, while decentralization is about a transfer of process from higher to lower government levels. The government is still the one that decides what will happen with the land, and even though the villagers who received land and red books have become owners on 'paper' in reality they are still dependent on the will of the local and the central government. The only participating role the villagers got designated was the responsibility to manage and protect the natural forest. However, there were no rewards handed out or trainings given on how to protect the natural forest according to the villagers themselves. Besides, most villagers did not feel as if they are the owners of the natural forest, even though they have one common Red Book for the natural forest, because of the strict rules and regulations enforced by the commune and the Forest Protection Unit. This lack of ownership of local forest communities is a common problem in many developing countries according to Rogers et.al.(2008). The problem is that it is unclear who own the forest and local forest communities do not want to invest their time and money in forest management when it officially belongs to the government, which is also the case in Cha Mang and Ta Lu.

Co Tu Livelihoods

In order to reveal the effects of the FLA policies on the livelihoods of the Co Tu population their livelihood nowadays needed to be described to make a comparison with the situation before. The five livelihood capitals and the livelihood framework were used as tools to

capture the different facets of the Co Tu's daily life and the livelihood outcomes.

In the fifth chapter it became clear that most of the villagers living in Ta Lu and Cha Mang village are farmers and their daily lives revolve around the work on their land and the market. The overall majority of the respondents had access to forest plantation land, field and garden land with or without Red Books. Most respondents had one or two Red Books and the minority owned three. Different reasons mentioned for having land without a Red Book were: people were still waiting for the commune to come and measure the land or after the commune measured the land they had to wait for the Red Book and villagers did not have the money to pay the high fee for a Red Book. Within Cha Mang village most of the farmers did not have access to field land simply because there was not enough field land in the area. The field land is used for cultivating rice, the garden land for crops and small trees and the forest plantation land is used for the growing of Rubber and Acacia trees. The selling of the trees gives high profits but only happens around every 5 to 7 years, depending on the weather and the quality of the trees. However for most households the income was low, with an average around 50 dollars a month.

The couple of villagers that had an official job besides farming were more the exception than the rule and in most cases his or her partner was working on the land since the income from the official job was not sufficient. The lack of employment in the Nam Dong region and the low level of education among the villagers make it difficult to find an alternative occupation. The majority of the adult farmers had no education or finished only primary school. In addition the respondents said they had lived their whole life or most of their lives in the same village or region and they were not eager on migrating to an urban area where they have no social network like in their own village, to find an alternative occupation.

The situation seemed to be in correspondence with the remark of Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002) that social networks are considered stronger in rural areas than in urban areas because of a lower level of mobility and heterogeneity of the populations living in these rural areas. Indeed the majority of both villages consisted out of the same ethnic group, namely the Co Tu.

Within both villages there were various groups of which people could become a member to discuss (mostly agricultural) information and exchange ideas. In case of a problem most respondents ask their families, neighbours and the village groups for help and when they cannot solve the problem themselves or inside the family they will ask one of the village leaders for help. The respondents reported that when the problem is too big to solve solely by the village leader they will take it to the commune, though no one mentioned ever going to the commune office. In fact, it became clear that numerous villagers did not trust the commune officers and several respondents mentioned corrupt practices concerning the commune

officers.

Livelihood Changes

Rogers et.al. (2008;11) stated that human beings and the environment do not exist apart from each other, and because of that every change in the environment will lead to changes in people's lives. In that case, changes in the access to and in the rules and regulation over the use of the land must also have its effects on the livelihoods of the local population concerned, as discussed in chapter six. The link between changes in the daily life of the Co Tu and the FLA policies were often not as clear as expected. The FLA policies were created during the same time as the Doi Moi policies were implemented; reforming the centrally planned communistic economy into a market economy and from industry-based to a modernized agriculture-based economy. Economic growth and development followed, leading to increased incomes, improved infrastructure and social services. Indeed the villagers mentioned the new road, the health care facilities and schools that were build and improved when they explained in what way their living standard had improved. One of the changes that was easier to link to FLA policies was the increase in incomes of most of the respondents after they had received land from the commune. Especially the receiving of forest plantation land and the growing and selling of Rubber and Acacia trees had increased their incomes. In addition the improved cultivation methods applied increased the agricultural output. People's agricultural knowledge improved since agricultural knowledge became more accessible, caused by the enhancement of attention given to the villagers and their agricultural activities and use of the environment after the implementation of the FLA policies and the increased access to different media resources. Unfortunately this does not account for the information on the FLA policies and the possible beneficiaries for the villagers. The largest part of FLA policy documents, like the Red Books, are written in the national Kinh language which makes these documents incomprehensible for those Co Tu people who do not understand the Kinh language. In addition, because of the high level of bureaucracy and the exclusion of most villagers from participating in the policy formation and implementation, information is less accessible for many villagers. One of the effects is that people do not completely understand the policies and the rules connected to these policies, and they are not fully aware of the benefits they can get from these policies. The benefits that most of the respondents noticed themselves were a slightly increased income, land rights giving more security, and the work became easier because of improved cultivation methods and the increase in agricultural information. Another effect people mentioned, linked to the increase in information, was that Co Tu people nowadays are more aware of environmental issues and the importance of environmental protection than in the past. The increased awareness was caused by the

augmented information from different groups, organizations and media sources. Some respondents mentioned the damage that was caused by environmental hazards because of environmental degradation and several respondents mentioned that the gods of the forest were angry, causing these environmental hazards.

