CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1Continuity and Differentiation in Highland-Lowland Relationship

The topography of the southwestern parts of China and the northern parts of mainland Southeast Asia is like "laying a left hand ona blue paper" (Ishii and Sakurai 1999:7), as the areaconsists of five mountain ranges and large rivers which run from north to south. Amongst the mountain ranges there are basins which have become the stages for prosperityamong the civilizations located there. This area has been the focus of, and often been given particular names[1], with regard tothe study of the diversity and complexity of relationships among a large number of ethnic groups. In this area, contrasting ideas between the highland and lowland have often been emphasized, and lowlanders usually have received the prosperity and authority to rule the area as a result of ecological differences between the highland and lowland people (Ibid:6). Due to the different topography and environment in the two areas, they have developed differently in terms of agriculture, ethnic relations, religion and levels of authority. Wet-rice cultivation in lowland areas and dry-rice cultivation in highland

[1] For example, Shintani (1998:10) calls this area a "Golden Quadrangle Area". He explains that the area is the point not at which four states meet, but also where four major ethno-linguistic branches meet, these being Tai,Tibet-Burman, Mon-Khmer and Han."Also, it is the area that different elements are intertwined as the political intensions of the four countries intertwine, and moreover, the influence of…international politics towards the area cannot be ignored". He also calls the area the "Tai Cultural Area", since he highlights the influence of Tai ethnic groups on development in the area. Nishimoto (2009:28) names the area where the Lahu have settled as the"Lahu Settlement Area". It can be assumed that he refers to the highland area of the Golden Quadrangle Area as a Lahu Settlement Area. "Zomia", as Scott (2009: iv) says in his recent book, includes this area as well as the highlands of northeastern India and the central highlands of Vietnam.

areas are picked out as clear examplesof the differences (Berlings 1965). In terms ofsocial organization, lowland societies tend to be described as possessing uniformity; whereas, in contrast, highland societies tend to be seen as possessing plurality and are often linked with the notion of anarchy (Scott 2009). As a result of the formation of nation states, with boundaries demarcated as part of the construction of a national, uniform identity (Thongchai 2003), power relations between the highlands and lowlands have been emphasized; people in the highland areasare normally placed last in the hierarchical order by lowland authorities and are also categorized into different ethnic groups(Turton 2000).

While some differences between highland and lowland areas can be recognized, there have been continuous interactions between the two. Kunstadter (1969:70, quoted in Walker 1981:13) notes that "the lives of the upland peoples are systematically linked with lowland peoples - culturally, economically, demographically and ecologically, as well as by formal administration systems". Within the power relationsfound between highland and lowland areas, the adoption of some new cultural elements has occurred, such as religious conversion. In the process, these groups of peoplehave not just mimicked these elementsand power relations, but also interpreted the meanings of the systems or practices of those elements (Scott 2009, Hayami2004, Kataoka 2006).

Commercial activities are one important factor to take into account in order to understand the interaction between highland and lowland peoples in Southeast Asia. Inland trade routes historically connected the highland areas of Burma, Laos and northern Thailand; there also existed some trading hubs located in lowland areas, such as Chiang Mai. Forest products were treasured by lowlanders and many goods were sold in lowland areas are instead of being brought to the highlands (Wang 2008a). As part of the exchange between the highlands and

lowlands, cotton was one important commodity. In the nineteenth century, cotton was planted in the uplands and was purchased by lowlanders who commonly woreit (Bowie 1992:807); such commercial activities were carried out through both barter and the use of money.

The relationship between highland and lowland peoples has existed and its power relations constructed through a pattern of both continuity and differentiation (Hayami 2009). Differentiation of the 'others' is implemented because one recognizes the existence of another, leading to interactions between the two. Scott (2009) refers to the area "Zomia", meaning the highlands of northeastern India, southwestern China and mainland Southeast Asia, as a region of refuge within which the people living have fled the control or tyranny of the lowland authorities, though there has always been an interaction between the lowlands and highlands. In practice, people in the highlands and lowlands have always recognized the existence of one another and have thus interacted. As a result, the notion of differentiation, often accompanied by negative images, has occurred in their minds (Scott 2009). In the process of creating differentiation, certain relationships with certain groups of people have been selected and developed, and, at the same time, new relationships have also been created, with power relations always influencing these decisions (Hayami 2009, Scott 2009)[2].

This study focuses on the everyday practices of female Lahu vendors. In doing so, I aim to understand the reaction of highland people, those whose livesare continuously related to lowland people and the associated nation states. Indeed, this study will also demonstrate that ordinary people,such asthe female Lahu vendors, are not completely powerless when influences come into their lives from outside; rather, they are active in terms of making decisions regarding

[2] The selection of a certain relationship can be seen in the selection of identity under power relations: in the case of the Lue, see Moerman (1965 in Baba 1998), in the case of the Kachin, see Leach (1954 in Scott 2009), in the case of the Akha, see Toyota (1998), and in the case of the Lahu, see Kataoka (2006).

their lives, as they choose which impacts to accept and which to reject, and how to interpret these changes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

After the colonizationby Western powers of several countries in Southeast Asia, nation state building, with the demarcation of territorial boundaries, was implemented in the Golden Quadrangle Area, including Thailand, which was not actually colonizedby western powers(Shintani 1998). As a result, not only land but also various ethnic groups living in the area were divided and categorized as either citizensor aliensof the nation states. In the case of highland ethnic groups[3] in Thailand, their existence has always been situated as problematic and they have thus been fixed to the highland areas, being called *chao khao* (hill tribes);those who need to be 'developed' by the Thai State. Throughdevelopment projects implemented by the State, thisclassification has permeated Thai society, as well as the highland ethnic groups themselves.

During the process of territorialization of the highlands, life in the highland and lowland areas has always been characterized asan antipodes, although there are continuous relationships between the people in the two areas. Differences between highlanders and lowlandersin terms of cultural and social organization do not mean that they are opposites who do not interact, on the contrary, they have had a relationship with one another over a long period of time, and particularly now, it isalmost impossible to divide the highland and lowland people as completely separate. A dichotomized idea of migration practices, both in terms of settlement spaces and ethnic identity, should be avoided, as Toyota (1998) has already found with the various identities utilized by Akha migrants. Pirote (2007) also argues that the ideology of

[3] In this study, I will use the term 'highland ethnic groups' to refer to the nine ethnic groups categorized by the Thai Government as '*chao khao* (hill tribes)'.

the*Akha zang*, the traditional customs of the Akha, is still maintained, has not been thrown away, and is even reflected intheir way of life in the urban context, although many Akha women have fled from the heavy burdensand prohibitions the *Akha zang*also brings.

