CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study focuses on the contested development of ethnic minority community, and the strategies they have used to gain access to land and forest resources under government management. To understand the complex nature of transformation in ethnic minority communities, I have reviewed literature relevant to the contestation of development space. Various approaches in this literature have been used to build a conceptual framework that guides the analysis of the transformation of ethnic minority communities and contestation of the control, utilization and management of natural resources.

This chapter is divided into four sections. First, I review the concept of the discourse of development as a 'technology of power' for the modernization of the state. A number of studies discussing the transformation of ethnic minorities' ways of life and the construction of images of ethnic minorities have also been reviewed. In addition, critiques of development thinking have been considered to better understand the emergence of alternative development paradigms. In the second section, I review the concepts of empowerment and participation in the development process to support my study of ethnic minorities' struggles to reconfigure knowledge and to reconstruct ways of life through 'people's participation'. The third section proposes the concept of ethnic practice as an articulation of contested development space to struggle for obtaining community right control over local natural resources. The last section concludes with an analysis of the interactions and social relations among different actors involved in natural resource utilization and management.

2.1 The Discourse of Development as a 'Technology of Power' for the Modernization of the State

The technology of power, which determines the conduct of individuals or domination, as an objectivizing of subject (Faucalt 1954-1984 cited in Rabinow 1994:225). The concept implies the management of individual inside and outside of community that makes a discourse of development. This encounters between the government and local people. Thus technology of power is the interactions in between one-self and others, in the mode of action that an individual exercise upon its technology. This technology produce, transform, and manipulate things, such as, images of local people, agricultural practice as tradition, structural changes, and legitimization of domination (ibid.).

This section examines the effects of the power of the state constructs the discourse of development in local community. Development is about people, and about enabling more people men, women, and children, including ethnic minorities to realize their potential to fulfill their livelihood aspirations. It should be noted that in the process of development, it is primarily the powerless people who sacrifice, suffer and become victims of development (Kaufmann 1997:118, Bryant and Bailey 1997, Escobar 1991, 1995a). By drawing on examples from Thailand and Cambodia, it can be seen that governments have disregarded indigenous knowledge system and disrespected cultures, customs and ethnic practices. They have often disparaged the potential of people to develop their own communities and failed to recognize the complex relationships between ethnic minority communities and their environments (Komatra 1998:336, Colm 1997a).

Dominant ideas of development are related to transforming poverty into prosperity and the integration of ethnic minorities into mainstream society. Modernization has thus undermined traditional society and broken down traditional structures of authority, corroding community, identity, and culture and destroying lives and livelihoods (Sopheap 1998, Murray Li 1990, Colm 1997b, Rigg 1997, 2003). From day-to-day, in many different settings, ethnic minority peoples are marginalized and forced to suffer the effects of imposed development plans.

Lowe (2003) asserts the need to unveil the 'colonization of reality', using Arturo Escobar's term. This 'colonization' has shaped the ways in which development is

imagined, implemented and constructed as development space, while local people are marginalized and their vernacular space reduced. For instance, development programs are viewed as a humanistic endeavor necessary for fighting poverty, ill-health and inequity and for promoting progress. In fact, these development programs led by the power of the state can be seen as politically motivated and aimed at consolidating power, achieving domination, and maximizing profit for the ruling class (Watts 1995:51, Komatra 1998:337).

Development has thus been a post-colonial project that has been accepted as a model of progress. However, development is generally based on the model of westernization without considering the suppression that colonialism involves. Development as capital accumulation and the commercialization of the economy for the generation of surplus and profit becomes an extension of the project of wealth. As such, it is based on the exploitation or exclusion of women, the degradation of nature, and the erosion of culture (Shiva 1989). Moreover, development is a social construct, and thus difficult to define in any absolute sense, with many different approaches employed by social scientists working in the development domain (Gardner 1997:133).

Development can also be seen as a way of organizing or motivating society for change, specifically as a means of directing social and economic change. These changes, however, directly affect the balance of human culture with nature. Such changes can include moving societies from religious to secular rule, relocating populations from rural to urban settings, or changing material means from animal to machine power. McMichael (1996:15) for example, argues that all of these dimensions shift societies towards social arrangements that are familiarized with the western world.

Development as a form of knowledge effectively functions as a mechanism for ruling the Third World, which determines interactions between different forms of knowledge within development projects and generally overrides notions of indigenous knowledge. Development thinking is deeply structured by western assumptions of scientific rationalism, within which indigenous knowledge may not be readily systematized and categorized. However, according to Gardner (1997:134) indigenous knowledge is generally of a sophisticated form while developmental knowledge often remains frustratingly simplistic. Development knowledge is generally presented as

homogeneous and rooted in scientific rationalism, but in practice is not one single set of ideas and assumptions. At one level, development knowledge may function hegemonically, but it is also invented and reinvented by multiple actors, who often operate on very different assumptions (ibid.).

According to Foucault (1981), the discourse of development is systematically structured. This discourse is based on non-discursive practices, such as, socio-economic factors, institutional arrangements, and administrative functioning. Within this framework there are two main development strategies constructed by actors in the developed world. The first is associated with the whole apparatus of development implemented in underdeveloped countries as well as a large number of theories of development produced by international organizations and scholars in North America and Europe. According to Escobar (1984:379), the second major strategy for penetration and control of the Third World is embodied in communication and information technologies, especially the mass media, television and commercial cinema.