A negative effect of the policy that villagers mentioned was that strict rules and regulations have decreased people's access to the natural forest and the forest products and animals. However, as Hawley (1986) argued, people have the resourcefulness to adapt to changing circumstances and extend externally forced borders. Indeed, many Co Tu households started to focus more on the growing of trees on their forest plantation land and the collecting of leaves and honey which is still legal.

Forest Use

Since the use of the natural and the plantation forest is an essential part of the Co Tu's livelihood, chapter seven was focused on the use and the role of the forest (products) by Co Tu households and in what way this has changed after the FLA policies were implemented. The Co Tu villagers used to be classified as a forest dependent population falling in the category of "Communities and villages located on the borders of or within Special Use Forests, National Parks and Protected Areas of high biodiversity value, where special regulations and prohibitions apply with respect to land allocation and the use of forest products." The Co Tu population, discussed in this chapter, is living in the buffer zone of Bach Ma National Park, a protected area. In addition people who in some way are dependent on forest products are also classified as forest dependent, which is the case for many poor households who still have to supply their income with forest products. Nevertheless, the dependency on the forest has changed since forest plantation land was being allocated to different households. There has been a clear shift from people being mostly dependent on forest products (NTFP's and firewood) to people being dependent on the selling of trees they cultivate on the forest plantation land. The schedule in figure 9.1 shows how the Co Tu people have shifted their livelihood type from B to C, though some of the poorest households are still in between these two categories.

Figure 9.1: Different types of rural forest dependent livelihoods

Type of livelihood	Associated attributes of forest use			
	Main type of forest use	Density of forests	Mode of forest use	Forest product income as share of total income
A. Hunting and gathering	Food: capture and collection of forest fauna and flora	High	Use value: high Exchange value: low	High
B. Swidden cultivation	Source of agricultural land restored by forest fallows Use and marketing of forest products	Medium	Use value: medium Exchange value: medium	Medium
C. Sedentary agriculture at forest frontier	Source of new agricultural land Marketing of forest products	Low	Use value: low Exchange value: high	Low

Source: Sunderlin 2005b; 1387

If Sunderlin (2005) is right that, ‘forest dependent people living in or close by the forest are often politically weaker or powerless compared to more powerful actors outside of the forest who compete for access to the forest resources’, the shift from livelihood type B to C has improved people’s position since they now rely on products they grow on their own land, instead of being dependent on ‘common pool resources’. In the past the village was largely based on communal ownership and common pool resources where the village leader decided who has access to what; this changed after people received their own land rights and thus their own profit. One should be careful however, not to confuse ‘ownership’ rights with ‘control’. The legal rights to the forest plantation land defined in the Red Books has made Co Tu families ‘owners’ of their forest plantation land but these families do not always have full control over the land. The same can be said for the natural forest land, people have the right to access the forest but it is the FPU that controls and manages the forest. Rogers et al. (2008) argued that in order to achieve a balance between human development and the protection of the environment, good governance and sustainable institutions are needed. This is in line with the argument of Gibson et al. that in order to create the conditions for successful resource management, regular monitoring and sanctioning of rules and rule enforcement is needed. The problem is that like the commune, the Forest Protection Unit was often accused of accepting money or for not punishing their own friends and families when they disobeyed the rules. Gibson (2005) argued that it is attractive for poorly paid staff to accept extra payments offered by rule-breakers who get caught. Indeed this is also the case for the forest rangers and commune officers in Nam Dong as became clear from the several respondents working for the

commune office or the FPU, mentioning their low salary. The corruptive practices of the different FPU officials have decreased the level of trust among the villagers. When there is no communal trust, the chances of resource management to be successful and sustainable are getting smaller. Besides, when the forest rangers, involved in corruptive practices, are coming from the village itself, this can damage the social capital among the villagers and create conflicts.

Gender

One of the criticisms the Livelihood framework received was that the model is not showing enough dynamism and should include more intra-household differences instead of considering households as a single decision unit. To give enough attention to these intra-household differences a gender analysis was applied in the research to give a better understanding of the division within the Co Tu society by analyzing socially constructed differences related to gender roles and identities, as described in chapter eight.

