CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I have organized my literature reviews in accordance with the key themes of my study: development, resettlement, livelihood, and cultural practice. I reviewed the related literature by locating it within the context of my planned study, and at times, reviewed the literature on the basis of the concepts involved.

2.1 Development

Development involves a progressive transformation of economy and society. Development as it has been practiced in Laos has had mixed consequences. While improving the economy and bettering the conditions of people's lives, there are remaining question as to whether all members in the national community have benefited. Studies by Vandergeest (2003) and Sengduangdeth (2006); for example, have testified to the questionable affects of development programs conducted in Laos. Vandergeest's (2003) study of land tenure reforms highlighted the problem of "development-induced" displacement, while Sengduangdeth's study in 2006 revealed that the benefits of development have been unequally shared among different groups of people in the same community.

Since 1986, the innovation policy *Chintanakan Mai* has acted as a catalyst for transition in the social, economic and political way of life in the country, post-war. This new economic system has used a capitalist economic system within a socialist country (Phomvihn 1986). With the aim of improving socio-economic conditions in the rural areas, the state has been concerned about developing infrastructure. For example, roads between urban and rural areas have been built and improved; moreover, the government of Lao PDR has adopted many new urban policies and programs, has built up the capacity of authorities, and has mobilized domestic and international funds in support of the implementation of those policies and programs.

2.2 Urban Development

Studies on the issue of urban development have so far focused on its social, ecological and environmental impacts (Sounadeth 2010; Pielke and Downton 2000; WHO 1990; Mather 1986). As argued by Mather (1986), urban development, as a major type of land cover change, has a great impact on the environment. In the process of urbanization, trees are cut and natural vegetation cover is largely replaced by paved surfaces. In addition, a few studies have emphasized on the sustainability of strategies of urban development. These strategies vary from the employment of the rural-urban partnership development (Jezeph 2001), to improving public transportation and avoiding further urban sprawl and further expansion of the road and parking capacity, in order to reduce the need for an increased use of cars (Naess 2001).

In the case of Laos, Sounadeth's (2010) study of urban development in Vientiane focuses on local and international interaction in development discourse and the use of networking by villagers impacted by an urban development project - for bargaining with the development process. Sounadeth's analysis highlighted both the successful aspects of urban development policy and its unintended consequences, including changes in livelihood strategies for those villagers who are relocated, as well as the use of traditional social networking.

2.3 Resettlement

Many studies have focused on the issue of resettlement/relocation in Laos, particularly those involving the relocation of highland ethnic minorities in northern parts of the country. A review of internal resettlement literature in Laos highlights many of the socio-cultural, health, livelihood and environmental problems associated with internal resettlement (Baird and Shoemaker 2007: 866; Chamberlain and Phomsombath 2002). Yet, while many studies (for example, Baird and Shoemaker 2005; Ervard and Goudineau 2004; Goudineau 1997) investigate the negative impacts of development-induced relocations, others (High 2008; Petit 2008) have paid more attention to the issue of the human aspiration for modernity, which works to support state-sponsored schemes. Researchers who emphasize the modernity aspiration argue against attempts to link resettlement to livelihood vulnerabilities. Some scholars; for example, Petit (2008: 118), argue that the Lao settlers' agency, their representations

and practices, have been under-analyzed. However, those who raise concerns about the negative impacts of resettlement have pointed out the danger in focusing on aspiration aspects while ignoring other aspects, as this could justify any centrally planned resettlement if increased funding is available and better planning is conducted (Baird et al. 2009).

Other scholars consider resettlement in a different light. For Goudineau (2000, cited in Ervard and Goudineau 2004), the word 'resettlement' refers to a double process: de-territorialization - which not only means leaving a territory, but for many villagers also entails changing their whole traditional way of life (ecological, cultural, technical), and re-territorialization - which implies not only settling in a new environment but also accepting and integrating into the cultural references that are bound up with it (Goudineau 2000).