Pigg's (1992) study of villages in Nepal, 'Images of Rural Development', addresses the ideology of modernization and development, and its impacts on local society and culture. She presents development as a socially important, organized force experienced through a variety of means including place of residence, mode of livelihood, and practices of religion. On these scales, development pertains to the mobilization of resources as villagers incorporate the ideology of modernization into local social identities. In this sense, development transforms what it means to be a village member and helps to bridge perceptions of ignorance.

Similarly, the development programs were implemented by the state of Lesotho in Southern Africa has been portrayed as the epitome of 'peasant society' (Ferguson 1990:59-60). This means not only that the importance of wage labor is understated but also a particular image of 'peasant agriculture' is systematically promoted by the state. The ethnic Basotho are defined as 'farmers', including people with no land or livestock. Development in Lesotho has caused further entrenchment of the state and the restructuring of rural social relations, which has been one of the most significant effects of the deployment of rural development.

Escobar (1996) argues that development is a discourse oriented to economic growth. Further, this discourse has seldom recognized the problems rooted in development processes that displace traditional structures, disrupt people's habitats and occupations, and force many rural communities to increase pressures on the environment. For instance, ethnic minorities who practice swidden agriculture have typically been used as scapegoats for massive forest destruction largely caused by a capitalist emphasis on economic growth and development. Such a perspective can further marginalize ethnic minority peoples in the development process.

Anan (1998:71-82) asserts that ethnic minorities in Thailand, who live in the forest and practice shifting cultivation, have been blamed for the destruction of forests to the point where they have been identified as a threat to national security. He adds that scholars have long argued that the degradation of watersheds, for instance, is not simply a problem of local agriculture but related to complex social and political problems created by the state development agents. Most of the official policies for the highlands in Thailand have been based on misconceptions of shifting cultivation practices.

McCaskill (1997:26-27) observes that development theory and practice has moved through several phases in attempts to improve the situation of Third World populations. Early versions of modernization theory, which emphasized stages of economic growth, Gross Domestic Production (GDP), and the presumed trickle-down effect of economic benefits, gave way to an emphasis on the need for more systematic development planning.

Murray Li (1990) adds that by adopting the modernization theory of development, agrarian societies are viewed as traditional. This means that populations are oriented to the past and lack the cultural ability to adjust to new circumstances, with kinship systems central in social, economic, and political relations. Modern industrial societies, by contrast, are portrayed as consisting of people who are not unduly tied to tradition, with kinship playing a smaller role in society. In such cases, individuals are forward-looking and innovative, reflecting a strong entrepreneurial spirit. They have a great deal of geographic mobility and move within a complex occupational system. Using modernization as a model of development is based on the idea of a rational and scientific worldview, so that moving individuals and institutions towards this ideal is the imperative of the development paradigm.

However, one of the important issues for ethnic minority peoples in this context is that the process of development tends to destroy traditional culture. McCaskill (1997:30) argues that development experts maintain their authority based on their claims to specialized, impersonal, and largely secular knowledge originating outside local contexts. The desirability of integrating local communities into the nation state to ensure increasing economic opportunities and a superior quality of life for those being developed is generally assumed. Traditional culture is often seen as an impediment to the development process, and local community members are rarely given any meaningful decision-making role. There is thus little attention to traditional culture with the penetration of capitalism into even the most remote communities, incorporating them in an emerging global society.

The 'technology of power' has also emerged as a main theme in development discourses. Developmentally speaking, technological capacity is seen as increasingly able to improve society. In contrast, post-structuralist scholars have increasingly come to see development efforts as a uniquely efficient system of colonization on behalf of the powerful, such as, Northern states (Peet et al., 1996:16). The apparent ability to 'make things better' is the main way of achieving power. Escobar (1995b) argues that modern development discourse is understood to be part of the larger history of the expansion of western reason and so modern knowledge is used in the developmental language of liberation to extend systems of power in a modernized world. This power of knowledge aims to ensure conformity with capitalist economies and cultural behaviors. Development discourse in this way supports the integration, penetration, management, and control of people by regulating knowledge and generalizing development. The Third World has been viewed by as an arena amenable to the developmental sciences and technology, which are considered as necessary guides for development (ibid.).

While the 'technology of power' legitimizes the action of dominant groups such as government development agencies and international development organizations in their attempts to fight poverty through economic development and modernization, these initiatives include contested and competing claims in the construction of development space (Komatra 1998). The 'technology of power', then, is a destructive force that threatens cultures, changes traditional structures, and deeply affects the life of villagers. However, it is a force that has been repeatedly, in many different ways

and contexts, been resisted, contested, negotiated, or recreated by the 'targets' of development.

2.2 Empowerment and Participation in the Development Process

Empowerment and participation in the development process must be considered in social, political and economic context in order to understand how it emerges and transforms power for ethnic minority groups. For example, the Northern peasant community was open in the sense of membership and land ownership, but closed in terms of membership of the administrative and political community (Chayan 2003:17). Further he views that the study of empowerment and participation development approach can be examined in the different perception of the state and local people toward development (ibid.). Thus it is essential to look at the social interactions that the state agents implement development programs and control over rural population and resources, and how local people responses to this perception.