The most outstanding differences were to be found in the role patterns and land rights. Currie and Vernooy (2010) discussed that in most developing countries in Asia land titles and tenure rights are still controlled by men through formal and customary laws. In the Nam Dong district, the customary laws of the Co Tu define that the inheritance goes through the line of the father and from father to son. In this case women almost never inherit land from their parents unless they have no male siblings. In addition even though the law prescribed that both names of women and men can be written down in the Red Books, it is still more common for the men's name to be in the Red Book than that of the women. The women's rights are those of her husband and not of her own. In case of death or divorce the women stand alone with no rights or land and they are completely dependent on others to help them. Peterman (2011) stated that restrictive customs and policies concerning property rights have hindered the economic advancement of women (Peterman 2011;2). In addition she states that women living in communities where they have high property and inheritance rights are more likely to engage in non-agricultural, self-employed work than women who have less property and inheritance rights. Indeed it was obvious that more men than women had an alternative job apart from the farming work, though this can also be explained by the fact that women have had less education than most men, giving them fewer opportunities to find another occupation. Besides, women are expected to: carry out the house chores, raise the children and if present take care of the livestock, besides their farming work. Because of these role patterns it is more difficult for women to leave the house and participate in village meetings.

Bebbington (1999) spoke of agency, giving people the power to act and to produce and challenge or change the rules that administer the control, use and transformation of

resources. The different livelihood assets can be used as tools for emancipatory action to challenge existing structures. However, in order to be able to change these structures, women need to be given a chance to fully participate in meetings and discussions concerning these structures, and the ones that control these structures. The fact that women are expected to stay at the house, limits their access to emancipatory action, and thus their agency. Some of the related challenges women face, mentioned by Peterman (2011) became also visible, such as: discrimination and gender based violence, childcare distress and the fact that they are often primary care givers. Women admitted that they were less mobile because of their children. The men are expected to be the ones that carry out the ‘heavy’ tasks such as: working on the tree plantation land and collecting NTFP’s; work that was considered to be too heavy for women. This stereo type of women as the main care givers and men doing the heavy work was not only confirmed by the men but also by the women as ‘the way things are’. At the same time, the majority of the women and men stated that they are equal in the household, and the work is divided equally. There were a few women that admitted that some of the men in their village physically abused their wives, especially when the men are heavy drinkers, which was also one of the problems mentioned by several men and women in both villages.

Even though in most households people spoke of equality the man was always considered to be the head of the household, making the final decisions and in most cases the woman is in charge of the money. It was mentioned that this imbalance between men and women, has changed over time; only a couple of years ago women were not allowed to do anything without their husband’s permission. This is not the case anymore and also the education level and attendance of girls is improving nowadays. However, when these intra-household differences are not addressed, development in these villages will not become sustainable since there is no equality. As Abdella (2010) noted:

‘The quality of growth should be more important than the quantity of growth’.

With this quote Abdella (2010) underlines the importance of inclusiveness and participation of both sexes.

Recommendations:

This thesis was meant to give an overview of the effects of the FLA policies on the daily lives of the Co Tu people living in the district of Nam Dong, rather than providing an evaluation of the FLA policies. However the research that was done in advance showed some flaws in the

implementation of the FLA policies and several points of improvements came up while writing this thesis.

One of the biggest shortfalls of the FLA policies is the lack of clear information on the policies and the possible outcomes, which are understandable for everyone. Even for myself as a researcher it was difficult to get a grasp of what the FLA policies entail since they are so extended and often vague. For a person who did not have much education and whose mother language is not the Kinh language, it is probably even more difficult to understand what the exact policies are and what benefits one can get from these policies. In fact it would be advisable to hand out documents that concern the Co Tu villagers in their own language. This is closely related to the second recommendation; many Co Tu villagers are concerned about losing their own language since the new generation is only learning the Kinh language at school. An idea would be to offer bilingual education so that the ethnic language can be preserved. Another matter that was striking is the lack of participation of women in village meetings and meetings with the commune officers. It became clear during the participatory meetings that women were normally not present at meetings. It should be noted that for the policies aimed at improving livelihoods to be effective and sustainable, women should also be included and stimulated to participate. This is a rather difficult point since most women have to take care of the children. An option would be to stimulate these meetings by appointing a 'babysitting' group to take care of the children while the mothers join the meetings. A small budget may be needed to pay for this service. In addition, the overall majority of all the village, commune and district -officials consist of men. Especially now the education level and attendance of girls is increasing, these girls should be stimulated to go on with their studies to improve their perspectives for the future. Livelihood development can only be sustainable if both men and women are included. However, in order for the future generation to have the opportunities of finding another occupation besides farming, more jobs have to be created in the district.

