CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL DEBATES

The aim of this chapter is to review the state of knowledge of research on the ethnic peoples and development in the Central Highlands and literature relating to previous studies of development. The chapter is divided into four main parts. The first part discusses social studies and debates of the ethnic peoples and development programs in the Central Highlands during the post-colonial period. The second part of this chapter focuses on the concept of development as discourse and practice of integrating ethnic peoples. The third part deals with the concept of social space. The fourth part is a discussion of the concept of everyday practice as a form of negotiation.

2.1 Social Studies and Debates on Development and the Ethnic Peoples in the Central Highlands

Historically, studies of development and ethnic peoples in the Central Highlands can be dated back to the early 1880's, when the French colonists arrived in this region. To date, there have been a large number of Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese social researchers working in the Central Highlands who produced voluminous ethnographic accounts on a great variety of topics. To provide the context for the present study, however, I shall selectively review only some relevant studies, particularly those concerned with the ways of life of ethnic people (agricultural production, social regulations, customary practices and beliefs) and the effects of development programs in the post-colonial period.

Since the issue of the ethnic peoples and development in the Central Highlands is one of the most crucial concerns of the Vietnam's socialist state, there have been a number of social researchers with large financial budgets for carrying out studies on these people. Phan Huu Dat gives a brief description of these studies as follows:

> "Those works have collected large data on the origin of the ethnicities, population and distribution of each ethnicity in over the country, cultural aspect of production of all ethnicities (from hunting and gathering to agriculture, from swidden cultivation, shifting cultivation to agricultural production with plough, water-rice, and traditional handicraft, etc.), physical culture (the village, housing, costume, jewelry, transportation), social culture (income differences, social classes, property regime, social relationships, social structure), family, marriage, life cycle (wedding, childbirth, funeral), spiritual culture (language, writing, primary scientific knowledge, folklore, traditional healing, religion and belief), ethnic process (separation, assimilation with their tendency of unity, harmony in accordance with natural assimilation of some ethnic people)." (Phan Huu Dat, 2004: 42)

In my understanding, however, most of these studies essentially aim at answering three main questions: "Who are ethnic peoples? Which evolutionary stage of humankind are they living in? And how to bring those ethnic peoples to socialism?" (Dang Nghiem Van, 1986: 40). Disappointedly, studies addressing those questions argue that all of the ethnic peoples in the Central Highlands had been staying at the lowest state of the human evolutionary ladder equivalent to the Marx-Engel's notion of "primitive society" (in Vietnamese terms: *xã hội nguyên thủy*). The most important feature, which has been used to consider these ethnic people to be at the lowest state of development, was their shifting cultivation. Dang Nghiem Van, one of the most prominent social scientists with profound influences upon the thinking of the ethnic peoples in the Central Highlands in the terms of "primitivism," describes that:

> "Traditional agricultural production with diverse forms of cultivation depending on the nature and aiming at self-sufficiency. Animal husbandry has not separated from agriculture. Product exchange has been developed but it has not created a class of native traders. Appropriation of natural resources still plays very important role. Division of labor is based on gender. Expenditure is unplanned and wasted leading to poverty while food is abundant… Labor force is unspecialized leading to wastefulness of productive manpower, natural resources and people's dependence upon customary practiced inherited from the ancestor.
>
> The last key consideration is unplanned, wasted and incalculable in using produced products, especially food and raised cattle. Paddy is full of storehouse, and the consumption is incalculable. Ethnic people pay no attention to food shortages in between-crop period. Their food consumption is also used wastefully in the traditional festivals, religion ceremonies especially during period of traditional New Year. Asset sharing for the dead devastates valuable assets of ethnic families. Irrational and wasteful expenditures are barriers not only for a family or village but also for the whole society …" (Dang Nghiem Van 1981: 34-40)

In his revised paper published in 1986, Dang Nghiem Van has added the following passage to his description:

> "Production activities of the Highlanders are natural, by hand and by their own intellect, no machines and cattle are used. The Highlanders are resourceful in working, but they are passive and lack of initiative, importantly their activities are followed what they have learnt from the elders, they have only one crop per year following agricultural calendar determined by their community, works are customarily allocated to everyone, gender and age. They work actively without technical standard (forge is underdeveloped, hand-made pottery, weaving without loom, cultivation technique is very simple…), time-consuming and unproductive. Annually, off-farm period is equal to farming period. In their works, because they lack of self-confidence of themselves and they see their successes to be regulated by the spirits, they do not attempt to solve the natural calamities … and thus the same as the *primitive* described by Engel." (Dang Nghiem Van, 1986: 44-45; emphasis is added)