The struggles of highland ethnic groups to move away from the edge, in other words to "deterritorialize" (Gravers 2008) themselves as active agents, have been explored by several scholars. Gravers (2008) focuses on the action of the Karen in Thailand, who have helped establish their position as forest conservationists by mixing modern knowledge,that valued by Thais, with traditional knowledge,within their actions. Pirote (2007) and Apinya (2008) report on the current situation for the Akha in urban Chiang Mai and the tactics they have used to succeed in the handicrafts business and to overcome economic difficulties, by utilizing their social networks and cultural knowledge in terms of embroidery designs. These works have revealed how important it is to see how people, as active agents, react to the differentiation and territorialization projects of the powerful. In this study, I aim to show another case of deterritorialization,through acommercial activity and the mobility practiced by highland ethnic women.

In studieson the Lahu, it has already beenwell discussed what kinds of situation they face and by whom they have been influenced, as well as how they have reacted to the situationsthey face (Nishimoto 1998, Walker 2003, Kataoka 2006). Nishimoto (1998) reveals a narrative of self-inferiorityamong the Lahu,which is the internalization of a negative portrait of the Lahu as painted by the powerful lowlanders. Walker (2003), using rich historical evidence, describes how the Lahu's religion has diversified as a result of the influence of others, especially the powerful lowland authorities. Kataoka (2006) exploreshow Lahu Christians recognize the differences between their identity and the nation-states, and how they maintain their

relationshipsand religious practicesin the two differentcontexts. Although he providesa rich description of the Lahu as people standing in the middle of a changing situation, while interacting with others' power frameworks, he provides only a summaryoverseveral lines of their livelihood in terms of commercial activities.This study will focus on the lives of Lahu women, those who engage in a small-scale commercial activity. It aims to understand the tactics and choices they utilize in order to survive the current situation in terms of power relations.

As well ascommercial activity, their mobility will also be focused on. Urban migration has recently been practiced by a number of highland ethnic groups[4]. Several research studies on the life of highland ethnic groups who have migrated tothe urban Chiang Maiarea have been carried out in terms of the push and pull migration factors at work, plus the migrants' adaptation to city life. Scholars concerned with the first area of interest insist that the main push factor in terms of migration to urban areas for the highland ethnic groups is the changesin their lifestyle brought about by the influence of the State's development policies and by capitalism (Panadda 1998, Tawit et al. 1997, Toyota 1998). In terms of pull factors, urban Chiang Mai provides these highland people with a space for pursuing education and cash income earning opportunities. Some scholars have studied people's physical adaptation in the urban context, in terms of their residence and occupation (Panadda 1998, Tawit et al. 1997, Prasit et al. 2003, Panadda and Meeyum 2006). In these studies, some of the urban migration of highland ethnic groups, as well as the highland to lowland migration of others (Sanit 1984, Hoare 1985), has been positioned

[4]Prasit and his team (2003) study the migration of highland ethnic groups towards urban Chiang Mai. Their survey identifies 5,220 people from six different highland ethnic backgrounds (Karen, Lisu, Akha, Lahu, Mien and Hmong) living in the urban and suburban areas of Chiang Mai(Prasit et al. 2003:55). However this number reflects only a fraction of the total population in the urban context, whichhas been estimatedat more than 13,000 people. Prasit and his team themselves state that their survey does not cover the entire population of these six ethnic groups in urban Chiang Mai; for example, the number of Karen and Lisu is about 15% of the total (Ibid: 80 and 89), the number of Lahu is about 65% (Ibid: 102), and the number of Mien and Hmong is about 60 to 70% (Ibid: 117 and 108) of the total population whichlives in urban Chiang Mai. In terms of the Akha, Pirote (2007) states that the number of Akha in Chiang Mai may now be more than 2000, based on the number shown by Toyota (1998).This is about 1.5% of the total population of the six highland ethnic groups in Thailand.

aslineal and one way[5], pre-modern to modern, and rural to urban.

By looking at the mobility of Lahu women, I aim to reveal their relationships with others at different power levels. Since the voluntary movement from one place to another of highland ethnic groups has taken place, including among Lahu women in Thailand, the boundary betweenthe highlands and lowlandshas become blurred: urban areas are now included as a part of their cosmology, as well as theireveryday life practices. Studying the mobility of female Lahu vendors, as their way to adapt to the current situation, may provide us with an insight into one of life's experiences that cannot be fixed in place and time.

Moreover, the commercial activity of the mobile Lahu womenrelate to the gender roles they experience within their household livelihoods. By focusing on this area, my intention is to understand the changes in gender roles and the women's notionsof the maintenance of the household as well as the Lahu identity within a period of change. Lahu society is often characterized forits egalitarian gender relationsframework (Du 2000, Walker 2003). Among the Lahu in China, becoming a pair is regarded as ideal and as completing a person, while anyone who is single in terms of marital status is regarded as not being an adult, though he or she may be old. Also, there is no clear division of labor within the production process in Lahu society in China. Meanwhile, Sanit (1984) hasobserved the gender roleswithin the production processes of Lahu societiesin Thailand,in which women (the wives) have the principal role. Gender relationsmay change as a result of outside influences, as well as a given situation in a society.Here, I do not mean to debate which one is subordinate to the other in modern Lahu society, but,rather focus on the choices made by Lahu married women,those complemented by

[5]Panadda and Meeyum (2006:15), as well as Kwanchewan and her team (2002:12), discuss construction workers and traders who move between their villages and urban Chiang Mai. However, further research on these groups of people has not been conducted due to the difficulty in trying to follow them, since they do not settle in one place but move back and forth among several locations.

the support of the males, their husbands.

1.3 Research Questions

1.How do female Lahu vendors travel between their villages andurban ChiangMai to practice vending?

2.How do female Lahu vendors negotiate the urban environment, one that isdifferent from their home village, and also the situation in terms oftheir move?Whatsocial networks are usedduring their tradingactivity?

3.What made them decide to become mobile? What are their life experiences as 'mobile' women?

1.4 Research Objectives

1.To understand the everyday practices of mobile female Lahuvendors.

2. To investigate the negotiation tactics and social networks used by thefemale Lahu vendors, in order to adaptto the changing situation.

3. To understand the meaning of the mobility, plus the cash income earning activities of the female Lahu vendors.

1.5 Study Methods

The carrying out of this study relied heavily on a network of people. I undertook the study across two stages in order to fully focus on the lives of the female Lahu vendors. Although the first stage was not directly related to the main theme of this study, it gave me an understandingof the general setting of those Lahu living in the urbanareas of Chiang Mai.