One of the most striking points that came forth out of the research was the lack of trust among the villagers in the commune officials and the forest protection unit (FPU). Several cases of corruption were mentioned, though no one seemed to have a solution for this problem. Since the villagers themselves do not have the power to act against these institutions, it can be useful to implement an objective control mechanism for the FPU and the commune and district officials.

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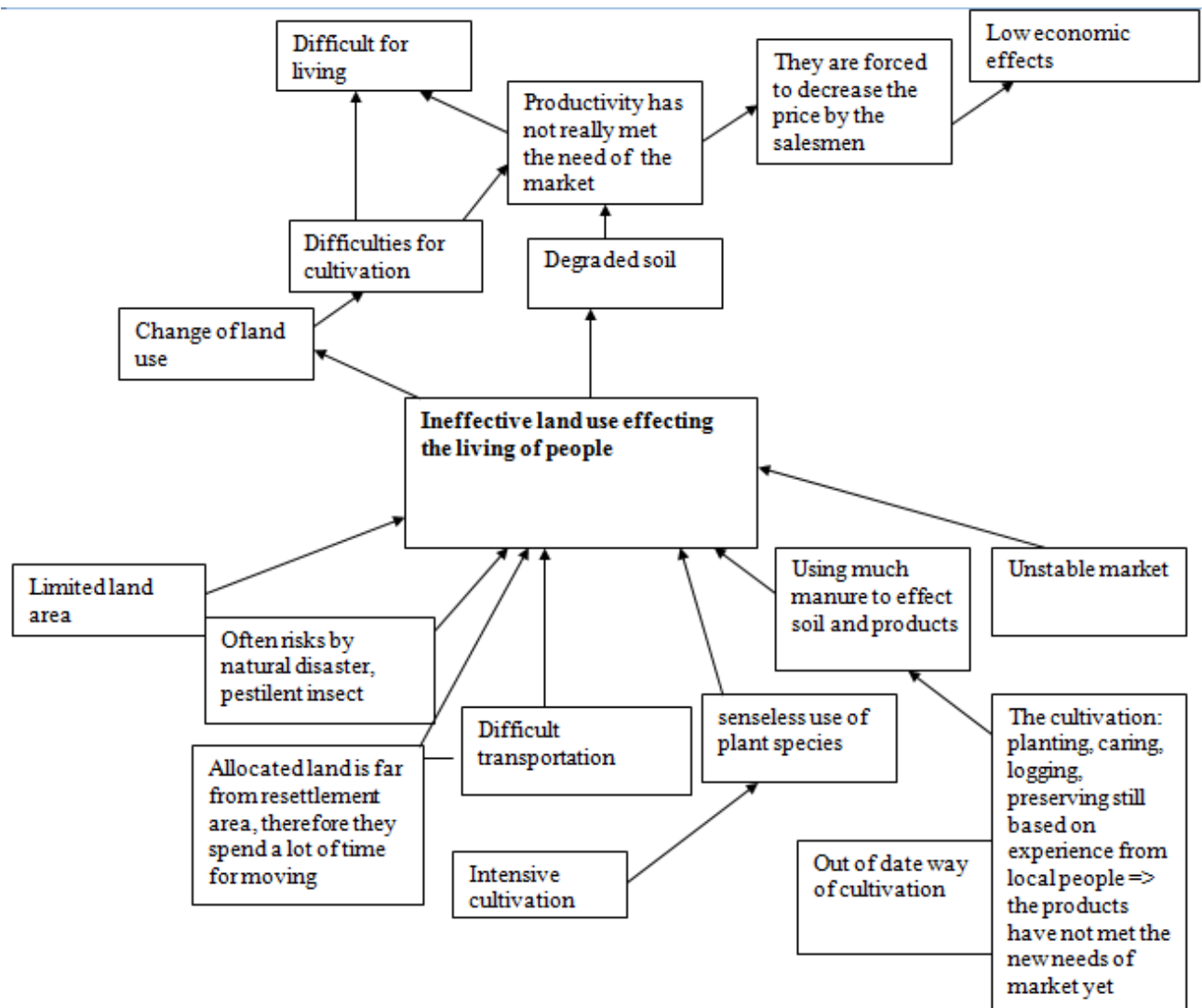
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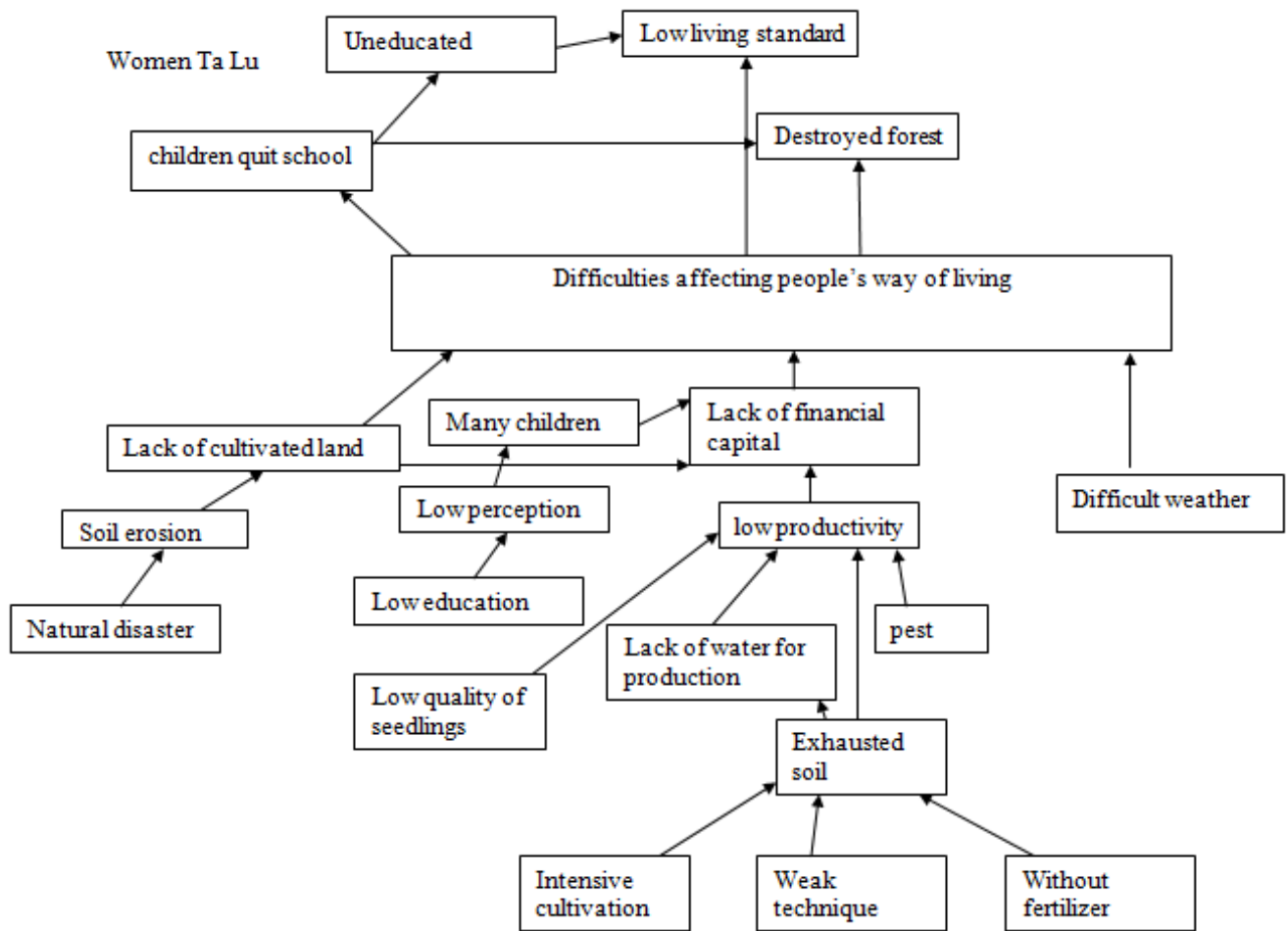
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Appendices