It can be seen from the first section discussion that the technology of power exercised by the holders of modern technology in the processes of modernization in the Third World is closely related to the issue of rights. Benefits from development are basically determined by whether a population has the power and/or right to utilize natural resources for production and to support their livelihoods. Having rights mean that local people have autonomy in the decision-making process. If development is to be realized in the Third World, the issue of local rights cannot be ignored. Empowerment can be an effective way to protect local rights, though it can involve different processes and outcomes through government-imposed community participation as opposed to participation initiated by local communities. Only when respect is shown for local knowledge and local rights are recognized in decision-making processes can we talk about sustainable community development or community-based environmental protection (Chayan 1996:3).

In studying community transformation through development, it is first necessary to investigate the power relations operating at different levels of society, especially the changing power relations involving local communities and the state, those intervention in rural society that have effectively differentiated communities into social and economic classes. Broadly speaking, development aims to integrate

national economies into the world market. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s the Thai government allocated a huge budget for agricultural credits, irrigation systems, and fertilizer, which was expected to create better producers and wealthier farmers (Hart et al., 1989). Instead, as Hart et al (ibid.) point out, this program led to increased inequality of income, and unequal access to the means of production, employment, and virtually all social benefits, including health and education, for the rural communities it was meant to help. This case reflects Komatra's (1998) argument that the state can increase its power to appropriate local politics and administrative roles through processes of development, and create a hierarchy of bureaucratic and commercial institutions.

Relative experiences of empowerment and disempowerment in different development settings are shaped by a hierarchical bureaucracy that favors private as opposed to communal ownership. As Escobar (1991:667) argues, development policy is structured by such professional and bureaucratic mechanisms. Much anthropology of development literature (see for example Escobar 1991; 1995) has identified and criticized the ways in which development discourse has been promoted by states and impacted upon the lives of rural people, who are the main targets of many development interventions. However, this literature also emphasizes that rural people have acted strategically in their interactions with external development agents, re-appropriating the meaning of development imposed by states and other actors, such as, the World Bank, International Labor Organization (ILO), and Asian Development Bank (ADB). In response, there have been increasing concerns within development circles, domestic and international, to incorporate considerations of culture, including those of ethnic minorities, in development interventions.

There is a growing body of critiques of participatory approaches that involve the use of empowerment methods. Hobart (1993) pointed to the politically-constructed nature of the outcome of participatory development activities that take place in specific social and time-bound contexts. In such projects, villagers often participate in needs-assessment meetings, but outsiders including development agents tend to exert dominant influence in these interactions. Furthermore, ethnic minority cultures have rarely been explicitly addressed as part of the project formulation process. Part of the reason for this situation is that such strategic interactions primarily take place in terms of the cultural frameworks of outsiders.

Analysis of the practical effects of empowerment efforts must concentrate on social, political and economic contexts. This is partly due to the fact that empowerment is difficult to define and subject to many different interpretations. As Lavigne-delville et al. (2001:27) point out, empowerment can simply mean the ability to express oneself within a given relationship of domination. If local people are given opportunities to make decisions regarding the path of local development, they have the ability to evaluate and analyze development options and their potential consequences.

Empowerment discourse places the emphasis on local communities. According to Long (1996) by focusing on this unit of analysis local communities are viewed as homogenous with little attention to differentiation in social relations, inter-group interactions, economic status. Cultural differences are seldom included in the analysis. This means that communities are often idealized, underestimating the dynamic differentiation and internal power struggles (ibid). However, local communities are faced with struggle, conflict, and competition: gender, age, income distribution, and political and religious affiliation are structured around systems of inequality and dependence. Therefore state efforts to empower local people, such as, in Northeastern Cambodia often do not fully represent local interests because they do not recognize unequal power relations within ethnic minority communities.

In order to uphold local rights to control resources, many ethnic minority groups in Northeastern Cambodia have initiated participation in development projects. This resistance has included the use of certain farming practices and traditional resource management systems as contestations of external interventions. A wide body of literature on ethnic minority peoples views including their communities as having a close relationship with nature. Through practice, they accumulate experiences and establish traditional knowledge about their natural surroundings. This strengthens a local community is ability to manage resources. Fox (1997a) argues that the effectiveness of these systems should be examined in the context of sustainable development. Although there can be limitations to traditional resource management systems, many have remained not only viable but also active in many parts of the world. Ethnic minority peoples often use traditional taboos to regulate their activities, or develop social controls to regulate resource use and ensure that the environment is

managed sustainably. There are often many tenure traditions existing in such systems including regimes of marine, forest and land tenure (Colm 1997a, Fox 1997a).

Local participation can be a way to create local and global linkages, in which local communities can be viewed as a demographic entity, an object of policy analysis and/or as a unit of social relations or individuals with distinct social and psychological experiences (Vivian 1992, 1995). Rural development can be defined in terms of sustainability, explicitly sustaining not just the biophysical environments, such as, forests and rivers, but also sustaining local communities and building social capital. Social capital is referred to here as the development of a local community capacity to make judgments and act for themselves and successfully manage their local environments and property within the communities (Slocum et al., 1995, Sillitoe 2002). This includes the development of social networks, of interpersonal trust, and reciprocity that can help to sustain communities and the environments on which they are dependent. Such a perspective of rural development integrates environmental, community, and economic objectives.

However, participation rarely refers to real decision making and power sharing in development planning, management and implementation as promoted in participation discourse. In many cases, target groups are invited to share responsibility as stakeholders in the managing of a particular aspect of a development project but real participation in decision-making processes is rare (Bliss et al., 2001:13). Additionally, Scoones and Thompson (1994:44) argue that:

> The interactions between government and local community involved in implementing particular development programs and recipients within local populations are complex and dynamic. Such interactions cannot be understood simply through existing concepts relating to state-peasant relations, or by resorting to normative concepts of local participation, but must be analyzed as part of ongoing processes of negotiation, adaptation and transfers of meaning that take place between specific actors.