1.5.1 Research Design

Since my primaryinterest was to study the way of life ofthose Lahu who have settled in

an urban context, I visited Lahu people living in urban Chiang Mai in order to conduct interviews. I also reviewed previous reports about Lahu living in the urban areas of Chiang Mai, including those by Panadda and Meeyum (2006) and Kwanchewan, Panadda and Prasit (2002), in order to gain an understanding of their settlement areas and dormitories in the city. I also interviewed the heads of Lahu villages in Chiang Dao District, Chiang Mai Province,at a NGO in Sansai District, also in Chiang Mai Province, in order to estimate the number of Lahu working in the city. I also carried out interviewsto Lahu friends of mine who study atuniversities in urban Chiang Mai, to staff at the relevant NGOs, topastors who take care of the Lahu dormitory in the city, andto participants in the Sunday servicesheld at a Lahu church. In addition, and with the help of an anthropologist, I visited and interviewed a number of Lahu families living in one of the slum areas ofurban Chiang Mai. Based on the information I received from my interviews with several Lahu people, I decided to visit Kham Thiang intersection in Chiang Mai, where I aimed to interview Lahu wage laborers. All these interviews gave me a broad view of their lives in an urban context, and I mostly used Thai to communicate with the interviewees, since most of them can speak Thai. For this stage of the research, the sitesused wereChiangMaiMunicipality, which includes four municipal districts, these being: Nakornping, Kawila, Mengrai and Sriwichai, plus Sansai District, which is east of Kawila Municipal District. After I had learned about the lives of the Lahu urban settlers in Chiang Mai,both from previous studies as well as from interviews, I also became interested in the lives of those Lahu who are not sovisible as these Lahu urban settlers, because they do not fix themselves in one place but move from one place to another.

1.5.2 Research Sites

When talking about the Lahu in urban Chiang Mai, there are a number of settlement patterns, occupations, and social and economic statuses that can be seen; however, I needed to

focus on one group in order to understand their lives in detail. During my research intothe Lahu in an urban context, carried out during 2008, I met Lahu female vendors selling produce at Tonlamyai Market. I then became interested in their mobile life, travelling between the village and the marketacting as mothers, daughters, wives or villagers,and working as vendors. After I had narrowed down my research focus tothe female Lahu vendors, my main research site became Tonlamyai Market, which is in the Kawila District of Chiang Mai; on the west bank of the Ping River and adjoining Warorot Marketto the west – the place where I first met the vendors in 2007,when I found that it is a gathering place for Lahu traders.

I developed a stronger relationship with the female Lahu vendors by spending time chatting with them at the Market, as well as following them toother marketsin order to buy and sell.Mueang Mai Market is a wholesale market where the Lahu vendors buy their agricultural produce; they look for produce in the area where people sell produce from the back of their pick-up trucks. Produce in the market comes from different districts in Chiang Mai, as well as other provinces, and Mueang Mai Market sells many varieties of produce, as well as meat, seafood and other food items, all at a low price. Lahu vendors can reach this market by walking for five minutesin a northerly direction from Tonlamyai Market.Chin Ho (Yunnanese Muslim) Market is another place where the Lahu vendors buy produce. This market is held in a private compound opposite a mosque near the Chang Khlan Road,but only on Tuesday[6] and Friday mornings. I also followed the traders to the Night Bazaar, situated on the Chang Khlan Road, during the evenings.The Night Bazaar is also about a five minutewalk from Tonlamyai Market, but in a southerly direction.

[6] The market was held only on Friday until 2010, when it started to be held on Tuesday as well.

In order to explore the general setting of a marketplace in urban Chiang Mai, I visited some other local markets in the city, such as Pratu Chiang Mai Market, Pratu Chang Phueak Market and Tonphayom Market. The first two markets are morning markets which extend their selling space along the footpaths in front of the main market building. Thesemarkets are commonly used by local people due to their location,near to city gates; whereasTonphayom Market is located near to Chiang Mai University. Although this latter market is not near the city, it is still popular.

My research was mainly carried out around the markets of Chiang Mai city; however, in order to understand the everyday lives of the traders in their village setting, I also visited several Lahu villages.In order to visit their villages or homes, I accompanied the vendors when they returned home after selling inChiang Mai. The Lahu female vendors whom I interviewed are from seven highland villages in Chiang Rai Province and four areas across three districts of Chiang Mai Province.It was impossible to visit every village and area, since it was not easy for me to know the exact date when the vendors, especially those from highland villages in Chiang Rai, would return home. Whenever I met a Lahu vendor from a highland village in the markets in Chiang Mai, I always asked when they thought they would go home next, and the answerstended to be “when I have sold out of hill rice” or “I don’t know”. Even though some answered with an exact date, this often happened after they had already been home; therefore the villages and houses of the Lahu vendors I visited were not selected particularly carefully - it was rather dependent upon an opportunity arising.

I first visited village A in Maeyao Sub-district, MueangDistrict in Chiang Rai Province, in April 2009. According to alocal administrative organization official who is a resident inthe village,it is part of an administrative grouping which consistsoften villages in total. VillageA has

106 households consisting of people from the Lahu Na[7] and Lahu Shi[8]groups. There are two churches in the village, a health center and an elementary school, plusan office of the Forestry Department near the village.Only one of the Lahu vendorsin my study comesfrom this village. The second village I visited wasVillage C in Thako Sub-district, Maesuai District in Chiang RaiProvince, which I visited in September 2009. This village has 52 householdsconsisting of people from the Lahu Na group. There is a nursery center and a church in the village, plus a health center and an elementary school are located in anearby village, Village E. More than ten women from this village trade at a local market in urban Chiang Mai. This village is near to VillagesD and E,wheremore than fifteen female traders reside.Villages B, C, D and Eare connected to each other bya road[9]which is mainly unpaved, though some parts are paved with concrete. Motorbikes and pick-up truck are commonly used by the villagers as well as the traders who come from the lowland villages to sell a varietyof products. A four wheel drive is a valued commodity here, especially during the rainy season in late May to September, since the condition of the road becomeslargely inaccessible to most vehicles, such as a pick-up truck with no four wheel drive. Village C, as well as the other three villages in the same district, is located in ahighland area[10].I also visited the house of a Lahu vendorin Doi Saket District, Chiang Mai Provinceduring October 2009. While there are several Lahu communities in the hilly areas of Doi Saket and a few vendors who come from there, there are only two vendorswho live near the District town. I visited a vendor's house located in a community consisting mostly of northern Thais. A public bus runs from the town of Doi Saket to Warorot Market in Chiang Mai, and it takes about fifteen minutes to walk from the vendors'houses to the bus stop in front of the main market in Doi Saket. I spent a few days in each village,staying at the houses of the vendors.

[7]Lahu Na is one of sub-groups of the Lahu. For detail, see footnote 14 in 2.2 (page 33).
[8]Lahu Shi is one of sub-groups of the Lahu.For detail, see footnote 14 in 2.2 (page 33).
[9] The nearest village to the main Chiang Mai-Chiang Rai road is Village E and the farthestvillage away is Village B, which is about 21kmfrom the road (Royal Project Foundation1996).
[10]Village B is situated at a height of 1,200meters above sea level (Kataoka 2008:164), while Thako District office is located at a height of 600 to 1,500meters above the sea level (Thako District 2010:4).

