

Doctoral Dissertation

**Environmentality and Cultural Identity Modification of the Akha in the
Northern Thailand: Focusing on the Arabica Coffee Business and
Sustainable Development**

SAWANG MEESAENG

Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation
Hiroshima University

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Sustainable Development**

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SAWANG MEESAENG

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We hereby recommend that the dissertation by Mr. SAWANG MEESAENG entitled "Environmentality and Cultural Identity Modification of the Akha in the Northern Thailand: Focusing on the Arabica Coffee Business and Sustainable Development" be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

Committee on Final Examination:

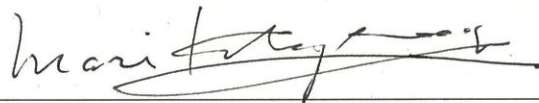


SEKI Koki, Professor

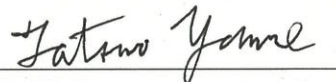
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NAKAZORA Moe, Lecturer



KATAYANAGI Mari, Professor



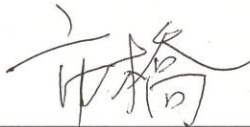
YAMANE Tatsuo, Associate Professor



MAKI Takayoshi, Associate Professor

Date: Jan. 25, 2022

Approved:



ICHIHASHI Masaru, Professor
Dean



Date:

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For Uncle Chai, Uncle Nhong, and Ryo

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

This study aims to discuss changes in the economic activities and cultural practices of an ethnic group engaged in the coffee business, specifically arabica coffee plantations, in Northern Thailand. Arabica cultivation is a commercial crop production that was introduced in Thailand about six decades ago in 1974 (The Royal Project Foundation 2012).

In Chiang Rai province, the northernmost part of Thailand, a confluence of changes have occurred as result of coffee cultivation by Akha farmers. This research is focused specifically in Pangkhon Village, Huaichomphu Subdistrict, Mueang District, Chiang Rai Province using anthropological perspectives and theories to understand the phenomena that have arisen from the economic and agricultural changes experienced by the Akha ethnic group, with coffee being the linkage to the many changes including those on the livelihood of the locals, environmental politics, and the Akha cultural activities.

In the global coffee trade market, there are two main coffee varieties: robusta and arabica. Robusta coffee, grown on plains at very low elevation above sea level, is the most grown and produced coffee in the world. It has high caffeine and is mainly used as raw material for instant coffee powder and ready-to-drink coffee beverages. Arabica coffee, on

the other hand, has less caffeine and is more expensive than robusta coffee. It is commonly meant for sale as a cup beverage in coffee shop businesses.

Arabica coffee is planted and grown in areas with cool temperature and high humidity throughout the year, surrounded by large trees which provide shade to protect the coffee from direct sunlight. Furthermore, cultivation of arabica coffee requires areas with high elevation, with altitudes from as high as 800 to more than 1,000 meters above sea level (Tucker 2011: 84). For this reason, in many countries, the cultivation of arabica coffee has been done by ethnic farmers who live in mountain areas. In Thailand, all arabica coffee cultivated in the country are being produced by ethnic farmers of Thailand. As one such case of ethnic minority farmers, this study will focus on the Akha people.

It should be noted that, because all the highland coffee cultivation areas in Thailand are forest reserves and watershed areas which are under the supervision of the Thai government, coffee farmers can grow coffee in the highlands only with the permission of the Thai government. The government's conservation management policies have various patterns because almost all forest areas in Thailand are protected by the law. In some cases, the government, through the Royal Forest Department officials, the National Park Service and military soldiers enforce strict legal measures such as demolishing houses in communities in order to compel ethnic minority groups to relocate to new settlements outside the protected areas. This was done although these ethnic groups had been living in the area even before it was declared subject to state conservation.

It was under this scenario that coffee cultivation was first promoted as a compromise solution between government and the local ethnic communities. In many areas in northern Thailand, such as Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, and Nan, coffee planting in

highland areas was permitted as a way of land use under management by Thai government agencies. Coffee, therefore, became a new cash crop of farmers in the highlands under a program which worked to reduce the expansion of agricultural land in the forest, conserve highland areas due to coffee agroforestry and increase the income of local farmers. Thus, the introduction of arabica coffee cultivation in the mountain communities in Northern Thailand has brought about many changes in the daily life of local ethnic people both economically and culturally. Coffee production led to changes in their livelihood and consumption patterns, and the emergence of a new type of social networking, the land tenure system, and cultural modification.

Arabica coffee cultivation allows ethnic farmers to continue living in highland areas while simultaneously preserving the forest areas. For this reason, in Thailand, government agencies working in forest conservation usually promote arabica coffee growing in highland areas to fulfill their mission and, at the same time, avoid confrontation between officials and ethnic groups.

It should be noted that arabica coffee is a high-value commercial plant. In addition, the coffee plant is cultivated using knowledge that is constantly changing, such as in the techniques of planting, drying, and processing of coffee beans; hence, coffee growers are keen to follow the constantly changing coffee technology. This has changed the pattern of agricultural work among ethnic farmers and their methods of acquiring such knowledge in agriculture.

Through a politically astute initiative by the government, coffee growing has allowed the ethnic farmers to live and continue farming in the highlands despite the fact

that such areas are subject to conservation law and are not covered by any form of land certificates since they are protected forest areas.

Regarding the identity of the ethnic farmers, they have acquired Thai nationality and are now full citizens of Thailand. They have also tried to become environmentally friendly farmers who are concerned about natural resource conservation and try to protect the environment in highland areas. Interestingly, as will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 6, they have maintained their original identities but at the same time, they change such identities and their traditional cultural activities in order to adapt to and stay competitive in the national and international coffee market.

Figure 1
Location of Chiang Rai Province, Thailand



Note. Modified from Map of Thailand with Provinces by Vemaps.com, December 2021¹

¹ Retived from <https://vemaps.com/thailand> (Free downloads with attribution), December 2021

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The fact that coffee is being promoted as a commercial plant for the preservation of natural resources has resulted in a change in the Akha livelihood. Coffee has brought great changes to the society and culture of Akha ethnic groups, including changes in their agricultural activities and in their settlement pattern from being a stateless mobile ethnic group into becoming Thai citizens.

The exercise of conservation power in the area is done through direct power, such as patrolling and controlling the forest resources in the area by forest officials and military soldiers. At the same time, indirect power is manifested through the creation of environmentality, which includes disciplinary environmentality such as the promotion of forest conservation through the coffee plantation of the royal initiative agricultural development center. In addition, neoliberal environmentality is at play in promoting conservation by market mechanisms through the purchase by a large company only of coffee produced under environmentally conscious methods.

Moreover, the process of the nationalization and granting of citizenship are also closely intertwined with conservation. As a result, ethnic farmers in the area experienced both environmental politics and conservation issues from multiple forms of environmentalities. At the same time, they are also becoming Thai citizens under the royal hegemony of the Thai royal family in the conservation under the nationalization process. Nevertheless, in the current free market of coffee, they are able to maintain their identity as Akha people or modify their identity to match their production with the market for coffee

and cultural tourism. The dynamic changes in the Akha community after they had settled and become coffee growers is therefore a significant issue in this research.

This study expands the theoretical understanding of contemporary ethnic minorities particularly focusing on a new pattern of agricultural production in the neoliberal market and a new type of natural resource conservation policy.

1.3 Research Objectives

There are two objectives in this study.

The dominant objective of this study is to examine the specific power relation, that can be termed as environmentality, and political dynamism among the multiple actors involved in the production, sales, and consumption of highland coffee in Northern Thailand.

The subordinate objective of this research is to explore the consequence of such power relation in conservation and the response of the local villagers in the form of the change in identity, culture, and lifestyle of the Akha people in the process of expansion of the commercial coffee business.

1.4 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the features of power and politics working in the conservation of forests and coffee growing in Northern Thailand?
2. How have the Akha people modified their cultural identity under the expanding influence of international and domestic coffee market?

1.5 Review of Literature

To understand the main theoretical concepts as basis for the research argument, all relevant literatures were reviewed and are categorized here for ease of discussion.

1.5.1 The Politics of Environmentalism and Environmentalism

The first group of literature which proved useful for this study pertains to environmentalism. The concept of conservation is widespread in the global politics of the present international environment. However, the trend of environmental conservation cannot exist without politics and power relations. The idea of conservation in various countries is not free from politics. Conservation is related to the political relationship and technology of power between the state, the institution, and the individuals.

1.5.1.1 Governmentality, Neoliberal governmentality, and Ecogovernmentality

Foucault paid attention to self-governing which will later develop into the concept of governmentality. Unlike Weber's state-centric theories, the significance of Foucault's contribution to social studies is in describing a “nominalist” view of power (England 2019: 13). There are two main types of governmentality. Firstly, disciplinary governmentality operates through the internalization of social norms and ethical standards of individuals owing to the fear of deviant behavior and immorality. It is the process of self-government under the fear of social and institutional monitoring. Foucault explained this idea by using the concept of the panopticon (Foucault 1977 in Burchell *et al.* (eds.) 1991: 196, Fletcher 2009: 176) which is a type of institutional building and a system of control to monitoring the behavior of prisoners who, in the end, internalize the regulations by themselves and control their own behavior due to not knowing when exactly they are

being watched; hence, harbor the fear of being watched by the guards in the panopticon building at all times.

Secondly, neoliberal governmentality is another type of technology of power to create external incentives for individuals, who are seen as self-interested rational actors. These incentives include economic gains or improved social status. Cotoi (2011) in his analysis of neoliberalism, explains how Foucault considers that the emergence of the economy led to new forms of knowledge and power. The market creates exchange values and government processes. In the lecture on the Birth of Biopolitics (Foucault 1978-79), Foucault mentioned that neoliberal governmentality is not there to regulate the market but to let the market work according to its natural flow. Cotoi further explained that in the neoliberal context, people are governed by and through their interests, which is the process of self-regulating or self-directing – the governmentality from the Foucauldian perspective.

Foucault's concept has been applied to explain the environment's governance and environmental discourse. Luke (1995), in explaining discourses of environmentalism in natural resource reservation, stressed that nature is meaningless until humans assign meaning to it. Nature is discursively transformed into "natural resources" and "environment," where "environment" is not an existing thing but results from power and knowledge in reservation managerialism. Luke points out that, before 1965, the concept of nature in policy discourses was simple: nature, conservation, and ecology. Nevertheless, since the 1970s, the concept of environment and conservation began to change due to global political and economic changes. He further argues that the introduction of eco-knowledge led to environmental discourses such as sustainability of the environment as a new version of a global economy.

To clarify this concept, Luke (1995) cites the application of Foucault's concept of governmentality to explain "green governmentality" as a new resource management practice. Moreover, he applied the concept of bio-power to explain the modern subjectivity in conservation processes among self-directed ecological subjects. He focused on The World Watch Institute, an American-based environmental organization that monitors and builds scientific knowledge (eco-knowledge), which can be described as geo-power. Luke was the scholar who explained environmentality in the early stages before Agrawal later developed the concept of ecogovernmentality from environmentality. The World Watch Institute is an example of the eco-panopticon institute with panoptic power in nature conservation programs. In addition to The World Watch Institute, there are other organizations such as Earth First, The World Wildlife Federation and Greenpeace that convey the concept of conservation to the world (Luke 1995).

Rutherford (1999) describes the discourse on conservation and environmental governance. He explains that environmental governance, developed from Foucault's biopolitics and governmentality ideas, shifted from striving to govern territory to governing things, especially 'government of the self'. Therefore, Foucault characterized government as 'the conduct of conduct' to explain the various practices of individual self-government, others' government, and the state's government (Rutherford 1999). She further defined 'ecological governmentality' (or environmentality – in Luke 1995 and Agrawal 2005) through a case study of doing an environmental impact assessment (EIA) in the US context, which is a process institutionalizing ecological rationality through the use of scientific knowledge to control the conservation behaviors and self-regulating manner of individuals, and the technology of government in governing at a distance on environmental conservation issues.

In trying to understand the strategic character of the government, Lemke (2002) wrote an essay that points to Foucault's principles, especially the concept of governmentality, and explains how it broadens the understanding of the process of self-control. Foucault's explanation of government as conduct clarifies "governing the self" (Lemke 2002: 3). He explained sustainable development as a discourse in the "new world order" and raised the case of re-conceptualization of nature to "ecosystem." He also mentioned that nature had become an "environment" in a capitalist system. Therefore, nature has become an issue in the economic discourse of efficient resource management in a neoliberal context (Lemke 2002).

Thus, the abovementioned scholarship are applying Foucault's concepts of governmentality and subjectivity to describe resource conservation phenomena worldwide. Foucault's governmentality concept has been developed into a concept of "environmentality" (Luke 1995), "ecological governmentality" (Rutherford 1999), "ecogovernmentality" (Agrawal 2005), and "green governmentality" (Rutherford 2017) in the study of modern environmental governance. The concepts of subjectivity and self-control evolved into the notion of an "environmental subject" — an individual concerned with the conservation of natural resources and have internalized natural resource conservation ideology into themselves and the community.

Goldman (2005) explains the emergence of a global green neoliberalism. He mentioned the process of a global structural adjustment which is being applied in financing programs of the World Bank and IMF. Since 1990, many borrowing governments have been required to disclose their budget for environmental conservation in order to receive financing support from the World Bank. This process has led to green neoliberalism in the global context. Goldman also highlights eco-governmentality as the art of government in borrowing states, where developing countries aim at promoting a conservation ideology.

Therefore, the “ modern eco- rational subject and the environmental state mutually constitute” (Goldman 2005: 219) global green neoliberalism.

Moreover, Arts and Bizer (2009) explain that the global forest policy has changed since the 1980s to pivot more to concerns on biodiversity, sustainable development, and governance. Since the 1980s, there have been many international treaties and international fora on international environmental conservation including the 1986 National Forum on BioDiversity, United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), 1980 World Conservation Strategy (WCS), 1990 Our Common Future, Sustainable Development in 1990s, and Framework Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992 (Arts and Bizer 2009). A most significant work which applied the concept of governmentality into the context of natural resources conservation is that of Agrawal (2005) who did his research in Kumaon, India. His research began in 1989 to study local forms of control and regulation over forests. He investigated environmental politics and provided a new approach to the study of environmental relationships. This approach is environmentality, which brought to the fore concerns with power/knowledge, institutions, and subjectivities in the natural resource reservation projects. Agrawal applied the concept of Foucault to explain governance power in the conservation process. He agreed with Foucault that in the conservation process, the state does not use only hard power, but rather still uses soft power or governance of people’s mind in conservation through natural conservation institutions.

According to Agrawal, the concept of environmentality is composed of four elements; namely, the knowledge in natural conservation, politics in natural resource management, institutions engaged in natural conservation, and, as the most important element, subjects of conservation. These four elements emerged under the context of changing perceptions of the environment to be regulated and to be conserved (Agrawal 2005).

Furthermore, Agrawal explored “how new technologies to govern the environment have emerged over the past 150 years in India and in the case study in Kumaon using collected statistics and numbers as forms of colonial knowledge that made the new way of governing the forest possible” (Agrawal 2005:6). He explained why “the new technologies to govern forests were (and are) linked with the constitution of environmental subjects: people who have come to think and act in new ways in relation to the environment” (Agrawal 2005: 7).

The concept of environmental subjects explains the change of an individual’s subjectivity regarding natural resource conservation. Agrawal (2005) defined environmental subjects as referring to “the people who have come to think and behave in the new way in the context of how environmental resources, especially the forest, are being governed” (Agrawal 2005: 7). He used the concept of environmental subjects to explain the change in people’s subjectivity with regard to how the forest area they are living in has been governed and protected. As Foucault explained, the emphasis is on the technology of power in conservation rather than on describing the role of the state or sovereign in conservation processes. Thus, what is being underscored is the internalization of the conservation ideology among the local villagers in the conservation projects. They set up organizations, such as a forest council, to monitor the use of natural resources by individuals in the community. Therefore, in this context, the concept and action of the local people to conserve the natural resources are the product of the technology of power to control the use of environmental resources.

The Kumaon people set up their “forest council” to monitor the forest use by the local people. The monitoring system is both a “mutual monitoring” system by the council and “third party monitoring” by every household looking at all the other households. This

form of monitoring is most common in small, close-knit groups. Therefore, most individuals follow the rules; otherwise, once reported by the guard to the council, they would have to attend the council meeting and explain why they were in violation of the rules.

Li (2007) further developed the concept of Agrawal and explored the concepts of “governmentality” of Foucault, and the concept of “hegemony” of Antonio Gramsci for an understanding of politics in the development and natural resource management in Indonesia. She focused on the power relation of the development between the state and local people, and “governmentality” among local people. Li defined the national resources development agenda as the government’s “will to improve.” However, the development agenda should be situated in the field of power between the state, local government, and local people. In every development program, there must be “trustees” or the agencies of the development, which includes colonial officers, missionaries, politicians, bureaucrats, and international aid donors and NGOs. In the case of the coffee plantation in Pangkhon, Chiang Rai, it is the royal development center that serves as the trustee of the development of the highland areas.

Under the natural resource conservation programs, local people shall govern themselves to protect the natural resource. Li defined this process as “eco-governmentality” (Li 2007:5). Foucault coined the term “governmentality” to define “conduct of conduct” or the way that people, who are under the controlled power, usually govern themselves even though the rulers do not always use violent techniques of control on them (Agrawal 2005).

However, there is a gap in the explanation of the process of governmentality in conservation practices analysis. Regarding the explanation of Agrawal and Li, we cannot

see much about the agency of actors as individuals who act independently and make their own choice considering that the local people are not mere passive subjects to the development and conservation practices.

In the following subsection, the literature describe the process of negotiation of local villagers with the conservation project or the process of preserving their local values in the midst of conserving the environment such that, in the end, local farmers do not transform into environmental subjects.

1.5.1.2 The Unmaking of Environmental Subject

The scholarship in this group pertain to the unmaking of the environmental subject, a process in which local people do not become environmental subjects through the conservation processes. Because of the instilled local values on conservation among the local people, they negotiated and expressed resistance to the conservation projects.

As mentioned earlier in the previous section, Goldman (2005), Luke (1995), Igoe and Brockington (2007), and Fletcher (2010) described neoliberal environmentality as the politics of environmental control in the neoliberal market. Under a modern capitalist economy, resources become commodities that can be commodified in the free market – local people in the conservation areas engaging in the conservation process and politics on environmental conservation. Moreover, the conservation projects also lead to subject formation and the formation of identity of the local people, including the process of internalization of conservation (environmentalist) ideology. On the other hand, Cepek (2011) presented a critical study which poses a challenge to the notions of reservation mentality and 'environmental subjects'. He criticizes Agrawal's explanation of environmentality and environmental subjects based on a case study in the preservation

project to protect the population of freshwater turtles in the Amazonian ethnic village of Cofán. The project was under the support of the Field Museum of Natural History's Office of Environmental and Conservation Program (ECP), an environmental organization from Chicago, USA. Cepek suggests that using the concepts of environmentality and environmental subjects is limiting in discussing community-based conservation. His main argument is that in natural resources conservation, Cofán people continue to have their own critical consciousness and traditional pattern of resource use.

Cepek explained that in promoting ECP's conservation efforts, residents were encouraged to use new tools and technology to monitor and protect natural resources such as satellite tracking systems, monitoring cameras, water level measurement instruments for monitoring conservation of the Amazon native species of water turtles. However, under the reservation processes, most villagers became alienated laborers, thus, it could not be said that they became environmental subjects. As described by Cepek, the Cofán people felt alienated from the technology used to monitor and preserve natural resources, despite the ECP having offered incentives for the community to conserve resources in this modern way, such as additional payments for the increase in the turtles' population. Nonetheless, indigenous peoples consider themselves as natural resources protectors for the world even without the conservation project of ECP. Moreover, since no one else could be expected to do their duty in preserving natural resources and safeguarding their group, the financial support for them to undertake natural resource protection is justified.

In any case, many scholars have joined in the debate on the process of environmentality formation and subjectivity formation of local people. For example, on the process of not being 'environmental subjects', some case studies showed alternative livelihoods of local people in conservation projects (Seki 2009 and 2014); the maintaining of 'a critical consciousness' among local people to the conservation projects (Cepek 2012);

the existence of traditional values and actions (practices) of local people in the conservation process and environmental subjects formation by the conservation project (Segi 2013); and everyday practices of local people in the conservation projects (‘practising nature’) (Cortes-Vazquez and Ruiz-Ballesteros 2018).

However, the latest development in the concept of environmentality has evolved to a showing of multiple forms of environmentalities; that is, environmentality in diverse patterns. Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez (2020) proposed ‘variegated environmentality’, or multiple environmentalities. Montes (2019), in describing the multiple direction of environmentalism and subjectivities formation, as in the variegated environmentalities proposed by Fletcher, presented the ‘Buddhist biopower’ in the case of ecotourism under the Gross National Happiness (GNH) paradigm of Bhutan. These concepts will be discussed in the next section.

1.5.1.3 Variegated Environmentalities and Multiple Environmentalities

Fletcher summarized that “neoliberal conservation provide incentives to motivate individuals to choose to behave in conservation-friendly ways” (Fletcher 2010:176).

Fletcher (2010) differentiates environmental controls in the Foucauldian sense, including disciplinary environmentality and neoliberal environmentality. Neoliberal environmentality, a crucial concept for the discussion of the case study in this research, creates an external incentive (economic incentive) for local people to conserve the environment rather than the definite rules and regulations governing the conservation of resources.

Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez (2020) explained that the concept of Foucault's governmentality had made significant contributions to the study of environmental governance processes and decentralization of government in natural resources management projects. He states that the 'green panopticon' approach guides the understanding of 'governance at a distance' in conservation. However, the tradition of environmental studies using Foucault's concept has been changed by research experiences and findings of field studies from various contexts around the world.

Fletcher discusses the constraints of describing environmental politics as a green panopticon: "consequently, analysis in terms of environmentality is often seen to focus excessively on the top-down exercise of power and thus neglect the creative ways that subalterns resist, reconfigure and exercise their forms of governance autonomous of or in opposition to external authority" (Cepek 2011; Fletcher 2020: 4). Therefore, he summarizes the trend of environmental studies as 'multiple environmentalities' or 'variegated environmentalities'.

Montes (2019) applied the concept of Fletcher, describing governmentality and neoliberal environmentality, when he investigated the promotion of Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH) policy, especially in ecotourism promotion. The Bhutan government promotes GNH to distinguish itself from Westernization of development initiatives. Montes studied and argued that Bhutanese environmental subjectivities could be traced back to the Buddhist cosmology of people. They have environmental awareness from Buddhism cosmology, or what he proposed as 'Buddhist biopower'. The government of Bhutan promoted ecotourism to achieve its goal of integrating livelihoods, environmental conservation and the neoliberal economy. Ecotourism was prompted to create a 'high value - low volume' and 'high value - low impact' tourism (Montes 2019: 11). Montes also integrates Ingold's 'dwelling approach' (Ingold 2000 in Montes 2019:

20) to investigate human- environment interactions to overcome the nature- culture dichotomy.

Cortes-Vazquez and Ruiz-Ballesteros (2018) discussed the limitations on literature using the concept of environmentality. The environmentality studies focus on governance and subjectification processes by neglecting the practices of local people in everyday life. Cortes- Vazquez and Ruiz- Ballesteros (2018) argued that local people could be creative and active actors in conservation regulations. Therefore, they raised three cases of local actors in three different conservation areas. They found that the local actors have their own interpretation of conservation. " There are different environmentality and variegated individual experiences and narratives of conservation" (Cortes- Vazquez and Ruiz- Ballesteros 2018: 233). Actors in conservation projects are 'nature users' and 'practicing nature' daily.

While many countries have been promoting community-based conservation, in many other parts of the world 'green militarization' has been the main practice for preventing poaching in conservation areas. At present, green militarization is also becoming a common phenomenon. Lunstrum (2014) explained that the new trend of conservation in many countries has transformed into 'militarization of conservation'. Before the 1990s, the dominant model of conservation in the colonial period – early, middle and post- colonial period – had transformed to a more decentralized and community-based model. However, by the 1990s, the conservation trend turned into a more militarized system in many countries. In her case study in Kruger National Park in the border of South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique, Lunstrum (2014) discusses military partnerships in conservation efforts where there is discursive construction of 'enemies' to conservation. According to this ideology, inflicting violence against an enemy of conservation is acceptable. Therefore, in the case of Kruger National Park in South Africa,

poaching teams were being subjected to increasingly aggressive actions. Since the site is located in the border area, most poachers in Kruger National Park, who are Mozambicans, face the rangers and military that are legitimately deputized to use violence and armed force against them.

Marijnen and Verweijen (2016) also studied the discursive (re)production of militarization conservation in the Virunga National Park in Congo. In their study of the discursive practices to normalize and legitimize green militarization, they explained the support of individuals to militarization by consumption. Marketization and commoditization to support green militarization became normalized. Therefore, the consumers directly fund militarized conservation practices under 'the war for biodiversity' (Marijnen and Verweijen 2016: 275).

Similarly, in Thailand, the military are engaged in fortress conservation. In 2011, Kaeng Krachan National Park officials relocated the village of Karen Bang Kloi villages in Phetchaburi, western Thailand, near the Thai-Myanmar border. In that operation, Thai state officers used physical violence to force Karen people to move from the village even though this minority group had been living in the forest for hundreds of years. Their houses and rice barns were destroyed and burned by the officers. The villagers then brought the issue to court to ask for justice. Mr. Billie, their former village leader was kidnapped. He disappeared and is still missing up to the present (Amnesty International Thailand, 2020)

1.5.2 The Akha in Thailand and Akahzang as Akha Way of Life

The Akha people are an ethnic group in Southeast Asia residing in areas in China and Southeast Asia including Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos (Kammerer 1988 and 1996, Sturgeon 2005, Goodman 2008). Scott (2009) defines the Akha as 'stateless' people in the group of Zomia, stateless ethnic peoples in Southeast Asia, South China and India. Akhas

usually set up their residential areas in high altitudes with elevations ranging from about 800 meters to 1,800 meters above sea level. Their ethnic identity is based on “Ahkazang”, a common patrilineal clanship (Morton 2013; Trupp 2014,2015; Agostini 2018) and shared customs. These customs, also constituting the “zang” of the Akha people, are likened to a finely woven bamboo basket that cannot be easily broken or torn and is much stronger than that of other tribes (Kammerer 1988).

There are three main groups of Akha including, the Ulo Akha, Lomi Akha, and Pami Akha. (Toyota 1998). The Akha villagers in Pangkhon Village is from the Lomi Akha group.

As mentioned earlier, the Akhas used to be a stateless ethnic group in the Zomia area. This area, which is the territory in southern China from the north of Burma, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, to India and Bangladesh, is home to various ethnic groups which are minorities in various countries in that area (Scott 2009). It hosts a large population of peoples with differing language and culture but sharing the common identity of being anarchist and stateless peoples. The definition by Scott of anarchist and stateless is quite different from other scholars in that they are not against or opposed to any state, but rather are indigenous people who do not undermine the power of a particular state or kingdom throughout their very long, thousands of years stay in the history of the region. In historical times, these people could have been subjects of a kingdom at a certain period. However, they chose not to be affiliated or be citizens of one state permanently.

They were able to move and change their land or escape into forests or high mountains to hide away from state power. Their agriculture is a form of “escape agriculture” that is not under any state controlling power and taxation. This means that the cultivation that has been done by farmers in the Zomia area is of anything that is not a

commercial cash crop, such as wet rice or grains, that require an irrigation system and state management of cultivated land which consequently brings in control and taxation by the state. Some examples of escape crops cultivated by stateless people in order to avoid state control are opium, corn, cassava, potatoes, and taro. Aside from opium, which is a high-income plant, the remaining plants are of low market value and mostly used for household consumption (Scott 2009). Hence, in the Zomia area, they do not engage in farming practices on permanent land that rely on irrigation systems which cannot be helped but be subject to government power and taxation. Instead of growing rice, they grow plants, such as opium, which can be farmed in areas that can be moved or rotated and then can be sold or exchanged for basic living needs.

Moreover, there is another interesting case study about Akha people in the border areas of China, Myanmar and Thailand. Sturgeon (2005) examined the border landscape and the politics of land use in two Akha communities in China and in Thailand. The cases studied were the Xienfeng hamlet in Mengsong, Yunnan, Southern China and Ahkapu (a pseudonym), the oldest Akha community in Thailand located in Chiang Rai Province, northern Thailand. Both communities are located near the Myanmar border. The Akha villagers in both communities took advantage of the border landscape by hunting, collecting forest products, raising animals in forest areas in border lands, and engaging in shifting cultivation.

Border areas can be defined as areas for separation such as in terms of citizenship, where people are either “citizen” or “ethnic minority,” or “Thai” and “non-Thai.” At the same time, the border areas are also areas for opportunities and market access for Akha farmers. Through history, Akha people have designed and applied border landscapes "to negotiate with state agents and border patrons" (Sturgeon 2005: 8-9). However, there is complexity in land use in a border landscape. In the state perspective, shifting cultivation

is destroying natural resources. However, shifting cultivation is also an opportunity for market access of Akha farmers in both countries. Agricultural activities in the border areas include opium cultivation, rice terraces, and shifting vegetation agriculture. Of importance is the fact that border areas seem to be distant from state power and markets. However, Sturgeon (2005) pointed out that Akha farmers have been in contact with the market and trade for a long time, such that in the past in Southeast Asia, there were land trade routes by groups of horse caravan traders traveling from Yunnan in southern China, through northern Thailand until Myanmar.