Arguments that consider the Highlanders' production is the most primitive pattern of production and their cultural life is "backwards" are found in many works by Vietnamese scholars, such as, Nguyen Tan Dac (2005), Bui Minh Dao (1999, 2006), Vu Dinh Loi, Bui Minh Dao and Vu Thi Hong (2000), Luu Hung (1996), Truong Minh Duc (2005), Khong Dien (2002) and Tran An Phong (1996). Nguyen Tan Dac, for example, in his book *Social Culture and People in the Central Highlands*, contends that:

> "The ethnic people in the Central Highlands have known to use forestland for shifting cultivation, which means they know how to adapt to their natural environment; however shifting cultivation has kept these people standing at the starting-point of the evolutionary ladder, or the lowest stage of civilization." (Nguyen Tan Dac, 2005: 80)

In addition to the mode of cultivation, political organization is also very crucial in argument about the developmental stage of ethnic peoples in the Central Highlands. In a number of studies, the social and political organization of the Highlanders is perceived as standing at a lower level of social evolution because of their lack of a "truly" class society, a "big landlord," and a political system that could exercise its power over the boundary of the village. Nguyen Tan Dac, for example, described the social and political organization of the Highlanders as follows:

> "In the Central Highlands, only village can be called a social organization of ethnic peoples. Each village has its own cultivation area, customary laws regulating activities of the village's population…. In this form of social

> organization, there is an economic differentiation due to differences of manpower among village's families, but it has no social class.
>
> Because village community is the highest social unit of ethnic societies in the Central Highlands, the Highlanders are aware of the village only; they have not had even a simple idea of higher social organization or nation-state….
>
> In short, village community in the Central Highlands is a basic social unit similarly to social form that existed before the formation of nationality and nation state." (Nguyen Tan Dac, 2004: 85-92)

For some Vietnamese social researchers, the "primitive aspects" of the highlanders are also manifested in their religion and belief system. Phan Huu Dat contends that "religion of ethnic people has maintained vestiges of totemism - a fundamental religion of societies, namely communal society" (Phan Huu Dat, 2004: 533). He further argues that "the Central Highlands is one of very little areas in Vietnam and in over the world, where has kept many scientific and interesting issues of cultural development of human being at the starting point of civilization" (Phan Huu Dat, 2004: 549).

Although the production of the highlanders, their social regulations, and other cultural practices have undergone greatly changes due to the development policies and programs in the postcolonial period, only a few studies by Vietnamese social researchers have examined such changes. Moreover, most of these studies tended to support the state's theoretical framework of rationale of its policies, rather than to reflect the real impacts of the development policies and programs on the life of highlanders (Salemink, 2003). To illustrate, here is a rationale of a traditional village headman, which is described by Phan Huu Dat:

> "In his study of *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State*, Engels had pointed out that division of labor and result of division of labor had led to collapse of primitive society. Engels had mentioned about three great revolutions in division of labor of primitive society… It is necessary to realize that those three revolutions in division of labor happened during the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, which means they happened at the end of primitive period. At the beginning of its history or the Paleolithic Era, it is about 5 or 4 thousand years ago, human society had had a simple division of labor, which was natural division of labor with two types. The first type of division of labor based gender, male and female, in other words it based on human body, functions of gender, and purpose of production - maintaining human existence… The second type of natural division of labor was based on age class. Each member of the society dedicated his/her strength to community according to his/her age. In general, people of the society were divided into classes according to age: the infant, adult and old men… When a man was fifty years

> old, he organized a ceremony to give a feast to other villagers to inform people that he had achieved his ordinary obligations, and he now had to be given a higher place at communal house and voices in communal activities…
>
> Based on this observation, it can be concluded that: *First*, traditional village's headman, village's headman-based institution or social institution based on old men had appeared in the early history of human being. It generated from natural division of labor. It was very popular in our planet. *Second*, the social institution based on old men exists and operates in primitive society, or in pre-capitalist society, a transitional society between primitive and capitalist societies... Dialectically, primitive commune, village's headman or chief of village are historical categories, which mean that they are not constant categories, everlasting, rather they are shaped, developed and lasted according to evolutionary path of ethnic and human histories… (Phan Huu Dat, 2004: 605-610)