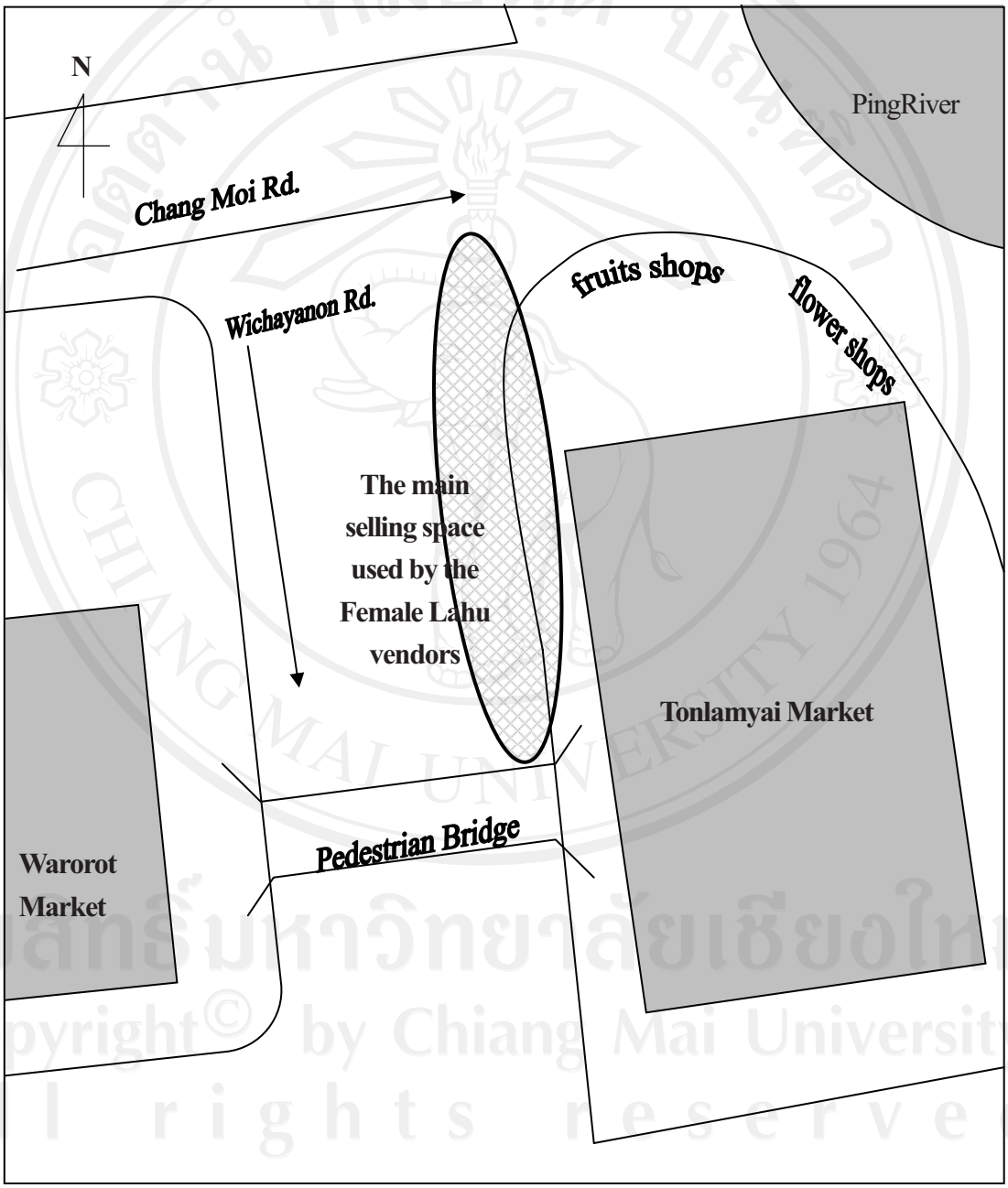

Figure 1.1: The Location of Tonlamyai and Warorot Markets (not to scale)

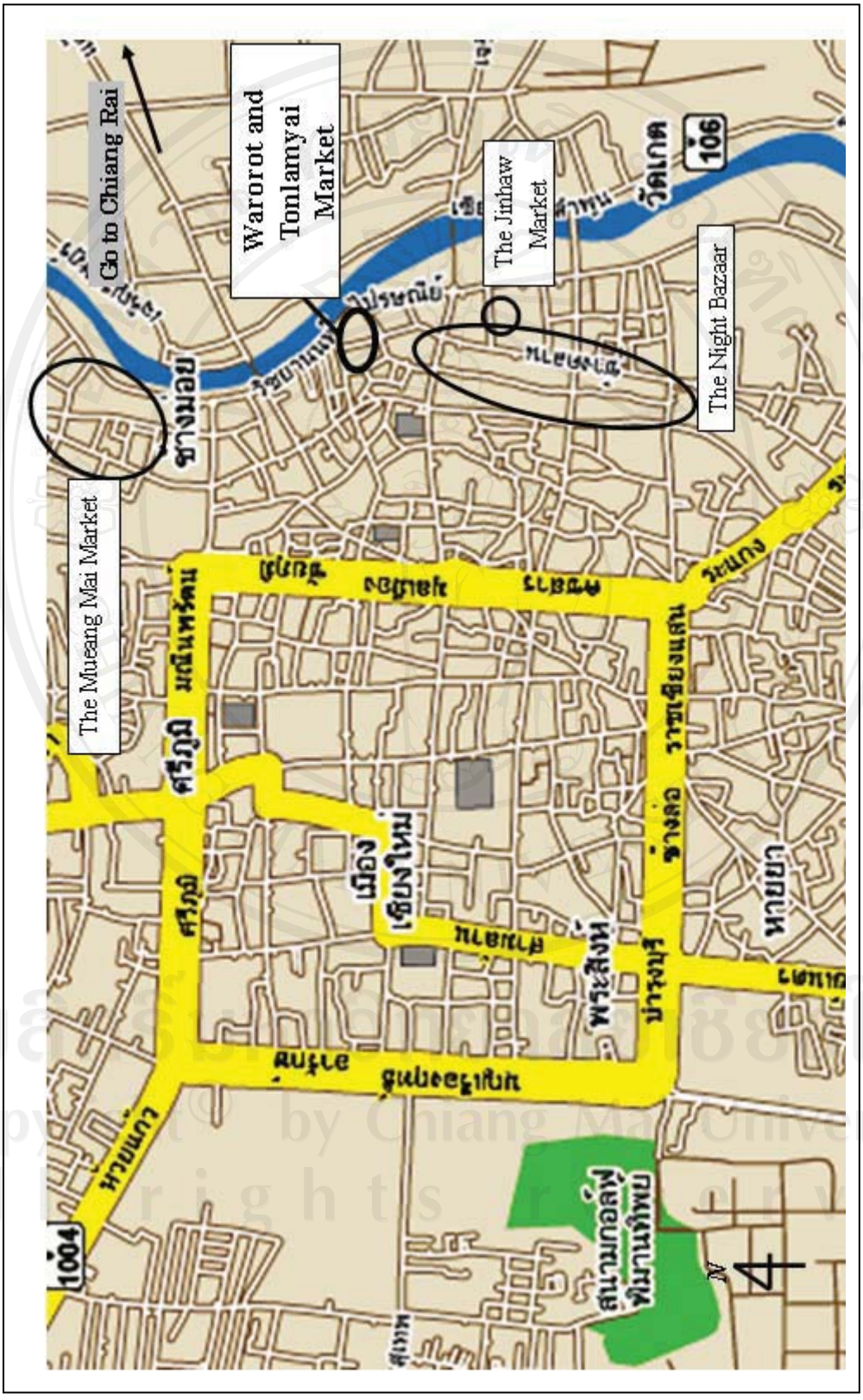

Figure 1.2: Map of Chiang Mai with Main Markets used by Female Lahu Vendors (Source: http://maps.google.co.jp/maps?hl=ja&utm_source=ja-wh)