In the case of Thailand, the government has controlled Akha farmers through their ID card. Initially, ethnic groups, including Akha, received blue ID cards which allowed them to reside and settle in the province although they could not move or travel to other provinces except with permission from the governor (Sturgeon 2005). Since the late 1990s, the Thai state has issued full ID card and full citizenship to ethnic minorities in Thailand.

In 1990, the Royal Forestry Department (RFD) promoted policies to prevent shifting cultivation in Thailand, especially in many natural resources reservation which are "reforestation for the king" projects (Sturgeon 2005). This had repercussions to the Akha who, in line with Scott's explanation of Zomia, used to be one of stateless ethnic group migrants in border areas who practiced shifting cultivation for their crops. However, the Akha who settled in Thailand have become Thai citizens. At first, they received hill tribe ID cards but later, from the late 1990s, they have become Thai citizens. It is worth mentioning how in situations like these, the head of the village became an important mediator between the Thai government and the local people. The role of community leaders in Thailand, known as "phuyai ban" (village headman) as intermediaries is vital as

they connect policies and laws from the central government and local governments to the villagers in the community (Sturgeon 2005).

In addition, one of the processes after becoming a Thai is the participation by the Akha in Akapu villages in the “reforestation for the King” projects. This is similar to the phenomenon that occurred in Pangkhon where Akha people undertake coffee growing according to the Royal Project development initiative.

Among the ethnic farmers who grow coffee in Thailand today, the Akha is the most important group because they migrated to settle in Thailand at a time when coffee cultivation was being promoted in the country. At present, a glance at the images and logos on coffee products in Thailand reveal mostly images of Akha people. The first famous Thai arabica coffee brand is "Doi Chaang Coffee" which was founded by two Akha coffee farmers in Chiang Rai Province. It has been the most famous coffee in Thailand for the past three decades and has generated the popularity of arabica coffee drinking and coffee culture in Thailand. The logo of Doi Chaang Coffee is the image of its founder's father in Akha traditional clothes (Ritprecha 2008). An understanding of the Akha people from these relevant literature will be useful for further analysis in the next part of the study.

Kongtaweesak (2015) studied the Akha street peddlers in the Night Bazaar Market, Chaing Mai, Thailand. The Akha peddlers do not sell only their ethnic souvenirs to the tourists who visit the night market. They also sell the sense of "otherness" through the identity of Akha by using their appearance, language, and traditional clothing as cultural products. Many tourists bought their souvenirs and took photographs with them owing to the extraordinary sense of their otherness.

Akhazang is the Akha culture, beliefs, religion and rituals. Akhazang is the backbone in the daily life of the Akha people. Scholars who study Akha society often study

Akhazang. The first milestone of the Akha study on Akhazang is the study of Geusau in 1983. Geusau states that Akhazang is the culture, religion, rituals, beliefs, and way of life of Akha. Akhazang passed on from generation to generation through fathers (Geusau 1983, 249). Akhazang includes the supernatural beliefs of the Akha people. Akhazang includes religion, rites, ceremonies, ancestor Akhazang is a holistic cosmology myth (Geusau 1983, 251). Geusau's classical study sheds light on the connection between culture and lifestyle in the Akha people's way of life.

Later some studies describe the changes occurring in the Akha Akhazang traditional culture. Kammerer (Kammerer 1996) has studied Protestants Akha in Thailand to understand the reinterpretation of the traditional tradition of Akha, who converted to Christianity. Kammerer indicated that The Akhas' decision to convert to Christianity instead of upholding the Akhazang way of living is because Akhazang requirements are difficult to comply in the present day. Culture is like a basket that is “difficult to carry on,” and Akha customs are a heavy burden (Kammerer 1996, 326). However, the Akha people have reinterpreted their tradition according to the Bible. Matthew 11:28) mentions that Jesus will be the refuge of the one who carries the heavy load. Therefore, Akha Christians converted to the Jusus'zang (Kammerer 1996, 329).

Subsequent studies will examine the process of reviving Akhazang under the change in Akha religions. Morton (Morton 2013) study Akha Cultural Conferences to promote Pan- Akha sense of belonging. This is the revitalization of Akha cultural citizenship – their unity through 12 yearly rituals, patrilineal ancestry, and the standard writing system of Hani-Akha language (language unification) (Morton 2013: 38). This process attempts to bring Akha Christian back to Akazang (Morton 2013: 46).

Agostini (Agostini 2018) study the revitalization of Akhaness through the Akha Transnational Network in China, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand during the international Akha New Year Festival. The event organizers stated that Akha had abandoned most of their traditional belief system due to modernity and the conversion to Christianity (Agostini 2018: 3). The revitalization of Akhaness (Akhazang) thus creates a new sense of belonging among the Akha people in the upper Mekong, especially efforts to reintroduce the twelve Akha traditional clans that can link all Akha in all countries together (Agostini 2018: 6).

Meanwhile, Trupp (Trupp 2015) examines the interconnection of Akha culture and the network of relationships that form the foundation of the business development of Akha street vendors in Bangkok. The social network of Akha becomes the resource that creates mixed embeddedness among the Akha in urban life and engages the souvenir vendors business (Trupp 2015: 781).

The existing studies of Akhazang have been to study the transformation and reconstruction process of Akhazang. To create a connection between the Akha people living in different areas or under different nation-state powers to create a connection or commonality between the Akha community. However, this study will explore the process of adapting and rebuilding Akhazang as a foundation for coffee business development.

1.5.3 Coffee Production in Neoliberal Market

This section will explain coffee production under the context of a neoliberal market in the study of West in Papua New Guinea. West (2012) examines the coffee cultivation of ethnic farmers in Maimafu, Papua New Guinea, an area inhabited by the Gimi ethnic group, and explains how coffee has become a “globalized commodity”. According to this

study, it has reached global levels because the countries where coffee can grow are located in an area that can be defined as the "coffee belt", which refers to an area where different varieties of coffee can be grown near the equator warm zone, while the coffee is exported to coffee markets around the world. Therefore, coffee is exported from most of the "global south" countries to consumers around the world.

The trend of the coffee market in the present-day has changed from industrial instant coffee powder ("Fordism coffee") to "specialty coffee" and "single-origin coffee" from homogenous coffee production site (West 2012: 4). The consumption pattern of coffee consumers has also changed into a preference for "cup drink coffee" in coffee shops. We can see the expansion of coffee shops in almost all countries around the world. Drinking coffee is not anymore just drinking for caffeine, but also drinking for aesthetics and consumption for the cultural meaning of a particular coffee.

The late 1980s was the origin of specialty coffee. Popular media in the United States began to show the relationship between coffee production and environmental sustainability. Since the mid-1990s "sustainable" coffee production was being associated with the solution for "saving" tropical forests. Nowadays, there is a huge market for coffee produced with related messaging to environmental reservation and how it can help rural peoples pursue small-scale economic development in the community. This allows the community to access a fair share of the global flow of money in the coffee business without destroying natural resources (West 2012).

West explained Karl Polanyi's concept of embeddedness to describe the emergence of specialty coffee against 'big industrial coffee' (West 2012: 61). Coffee consumers are willing to pay more for coffee products that fit their new consumption standards such as food safety, high coffee quality, and ethical standards. The new standards for coffee such

as “shade- grown,” “bird- friendly”, and “fair trade” are linked to the perception of consumers that the coffee was produced by “ethnic” “poor farmers”, “minorities”, “native”, and are thus “authentic” and related to “indigenous culture ” (West 2012: 52, 62).

1.5.4 The Criticism to the Traditional Knowledge

Agrawal 1995 criticized the process of separating indigenous knowledge from western knowledge as a problem because the term indigenous knowledge is often associated with the idea that leads to harmony in the development and sustainable development. Indigenous knowledge seems to lead to development in harmony with nature and sustainable resource use. For example, the World Bank and UNESCO have supported the indigenous knowledge-centered promotion of development. After the collapse of the grand theory of development (Scott 1995, 415), the concept of indigenous development was promoted by NGOs around the world. However, Scott defines indigenous knowledge as 'neo-indigenista', which means that some "local knowledge" was chosen and established as indigenous knowledge. In other words, indigenous knowledge is the construction of not naturally formed knowledge.

1.5.5 Summary of Literature Review

The research on the building process of environmental consciousness of the local resources users has influenced by the Foucauldian concept. Foucault has developed the concept of governmentality from the previous works of literature to analyze the governance power of the government and rulers. There are two main forms of governmentality including *disciplinary governmentality* and *neoliberal governmentality*. Neoliberal governmentality becomes the new technology of government to create self-regulation

practices of individuals by external incentive. Two main works of Agrawal and Li applied the concept of governmentality of Foucault to analyze the natural resources conservation practices. Agrawal modified the concept of “*ecogovernmentality*” to explain the conservation practices of rural people in India who organized the forest council to monitor the use of natural resources of local people. Moreover, Agrawal analyzed how the local people internalized the conservation agenda to control their behavior, or how they become ‘*environmental subjects*’. Li also analyzed the ecogovernmentality of rural Indonesian people. However, Li expanded her analysis to the role of ‘trustees’ including organizations, institutions, NGOs that engaged in conservation practices.

The development of the concept of environmentality has now evolved into multiple environmentalities. Fletcher (2010, 2020), Youdelis (2013), and Montes (2019) describe multiple forms of environmentality by pointing out that environmentality, in each context, may happen differently. They may coexist or conflict with each other in each actual context. This research was theoretically motivated by the concept of environmentality, which has developed into "multiple environmentalities". This research aims to apply the concept of multiple environmentalities to describe the complexity of direct power and indirect power under the conservation promotion processes. Moreover, this research aims to fill the knowledge gap by discussing the process of multiple environmentalities and the nationalization of ethnic farmers in coffee production. In addition, to study how environmentality or the internalization of conservation work alongside citizenship formation and nationalization?

Under the context of the modern market, the coffee production at Pangkhon is linked to conservation and the global coffee market. In the case of Pangkhon, the government of Thailand also plays an important role in natural resources reservation by promoting coffee production. The Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area

Development Center was established in 2002. This project was aimed at developing ethnic highland agricultural areas by supporting the cultivation of highland crops to transform the commercial crop and solve the problem of forest encroachment. The year 1990 - 2000 was a period of expansion of commercial crops. Moreover, since the year 2000, there has been a period of expansion in the cultivation of corn for animal feed production. Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area Development Center was established to solve those various problems. Finally, the Akhas became coffee farmers who protect the forest area. At the same time, they became Thai citizens bearing loyalty to the Thai monarchy. This study notes how the Akha people also negotiated their Akha identity in the coffee business and tourism development. They became environmental subjects who are passively governed by the Thai government under the environmental discourse and the royal hegemony of conservation.

West (2016) also studied the significance of coffee production to the development of the rural area. Coffee as a global commodity with a modern production pattern created social embeddedness in the local community. The local culture of coffee producers attached to the coffee products under the demand of “specialty coffee” among global consumers.

There is also a study that examines the changes in the Akha culture, or Akhazang, which is the primary way of life of the Akha people. Akhazang includes religion, rituals, traditions, beliefs in ancestors, how the Akha people interact with nature (Geusau 1983), and studies that address the process of Akhazang transformation due to the limitations of adherence to traditional values of Akha culture (Kammerer 1996). Later, he studied the process of reviving the Akhazang of the international Akha community to build links between the Akha people in each country through the revival of the Akha tradition calendar, the Akha language, and the network of clanship of Akha (Morton 2013, Agostini

2018). Moreover, there is a study on adapting Akha culture and networking to become the foundation of the street vendors in Bangkok (Trupp 2014).

The group of studies reviewed above has a limitation to study only an aspect of revitalization of the original Akhazang as a foundation for creating the universal Akha network. However, this study will study cultural modification and cultural revitalization to have a new cultural model as a foundation for the development of coffee business and tourism in Pangkhon. And it would argue that, according to the Pangkhon case study, it cannot happen automatically, but somewhat under the creation of citizenship and nationalization of ethnic people to the Thai state.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

This research aims to fill the gap in the debate on environmentality by presenting the discussion of disciplinary environmentality, neoliberal environmentality, and sovereign environmentality (fortress conservation) within the context of royal hegemony on conservation and the nationalization process of becoming Thai. The process of becoming Thai is in sync with the formation of environmental subjects through conservation as it highlights the construction of environmental citizenship imbued with conservation consciousness.

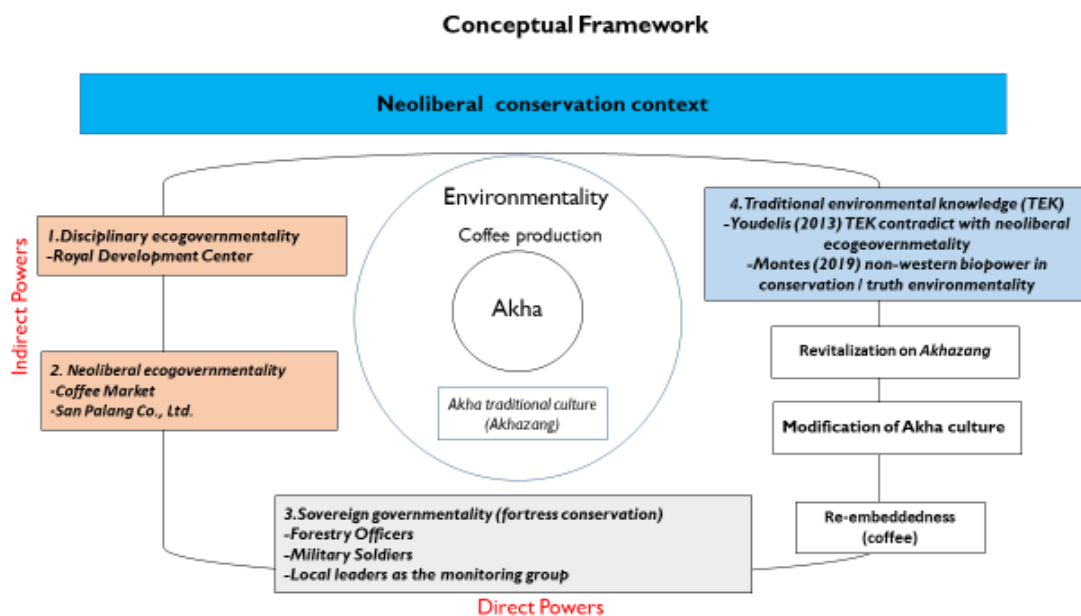
Although there were studies on environmentality or creating an ideology of environmental conservation, most of the studies looked at ethnic minority farmers as users of traditional resources.

The interesting point that will be discussed in this study is when the new conservation process with a new commercial plant that does not have a cultural link with

the Akha people parallel with the creation of citizenship of ethnic farmers. How will it affect the conservation ideology and culture of the Akha people? Moreover, regarding the environmental subjectivity formation and environmentality internalization, issues of agentive practices of the local villagers have not been conspicuous. This study aims, and here lies the significance of this study, to focus on the process of environmental consciousness internalization, nationalization and becoming a citizen.

This study will discuss the practice of environmental subjects as individuals who have agency in cultural activities, and modification and ethnic identity revitalization under the conservation project of coffee production.

Figure 2
The Conceptual Framework



This study focuses on the power relationship and political dynamism between the international and domestic coffee markets, the government, and coffee growers in a specific setting of the mountain community of Northern Thailand. The analytical concept effective for an analysis of such dynamism is ecogovernmentality, which explains the control of thought in conservation (Agrawal 2005). Ecogovernmentality is a modification

from the concept of governmentality of Foucault to explain the dominant consciousness of local people in resource conservation projects. This study will add the analysis on the roles of central and local government agencies at the provincial, district, and sub-district levels, and military soldier units that patrol the area to control the use of forest areas by local people, and how ecogovernmentality works through the promotion of coffee cultivation, and consequently the modification of Akha culture upon the expansion of the coffee market.

In order to study the politics of environmental conservation in social science, especially in anthropology, there are some concepts that need to be examined such as environmentalism, globalization of environmental discourse, and environmentality.

Environmentalism

Environmentalism is the environmental concern at the global level after the development of global economic development and industrialization. Environmental awareness has become a major concern on a global scale since 1980 (Hirsch 1996, Taylor and Buttel 2016). Environmental problems such as the problem of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases, tropical deforestation, or biodiversity losses have become global issues. Almost every state and development agency in the world are trying to solve those environmental problems. While environmentalism leads to environmental policies in a global scale, those environmental concerns are usually based on scientific knowledge of the environment or science-centered environmentalism. In this sense, by international politics, environmentalism also created a global environmental discourse. International organizations such as the United Nations (UN), World Bank, IMF have become global-change-led international environmentalism (Taylor and Buttel 2016). Environmentalism passed from developed and industrialized countries to developing countries through the

"debt regime." Goldman (2005) studied the transformation in the role of the World Bank from being a global economic development support agency to an organization that promotes environmentalism for environmental preservation to borrowing countries.

Although environmental policies are something that should be implemented and enacted to solve the increasingly serious environmental problems in the present day, international environmentalism has been defined as "environmental colonialism" (Taylor and Buttel 2016:211) because of international politics with regard to conservation. There is a classification of countries that are successful in conserving natural resources and, on the other hand, countries that fail to manage natural resources or polluting countries, which is often related to their level of economic and social development. Therefore, environmentalism is related to international politics of intervention or sanctions on the issue of conservation of natural resources.

Thailand is one of the developing countries that embraced the concept of environmentalism to determine the direction of its national development. This can be seen from the formulation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan aimed at promoting sustainable development since the National Social and Economic Development Plan in 1997.

Although it has not yet been successful in preserving natural resources, the Thai government has implemented legislative and development programs aimed at preserving natural resources and promoting sustainable development. Many conservation laws and policies have been enforced, such as conservation area announcements, relocation, arrests, and efforts to use the power to promote conservation without causing conflicts with indigenous people or local people who live in the forest areas.

Environmentality

Environmentality is the main concept being applied in this research on natural resource conservation through promoting arabica coffee cultivation in highland areas in northern Thailand. Arun Agrawal (2005) developed the concept of environmentality by combining the environment with the concept of governmentality which was introduced to the academic circle by Michel Foucault. Environmentality is a concept that studies the process of conservation and the technology of power such as in forest reservation in the case of the Kumaonis in India. Conservation policies and environmentalist ideology transmitted by the international development organization and the state of India created environmental subjectivity in the local Kumaonis. The concept of governmentality has contributed to creating the understanding of a controlling power over people's mentality in conservation. The conservation policy in India partakes of governing at a distance over the Kumaonis' mentality. Although the state, in its efforts at forest conservation, does not strictly control the local people, they have become environmental subjects who have environmental subjectivities. Therefore, they created the Panchayats or village forest councils to control the use of natural resources by the local people.

Eco- governmentality or environmentality is the modification of Foucault's concepts of governmentality in the context of natural resource conservation. Eco- governmentality includes the construction of knowledge in conservation, the rationalities in conservation and technologies of government in natural resource conservation. Eco- governmentality has created Thailand, as a government agency that is an environmental state responsible for initiating the concept of natural resource conservation.

As for the local Akha, in order to be granted permission to stay at the national reserve forest, they understand the necessity of complying with the development program

of the government agency, in this case, the coffee production system. The local Ahka people have become eco-rational subjects or individuals who are concerned about natural resource reservation and “self-disciplining” and “self-monitoring” in the context of resource conservation. Under this process, there are government agencies in the area that act as intermediaries in conveying conservation ideologies, such as the royal development center, Department of Forestry, Ministry of Land, and military agency. At the same time, community leaders have the important role of controlling and transferring the ideology of conservation to the villagers. However, they are not only passive or subordinated agents. They have their own agency, and they negotiate with the system in their daily lives. Specifically, the negotiation is conducted by using their Akha culture. Hence, even though the scientific forest area reservation tends to marginalize, or even negate, the customary right of indigenous people, in their practice of everyday life, they are able to use their modified traditional culture for adopting in the coffee market.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is an attempt to understand the process of natural resource reservation policy in a highland area by promoting coffee production as a medium in natural resource reservation. Coffee is a high value commercial crop that can create economic incentives for ethnic farmers. In this sense, the conservation efforts of Thai government agencies are not limited to using only severe measures, or hard power to control and manage forest areas, such as to arrest, or to relocate ethnic farmers from the highland areas. There is the process of self-regulation and self-governing through the conservation ideology of the people in the area by engaging in coffee production.

In the conservation of forest areas through the promotion of coffee planting, conservation control powers work in coexistence with both direct and indirect power, which as earlier explained are included in various powers that exist in the conservation processes. In particular, the study by Fletcher and his colleagues on “multiple environmentality” described the various forms of environmentality. However, this study would like to add a new perspective on conservation control in the form of the royal hegemony (Chitbundit 2007, Tejapira 2016) on conservation and the nationalization process of citizenship by being an environmental subject. As Scott’s (2009) study shows, the Akha used to be stateless in the zomia ethnic group seeking escape from state power. Nowadays, the Akha, especially in Thailand, is mainly affiliated with the Thai state. With the force of Thai national citizenship, conservation processes work in parallel with the creation of conservation ideology.

Therefore, this study will discuss the issue of Akha farmers who have Thai citizenship and become coffee growers with environmental conservation in mind, an agricultural model that depends more on the state.

In addition, Sturgeon (2005), who studied border landscape and the politics of land use of the Akha people in China and Thailand, discussed how previously, Akha people earned many benefits from their cross-border livelihood, especially cross-border business and farming. However, the social context of the Akha people in Thailand has changed. In particular, most Akha people in Thailand have obtained citizenship and have participated in state-led development and conservation projects. Sturgeon cites, for example, how they created "reforestation for the King" conservation projects. However, in the process, Sturgeon failed to consider the concept of environmentality in its various forms.

Therefore, this study will elaborate on the significance of the Thai royal hegemony and concomitant nationalization process, under which the Akha has been increasingly incorporated into the nation as citizens, and their implications on conservation control by making the Akha environmental subjects.

The local villagers participated in the conservation process and at the same time the nationalization process to become Thai citizens. This could transpire because the conservation ideology was being promoted when citizenship and “Thainess” were passed on to local villagers at Pangkhon. Therefore, any resistance to the formation of conservation consciousness among the villagers would have not progressed in the actual context.

At the same time, the local coffee farmers have not abandoned their “Akhaness”. The local villagers have tried to modify and revitalize some dimensions of their “culture” to be consistent with their coffee business.

1.8 Research Methodology

This research began in October 2018 and was conducted for seven months until September 2021 in Pangkhon Village, Chiang Rai province. I interviewed informants using the Thai language and Akha language with a local interpreter. Following the ethnographic methodology, the research used both quantitative and qualitative data.

1) Household survey. The study covers a survey of 100 households using household questionnaires. The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires include basic information such as career information, income, and landholding size, and the amount of

coffee plantation and coffee production in order to use it as a statistical basis for understanding an overview of households in the community.

2) Participant observation. Participant observation was done as part of the data collection in order to directly obtain information from peoples' daily activities. I participated in coffee cultivation and processing, rituals, ceremony and cultural activities, coffee testing and standardization, coffee trading, community's tourism activities, and others.

3) Case studies. The case studies include large coffee growers and small coffee growers, middlemen who buy coffee in the community, the chairman of the coffee group in the community, and the owners of the coffee brands in the community.

4) In-depth interview. Semi-structured and open-ended interviews were employed in order to gain in-depth information from selected informants such as the village leader group, elderly people in the community, government officers who have mission in the community, coffee producers, and coffee traders and middlemen.

1.9 Organization of Chapter

The dissertation is composed of seven chapters.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 will discuss the process of territorialization of forest areas and the development of scientific forestry in Thailand; the historical background of commercialized agriculture; and the emergence of arabica coffee production in highland areas of Thailand. The territorialization process pertains to categorizing the state's land areas, for example, by classifying the unoccupied areas into forest areas. When the state divided the different types of land area, different laws to control each land were legislated.

Chapter 3 aims to discuss the change in Akha people's livelihood after the promotion of coffee production in the area. The chapter explores how coffee production brought changes in occupation, income, livelihood patterns, and consumption patterns of the households in this study's research site.

Chapter 4 aims to discuss the coexistence of direct power and indirect power in the natural conservation program in the case of coffee production. This chapter tries to show the interrelation of indirect power in conservation, including disciplinary environmentality from the royal development center and neoliberal environmentality from the big coffee enterprise company, which also creates the indirect control power in conservation consciousness construction among local villagers encouraged by economic incentives. However, the direct control power on conservation also plays a vital role in conservation in the area. Fortress conservation can be seen through the mission of military soldiers and forestry officers in the area. Moreover, the royal hegemony on conservation through the royal family of Thailand also plays a significant role in the process of nationalization for becoming a Thai citizen who pledges allegiance to the nation and the royal family of Thailand. It will be shown how all these factors make negotiation and 'unmaking of environmental subjects' of the local villages difficult to achieve.

Chapter 5 aims to analyze the network of coffee businesses in the community, especially the four main community enterprise groups of coffee. Moreover, coffee farmers in the community turn themselves into intermediaries in the purchase of coffee. The network of relationships in the production and distribution of coffee is essential to establish the standards for the Akha-brand coffee and disseminate conservation ideologies in the coffee business.

Chapter 6 focuses on the modification of the traditional Akha culture and creation of new cultural activities, new representation, and identity of Akha people in Pangkhon. There will be an in-depth discussion of the meaning of Akha culture in their coffee products, their coffee shops, homestay business, and Akha cultural shows for tourists in order to analyze the modification of their culture under a conservation policy.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion of the dissertation and provides a summary of the whole dissertation.

Chapter 2

Historical Background of Coffee Production in Highland Areas

This chapter aims to discuss the process of territorialization of forest areas and the development of scientific forestry in Thailand, the historical background of commercialized agriculture, and the emergence of arabica coffee production in highland areas of Thailand. The territorialization process pertains to categorizing the state's land areas, for example, by classifying the unoccupied areas into forest areas. When the state divided the different types of land area, different laws to control each land were legislated.

The primary objective of this chapter is to understand the process of land systems and land classification that affects land control and the usage of land. There are three important concepts related to land classification including land territorialization, land formalization, and scientific forest (Forsyth and Walker 2008, Hall, Hirsch, and Li 2013). Land territorialization is the process whereby government classifies land into various types, owing to different purposes of land use, and enforces different laws to control use in those areas; for example, the classification of forest areas and residential areas. The conservation forest area will be highly protected by intensive conservation laws whereas agricultural and residential lands are controlled by laws that are not as strict. The government of every state will proceed with land territorialization to control access and land use patterns within its territory.

Land formalization is one process of land territorialization. It is classification of land done by formalizing land ownership through land title deeds which certify that a person is in possession of private property. For example, in the case of Thailand, the titling of deeds for land ownership was developed in the reign of King Chulalongkorn – Rama V

(1853 - 1910) to grant property rights to individual persons. Land that used to be property of the state was divided and granted to individuals. The property right is guaranteed by an official document, the land title deed, and it can be used as capital or sold by the owner. On the other hand, areas that cannot be covered with deeds such as forest areas have become conservation areas, which individuals cannot possess.

Then there is the scientific forest subject to a forest management system using scientific knowledge to manage and classify forest areas into various types. Thus, upstream forest areas should be strictly conserved as opposed to forest areas that can be utilized for local use. The process of land territorialization, land formalization, and scientific forest relates to the cultivation of coffee in highland areas in terms of classifying coffee plantations for conservation.

2.1 The Process of Land Territorialization, Formalization and Scientific Forest

2.1.1 Land Territorialization

The process of territorialization is a process of land classification of the government. Vandergeest (1996) explains territorialization as the process of 'mapping nature' where the central government established its monopoly power in the control of nature. Agricultural lands, for which no permanent claims can be made, have been defined as forest areas.

He proposed that there are three stages of territorialization. First, territorial sovereignty involves defining the unoccupied land into forest areas – in the case of Thailand, the Royal Forestry Department of the central government claims ownership of the forest areas under the 1941 Forest Act. The second stage of territorialization is the process of forest demarcation as a reserve and protected forest. Thailand has had forest

demarcation laws since 1938 by the Forest Protection and Reservation Act of 1938 and the 1964 the National Forest Reserve Act. Finally, territorialization also involves defining the functional territory, as in the case of the US national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, and watershed areas (Vandergeest 1996).

2.1.2 The Process of Land Formalization in Thailand: Land Titling and Formal Process of Land Exclusion

Hall, Hirsch, and Li (2013) explained the dynamics of power over land and the process of creating a territory in Southeast Asia. Many countries in Southeast Asia went through a process of land formalization, as a formal process of exclusion (licensed exclusions) through the land titling program.

The process of land formalization can be divided into three main types. First, land title certification refers to the land surveying process that makes the land description official. The creation of land title deeds gives access to and right to use specific land in definite territories within the state. Land that has been certified by the state can become the private property of the occupier and it can be sold, exchanged, or mortgaged with state protection of ownership. The second process is the land reform process whereby the state allows landless populations to settle and take advantage of existing land that has already been distributed. Land obtained from the land reform process usually are small in size and given to small households. Finally, the third process is the land settlement process. In most cases, it allows people to cultivate and settle on land owned by the state and allow access to agriculture. In some cases, this process also refers to the residency of an occupant who had previously settled (Hall, *et al* 2013).