The notion of participation is used by international and local government as a strategy to recognize and involve local people in development. But the kind of local participation discussed above is not sufficient to solve the environmental problems faced by the Third World (Bryant et al., 1997). The problems are too widespread and too deeply entrenched to be entirely solved with the disparate, sometimes haphazard and usually localized palliative remedies presently offered. To some extent, the

notion of participation can be understood as power sharing, however, in practice top-down forms of empowerment introduced by outsiders or governments generally do not entail reallocation of power. Vivian (1992, 1995:52) argues that instead of relying upon outside recognition of the values of local participation, local people themselves have found their own ways to participate more meaningfully and effectively in resource management projects.

In response to state-led resource management interventions, ethnic minority communities have also strategically used customary law in attempts to protect and manage communal property, demonstrating an active collective consciousness. In Cambodia, customary law generally identifies a clear sense of village lands, however, specific boundaries between villages were not traditionally required unless the cultivation plots of two villages were in adjoining areas. Taboos against crossing another's field for cultivation defined the limits for use, with elders of both villages deciding the boundaries for shifting cultivation fields. At the state level, though, the government typically does not recognize the complexity of traditional land tenure systems of ethnic minorities, and does not allow them to fully participate in the planning of development projects. Thus ethnic minority communities experience both internal and external pressures from development projects that threaten the sustainability of traditional life-styles and attempt to recreate local landscapes in ways that are distant from local custom and culture.

Those efforts at landscape transformation that are flexible and recognize the viability of traditional tenure systems can, however, potentially be a foundation for achieving sustainable resource management. Even so, local people need active support from development workers in their struggle for meaningful participation (Vivian 1992, 1995:66). The sustainability of local environments can be achieved only when local people's rights and traditional systems are recognized and respected by governments and commercial entrepreneurs. There is an urgent need to develop legal mechanisms for recognizing traditional land-use practices and systems of customary tenure in order to protect the rights of rural communities, including indigenous peoples (Fox 2002:7). At the same time, local communities themselves must find appropriate methods for voicing their concerns and asserting their rights.

According to Vivian (1992, 1995:66), it is necessary to consider the power relations operating within any development process. Generally speaking, inequities of

power cause conflict where different groups within any conflict have their own goals and interests. Vivian (ibid.) notes that there have been many instances in which communities have mobilized to participate in development projects on their own terms, drawing upon local knowledge and power to protect local interests. Local communities have also successfully formed coalitions with regional, national, and international groups helping local people to determine the nature of their own participation and negotiate the terms of local development.

Empowerment is therefore a process, which includes continuous resistance, adjustment, negotiation, and compromise. Not only is government recognition of local people's interests and related dialogue and negotiation necessary, but local people themselves must also be strategic about the nature of their resistance. This includes determining how local people can participate effectively without circumscribing their original aims, and how they can best communicate with government agencies. Further, since the discourse of development marginalizes local communities, their self-empowerment cannot be realized if government agencies do not address power inequities.

Investigating, empowerment and participation can help us better understand marginalized people's struggles to reconfigure their knowledge and reconstruct lives with meaning. This 'people's development project' is a new concept of governance, one that claims that the notion of 'rights' is universal the abuse of authority is not tolerated (Komatra 1998:373). Based on this understanding, ethnic minorities cannot be viewed as uneducated or ignorant, they have their own belief systems, cultures, and customs, as well as ethnic practices. It is necessary to ensure that ethnic minority groups are not marginalized, and assumed to be powerless, living in poverty and constant conflict, but provided with opportunities to utilize their knowledge and exert their rights in development processes, particularly natural resource management. In the following section, the cultural context in which ethnic minorities devise cultural meanings, mobilize resistance and recreate development space will be addressed.

2.3 Ethnic Practice as an Articulation of Contested Development

> We don't know exactly when we started to talk about cultural practice... The government continues to bet on democracy and development; we respond by emphasizing local autonomy and the rights to be who we are and have our

own life project. To recognize the need to be different, to revitalize cultural values and local structures are difficult tasks that demand persistent work among our communities, taking their very heterogeneity as a point of departure... This is one of our most important political tasks at present: to advance in the formulation and implementation of alternative social and economic proposals...

(Escobar 1995:212)

This section reviews the concept of ethnic practices for contestation of development space to control their local resources. According to Chayan (2003:20), asserts that this approach has been used by Marxist anthropology that interested to the contestation over natural resources by the state and local people. From this approach, I focus on how local community practices have constructed and reconstructed in the everyday life of community's articulation, and the way that they have negotiated or resisted with the state or powerful actors.

According to political ecology literature (see for example Bryant 1997), local power is defined as the ability of an actor to control their own interactions and to control the interactions of other actors within their power base. Above all, power is determined by the control that one party has over another party. According to Bryant and Bailey (1997) there are various ways in which one actor may seek to exert control over other actors. This is most evident when an actor attempts to control the access of other actors to a diversity of environmental resources, such as, land, forests, water, marine or terrestrial wildlife or minerals.

Moreover, states and other powerful actors may seek to maintain or enhance their power over the environments of other actors by controlling what Scott (1990) termed as 'public transcript', that is, the 'socially accepted' version of events represented in public documents, legal political ideologies, popular music, theaters, and so on. Through control of this public transcript, actors seek to extend their partisan interests on a society-wide basis (Bryant and Bailey 1997: 170-171).