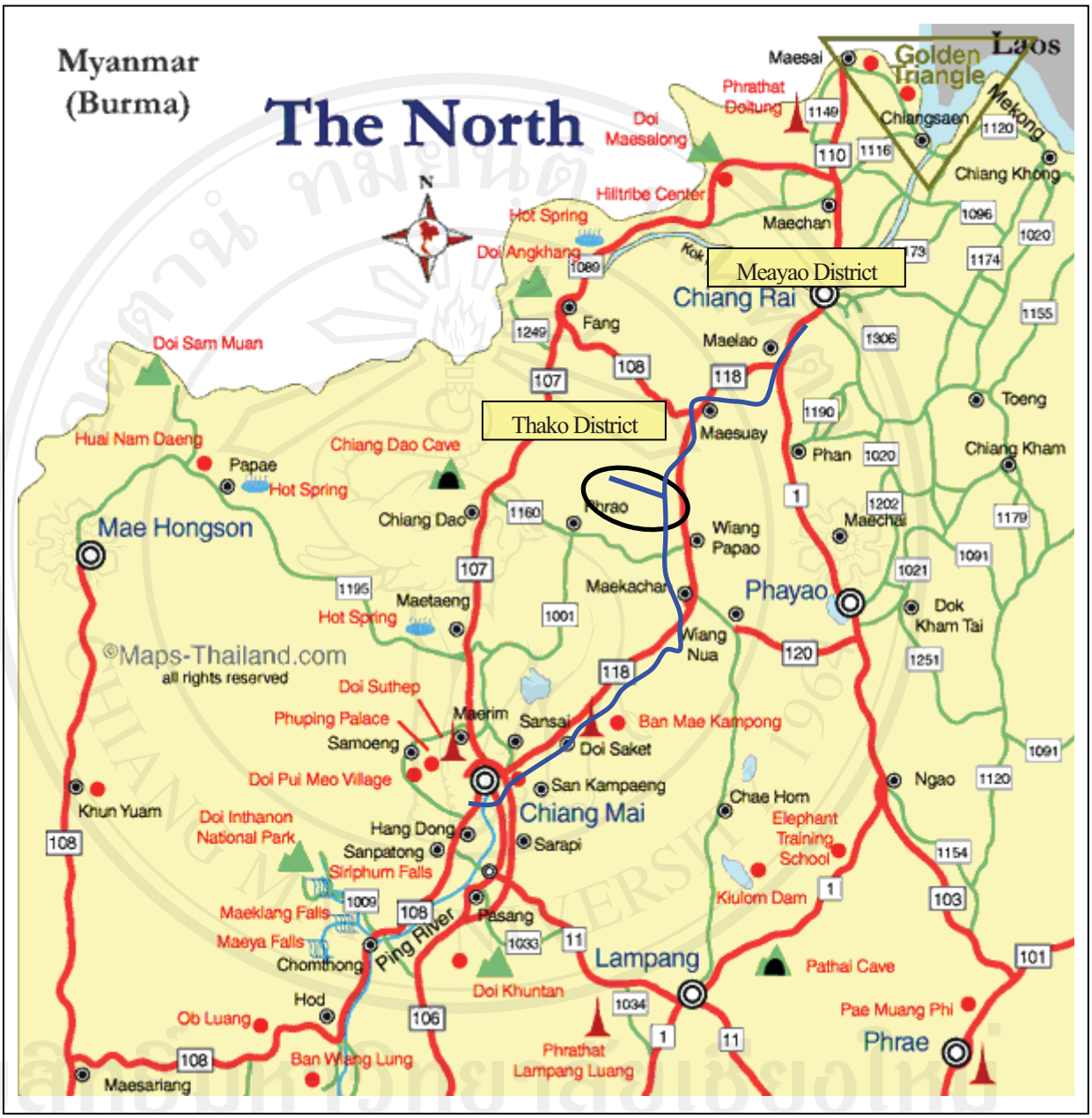

Figure 1.3: Map of Chiang Mai and ChiangRaiProvinces

(Source:http://www.guidetothailand.com/maps-thailand/map-north.php)

1.5.3 Female Lahu Vendors

In this study, the main focus in terms of people isthe female Lahu vendors. Actually, atthe marketplacesin Chiang Mai there are several types of Lahu vendor, such as the Lahu Shirice traders, the Lahu Shi Chinese chestnut sellers, the Lahu Shi handicraft traders and the Lahu Na agricultural produce traders. Except for the handicraft trader, who rents a permanent selling space in Warorot Market, they move around the different markets in Chiang Mai. In the case of the Lahu Shi rice traders, they also trade in other provinces. Among them, I pay particular attention to the Lahu Na agricultural produce traders, the reason being that the largest number of Lahu Na traders who work in Chiang Mai is in this category, according to my research[11]. Another reason is that these traders have a very diverse network, as most of them are dispersed across several villages, both in the highland areasand in Chiang Mai city. Also, while it is quite obvious that most Lahu Shi rice and Chinese chestnuts traders work in pairs; a wife and husband[12], Lahu Na agricultural produce traders are mostly women and seldom work in pairs[13]. In the off-season, ten or more Lahu female vendors sell at the market, but when the vendors from the villages in Chiang Rai are busy with their farming activities, only a few permanent traders remain at the market. Even among the fivepermanent traders, one vendor trades from 9 a.m.till 6p.m.,another trades from 4p.m.until 11p.m. or midnight, and another trader tradesfrom the morning to midnight for six days; Monday to Saturday.All of the permanent and temporary vendors focused upon in this study are Christian and married.

[11] I found three Lahu Shi Chinese chestnuts traders, and two Lahu Na handicraft traders. In the case of the Lahu Shi rice traders, according to an interview withone trader, many villagers in her village in Maesuai District, Chiang Rai Province, which has more than 100 households, sell rice in several markets across the northern provinces.

[12] In the case of the rice traders, both the wife and husband come to sell rice at the market. In the case of the chestnuts traders, the husband is the one who roasts the chestnuts and the wife sells them. When selling at Chin Ho Market, both the husband and wife arrive together.

[13] During my research, I met only one man who was an agriculturalvendor and two men who came to help their wives at Tonlamyai Market, but only for one or two days.