Table 1

Biological, Political, and Conservation forests shown as percentage of national land in Thailand from 1970s to 2000s

	Biological Forest		Political Forest		Conservation/ Protected Areas	
	1970s	2000s	1970s	2000s	1970s	2000s
Thailand	39 %	31 %	49%	46%	5%	25%

Note. Adapted and modified from Hall, *et al* (2013: 32).

In categorizing national land, the biological forest is defined as total forest land per total area of the country. The political forest area, on the other hand, refers to those under the supervision of the Royal Forest Department. The latter is the protected forest area which means areas protected by specific laws such as reserved forests, protected forests, wildlife sanctuary, or watershed areas. Table 1 shows that the percentage of the forest to the land area in Thailand has decreased in thirty years from the 1970s to the 2000s. The forest areas from around 39 percent of the total land area of Thailand have been reduced to 31 percent of the total land area.

At the same time, political forest areas or forest areas under the supervision of the Royal Forest Department of Thailand has decreased from 49 percent of the total forest area to about 46 percent of the total forest area. That is to say, in the last three decades, Thailand's forest area has decreased by about 8 percent of the total area, and political forest areas have decreased by an average of 3 percent.

The most interesting thing is that the conservation forest area, on the contrary, has increased dramatically in the past three decades. This can be seen from data showing the conservation forest area from 5 percent of total land area of Thailand in 1970 became 25

percent of the country's total area in 2000s. Therefore, the conservation forest area increased by 20 percent of the total area.

This reflects how Thailand's conservation forest areas have increased dramatically under current global environmental conservation policies. Moreover, the increasing number of conservation areas will affect the livelihood of farmers, especially the minority groups who live in forest areas, most of whom have settled there prior to the announcement of the protected forest areas policy.

The land titling process in Thailand was established in 1984 by the Department of Land (DOL). There are many types of land certificates in Thailand. Examples of important rights documents in Thailand established in 1954 include the Occupation certificate (SK1), which is proof of pre- 1954 occupation certified by local officials; Land reservation certificates (NS2), which expire if the land is unused after the certificate was granted; Utilization certificates (NS3) which guarantee the right to use the land; and the last one which grants full possessory right, the land title deed or *chanood* (NS4) (Hall, *et al* 2013).

Hall, Hirsch, and Li (2013) classified the history of land rights certificates of Thailand through the period of Thai history. In the pre-modern era to the mid-19th century, the control power of the Siam government focused on control power over people, not over the land. The political power relation between rulers and people was patron-clientage in the quasi-feudal (*sakdina*) system. The second period is the expansion of the rice economy (1850-1892) after the Bowring Treaty (Treaty of Friendship and Commerce of 1856 between the British Empire and the Kingdom of Siam). The central government of Siam opened up commercial rice growing by the development of canals and an irrigation system. In the third period came modernization reforms (1892-1940) such that agricultural production had developed, and the lands were more intensively used. In 1892, the Siam

government launched the Land Law to certify the security of land tenure. However, in that period, there was no single central registry system for issuing the land certificates. Therefore, there were conflicts in land tenure which gave rise to overlapping claims.

In the fourth period, the early development era (1950s-1960s), the 1954 Land Code established the current basis of private land ownerships. The land right certificates such as SK1, NS2, NS3, NS4 started to be issued. Territorial cash crops were introduced to farmers in Thailand during this period. The Thai government also established the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO) in 1975 to redistribute the land, formalize settlement in forest reserve areas, and promote new settlements in formerly forest areas that had lost wilderness and were allowed to be changed into agricultural areas.

The fifth period is the period of economic boom and environmental concern in the 1980s. During this period, the Thai government tried to prevent the expansion of unlawful land settlement into forest reserved areas. The Agricultural Land Reform Office launched a program that extended state recognition of forest reserve areas which were previously untitled. The Royal Forest Department also issued conditional land occupation certificates, STK (utilization certificate), for farmers who have agricultural activities in former forest reservation areas. These efforts were done by the Thai government to manage and formalize land occupation in Thailand. The World Bank/ AusAid land titling program started to support the Thai government in managing land titling in 1984. The price of land in Thailand increased during the 1980s; starting specifically in urban areas and then rapidly spreading throughout the country. Conflict in land ownership and land use in forest areas had become apparent in this period; consequently, it became increasingly significant to enforce a land titling policy and expand commercial crops such as rice, sugarcane, and cassava in Thailand.

The sixth period in the 1990s, the period of development and conservation (1990s-) in terms of land management, is when the Thai government tried to manage the issuance of personal land title deeds to solve poverty. However, there was still conflict in utilizing rights in forest areas. While there were efforts to conserve forest areas in this period, environmentalists were, at the same time, pushing for the Community Forest Act to empower communities in the management of forest areas and to allow them to live with the forest. Then, the 1997 Asian financial crisis occurred. The formalization of land measures prevented the expansion of agricultural land into forest areas but, at the same time, disrupted the rights of those who have settled or cultivated land in the forest before the announcement of the reserved forest areas. (Hall, *et al* 2013).

The study of Hall, Hirsch, and Li (2013) reflects the process of the enforcement of the land title deed, which on one hand, granted formal land rights to citizens but, on the other hand, prevented access to the land occupied by farmers, especially ethnic farmers, who suddenly found themselves deprived of land rights in forest areas.

All agricultural and residential areas of Pangkhon and surrounding villages are located on protected forest areas. Although there is no land rights certificate for these areas, people in the community have been allowed to live and do their agriculture there. In this case, land tenure involves the possession of rights to the land, except for the right to possess legal documents on ownership of the land on which such rights were granted. Nevertheless, land trading between people within the community is permitted. However, selling land to people outside the community is prohibited.

In Chiang Rai, the forest conservation area has been delineated under the Forestry Act of Thailand BE 1941 (1941) and Amendment BE 2532 (1989), which is the law that embodies the comprehensive official power to govern forest areas, including controlling

forest use. Sections 27 to 33 (Thailand national Forest Policy 2019, Thailand's National Reserved Forest Act 1964) of the Act prohibits the use of restricted forest areas. Therefore, Pangkhon and nearby communities, which were subject to the law, have been within the protected forest areas as announced since 1941. In addition to this, on September 25, 1973, there was an amendment to define the area as "Conservation Forest Areas" by Ministerial Regulation No. 581 (1973) Volume 90 Part 119 which made 203,125 *rai* (or 32,500 hectares) subject to control in the forest area on the left side of Mae Lao River and the right side of Mae Kok River. The Thai government launched the National Forest Policy, its latest forest policy on a national level, which serves as the policy framework for forest management in Thailand. Since 1985, the Thai state has aimed to conserve 40% of the total land of Thailand as national forest area. The 12th National Economic and Development Plan (2017 – 2021) has also set the proportion of the forest area to be equivalent to 40 percent of the country's total area. This is then divided into 25 percent reservation forest area for conservation and 15 percent economic forest area (Thailand National Forest Policy 2019:15).

As of 2019, the forest area of Thailand is 102,488,302.19 *rai* (16,398,128.35 hectares), which is 31.68 percent of the entire area of the country. As mentioned, the Thai government aims to increase this forest area to 40 percent until the size of the forest area is at 128,272,969.00 *rai* (20,523,675.04 hectares) (Thailand National Forest Policy 2019: 10). Mr. A², the first head of Pangkhon Royal Development Center, in an interview in May 2016, narrated:

In 2002, when the royal development center was just being set up, I and some forestry officers would go around communities and the royal development center.

² A pseudonym

We had to be accompanied by soldiers with firearms for safety reasons in case any conflict would arise as we tried to reach an understanding with the villagers about forest conservation. There were times, when we were on our way back to the center, that we would hear the sound of gunshots. The soldiers would then have to shoot warning shots in response. In the beginning, there was some conflict. (Mr. A, interviewed in May 2016)

2.1.3 Scientific Forestry in Thailand

Scientific forestry in Thailand had been developed during the period of King Chulalongkorn – Rama V (1853 - 1910). Usually defined as the modernization period of Thailand, it was also the era of colonization in Southeast Asia countries when some countries in mainland Southeast Asia such as Burma, Laos, and Malaysia became the colonies of the United Kingdom and France.

Throughout that period, Thailand, then called Siam kingdom, tried to respond to the demands of the superpowers, such as in signing the Bowring Treaty of 1855 with the United Kingdom to reduce the rate of import tax duties and the granting of extraterritorial rights. Moreover, at the time it lost in its border territory conflict with France on its eastern side, the Siamese government agreed to pay war indemnity and to divide the disputed land following the French map of Cambodia.

The northern and western regions of Thailand, sharing border territory with Burma, are forest areas full of high economic value woods, such as teak wood. Siam's central government tried to integrate the Lanna Kingdom, formerly an independent kingdom in the northern part of Thailand, into becoming part of the Siamese state. It successfully did so in 1939, and from then the power to control forestry management in the northern region

of Thailand was transferred from the former royal family of the Lanna Kingdom (Chao) to the central government of the Siam Kingdom.

During that period, King Chulalongkorn modernized the administrative system of Siam based on the western government administration system. He established the Ministries and Departments as a centralized service system of the modern nation-state.

The Ministry of Royal Forestry was established in 1896 to supervise forest areas throughout the Siam Kingdom. The forest was an important source of income for Siam. The forest concession for British timber merchants entering the forestry station in Myanmar generated huge revenue for the Siamese government. The income generated from the logging concession auction, which used to be the income of royal members of the Lanna Kingdom, became a revenue source of the Siamese government (Usher 2009, The Royal Forest Department 2013).

The establishment of the Ministry of Royal Forestry has made forestry management in Thailand more systematic and scientific (Forsyth and Walker 2008). The School of Forestry Education was established in 1936 to formally teach forest management and knowledge of western forestry for the first time in the country. Kasetsart University (The University of Agriculture) was established in 1943.

The scientific knowledge and techniques of forestry management have therefore developed in Thailand since the modernization era and before the Second World War. Forest areas and agricultural areas were divided and controlled by laws. Forests are classified according to the purpose of use; namely, utility forests and protected forest areas.

Officials of the Pangkhon Royal Development Center also applied scientific forest management in their operations to promote the cultivation of coffee and control the use of forest areas. Mr.A, the first head of Royal Development Center, explained further:

When we set up the Royal Development Center, eucalyptus trees were planted to mark the borderline of the reserved forest zone. Because eucalyptus is a plant which is not native to the area, we used it as a means to control the expansion of agricultural areas of the villagers from 2002. (Mr.A , interviewed in March 2016)

The staff of the Pangkhon Royal Initiative Center for Highland Area Development are officers of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) who manage the forest using scientific forestry principles.

2.2 Politics of Ethnic Conflict of Land Use in Forest Areas in Thailand

As a general perception among Thai people, the upland agricultural activities in Thailand are the usual cause of environmental degradation resulting in drought, flood, soil erosion, and agrochemical contamination in rivers and the water supply.

Most of the land in Thailand are plain lands and river basins, with the most important river basin being the Chao Phraya River Basin. The Chao Phraya River has four main tributary rivers consisting of the Ping River, Wang River, Yom River, and Nan River. The watersheds of all these rivers are in northern Thailand.

The problem of ethnic conflict arises from the lowland people's negative view of the highland ethnic groups who, owing to their agricultural activities in the north, are perceived as forest destroyers and the cause of water shortages in the lowlands (Forsyth and Walker 2008). Most of the ethnic groups are highlanders who live in the mountainous areas in northern Thailand. On the other hand, the “Khon Muang” are the northern Thai lowland farmers. Therefore, disagreements as regards resources and conservation between ethnic groups had thrust the environment to become an issue of ideological conflict

between ethnic groups in northern Thailand (Forsyth and Walker 2008). Moreover, there are also conflicts on resource use between highland ethnic groups and lowland Thai people. Englehart (2018) argues that the conflict in resource use can lead to ethnic conflict. He explained the tension of how cash crop production (cabbage) of highlanders, specifically the Hmong people, caused the problem of contamination of water that flowed downstream to lowland farmers which then led to ethnic conflict. The Hmong, who are considered ‘non-buddhists’, were stereotypically perceived as ‘non-Thai intruders’ (Englehart 2018: 100).

Actually, Chiang Rai is not located at the watershed of the Chao Phraya River, the most important river basin in Thailand. The major rivers in Chiang Rai are the Kok River and Ing River, which are tributaries that flow into the Mekong River, an international river that flows through many countries such as China, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, and Cambodia.

Hill tribes living in Chiang Rai today are mostly ethnic groups who have traveled and resettled, for their residence and agricultural activities, on lands along borders between countries in Southeast Asia; keeping in mind that the present national border was determined only during the colonial period in Southeast Asia.

In the Cold War era in Southeast Asia and the Vietnam War in the 1970s, the highlanders and ethnic groups were classified in the *pink zone*³ as a threat to the security of the Thai state, which was the last domino to fall in the democratic side before the change to becoming a communist country. During that period, the Thai government enacted a relocation policy.

³ During the Cold War in Thailand, there were categorized areas, especially forest areas and border areas. During the fighting between the Thai military and the Communist Party of Thailand, the *red zone* was the battlefield between the Thai military and Communist Party of Thailand. The *pink zone* was a border area without fighting but characterized with the spread of communist ideology.

The Thai Army's 1967 decision to evacuate large numbers of hill tribesmen from the mountain to the lowlands was a costly mistake for the Thai government, in terms of military strategy, men, and money... The military's stated objective was to separate the "good" tribesmen from the "bad" tribesmen, and then to summarily destroy the remaining bad tribesmen with the Army's superior technology and firepower (Forsyth and Walker 2008: 46).

Presently, in an innovative maneuver, the Thai government has been employing a different strategy from evicting ethnic groups from areas that it wants to control and protect. Planting coffee is now being used by Thai agencies to control ethnic groups in its pursuit of conservation of forest areas. Promoting modern highland agriculture is a government effort that does not require eviction.

Growing coffee involves a highland plantation. Hence, it is an activity that need not expel farmers from the area but rather encourages their cultivation of plants that will preserve the highlands. Specifically, coffee growing is one attempt to grow crops in the forest areas.

2.3 National Economic and Social Development Plans of Thailand

Thailand started its development projects through the National Development Plan since the year 1964. The first plan was launched with the support of the World Bank and the United States in their fight against the spread of communism in mainland Southeast Asia. After the Second World War, some countries in the mainland Southeast Asia embraced communist ideals such as Vietnam and Cambodia.

In 1964, during the dictatorial regime of former Prime Minister Marshall Sarit Thanarat, a five-year development plan for Thailand was launched on a national scale. In

a period of 15 years, the series of development plans focused on hastening expansion of infrastructure such as highway roads, dam, electricity, and public transportation to accommodate direct investments from other countries and to industrialize Thailand (Sathirathai 1992).

The 4th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977 – 1981) was the first development plan focused on rural development. The 5th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982 – 1986) gave attention to regional town development by creating more jobs and economic prosperity in the regions, which aimed to solve the problem of rural-urban migration, as well as developing infrastructure throughout Thailand. Major cities in every region of Thailand were selected and developed to be regional cities such as Songkla province in the south, Khon Khaen province in the northeast, and Chiang Mai in the north. The 7th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1992 – 1996) was the first time that sustainable development was made the focal point with an eye on sustainability in the economy, society, and environment.

By 1997, the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997 – 2001) gave priority to “people-centered development.” It aimed to facilitate social and economic development based on the bottom-up approach. This approach was pushed by civil society and NGOs in Thailand and the local people, and local communities became the center of national development. In the same period, development of democracy in Thailand had also begun. The Thai people, for the first time, participated in an election for the national Constitution Drafting Committee for the drafting of a new constitution of Thailand. From 1932, since the revolution for Thailand to become a democratic country, the constitutions of Thailand have been drafted by military juntas and politicians, which worked beneficially and ensured privileges for the members of the cabinet and supported the dictatorship of the military juntas. Therefore, it was only the 1997 Constitution that enjoined the most people

engagement. It included the right of local communities to participate in the development program of the government and the right of local people to natural resource management. In line with the constitution, the 8th national development plan encouraged the core philosophy of developing human resources and local communities.

2.4 The Royal Initiative Development Project

However, the 1997 financial crisis caused a major shift in the development agenda of Thailand. The 9th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002 – 2006), launched in 2002, leaned toward mitigating the devastating effects of the worldwide financial crisis, and the Thai government, through the Office of the National Economics and Social Development Board, raised the philosophy of a “sufficiency economy” of HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama IX) to be the country’s main goal for national development. Sufficiency economy is a socio-economic development paradigm that was initiated by HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand in order to achieve self-sufficiency among the Thai people after the economic crisis in 1997.

The first royal development projects initiated by King Bhumibol were undertaken in 1952. Currently, there are more than 4,741 development projects spread in every region of Thailand (Office of The Royal Development Projects Board 2018). The main objective of royal development projects is to create decent jobs and generate income for people in rural communities. Understandably, most royal development projects are related to agricultural development and are aimed at ensuring self-sufficiency among the people. However, the development project in Pangkhon Village has gone far beyond income sufficiency.

Royal Project Development Centres have played an important role to the development of highland areas in Northern Thailand. In 1952, the first project was founded by HM King Bhumibol and the budget came from the Crown Property Bureau. However, during the regime of former Prime Minister Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat (1959 - 1963), the royal development projects received budget support from the government. Therefore, the royal development projects can be considered as governmental projects owing to the Thai government spending to support the development centres.

The first royal project development centre was founded in 1969. In 1972, the *UN/Thai Program for Drug Abuse Control Project* granted 20 million baht for royal project development centres. There are 38 Royal Project Development Centres in nine provinces in northern Thailand.

Starting from the 1997 financial crisis, Thailand drew up three national development plans carrying “sufficiency economy” as the main objective. Hence, for a period of 15 years (from 2002 to 2016), the development approach for a sufficiency economy became mainstream, and community development as a royal project pattern became the main development technique enforced by the government.

In fact, the Pangkhon Royal Initiative Center for Highland Area Development works with various governmental organizations to further its mission of serving the royal family and supporting the royal development approach. The main governmental organization at Pangkhon center is the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Chiang Rai office. There are many organizations participating in the mission: the Chiang Rai Provincial Land Development Station, Chiang Rai military camp, community development department, and the Ministry of Interior. The budget for the Pangkhon center comes from the Office of the Royal Development Projects Boards (ORDPB), which is

supported by the governmental budget of Thailand. However, each governmental organization engaged in the mission of the Pangkhon center may draft a budget proposal or use their own budget to support their duty of serving the royal development project (Office of the Royal Development Projects Board 2020).

2.5 Overview of Arabica Coffee Production in Northern Thailand

In the world coffee market, Thailand is a newcomer in arabica coffee plantation although the Thais have had a long history of coffee drinking and coffee-growing since the Ayutthaya period (Klaipakorn 2014). However, the coffee that has been cultivated and consumed in most of Thailand since the past has been robusta coffee grown in the central and southern regions of Thailand. In fact, Thailand is the fourth largest producer and exporter of coffee in Southeast Asia, following Vietnam, Indonesia, and Laos.

In the year 2017, Chiang Rai's coffee-growing area was 40,306 rai (6,448.96 hectares) in total, and the production was 4,227 tons of coffee product. The cultivation areas of coffee in Chiang Rai were increased in 2018 and 2019 due to the expansion of the coffee market in Thailand. The demand for Thai coffee is from both the demand of the domestic and international markets. In terms of expanding the cultivation area, the cultivation areas increased from 40,520 rai (6,483.2 hectares) in 2018 to 42,215 rai (6,754.4 hectares) in 2019.

However, in 2019, the amount of coffee production has decreased to 3,402 tons. The decreased productivity of coffee in 2019 by more than 1,000 tons was due to weather conditions. It was the result of cold and frost problems in the winter of 2019. The cold spell that year affected the yield. In particular, frost caused damage to the coffee being produced. Farmers in Pangkhon were also affected by this problem. Temperature in days of December 2019 dropped to near 0 degrees, causing frost that damaged the farmers'

coffee production. In 2019, the coffee production in the northern province of Thailand was greatly reduced despite the continuous increase in production in the previous two years: in 2017, the average coffee yield per 1 rai (0.16 hectares) was 126 kilograms and 129 kilograms in 2018. However, in the year 2019, the average coffee production was reduced to 89 kilograms per rai (0.16 hectares).

Table 2
Three Highest Cultivation Area and Arabica Coffee Yield in Thailand

Province	Cultivation Field (<i>Rai</i> = 1,600 m ²)			Harvesting Area (<i>Rai</i> = 1,600 m ²)			Production (1,000 KG)			Production per Plantation Field (KG/ <i>Rai</i>)		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
1. Chiang Rai	40,306	40,520	42,215	33,551	38,153	38,229	4,227	4,922	3,402	126	129	89
2. Chiang Mai	23,320	22,537	23,125	20,194	20,568	21,141	2,787	2,921	2,283	138	142	108
3. Lampang	5,260	5,356	5,535	4,172	4,750	5,035	534	622	599	128	131	119

Note. Summary data adapted from the Agricultural Information Center, Office of Agricultural Economics of Thailand, 2020.

According to the information from the Agricultural Information Center, Chiang Rai province is the largest arabica coffee production area in Thailand. The size of the coffee production area in Chiang Rai province is bigger than the other two provinces that are important coffee production areas in Thailand in Chiang Mai and Lampang. Although the number of coffee farmers in Chiang Mai is more than in Chiang Rai due to the higher population density, the lesser number of coffee farmers in Chiang Rai actually hold the largest coffee plantation area on average per household. On average, coffee growers in

Chiang Rai own an average of production is 14.72 rai (2.3552 hectares) of land per household in 2017 and 14.61 rai per household (2.3376 hectares) in 2019.

Table 3
Arabica coffee Cultivation Area per Household in Northern Thailand

Province	Cultivation field (<i>Rai</i> = 1,600 m ²)		Number of Coffee Farmers Households		Coffee Cultivation Area per Household (<i>Rai</i> = 1,600 m ²)	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
1. Chiang Rai	40,306	40,520	2,739	2,774	14.72	14.61
2. Chiang Mai	22,320	22,537	3,596	3,687	6.21	6.11
3. Lampang	5,260	5,356	763	744	6.89	6.92

Note. Summary data adapted from the Agricultural Information Center, Office of Agricultural Economics of Thailand, 2020

2.6 History of Pangkhon Village

The area of Pangkhon Village was originally wilderness. The village was founded in 1970 by Mr. Sang Saephan, a Mien ethnic farmer who lived in the village of Huaymaelium, about 10 kilometers away from Pangkhon. In the beginning, he only brought livestock to the area because of the effect of seasonal changes on fertility and breeding. After that, he constructed a permanent shelter and began to clear the land to make way for agricultural activities, and then decided to make a permanent agricultural plot as well as residential areas in 1963. Later in 1970, he along with six Mien families, who are his relatives, decided to move out of the village of Huaymaelium and set up a new village, which is now the area where Pangkhon Village is situated. It should be noted that, at that

time, land settlement in forest areas was still possible; therefore, Pangkhon Village was eventually founded in 1983⁴. Figure 3 shows the current Pangkhon Village.

After Mr. Sang founded Pangkhon Village, the beginning of the village's development history began. In the beginning, the entire village's population were Mien farmers who came to clear the forest for agricultural land and residential areas.

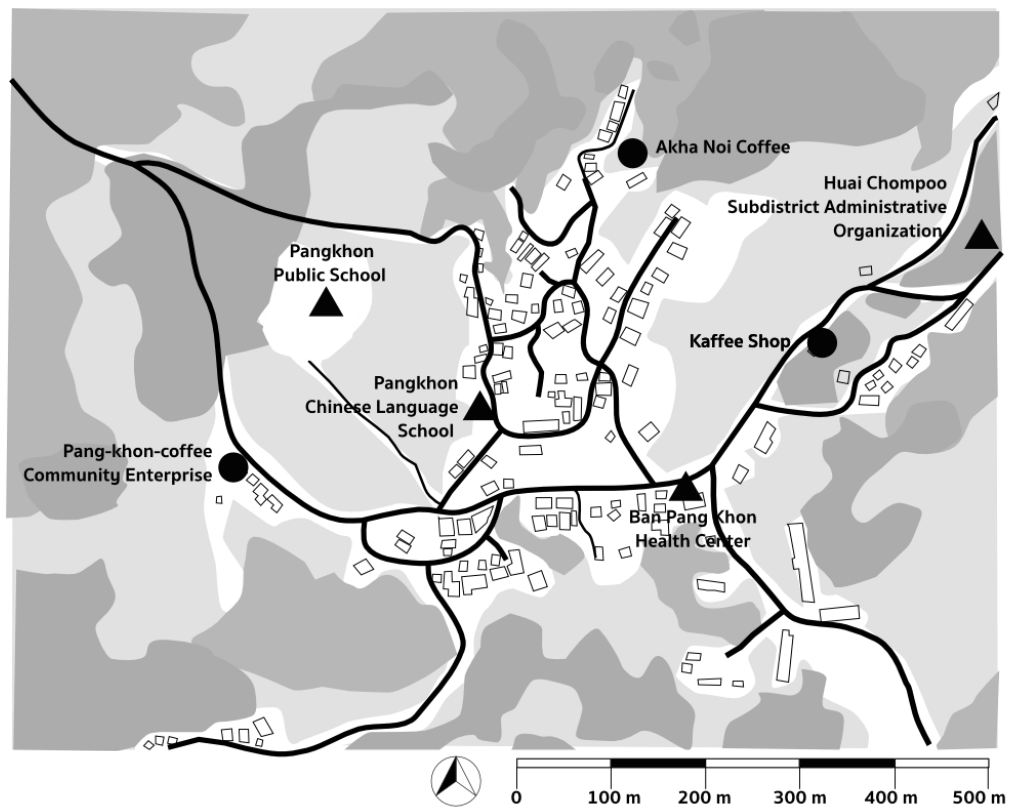
According to an interview done in October 2019 with Mr. Lualu, a Mien native who still lives in Pangkhon and works as a grocery store owner, coffee farmer, and Assam tea farmer, the historical changes in Pangkhon and the movement of the Akha people into Pangkhon can be described as follows:

From the time Mr. Sang set up the community in this area, at the very beginning, there were only 10 to 20 households, only Mien households during 1970 to 1980. The price of the land was very cheap; it was only 300-400 baht per rai (0.16 hectares). No one wanted to buy land in Pangkhon in the past. The Mien people cultivated opium. Most areas could not grow rice because the weather was too cold, and some sides of the mountain receive no sunlight. Therefore, at that period, Mien planted opium, corn, black tea (Assam tea), and fruits such as peaches. Then, the Akha people migrated to Pangkhon as agricultural laborers in the Mien plantations. Up until the early 2000s, the lands began to be sold. The Miens sold their land to the Akha people and moved to the lowlands, specifically in their last ten years in the area [from the 2010s]. (Mr. Lualu, a Mian ethnic farmer and trader, interviewed in October 2019)

⁴ I summarized the historical background of Pangkhon Village from interviews conducted with the team of village leaders after their meeting on October 18th, 2017.

Mr. Laulu's narrative explains the history of the settlements of the people in the Pangkhon community. It also describes the agricultural occupation patterns of the people in the community, including the migration of the Akha people to settle in Pangkhon and the exchange of lands in the area

Figure 3
Map of Pangkhon Village



Note. Modified from Google Maps (Google, 2021)⁵

From the nascent period of Pangkhon Village, the number of Mien people began growing and they became landed with residential and agricultural properties. Mr. Sang Saephan later became the first head of the village and was recognized as the legendary founder of the community. After he passed away, in the late 1980, his body was buried in

⁵ Free use with attribution

the small hill that has become a part of Pangkhon Royal Development Center in the present day. This historical information is inscribed at the observation area at the royal initiative development center.

As regards the Akha people, they initially entered the village as laborers whom the Mien people hired to help them work in agricultural activities in tea production sites, in opium fields, and in their orchards. According to Mr. Laulu, since the beginning of the 1980s, Akha people have settled in Pangkhon Village. Since then, they have accumulated capital and bought land and tea gardens from Mien people in Pangkhon, as well as persuaded relatives from other communities to live in Pangkhon.

Based on data from further interviews, it appears that coffee cultivation had not been promoted in the area in the early times of Pangkhon Village. As mentioned earlier, the main income of the Mien farmers was from selling opium, tea leaves, and fruits such as peach and plum. The opportunity for economic progress from these crop production activities was very limited, not to mention that the government agencies have made efforts to control and suppress opium cultivation in the area. As a result, many Mien farmers sold their land to Akha people and migrated to Chiang Rai city, or areas with lower elevation or had legal rights documents. From 1990 onwards, Pangkhon Village gradually changed its land tenure holdings from the Mien people to the Akha people. Based on field data, a further summary of the historical timeline of the establishment of and developments in Pangkhon Village is outlined in Table 4.

Table 4
Historical Timeline of Pangkhon Village

Year	Historical Timeline of Pangkhon Village
1955	In 1955, Mr. Sang Saephan (Mien) the village headman of <i>Huaymaelium</i> village visited the Pangkhon area.
1963	Mr. Sang Saephan had a tea garden in Pangkhon.
1970	Mr. Sang Saephan and six households of his relatives moved to Pangkhon and set up the community.
1983	Pangkhon Village was officially established.
1984	Akha people moved to Pangkhon as wage laborers.
1985	Arabica coffee was introduced to Pangkhon Village by World Vision Organization, a Christian international organization.
1987	Pangkhon school was established.
1990	Pangkhon Chinese school was established.
1993	Pangkhon began to be developed under the community development plan of Huaychomphu sub-district organization.
2002	Pangkhon Royal Initiative Station for Highland Area Development was established.