In contrast, patterns of resistance within these contexts are often more difficult to discern precisely because, as Scott (1985: 31-32) notes, the weak rarely seek to draw public attention to their resistance. However, resistance does occur, and is notably associated with the 'illegal' exploitation of environmental resources by poor farmers

and other grassroots actors. Forest clearance for agricultural purposes, the gathering of firewood in national parks or reserved forests, the poaching of big game in wildlife parks, or the cultivation of forbidden crops are all be examples of these actors asserting their perceived rights to shape local environmental conditions. Similarly, efforts by these actors to specify the boundaries of local community forests or ancestral domains represent an attempt to counter-map contested environments (Peluso 1992).

Generally, it is in the interest of powerful actors to shape the public transcript that surrounds the question of legitimacy to control and manage natural resources. Yet, as Scott (1985) notes the alternative 'hidden transcripts' of weaker actors always pose a danger to powerful actors precisely because they question official history. When these hidden transcripts become public, weaker actors openly challenge the claims to legitimacy of more powerful actors, the political and economic situation may become explosive. Although the more powerful actors may well prevail in such struggles, their power is nonetheless diminished in so far as the wider population is exposed to claims that question the legitimacy of their power (ibid.).

Even though the rule of formal law is considered legal and legitimate, many local communities still observe local rules and practices, which predate formal legal systems. Local rules and practices do not disappear they merely become informal ones. In practice, Vandergeest (1997) argues that formal (*de jure*) and informal (*de facto*) laws exist in everyday life in a specific locality. Claims to natural resource access are therefore a combination of usufruct and legal rights. Vandergeest (ibid.) also notes that everyday practices are more complicated than the provisions of formal laws, and different interpretations of resource claims can lead to confrontation between states and local communities. Colm provides a pertinent example in the case of the Kreung people reacting to the granting of a logging concession in 1999:

> No one dared to protest, and they had soldiers, people from the province, the big delegation. The company had approval from the district and province authorities to operate the logging concession. There is no consultation with the people. The government always accused us of destroying the forest but actually it's them. The big people are cutting the forest and making us poor. They should follow their own laws.

(Colm 1999:29-37)

Escobar (1992; 1995; and 1996) argues that grassroots movements are explicitly constructed as political strategies for the defense of territory, culture and identity. These grassroots movements create a cultural politics that is mediated by ecological concerns. In terms of biodiversity advocacy networks, the emergence of social movements that explicitly appeal to biodiversity discourse as part of their strategy is a recent development. In many cases, the concern for biodiversity has emerged from broader struggles for territorial control. This is true in many parts of Latin America, primarily in conjunction with the demarcation of collective territories, such as, Ecuador, Peru, Columbia, Bolivia, and Brazil. These experiences are yet to be thoroughly examined ethnographically and comparatively (ibid.).

A range of literature (see for example Escobar 1995) views grassroots movements in Latin America as forms of resistance to delineation, exploitation, and subjugation. Slater (1985 cited in Bebbington 1996:94) views grassroots movements as protests against state politics, particularly against excessive concentrations of decision-making power and inadequate state services. In this sense, these social movements are protesting the legitimacy of the state. However, other researchers adopting a broader focus question the ways in which social movements rise as expressions of long-dominated and marginalized community or group identities, which can also contribute to the reformulation of identity through the activity of the movements. The expression of identity can thus be a form of resistance (Escobar 1995).

It is clear that grassroots movements have emerged in opposition to development throughout the 1980s, and have been characterized by new forms of collective action and social mobilization. Grassroots movements have significantly changed the character of political culture and practice in Third World countries. Processes of identity construction in various developing countries in response to development projects have been flexible, modest, and mobile, relying on tactical articulations arising out of the condition and practices of daily life (Escobar 1995:216).

This notion of everyday resistance may be combined with a post-structural interest in the discourses of protest. A wide range of popular statements, which often appear only at the local level, can be read as examples of grassroots resistance. Drawing on the perspectives of phenomenology and ethno-methodology, Peet and Watts (1996:33) argue that subordinated classes have rarely been afforded the luxury of open, organized political activity, which is the preserve of the middle classes and

intelligentsia. Scott (1985:29-30) focuses on everyday forms of peasant resistance, struggles between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents and interest from them. Most of the forms this struggle stop short of outright collective defiance. Thus, the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups include foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth (ibid.).

Long (1992) interprets social action and human agency as grounded in everyday life experiences. This means that there is interplay between strategic action and social meanings within the context of the formation and transformation of social identity. Such an understanding implies the need to address issues concerning the negotiation and contestation of self-image, and analyze the interplay of discursive practice. In addition, Long (ibid.) used symbolic interactions and phenomenology to analyze how local people have struggled over the social meanings of agricultural development.

Everyday forms of peasant resistance have both material and symbolic manifestations (Scott 1985). In other words, they are part of the struggles over natural resources and cultural meanings. Scott (1985 cited in Piseth 2001:32) argues that such forms of resistance are conscious acts by individuals who are capable of penetrating the ideological fabric woven by those in privileged positions, and that these acts give their resistance symbolic meaning, so that the poor are not the victims of false consciousness. Further, according to Scott (1985) the poor require little or no coordination or planning for these kinds of resistance, they often involve a form of individual self-help, and they typically avoid any direct confrontation with authority.