In recent years, some studies point out that allocation of large areas of agricultural land and forest to state enterprises have serious effects on the livelihood and cultural practices of ethnic minorities. A study carried out by Vu Dinh Loi, Bui Minh Dao, and Vu Thi Hong (2000) is the first attempt to voice the consequences of development policies and programs on the people of the Central Highlands. This study states that the state's formulation of state enterprises to manage land and forest has ignored the land use demand of ethnic people. Meanwhile, transmigration has transferred a large part of the cultivable lands of ethnic people to the new settlers. Consequences of the policies were that cultivable land of ethnic people has become scarce, and land conflicts have become common problem in the Central Highlands. This study records that about 2,500 social conflicts related to land and forestland between ethnic minority people and new settlers or state units in the Central Highlands had happened during the 1990s. It is observed that in these land conflicts the ethnic minority people had destroyed the crops of the new settlers and state enterprises.

The studies by Khong Dien (2002) and Dang Nghiem Van (2002) have linked policies on land allocation with the movement of ethnic households to very remote areas in order to practice shifting cultivation. These researchers argue that many ethnic households have lost their fallow land, because the state's policies had recognized this type of land as unused land and thus allocated them to the Kinh settlers. On the other hand, the policies of land allocation have increased land insecurity of ethnic people as they have been confronted with land hunger of the new

settlers. These studies state that sixty thousand ethnic minority people have lost their cultivation lands after the implementation of land allocation policy. As a result, they recently came back to their nomadic way of life practicing shifting cultivation and clearing thousands of hectares of primary forests for food production.

Nguyen Ngoc (2002) also points out that many ethnic villages lost their communal ritual ceremonies and other customary practices because the villages' forests had been allocated to state enterprises and other state organizations, which did not allow villagers to collect even minor forest products for reconstructing the men's traditional communal house. As a form of resistance to the policies on land and forest allocation, according to Nguyen Ngoc, ethnic people in the forests have given strong support for illegal loggers (*lâm tặc*); sometimes they even became "illegal loggers" themselves.

Because of political concern, "until recently, foreign researchers were not allowed to do any substantial research in the Highlands" (Salemink 2003: 267). However, some scholars, for instance, Evans (1992, cited in Salemink 2003), Hardy (2003), Salemink (2003) and McElwee (2004), have analyzed the policies of the Vietnam's socialist state on the highlanders. In his analysis of development policies for the highland areas, Evans attaches the label of "internal colonialism" to Vietnamese policies in the Central Highlands (cited in Salemink, 2003: 266). Hardy (2003) relates recent resource conflicts in the Central Highlands to the political economy of internal migration of the postcolonial state. According to Hardy, the internal migration, promoted by the socialist state, has helped the country deal with national security and over population in the lowland areas. However, it has taken away the ancestral lands of the highlanders and separated these people into small groups in their own provinces of this area now called the "*Red Hills*."

Salemink, in his *The Ethnography of Vietnam's Central Highlanders* (2003), exposes that two development programs, named "Fixed Cultivation and Fixed Settlement" and "Selective Preservation of Traditional Culture", have not only taken away ancestral lands of the highlanders and transformed the Central Highlands into a settlement area for the Kinh people, but also destroyed various cultural practices of the highlanders and furthermore, their very world. Moreover, they have changed the highlanders into disempowered groups in their homelands who are voiceless in the

national society. In the Central Highlands today, therefore, the highlanders have resisted the state policies overtly "by joining the FULRO movement or by 'voting with their feet,' and covertly, by maintaining their system of customary law or by converting to Protestantism, in an attempt to reclaim agency" (Salemink 2003: 287).