Note. Data from the author's field notes, 2019.

2.7 Population and migration of Pangkhon Village

Pangkhon Village consists of 168 households and has a population of 1,114 villagers who are mostly Akha people. Chiang Rai province is the second largest province in terms of population which now stands at 1,287,615. The population of Muang district, Chiang Rai province is 106,876 while the population of Huaichomphu sub-district is 11,915 people.

Table 5

Comparative Population Data in Chiang Rai and other Districts

Administrative Level		Male	Female	Total Population
1.	Chiang Rai Province	628,897	658,718	1,287,615
2.	Muang District	51,206	55,670	106,876
3.	Huai Chomphu sub-district	6,028	5,887	11,915
4.	Pangkhone Village ³	553	561	1,114

Note. Data taken from Huaichomphu Subdistrict Organization, 2019.

Most of the population of Pangkhon, especially those of age fifty years and above, were migrants to Pangkhon Village. Most of the villagers have immigrated from communities outside Huaichomphu Subdistrict. However, as shown in Table 6 below, 66 percent of villagers came from nearby neighborhoods in the Huaichomphu subdistrict, such as Romyen village, Maeliam village, and Huaykeaw village.

³ Pangkhon is the sixth largest village among 11 villages in Hui Chomphu subdistrict.

Table 6
Origin of Residents in Pangkhon

Place of Origin of the Pangkhon Villagers	Number of Villagers	Percentage
Doichang village, Huaichomphu sub-district	1	1.0
Pangnoon village, Huaichomphu sub-district	1	1.0
Wawee village, Huaichomphu sub-district	1	1.0
Huaychomphu village, Huaichomphu sub-district	1	1.0
Huaykeaw village, Huaichomphu sub-district	9	8.7
Maeliam village, Huaichomphu sub-district	26	25.0
Romyen village, Huaichomphu sub-district	31	29.8
Other places	34	32.7
Total	104	100.0

Note. Data from field notes (2016)

The main reason for the migration was due to economic factors, especially the lack of agricultural land. About 52 percent of the respondents explained that their migration to Pangkhon was due to insufficient agricultural land in their former residence. Meanwhile, about 25 percent migrated to Pangkhon because of the insufficient income from their livelihood in the areas where they used to reside. Moreover, about 11 percent of the respondents said they had migrated to Pangkhon because they followed their parents and relatives to live in Pangkhon. However, most of the villagers who are of thirty years or younger were born in Pangkhon Village. A summary of this information is shown in Table 7.

Table 7
Reasons for Migration to Pangkhon

Reasons for migration	Frequency	Percentage
Relocation by government policy	4	3.84
Other reasons	6	5.76
Migrated with parent or relatives	12	11.54
Insufficient income/poverty	27	25.0
Lack of agricultural land	55	52.88
Total	104	100.0

Note. Data from field notes (2016)

2.8 History of the Highland Agricultural Development Center in Pangkhon

The Pangkhon Royal Initiative Centre for Highland Agricultural Development is a centre for agricultural development created to support the occupation of ethnic groups in highland areas in Northern Thailand. The main objective of the development centre is to solve the problem of deforestation, which has been caused by the cultivation of drugs such as opium and other commercial plants.

On March 13, 2002, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit visited Pangkhon Village at a time when deforestation problems in the area have surfaced. Therefore, the Queen initiated the creation of an agricultural development research centre to address the problem of deforestation. Thereafter, the Pangkhon Royal Initiative Centre for Highland Agricultural Development was established in 2002. Figure 4 shows a demonstration coffee plantation in Pangkhon as part of the agricultural development program.

Figure 4

A demo coffee plantation for the Agricultural Development Program (May 2016)



The Conflict in Territorialization in the Early Stage of Conservation Programs

After the establishment of the development center, the process of land territorialization in the Pangkhon area started. The development center and the staff of the forestry office designated the boundary between the agricultural land of the villagers and the reserved forest areas. That attempt led to conflict among the local villagers and the officers in the area. The first head of the Pangkhon Royal Development Center, Mr. A, narrated the tense situation in the early stages of conservation programs in the area.

In the period of setting up the royal development center in 2002, when I and forestry officers went around communities and the Royal Development Center, we brought soldiers carrying firearms with us because conflict would erupt when we try to reach an understanding with the villagers in the area about conservation. Sometimes, when on our way back to the center, we would hear sounds of gunshots. Soldiers had to

shoot warning shots in response to them. At the beginning, there were some conflicts.

(Mr. A, interviewed in May 2016)

2.9 Politics of Highland Areas Management

The Pangkhon Royal Initiative Center for Highland Agricultural Development was established to control use of high-altitude areas without fortress conservation measures. The center's objective is not to relocate local people out of the forest by military or armed personnel. Instead, the development center aimed to transform the livelihood of local people from growing opium and commercial crops, which required cutting forest cover, into the cultivation of coffee.

The politics of highland area management at present addresses the current environmental issue on haze and PM2.5 pollution in the dry season of Thailand after the harvest season of maize for animal food products. Since 2007, many transnational and national agribusiness companies have introduced maize production into Northern Thailand due to the demand for maize in the animal feeds industry.

The Ministry of Agriculture of Thailand signed an MoU to promote the production of maize, instead of a second rice production in the year 2016/17, aimed at reducing the area of 320,000 hectares in 31 provinces during the dry season for higher income to farmers (Kasettumkin News 2017).

Maize production expanded in northern Thailand, as well as in Laos and Myanmar. Maize is a plant that requires less water and therefore can grow well in highland areas during the dry season. However, given that corn stubble is very difficult to dissolve, most farmers have decided to burn them after harvest season. Consequently, maize production has led to wildfires and haze pollution in Northern Thailand, Laos and Myanmar since 2010.

This leads back to the discussion of coffee growing, which has become one of the solutions to reduce the negative impact not only of the expansion of commercial plantations in highland areas but also the prevention of forest destruction, including forest fire catastrophes. In the past five years, wildfires that led to PM2.5 usually occurred during the dry season between March and April. The Thai government has enforced measures to control hotspots. All provinces in northern Thailand were requested to monitor and prevent forest fires and organize firefighter volunteers. There is a sanction imposed on the sheriff and government officials for negligently allowing wildfire in their zone as well as punishment on those who caused the forest fires. Although there is no maize plantation in Pangkhon, it is exposed to the risk of the spread of wildfires which have often occurred in nearby communities every year. Hunting and clearing forest areas by burning grass for wild mushrooms during the rainy season are also causes for wildfires. Moreover, any flame that leaps and gets blown in the wind can be the spark leading to a wildfire disaster.

Figure 5
Forest fire on the way up to Pangkhon Village (March 2019)



Figure 6

The PM2.5 haze that covers Pangkhon Village (March 2019)



On forest fires and the interventions done in Pangkhon by the community, Mr. Sorn, the village head in March 2019 gave the following comment.

We don't know... who would burn the forest? As we are local residents, we volunteered to be firefighters. We have to take the risk of death to enter the forest to fight fire from spreading. In Pangkhon village, there has been no forest fire at all because we have coffee trees and we have made a fire protection line. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in March 2019)

Coffee cultivation, especially coffee growing under large trees, is considered a sustainable solution to forest fires in northern Thailand. This is one of the essential reasons why promoting arabica coffee cultivation has expanded to the highlands in northern Thailand, with an average elevation of 800 meters above sea level.

2.10 Summary

Scientific forestry was introduced to Thai society after the period of modernization of Thailand, at about the same time as the colonization in Southeast Asia. After the Second World War, the Thai government tried to formalize occupation of lands by the process of land certification. In doing so, it could achieve separating the forest land from agricultural land. Since that time, there has been a clear separation of land types which, however, became the source of land disputes of ethnicities living in the forest. The measures taken by the Thai government agencies in controlling forest areas included arrest and eviction from the land, which is considered as measures of *hard power*. Nevertheless, there are also *soft power* measures implemented for the sake of ethnic farmers who could cultivate and grow crops which are not prohibited such as coffee. The Pangkhon Royal Initiative Centre for Highland Agricultural Development was established to resolve conflicts in natural resource preservation by persuading local ethnic people to participate in environmentally friendly agricultural production.

Under the concept of scientific conservation and land territorialization processes at Pangkhon, the community area was defined as a watershed to Mae Korn River. Pangkhon has been classified as a highly protected forest area of Type 1 A forest. In fact, in that area, residents and agricultural activity were prohibited due to the conservation laws of Thailand. However, in 2002, HM Queen Sirikit of Thailand paid a visit to the community; and later, she initiated a royal development center to promote agricultural activities that preserve the natural resources and replace the agriculture requiring intensive land use.

From then, coffee has become an alternative crop for highland area conservation because it can be planted in forest areas. Thereafter, the pattern of agriculture in Pangkhon

has changed from growing opium and commercial crops that require intensive land use into cultivating coffee.

Moreover, the people in the community also changed. There was a migration movement into Pangkhon by the Akha people, who started as wage laborers in Mien farmlands in Pangkhon. The Akha, who accumulated money through time, could then buy land and own their coffee plantations. Eventually, the Akha people formed the majority population of Pangkhon since the 2000s, while the Mien, who used to be the main population and landowners, sold their lands and migrated out of the area.

The cultivation of coffee, a modern commercial crop for conservation, has become the leading agricultural activity of the community. Moreover, coffee has become a solution for the conservation of forest areas and environmental problems such as the haze problems of present time.

Therefore, coffee is a plant that is used for the current reterritorialization of agroforestry in the reserved forest area.

Chapter 3

Economic Changes in Households of Coffee Farmers in Pangkhon

This chapter mainly focuses on the change of household income in Pangkhon Village after the expansion of arabica coffee production in the village from the year 2002. After the establishment of the Pangkhon Royal Initiative Centre for Highland Agricultural Development in the area, the village became the center of coffee production in the Huaichomphu sub-district.

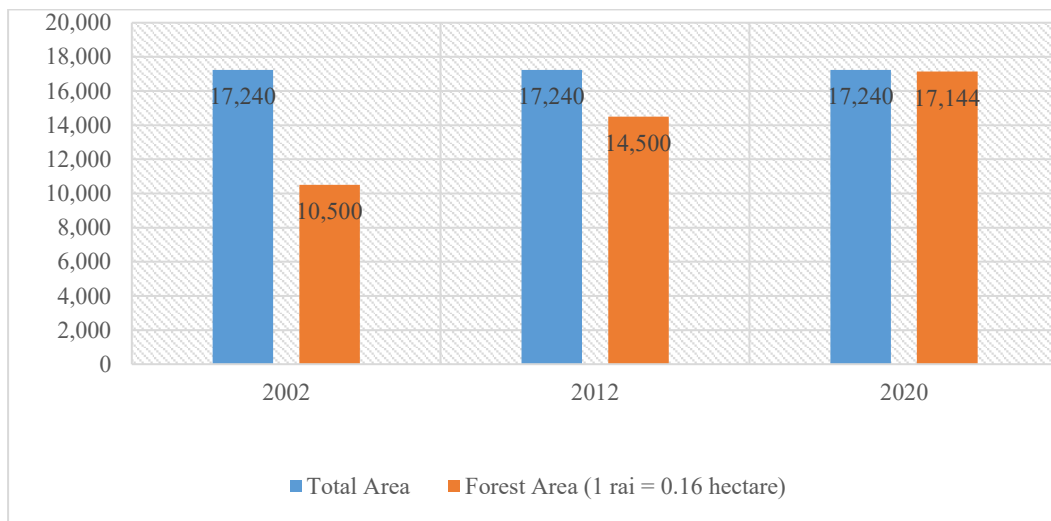
In this chapter, unless noted otherwise, the data presented in all tables and figures were analyzed and summarized based on interviews and questionnaires during the fieldwork done in 2016.

3.1 Economic Changes in the Pangkhon Villagers after the Inception of Coffee Production

The occupation of Pangkhon villagers has changed after the promotion of coffee production in the area. According to the narratives of the local villagers, before the year 2002, the main occupation of the local villagers was cultivating opium, tea, vegetables and fruits which all involved agriculture characterized by an intensive land use pattern.

At present, Pangkhon Agricultural Development Station maintains a total area of 17,240 rai (2,758.4 hectares). Before setting up the development station in the year 2002, the total forest area amounted 10,500 rai (1,680 hectares). In 2012, after 10 years of operation of the royal development center, the forest area increased to 14,500 rai (2,320 hectares). These data are illustrated in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7
The Change of Forest Area in Pangkhon



Note. Data from the Royal Development Center, 2020

As shown in Table 8, the original average income of local villagers in the area of the Pangkhon Royal Development Center in the year 2002 was 5,000 baht (US\$ 160.17) per household per year. In the year 2012, the average income in the village increased to 167,046 baht (US\$ 5351.12) per year. According to information from the Royal Development Projects Board, the most important source of income was from cultivation of arabica coffee in the area. Local villagers could sell their coffee beans for 150 baht per kilogram, thus giving people a stable life (The Royal Development Projects Board 2012).

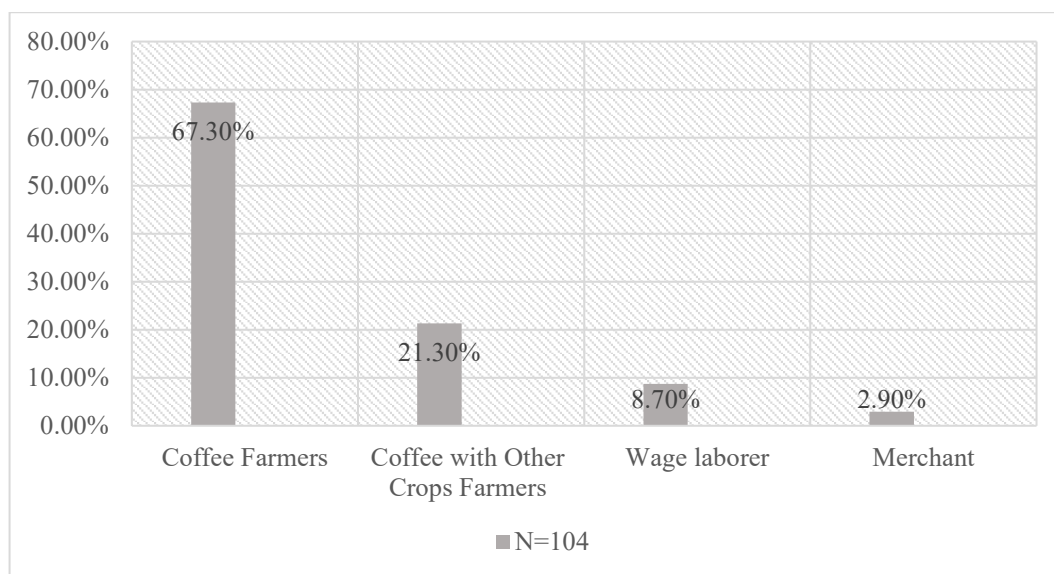
Table 8
Average Income of Households per Year

Year	The Average income of Household per Year
2002	5,000 baht (US\$ 160.17)
2012	167,046 baht (US\$ 5,351.12)
2020	280,000 baht (US\$ 8,969.47)

Note. Office of the Royal Development Projects Board, Thailand (2012, and 2020)

3.2 Changes in Agricultural Occupation in Pangkhon Village

Figure 8
Occupation of Pangkhon Villagers

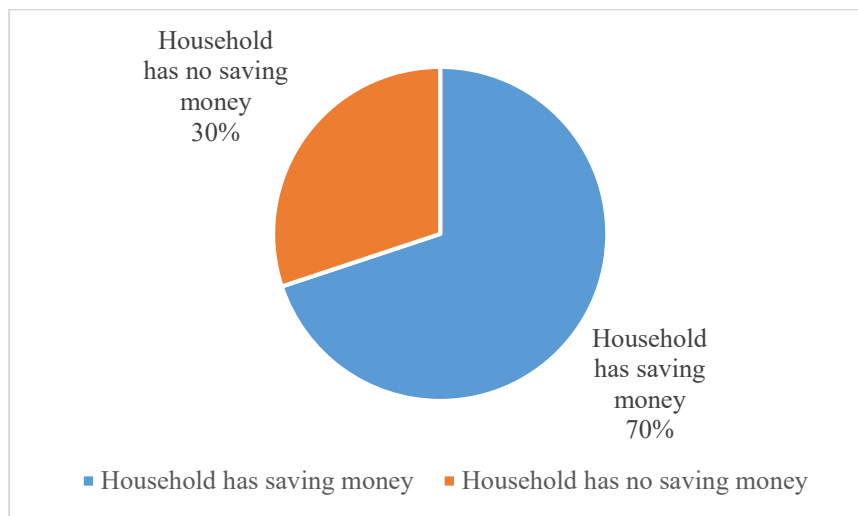


After 2002, the year of establishment of the Pangkhon Royal Initiative Center for Highland Agricultural Development, most of the local farmers in Pangkhon shifted to coffee farming. Figure 8 illustrates the results of the household survey conducted in this study, which shows that 67% of households in Pangkhon have become arabica coffee farmers who produce only coffee as a single cash crop. Around 21% of villagers have

become farmers whose products are coffee and other crops such as macadamia and plum. The rest of the villagers who work outside the agricultural sector as merchants comprising almost 3% are grocery shop owners and food shop owners in Pangkhon. There are five grocery stores in the village that sell foodstuff and miscellaneous products. Only 8.7% of the people in the village work as wage laborers.

Most households (about 70%) in Pangkhon keep funds as savings (see Figure 9). There are two main kinds of financial institutions where villagers accumulate their savings: a commercial bank and a community loan fund. The first financial institution is a commercial bank; specifically, the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC). The bank of agriculture is a state enterprise with the duty to provide loans for agricultural investment of farmers. However, in order to borrow money from the bank, the farmers must have saved money in a bank account. Therefore, in order to receive financing or money as loan, the coffee farmers would have to first deposit their money and open a bank account. The second financial institution is the community loan fund. In this case, to receive money as a loan credit, the farmer would also have to first deposit some money into their account. The community loan fund provides microcredit for the villagers.

Figure 9
Percentage of households with savings



From field data collection, it was found that most of the households in Pangkhon are in debt. As shown in Table 9, while 31.7 percent of households have no debt, nearly 70 percent of households are in debt. Most of the households in debt, about 38.5 percent, owe money between 200,000 – 300,000 baht (US\$ 6,072.01 – 9,108.02). Households with a debt of fewer than 200,000 baht accounted for about 2.9 percent. At the same time, 7.7 percent of households have debt between 300,000 – 400,000 baht (US\$ 9,108.02 – 12,144.03) while 4.8 percent of households have debt between 400,000 – 500,000 baht. An interesting point is that about 14.4 percent of households have debts between 500,000 – 600,000 baht (US\$ 12,144.03 - 18,216.04) which is considerably a high rate of debt. Such large loans were granted despite the fact that households in Pangkhon do not possess land title certificates. Therefore, the land could not have been used as collateral for the loans.

This shows that coffee cultivation brings high credit worthiness scores to farmers in the Pangkhon area. Even on land without land title deeds, the farmers who grow coffee can have access to large credit from lending institutions. Therefore, coffee is an asset to

farmers, giving them access to formal financial institutions without need to borrow from informal financing.

Table 9
Debt per Household in Pangkhon

Household Debt	Number of Villagers	Percentage
No debt	33	31.7
Lower than 200,000 baht	3	2.9
200,001 – 300,000 baht	40	38.5
300,001 – 400,000 baht	8	7.7
400,001 – 500,000 baht	5	4.8
500,001 – 600,000 baht	15	14.4
Total	104	100.0

This credit accommodation is applied even to borrowing money for car leasing, as most farmers need a pickup truck to use in their coffee cultivation. Car dealer companies in Chiang Rai also offer promotions specifically for farmers who own coffee plantations. They even install advertisement billboards alongside the road to Pangkhon Village. In the advertisements, the companies offer particular soft loan conditions to the coffee farmers in Pangkhon and surrounding villages. The coffee farmers are given the leeway to pay installment payment only once a year after they sell their coffee products.

For example, the advertisement of Isuzu Motors Chiang Rai gives coffee farmers the choice for a special payment plan for a car loan without need of either a land title certificate as collateral or a loan guarantor. The first option is for the purchase of a four-wheel drive truck on installment payments without interest for one year. The second option

is for the purchase on installment but only at a one-time payment per year scheduled after the coffee farmers have sold their coffee products.

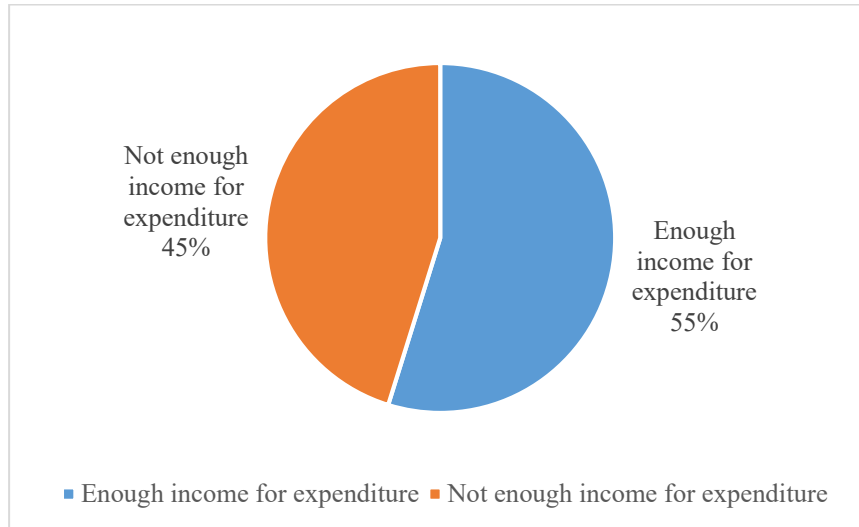
Aside from car rental loans, most loans are meant for coffee cultivation or processing investment, including building a coffee storage and/or a coffee roasting factory. The most important source of loans is the formal financial institution, Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC). This is a state-owned enterprise of Thailand established to support Thailand's agriculture and farmers. As shown in Table 10, about 49 percent of the households in Pangkhon borrow money from BAAC. Again, growing coffee gives farmers in Pangkhon access to official loan credits, although the farmers do not have land title deeds as collateral for the loan. Around 34.6 percent of the households still borrow money from their relatives and loan sharks to use as investment for coffee cultivation. However, most of the loans were granted by formal financial institutions.

Table 10
Sources of Loans in Pangkhon

Source of Loan	Number of Villagers	Percentage
Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives	51	49.0
Informal loan	36	34.6
Commercial Banks	6	5.8
No debt	6	5.8
Cooperatives and Community Loan Fund	5	4.8
Total	104	100.0

In Figure 10, it can be seen that more than half of the total households in Pangkhon have enough income to match their expenditures.

Figure 10
Income and Expenditure of Villagers in Pangkhon



Mr. A, the first head of the Pangkhon Highland Development Center, had once mentioned that:

Nowadays the problem in the lifestyle and economy among the Pangkhon people is no longer that of not having money or not having sufficient income for their household consumption. Nowadays, the problem has evolved into unchecked spending. They can buy cars and various household appliances or build a new house with their money from selling coffee. (Mr.A, interviewed in March 2016)

The use of the land in Pangkhon is not without limitations. Cultivation by farmers in areas in Pangkhon are permitted under a grant of land use rights to a specific household. It should be stressed that those agricultural areas do not have titling deeds attached to the right to use them. According to the conditions issued by the Agricultural Development Station and the Royal Forest Department, farmer households in Pangkhon are allowed the

following rights: to use the agricultural land, to hand over the land as an inheritance to their heirs, and to sell the land strictly to members of the community only. Table 11 gives a notion of the extent farmers use the land for farming with the support of members of their own households as the workforce.

Table 11
Using Household Workforce in Coffee Production

Type of Workforce	Number of Villagers	Percentage
Using household workforce	94	90.4
Not using household workforce	10	9.6
Total	104	100.0

In the past, farmers used natural boundaries to divide the farming area of every household. However, at present, the coordinates of each plot of land have been mapped. Therefore, the expansion by the farmers of agricultural land into the forest area is improbable. According to the household survey, more than 90 percent of households are using their own agricultural land for coffee production. Only a small number of farmers, lower than 10 percent, rent out the land for coffee cultivation. They do so to increase their productivity because, based on the allocation of land by government agencies in the area, there is no landless household in the community.

Table 12
Using Household or Rental Agricultural Land for Coffee Production

Type of Workforce	Number of Villagers	Percentage
Using household agricultural land	94	90.4
Using rental land	10	9.6
Total	104	100.0

Table 13 shows how the cultivation of arabica coffee has made a noticeable effect on the villagers' income. However, because coffee is a crop that requires high cultivation and maintenance costs, including labor-intensive needs especially in harvest time, about 16 percent of farmers said they disagreed that coffee cultivation has definitely increased their income. The rest of the farmers have felt the positive effect of this kind of agriculture on their household income. The average price of dried coffee beans is between 90 – 120 baht (US\$ 2.75 - 3.66) per kilogram. Farmers usually produce about 400 kilograms of dried coffee beans per 1 rai (0.16 hectare) of coffee planting, which allows for the profound change in the income of the people in the community.

Table 13
Effect of Growing Coffee in Household Income

Growing coffee has increased their household income	Number of Villagers	Percentage
Strongly agree	51	49.0
Agree	36	34.6
Somewhat agree	16	15.4
Disagree	1	1.0
Total	104	100.0

Despite some variance in the perception of farmers in the extent of the increase in income brought about by coffee cultivation, all of the households agree that their quality of life had been improved markedly after the expansion of coffee production within the community. As shown in Table 14 below, 13.5 percent of the respondents said they strongly agree that coffee cultivation improved their quality of life. More than 70 percent also said they agree that their quality of life improved. The results of the survey clearly reflect the unanimous opinion of people in the community, although in different degrees, that their lives have changed for the better due to growing arabica coffee.

Table 14
Effect of Growing Coffee in Quality of Life

Growing coffee has increased the quality of life of their household	Number of Villagers	Percentage
Strongly agree	14	13.5
Agree	73	70.2
Somewhat agree	17	16.3
Disagree	0	0
Total	104	100.0

3.3 The Other Side of the Coin: Small Farmers and Landless Laborers in the Community

Pangkhone Village is a community with three main ethnic populations: Akha, Mien and Lisu, according to interview data from Mr. Sorn (interview Mr. Sorn, the head of the village September 2017). The main population of Pangkhon Village is Akha people. More than eighty percent of the villagers are Akha people, followed by about fifteen percent of the Mien population and about five percent of Lisu people.

Pangkhone Village is a community founded by the Mien people and the Akha people used to be hired labor in the agricultural sector for the Mien people. However, the community population had changed, especially during the 1980s to the 2000s, when the promotion of coffee cultivation started.

Mien farmers sold their agricultural land to the Akha people and began to migrate down to the plain areas, or the province of Chiang Rai. At that time, the agriculture in Pangkhon was not good, the income was not enough, and we stopped opium cultivation. During that time, the land was sold for only 300 – 400 baht per rai. Mien people sold more and more land to the Akha people since 1990 – 2000. (Mr. Lulu, Mien coffee farmer, and a grocery store owner, interviewed March, 2019)

Mr. Lulu's interviews reflect the change of land ownership between the Akha and Mien people in Pangkhon area. The agricultural land and residences of the Mien people were transferred to the Akha people, and the Akha people became the leading group of coffee farmers.

Most of the farmers from the interviews mentioned that coffee cultivation brings more cash income and economic changes for their households than any other commercial crop previously cultivated. However, small landholders with less than five rai (0.8 hectares) of coffee cultivation land cannot produce coffee to generate sufficient income for household consumption.

Table15

Small Coffee Farmers in Pangkhon

No	Name/ Age	Land Ownership	Household Income (Yearly)	Number of Family Members	Ethnicity
1.	Mr.Arpo (29)	3 rai (0.48 hectare)	290,000* (US\$ 8,728.50)	2	Akha
2.	Ms.Arpaе (57)	3 rai (0.48 hectare)	153,600 baht (US\$ 4,623.09)	3	Akha
3.	Ms.Janwipha (34)	5 rai (0.8 hectare)	64,000 baht (US\$ 1,926.29)	7	Akha
4.	Mrs.Pusue (39)	5 rai (0.8 hectare)	70,000 baht (US\$ 2,106.88)	3	Akha
5.	Mr.Lawjue (32)	5 rai (0.8 hectare)	50,000 baht (US\$ 1,504.91)	5	Akha
6.	Ms.Arsur (35)	5 rai (0.8 hectare)	54,000 baht (US\$ 1,625.31)	5	Akha
7.	Mr.Sombat (51)	5 rai (0.8 hectare)	140,000 baht (US\$ 4,213.76)	5	Akha

In the case of Mr.Arpo's family, since he and his wife have less than three rai (0.48 hectares) of agricultural land, Mr.Arpo has to migrate to Taiwan to work and return remittance of about 20,000 baht a month (US\$ 601.97), equivalent to 240,000 bath (US\$ 7223.58) per year. The income from the agricultural sector from coffee production is only 50,000 baht (US\$ 1504.91) per year.

Ms.Arpaе's family also has three rai of agricultural land. Agriculture income from coffee production is only 72,000 baht (US\$ 2167.08) per year, so one household member of Ms.Arpaе's family has to go to work in Taiwan remittances back to the family about 60,000 baht (US\$ 1805.90) a year and another member of the household works at the Pangkhon agricultural development center, earning about 1,800 baht (US\$ 54.18) per month. The total income of three people is 153,600 baht (US\$ 4623.09) per year.