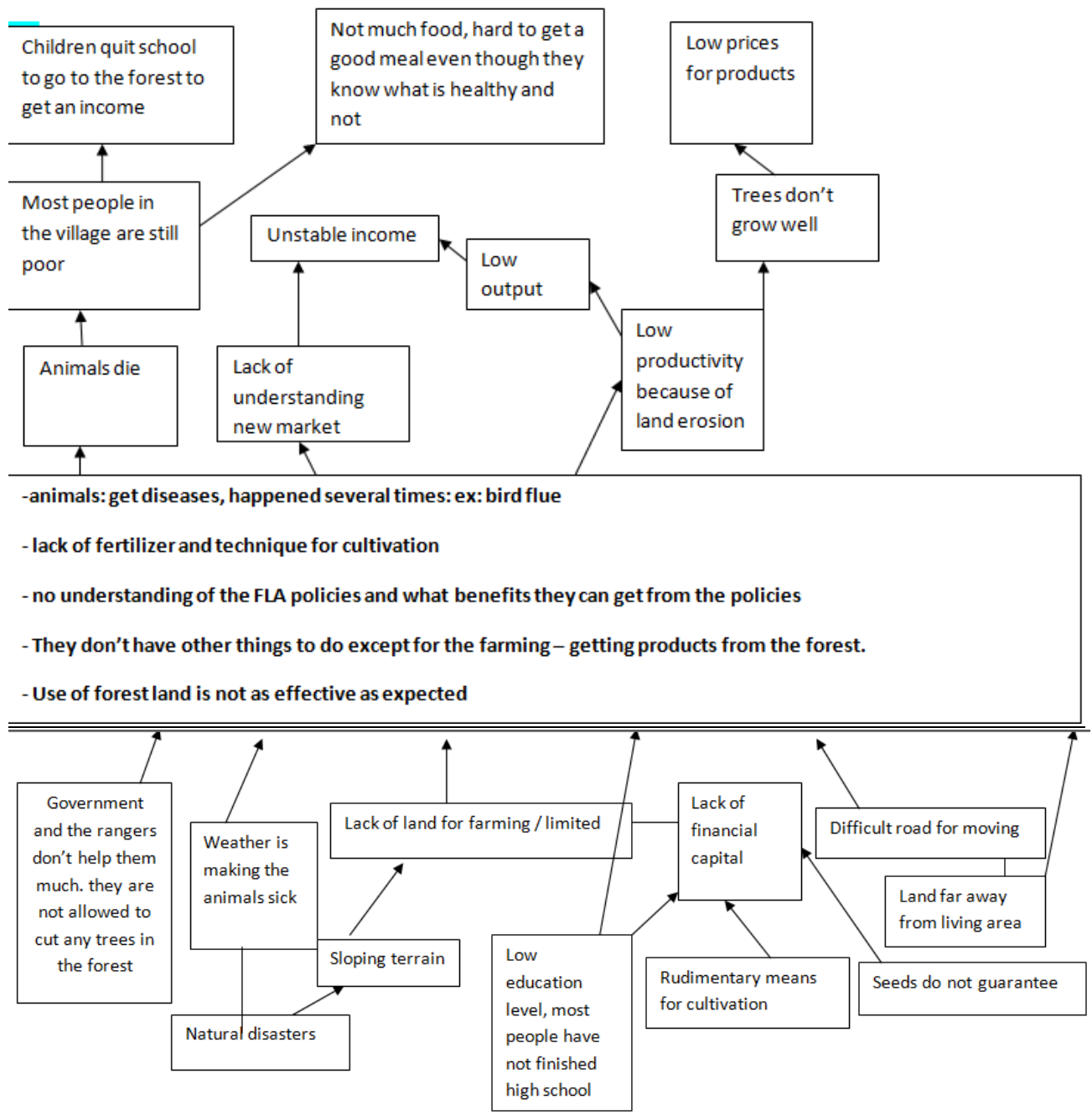
Appendix 1: Problem tree of the men in Ta Lu