Since these processes are fundamentally complex and multifaceted, not all instances of de-territorialization have the same social impact, and not all attempts at re-territorialization are equally successful. Moreover, since the state cannot control all the aspects of this dual process, some planned de-territorializations give birth to partly autonomous forms of re-territorialization (Evrard and Goudineau 2004: 939). Furthermore, the settling process, because of its broad and often tragic social consequences, can paradoxically generate unplanned or unexpected migrations, which could be called "resettlement-induced forms of mobility" (Evrard and Goudineau 2004).

While existing works on development-induced resettlements have provided useful information that help expand perspectives on understanding the issue at hand, I agree with Rigg's (2005: 192) observation that it remains to be seen how development programs as part of an economic reform relate to the livelihood trajectories of the people who are subjected to them. In addition, existing literature (for example, Baird and Shoemaker 2007) only lists opium eradication, security concerns, access and service delivery, cultural integration and nation-building, and Sweden agriculture reduction, as the main justifications given for internal resettlement in Laos. It seems few, if any scholars have paid attention to urban development as the cause of internal resettlement in Laos, which is a pity, as this is a different kind of resettlement from

that studied by most scholars. My study, therefore, aims to shed light on the consequences of a resettlement caused by urban development.

2.4 Livelihoods

In Laos, the great majority of the population has agriculture as it main livelihood source (Rigg 2005). According to the National Census in 2005, the results of a question about people's key occupations in the previous twelve months divided the answers into various types of farming and non-farm activities. Farming is the dominant sector in the economy in all provinces except Vientiane city, where 65percent of economically active people are occupied in non-farm activities (National Statistics Bureau 2012). Therefore, most of the country's people consider agriculture as their main livelihood activity. Agricultural activities involve rice and vegetable planting, and raising livestock. While the present context of regional economic integration, and Laos' move toward greater economic development necessitate that agriculture be placed within a wider livelihoods contexts and may subject to re-engineering (Rigg 2005), agriculture maintains its central importance as the main economy of Laotian livelihoods.

However, it is important to note that households embrace multiplicity in farming systems and depend mostly on mixed livelihoods (Rigg 2005; Shoemaker et al. 2001 cited in Rigg 2005). Furthermore, Rigg (2005)**,** writing in the context of Laos, also cautioned against the simplification of dividing rural households into lowland and upland systems, or against overlooking the variation in household livelihoods patterns. Citing a 1997 survey of the International Labour Organization in two districts within Oudomxai and Savannakhet provinces, Rigg (2005) pointed out that poorer households have more diverse sources of income and rely less on farming.

In addition, while studies (see; for example, Shoemaker et al. 2001) show the existence of locally oriented networks of exchange based on villages' different ecological and natural resource contexts as facilitating livelihoods sustainability, wider marketing and social networks may assume greater importance in ensuring livelihoods sustainability in the emerging context of regional economic integration. For instance, Phouxay and Tollefsen (2010) reported that an increasing number of young rural people, including a larger proportion of women, go to work in large towns, in

particular Vientiane, where more jobs are available such as in garment factories or the services sector. Furthermore, increasing numbers of workers from southern Laos have migrated to work in Thailand in recent years. Economic growth and industrialization in Thailand have increased employment opportunities, attracting labor from Lao's rural areas and also from its cities, as well as from neighboring countries such as Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia (Thongyou and Ayuwat 2005), The influx of migrant labor from Laos to Thailand has resulted from lower relative wage rates in Laos (Deelen and Vasuprasat 2010). These migrant workers draw on their social networks of relatives, friends, and other villagers with experience of working in Thailand (Thongyou and Ayuwat 2005).

A number of studies in the context of development in Laos have focused on state development projects and their impacts on the livelihoods of those affected (see; for example, Sengsouliya 2011; Pinkaew 2011). In his study about the Laotian government's 50-year land concession to a Vietnamese company – to set up and operate a rubber plantation in Bachieng District, Champasak Province in January 2004, Sengsouliya argued that this large-scale project has had many impacts on the landscape and on local livelihood, and has increased poverty among the ethnic minority villagers in rural and upland areas. Viewing this as the government's re-territorialization of land, he showed that the transition from subsistence cultivation to rubber plantation meant the villagers lost access to important forest agricultural land and resulted in different groups of people looking for new livelihood strategies. Another study by Pinkaew (2011) into people who lost their land due to a concession, also found that they had not been able to adapt to their new environment. They had to deal with unfamiliar circumstances and experienced greater levels of scarcity than before, though a few of them were able to adapt due to income earned from working as employees.