Meanwhile, Ms.Janwipha's household and Ms.Arsur's household have to work at the Pangkhon agricultural development center to earn cash that is enough for household consumption, about 24,000 baht (US\$ 722.36) per year, because the income from the

agricultural sector from coffee cultivation in the area of five rai (0.8 hectares) generates only 30,000 – 40,000 baht (US\$902.95 - 1203.93)

Mr.Sombat's household earns only 60,000 baht per year (US\$ 1805.90) from agriculture; therefore, four members of the household are becoming wage laborers to have an income of approximately 20,000 baht (US\$ 601.97) to be sufficient for household consumption.

According to the information, small farmers with a small land plot of three to five rai (0.48 - 0.8 hectares) have to work outside the agricultural sector to earn enough income. Especially for households with less arable land of three rai, household members have to work abroad (Taiwan) to send remittance money to the family.

Moreover, there are also landless laborers in the community who does not have agricultural land. Their occupations rely mainly on non-farm work. These landless workers are defined as those who have no agricultural land but own about 400 square meters (0.04 hectares) of residential land per household.

It is noteworthy that all landless workers in Pangkhon are Mien ethnic. Based on community historical data, residential and agricultural land used to be the land of the Mien people. However, there are some Mien people who lost their agricultural land⁶ and became landless wage laborers who had to live by doing daily wage work mainly. The average income per person per month is about 5,000 baht per month.

⁶ According to the interview with Mr.A, the first head of Pangkhon Royal Initiative Center for Highland Agricultural Development, when the center was established all villagers received 400 square meters (0.04 hectares) of residential areas in the community and at least five rai (0.8 hectare) of agricultural land. (Mr.A, interviewed May 2016)

Table 16
Landless leberers

No	Name/ Age	Land Ownership	Household Income (Yearly)	Number of Family Members	Ethnicity
1.	Mr.Thulengwen (68)	400 m2 (0.04 hectares)	10,000 baht (US\$ 301.22)	1	Mien
2.	Mr.Worachit (58)	400 m2 (0.04 hectares)	55,000 baht (US\$ 1,656.70)	6	Mien
3.	Mr.Sanser (60)	800 m2 (0.08 hectares)	80,000 baht (US\$ 2409.75)	5	Mien
4.	Mrs.Yingseaw (55)	400 m2 (0.04 hectares)	45,000 baht (US\$ 1355.48)	3	Mien

The work of wage laborers in the community is classified into two major categories. Firstly is working Pangkhon agricultural development center, which paid a daily wage of 200 baht a day. Secondly, work as agricultural laborers in the coffee plantations of farmers with large coffee plantations. Agricultural wage jobs consist of planting, fertilizing coffee, mowing the grass in the coffee plantation, collecting coffee beans during the harvesting season, and coffee bean selection by sorting out the defective dried coffee beans. The coffee bean harvesting and selection are paid according to the amount of work performed by the kilogram, such as picking up one kilogram of coffee labor can earn two baht.

During the interview, some small farmers and landless laborers have mentioned the difficulty of their life; for example, they do not earn enough income to support their children's studies. However, most of the villagers in Pangkhon have a positive attitude toward coffee production. In reality, some are not fully benefiting from the expansion of coffee cultivation. However, Pangkhon villagers still want to make coffee production.

3.4 Summary

The lifestyle of the villagers in Pangkhon has been altered by the change of livelihood and increased income generated by coffee production. The change in the patterns of the houses in the community is a strong indicator of such change. The pattern of consumption of the villagers, such as the kinds of vehicles and furniture in the households, is also the result of the change of economic activity in the community. Coffee production created a host of changes to the life of the local Akha hill tribe in the Pangkhon community. Therefore, the livelihood and pattern of consumption of the villagers are different from the livelihood pattern of other hill tribes who experience a different level of economic development and agricultural system.

The farmers' occupations in Pangkhon have changed dramatically since the establishment of the royal highland agricultural development center within the area to promote coffee planting as a new cash crop to conserve the environment and avoid forest encroachment. In the past decades, farmers in the area have previously cultivated commercial crops, such as opium and vegetables, which required intensive land use.

Cultivation of coffee has been shown to generate sufficient cash income for farmers in the area. Hence, more than 80 percent of farmers in the community have turned themselves into coffee farmers. The income derived from selling and processing coffee have made the farmers in Pangkhon earn a much higher income over Thailand's poverty line.

Financial institutions and companies, such as auto dealer companies in Chiang Rai Province, have been willing to provide loans to coffee farmers despite their lack of collateral as they do not possess land documents or title deeds to show ownership over the

land on which they cultivate their coffee. Most farmers have access to funding because they are owners of a coffee plantation.

Finally, most of the farming households also said that their quality of life and their households' spending capacity and consumption have improved after coffee cultivation. In line with the promotion made by the highland agricultural development station, therefore, it can be said that coffee is a commercial crop for conservation that generates cash income for farmers and brings significant changes in their way of life.

Chapter 4

Coexistence of Direct and Indirect Power in Environmentalism

This chapter aims to present the coexistence of indirect and direct power in a conservation project by promoting coffee production in a highland area. Here, it will be shown how environmentalism, or the conservation awareness of the local people in the case of coffee growing for forest protection, comes in multiple forms — the entanglement of the different types of power. The ‘direct power’ of government officers and military soldiers coexist with disciplinary environmentalism and neoliberal environmentalism that can be defined as ‘indirect power’. Both types of power constitute mental control in conservation among local villagers.

Moreover, the concept of ‘multiple environmentalisms’ (Fletcher 2010; 2017; 2020, Youdelis 2013, and Montes 2019) will be applied to better understand the entanglement of different powers in the actual conservation project. At the same time, it will be shown how environmentalism generates conservation ideology in multiple forms. The resistance among the local villagers to such environmentalism will also be discussed.

In the royal speech of Her Majesty the Queen Sirikit on December 20, 1982, at Tham Kao Village, Long Dao District, Sakon Nakhon Province, she waxed eloquent with:

"If His Majesty (HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej) symbolizes water, I would like to be the forest, the forest that pledges loyalty to the water. His Majesty built water reservoirs⁷. I will *cultivate* forests."

⁷ HM King Bhumibol has built a professional reputation in water resources management. Throughout his 70-year reign, he initiated 3,204 water reservoir projects, and he has gained international recognition. Moreover, his work has been given honor by the United Nations (Matichon 2017).

This quotation is found in the 2017 report from the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. It is a statement embodying the creation of royal hegemony in the wide-ranging environmental programs in Thailand, where the royal family members play a significant role in resource conservation of the nation. It has been quoted regularly since 1982 whenever government agencies and non-governmental organizations describe the role of the royal family in water resource development and forest conservation in Thailand. This royal speech has been broadcast in television media, billboards, and documentaries in honor of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and royal family members in Thailand for more than 40 years. It demonstrates the primordial role of the Thai royal family in leading the conservation of natural resources in Thailand.

The shift in the natural resource conservation programs of the Thai state will also be explained in this chapter. The Thai government has changed its method of forest management from enforcing strict control through regulations or laws into merging conservation practices with the production of high value commercial products to motivate farmers to participate in forest reservation. In the discussion here of environmentality that exists in multiple forms, the royal hegemony of conservation will be brought to the fore under the context of nationalization and the process of creating citizenship through conservation projects. Agrawal (2005) gave an approach to studying the relationships of power/knowledge, institutions, and subjectivities between the state and its subjects in natural resource reservation, which he termed as “environmentality.”

4.1 Thailand and International Environmentalism

Thailand is one of developing countries participating in international environmental agreements and treaties on natural resource reservation. Environmentalism

has become a global concern considering how past industrial development has caused environmental degradation at an international level.

Thailand has been developing its economy and industry since the 1960s through the National Economic and Social Development Plan which started from infrastructure building and by now is on its 12th development plan. Thailand has been a signatory in The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) since 1983. It also participated in the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1987, the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1995, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in the year 2003, and became a member of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals in 2004.

On the other hand, international organizations, such as the World Bank, have become environmental governance bodies. In his study, Goldman (2005) explained the role of the World Bank in determining the direction of environmental preservation for borrowing countries by requiring environmental conservation as a development condition, which is actually something that developed countries have stipulated for developing countries to follow.

4.2 Environmentality in Thailand on the National Level

Thailand's National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) Plan Number 8 (1997-2001) embodied the national economic and social development plan, which was a five-year national development plan. In the 8th development plan, the main focus was to create "sustainable development" which could strike a balance between economic, social and environmental development.

To understand environmentalism, it is significant to grasp the concept of self-regulation. The self-regulated conservation of natural resources in Thailand is often paramount in ethnic groups, especially in hill tribes, because they are the people living in forest areas who have obtained government permission to settle in residential areas and till agricultural areas in the forest.

The trend of environmentalism in Thailand had been widespread in the 1990s, especially since the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan was launched in 1997. The sustainable development approach has been taken into consideration by development agencies in order to promote the conservation of the environment along with economic and social development. The current awareness of conservation in Thailand arose from environmental problems that have resulted from economic development projects since the 1980s. Thailand had suffered pollution such as from wastewater contamination and forest loss due to the expansion of commercial agriculture in the "green revolution" from 1970. However, environmental politics is at play in the general perception of lowland Thai people when they perceive that the cause of the problems of deforestation, landslides during rainy season, and loss of biodiversity in northern Thailand forests are the agricultural activities of ethnic minorities in highland areas.

Forsyth and Walker (2008) studied the politics of environment in northern Thailand. They proposed that there is a representative image of hill tribe groups in northern Thailand which fuels the debate of whether hill tribes are forest guardians or forest destroyers.

In the 1990s, NGOs and ethnic groups have promoted activities for forest conservation so as to change the perception on hill tribes from "forest destroyers" to "forest protector." The "Community Forest Act," which was first proposed in 1991, is a law that

allows local people to live within forest areas by recognizing the rights of communities to manage forest resources. The draft law was approved by parliament and enacted in 2019. The NGOs and local people networks spent 28 years lobbying for this legislation (Forsyth and Walker 2008).

Hayami (1997) also mentioned the use of Karen rituals in natural resource reservation. Karen is the most populous ethnic group in Thailand. Hayami raised the case of “The Pine Forest Project” in which Karen people use religious rituals to conserve forest resources by wrapping 1,000 pine trees with a monk’s rope as a symbol for tree reservation.

In the case of Pangkhon, the promotion of coffee production in the village was also based on the national development plan during that period. The Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area Development Center was established in 2002 following the visit of HM Queen Sirikit of Thailand. The Center, in aiming to address and prevent the problem of deforestation in the area owing to its former use as a plantation for opium and high value cash crops, started to promote coffee production as a high value yet environmentally friendly cash crop. Mr. Kwan, a large-scale coffee farmer and coffee buyer, explained:

The [Royal Development] Center has encouraged the community to conserve the forest. So, nowadays, the villagers exert efforts to protect large trees in their coffee gardens and the surrounding forest. Coffee farmers have planted large trees in their coffee plots. They will not cut down the trees. Pangkhon Village and its forest areas look green when compared with other villages in this sub-district. It has the most fertile forest in the area. Prior to the setting up of the royal development center, this area used to be occupied by rice fields, maize production plots, and shifting fruit gardens. After the forestry officers came to

set up the royal development center, the area was transformed into coffee gardens. (Mr. Kwan, interviewed in September 2017)

In addition, Mr. Kwan reacted to the attitude of people living in the lowlands who often perceive that ethnic people in the highlands are forest destroyers who ravaged the watershed forest areas and commented,

Lowland people usually think that we, the hill tribe, destroy the forest areas or cut down trees. Today, it is we, the hill tribe brothers, who refrain from destroying the forest. We produce our coffee in the forest. Nowadays, lowland people cut trees more than highland people do. (Mr. Kwan, in September 2017)

The narratives by Mr. Kwan reflects the changing perspective on conservation and an awareness in ethnic farmers who live in the highlands, especially those who are participating in the promotion of coffee cultivation as a conservation project.

Mr. Wuthichai is a medium-sized coffee farmer who has been trying to develop organic coffee cultivation. He believes that coffee planting is not merely about cultivation and explained, “Actually, coffee production is an agricultural production process which preserves natural resources and forest areas.”

In addition, Mr. Sorn, the community leader, said that the people have greatly changed their way of life and forest utilization following the promotion of coffee planting and the implementation of conservation policies in Pangkhon. The community previously used the forest area for farming and foraging food. However, nowadays, there is no more logging in the forest unlike in the past. Instead, rules were put in place to regulate the use

of wood and hunting, so much so that even the patterns of firewood use and foraging in the community were changing. Mr. Sorn narrated,

Currently, people in the village do not cut trees even for firewood. We collect only unwanted coffee branches or fruit branches for firewood after we prune our gardens. Hunting wild animals is also prohibited. We buy pork, rice, and eggs from the grocery stores and grocery trucks to sell food products in the village. As for vegetables, we harvest those that we planted in our coffee gardens, such as chayote, lettuces, and scallions. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2019)

Mr. Sorn added an insight in the “green area” change in Pangkhon after coffee planting had been promoted. He said, "Pangkhon has become a green area. Burning the forest is like burning one's own coffee fields."

These narratives by Akha coffee farmers reflect the internalization process of the conservation ideology among the ethnic farmers in Pangkhon. Through the process of coffee production while promoting highland conservation, environmental consciousness has been instilled among the locals.

In Thailand, the ethnic groups, especially hill tribes, can be said to be self-governing individuals shaped by environmentality with a high level of consciousness because they live in the forest and are directly affected by forest degradation and forest reservation policies enforced by the government. In terms of forestry law support, various communities, specifically ethnic groups, have been granted the power and the right to manage and maintain the use of forest areas in their communities. In the case of the Karen people from Hayami's (1997) case study, they used religious beliefs to preserve trees and eliminate the discourse of hill tribe as forest destroyers. As for coffee farmers in Pangkhon

Village, they control their own behaviors in order to protect the forest area and to make the forest fertile and suitable for coffee production.

4.3 Multiple Environmentalities

The approach of multiple environmentalities, developed by Fletcher and his colleagues (Fletcher, 2010 and 2017; Youdelis, 2013; and Montes, 2019) have presented several forms of environmentalities, including ‘disciplinary environmentality’, ‘neoliberal environmentality’, ‘sovereign environmentality’ (fortress conservation), and ‘traditional environmental knowledge’ (TEK) in natural resource conservation projects.

The development of this concept started when Fletcher (2010) distinguished between notions of disciplinary environmentality and neoliberal environmentality in analyzing eco-tourism projects. He discussed ‘economic rationale subjects’ and ‘environmental subjectivity’ – the conservation awareness shaped by economic incentives of conservation such as ‘eco-tourism’. Then, Youdelis (2013) developed the argument by discussing the contradiction between neoliberal environmentality and traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) in the eco-tourism development of Karen people in Northern Thailand. Thereafter, Fletcher (2017) proposed the approach of ‘multiple environmentalities’ in political environmental studies.

Moreover, to analyze non-Western neoliberal environmentality and the indigenous form of biopower in conservation, Fletcher and his colleagues highlighted the “traditional environmental knowledge” (TEK) of local people as “truth environmentality” in natural resource conservation.

Montes (2019) analyzed the development of the eco-tourism business in Bhutan and explained that the Bhutanese people’s traditional knowledge in conservation is based

on Buddhism biopower, an indigenous form of biopower, which includes belief in natural spirits, forests, rivers, lakes, and guardians. Hence, the Bhutanese had already become environmental subjects by their cosmological subjectivities (Montes 2019).

The following section, therefore, provides a discussion through empirical phenomena of conservation in the Pangkhon area to show the formation of conservation awareness among local people in the area.

4.4 Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area Development Center: Disciplinary Environmentality and Local Environmental Institutions

The motto of the royal development center from the royal initiative of HM Queen Sirikit is to “*allow people and forests to coexist together in a balanced and sustainable way*” (Pangkhon Royal Initiative Center for Highland Agricultural Development, 2016).

The Pangkhon Highland Agricultural Development Station Project was initiated by HM Queen Sirikit of Thailand in 2002 following her visit to the village. At that time, the area of Pangkhon Village and nearby villages had problems with the use of forest resources, having been known previously as a site for opium cultivation as well as fruit and vegetable cultivation. Through the natural reservation policies of Thai government, the forest area in Pangkhon, which was not fertile, was recognized and deemed in need of reforestation. Furthermore, the area sits at the border between Thailand and Myanmar. Given these characteristics, a royal initiative started to establish a highland agricultural development station aimed at studying and improving plant species and animals suitable for the highlands while, at the same time, preserving forest areas.

In the Thai political context, the Royal Projects integrated government agencies to work together. The Pangkhon Highland Agricultural Development Station project, which

was established in 2002, includes the integration of government agencies from both the central and provincial areas. After the establishment of the station in 2002, there were government agencies that came to integrate their missions such as Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Department of Agriculture, Land Development Department, Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education, and the Thai Royal Army Section 3.

Furthermore, since the establishment of the Highland Agricultural Development Station, there have been eight major development projects aimed at preserving forest areas and controlling the use of forests together with water resources development, and occupational development for ethnic farmers in the area. This is summarized in Table 15 below.

The Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Plant Species is the main unit responsible for the mission of Highland Agricultural Development Station Project. However, there are other departments that take responsibility for project activities. The operating budget comes from the Office of the Royal Development Projects Board granted through the royal initiative. In addition, most of the budgets are from the ministries.

Table 17
The Thai Royal Development Projects in Pangkhon

Royal Development Projects	Initiated by/ Date of Initiative	Details
1. Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area Development Center, Pangkhon, Huaychomphu subdistrict, Chiang Rai district	HM Queen Sirikit 2002	Project details: Establishment of a highland area agricultural development station to provide agricultural knowledge to local people. Operating organizations:

Royal Development Projects	Initiated by/ Date of Initiative	Details
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation - Department of Agriculture - Land Development Department - Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education - Thai Royal Army Section 3
1.1 Career Promotion Project by Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area Development Center	HM Queen Sirikit March 13 th , 2002	<p>Project details: Career Promotion Project by searching for suitable agricultural activities for local villagers</p> <p>Operating organizations: Royal Secretariat Office</p>
1.2 Environment Reservation Projects by Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area Development Center	HM Queen Sirikit March 13 th , 2002	<p>Project details: Environment Reservation Projects</p> <p>Operating organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation <p>By The Office of Conservation Forest Area Section 15 (Chiang Rai)</p>
1.3 Aquaculture Development Project	HM Queen Sirikit March 13 th , 2002	<p>Project detail: to support aquaculture and fishery development in Pangkhon and surrounding villages 7,530 Rai (1,204.8 hectare)</p> <p>Operating organization:</p> <p>Department of Fisheries</p>
1.4 Forest Area Conservation Project	HM Queen Sirikit March 13 th , 2002	<p>Project detail: to conserve forest resources in Pangkhon and surrounding villages 7,530 Rai (1,204.8 hectare)</p> <p>Operating organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation
1.5 Forest Plantation Promotion Project, Bamboo Plantation	HM Queen Sirikit March 13 th , 2002	<p>Project detail: to conserve forest and the use of wood in Pangkhon and surrounding villages 7,530 Rai (1,204.8 hectare)</p>

Royal Development Projects	Initiated by/ Date of Initiative	Details
Project, Firewood Bank Project		<p>Operating organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation <p>By The Office of Conservation Forest Area Section 15 (Chiang Rai)</p>
1.6 Watershed Area Conservation Project	HM Queen Sirikit March 13 th , 2002	<p>Project detail: to conserve the watershed areas in Pangkhon and surrounding villages 7,530 Rai (1,204.8 hectare)</p> <p>Operating organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation <p>By The Office of Conservation Forest Area Section 15 (Chiang Rai)</p>
1.7 General Management of Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area Development Center	HM Queen Sirikit March 13 th , 2002	<p>Project detail: to conserve and protect forest area</p> <p>Operating organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation <p>By The Office of Conservation Forest Area Section 15 (Chiang Rai)</p>
1.8 Water Resources Development Project	HM Queen Sirikit March 13 th , 2002	<p>Project detail: to develop water resources in the area</p> <p>Operating organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation <p>By The Office of Conservation Forest Area Section 15 (Chiang Rai)</p>

Note. Modified and adapted from The List of the Royal Initiated Development Projects (1952 - Present) (Office of the Royal Development Projects Board 2020)

There are five main organizations involved in the mission of Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area Development Center. The first organization is The Office of

Conservation Forest Area Section 15 (Chiang Rai) whose area of responsibility covers Chiang Rai and Phayao Province. The total area covered is 11,073,520.72 rai or equal to 1,771,763.4752 hectares. The head of Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area Development Center, who is the person in-charge of the conservation project in the area, is selected from officers in this organization.

The second organization is Chiang Rai Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office, which is a regional government agency under the Office of the Permanent Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment. It was established as an organization in 2002 through the Ministry of Natural Resources Development Act 2002 as a representative of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and is tasked to support the mission of the ministry in the region. It is responsible for protecting the forest in Pangkhon and nearby communities in Huichomphu Subdistrict. The office has the primary duty to patrol the Huichomphu subdistrict forest areas, including Pangkhon and surrounding villages. Five officers patrol in shifts within the forest area to control the use of the forest by the local people, especially during the dry season between January and April. Local people call the officers from the Conservation Area Office Section 15 as “forestry officers”. On this matter, Mr. Fluke, a middle scale coffee farmer, narrates:

In case hunters for animals in the forest are caught by forestry officers, they [officers] will take all their hunting equipment such as guns or other weapons. Nevertheless, finally, the hunter will be released. However, they will not get back their hunting equipment. But if anyone caused a forest fire, by hunting or collecting wild objects, if they got caught, this will be a big issue, they will be arrested and prosecuted because it violates the law. (Mr. Fluke, interviewed in March 2020)

The third organization is Chiang Rai Land Development Station which was established in 1968 and is responsible for the improvement of soil to make it suitable for crop cultivation. Their task includes disseminating knowledge about soil development, demonstrating and testing of soil and water development, and promoting soil improvement with organic substances. Their mission, in serving the Pangkhon royal development centre, is to analyse and improve the soil quality in the coffee plantation fields of local farmers.

The fourth organization is Chiang Rai Horticulture Research Center which is a research center established in 1972. Its function is to research on horticulture that is suitable for cultivation in Chiang Rai province. The research includes examining improvements and developments of coffee production for the royal development center.

The fifth organization is Pangkhon Military Base Camp, the Third Army Section of Thailand. There is a military camp located in Pangkhon Village. The soldiers' mission is to stay in the military camp for 20 days per month before they return to the camp in Chiang Rai town. However, if there are other special missions, they would have to stay longer. Sergeant Sak and his soldiers have to patrol around the forest surrounded by the community. The main duty of this military unit is to patrol the area of Pangkhon Village, along with neighboring areas, because it is located on a border area that used to have problems with growing opium and smuggling drugs into the border of Thailand. Currently, however, the mission of this military unit also includes patrols to protect forest resources, such as look out for forest fires, and make arrests in case of illegal logging or hunting.

The Pangkhon Military Operations Unit, with 5 personnel, has been set up. Its camp is located near the Agricultural Development Center. The military unit has to patrol the forest area in Pangkhon and nearby villages to control logging, secure farm and forest areas from invasion, and prevent drug smuggling in the area

Although the main duty to manage Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Area Development Center rests on the staff from The Office of Conservation Forest Area Section 15 (Chiang Rai), military units in the area represent the use of hard power to control the use of forest resources. The narrative from the leader of the military unit in the area shows the intensive control of the forest area by the military patrols.

These duties of the five main organizations responsible for the Pangkhon highland agricultural development station were delineated from the establishment of the station in 2002 through eight operational plans. All five agencies are expected to coordinate work in the area; hold regular meetings all year round; and on the occasion that representatives from Privy Council come to follow up on the performance of the Development Center, the representative of each organization gives a brief presentation about their mission with the Center to representatives of the King. In Thailand, the mission of royal family members and deputies are broadcast daily in the evening news. Therefore, the results of projects of various royal initiative development centers, including that in Pangkhon, are subject for broadcast on television through news programs on activities of royal family members.

In many cases, these agencies will receive directives or policies transmitted from their superior department and then, so as to achieve the goals of their mission, they would pass down the order of the commanding office through to the village headman and the village administration team who in turn communicate it to the local villagers.

In the case of Pangkhon, the Thai state uses both formal power (by the laws and military) and soft power to manage the highland conservation through the Royal Development Projects scheme. After the establishment of a highland agricultural development station, the Royal Project Coordination Office frequently sent the representatives of the HM King and HM Queen to visit the area. For this reason, farmers

in Pangkhon represent themselves as Thai citizens who are loyal to the nation and royal family by their actively preserving natural resources.

The implementation of the budget for the royal development center is under the responsibility of the Royal Projects Development Board, a special committee tasked to coordinate projects initiated by the Thai royal family members. The Royal Projects Development Board, in turn, is a special organization of the Thai government which was established in 1981 to manage and support the operation of more than 4,000 projects of royal initiative projects. In each year, the committee will receive the budget from the Thai government to support the implementation of the Royal Projects in the amount of 2.5 billion baht (US\$ 80,396, 258). The Office of the Royal Development Projects Board support the budget for the development projects of the development center such as operations for coffee cultivation promotion as well as other crops promotion.

Every two years, a representative from the Privy Council, who is responsible for overseeing the mission of the center of the royal initiative in the northern region of Thailand, will come to visit the Pangkhon development center to monitor the performance of the center and follow up on the project's achievement in the communities.

Before the coming visit from the Privy Councilor to the royal development center, the government officers of the development center will be well prepared to welcome the councilor as the representative to the royal family members. The development center will be neatly decorated. The road to the development center will be maintained. Portraits of the royal family members and the Thai flag will be adorned at the entrance and in the development center. All television channels will come to broadcast the activities on primetime news that night.

As a representative to the royal family members, the privy councilor gives away bags, which contains gifts from the royal family members. The gift bag contains rice, soap, and household items. Those who get to receive the bag keep it as an auspicious thing they received from royal family members. Moreover, they receive portraits of the King that they can use to decorate their homes.

Mr. Phantamit, gave an interview with the Thai Post Newspaper on September 30, 2020, the day that the Privy Council representatives to the Thai royal family visited the royal development center at Pangkhon. According to his interview, Mr. Phantamit reflected on his indebtedness to the HM Queen Sirikit, who initiated the agricultural development center in the area. His responses to the interview depict environmentality and the adoption of royal hegemony in conservation among the local villagers involved in coffee production. This interview, originally published in a newspaper column, was re-published on the main website of The Royal Development Project Board, 2020. It is quoted below.

“My coffee garden is 20 rai (3.2 hectares). Last year, the coffee yield was 5,500 kilograms. I earned 280,000 baht (equivalent to 8,969.47 US dollars). Every one of us feel indebted to Her Majesty Queen Sirikit. Nowadays, Pangkhon Village is an agricultural tourism village with people also coming for the “*Nang Phaya Sua Krong*” flower tree (Wild Himalayan cherry – *Prunus cerasoides*) planted in the coffee plantations. Therefore, villagers have a stable income. In the present day, people live well. People and forests can live together.”

Mr. Phantamit also stated that owing to the conservation and restoration of the natural resources and environment, more fertile forests were created in Pangkhon. Currently, 6,644 rai of forests exists and ecosystem improvements continue to be done (The Royal

Development Projects Board, 2020). Table 16 shows the increasing forest area covered by the operations of the Royal Development Projects Board. Consequently, in the year 2020, the average income in the village increased to 280,000 baht per household per year (The Royal Development Projects Board 2020).

Table 18
Increasing Forest Area

Year	Total Area of Royal Development Center	Original Forest Area	Increasing Forest Area
2002	17,240 rai (2,758.4 hectares)	10,500 rai (1,680 hectares)	N/A
2012	17,240 rai (2,758.4 hectares)	14,500 rai (2,320 hectares)	+4,000 rai (640 hectares)
2020	17,240 rai (2,758.4 hectares)	17,144 rai (17,240 hectares)	+6,644 rai (1,063.04 hectares)

Note: Office of the Royal Development Projects Board, Thailand (2012 and 2020)

Mr. Phantamit is one of the prominent coffee entrepreneurs in the community and initiated the community coffee enterprise group in the community. During interviews with Mr. Phantamit in this study, other villagers including Mr. Sorn, the village head, have expressed that coffee production has changed their economic status. Moreover, growing coffee and caring for coffee plantations have also made them more aware of conservation. Because the production of coffee through an 'environmentally friendly way' was what the royal development center promoted, it created a deeper environmental consciousness among them.

There are also community-level groups who work with local government agencies and control the use of resources by the local community. The following section will discuss the village-level administrative group and its role in conservation.

4.5 Village-Level Administrative Groups: Direct Control Power in the Conservation Area

Aside from forestry officers and military soldiers in the area, there are local leader's team to monitor the use of forest resources. The Ministry of Interior divided the administrative structure of regional and provincial administration into two sectors. First, the provincial administration's command chain starts from the village headman on top, followed by the sub-district headman, district-chief officer (similar to the sheriff), and the provincial governor.

This has been the formal governmental organization of Thailand since the modernization period from 1892. In 1994, the Thai government launched the "Sub-district Council and Sub-district Administrative Organization B.E. 2537 (1994)" to set up local administrative organizations that allowed people to elect members of the local administrative organization. There are two main types of local administrative organizations in Thailand. First is the Subdistrict Administration Organization (SAO) in the rural areas of Thailand, with the "Chief Executive of the Subdistrict Administration Organization" as the head of the organization. Next is the municipality, which is the local administration in urban areas of Thailand. There are also three primary municipal levels in Thailand based on population size in those areas, which includes the Subdistrict Municipality, Town Municipality, and City Municipality.