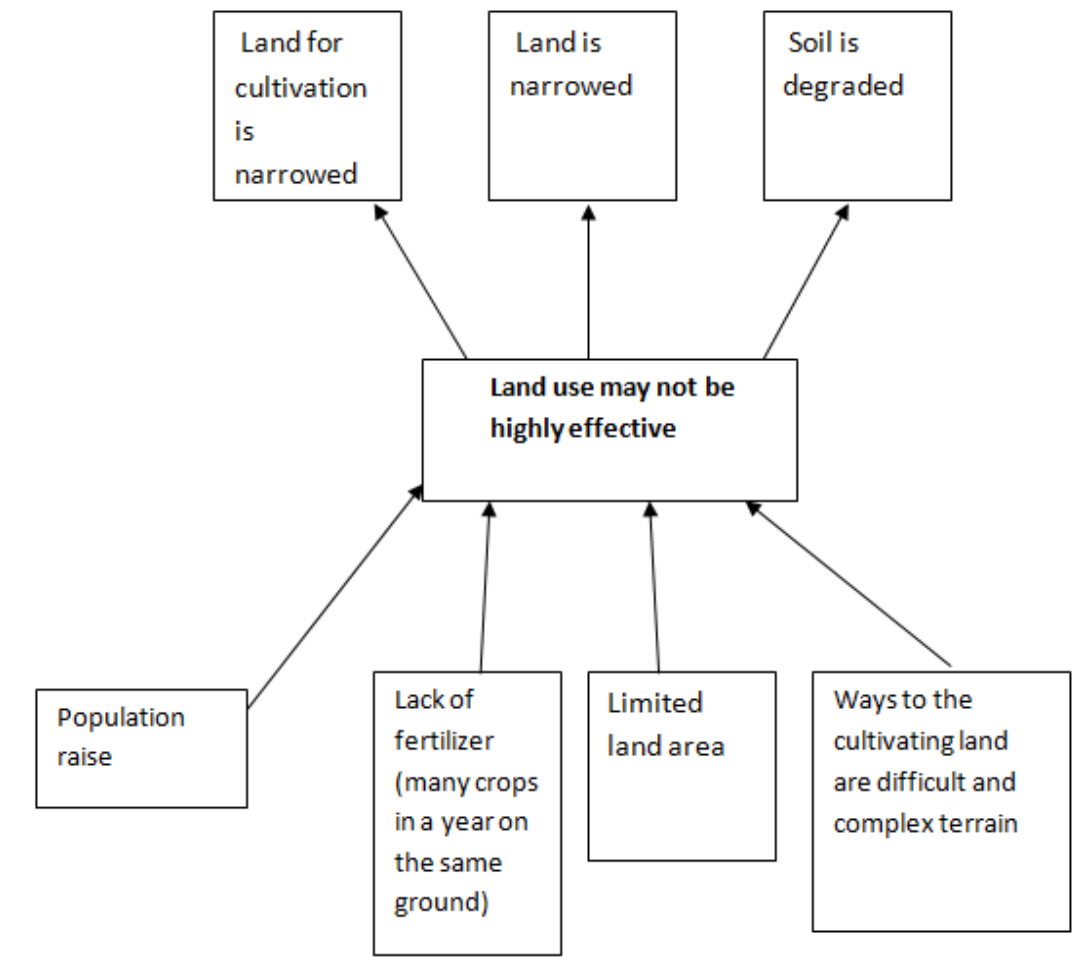
Appendix 2: Problem tree of women in Ta Lu