McElwee's examination of policies created by the Socialist State for ethnic peoples suggests that the ethnic demonstration in 2001 and other problems of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands are outcomes of the state's poor policies directed at non-Vietnamese ethnic groups. For McElwee, the policies of the Socialist State have emphasized too strongly on promoting national security rather than focusing on addressing the development problems of ethnic minorities. The ethnic minorities were treated as static cultures with "quaint" customs, which are in need of change. She also contends that the current problems in the Central Highlands cannot be solved if the Vietnamese government still focuses on security issues and pays less attention to legitimizing equity and concern of social justice.

It can be said that the studies by international researchers have provided a rich understanding about ethnic people in the Central Highlands and the development process created by the socialist state. However, there are a number of questions, which are calling for more attention, for instance: How have ethnic people experienced the negative effects of the development programs? What kind of survival strategies have the ethnic people practiced in order to cope with such negative effects? Thus, in this study, I want to deal with these questions in order to expand our understanding about the experiences and practices of ethnic people in the Central Highlands under the state's imposed development programs. In the following parts I will examine theories and concepts which have been developed by anthropological studies for examining development processes and ethnic peoples, in such a place as Vietnam's Central Highlands.

2.2 Development as Discourse and the Practice of Integrating Ethnic Peoples

In this part, I will examine how anthropological studies approach development processes for ethnic people of the modern state in order to lay out a theoretical framework and make an analysis on the nature of development policies and programs in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

It can be said that the word “development” has become a powerful word in every corner of our world, and has created enormous changes in various social aspects. Many international organizations have set up their development agencies and billions of dollars were spent each year for a large number of development projects all over the world. In the same context, every nation-state in the North has its department or ministry of local, regional and international development; and no Third World nation expects to be taken seriously without the development label prominently displayed on some part of its governmental anatomy (Cowen and Shenton, 1995). However, there is no particular agreement about the defining elements of the concept of social transformation. The ideas and concepts of ‘development’ are advocated differently between different states, social organizations, societies and periods of time. Development can mean national independence, economic growth, poverty alleviation, ecological development, sustainability and globalization (Cowen and Shenton, 1995; Sachs, 1992; Watts, 1995; Adams, 1995). As a result, the more current the notion of development becomes, the more it seems to be beset with vagueness and inconsistencies.

In the last few decades, there have been an increasing number of scholars in anthropology, sociology and other related fields, who have tried to clarify the term “development” and reduce its ambiguity with respect to ideas, effects and experiences. Within the studies of these scholars, the concept of development as discourse has been widely applied and discursive analysis has become an influential approach to explain what the nature of development is, how development has great power, and why “to develop” has become a fundamental problem for many people since the late 1980s (e.g. Crush *et al.*, 1995; Escobar, 1995).

Theoretically, the studies, which examine development in term of discourse, employ the literature constituted by a number of French scholars, among whom Michel Foucault has been especially influential. Discourse, in general, refers to language associated with an institution including the ideas and statements that express the values of the institution. In Foucault’s writing, discourse can be understood as language in action – they are the windows, which shape our understanding of ourselves and our capacity to distinguish the valuable from valueless, the true from the false, and the right from the wrong (cited in Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2002).

What this means is that people are not individual subjects in control of our thoughts and actions, rather they have their thoughts and activities influenced, regulated and to some extent controlled by the discourses that constitute the grounds upon which they can act, speak and make sense of things. For Foucault, discourse has become a technology of power used by the modern nation-states and the dominant people to produce the truth of knowledge and institutional settings that lay down the grounds upon which people can make sense of the world and regulate their activities in certain times and at certain places (Rabinow, 2003).

For studies in anthropology, to study about development in terms of discourse is to analyze the nature of development based on:

> "[T]he ways that development is written, narrated and spoken; on the vocabularies deployed in the development texts to construct the world as an unruly terrain requiring management and intervention; on their stylized and repetitive form and content, their spatial imagery and symbolism, their use of history, their mode of establishing expertise and authority and of silencing alternative voices, on the forms of knowledge that development produce and assumes; and on the power relations it underwrites and reproduces" (Crush *et al.*, 1995: 4).