There is a general consensus among Third World countries that issues of ecologically-based resistance can be addressed by focusing on the resource users and their social relations. Moore (1993:381; 1996:125-126) has identified struggles at grassroots levels as materially-and symbolically-contested arenas, in which 'peasant politics' is not only concerned with resource access but also notions of morality, rights, criminality, and subversion. Therefore, instead of employing a macro-structural framework, the micro-political level of conflicts in developing countries needs to be examined as peasants' struggles over access to productive resources and efforts to create symbolic meanings to sustain their struggle.

This context of peasantry taking part in everyday resistance is what Scott (1985: 29) calls 'the weapons of the weak'. Similarly, Bryant (1997) views the phenomenon of 'forest crimes', including the theft of forest products, arson, trespassing and illegal grazing for example, which can also be viewed as acts as of resistance. Moreover, peasant resistance has also encompassed what Adas (1981 cited in Bryant 1997:10) calls 'avoidance protest', in which protest is manifested dramatically through the withdrawal of peasant labor or flight to a new territory.

Many scholars have also used the concepts of everyday resistance and avoidance protest to explain peasant resistance to state controlled forestry. Peluso (1992) explored how Dutch and Indonesian rulers attempted to assert state power over Java's teak forests. These government claims to control over land, labor, flora and fauna simultaneously gave rise to various forms of popular resistance, including clandestine farming in state forests, labor strikes, migration, and the destruction of flora and fauna through a counter-ideology of communal ownership and resistance. This process of state control and peasant resistance in Indonesia left a legacy of forest dweller antagonism against the state, rural poverty, and forest degradation.

Resistance against the control of the state in terms of development strategies means that resistance represents a response to external threat to local autonomy and local access to material resources. Hirsch (1993) cites examples in Thailand were this type of resistance by villagers has been expressed by ignoring new boundaries established by the state. Instead, local communities have maintained established shifting cultivation plots and refused to move from their settlements. Villagers have also refused to construct fences or be relocated by the state because such action does not accommodate traditional ways of life and livelihood. In such situations, villagers often recognize informal local leadership as a better alternative to following government directives that representing outside threats to local aspirations.

Informal movements are a way for peasants to exercise and increase their power in advocating for political and material rights. This resistance is expressed in dynamic and diverse ways. Resistance may help peasants achieve their goals and is related to social, economic, cultural, and political conditions. Recently, Vien (2002:34-35) found that local people in the Central Highlands of Vietnam negotiated with the state by employing ethnic practices as a basis for natural resource management. He also contends that in natural resource management situations where

conflicts have occurred between powerful and less-powerful groups, one way that different parties have successfully achieved rights to natural resources is through negotiating more equitable access for local people living in national parks and forest areas.

Peluso (1998:23) also notes that local practices and customary laws related to forest utilization can be restricted by state intervention. She outlines ways that local people have been able to negotiate recognition of their rights to formalize and legalize them within state frameworks. Peluso (ibid.) argues that different kinds of political spaces for negotiation between local people and the state as well as among local people have been constructed through these processes of formal recognition. Thus resistance, negotiation, participation, and compromise, approached in different ways by different groups and communities, can become a powerful basis for regaining lost access and rights to land and other resources to maintain livelihood subsistence and desired cultural values (see for example Vien 2003, Moore 1996, Piseth 2001).

Considering the above discussion, it can be seen that local people have been able to adapt creatively in the development of strategies to negotiate state policy related to natural resource management. Local groups have often acted to protect their territories by asserting ethnic practice through symbolic resistance and by revitalizing cultural-environmental relationships to assert their identity as effective resource claims that development should be adaptable to local livelihoods. The value of culturally-based resource strategies can be seen in the definition of sustainable development created by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. Their findings included that local people's livelihoods are attached to specific territories, and that their knowledge can be used to create an alternative discourse for articulating the connections between culture and nature as a basis for development space, or as alternatives to development. Essentially, the assertion of cultural practices by ethnic minority groups in Cambodia can be seen as attempts to show the ways that social life, work, nature, and culture can be organized, perceived, and valued differently than the dominant models of culture and economy mandated by the state.

The conflict between different stakeholders over local resources is not always visible; there are complex forms of resistance at local levels. Researchers must be aware of traditional culture and knowledge and the variables of power (Banuri 1993).