Appendix 3: Problem tree of the men in Cha Mang



Appendix 4: Problem tree of the women in Cha Mang



Appendix 5: Semi-structured question list for farmers

Question list: farmers who got land from FLA on individual base

General Characteristics:

Name:

Ethnic group:

Spoken Languages:

Age:

Sex:

Marital status:

Children:

Number of people living in the house(hold):

Education:

Monthly income:

Has this changed in the last 10 to 20 years?

If yes: how come?

In possession of Savings or Credits?

Do you have a red book?

If not: why not?

Land ownership/FLA:

Is this your own land?

How big is it?

How long has this been your land?

Did you and your family always grow crops here?

If not: where did you use to grow the crops?

In the past, before you got this land rights, what did you do when the land was no good anymore?

// Did you move from place?

What if the land is not fertile, what do you do now?

Do you share the land with someone?

Who gave the land to you?

How did this happen?

For how long can you have this land?

Are there any rules for the use of this land?

What kind of?

How do you consider the quality of this land?

Has it always been like this?

Land use (natural capital)

What crops do you grow?

When do you grow them?

Why do you grow these crops?

Do you have different crops at different seasons?

How do you grow the crops, how do you prepare the land?

Do you use fertilizer?

-if yes: What kind of fertilizer?

-if no: do you use anything else?

Where do you grow the crops?

Do you have animals/livestock?

For what other purposes do you use the land?

Can you tell me who does what in your family?

Do you or your wife or other family members collect resources from the land or the forest?

What kind of resources?

Where do you/they get it?

Where do you and your family use it for?

Do you have piped water?

How do you make sure you will always have enough food?

If you have a good harvest, do you save food or what do you do with the surplus?

Do you plant trees?
What kind of trees?
Why this kind?
Where do you use the trees for?
Where do you get your firewood?
Do you have to grow trees on your land according to the red book?
Are you involved in the WT3 project or another project?

Has your farming work changed (since the land allocation policies have been implemented) in the last 10/20 years?

If yes: In what way?

Why do you think it has changed?

Has your life changed?

Has the natural environment changed? How was it before and now?

Questions about societal structure of village/community: (social capital)

Who is the head of this household?

Who is in charge of the money?

Where do the men spend their money on?

What has the government or commune done to help you or other people in this village?

Is there a community board or something like that?

Who is the traditional boss of the community/village?

What is the role of the oldest person in the village?

If people in your village have a problem or they are having a fight, to who do they have to go to solve this?

Who do you ask for advice or help?

Has this changed in the last 10 to 20 years?

If yes: in what way? What has changed?

Do people ask for your help when they have problems?

If yes: why and who (family, friends, neighbours)?

Materials: (physical capital)

Do you have any machines?

What kind of?

Final questions:

Do you have any alternatives for another job besides farming?

What do you think about the new land policies?

Appendix 6: Questionnaire

Question list farmers who got land from FLA on individual base

Dear all, when there is a line behind a question you have to fill in an answer, try to keep it short.

Fill in the round  for the answer

 filled in the wrong answer – cross the circle

If you fill in the wrong answer 2 times, draw a circle around the right answer.