Constructing their debates from these analyses, anthropologists have exposed that development discourse has become a technology of power of the modern nation-states producing knowledge upon the truth "to convince, to persuade, that this (and not that) is the way the world actually is and ought to be amended" (Crush *et al.*, 1995: 5) or, in the other words, to promote and justify the interventions and practices of transforming the societies. As we can see from many countries in our world today, there have been advocacies of poverty, environmental degradation, and loss of biodiversity, which are the result of "backwardness" and "underdevelopment." At the same time, there has been an explosion of explanations relating to rhetoric concepts, such as economic growth, social equality, prosperity, and wealth associated with development or modernization. This development discourse has brought a great transformation of social knowledge as many rural people have a perception that their problems of poverty, environmental degradation, forest destruction and disease are associated with their "backwardness," "superstitions," unscientific exploitation, outmoded traditions, and so forth (Escobar, 1995). Simultaneously, economic growth, the "scientific exploitation" of natural resources and sedentarization implemented by

the modern nation-states are seen as the key solutions that must be achieved in order to solve the nation's problems and to bring a better life to the people. For modern nation-states, such a belief in the ideas of development creates a basis upon which they rearrange their national territory, reorganize the population, classify natural resources and create national regulations delineating how and by whom these natural resources should be used.

The current debate among anthropologists has pointed out that the discourse of development, despite the linear thinking rooted in a particular attitude of a civilization that is embedded in the ambitions of politics and economics, also changes its language, strategies and practices. Those changes of development discourse reflect some changes in the power relations, material relationships and activities of people (Sachs *et al.*, 1997). However, whenever a change happens, modern nation-states and the dominant groups receive more power. For instance, when development is emphasized with respect to economic growth, the terms "land" and "forests" mean resources containing economic values only, and modern nation-states establish various mechanisms to control the exploitation. On the contrary, when sustainable development is advocated as the way to develop our current society, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, the terms "land" and "forests" are given more meaning that take into account environmental values and biological stores, and states establish institutions with more power to control resource utilization (see for example: Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995; Li, 1999).

From a critical perspective, development discourse does not arise in a social, institutional, or literary vacuum. Rather, it is included into practices and/or development projects. For Ferguson (1990) or Escobar (1995), for example, analysis of development practices is an important approach that provides deep understanding of how development functions or works, as well as why development fails. These studies emphasize that analyzing development practices means to examine how social relations, cultural forms and modes of production are produced and formalized by modern states, development institutions and development projects. This approach has been employed by Escobar (1995) carrying out his work on the practices of development, such as poverty alleviation or economic improvement established for the "Third World." According to Escobar, the practices of development are active

processes of distributing individuals and populations in ways consistent with the creation and reproduction of modern capitalist relations, constructing new experiences of everyday life, and formulating new forms of control and management of people and their societies.

As policies and programs for "development" of the "small-scale societies" or "ethnic minorities" are very popular in many countries, and especially in Southeast Asia, there are numerous anthropological works that have made great attempts to examine what the nature of those development policies and development programs is (e.g. Li, 1999; Padoch and Peluso *et al.*, 1996; Harrell *et al.*, 1995; Salemink, 1997). These works have related the construction of "tradition," "underdevelopment," and "left behind," and the implementation of development processes for people of "small-scale societies" or "ethnic minorities" and their living places to specific processes of power, knowledge and production (Li, 1999). Discussions in these works have brought out the idea that the nature of the state's initiatives of development for highlands or uplands is derived from the question of power, sovereignty and resource control. As Salemink (1997) points out, the most fundamental question for many modern nation-states, especially the modern nation-states in Asia, is how to integrate the diverse ethnic groups with diverse cultures, knowledge, social institutions, modes of livelihood, and natural resources in the highlands into the control of the state and the national society.

To many modern social theorists, different modern nation-states have implemented different technologies of power in order to solve this challenge. The fundamental technology of power is to bring people and their territories into what modern nation-states call the "development process." Whatever the development process of the modern nation-state is called, the differences in knowledge, cultural practices and production of the ethnic groups are all constructed in evolutionary terms. This means that the differences between the ethnic groups and the others, normally between the minorities and the dominant groups, in terms of knowledge, cultural practices and production, are considered to result from the distance from development progress that the minorities have failed to achieve, and that all the differences will be abolished when the ethnic peoples get the same level of development guided by state-directed development programs. Hence, development programs of the modern nation-

states have become fundamental tools to bring “well-being” to the “primitive,” “science” to the “superstitious,” and “order” to “disorder.”