1.5.4 The Fieldwork

During my fieldwork, I tried to communicate with the Lahu female vendors in Lahu as much as I could, having learned the basics of the language from my Lahu friends, as well as my Lahu Nyi[14] husband. However some words are different between the Lahu Nyi and Lahu Na languages, so in such situations I used a Lahu-English-Thai dictionary (Lewis 1986). Some Lahu female vendors also taught me the right words on occasion. Gradually, I developed my Lahu language skillsthrough communication with the Lahu traders. Some Lahu traders were able to communicate in Thai, so I mainly used Thai with them, while I still used Lahu for greetings. By using the Lahu language, even though Iwas not fluent,I developed a closer relationship with the traders and this also put the traders at ease, so much so that I became known among them as the "*Ja pan ma"* (Japanese woman). In situations when I became confused by the data collected from the interviews and from the small discussions I held in Lahu, I asked a Lahu female vendor who can speak Thai and/or my husband for help.Also, when collecting people's life histories at the market, I often recorded the conversation and asked my husband to translate into Thai in order to avoid misunderstandings.

The main methods used for the research were interviews and participant observation. I first tried to understand the traders work patterns and gain knowledge of their selling space. Since they move between vacant spaces several times a day, I tried to avoid the busiest times when holding interviews, especially between 7to8 a.m. and 5 to 6 p.m. When I visited, they were kind and let me sit next to them; they also gave me a plastic chair to sit on. After that, I would spend several hours chatting with them, using open-ended interviews while chatting, since I found that they were not so comfortable to be asked in a systematic way, such as using a questionnaire or a structured interview. I mainly talked with the vendors one on one, though we

[14]Lahu Nyi is one of sub-group of the Lahu which is classified in the Lahu Na large sub-group.

sometimes heldgroup discussions. During the interviews, I often became their helper in sellingthe produce, as they sometimes moved away from the space for a while in order to obtain more produce or go to the bathroom. I also walked with them when they went to buy produce at Mueang Mai and Chin Ho Marketsor to sell at the Night Bazaar. This helped me to visualize how they carry out theirdaily routine, as well as what connections they utilize in order to trade. Research in the village context was conducted through observation and interviews. When I struggled to understand the conversationswith the vendors conducted in Lahu, their children or grandchildren, who can speak Thai, helped me to correct my misunderstandings and to add more data.The vendors provided me with more time in the villages than at the markets and helped me to understand their roles in the village and to visualize the social networks that exist among the vendors there.

The informants' privacy was of primary concern during the interviews and analysis, so pseudonyms are used in place of theirreal namesin this thesis.I also used the English alphabet for the name of the highland villages in Chiang Rai, where some of the Lahu vendors are from.

1.6Review of the Concepts

The sections below review the relevant theoretical discussions in order to clarify the study approach. Since this study looks at the everyday practices of Lahu women who engage in small-scale, mobile commercial activity, the social construction of their practices is highlighted. In order to understand why looking at the everyday practices as well as the social construction activities of mobile workers is meaningful, the concepts of mobility, spatial practices and social networks will be examined.

1.6.1 Mobility as a Social Practice

Mobility, or travel in geographic terms, has been practiced by people for a long time, while dwellings havealso been recognized as the center of people's lives. In Chinese society, mobility has sometimes been regarded as a rootless and evil thing (Zhang 2001).Also, in traditional interpretations, anthropologists have tended to situate groups in a fixed place (Rickson 2005, Clifford 1997). Clifford (1997) has posed a significant question, asking:what if travel is not the 'supplement' for a dwelling, as has been said, but a premise through which to understand people's lives?

In the eighteenth century, the term 'travel' was used only for the geographical mobility of a particular group of people with political, economic and social privileges, such as white (Western-dominated), bourgeois men. Mobile people not in the above category were excluded from this term. Though their experience of traveling was not recognized as travel per se, nor published as theexperiences of a 'traveler', these excluded mobile people also had their own story to tell about travel, through their direct experience. This notion emerged among scholars in the nineteenth century. Since mobility has become more common, especially among people who were previously prohibited from the practice or regarded as not worthyof study, many scholars have studied what mobility means for the practitioners and what the practice creates. Mobility is an activity practiced within the contestation of power relations, between practitioners and powerful institutions.

Mills (1993) explores the relationship between female migrants and their society in northeast Thailand. As modernity has entered the lives of the villagers sincethe 1960s, labor mobility has rapidly increased among young female villagers. By moving towards Bangkok in search of work, each woman evaluatesherself as "a good daughter" who earns money for her

parents and family, and as "a modern woman" who consumes commodities, as seen on TV. In this sense, what the young female migrants shift through their mobility is not only a physical space but also their identities and social relations. Moreover, Mills finds a conflict between two ideas - tradition and modernity, within the young women's bodies and minds, as they face the dilemma of trying to achieve both statuses at the same time. This study shows that the movement of young women from the northeast of Thailand to Bangkok to look for work, a phenomenon that has occurred recently within a changing Thai society, givesthem not only experience in geographical terms,but also creates new experiences and values which are shared among the practitioners as well as with the society to which they belong. At the same time, such experiences and values also encourage more mobility.

Andrew Walker (1999) has studied the life of female boat operators who carry out long-distance trade in northwestern Laos. This study shows what kinds of tactics are used by women who engage in the boat trade, a trade undertaken on the Mekong Riverand within which they face control by the state that makes it difficultfor them to earn a profit. In order to maximize their profit, they use a number of tactics, including utilizing their femininity with other male traders as well as with state officials.They also face hardships as a result of the heavy work experienced during their trading activities. The tacticsthey use to counter losing their femininity, which is one of the hardshipsthey endure, is to wear jewelry and use make-up. Through his case study, Walker insists that travelling identities are not only the privilege and domain of men, but also of women.

Wasan (2008) examines the mobility of a Lue music band,a social practice implemented within a power relations frameworkwhich includes the Lue themselves and the state. After a long history of oppression by the Han Chinese, and migration, the Lue have

dispersed and it has become difficult for them to maintain their culture and identity. Since modernization projects,within a national and regional development framework, havebeen implemented in China, the Lue people have not missed the opportunity to revive their lost culture and identity. One of the actions carried out has been throughthe use of music. The study focuses on a music band established by Lue religious leaders and Lue musicians, who have produced music, albums and organized concert toursto Dai annual festivals within Lue communities. This has produced a circulation of people as well as Lue music, and created social space for the Lue people to revive and maintain their culture and identity, which were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution in China. Moreover, the production and consumption of Dai popular music had provided them with the opportunity to maintain and (re-)invent the Tai language and Buddhist festivals.

1.6.2Spatial Practices as a Tactic of Negotiation

Construction of Social Space

It is quite well-known among scholars that space used to be treated as fixed and 'dead' (Foucault [1976]1980:70, cited in Kahn 2000:7, Zhang 2001:7). Since being linked to the context of the time, the discussionsaround space have developed further, especially since the late twentieth century. De Certeau (1984), who has conceptualized everyday practices, emphasizes the significance of looking at how people use the products which are imposed by a dominant order. Such 'consumption' can be seen everywhere,such as in the practices of talking, reading, shopping and cooking. By analyzing the process of using these products, we are able to understand the process of space making. De Certeau insists that "*space is a practiced place*" (ibid:117, emphasis in original). While a place is fixed and dead, it is changed into a space through manipulation.