General Characteristics:

1.1 Name: _____

1.2 Ethnic group:

Co Tu Kinh Others _____

1.3 Spoken Languages: _____

1.4 Age: _____

1.5 Sex:

- male female -

1.6 Marital status: _____

1.7 Education: _____

1.8 Education partner: _____

1.9 Children: _____

1.10 Number of people living in the house(hold): _____

1.11 Monthly income: _____

1.12 Monthly income before the Red Books: _____

1.13 In possession of Savings or Credits? _____

2. Land ownership/FLA:

2.1 Do you have your own land?

yes no

2.2 What kind of land?

field land forest (plantation) land garden and house land others:

2.3 How big is it?

_____m²

_____m²

_____ha

2.4 Do you have Red Books?

yes no

2.5 If no, why not? _____

2.6 if yes; For what land do you have Red Books?

forest land field land garden land others

2.7 Did you have the same land before the Red Books?

yes no others:

2.8 How long has this been your land?

_____ years

2.9 Did you and your family always grow crops here?

yes no

2.10 In the past, before you got this land rights, what did you do when the land was no good anymore?

move around use fertilizer others: _____

2.11 What if the land is not fertile, what do you do now?

look for other land use compost use fertilizer others: _____

2.12 Who gave the land to you?

the Government the commune the village leader
 an organization others: _____

2.13 When did you get the land?

_____ in the year

2.14 For how long can you have this land?

5 years 10 years 50 years others: _____ years

2.15 Are there any rules for the use of this land?

yes no

2.16 if yes; what kind of rules? _____

2.17 How do you consider the quality of this land?

very bad bad alright good very good

2.18 Has it always been like this?

yes no

2.19 if no; why did it change? _____

3 Land use (natural capital)

3.1 What crops do you grow? _____

banana cassava areca oranges vegetables sugar cane
 pineapple sweet potato dry rice wet rice others

3.2 When do you grow them?

1 season a year 2 seasons a year more others: _____

3.3 Why do you grow these crops?

- most suitable for the land
- the commune told me
- more profit
- the other crops didn't grow well
- others: _____

3.4 Do you use fertilizer?

- yes
- no

If yes: What kind of fertilizer? <name> _____

if no: What do you use?

- compost from the animal
- compost from the leaves
- nothing

3.5 Where do you grow the crops?

- on the garden land
- on the field land
- on the forest land
- on all the land

3.6 Do you have animals?

- yes
- no

3.7 What animals and how many?

- Cow ___
- Chicken ___
- Duck ___
- Pig ___
- Birds ___
- Water buffalo ___

3.8 Who does what working activities in your household?

Husband	Wife	Children	Parents

3.9 Do you or your wife or other family members collect NTFP's from the natural forest?

- my wife
- my children
- myself
- my parents
- no one

3.10 if not; Why not _____

3.11 If yes; What kind of resources?

- rattan
- honey
- animals
- firewood
- leaves
- others: _____

3.12 Where do you/they get it?

- in the natural forest
- in the national park
- on the plantation land

3.13 Where do you and your family use it for?

- selling
- eating

3.14 Do you have piped water?

- yes
- no

3.15 If you have a good harvest, do you save food or what do you do with the surplus?

- yes we save it
- no we eat all
- no we sell it
- no, we sell and eat all

3.16 Do you plant trees?

- yes
- no

3.17 What kind of trees?

- rubber tree
- keo tree
- acacia tree
- others; _____

3.18 Why this kind?

because it grows best on the land because it gives me high profit because

someone told me (who _____?)

3.19 Where do you use the trees for?

for firewood for selling

3.20 Where do you get your firewood?

from the plantation/forest land from the natural forest from the national park

3.21 Do you have to grow trees on your land according to the red book?

yes no don't know

3.22 Are you involved in the WT3 project or another project?

no yes

3.23 Has your farming work changed after the forest land allocation in the last 10/20 years?

yes no

3.24 If yes: In what way?

3.25 Has your life changed?

yes no

3.26 If yes; in what way? _____

3.27 Has the natural environment changed? How was it before and now?

4. Questions about societal structure of village/community: (social capital)

4.1 Who is the head of this household?

men women father of the men/women mother of the men/women

4.2 Who is in charge of the money?

men women

4.3 Where do the men/women spend their money on?

food school furniture house motorbike cloths others: _____

4.4 What has the government done to help you or other people in this village?

they gave money they build a school they give some food give advice

4.5 What has the commune done to help you or other people in this village?

they give money they give food they give advice
 they provide services others: _____

4.6 Is there a community board or something like that?

yes no

4.7 Who is the boss of the village?

- the village leader the village oldest

4.8 What is the role of the oldest person in the village?

- guiding traditional cultural activities advisory helping in case of problems others

4.9 If people in your village have a problem or they are having a fight, to who do they have to go to solve this?

- the village leader the village oldest neighbours family the commune

4.10 Who do you ask for advice or help?

- neighbours relatives women group other group village leader village oldest

4.11 Has this changed in the last 10 to 20 years?

- yes no

5. Materials: (physical capital)

5.1 Do you have any machines?

- yes, hand tools yes, electric machines yes, both no

6. Final questions:

6.1 Do you have any alternatives for another job besides farming?

- yes no

6.2 What do you think about the land policies and the Red Books?