Furthermore, there are three types of government-registered local volunteer groups that provide assistance to government officers in Thailand villages. These are the Village Security Team ("Cho Ro Bor"), Civil Defense Volunteer ("Or Por Po Ror"), and community leaders group.

These three local administrative groups assist the direct control of the government at the community level. The members of the three village-level administrative groups are

local people in the community. They received training from and were officially appointed by the Ministry of Interior's local offices. Their mission is to assist the government's direct control, including political control and environmental conservation.

In the study of Agrawal (2005) and Li (2007), they discuss about community organizations and institutions acting as mediators to coordinate and transfer the conservation ideology to local people. In the case of Agrawal, it is the Forest Council – Panchayats of Kumaon. In the case of Li, it is the local trustee or local governmental organization. Here, in the case of Pangkhon, besides the five main governmental organizations participating in the mission of the Pangkhon royal development centre, it is the community's leaders and Civil Protection Volunteers Group who work as mediators between the central government and local villagers.

4.5.1 Pangkhon's Village Security Team (“Cho Ro Bor”)

To give a background, the Village Security Team was first established in the 1970s, during the spread of the influence of the Communist Party in Southeast Asia. The Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior has assigned village-level local assistant government officials for the ministry. It was originally called "The Village Development Volunteer and Self Defense" before it was changed to "Village Security Team" in 2008 by an amendment to the Act. The role of the Village Security Team is to assist the government officials from the Ministry of Interior. The team is under the command of the village headman, subdistrict headman, and the district-chief officer. Participants in the Village Security Team have to attend the official training curriculum and be appointed by the district-chief officer.

Among the team's several tasks, two specifically pertain to actions against criminal acts, which can be said to be critical to the government's wielding direct power at the community level. The Village Security Team has become a direct government agency which monitors the behavior of the local people – their own neighbors and relatives – in the community. The team's authority to arrest criminal offenders and suspects includes violations related to environmental and natural resource protection, such as hunting, cutting down trees, or causing forest fires. These are considered criminal offenses over which the Village Security Team can make arrests and report the case to government officials. In view of this, the team's existence is a direct use of power by the government in the community area.

In Pangkhon, there are ten members in the Village Security Team. The head of the team is Mr. Sorn, who is the head of the village. Most of the security team's activities are directed at setting up checkpoints to protect against crimes and drug trafficking. It should be noted that so far there have been no cases in which the Village Security Team of Pangkhon arrested any community member living in Pangkhon. Nevertheless, it is clear that the security team is the direct government body at the community level for monitoring the behavior of the local people.

4.5.2 Pangkhon's Civil Defense Volunteer Team (“Or Po Por Ror”)

The second volunteer group, organized as a governmental group at the community level, is the Civil Defense Volunteer. It was created through the Huichomphu Subdistrict Organization (Huichomphu SAO). There are twenty members of the Civil Defense Volunteer in Pangkhon. The Civil Defense Volunteer staff must be trained in Civil Defense Volunteer courses and are appointed by the sub-district or municipal administration. The primary function of this group is disaster prevention and mitigation and forest fire control.

4.5.3 Pangkhon Community's Leaders Team

The community leaders are the main coordinators and agents for transferring environmental ideology from governmental agencies to villagers by issuing village regulations and managing village meetings. There is a Pangkhon community meeting once in every month. The community monthly meeting is usually held on the 7th day of each month. A representative from every household must attend the meeting which usually takes from three to four hours. During the meeting, the community leaders give the information or regulation coming from the provincial government office and subdistrict office. If the community has to reach a common agreement and consensus regarding a subject, the village members use the monthly meeting for that discussion. Every participant also needs to show his ID card to verify his attendance. Anyone absent from the meeting without a proper reason will be subjected to a penalty. The community leaders also implement the regulations and control the use of forest areas. The following narrative in regard to regulations and control comes from Ms. Kate, one of the community leaders.

We have rules for cutting down trees. When any household wants to use wood, they have to first inform and ask permission from the village leaders, then inform the highland agricultural center's staff, and then the soldiers before logging. But most of the time, we use wood from trees that naturally fell by itself. We usually do not cut down trees. But even the trees that fell naturally, such as the tree that fell in our garden, we still have to ask for permission from the authorities to use the wood from the tree even though that wood is coming from our own farmland. Because when cutting the tree or moving the wood, they (authorities) will hear the sound of the chainsaw, or they could see us when we move the wood into our house. (Ms. Kate, interviewed in September 2019)

The narrative shows that in all cases when people in the community want to gather wood from the vicinity, they must not only inform but also receive permission to gather wood from community leaders and officials from the highland area agricultural development station and military personnel. If villagers undertook any logging without permission, the community leaders must report the act to the authorities and those villagers may be charged guilty of an offense. This is the process of monitoring and controlling among the ethnic farmers living in the forest. Although they are allowed to cultivate crops in the forest, they must strictly abide by the rules set out and the community leaders themselves have to be the ones to control the behavior of fellow villagers.

Moreover, the community leaders organize community activities for natural resource conservation. When there are activities for community development or disaster prevention, such as irrigation canal maintenance, making a firebreak line to defend from wildfires, or extinguishing wildfires, which occur every year, every household will have to participate. According to Mr. Sorn, the village headman,

If any household does not join, they will have to pay a fine of 300 baht per day to the community fund, equal to the minimum daily wage rate. If they do not pay or do not join many activities, we will report them at the monthly village meeting. (Mr. Sorn, interviewed in September 2019)

4.6 San Palang Social Enterprise Co., Ltd. (SPSE): Neoliberal Environmentalism through Economic Incentives

The previous section explained the process of forming a natural resource conservation ideology through the royal development center and government offices engaged in the conservation of highland areas. Such is the process of disciplinary environmentalism. On the other hand, the conservation ideology of coffee farmers is also being developed through

economic incentives. Fletcher (2010) explained how local people in the conservation projects with economic rationality can develop conservation awareness through market motivation. In the international free market flow, the conservation projects can also create conservation consciousness by economic incentive.

This section will discuss the creation of conservation consciousness by a large coffee company in Thailand. Specifically, it will show the economic incentives offered by the quasi-state enterprise, San Palang Social Enterprise Co., Ltd. (SPSE), which is a business unit of the PTT Public Company Limited, a government-owned oil and gas enterprise (San Palang Social Enterprise Co., 2019).

As of 2021, four community enterprise groups are doing business with San Palang Social Enterprise Co., Ltd. (later referred to as “San Palang Company” for brevity). Among them are the group of Mr. Phantamit which has 13 members and the group of Mr. Phu which has 25 members.

Figure 11

The Akha in traditional clothes at the MoA signing ceremony of San Palang Company



Mr. Phantamit, the leader of Pangkhon Coffee Community Enterprise, recalls that following the visit of Queen Sirikit to Pangkhon and the establishment of the royal development center, the livelihood of the people in Pangkhon changed to growing more fruit trees such as persimmons, avocados, macadamia and specially-grown coffee under the largest shade of trees, which became the main source of income of the villagers.

Eventually, the first MoA (Memorandum of Agreement) between Pangkhon and San Palang Company (2017 - 2021) for the purchase of coffee beans from the village was realized. This contract had expired recently in October 2021. Now, the company and the villagers have agreed to extend the contract for the purchase of coffee from Pangkhon for another four years. The purchase contract contains ten details, the most important of which

is the regulation prohibiting farmers from expanding their coffee plantations into the forest areas.

In a group discussion in October 2021, Mr. Mr.Phantamit, a large coffee purchaser, and Mr. Jetsada, the assistant to the village head, explained the pros to transacting with San Palang Company as follows:

The MoA with San Palang Company made the coffee farmers decide to sell most of their coffee products to Café Amazon [an affiliate] because the company bought the coffee at a higher price, and the company transferred the money to farmers faster than selling coffee to other contractors. Moreover, the coffee from Pangkhon can become more famous through selling it in the wider market of the more than 300 Café Amazon coffee shops nationwide. (A group discussion with Mr.Phantamit, and Mr.Jetsada, October 2021)

Presently, the regulations of San Palang Company for the coffee's quality control have been updated. There are new conditions in the second round of contracts, such as the farmers installing a wastewater treatment system. Coffee production creates wastewater during the process of washing coffee beans and fermenting them, as well as in the wet mill process of removing the pulp of coffee beans. Mr. Phantamit explains the new wastewater treatment incentive below.

The farmers in Pangkhon should have a wastewater treatment system in their coffee processing. According to the new contract, the farmers with a water treatment system will earn higher coffee prices of 1.5 baht per kilogram. Coffee production consumes a lot of water in washing, fermenting, and milling coffee beans. Wastewater from coffee production creates environmental problems for the community, especially the contamination of

wastewater into the small water streams around the community and the smell in the hot summer months between March and April. (Mr. Phantamit, interviewed in October 2021)

This new regulation of the San Palang Company requires every household to have a wastewater treatment system by the construction of two ponds as cesspool tanks to store the wastewater from coffee production. “If we can do it, we will get a higher price of 1.5 baht per kilogram of coffee,” said Mr.Phantamit.

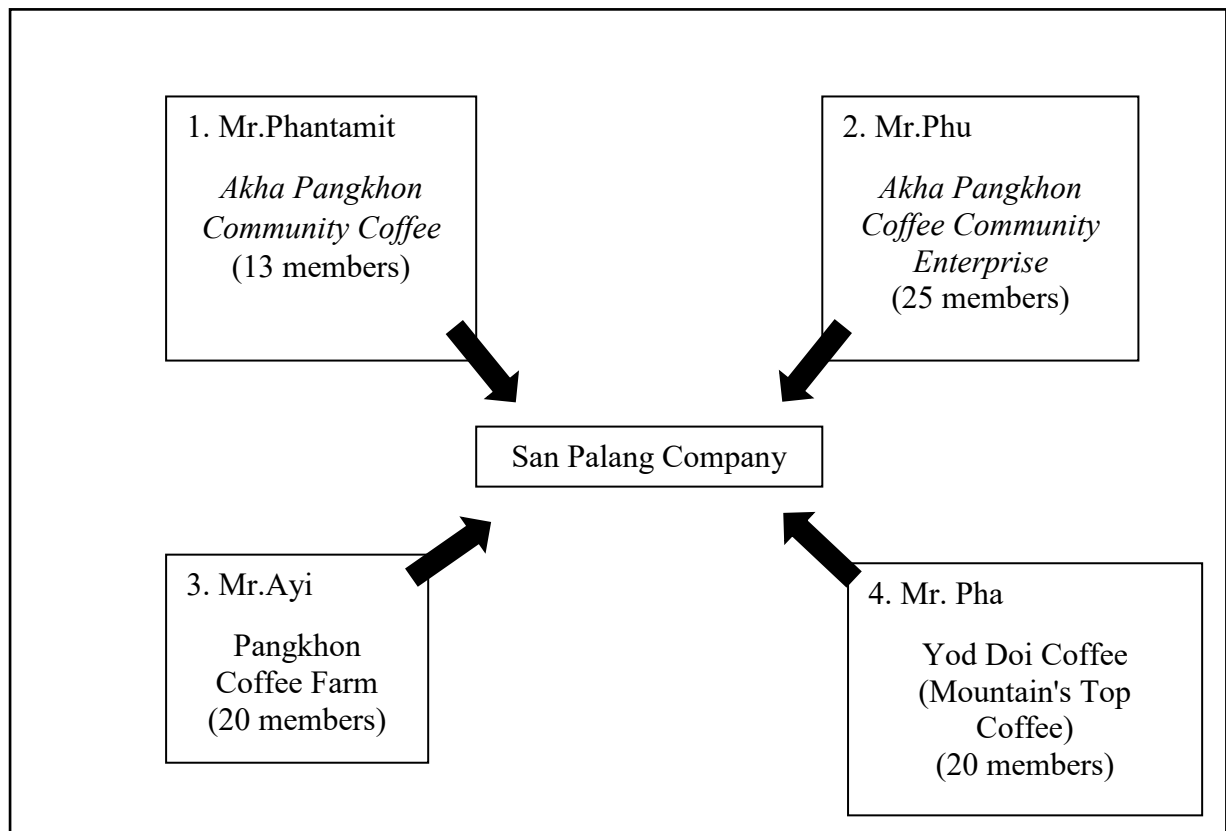
Moreover, in the second term of the contract, some previously required inspections of Pangkhon coffee standards became exempt such as coffee taste inspections (cupping process). It can be surmised that, in the first contract term of four years, the coffee farmers of Pangkhon have proven the good quality and taste of their coffee products which meet the company's requirements. Mr. Phantamit confirms this, saying:

In the new contract, the company is no longer including coffee flavor testing (coffee cupping) because the company trusts the quality and taste of Pangkhon coffee. Therefore, there is no longer cupping in the MoA. (Mr.Phantamit, interviewed in October 2021)

As to the contracting parties involved, the number of community enterprise groups has been expanded to four groups in the second term of the contract. The first two groups are the former parties to the first contract, which are the “Pangkhon Community Coffee Enterprise” and “Akha Pangkhon Coffee Community Enterprise.” Mr. Panthamit is the head of the first group which has 13 members (including Mr. Sorn, the village head). The second group is led by Mr.Phu which has 25 members. The third group is known as “Pangkhon Coffee Farm” organized by Mr.Aryi with 20 members. The fourth group is “Yod Doi Coffee” (Mountain's Top Coffee) led by Mr.Pha with 20 members. At present,

San Palang Company has played a significant role as the largest coffee buyer in the community. Moreover, the company was able to set guidelines for environmental conservation as part of the terms of their coffee purchase by attracting the coffee producers to economic incentives.

Figure 12
The Coffee Community Enterprise Groups



Mr. Phantamit expressed his confidence in the arrangement with San Palang Company, as illustrated in Figure 12, by saying, “Selling coffee with Amazon Company gives the community a stable coffee market. Cultivation of coffee gives the villagers security in their occupation.”

Therefore, there are economic incentives to coffee cultivation which, when combined with disciplinary environmentality that is passed on to the people through the highland agricultural development station, help ensure less resistance and conflict in the production and sale of coffee in Pangkhon.

4.7 Traditional Environmental Knowledge (TEK):The Akha Tradition of Conservation by Akhazang

Traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) aims to show the local biopower in conservation in non-Western societies. In many cases, the local communities have their biopower and traditional knowledge and beliefs to protect and conserve their resources. For example, local beliefs have created local people who respect nature and fear the destruction of natural resources.

The Akha people have a traditional culture that includes religion, beliefs, rituals, and the meaning of organizing relationships between them and its relationship with the supernatural. The *Akhazang* or Akha traditional culture used to be the backbone of Akha communities. The prominent definition of Akhazang comes from the pioneering work on the study of the Akha society and culture by Geusau.

Akhazang is more than a religion; it is a way of life and philosophy that regulates all levels of the Akha life. It embodies knowledge of Akha traditions and ceremonies, cultivation of the fields, care of livestock, hunting, the origin of illness and therapies, and behavior within the group and towards others. (Geusau 1983: 249, Trupp 2014: 357).

Akha people had a tradition of separating the lands for use which may be defined as *territorialization of the land* under the former customs of Akha. According to the Akhazang, there was a custom to separate residential areas and agricultural lands from the conservation forest area and sacred areas, such as cemeteries and sacred places of local Gods or spirits. Akha people will neither intrude nor farm in those restricted areas. Mr. Wuthichai, a coffee producer, has mentioned the concept of conservation and the former territorialization of space done by the Akha people, which initially occurred when people in the community practiced Akhazang. He explained,

Akha people must stay in the forest areas. We have a long history of conservation of forest areas. Every Akha community have community forest areas. The forest area is a place which people in the community are forbidden to use for agriculture. We would not do farming in the conservation forest area and the cemetery area. (Mr.Wuthichai, in June 2021)

Mr. Sorn, the village head, also explained the boundaries respected by the Akha people separating the residential and agricultural lots from forest areas, and their tradition of accessing and taking advantage of each area in the proper manner.

Before planting coffee, we planted rice and corn. Akha people “believe” (practiced - ather) in ancestral spirits and spirits in nature, such as in forests, mountains, and water. Therefore, we will not destroy those resources. There have been boundaries between the community and reserved forest areas and the cemetery since the past. Akha people will not extend their cultivation activities in those areas. Even today, no one grows coffee in the community's protected forest area. (Mr. Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

They also have rituals that protect and conserve forest areas. One of these rituals is not to cut large trees marked with star-shaped bamboo weaves. Mr. Sorn also shared about this prohibition laid out in the form of a ritual as follows:

In Akha tradition, there is a ceremony to protect the big trees in the forest. It is done by weaving bamboo into the shape of a star, string it with ropes, and then tie it around the tree to prevent people from cutting down those trees. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

This ceremony, a practice of Akhazang, is usually organized every year. Other than this, Akha people also had the tradition of reserving their preferred wood to be used for making their own coffin. Mr. Phantamit spoke about it this way,

There is a tradition in which Akha people could reserve a tree per person, one tree, for the rest of their lives to make wood for their coffin. They would mark their "reserved" trees and take care of that tree for the rest of their lives. Other villagers would not cut that tree. Finally, when the tree owner dies, the villagers and their family members would cut down the tree and use wood from that tree to build a coffin. (Mr. Phantamit, interviewed in October 2021)

This shows the connection between the life of the Akha people and the forest and how the forest plays a role in the way of life of the Akha people. Throughout their life, from cradle to grave, the tradition of protecting trees is ingrained in the villagers. Mr. Wutthichai, a mid-scale coffee farmer, describes below how these traditions affect the present-day Akha.

Nowadays, although there is no practice of the traditional belief (Akhazang) for the local people to control the use of forest resources, the new generation does not destroy the forest. Now, there is a modern conservation concept, we focus on making a living by growing coffee to conserve the forest. We have no intention of expanding our agricultural land [into the forest area]. (Mr. Wutthichai, interviewed in October 2021)

At present, Akhazang has reduced importance in Pangkhon. The description of the relation and connectivity between humans and nature cannot be explained using solely the traditional Akhazang concept. The local beliefs regarding ancestors or the spirits of the forest do not sound convincing to the present generation. The description of conservation

practices must be more scientific for it to be convincing enough to encourage awareness among young people in the community. Therefore, the village head said that if he wants to explain the importance of the resource conservation to the youth, he must use contemporary words or modern knowledge such as "global warming." Mr. Sorn thinks, "We need to find new reasons to convince the young generation of the need to understand environmental conservation, such as teaching them coffee plantation or talking about global warming."

Thus, as borne out in interviews with different Akha coffee farmers, the Akha people's culture and traditional rituals in forest conservation exist but such culture and traditions need to be updated and reinterpreted in line with the process of promoting coffee cultivation and scientific knowledge on conservation. In line with Agrawal's (1995) notion, although the concepts of forest conservation were being inherited in the Akha culture for a long time, such indigenous knowledge (IK) is not static but rather dynamic and prone to change.

Mr. Sorn stressed the need to create a description of conservation, meant for young Akha people, which should be modern and based on scientific knowledge for it to be more convincing. Therefore, in this sense, it is not possible to describe the conservation process in Pangkhon as non-western biopower on conservation through traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) like the Montes (2019) study conducted in Bhutan. Instead, the conservation ideology in Pangkhon is a process arising from the combination of new knowledge and traditional knowledge of the locals. This research discusses indigenous knowledge based on the approach of traditional knowledge (TK) primarily to situate the discussion with Montes (2019) traditional environmental knowledge studies.

4.8 The Process of Internalization of Environmental Consciousness

This subsection aims to show how the local villagers of Pangkhon have been transformed with environmental consciousness as a result of the interplay between direct and indirect power on controlling forest resources.

There are four main processes that ensured the internalization as ‘environmental subjectivity’ among the local coffee farmers in Pangkhon. Firstly, by the direct power, the Pangkhon royal development center set up the boundary between the reserved forests and delineated Class 1A, the highly protected watershed forest area under the forestry laws of Thailand (Forsyth and Walker, 2008). The delineation of the boundary between the forest and agricultural area led to environmental awareness on resource use among the local villagers. Following the regulations issued by the development center, the resource use pattern of local villagers in Pangkhon had to change. Hunting and foraging in the protected forest areas became prohibited.

Secondly, the royal development center created ‘agroforestry coffee production’ plots as demonstration plots for the local villagers. The plots are located in the area of the Pangkhon Royal Initiative Center for Highland Agricultural Development. In 2016, the description (see Figure 13) posted on the said coffee demonstration plots states that it is the ‘proper way’ of coffee production. This proper way of creating sustainable coffee production refers to planting large trees in the coffee plots to give shade to the coffee plants and protect them from direct sunlight. Moreover, these large trees in the coffee plantation plot also serve to create the area’s ‘green spaces’.

Figure 13
The Sign at a Demonstration Plot



Thirdly, the royal development center facilitates the local farmers' engagement by allowing every household in the village to work in the coffee demonstration plots or vegetable farms at the development center. The royal development center provides remuneration for representative households who participate in the agroforestry coffee production. Mr. Dusang, the head of workers in Pangkhon Development Center explained the system as follows:

Every household can send a representative to work at the development center. There are two main types of workers, monthly and daily workers. The workers received 100 baht per day. [In 2019, the remuneration increased to 200 baht per day.] Workers may receive a monthly income between 4,000 -5,000 baht (US\$ 133 – US\$ 166) (Mr. Dusang, head of workers in the royal development center, interviewed in May 2016)

Working at the development center resulted in the formation of conservation consciousness among the local villagers. After the establishment of the development center, the local villagers of Pangkhon received coffee trees from the development center free of charge. Moreover, they learned how to nurture the coffee tree from the development center. Therefore, the coffee demonstration plot is a direct form of power to persuade the local farmers to participate in the conservation project by coffee production.

Lastly, the royal hegemony on the conservation of the natural resources, a Privy Council member, as the royal family representative, visits Pangkhon village and the Pangkhon Royal Development Center every two years to monitor the development center. A welcome ceremony would be held during the visit where community members are dressed in Akha attires. The Privy Council member, as representative to the royal family, presents souvenirs from royal family members and helps reconfirm the internalization of the environmental ideology through the royal hegemony on conservation.

On the other hand, the indirect power that creates conservation ideology among the local villagers consists of three elements. First, coffee farmers try to use kinship and community ties to control coffee production and conservation in the area. This is true in the case of Mr. Kwan who, using kinship as a base for the purchase of his coffee, would buy organic coffee produced by his relatives because he feels he could trust the coffee quality and their process of production more than buying coffee from people he has no relations or prior association with. Purchasing coffee through this kinship network causes conservation consciousness to be spread by indirect power, not direct power from the coffee purchasers to coffee producers.

Second, the effort to produce organic and specialty coffee also resulted from economic incentives for higher coffee prices. If farmers can produce chemical-free coffee

and grow it by agroforestry, they will receive economic incentives through indirect power driving conservation subjectivity. For example, efforts in organic coffee production and conservation coffee are the result of the economic incentive under the neoliberal environmentality of the coffee market.

Finally, signing the MoA with the San Palang Company is the most significant economic incentive. Because of the incentive scheme where the company agrees to buy coffee from farmers at higher prices if farmers comply with all required environmental conditions, Akha farmers were directed to have awareness on conservation and developed in themselves the necessary environmental consciousness. This enabled farmers to receive higher returns of up to 10 baht per kilogram from the average purchase price of coffee during each harvest season.

Thus, the process of direct and indirect control in conservation through coffee cultivation shaped the environmental consciousness of the local villagers who could become “environmental subjects” concerned with environmental conservation.

The internalization of the conservation ideology of local villagers in Pangkhon can be observed from descriptions of the conservation behavior of local farmers.

Cultivation of coffee makes our people understand conservation. Although in the past, the forests in this area were not fertile. However, we also try to conserve forest areas and take care of forests because forests are coffee-growing areas and our living area. Nowadays, villagers in Pangkhon village do not cut down trees or hunt animals. The village area is green. (Mr.Sorn, the village headman, interviewed October 2021).

From the active observation of the forest conservation activities of the people of the Pangkhon community, it can be seen that the internalization concrete conservation

ideology of people in the community Villagers holds conservation activities throughout the year. The conservation activities include forest planting activities, village development activities, community waste management, forest fire-prevention, and public water resources in the community. The story told through interviews and events in conservation reflects the internalization of the conservation consciousness of the local villagers.

4.9 Summary

Thailand is a member of many international environmental preservation treaties owing to how environmentalism has become a prevalent ideology nowadays. The country has also issued policies and established national economic and social development plans to create sustainable development, which is an aim to balance the development in economic, social, and environmental factors.

The Thai state seeks to make itself an environmental state concerned about environmental preservation. Due to the policy of separating agricultural land from forest areas and issuing laws to declare reserved forests, a dispute arose between government officials and minority groups living in forested areas before the declaration of the conservation areas was made.

The Thai government has used The Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Agricultural Development Center to transfer conservation ideology. The royal development center becomes the creator of disciplinary environmentality in the area. Governmental organizations of Thailand and especially in Chiang Rai province engage in the mission of the development center in the promotion of coffee production.

Aside from that, the neoliberal coffee market also creates an economic incentive for the local villagers to participate in the conservation project actively. The second notion

of multiple environmentality is neoliberal environmentality. As economic rationale subjects, the local villagers also engage in conservation projects by reason of the economic incentives. In the case of Pangkhon, local villagers are actively taking part in coffee production.

Moreover, the government agencies in Pangkhon, such as forestry officers and military soldiers, also perform patrolling duties to control and protect forest areas from invasion. They also control hunting and logging in protected forest areas. This action is the third notion of multiple environmentality – sovereign environmentality or fortress conservation. There is also the emergence of 'local monitoring groups', including the community leaders and volunteer groups that control the behavior of farmers in the area and limit the use of forest areas. The community exercises individual self-control and group monitoring. As a result, the process has created environmental subjects with awareness of forest conservation.

All things considered, it is evident that Akha people became environmentally friendly coffee producers through the government's development project. The Pangkhon villagers could become modern eco-rational subjects. Any resistance to the conservation project or to environmental consciousness formation would have been difficult.

Chapter 5

The Coffee Business Network in the Community

This chapter aims to analyze the development of the network of coffee businesses in the community, especially the four main community enterprise groups for coffee. The coffee farmers in the community have turned themselves into intermediaries in the buying and selling of coffee. A network of relationships was forged in the production and distribution of coffee which became essential to establish the standards for quality coffee and disseminate conservation ideologies in the coffee business.

The changing network of coffee traders will be presented from the beginning when coffee just started to be promoted in the area. In the early stage, the community's group of local coffee businessmen utilized their kinship networks to develop the coffee business. However, a significant change in the coffee trading network came upon the signing by local coffee producers of the MoA with the San Palang Company which bought coffee in bulk from farmers in the area. The consequential changes in every phase of the network affected the spread of conservation ideology in expanding the social network.

5.1 Early Stage of Coffee Trading (2002 - 2015)

In the early stage of coffee production since 2002, coffee trading in Pangkhon Village was being run by local traders who were Akha and original local villagers. They were the coffee farmers who were able to accumulate capital and shifted into the trade of coffee purchasing in their community. They are known as the middlemen of coffee trade in Pangkhon who buy both dried coffee beans and coffee berries. They buy dried coffee beans, then roast and mark them with local brands of local traders. They also store the

dried coffee beans bought from farmers and then sell them to traders from outside the community. Finally, the local traders also purchase coffee berries from farmers and process the coffee to make dried coffee in their own factories.

Thus, the social network between coffee farmers and coffee purchasers began. The coffee trade network is based on a pre-existing social relationship; for example, the coffee producers and coffee traders are actually relatives. Coffee farmers usually sell the coffee product to local purchasers who are their relatives.

There are two different groups of coffee traders in Pangkhon Village. The first group is composed of traders who are merely middlemen in the coffee business. This group of traders do not create their own coffee brand. Instead, they purchase the coffee berries and dried coffee beans from villagers, as well as stored coffee beans from their relatives, and then sell the coffee beans to coffee brand owners outside the community both in Thailand and other countries. Traders under this group are both middlemen and coffee exporters. On the other hand, the second group of traders are those who also create their own coffee brand. They use coffee beans from their own production site and the coffee beans purchased from the villagers. This group of coffee traders are middlemen but also believe that coffee brand creation is the way to develop the status of Pangkhon coffee beans.

The first group of trader-middlemen includes Mr. Arye, a coffee trader who has built a strong relationship with government officers. It also includes Mr. Saelee, a coffee trader who has diversified his sources of income. Finally, there is also Mr. Kwan, a coffee trader who does not have his own coffee brand but who wants to develop coffee production

by finding the coffee variety which is best suited for the Pangkhon area for “*specialty coffee*”⁸ production.

The second group of traders and brand owners, referring to the middlemen who have created their own brands as well, includes Mr. Phanthamit, who is not only a coffee trader but is also the one who initiated the community enterprise scheme. The group also includes Mr. Sorn, the village head and leader of coffee production and cultural tourism in the community.