In another study carried out by Khamla (2010), the situation was different. This study, which looks at the issues of livelihood and land use dynamics in two different ethnic and topographical settings in northern Laos, reveals that the development of infrastructure, notably roads, and the expansion of commodity markets in China, all contributed to moving rural farmers away from subsistence based agriculture. Some farmers were able to take advantage of the emerging economic

opportunities and diversify their livelihood portfolios and accumulate wealth, while others were left increasingly marginalized and economically vulnerable. Both cases indicated that all social ranks improved their incomes due to newly introduced cash crops and employment opportunities. However, resource tenure had become a social problem, as poorer households tended to lose their rights of access to communal land, as it was converted to private property and granted as concessions. As the communal land became privatized, so farmers began to buy and sell it (Khamla 2010: iv).

Seen in this light, it seems important to understand the suitability of the new settlement during relocation, as well as the social, economic and cultural capital that people have, in order to understand their experiences in terms of livelihood changes, as well as their adaptive strategies. I intend to apply the livelihoods framework to analyze the concrete practices of households and the social and economic strategies they resorted to in the research area; their coping strategies, the resources they utilized, and the kinds of capital mobilized in the process.

2.5 Social relations, and religious and cultural practices

Among key issues involve in the relocation of people and the community, the changes in social relations and the cultural practices and their continuity in the new place assumed great importance. The villagers, who were relocated from several villages due to development project, not only had to adjust to the new environment and to strive to ensure livelihood stability, they also found themselves living among different groups of people whose culture and cultural practices, as well as other customs and beliefs, they did not necessarily share. In addition, unhealthy situations sometimes arose when people from one cultural group believed they were being demeaned, diminished or disempowered by the actions and the delivery systems of people from another cultures (Wood and Schwass 1993).

In a numbers of cases, conflicts arose which had a negative effect on the social relations' structures and the community's cultural practices. In a case study of those villagers relocated from the lignite-fuelled power-plant sites in Lampang Province in northern Thailand, the new settlers got into conflict with the former residents, due to the inappropriate management of community infrastructure, the lack of awareness of the social impacts of resettlement and the lack of a carefully planned social impact

analysis on the part of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) (Sangaron 1997). In a similar vein, Charoen (2000) found that the same resettlement scheme separated households from their close kin due to scattered settlement in the new place. Furthermore, social relations with the former community declined, while relations among community members in the new settlement became fragile; based more on economic interests than kinship-like bonding. As the new village was located far from the old temple and villagers worked outside the community, so less people participated in religious ceremonies and other community traditions (Charoen 2000).

Cultural conflicts aside, it is important to note that cultures also change, can be borrowed, acculturated or assimilated (Chayan 1986; Nithi 1994). Culture as a way of life is accumulated and transmitted in the forms of knowledge, practices and belief systems of groups of people, and be adapted in accordance with a changing situation (Kanchana 1995; Kasem 1963; Ekkawit 2001).

When it comes to the issue of cultural diversity, opinions vary among social theorists, though it is apparent in which contexts hierarchical power-relations come into play. Supporters of multiculturalism, such as Charles Taylor (1992), see social merit in the idea of multiculturalism; however, others argue that because multiculturalism relies heavily on the rhetoric of equality and egalitarianism, as a popular political discourse it has masked the historically mediated unequal power relations and the impact of dominant culture positions (Anderson & Reimer Kirkham 1998).

In the case of Pattana village, the social relations that I will focus on are the relations among villagers within the community, where several organizations were set up to support community activities. For example, there is a village committee, a village defense volunteers group, a women's union, a savings group and a health group. Although these different groups have different roles and objectives, they interact with and support each other, as well as provide advice and suggestions (Sayyavong Sayyalat 2000).