Scott (1985) argues that culture, knowledge and power can be embedded in everyday life experiences. Both Schein (1999) and Banuri (1993) conceive 'culture in practice' as constituting and being revealed by language, the creation of self-image, or religious beliefs and ritual. Further, Vien (2002:36) shows that ethnic practices are dynamic, diverse, and based on culture and knowledge. In this sense local people articulate more ecologically-and culturally-viable forms of practice and strategies, which are dependent upon time and place, to secure their livelihoods. When local people diversify their livelihood bases, they draw on a local inventory of cultural practice. Therefore, by reinterpreting long-term cultural practices, local peoples have reinvented and revitalized their social structures to adapt to and strategically manage community participation in rural development projects to achieve a sustainable development.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Based on the above literature review, I developed a conceptual framework for my research (Figure 2.1) to conceptualize the transformation of ethnic minority communities in Northeastern Cambodia as a contested development terrain. Various actors such as state agencies, ethnic minorities, donors/NGOs, and private companies play a crucial role in highland development projects. Firstly, the diagram shows donor/NGO influences over state agencies in regards to law, policy, planning and development programs, which the government may have to adjust according to the terms of various bilateral agreements, such as improving the living conditions of local people and promoting rural infrastructure facilities. Secondly, this diagram reflects the power relations and social interactions between state agencies and ethnic minorities in the context of contested development spaces. This social interaction is based on the connections between power and knowledge, as they are used to negotiate, adapt and transfer the meanings of development, with little recognition of human agency at the community level or existing forms of community organization that guides social relationships.
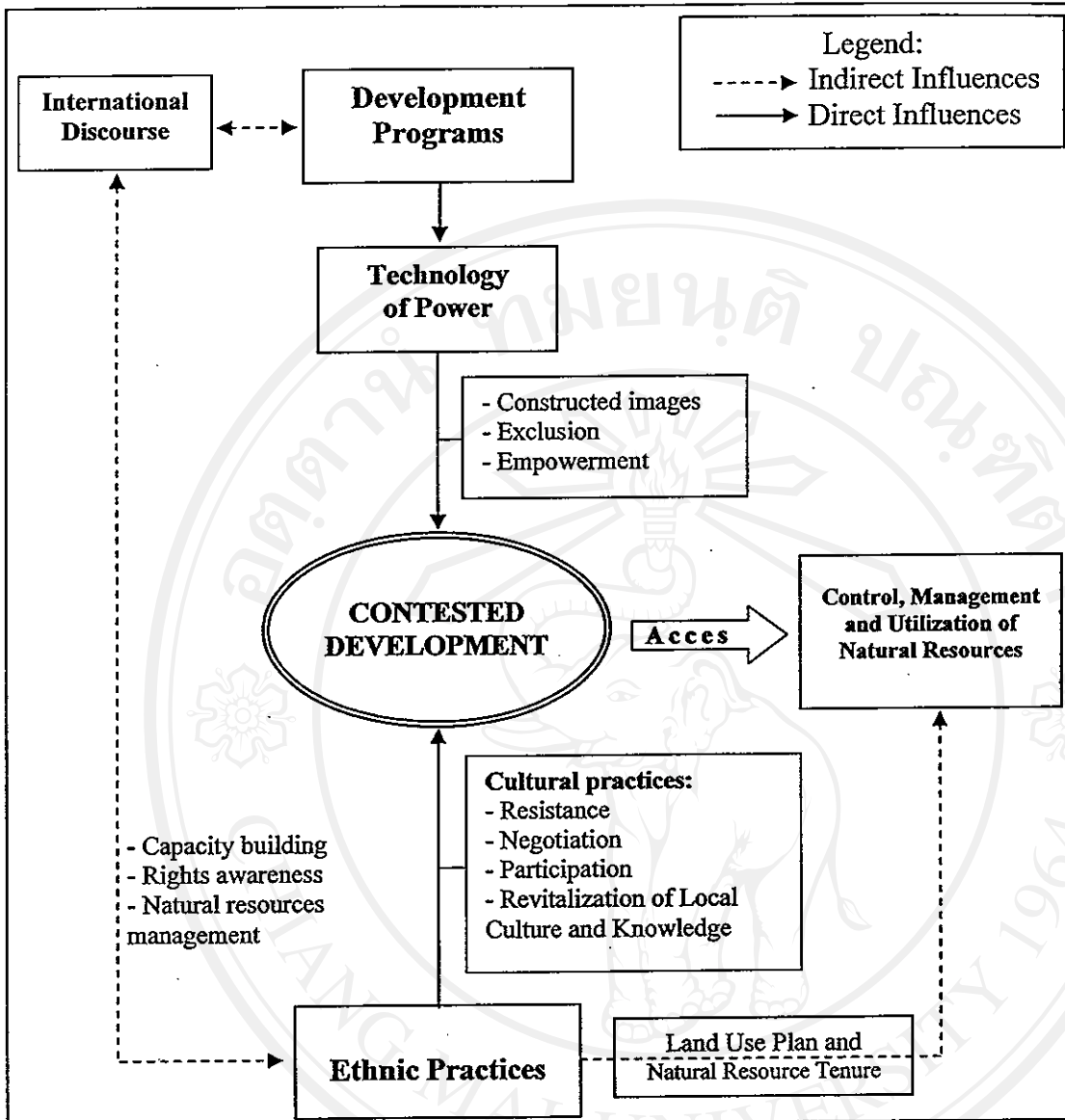
Figure 2.1: The Contested Development within Ethnic Minority Communities

State agencies have constructed discourses of development based on economic growth, modernization and democracy. Broadly speaking, state agencies claim legitimacy by creating institutional and legal frameworks to control people and natural resources. Development is thus aimed at empowering ethnic minority peoples; it is thought that participation in development projects will integrate ethnic minority groups into mainstream society. Such projects include the build of rural infrastructure, tourism, logging, mining, and cash crop production. The ideology, power and knowledge system recognized by the state also necessarily constructs images of ethnic minority groups through the development process. At the same time, the private sector has challenged customary laws and excluded local communities from access to forest resources traditionally used as a basis for subsistence and

