



Human-ecological Investigation on the Land Use of Flowery Hmong to Overcome Poverty

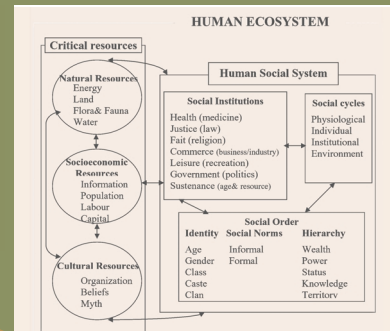
Case Study from Lao Cai Province, Vietnam

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Research problem:

- Poverty and degradation of natural resources.
- Poor results of land and forest allocation.
- Insufficient understanding of land use as practised by ethnic minority groups.



Theoretical setting

- Human ecological perspective.
- Human ecosystem concept.
- Human Ecosystem model (Machlis et al. 1997)



Research objectives:

Diagnose and design land use by Flowery Hmong to help overcome poverty.

- Analyse land use by Flowery Hmong;
- Examine influencing factors shaping land use by Flowery Hmong;
- Identify the congruencies and discrepancies between legal regulations and customary land use;
- Design future land use pattern.

Study site: (test phase)

A village of Flowery Hmong located in North-West of Vietnam. 53 households, 302 people. 80% illiterate especially women. 85% of households below property line. Access by motorcycle possible



Methods:

- Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) with the tools :
- Mapping
 - Matrix trend
 - Venn Diagram
 - Transects
 - Calendar
 - Individual interviews
 - Triangulation.



Results:

1. Land use in the village

- Land-use classes: Agriculture 35 %, Forest 42%, Home garden 1%, Resident 5%, Infra-structure 3 %, Other 16 %.
- Land-use pattern: crops farming (wet-rice, hillrice, maize, bean), livestock raising, tree cutting, fuelwood collecting and gathering of other NWFPs are arranged catena like from lower part to upper part of the village area.

2. Influencing factors

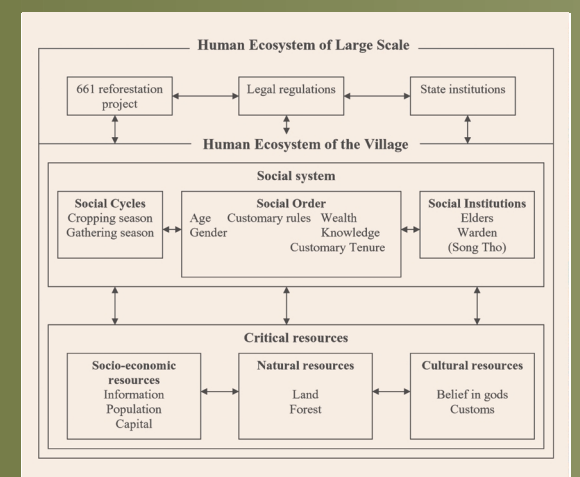
Endogenous:

- Biophysical characteristics of land and forest (parent material, slope degree, soil type, tree species etc.);
- Customary tenure (households with claimed rights to access, cut trees, decide to cut/plant tree, prohibit others, and sell or inherit land/ forest);
- Customary rules (penalty rules to violators cutting tree from others without permission, penalty rules to villagers letting buffalos damage crops of others etc.);
- Spiritual belief (in gods: Dragon, Thau Ty) and Taboos (to cut tree during three days after spiritual ceremony and trees in holy forest);
- Knowledge of villagers (on tree species, products, and uses of the forest product);
- Gender (men and women involve in different activities);
- Traditional Institutions (song Tho and elders involve in fining violators and solving dispute on land and forest use);
- Etc.

Exogenous:

- Legal regulations (prohibiting slash and burn farming and tree cutting);
- 661 project (forest formally claimed as protection forest to the Project Management Board);
- State institutions (661 Project Management Board responsible for forest management, protection, and development, Forest Protection Station responsible for law enforcement, Communal People Committee responsible for state management of forest).

3. Conflict between state forestry institutions (661 Project Management Board, Forest Protection Section) and villagers on land and forest utilisation.



Conclusions:

- Land use in the village is mainly for sustenance.
- Land use in the village is influenced by interacting biophysical and social factors at different scales.
- Participatory land-use planning would facilitate local people based land and forest land resource management.