Paradoxically, the more the ethnic peoples participate in the development programs, the more they lose their access to resources that are necessary for maintaining their subsistence. Furthermore, accompanying with the development programs of modern nation-states, the living areas of ethnic minorities have changed into contested places, arenas for struggles and resistance. In many places, policies and programs under the rubric of development have become “great human tragedies, in terms of both lives lost and lives irretrievably disrupted” (Scott, 1998: 3).

Based on their analysis of development processes created by modern nation-states for ethnic peoples, social theorists have argued that to define particular regions, peoples, or practices as “backward”, “traditional”, “disorderly” and/or in need of “development” is simply not a way to describe the social facts (Li, 1999). Rather, it is a process to deploy a discourse by the modern nation-states in order to justify its practice of integrating ethnic minorities, their territories and natural resources into objects that the state can manipulate in accordance with its requirements and rationalities.

For this study, the literature on the concept of development as discourse and the practice of integrating ethnic minorities will provide a good theoretical ground for examining the situation in the Central Highlands, where the ethnic people have been introduced to various state’s development programs, which are always characterized as scientific plans to bring “well-being” to the “primitive,” “science” to the “superstitious,” and so forth. Following the approach of the above mentioned anthropological studies, this study will examine how development policies and programs for ethnic minorities of the Central Highlands in postcolonial period have been legitimized, and implemented at the local level. Then, I will point out that these development policies and programs are essentially discourse and practices of integrating ethnic peoples and their living space into Vietnamese society and into the territory of the postcolonial period in Vietnam.

2.3 Concept of Social Space

Since the publication of *Primitive Classification* written by Durkheim and Mauss (1963) and *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* written by Durkheim (1965), "social space" has become one of the more complex concepts that is approached from different angles and at different levels. It is used to expand our understanding about societies in the field of social science. According to Durkheim, Mauss and some early followers (Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard, Leach), the so-called functional structuralists, the concept of social space can be seen as a part of the total system, which can be expressed at different levels through different models of social organization (cited in Kuper, 1972). Following idea of Durkheim and Mauss (1963), some studies have described symbols and social values as manifested in spatial arrangements as the fundamental elements structuring social space. Others associate social space with the manipulation of social relations in defined areas of territory over a period of time, while others associate it with model building (Kuper, 1972).

Although the concept of social space, developed by this structuralist school of thought, has fundamentally influenced insights as well as the outside of the field of anthropology, they have also been criticized. According to some critics, this concept is very similar to what has been defined by architects, urban planners or geologists, who stress the ordinary utilization of the word "space," understood as the way to record onto land social organization. In other words, social space is limited in living places, spatial utilization, or a site or a zone (Kuper, 1972, Condominas, 1980; Shields, 1991).

Structuralism is not alone in generating the debates and providing the insights of social space. Actually, in the late twentieth century, the concept of social space has emerged to be more central than before and, around it, a new body of literature has developed (Kahn, 2000). There are a number of scholars, such as Lefebvre (1974), Bourdieu (1977) and Foucault (1986), who have tried to develop concepts and theories of social space by combining various schools of thought in various disciplines, including anthropology, philosophy and sociology.

It can be said that Henri Lefebvre, a French philosopher and sociologist, is a scholar who has immensely influential thoughts on social space. Different from ideas

of the functional structuralists, who pay attention to the space of native or pre-capitalist societies, Lefebvre focuses on the space of capitalist societies in combination with the formulation of modern nation-states. Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* provides "the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and modalities of their genesis together within a single theory" (Lefebvre, 1974: 16). In this treatise, space is concerned with three fields that are usually apprehended separately: the physical (nature, the Cosmos), the metal (logical and formal abstractions) and the social.

For Lefebvre, social space is a social product created by every mode of production along with its specific relation of production. As he contends in his study that:

> Social space not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity - their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object. At the same time there is nothing imagined, unreal or 'ideal' about it as compared, for example, with science, representations, ideas or dreams. Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others. (Lefebvre, 1974: 73)

Another key insight developed in Lefebvre's works on how various societies have particularized social space (in terms of form, structure and function) is that in order to understand social space one must understand meanings, which are encompassed in *spatial practice* (our perceptions), *representations of space* (our conceptions) and *representational spaces* (the occupied space) (Lefebvre, 1974: 33).