culture. Highland development is thus directly related to private business interests such as logging and land concessions, as well as the development of state power.
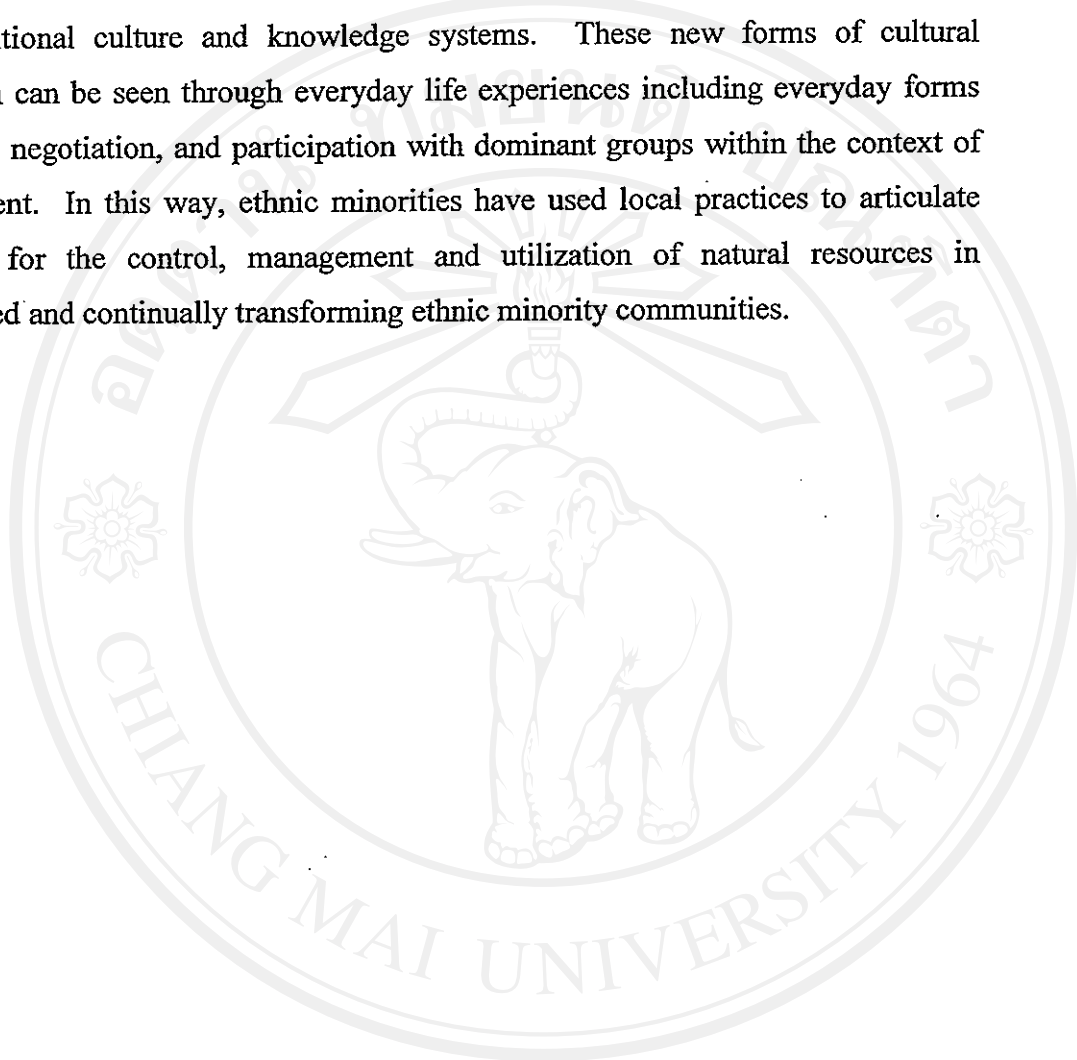
2.5 Summary

Development projects in the ethnic minority communities of Northeastern Cambodia promoted the raising of living conditions for ethnic minority peoples to allow them to build a better life in the region. Development projects, though, have changed the power relations and social interactions between ethnic minority communities and the government. State agencies, local businesses, elites, international investors, and lowland peoples have competed for access to and management of natural resources in ethnic minorities communities. Within this context, ethnic minority communities have became a contested development terrain, one that has transformed local livelihoods, impoverished cultural values, destroyed natural resources and changed access to the use and ownership of land. Development projects in Northeastern Cambodia have generally failed to deliver the promised benefits to ethnic minority communities. The development programs imposed from above by international agencies and state bodies have frequently not met the needs and aspirations of ethnic minority peoples.

To study and analyze this transformation of ethnic minority communities in Northeastern Cambodia, I propose the use of three main concepts. The concept of 'technology of power' is employed with the assumption that the state accumulates power in the development process, which is exercised in new the natural resource management regimes. This concept facilitates an understanding of the state power and the ways its influence transforms access to land and forest resources.

Secondly, these emerging elements of state power have dramatically changed the ways of life of ethnic minority people who are dependent on natural resources for subsistence livelihoods. It can be seen that one of the results of the state disregarding local ways of life and cultural practice is local contestation. The question then is how ethnic minority people have created strategies in response to development initiatives including the control of natural resources. The concepts of empowerment and participation are therefore employed, which places the focus of investigation on development as a 'discursive practice' between the Cambodia government and ethnic

minority groups in terms of the dynamics of power sharing and decision making in the development process.

Finally, within the development process, ethnic minority people have been able to respond creatively to the various assaults on culture and environment by revitalizing their traditional culture and knowledge systems. These new forms of cultural expression can be seen through everyday life experiences including everyday forms resistance, negotiation, and participation with dominant groups within the context of development. In this way, ethnic minorities have used local practices to articulate strategies for the control, management and utilization of natural resources in transformed and continually transforming ethnic minority communities.