5.1.1 Mr. Arye: Trader with strong relations with government officers

Mr. Arye has built a strong relationship with the former director of the royal development center. Mr. Arye used to work in the center as an assistant to Mr. A, the former director of the Pangkhon Royal Development Center. After Mr. A set up his private coffee business called “Pangkhon Coffee,” it was Mr. Arye who became the coffee beans purchaser for the said business. After coffee trees in Pangkhon became productive, the Pangkhon Coffee brand was born and became the biggest coffee business in Pangkhon. However, since Pangkhon Coffee was registered as a private business, most of the profit from the business did not revert to the local community, except the money generated from selling coffee beans. Hence, Pangkhon Coffee as a private business was criticized by some local people. It bore the name of the community, Pangkhon, but was registered as a private business, thus effectively preventing local villagers from registering the brand of coffee with their community’s name.

⁸ *Specialty coffee* is the standard of high-quality coffee. There are three main standards of specialty coffee. Firstly, *single origin* which means the coffee bean in a whole lot should be produced from the same production site. Secondly, *fair trade* which means that all parties involved in coffee production should derive benefits equitably. The third standard is *organic production* from planting to post-harvest (West, 2010).

In any case, Mr. Arye was able to set up the coffee trade network in the community. The system called for the price of coffee to be decided on by the purchaser. Mr. Arye earned much from the coffee business during the period he worked with Mr.A, from 2010 to 2015. Eventually, however, Mr.A had to move to Bangkok for a work promotion, thus putting an end to their business transactions. By the year 2018, the economic status of Mr. Arye's business had not been as favorable as it was when Mr. A was still director of Pangkhon Royal Initiative Centre for Highland Agricultural Development. This information was revealed during interviews conducted with the coffee traders group.

Owing to Mr. Arye's strong relations with the first head of the royal development center, he became the biggest coffee purchaser in the village in the early stages of the coffee business in Pangkhon. However, with the departure of the said head of the development center, the influential relationship diminished and so did the role of Mr. Arye as the most significant coffee purchaser in the village.

5.2 Second Stage of Coffee Trading (2016-2020): Utilizing the kinship network

According to Mr. Sorn, with Mr. Arye's reduced role as a middleman in the coffee purchasing business, other coffee farmers developed themselves into coffee traders. These were Mr. Kwan, Mr. Phanthamit and Mr. Sorn himself. They developed their own coffee business and became large coffee buyers in the community. Unlike Mr. Arye, they relied on kinship as the foundation of their coffee business.

5.2.1 Mr. Phanthamit: Community enterprise initiator

The second group in the coffee trade network is the one organized by Mr. Phanthamit. A coffee farmer who established himself as a coffee brand owner, Mr. Phanthamit registered his own coffee brand as "Paangkhon Coffee," using the name of the community but uniquely spelled using double 'a' of the alphabet instead of only one.

Figure 14

The packaging of Paangkhon Coffee, the product of Mr. Phantamit



Thus, the spelling is distinct from “Pangkhn Coffee”, which is the coffee brand of Mr.A (the first head of the royal development center). The logo of the “Paangkhn Coffee” (with a double ‘a’) is a full body picture of an Akha woman wearing the “traditional clothes” of Akha. The original picture of the coffee logo is of Mr. Phantamit’s younger sister. Mr. Phantamit expressed his frustration in coffee branding and explained the reason behind the unique name of his coffee as quoted below.

We could not register our coffee using the name of our community because it was already registered by someone who is an outsider [referring to Mr.A]. We could not name our coffee using our own community’s name, the homeland of our father and mother. And they even use the image of Akha as the logo. (Mr.Phantamit, interview in October 2021)

Mr. Phantamit is widely recognized as the leader of coffee production in Pangkhon. He is one of the first group of villagers who started to plant coffee trees in their gardens before most of the villagers. He invented machines and techniques for coffee production and transferred this knowledge to other villagers. For example, he invented the coffee peeler machine from a water pump by removing the water pump blade from the pump.

Even though “Paangkhon Coffee” is a private coffee brand owned by Mr. Phantamit, he wanted to set up the coffee business as a community enterprise. He believes that the community enterprise is a survival strategy for Pangkhon coffee farmers in the coffee business. His concern is rooted in the experience of Mr. Arye, once the largest coffee trader in the village through a business connection with Mr. A, who as explained earlier registered the ‘Pangkhon Coffee’ brand as his own private business but then eventually left Pangkhon.

With this in mind, Mr. Phantamit came up with the idea to unite coffee farmers in Pangkhon, to collect their products, and to sell these products on behalf of a community enterprise. He thought that it was a way of survival for farmers in the area because, in the first place, the coffee produced from Pangkhon was not widely known. He wanted to set up the community enterprise in order to share the profit from the coffee business with the local villagers.

He established the “Akha Pangkhon Community Enterprise” which was joined by 22 coffee farmers. This developed into a coffee business network and Mr. Phantamit became the head of the coffee farmer group. This community enterprise business eventually pulled in his relatives such as Mr. Jedsada (his cousin) and Mr. Sorn (his cousin) into the network of coffee producers.

The community enterprise group of Mr. Phantamit coordinated the signing of the agreement for San Palang Company to buy coffee from Pangkhon. On September 19, 2017, the Pangkhon Community Enterprise organized by Mr. Phantamit, acting as the representative of coffee producers in Pangkhon, signed the MoA with San Palang Company agreeing to sell the coffee beans from the group to the company at fifty tons in each year.

Figure 15
The MoA Signing Ceremony (September 19, 2017)



Note. The MoA was signed between Pangkhon’s community enterprise group and Café Amazon, PTT Company. In this photo, Mr. Phantamit is the sixth person from the right.

With the signing of the MoA, a community agreement now existed that must be followed to produce coffee that meets the company's needs. Rules were put in place so that farmers in Pangkhon maintain standards to create quality coffee. Mr. Phantamit summarized the rules in six points as quoted below.

First, farmers have to plant large trees to provide shade for the coffee. The company wants to buy coffee grown under the shade of a big tree. This first requirement serves to maintain the quality of coffee production and, at the same time, preserve the forest areas in coffee plantations.

Second, farmers must attend meetings of the community enterprises group to support building good relationships among members of the community enterprise.

Third, farmers must participate in activities or training programs that the company has organized. Most of these training programs are about coffee production and coffee processing that reduce the use of chemicals.

Fourth, the coffee production will be subjected to random inspection to ensure that the quality of the beans is maintained with the required nutrient content. Moreover, there will also be an inspection for infected coffee (defective beans) according to the amount specified by the company.

Fifth, coffee beans will be subjected to random tasting or what is called “cupping”.

Last, but not least, there must be no expansion of coffee plots into the forest areas to grow more coffee.

The regulations based on these company requirements are meant to control the standard and flavor of the coffee produced in Pangkhon, but as can be seen, most of the rules are aimed at the conservation of the forest by promoting agroforestry coffee cultivation, including reducing chemical use in coffee cultivation.

Hence, the company's regulations play a part in creating environmental consciousness among the people through economic incentives. These standards encourage

farmers to comply with conservation requirements and heralds the Pangkhon coffee production as “green coffee” as it helps conserve forest areas in the highlands of Thailand.

5.2.2 Mr.Kwan: A “Specialty Coffee” trader

Mr. Kwan is the younger brother of Mr. Phantamit. While Mr. Kwan used to belong to the community enterprise group organized by Mr. Phantamit, he had a difference in opinion with his brother and eventually left the said group. Mr. Phantamit’s goal was to establish a group of coffee producers without any concern for organic, non-chemical coffee, or “specialty coffee” which, to the mind of Mr. Kwan, should actually be the strength of Pangkhon coffee.

Mr. Kwan is a prolific middleman coffee buyer. In the 2016/2017 harvest season, he purchased 150 tons of dried coffee beans. He shared his thoughts on coffee production as follows:

Coffee planting seems easier than other cash crops. But, in fact, it requires special care; for example, coffee berries must be collected by hand, one by one. I tried planting coffee for five years. I have learned that if we can produce high-quality coffee, purchasers will put their trust in our coffee. Good coffee should be planted under the shade of big trees. Coffee planted under the shade of big trees will be specially called “shaded coffee.” Shaded coffee is larger, and seeds contain more nutrients. If there are no big trees in the coffee garden, the coffee trees will have a lot of seeds. But the coffee will die faster than usual. While the coffee tree is under the shade, the leaves stay green throughout the year and produce better yield. But there are some coffee growers who misunderstand. They think that, on the contrary, coffee under big trees is not

good because it cannot produce sugar in the coffee seeds compared to the coffee without the shade of the tree. The coffee production in Thailand is not even enough for domestic consumption and most arabica coffee, more than 70 %, were exported. Therefore, there is a lot of demand for coffee beans in Thailand. (Mr.Kwan, interviewed in March 2018)

His coffee purchasers are from Taiwan, Germany and Thailand. For the Taiwan market, he sells 10 tons of coffee beans every year. As regards the purchaser from Germany, in the beginning of their trade, he visited Pangkhon Village and bought only 2 kilograms of dried coffee beans. One year after that, he bought 5 tons of coffee. On the second year, he bought 10 tons; and on the third year, he bought 14 tons.

Mr. Kwan has a coffee roaster machine with which he roasts the coffee beans as ordered by his coffee buyer. The quality and level of roasting, from light to dark roast, is made-to-order as desired by the coffee buyer. Interestingly, Mr. Kwan does not mark them with his own coffee brand.

Figure 16
Mr. Kwan's coffee storage under construction



Note. Mr. Kwan is spending almost 5 million baht (US\$ 152343.80) for the construction of his coffee storage in the plains of Chiang Rai, outside Pangkhon Village.

Figure 17
Mr. Kwan's unbranded coffee product for Taiwan



Mr. Kwan spoke about the changes in the community after the advent of coffee production, as quoted below.

When Pangkhon villagers started coffee production 20 years ago, the price of coffee was very low. The price of dried coffee was only 40 – 45 baht per kilogram. But the price of coffee nowadays is 100 – 120 baht per kilogram. Every household earns at least 100,000 baht or 200,000 baht per year. When the infrastructure of the community improved, the lifestyle of the people also changed. The land price also started increasing. The land which cost 70,000 baht per rai... the price can be raised up to 100,000 baht per rai or more than that within just a few years. (Mr.Kwan, interviewed in March 2018)

Mr. Kwan is trying to create a coffee standard and produce his organic coffee. Moreover, he is trying to find a coffee suitable for the climate and land conditions of the Pangkhon area. He says,

There are many ways to standardize coffee production in Pangkhon. Also, there are many ways to make Pangkhon coffee be recognized in the coffee market. Some can create their own coffee brands such as Mr. Panthamit (his older brother) and Mr. Sorn. For me, I personally do not want to create my own coffee brand, but I want to develop the coffee varieties which are suitable for the Pangkhon area. (Mr.Kwan, interviewed in March 2018)

Mr. Kwan has tried to utilize his kinship relations to develop a network of small coffee farmers who produce coffee and bring the product to sell to him. Mr. Kwan said that he often buys coffee from his relatives since he can control the quality of their produce because he can confirm how his relative farmers produce and process their coffee. This shows some level of control on coffee production based on kinship relations.

5.2.3 Mr. Sorn: Leader of the village, coffee production and cultural tourism

Mr. Sorn, 33 years old, is the village head and a coffee farmer who owns a private coffee brand called “Akha Noi Coffee.” He is also a coffee bean buyer for his company. He buys coffee beans from Pangkhon farmers and nearby villages. Mr. Sorn, despite his very young age, was elected to be the village head when he was only 30 years old. As a part of the new generation, his proposed development plan is to develop the coffee business in Pangkhon, especially on ways to make coffee production sustainable in Pangkhon Village.

Mr. Sorn graduated primary school from Pangkhon School. He also studied at Pangkhon Chinese language school. He is literate and has a good command of the central Thai language, and can also speak the Chinese language. After he completed his High Vocational Certificate level from Chiang Rai vocational school, he went to Taiwan and worked in a factory in Taoyuan city for four years. During his stay in Taiwan, he remitted money for his family. After working for four years, he accumulated savings which later became the capital for his coffee business investment.

Mr. Sorn’s family decided to construct their own coffee production factory where Mr. Sorn and his younger brother started the family coffee business. Mr. Sorn is responsible for the cultivation of coffee beans while his younger brother is in-charge of the coffee roasting process. Both men went to work in Taiwan and then they used their savings to invest in the coffee business. Their factory equipment includes a coffee fermentation tank (built of concrete), coffee mill, concrete cement ground for drying coffee beans, coffee bean storehouse, and a coffee roasting machine. The production of coffee from their coffee gardens and of beans they purchase from other farmers are processed in their own factory under their brand “Akha Noi” (Little Akha). Furthermore, they opened two coffee shops

in Chiang Rai under the same brand which serve as sales outlets for their coffee products. One of their coffee shops is located in the downtown area of Chiang Rai while the other is in the district office of Chiang Rai at the governmental office's center.

It was in 2013 when Mr. Sorn, together with his younger brother, decided to open their first coffee shop in Chiang Rai. For the purpose, they bought a coffee roasting machine which could roast up to 5 kilograms of coffee beans.

Around the same time (2013), he bought a coffee plantation from a family in Huaymaeliam village, a nearby village. There are regulations and an agreement between Royal Development Centre and the local people that villagers in Pangkhon and other communities in this area could not sell land, either residential areas or farm areas, to people who do not reside in the mountain area. Not being an outsider, he could successfully make the purchase. He bought the land size of 30 rai (4.5 hectares) for 530,000 baht. For the coffee shop in the community, he invested 200,000 baht. He also bought the land for the coffee shop and guest house for 330,000 baht and 630,000 baht, respectively.

In the year 2014, Mr. Sorn constructed a coffee storage house, roaster factory and coffee bean miller in his house. He spent 400,000 baht. In the year 2017, he invested 220,000 baht more for his coffee shop interior design.

Mr. Sorn utilizes his kinship network in the process of coffee production. In each year, Mr. Sorn would spend around 200,000 baht for his business operations. His wage laborers came from Huaymaelium Village, an area which also has coffee plantations but whose coffee berries would ripen ahead of the coffee berries in Pangkhon. Therefore, workers from Huaymaelium could come to work in Pangkhon Village as coffee berry pickers after they have finished their harvest at Huaymaelium. Furthermore, in times of labor shortage, Mr. Sorn would bring Akha, who are his relatives, from Maekawtom

Village, Chiang Rai to pick the coffee berries. Eight of his relatives are married to Maekawtom villagers. Maekawtom, located 52 kilometers from Pangkhon Village, is the site of a community living on the plains of Chiang Rai. The wage pay rate is not based on a day-rate wage (300 baht per day); instead, the pay rate is calculated based on the weight of coffee beans that workers can collect in one day. The pay rate is 5 baht per kilogram and one worker can earn approximately 500-600 baht per day.

During the coffee production process, there is a high demand for labor. The coffee farmers in Pangkhon would hire their relatives and village acquaintances to work in their coffee gardens. The hired labor would work in the coffee planting process, fertilizing, pruning coffee branches, and the most important process of coffee harvesting. Since coffee harvesting is done manually, by hand picking, there is high demand for labor in Pangkhon for coffee berry pickers. Coffee farmers in Pangkhon try various means to find farmhands to work in their coffee gardens. For example, they use a “labor exchange tradition,” which means switching labor workforce in the coffee gardens of the members of a group. In each production season, farmers will prioritize labor exchange in groups. First, coffee beans are picked in fields ready for harvesting. Then, the workers are transferred to the coffee plantation of another farmer in the group to do the harvest. In each harvest season, there are up to three rounds of coffee picking in each member’s garden. Only the ripe and red seeds are picked in the first and second rounds but in the last picking, the third round, all the beans are collected. Here is when the quality of the coffee deteriorates and the value of the coffee beans is the lowest because of the mix of ripe and immature beans. Yet, this system is done because collecting coffee beans is a highly labor-intensive task. This is also why some of the coffee farmers, such as Mr. Sorn, as mentioned earlier would bring in their relatives from other communities to work in their coffee gardens. Mr. Sorn brings his relatives to his coffee garden to maintain the coffee trees and most especially in time for

the coffee harvest season. He mentioned that he even had to drive his car to pick up relatives who live in Mae Kaawtom Village (located 52 kilometers far from Pangkhon village).

It should be noted that this social network based on traditional kinship relations became the foundation not only of the coffee production process but also of coffee trading after the harvest season. Their coffee business network includes a group of relatives or family members. For example, the members of the coffee community enterprise of Mr. Panthamit are mostly his relatives. Coffee product standardization is also based on kinship and the network of relatives. For example, Mr. Kwan, who is promoting specialty coffee and organic coffee, would buy coffee beans from his relatives because he has relevant information about the production in those coffee gardens.

5.3 Coffee Business Network and The Political Network in Pangkhon Community's Leader Team

The kinship and network of coffee producers and traders are also related to the political and administrative network in the area. The village committee, the community's leader team, consisted of 16 people. The team includes representatives of significant families in the community, such as the Wuiyaku family, the Yapengu family, the Becheku family, the Micheku family, and the Hayeku family. Moreover, there are also representatives from other ethnic groups that are a minority of the community today, the Mien ethnic has representatives of the surnames Tan and Phan Join as members of the community's leader team.

Coffee farmers and coffee purchasers in the community have become the community's leaders team members. This can be seen from the list of community's leader team in the Table 17 the major coffee farmers and coffee purchasers in the community,

such as Mr. Sorn became the village headman and promoted the expansion of the coffee business in the area and the development of ecotourism in the village.

Table 19

The Name List of Pangkhon Community's Leader Team

The Name List of Pangkhon Community's Leader Team			
No	Name	Position	Remark
1.	Mr.Sorn	Head of The Village	Coffee business and tourism initiator of the community Wuiyaku family
2.	Mr.Haku	Assistant to Head of the Village	Kanyeku family
3.	Mr.Yossunthorn	Assistant to Head of the Village	A big coffee farmer 20 rai (3.2 hectares)
4.	Mr.Assadawat	Treasurer	Yapengu family
5.	Mr.Saelee	Committee	A major coffee farmer and coffee purchaser
6.	Mr.Awei	Committee	A member of Huaichompoo Subdistrict Organization
7.	Mr.Phonpoj	Committee	*Mian ethnic
8.	Mr.Amue	Committee	
9.	Mr.Phanthamit	Committee	One of the most significant coffee farmer and coffee purchaser in the village
10.	Mr.Yapa	Committee	Yapengu family
11.	Mr.Lawhu	Committee	Yapengu family
12.	Mr.Arkoh	Committee	Becheku family
13.	Mr.Aryoh	Committee	Becheku family
14.	Mr.Law-Er	Committee	Becheku family
15.	Mr.Law-ba	Committee	
16.	Mr.Theerasak	Committee	Wuiyaku family

Note: The Head of Pangkhon Village's Report (Wuiyaku 2021)

Moreover, Mr. Phantamit, a coffee farmer and a significant coffee buyer in the community, is also a member of the community's leader team. Mr. Phantamit is the farmer's network group chairman who entered into a coffee beans sales contract with Sanpalang Co.Ltd. He was the one who initiated the signing of a contract with the company.

The secretary of the community's leader team is Mr. Yossunthorn, a coffee farmer who has 20 rai (3.2 hectares) of a coffee farm, which is considered the vast amount of coffee plantation within the community.

There is also Mr.Saelee, a member of the community's leader team. Mr.Saelee is a large coffee grower with more than 20 rai (3.2 hectares) and diversified income from coffee and coffee flower's honey farm and the buyer of Assam tea leaves, which is the local tea in the area that the villagers cultivated before coffee production. Moreover, Mr. Saelee was the first farmer who initiated the construction of a homestay guesthouse for tourists in the community.

The interesting point is that the community's leader team attempts to build connections and ties among the kinship networks of farmers from different families. Both Akha and Mien people in the committee became community's leader team are large coffee growers and significant coffee buyers in the community. This group of community leaders will determine the direction of development at the same time with the direction of conservation of natural resources (as mentioned in Chapter 4). Moreover, community's leader team is the internal group that selects and applies Akhazang to be suitable and consistent with the development of the coffee business and the development of tourism in the community. This topic will be discussed in the following chapter (Chapter 6).

5.4 Summary

There are two types of coffee traders in Pangkhon Village. The first type refers to the trader who entered the coffee business in the early stage of the development of coffee production in Pangkhon. Mr. Arye was the first main coffee purchaser of the community. Based on his influential business connection with the first head of the royal development center, he became the first prominent coffee trader in the community. However, with the departure from the community of the said head of the royal development center, Mr. Arye's position diminished as the main coffee purchaser of the community. At this time, the

second group of traders stepped up and utilized their kinship networks as the foundation of their coffee business. It is not surprising then that most villagers in Pangkhon sell their coffee products to coffee traders who are also local villagers.

Among the second group of traders, most are locals within the ages of 30 to 40. They are literate and well educated under a Thai language curriculum and some are well-versed in the Chinese language. Most of them have had the chance to work outside the community, some of them have gone aboard such as to Taiwan (Mr. Sorn) and have accumulated capital for investment in the coffee business. These traders have successfully used their social network, their relatives or family members, as the foundation of their trade. In so doing, the supply and quality control of coffee products are based on their social relationships. Furthermore, this situation has caused changes in the political state of the community where a young group of coffee traders have become leaders, acting as either the head of the community or head of the community enterprise group.

In addition, this young group of entrepreneurs also created the Pang Khon Coffee Community Enterprise Group and negotiated the signing of an agreement with San Palang Company which committed to buying coffee products from local growers. The company set requirements for local farmers to comply with. Most of these regulations were in the form of economic incentives whereby the company offered to pay a higher rate for environmentally friendly coffee products. Thus, the terms of the agreement served as a stimulus to local villagers to embrace environmental consciousness through incentives under the notion of neoliberal environmentality.

Chapter 6

Akha's Cultural Dynamism in the Coffee Market

This chapter focuses on the modification of so called “traditional Akha culture” and the creation of new cultural activities, representation, and identity of Akha people in Pangkhon. An examination will be made of the meaning of Akha culture in their coffee products, Akha coffee shops, homestay business, and Akha cultural shows for tourists in order to analyze the modification of their culture under a conservation policy.

The study on the unmaking of environmental subjects discusses the resistance of local people to conservation promotion processes (Cepek 2012, Raycraft 2020). This research argues, however, that factors at play in conservation policies can include multiple environmentalities and royal hegemony that leads to a process of nationalization and the making of Akha people as citizens of the Thai state.

The promotion of a highland environmental conservation policy led to a process of cultural modification which gave new meaning to the “traditions of Akha farmers”. This cultural modification can be linked to coffee – something that has never been associated with the Akha culture in the past – as the new agricultural product that bears the Akha identity in the liberal coffee market of the present day. Thus far, there has been no resistance to coffee cultivation and production under environmental conservation policies among local villagers.

6.1 Changes in Akha “Traditional Culture”: the Akhazang

Akhazang is Akha “traditional culture” that includes religion, rituals, ceremonies, and superstitious beliefs. Akhazang is also a tradition of respecting nature spirits, ancestors, and the elderly. There were many rituals that the Akha had to practice. Many academics who study Akha culture have stated that the Akhazang is an essential tool for shaping thoughts, beliefs, and practices in the daily life of the Akha people (Geusou 1983, Kammerer 1988, Toyota 1998, Morton 2013 and Trupp 2014).

In one of the interviews during this study, the community leader Mr. Sorn mentioned the importance of Akhazang to the people as quoted below.

When the Akha people do something wrong, they would have to ask for forgiveness from the elderly and offer food to the spirits and ancestors. We had to sacrifice chickens, pigs, cows, buffalos. (The author had the experience of participating in a ritual where local villagers sacrificed a dog so as to resolve the problem of an evil curse on a family). The way to show respect to adults is to respect and obey them. For example, to all elders, we must bring the best quality of agricultural products of the first batch we had produced in each harvest season, such as rice, corn, and vegetables. Then, they will give blessings to us, our family, and our agricultural activities. It was a necessary practice to give the products to the elderly in the village even if they are not relatives. However, in coffee production, we no longer give the first lot of best quality coffee products to the elderly. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

Although Akhazang is very important, nowadays, the lifestyle and rituals of Akha people have been changed and modified. These traditional culture and beliefs of the Akha have been modified and selected to suit the cultural practice in line with the times. Since

most Akha people in Pangkhon Village have converted to Christianity since the beginning of the 2000s, community members have said that their former “traditional beliefs” and rituals have become difficult to maintain in their current situation.

The role of Pangkhon's religious leaders has also changed since the 2000s. Because the community's line of religious leaders could not be maintained, as is required by succession, it resulted in the absence of all four religious leaders which, according to Akha customs, was necessary for establishing a village of Akha people. Nowadays, when the Akhas in Pangkhon want to perform a ritual that requires a religious leader, they will have to invite a religious leader from the distant Romyen village in Huichomphu subdistrict. In this village, there are Akha immigrants who have not yet obtained Thai citizenship and are able to perform religious ceremonies. Ms. Kate, a village leader spoke about this:

Nowadays, most of the villagers in Pangkhon have converted to Christianity and Buddhism because it is very difficult to follow the “traditional religion” and spiritual beliefs – the Akhazang. Because we don't have a village shaman anymore. Moreover, the process of obeying spirits is complicated and there are many limitations, and for any wrongdoing, we will have to sacrifice a huge number of livestock. (Ms. Kate, a village leader, interviewed in September 2019)

Figure 18

A ritual of offering livestock to Akha ancestor spirits



The Akha had been once perceived as a stateless group moving around Southeast Asia. Scott (2009) stated that the Akha is one of the ethnic groups that used to live in Zomia. The word “Zomia” is a combination of two words: *zo* which means remote and *mi* which means people. The Zomia is an area from the southern part of China to the northern part of Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, India and Bangladesh. Since there are a hundred million ethnic groups in Zomia, it is easy to comprehend why there are just as many cultural variations in Zomia.

The power of ancient kingdoms in Zomia is similar to Mandala (Scott 2009). It explains political power between the center and periphery of the kingdoms. The kingdoms in lowland areas have developed fixed-field grain agriculture with an irrigation system in order to regulate their subjects. Hence, it can be said that the fixed-field grain agriculture was the foundation of state power considering that this agricultural pattern requires the unification of landscape and irrigation system (Scott 2009).

Therefore, ethnic minority groups in Zomia were keeping the so called “escape-agriculture” (Scott 2009) such as shifting agriculture to escape from payment of tax and the state’s regulations. Some of the escape crops were maize, opium, and others. Their having engaged in this livelihood is actually a decision between being a state subject or a “hill tribe” of ethnic minority in Zomia (Scott 2009). However, for the Akha came the coffee tree, which made a remarkable change in their lives, as narrated below by Mr. Lulu, of Mien ethnicity and owner of a grocery store.

Opium used to be the main agricultural product in Pangkhon. Most agricultural areas in Pangkhon are not suitable for growing rice specifically in the valley zone because the weather in Pangkhon is too humid and cold. The temperature is too low and rice cultivation was only successful in the zone that has ample sunlight. In the past, people had to plant opium and sell it to earn money to buy rice. After the policy to control opium cultivation was enforced, the government introduced alternative crops such as fruits to be planted in gardens like peaches, persimmons, pomegranates and cherries. These began to become the main products that people made here. But the selling price was not much. So, then came coffee which could finally make a change in our lives. (Mr. Lulu, interviewed in September 2019)

As explained earlier, due to weather conditions, rice cultivation has not been successful in the Pangkhon area since the past. However, as narrated in interviews, it became clear that despite this, Pangkhon was still an area where minority groups from Zomia opted to move and migrate to. Instead of rice, they cultivated escape crops, such as opium. Before the emergence of the Thai state, farmers from the border countries traveled and lived and cultivated in the Pangkhon area. After the borders of countries became fixed, Akha people had to become citizens of the modern state. Since then, citizenship has become more important in their lives.

Akha people began to migrate to Pangkhon as laborers in the orchards and opium-growing fields of the Mien people who had previously settled in the Pangkhon area in the 1980s. Sturgeon (2005) also studied the Akha people in two border communities: in China and Thailand. Her case study is on the oldest Akha village that settled in the country, which was named Akhapu village (pseudonym).

Sturgeon's (2005) research focused on the study of changes in the border landscape of Akha villages situated in the border areas. Her fieldwork began in the late 1980s and she provided information about the Akha settlements and the process they took to become Thai citizens. The Akha, formerly a stateless group, traveled across state borders of China, Myanmar, and Thailand. When they decided to settle in Thailand, the Akha received identification cards, which were blue-colored hill tribe cards that allowed them to stay in the country but with limited mobility within the province specified on their cards. Later on, in the case of Pangkhon settlers, most of the villagers were granted full citizenship and were finally issued their Thai identity cards in the early 2000s.

The 2000s is a significant period in Pangkhon history. It was the period that the Thai government provided citizenship to ethnic people in Thailand. The law that was promulgated in 2000 to give citizenship to the highland people is known as the Consideration of Person's Status in the Civil Registration for Highland People, BE 2543. This law was aimed at granting Thai citizenship to ethnic groups who live or whose ancestors have lived in the highland areas of Thailand. It covered nine ethnic groups, including the Karen, Hmong, Mien, Akha, Lahu, Lisu, Lua, Khmu, and Malabri (The Bureau of Registration Administration 2021).

Moreover, this was the same period when the promotion of coffee production by the Pangkhon Royal Development Center began. From the year 2002, coffee began to be

promoted to the local villagers to replace “escape- agriculture”. It can be said that, culturally, this was also the starting period of the changes in the “Ahka traditional way of life” or the Akhazang. Since 2000, the practice of the “traditional culture of Akhazang”, particularly ancestral worship, saw a decline due to the lack of successors in practitioners of this ritual in the community. Mr. Sorn explained,

When the Akha people set up their community, they should have all traditional community leaders which includes the elderly, shaman, fortune teller, and blacksmith. The position should be inherited from generation to generation. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021).