One example of a social space is a marketplace. In her study about the development of rural markets in socialist China, Yahui (2006) conceptualizes the market as a space constructed through social relations,and which contains power relations at the same time. She does not agreewith dealing with markets only from an economic perspective, as this ignores the social perspective.Rather, she focuses on people at the market, who "are active, respond neatly and…are inclined towards a 'moral economy'" (Scott 1976), but are also "rational peasants" (Popkin 1979). They are powerless, but they use "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985) to protect themselves and survive in adverse conditions (Yahui 2006:30-31). She also reviews the work of Zelizer (1997) (quoted in Lie 1992), who utilizes the model of the "multiple market"to imply that there are interactions of cultural, structural and economic factors within the market. Her intention, to conceptualize the market as a social space,is based on the idea of a "third space", as suggested by Lefebvre. In so doing, she demonstrates that,in an era of market reforms, local people at markets utilize social networks and relationships to adjust to the changing market situation, which is based on state monopolization, as well as capitalism. In other words, the marketplace is manipulated by people through social relations, becoming a 'space'.

Methods of Forming Social Space

There are two methods used in the manipulation of a place: one is a strategy to territorialize one's own place and create others as a threat, through power (De Certeau 1984). This strategy makes use of "panoptic practice" in order to control the place. Anderson (1997) gives a clear example of this strategy. He states that in the process of nation state building, the media, and especially the printedmedia within a capitalist structure, has been used to spread the notion of national unity, and thus control the people. Another method is a tactic that relies on time, which may bring one a chance to utilize space under sight of an enemy. De Certeau calls this tactic "an art of the weak" (ibid:37). Such a spatial practice is the result of social

interactionsbetween people.

Karen villagersin Thailand have managed to use the“art of the weak” in order to insist upon their rights,within an area which includes their villagebut which is also located within Doi Inthanon National Park. Gravers (2008:156) analyzes their spatial practices as “segmentation”, which has also been reintroduced as a concept by Herzfeld (1992, cited in Gravers 2008). Through this practice, the villagers have merged modern knowledge with their indigenous knowledge and utilizedthe results to contest modernity, which the State has imposedupon them. Since the area, including the village, has been locatedwithin the National Park, the villagers havecarried out forest ordination rituals in order to demonstrate that theydo conserve the forest, as perthe State’s orders. Moreover, when a water conflict arose between the Karen villagers and northern Thai farmers, the villagers joined an NGO, the Northern Farmers Network, and produced a map which indicated their territory, using both modern knowledge (making a plane map with scales and measurements) and indigenous knowledge (naming the conservation forest using Karen terms). This case is one of example of how minority people try to construct their space under the control of a dominant group, through the tactics of negotiation in their everyday lives.

Lefebvre ([1974]1991, in Kahn 2000) develops Foucault’s idea of “heterotopology” and discussesthe space that exists in between both physical and perceived space, and mental and conceived space. These two spaces dialectically relate to one another,but Lefebvre insists on the existence of a “third space”, one that is the product of the other spaces and can be called social and lived space. Kahn (2000) describesclearly how the Tahitians construct their space, through a discussion of Lefebvre. Tahiti is a perceived space where the Tahitian people spend their everyday lives fishing and visiting their friends. Since France colonized the area, Tahiti as an

image of paradise, with seductive women and beautiful scenery,has been created by French and foreign artists and entrepreneurs. Through this strategy, a conceived space has been constructed. When the French Government started to use Tahiti for nuclear testing, the Tahitian people protested strongly and insisted that France had exploded bombs within the womb of a mother land. This protest created a third or lived space. The whole experiencein terms of Tahiti shows that different values may be used by different actors, and that space can be created where these values interact and contest with each other (Kahn 2000).

1.6.3 Social Networks as a Basic Component of the Production of Locality

Among the "art of the weak", or tactics of negotiation, social networksare commonly used by people who are on the move or who migrate from one place to another. Before reviewing these cases, it is worthwhile to understand how the concept of social networks has been developed. Many scholars have entered the debate on social networks, with many theories and approaches used. The social network was first understood as a metaphorical term in which "the social links of individuals in any given society ramify through that society". Since then, it has been developed in a more realistic way, as an analytical use that "seeks to specify how this ramification influences the behavior of the people involved in the network" (Mitchell 1974:280). Bott (1957, in Mitchell 1974) has studied the division of domestic work between spouses and found that relationships with other people have an impact on this division. In other words, the behavior of spouses is affected by the behavior of the people who connect indirectly with the network. Wasserman (1994) also mentions that under network theory, it is worth noting that actors and their actions should be regarded as interdependent rather than independent.Therefore, the significant feature of a social network is the relationship between interacting units.

Zhang (2001) reveals that Wenzhou entrepreneurs in Beijingutilize various social networks to construct their space. They have limited access to formal services from the government in Beijing, due to the house registration system, which doesnot allow rural people to receive the same services as urbanities. In such a situation, they have expanded and frequently utilize their loosely defined kinship ties and native-place networks, in order to construct their own business markets and residential areas, combiningtheir working space with their living space in one house or room. Not only have they madespace, they also have utilized their social networks to develop the power to negotiate with state officials and succeed in their business activities. Extending kinship relations is one of the methods used to help these entrepreneurs develop their economic and social power, by gaining support from this network. They have also developed patron-client ties with the police and government officials, and made connections with informal authority figures, such as gangs. Through these networks, the entrepreneurs have been able to develop their businesses, whilst being protected from criminal activity. These social networks interconnect with each other and become an important means for Wenzhou entrepreneurs to develop their businesses in Beijing, though they are recognized as outsiders.

Suthep(1977) has studied how a Muslim identity has been maintained by Muslims migrating from PakistanandYunnanProvinceinChina to Chiang Mai in Thailand,within an urban setting, and by analyzing social relations. Similar to Zhang, Suthep highlights the importance of social networks in allowing the Muslim migrantsto succeed in Chiang Mai. During the process of settling down in Chiang Mai, the Muslims (mostly male) migrants have had to connect with relatives and friends who are living in the border towns and in the city. These hosts take care of the new migrants in terms of food and accommodation, and help them to look for a job. After the new migrants find a job, developing a patron-client relationship with their employer acts as an important new network upon which they rely. Such personal connections determine whether the

new migrants can develop their social status in the community, from being strangers and migrants, to becoming settlers.

A kinship relations network is also significant for the Muslim migrants, in order for them to develop and maintain their sense of membership within the community. While the Muslim family is patrilinear-oriented, it also extends its social relationstoother matri-lateral based groups in order to gain support. At the same time, social relations with neighbors and friends are regarded as important in order to adapt to the community and urban setting, as part of a multi-cultural society. Through such networks, the Muslim migrants learn how to behave in their new location and this case shows that a Muslim migrant in Chiang Mai faces difficulties if he or shedoesnothave a social network. Moreover, Muslim communities themselves consist of social interactions and connections among members of the communities, and with outsiders as well.