By way of summarizing, I found that the existing literature on development-induced resettlements, and on livelihood studies and adaptation, provided useful information that helped expanding my understanding of the issue at hand. However, the lack of research studies similar to mine, those focused on the relationship between

development and livelihood adaptation, necessitates further study. I hope my study helps fill the gap in this academic field.

2.6 Key Concepts

The key concepts I employed in the study of the relationship between urban development and livelihood adaptation were urban development and livelihood adaptation.

2.6.1 Urban development in the context of national development

Development involves a progressive transformation of economy and society. In mainstream literature of development agencies guided by a modernism approach, development has been linked to economic and social change, change that brings a quantitative improvement in life's conditions (Martinussen 1997). However, development is full of connotations and meanings; even discursive, charged with the promise of change towards greater social equality and prosperity for all citizens (Escobar 1995), while at the same time has functioned as an all-powerful mechanism for the production and management of space (Escobar 1995; Vandergeest 2003). For Escobar, development has penetrated, integrated, managed, and controlled countries and populations in increasingly detailed ways (Peet and Watts 1996). From the view of post-modernist critics, what has been lacking in the analyses of development in general is a serious attention to the relative differences in levels of living, or the highly skewed distributions of wealth and income that distinguish countries of different economic scales.

Debates; therefore, focus on the definition of development, not only in terms of economic prosperity, but also in terms of spiritual and moral advancement and sustainability (Stigliz 1998). According to the definition of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), development is "a complex, comprehensive and multidimensional process which extends beyond mere economic growth to incorporate all dimensions of life and all the energies of a community, all of whose members are called upon to make contribution and can expect to share in the benefits" (1993: 11).

In Lao PDR, the state's view of development as a tool in achieving its policies and strategies to promote economic growth and reduce poverty is evident in all of the country's "five-year" economic and development plans. For the state, the ultimate aim is to exit the status of least developed country by 2020. Although the main focus of the government is on rural development, urban economic development has also been emphasized and accelerated in the government development strategy for 2020.

Urban development is a process related to economic and political aspects. The sustainability of strategies of urban development which emphasize the rural-urban partnership is explained as the development paradigm, which links urban centers with rural growth areas and growth centers in order to ensure an overall balanced development process. Such rural-urban partnerships should create mutually beneficial network relations, not only between farmers, agro-based processing enterprises and domestic industrial unit in rural growth areas, but also between rural growth areas/centers and urban industrial centers (Jezeph 2001). According to Jezeph (2001) the policies of many third-world governments, which are supported by the large donor agencies, are still based on the model that promotes urban development and neglects rural areas.

However, the situation seems to be different in the case of Lao PDR, where the state has paid great attention to rural development, while emphasizing urban development in the most rapidly urban and larger urban centers.

In addition, urban development has a direct bearing on the health of urban populations. Social phenomena such as rural-to-urban migration and job opportunities, urban infrastructure, and economic factors such as per capita domestic product and per capita private expenditure, are among the determinants shaping the epidemiological pattern of diseases in urban settings (WHO 1990).

In my study, I intend to analyze urban development policy and projects within the context of national development in Lao PDR. My analysis will explore the process of urban development in Pakse and to see how the sustainability of this development can be assured, and through what mechanisms.

2.6.2 Livelihood Adaptation

1. Conceptualizing livelihoods

According to De Haan and Zoomers (2005), a new generation of livelihoods studies emerged in the 1990s in direct response to the need to develop more effective poverty alleviation policies. Two scholars, Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway, have been widely acknowledged as having put livelihoods center-stage, drawing upon insights from previous research on food security and agro-ecological sustainability. Before the efforts of Chambers and Conway, a series of events occurred that provided the platform for their paper on livelihoods in 1992. These events included the 1987 Bruntland Report, the Greening of Aid Conference at the International Institute for Environment and Development in the same year, and the first Human Development Report in 1990 by the United Nations Development (De Haan and Zoomers 2005: 30).

In Chambers and Conway's view, a livelihood refers to the means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets - such as stores and resources, and intangible assets - such as claims and access (Chambers and Conway 1992: 9–12). It is; therefore, a broad conception which "places households and their members at the centre of analysis" (De Haan and Zoomers 2005).