Lefebvre has also made a significant contribution to the current understanding of relations between the modern nation-state and social space based on his theory of the production of space. As exposed in Lefebvre's arguments, modern state nowadays promotes and imposes itself as the stable center - definitively - of (national) societies and spaces. It tries to plan and organize society and space "rationally" with the help of knowledge and technology, imposing analogous measures irrespective of political ideology, historical background and so forth. It also enforces a logic that puts an end to conflicts or contradictions, and neutralizes whatever resists it by castration and crushing. In the sovereignty of modern nation-states, in short, social space is "a tool

of thought and action"; it also serves as "means of control … of power" (Lefebvre, 1974: 26).

Social scientists have also witnessed some great attempts of various anthropologists, such as Condominas (1980), Gupta and Ferguson (1992) and Kahn (ibid), who have tried to reorient human inquiry of social values/meanings of social space. Condominas has insisted that a study about ethnic people cannot ignore social space when we carry out analysis of society, because the examination of ethnic social space will result in the understanding about meanings relating to how people perceive the world and why they have their own way of life or social behaviors. Condominas bases his studies on people in "pre-capitalist societies", such as, the ethnic peoples in the Central Highlands, and he has defined social space as a space determined by an "assemblage of significant relationship systems for a certain group of people" (Condominas, 1980: 16).

According to Condominas, this assemblage of relationships or, to be precise, social space, is structured by numerous elements, within which the most important elements are cosmology, natural conditions (ecological conditions, natural resources, etc.) and economic systems (production, property regime, etc.). These elements play very important roles in regulating interactions between ethnic people themselves and in the formulation of activities of the people with the natural world, which are manifested in social organization and customary laws, ritual practices, and livelihoods. In other words, they create a medium within which a particular ethnic group maintains their society and their harmonious way of life.

As this short review shows, there are already a number of works that contribute some critical ideas to concept of social space. In reviewing the literature related to this concept, I have discovered that the concept of social space as developed by Condominas provides a very useful framework for investigating the situation in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Like Condominas's work, this study aims to understand social space defined by the Bahnar people. I will show that the social space of ethnic peoples in the Central Highlands is an assemblage of relationship systems constructed by ethnic cosmology and knowledge generated from a long period of adaptation to living place. Moreover, it is an assemblage of relationship systems upon which activities of ethnic peoples are regulated and their society is

organized. At the same time, the study based on analysis of the development process of the socialist state contributes to anthropological debates that the state's development process for ethnic peoples in the Central Highlands is essentially a process of making new social space in accordance with the state's specific requirements. This process has created enormous impacts on social relationships and relations between ethnic peoples and the nature, and furthermore transformed social space of the ethnic peoples into contested spaces causing irreversible disruption to their lives and culture.

2.4 Everyday Practices as a Form of Negotiation

Theoretically, the term "everyday practice" is conceptualized differently in various studies, but the most influential conceptualization comes from Bourdieu's works. Bourdieu's theory of practice is built upon some suppositions that:

> "The objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions". (Bourdieu, 1980: 52)

Habitus, the center of Bourdieu's argument in the theory of practice, is the principle of a selective perception of the indices tending to confirm and reinforce it rather than transform it, a matrix generating responses adapted in advance to all objective conditions identical to or homologous with the (past) conditions of its production. It adjusts itself to a probable future, which it anticipates and helps to bring about because it reads it directly in the present of the presumed world, the only one it can ever know (Bourdieu, 1980). The responses of *habitus* are first defined in relation to objective potentialities in connected with the probable - things to do or not to do, things to say or not to say - but they may contain a strategic calculation shaped by the complex process of calculation or consideration that comes from the estimation of chances, part experiences, expected objectives, and so on, which is deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thoughts, and action. Bourdieu emphasizes that *habitus* is a product of history produced by a context associated with a particular class or condition of existence, such as social conditions or power relations. The members of the same class have the same *habitus* when they live under

the same objectives and conditions. Additionally, the *habitus* produces individual and collective practices in accordance with the schemes generated by history. Based on his analysis, Bourdieu (1980) contends that it is necessary to investigate the history of social conditions, institutions, power relations, material conditions and class differentiation in order to understand everyday practices.