The utilization of existing social networks, as well as the creation of new networks,is part of the production of locality, as Wasan (2007) demonstrates through the everyday practices of a returning Lue exile and his Thai restaurant in southwest China. Wasan cites Raffles (1999:324 in Wasan 2007:133), saying that locality "is a set of relations, an ongoing politics, a density, in which places are discursively and imaginatively materialized and enacted through the practices of various positioned people and political economies."The Lue have a history of losing their Lue 'motherland', which is now divided up among and controlled by different countries, and the identity of the Lue in southwest China was almost demolished during The Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution campaigns. By describing the life of a Lue exile who has become the owner of the most famous Thai restaurant in Jinghong, Wasan reveals that life experiences gained through mobility, as well as social networks,have been tactically utilized by the returned exile in order to establish the Thai restaurant. The restaurant has become a place

where people can consume Thai dishes, with Thai sounds and visuals also provided. Moreover, the key characteristic of the restaurant as "a non-place" (Augè 1999 in Wasan 2007:133), where people come and consume, has allowed the owner to expand his social capital and network.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

This study focuses on the mobility and utilization of social networks,as part of the implementation of a small-scale commercial activity by Lahu women. The relationship between the Lahu women and the Thai State can be seen through the regulations experienced in the everyday lives of Lahu women. Experiencing limitations in terms of their mobility, practices and ability to earn profits, the Lahu women have tried to develop their own path,avoiding State control, in order to make a living. The mobility practiced by the Lahu women in terms of their trade, is not simply a geographical movement phenomenon, but a social practice, and is interwoven by the interaction of people with different levels of power. During the mobility process, social networks are tactically chosen and utilized by the Lahu women, for place making purposes.

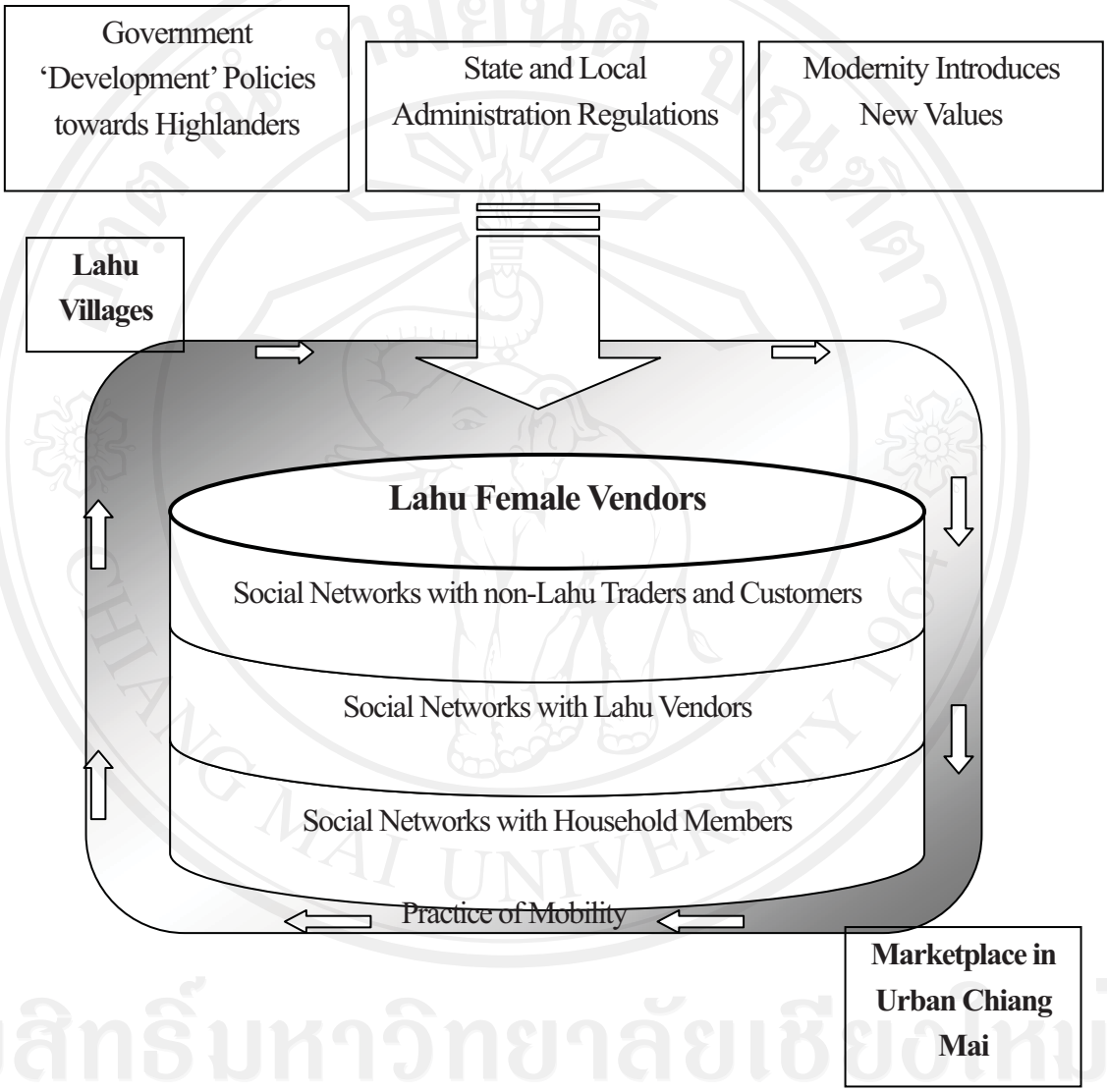

Figure 1.4: Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of Social Practices

1.8 Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into six chapters, including this introduction. Chapter I presented the theoretical idea of highland-lowland relations as a background to the study, and introduced the focus points of this study. The research questions and objectives were presented, as well as the research sites and research methods used, which outlined the direction of the study. I also reviewed the theoretical discussions and concepts regarding mobility, social practices and social networks,those relevant to the study. How these concepts are interrelated with and applied to my study of the lives of female Lahu vendors, is visualized within the conceptual framework diagram. Chapter II looks at the history of Lahu migration, from China to Thailand, and aims to see how the influence of non-Lahu people has affected the Lahu during and since their migration, focusing in particular on their politics and religion. After that, changesin the historical context of the highland-lowland relationship in Thailand are discussed. In Chapter III, the multi-ethnic setting of the marketplace in urban Chiang Mai will be looked at, since it is an important element to be taken into account by the Lahu vendors when choosing Chiang Maias their workplace. After describing the general setting of the Lahu in urban Chiang Mai, the everyday practices of the Lahu traders, both in a market and avillage context,will be described. Social networks separated by kinship, friendship and inter-and intra-ethnic relationships, plus other negotiations tactics used for the success of their vending businesses, are explored in Chapter IV. Chapter V analyzes the meaning of mobility, cash income and vending for the female Lahu vendors. It aims to deepen our understanding of their choicesin terms of mobility and trade, which are not only based on economic factors, but also on social and cultural considerations as well. Chapter VI concludes the study with some remarks on the findings.