Niehof and Price (2001) and Ellis (2000) focus on the bundle of activities that people undertake to generate their livelihood. These scholars analyse livelihood through the use of a system's perspective - looking at the whole system of inputs (resources and assets), throughputs (management and strategies carried out to achieve livelihood and well-being), and outputs. Resources are the immediate means needed for livelihood, while assets are stores of value, or claims, which can be mobilised when needed. When necessary, assets can be converted into resources.

As an analytical tool, the livelihood framework has been elaborated to understand the survival strategies of the poor by examining access to tangible and intangible human, social, physical, financial and natural capital assets. According to Appendini (2001: 24), the central objective of the livelihoods approach is 'to search for more effective methods to support people and communities in ways that are more meaningful to their daily lives and needs, as opposed to ready-made, interventionist instruments'. In addition, a livelihood is sustainable when a household is able to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and to maintain or enhance its capabilities

and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Carney 1998: 2).

The relationship between the issues of livelihood and resettlement becomes important when taking into consideration the capability of the physical settlement structures needed to support the livelihood strategies of settlers in the long term. The suitability of settlements is defined as the long-term functionality and usability of settlements for their residents. Settlements are considered suitable when they are responsive to the changing livelihood strategies of the settlers, when they reduce vulnerabilities, allow for appropriate densification and flexibility in land use, while respecting the neighbouring settlers' needs and development opportunities.

2. Livelihood adaptation

Human adapt under the influence of change. Their adaptive strategies are diverse, and depend on numerous factors and conditions ranging from traditions, living conditions, the leader of the organization and the context of the community (Charoen 2000). In a changing situation such as resettlement, people have to adapt and adjust when they have to interact with other people in the changing environments. In addition, in order to sustain their livelihoods, people who have been resettled have to adapt, or change their occupations in the new ecological setting. For example, a number of studies in Lampang Province in northern Thailand - of villagers relocated due to the building and expansion of lignite-fuelled power plants - have shown that villagers had to change their agricultural-based livelihood into industrial and service sectors (Charoen 2000), and wage labor and trade (Panyawut 1995). The various adaptation techniques used to overcome tensions, depended on each person's foundation and experience. Of equal importance were the tangible and the intangible assets that people had to ensure their sustainable livelihoods.

As Pinkaew's (2011) study has shown, there are people who are able to adapt to livelihood changes because they have families or have agricultural land to farm on. Therefore, she suggests that both land and labor are imperative pre-conditions for people to adapt to new conditions. They provide livelihood alternatives. In a similar vein, Sounadeth's (2010) study of the urban development and resettlement in Vientiane also found that having a diversity of household incomes can be considered an alternative livelihood strategy for local people, rather than working in only one job