Recently, there was an emergent theoretical tendency to emphasize everyday practices as forms of struggle and resistance. For some studies in this school of thought (Scott, 1985; Moore, 1994), the formulation of a modern nation-state in combination with the growth of the development processes has created many challenges for people in the rural and remote areas. Many modern nation-states have denied and subjugated the rights, cultures, and aspirations, and even the presence of these people (Howitt, Connell and Hirsch, 1996). As a result, the people in those areas have become minorities in the political space created around them, marginalized groups in the economies within which they have been incorporated, and disempowered groups excluded from the dominant groups around them.

However, the people are not apathetic, nor do they collapse immediately and completely when their cultures and territories are invaded and their resources taken away. Moreover, many of them rise up from being "victims of progress." Different modes of resistance and negotiation are continuously emerging and being waged by the people everywhere. For these people, everyday practices have played a crucial role in constructing resistance and negotiation strategies in order to deal with their current situation. The resistance and negotiation in this context, as stated by Scott (1996), are not merely about work, property rights, grain, and cash, but also about the appropriation of symbols, how the past and present shall be understood and labeled, a resistance to identify cause and assess blame, and a contentious effort to give partisan meaning to local history.

In the same vein with Scott (1996), Nygren (2000) examined how local people in Central America tried to create new strategies of survival and resistance in their everyday life in order to improve their control over the utilization of natural resources when the state tried to exercise its authority over their territory and natural resources. This study asserts that the negotiation is about the physical occupation of space as well as the knowledge and power in regards to the "rational" use of natural resources.

Contributing to the current debates, papers from Hyndman and DuhayLungsod (1996) and Strang (2000) identify that natural resources and living places of indigenous people contain more meanings than simplifying resources or material interests. These meanings are embedded in local practices, culture and identity. This is why, notwithstanding the various policies and reform efforts implemented, people put tremendous effort into making claims concerning their resources and their living place. In other words, negotiation in the cases of Australian aboriginals (in Australia) and T'Boli (in the Philippines) means to negotiate about meanings of their own culture and identity (see more Hyndman and DuhayLungsod, 1996; Strang, 2000).

As mentioned earlier, during the last thirty years in the Central Highlands, the Socialist state with its power, knowledge and technology of power has created various policies and development projects, which are essentially part of the process of manipulating the ethnic societies and their territory in accordance with its rationales. Under these processes, not only are the natural resources of ethnic people taken away, but their culture and identity are destroyed as well. Practically speaking, ethnic peoples are now faced with not only difficulties of resource shortage, but also with social disruption resulting in their loss of identity and culture. In this study, I apply the theory of practice in order to explore the everyday practices of ethnic minorities as they deal with their current situation. Following the reviewed literature, I argue that the current social problems in the Central Highlands, such as the movement of ethnic peoples deeper into the forests and their felling of the forest there for shifting cultivation are practices of negotiation that deal with both resource shortages and claims of their culture and identity, and furthermore, their social space.

2.5 Summary

Through the four main parts of this chapter, I have reviewed some relevant studies concerning the ethnic people and development programs in the Central Highlands and examined three theoretical concepts: Development as discourse and practice of integrating ethnic people, social space, and everyday practices as a form of negotiation. Particularly, in the first part, I have pointed out that Vietnamese researchers in conjunction with their evolutionary theoretical orientation have seen the way of life of the ethnic people as a primitive form or in the "lowest state" of the

human evolutionary ladder. The Vietnamese researchers tend to ignore all negative effects created by the development policies and programs of the Socialist state on ethnic ways of living. Recently, there have been some voices raised about the problems of ethnic minorities from both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese researchers. However, there are a number of questions that call for more attention to the experiences and practices of the ethnic peoples under the imposed development programs.

Through the second to the fourth parts, I have examined three theoretical concepts, often used in the studies of development and ethnic minorities. I have pointed out that the concept of development as discourse and the practice of integrating ethnic peoples is an important concept for analyzing the nature of "well-intended" development policies and programs for ethnic peoples. Meanwhile, the concept of social space can help to explain how ethnic societies are regulated, controlled and protected, and how the development process implemented by the modern nation-states affects these societies and lives. Finally, the concept of everyday practices as a form of negotiation plays a crucial role for examining the ways that so-called ethnic people develop their own strategies and activities that respond to the changing circumstances, which destroy their livelihood and social space.