as a trader or laborer. Similarly, Hua's (2010) research on the processes of adaptation and responses among affected villagers in an agricultural commune to a government development program also shows a disruption took place in social relations, as well as people's choice of new intervention. His study shows those different households responded differently, with some households being able to maintain their previous livelihood activities, while others had to change their activities or diversify them. As existing studies have shown, the process of adaptation involves awareness, learning, decision making, and experimentation and accepting (Charoen 2000).
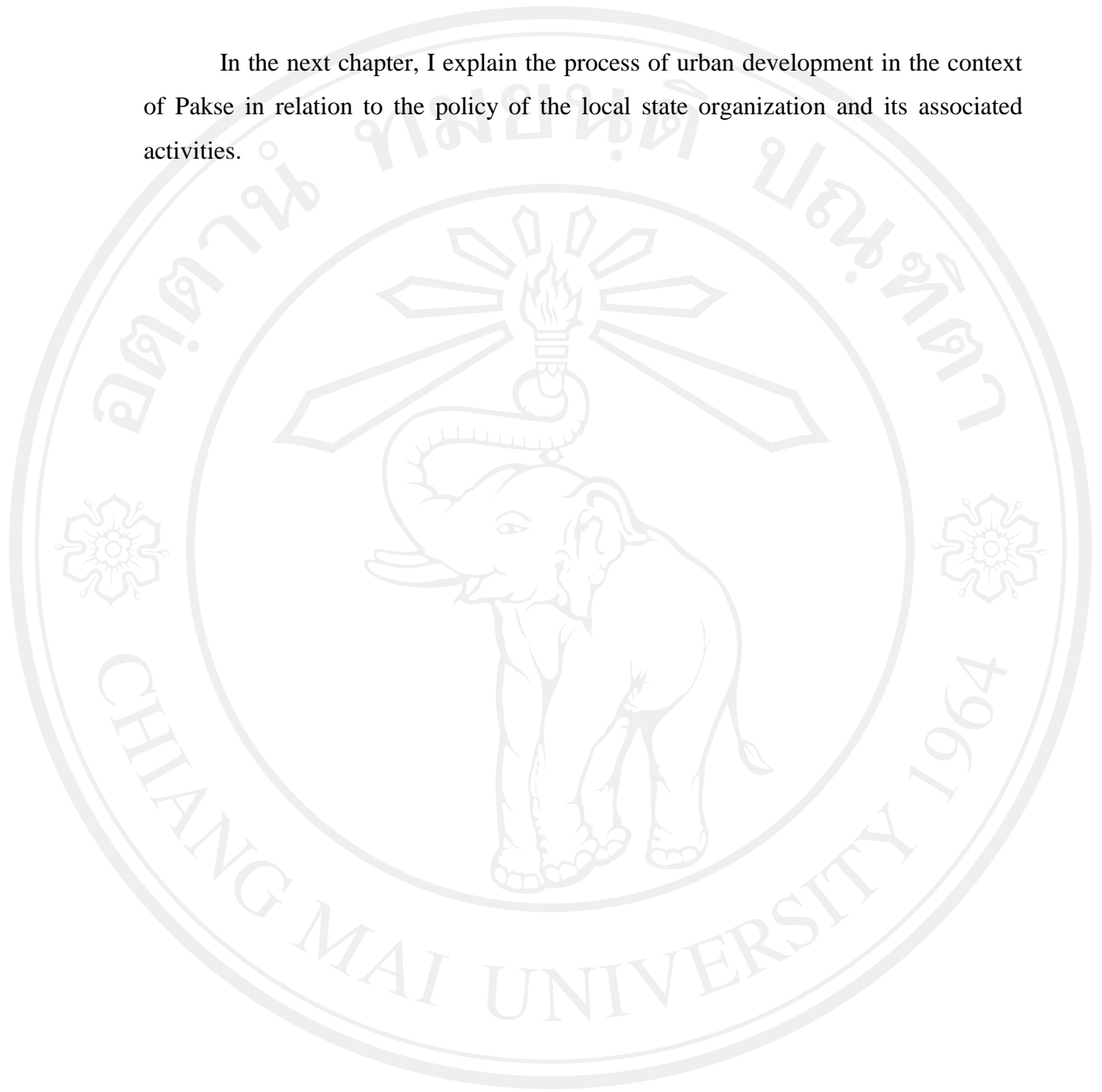
In my case study, I am interested in exploring the adaptation (social, economic and cultural) carried out at both the household and community levels, plus understanding the conditions that led to adaptation, and the process of adaptation itself.

2.7 Summary

The development of development theories and various approaches to development - from the modernization theory to the post-development approach and the view of development as a discourse has provided a useful theoretical background and guidance for my study. In particular, in the context of Laos which remains on the list of the world's least developed countries, this means development will assume the meaning of both a means and an ultimate goal of the government. In my study, I will employed the understanding of economic growth and modernization theory to explain the process of urban development in Pakse which had led to the resettlement of affected villagers to the new settlement in Pattana village.

In addition, I will employ the livelihood conception which "places households and their members at the centre of analysis" (De Haan and Zoomers 2005) to study the economic and social experiences of villagers who had been relocated as a result of the government's development program. I will use the livelihood framework as an analytical to understand the survival strategies of the people affected by examining their livelihood diversifications and access to tangible and intangible human, social, physical, financial and natural capital assets.

In the next chapter, I explain the process of urban development in the context of Pakse in relation to the policy of the local state organization and its associated activities.