6.1.1 “Traditional Community Leaders”

The community leaders in Akhazang comprises five designations. Firstly, the *Zui ma* is the religious leader of the village. He is the one responsible for auspicious ceremonies and rituals in the community. *Zui ma* is the most important, most respected position and is considered the traditional head of the village of the Akha people.

The second is the *Beu moh*, who is the village shaman. As the practitioner of rituals in the village, the *Beu moh* is responsible for organizing the rituals and chanting during ceremonies. He is called “*aboh*” (uncle) by the villagers (Geusau 1983).

The third is the *Ngeu pah*, a woman shaman and the fortune teller of the community. The duty of *ngeu pah* is different from *zui ma* and *beu moh*. *Ngeu pah* is tasked with the superstitious, supernatural activities. Moreover, she deals with protecting villagers from evil spirits. When the village faces a problem that they believe is a result of evil or angry

spirits, they would inform *ngeu pah* and asked for a solution to the problem. She is called “*aphi*” (aunt) by the villagers.

The fourth among the leaders is *Bah Je*, the blacksmith who makes and repairs iron tools. This blacksmith position is inherited from the father by the son only. Therefore, the blacksmith family would be passed on from generation to generation, and as a result, the blacksmith leader comes from a very limited family. On the other hand, the *bue mah* and *ngeu pha* can select their own successor. Traditionally, the tools of the blacksmith were considered as sacred objects which cannot be used by anyone other than a blacksmith because it will be a “*wrongdoing*” or “*Phid Phi*”. The blacksmith will take care of repairing metal tools such as a mattock and shovel, which are very important in Akha’s daily life.

The final one is the *traditional herbal healer* (using herbal medicine). The herbal healer does not have a particular name in the Akha language. The villagers would only call the name of that herbal healer. At present, Pangkhon still has a herbal healer. His name is *abah Jue* (uncle *Jue*).

From the year 2000, to find the successors to these “traditional leaders” became very difficult specially in the case of the *beu moh* and *ngu pha*. The young generation in Pangkhon are afraid that they could not practice the ritual correctly. Mr. Sorn narrates about his brother,

My younger brother, when he was a teenager, had been asked by the previous “*bue moh*” to become his successor. My brother declined. He said that he wants to be a coffee expert, not a *bue moh*. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

Moreover, there are changes in local beliefs. Nowadays, about seventy percent of villagers have converted to Christianity. Twenty percent of the total population converted

to *Chinese Buddhism* (Mahayana Buddhism) 貫道 Yīguàn Dào. Only ten percent of total population converted to Theravada Buddhism. Mahayana Buddhism has been introduced to Pangkhon by the Chinese Language School in the community. The Chinese Language School was established in 1990 by the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce. The courses offered are Taiwanese-Chinese courses, open to children in Pangkhon and neighboring communities. It is an after-school class, from 6 pm to 8 pm Mondays through Fridays, which children attend as soon as their day ends at the "Thai school" (Ministry of Education school). The tuition fee is 500 baht per student per month.

As the manager of the Chinese School explained, northern Thailand was the residential area of the former Kuomintang Army. The main residential area of the descendants of the former Kuomintang Army was in the mountains of Santi Khiri Village in Mae Salong Mountain in Chiang Rai Province. Therefore, the overseas Taiwanese business association supports the Chinese School in the area.

When he first visited Pangkhon, the local villagers were practicing spirit worship. Then, the Chinese School promoted Chinese Mahayana Buddhism to the villagers. Moreover, the school supported the budget for the Mountain God Shrine on the hill that Akha villagers had practiced their worship of spirits. Nowadays, the shrine of the Mountain God is the place of rituals of the Akha people who have converted to Mahayana Buddhism.

Figure 19
Spirit Worship at the Shrine of the Mountain God



Figure 20

Villagers Offering Foods to the Mountain Gods



The religious practices of the local villagers have been changed in the context of the development of the community. In the beginning of the settlement period, Pangkhon Village was the community of the Mien ethnic group. At that time, Akha villagers comprised the wage labor in the opium and cash crops plantation field of Mien villagers. Through time, within the last 30 years, the Akha people accumulated money and started to buy the land from Mien people. At that time, Akha and Mien people had their own religious practices. The Mien practiced in ancestor spirits while the Akha in natural spirits and ancestors by their Akhazang. However, when the Chinese School was founded in the community in the 1990s, it started to promote Mahayana Buddhism to the villagers. The manager of the Chinese language school, in an interview conducted, explained that, at that time, most of the villagers followed the religious practice of Mahayana Buddhism.

However, in the present day, there are only 30 households still practicing Mahayana Buddhism.

Mr. Wirat who is the manager of the Pangkhon Chinese Language School has explained that Chinese schools and teachers initiated the establishment of the Mountain Gods Shrine in the community and propagated Mahayana Buddhism (貫道 - Yīguàn Dào) to the villagers.

In the past, when we first set up a Chinese language school, we asked to use the place which was formerly the old Pangkhon School. At that time, most farmers still worshipped the spirits [Akhazang]. The villagers were still impoverished. The agricultural products were vegetables and fruits, not coffee. After the Chinese language school was established, our Chinese School supported the budget to build a shrine for the mountain gods. (Mr. Wirat, interviewed in September 2017)

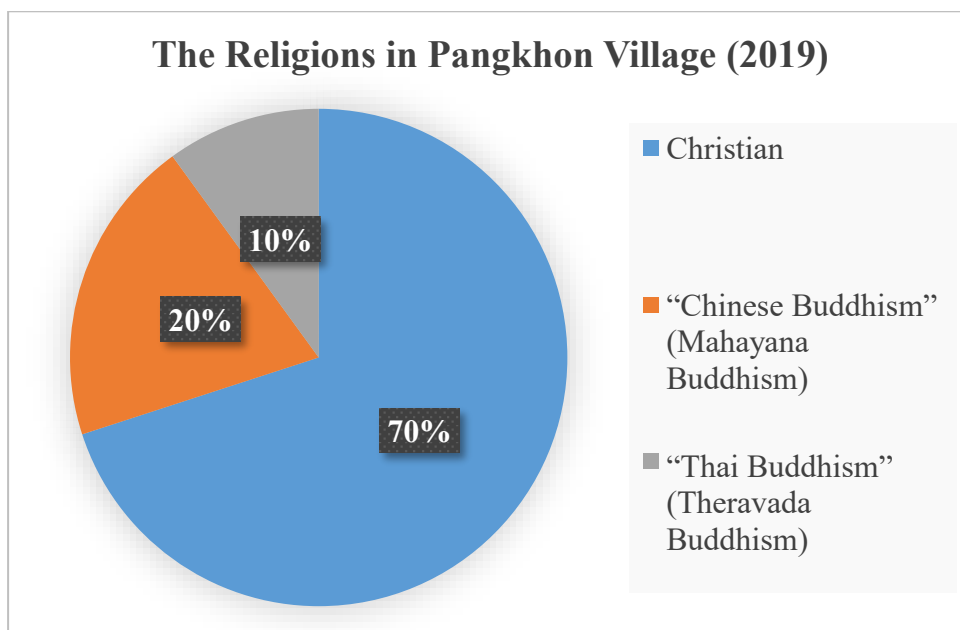
The Chinese school has promoted the teaching of Chinese language and the dissemination of Mahayana Buddhism (貫道 - Yīguàn Dào). However, since 2000, approximately 70% of the people in Pangkhon have converted to Christianity. Mr. Sorn, the village head, further explained:

Nowadays, the beliefs about ancestors are difficult to carry on because the religious leaders of Pangkhon community are not as complete as in the past. Therefore, Pangkhon people cannot complete the Akhazang ceremony. The religious leaders, shamans, and fortune tellers are elements in setting up the village of Akha. However, in Pangkhon we do not have religious leaders, so the ritual cannot be performed. Currently, we do not have successors to religious leaders or ritual practitioners. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

In addition, people in the Pangkhon community are concerned that rituals that are not correctly practiced may lead to negative consequences, as expressed below by Mr. Wuthichai.

The Akhazang is too burdensome and has too many restrictions. The elderly in the community are afraid of doing the wrong details instead of the correct “traditional practices”, which can lead to a bad omen or bring bad luck into their lives and their family members. Pangkhon gradually lost their practice of ancestral worship. (Mr.Wuthichai, interviewed in October 2021)

Figure 21
Religion in Pangkhon Village



Note. Data from the interview with the village head, September 2019.

Villagers who are “Chinese Buddhist” continue to practice rituals according to their belief in ancestral spirits. On the other hand, Christian villagers in the community abolished

the practice and rituals according to the “traditional belief” in ancestral spirits. Therefore, when there is a ritual associated with ancestors or spirit worship, only Akha people who are Buddhists will attend the ceremony and pay for the ceremony.

Since the year 2000, Akha in Pangkhon village began to convert their religion from beliefs, the Akhazang, and belief in ancestral spirits into Christianity and Buddhism owing to the lack of traditional religious leaders. Ms. Kate, the leader of a village group, explained:

... to keep the Akhazang and beliefs are too difficult for Akha in the present day.

We do not have religious leaders such as a shaman, women shaman (fortune teller and spirit medium), so we cannot keep practicing Akha traditional belief in spirits.

The belief of spirits is sometimes contrary to current customs. For example, the birth of twins, in Akha's belief, is considered a bad omen to the community.

According to ancient customs, a parent must kill one of the twins. Otherwise, the couple must be expelled from the community. (Ms. Kate, interviewed in September 2019)

Akha has strong beliefs and practices about wrong habits, doing wrong or “*Phid phi*” (which makes the ancestor spirit angry). In the general perception of Akha, a wrongdoing will create negative effects on the family of the dead person and the whole community. Ms. Kate continued her narrative:

In the case of funerals, the funeral doors and windows of every house must be closed. The coffin of Akha should be made of wood derived from only one tree.

That wood is meant for the coffin and could not be used for any other purpose, even for firewood. Any remaining wood should be left to be rot. Furthermore, Akha “believes” (practiced - author) in the importance of the funeral rituals such as

wearing white colored mourning clothes by the daughter-in-law of the person who passed away. This year an elderly man in Romyen village (10 km from Pangkhon) passed away, but he had no daughter-in-law [since the daughter-in-law had divorced his son] so the mourning was done by his grand daughter-in-law. But then the community shamans said that this way of mourning was not correct. They had to sacrifice a black pig. However, within the distance of about one kilometer from the pig's cage to the house, they could not bring the pig to the house alive to be sacrificed. Two pigs died during the transportation. (Ms. Kate, interviewed in September 2019)

At present, Christianity is the main religion of Pangkhon village. However, there are three different churches in the village. The members of the community perform rituals at their respected churches. The first church was constructed in the early 2000s by the missionary group from The World Vision Association. The Thai pastor is from the northern lowlands. He stayed at Pangkhon village for almost two decades. However, in 2018, there was a conflict about land ownership between the people in the community and him together with his church organization. Apparently, he tried to claim the pastor's house which had been bought by church money. Finally, he decided to move out from the village. Currently, the new pastor is from Phaya Prai village (Mae Fah Luang district, Chiang Rai). He bought a coffee plantation field in Pangkhon with 600,000 baht (US\$ 18026.69). Ten households of Mien villagers participate in Church worship activities.

The second established church is a Korean Church constructed in 2010. The pastor of this church is a Korean pastor whose name is Pastor Yong Ki. Pastor Yong Ki became a coffee trader and he used to buy more than 20 tons of coffee and export to South Korea. He has strong relations with Mr. Kwan and he would buy 5 tons of coffee from Mr. Kwan each year. With this good relationship, Mr. Kwan then divided the area he bought in

Chiang Rai to pastor Yong Ki. Around ten households participate in religious activities in the Korean church.

Figure 22
Korean Church at Pangkhon



The third church in Pangkhon is the Pangkhon Church, under the Church of Thailand Region 12, Chiang Rai. The Pangkhon Church has the largest number of congregation in the village. 40 households participate during Sunday Worship at the Pangkhon Church.

Figure 23

The Church at Pangkhon under the Church of Thailand Region 12, Chiang Rai



6.1.2 Changes in Akha's Identity: Becoming Thai citizens

Akha people in Pangkhon have opted to receive Thai citizenship. Since the year 2002, the villagers have received their Thai National Identification Card (ID Card).

In the past, many Akha who were living in what is officially Royal Forestry Department (RFD) land did not have a regular Thai ID card. Instead, most of them possessed hill tribe ID cards, which did not grant them the right to make a legal claim for land. Technically, most hilly lands remained the property of the state. However, nowadays, most Akha people have received Thai citizenship and they hold a Thai national ID card that bears a 13-digit number, which corresponds to the identification number of each citizen. Specifically for all the villagers in Pangkhon Village born before the year 1984, the first digit (which identifies the registration status of every citizen) in the ID cards is the number “8.” It is a special designation referring to migrant people who have received Thai citizenship (Luangaramsri 2015, KM Team, Office of Foreign Workers Administration, 2015)

Thailand's nationality policy has been in place since the Nationality Act of 1965, whereby the acquisition of nationality designates required vital qualification. For example, first, one father or mother has immigrated to the Kingdom of Thailand for a specified period based on the laws on migration of Thailand. Second, there is evidence or certificate of birth in Thailand. Third, there is no evidence of having or using another nationality. Fourth, the person is able to speak and listen to Thai and can understand. Fifth, one that is very important, the person has loyalty and admiration for the democratic system with the monarchy as head of state. (Luangaramsri 2015, Ministry of Interior Announcement 2017).

Thailand joins the Declaration on Citizenship by Birth, which are international norms including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CRMW, 1990), and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) (Paisanpanichkul et al. 2020: 13).

The laws of nationality that is most relevant and important to farmers in Pangkhon to obtaining Thai citizenship and obtaining an identity card is Nationality Act, B.E. 2508, amended No. 3, B.E. 2535, which appointed government officials such as provincial governors, district chiefs, and deputy district chief in each locality to conduct records and issue the identification cards of minorities. According to the Cabinet Resolutions on August 7, 2000, the Minister of Interior has established the form, method, and fee for applying for Thai citizenship, Thai naturalization, and return of Thai citizenship for “nationality-less person” (Boonraj 2017: 1) who are minority groups, 2002 (on September 13, 2002) (Department of Administrative Affairs 2002).

The academic circles and international development organizations working on Human Rights describe a stateless person, which means “a person who is not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law” (UNHCR 2014: 3). In order to be suitable for working in solving human rights problems in Thailand. Thai scholars have classified stateless people into nationality-less persons, which refers to persons affiliated with the nation-state, however, they are not recorded as a citizen of any state (Ganjanajitra Saisuntorn 2008:1, Rattanamane 2016: 140, and Boonraj 2017: 1) Therefore; in this study, the local farmers in Pangkhon were nationality-less persons among coffee farmers before 2002.

Figure 24
Sample of a Thai National ID card of a Pangkhon Villager



However, at present time, it is a different circumstance in the case of Akha people who migrated to settle in Thailand, a majority of whom are now involved in the coffee growing business. The cultivation of arabica coffee only thrives well in an area that is 800 meters above sea level, and in Thailand, all such areas are protected by the Forest Reserve Laws. Other than this, the policy granting Thai citizenship to minorities in 2002 has also changed the citizenship of Akha people. All of the Akha villagers in Pangkhon Village were granted Thai citizenship.

The Akha in Pangkhon studied the Thai language from Pangkhon School, a Thai public elementary school established in 1987. They accepted the duties of citizens of Thailand and became Thai nationals. In September 2017, the Akha in Pangkhon Village decorated their community with the Thai national flag in commemoration of the Thai National Flag Day, which is on September 28th of each year. Interestingly, this day is not as significant among most of the Thai people. There is no public celebration for that day and there is no regulation for the Thai people to decorate their houses or their companies with the Thai national flag. However, the Pangkhon villagers, who became Thai citizens later than the majority of Thai people, chose to celebrate this day by displaying the national flag along the road from the entrance of the community to the exit of the community. All households displayed the national flag in front of their houses as well.

Figure 25
Raising the Thai Flag on National Flag Day



This cultural practice shows the change in the identity of the Akha people in Pangkhon Village. They presented their *Thainess* as they are “Akha-Thai” who can show their loyalty to the Thai royal family by protecting the forest and planting coffee in cooperation with programs of the royal development center.

“We decorate the road by planting beside it the Thai national flags and in front of every house to celebrate the National Flag Day,” said Mr. Sorn in September 2017.

6.2 Revitalizing Akhazang

6.2.1 The Akha Genealogical Diagram

The special designation in their ID Card is telling of the mixture of the Akha identity and their Thainess. The Akha people acquired Thai nationality and registered their surnames according to the policies of the Thai government. However, they have no written form of their own ethnic history; thus, the Akha in Pangkhon tried to remember and search for the original Akha genealogical diagram in Pangkhon.

Therefore, the villagers and village headman registered the names of family members of five main Akha clans, which are patrilineal decent groups, in Pangkhon village including Lamue, Bowjong, Woichor, Kersa and Saelo. According to the Akha tradition, the son uses the ending of his father's name as the first syllable. Following this tradition, Akha people are able to search for their male ancestral line through name memorization. Although they now have a tradition of using Thai names and surnames after they received their Thai national ID cards, they still want to keep a record of the Akha family names in order to determine the connection among relatives in the community.

In the belief of the Akha in Pangkhon village, they can count back to their ancestors for 56 generations, by counting it through the lineage of men. Every Akha man received

the name of their father to be the first syllable of their first name. This name recognition is counted only through men. An Akha woman may remember her male lineage but she is affiliated with her husband's surname. This relates to the tradition of ancestor worship, as explained below by the village head Mr. Sorn.

When Pangkhon was still worshipping ancestors, no one would violate the belief in ancestor worship. Every member of the village trusted in it. The villagers performed rituals together because they respected their ancestral spirits and had faith that they had common ancestors. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

However, the Akha people do not have their written history and writing alphabets. This description is consistent with the Akha narratives in Scott's study. Scott (2006) mentioned that the Akha "lost" their records when they escaped from the Tai military. During the migration "they ate their books of buffalo-hide when they were hungry, and so lost their scripts" (Scott 2006: 222). The village head Mr. Sorn also spoke of this information as a legend known to Akhas as quoted below.

There is a legend that our Akha ancestors used to have recorded history, written language on the book of cow skin. However, during their tough migration journey, our ancestors ate the books containing that knowledge. As a result, our knowledge of history and our alphabets disappeared. We do not blame them, since the story shows that in the past, our ancestors had difficulty in resettlement. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

Many scholars focused on the revitalization of the Akha culture and identity, or Akhazang, of the Akha people in the Greater Mekong. Morton (2013) and Agostini (2018) studied the revitalization of Akhazang through the meeting for ancestor recognition of

international Akha in China, Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand. Mr. Phantamit expounds on his own family lineage:

There is a traditional way of counting the line of ancestors. A son can count his own line as a generation only after his father's death. We will count the generations in the family line from the ancestors up to the present era only when our father has passed away. For example, Mr. Sorn [referring to the village head] cannot count as a generation because his father is still alive. However, I can count my own line as another generation because my father has passed away. I am the 56th generation. (Mr. Phantamit, interviewed in October 2021)

It was Mr. Sorn's father who attended the upper Maekong Akha meeting in 2009 regarding the revitalization of Akhazang by recognizing patrilineal ancestral genealogy.

This ancestral lineage is reviewed in another Akha tradition. In an Akha funeral, the shaman would pray and these prayers would start from early morning and last throughout the day. The chants describe the patrilineal ancestor of the person who passed away, where they come from, and describe that person's life story before their death. This description is chanted in the ancient Akha language, to which Mr. Sorn and Mr. Wuthichai commented, "We didn't understand everything. Maybe our father or mother's generation would understand better."

The use of the Akha identity has been an effective marketing strategy in the coffee market. While the Akha in Pangkhon Village have legally become part of Thai society as Thai citizens, they intentionally set themselves apart in the coffee market, as can be seen in the brand names and logos they use which show a reproduction of the Akha identity.

The coffee brands – Pangkhon Coffee, Paangkhon Coffee, Akha Noi and Aso Coffee – have all been deliberately chosen by the Akha producers to showcase their identity. Pangkhon obviously relates to the place of their community. The other brands use Akha language; Akha Noi translates to Little Akha, meaning a little Akha learning about coffee; and Aso is a name for an Akha male in the Akha language. It is actually the Akha name of Mr. Mittaphap.

Arabica coffee production in Thailand is driven by ethnic minority groups such as the Karen, Hmong, and Akha. Among the three, it is the Akha people who produce the most arabica coffee in Thailand. Hence, the Akha of Pangkhon Village are regarded as the main player in the coffee business in Thailand and this fact allows them to effectively negotiate using the Akha community area, culture, and language.

The Pangkhon village head and villagers decided to organize a “*Pangkhon Coffee Event*” in January of every year. The community decided to have this event in January for promoting tourism in the village because the Himalayan cherry (*Prunus cerasoides*) coincidentally blooms in the village on the said month. (This is the flower that Thai people define as the *sakura* of Thailand. It blooms in the mountain area with high altitude in cold weather.) In the festival, there is a booth for Pangkhon coffee tasting. There are cultural performances (see Figure 27) of the Akha tribe such as Akha dance and folk music, and they serve tribal foods and beverages. In one such event, the price for a dinner table good for eight people was pegged at 1,200 baht. There was a total of 120 tables and all tickets for 120 tables were sold out. More than 1,000 people joined the first Pangkhon coffee and cultural day.

In the case of Akha coffee producers in Pangkhon, they could still maintain their identity, although modified, and they have especially attached this Akha identity to their coffee products and cultural tourism business.

6.2.2 The Village Gate and its New Social Function

In the past, every Akha village would have a big gate constructed of wooden pillars and there would be two village gates in every community. The first gate would be located at the main entrance of the community and serve as the entrance gate. The other gate would be the exit gate of the village and would be located on a passage leading to the forest or to a graveyard.

In 2016, after Mr. Sorn became the head of Pangkhon Village, he spent the community budget to construct a new village gate in the community. The gate of community is the symbol of the identity of Akha people. Since the past, the village gate has provided a "sense of territoriality" among the Akha people. The two village gateways are the boundaries between the 'inside world' and 'outside world' of the Akha. Akha villages are identical islands surrounded not only by forest, but also by hills, valleys, and rivers as well as by villages inhabited by members of other ethnic groups (Kammerer 1988).

Similarly, the newly constructed gate of the village serves as the symbol of Akha culture in Pangkhon Village. The gate may have no cultural function as an entrance gate to "the villagers world" or their territory but has the symbolic meaning of the Akha culture and Akha community space, which used to be occupied by the Mien ethnic group. However, in the present day, the village gate was constructed by the Akha in a modified

design. Nevertheless, the gate continues to represent their culture and has also become a part of their commercial culture under the coffee and tourism business.

Figure 26
The New Pangkhon Village Gate



Once visitors enter the village gate, there is more to see about the Akha culture. For one, the Akha in their clothes provides a lasting image of the Akha identity, so much so that, nowadays, they have resorted to donning their dresses so as to be more competitive in the coffee market.

There is also more to the Akha's village gates. As mentioned above, the first gate serves as the entrance and the second one as the exit. However, the second gate which is located at the end of the territory of the village is also a gate of the spirits (Pratu Phi) which leads the way to the community cemetery. There is a ritual to pay offerings to the gates once a year. There is also an exorcism festival (Phiti Lai Phi) every nine months according

to the Akha calendar. Mr. Sorn's narrative about the rich tradition of the gates follows. It ends with a short but interesting note of how the royal hegemony has played into an Akha gate. Geusau also mention that gate of the community was significant to the Akha way. The gate is decorated with wooden sculptures such as guns, knives, and swords (Geusau 1983, 254, 272).

In the exorcism ceremony, wooden swords are crafted and painted, and the boys in the community hold swords to chase and knock on every house. The evil spirits will then escape from the village. If the boys find cucumbers or melons in any household, they can take and eat them. At the end of the ceremony, wooden knives and swords will be placed at both village's gates. In the old tradition, the Akha gates will not be demolished, but villagers will construct new gates in front of the previous ones.

The entrance gates are usually decorated by wood carvings in many symbols such as guns, knives, birds, pigs, household utensils, and equipment for rituals (jars and pots). The head of the village team discussed with the elderly in the community regarding the construction of the gate. At first, the elders did not agree to construct the gate. This was because they feared that if the gates are not constructed under the proper rituals, they will cause a bad omen and inflict danger to the community. However, after many discussions and meetings, finally, the elders permitted the head of the village to construct the gate. However, the elders asked the village head team to reduce the wooden sculptures — especially the wooden sculptures of a naked man and a woman, which symbolize the origin of lives. The gates would normally have a carved wooden man and woman beside the pillars of the gate. Moreover, we took out the gun symbol because there is no more hunting wild animals with guns.

Furthermore, it has a helicopter sculpture, which is the vehicle of the H. M. Queen Sirikit, who visited Pangkhon and initiated the Pangkhon Highland Agricultural Development Center. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

From the interview data, the process of selecting the current practices of "Akha traditional culture" has been shown to serve two primary purposes. Firstly, it is to preserve their "traditional culture" within the context of their nationalization and status of being citizens of the Thai state. The Akha farmers are fully aware that they live and do agriculture in the border areas of Thailand. They understand that the Thai state has tried to control the spatial areas at the border and control the use of land in this area. In particular, they recognize the control of the state in their farming and use of forest areas. Under this scenario, the coffee farmers in Pangkhon have become "Thai citizens", since 2002, but have also tried to maintain and revitalize their "traditional Akha culture" (Akhazang) within the acceptable current norms.

Secondly, certain practices have been selected but modified as "Akha traditional culture", especially cultural activities, to serve as the foundation for the development of tourism and the coffee business. In other words, this modification of "Akha culture" connects "Akhaness" to the community livelihood and attract tourists into Pangkhon. A conversation with Mr. Sorn, the village head, shed some light to this modification of "Akha culture".

The revitalization of Akha cultural events has two main purposes. First is to preserve the culture so that it does not disappear. The second reason is to promote tourism in Pangkhon for a better coffee business. Therefore, the restoration of culture has positive impacts on both cultural preservation and coffee product distribution. We

use [traditional] bamboo kiosks for coffee tasting booths and selling coffee to coffee business owners in the village. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

The Coffee Festival Day is a significant example of an attempt to modify and revitalize the local villagers' cultural activities and artifacts, especially the building of the Akha gates and the selection of cultural events to be held at the coffee festival. Mr. Sorn, the head of the village has mentioned that:

This gate [referring to the new gate of the community] was made because Akha traditional culture started to disappear, so I wanted to rebuild the Akha gate with the decorative objects related to Akha culture to show Akha tradition to young generations. Otherwise, Akha children will not know anything about the Akha culture. The revival of the swing festival and the top battle game [events organized for tourists during the Pangkhon Coffee Festival] was aimed at engaging teenagers in activities to talk to each other. Swing and top battle games can be easily restored than other rituals and cultural activities. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

6.2.3 Expansion of Tourism and Modification of Akha “Traditional Culture”

Pangkhon's tourism began to expand since Pangkhon's coffee products became famous after the promotion of coffee planting at the royal development center. According to the Pangkhon Royal Initiative Agricultural Development Center, the number of tourists visiting Pangkhon every year (before the COVID-19 pandemic) was approximately 16,000 to 17,000 people per year.

Mr. Phantamit spoke about plans for the village and stated, "Our villagers focus on tourism development. Currently, Mr. Sorn is trying to develop tourism for the survival and

sustainability of coffee planting in Pangkhon.” About this, Mr. Sorn, the village head, explained:

The San Palang Company usually informs the local villagers in the community that the company has no plans to continue buying coffee from Pangkhon forever. Thus, they encourage the development of other community enterprises. On this point, the development of tourism is the way that would create a sustainable income for our local villagers. We can survive if tourists come and get to know Pangkhon.

We promote tourism in Pangkhon while we also develop our coffee production for our sustainable income. If we can process our coffee until the roasting process, we will earn more income. For example, if we sell 20 tons of dried coffee, we can get only 100 baht per kilogram, but the coffee price will increase to 180 baht if we have a miller machine. Moreover, if we can roast, the coffee price will be as high as 450 baht per kilogram. The price of coffee will increase by three times. (Mr. Phantamit, interviewed in October 2021)

Workshops and Homestays

There are coffee planting and coffee processing workshops in Pangkhon. The community organized a coffee study tour for two days and one night. Mr. Sorn the head of the village and Mr. Jedsada, assistant to village head, explained the prices relating to the workshop. The price to attend the workshop started from 1,800 baht per person. However, the price for two persons is 1,500 baht for each person. If the participants reached 3-6 people, the price would decrease to 1,300 baht per person. The price per participant in a group of 7-10 people would be 1,000 baht per person.

There are also five homestay houses in the village for welcoming tourists who travel during the winter. The coffee production has been promoted by Pangkhon Royal

Initiative Centre for Highland Agricultural Development as a ‘ soft technique of government’ to create an incentive for natural reservation in the area. Most owners of guesthouses and provide homestays in Pangkhon Village are the coffee farmers and coffee traders who have their own coffee brand.

While the promotion of tourism in the village is done as a community endeavor, supported by the Chiang Rai Provincial Community Development Office in the village level, the owners of the guesthouses and homestays in the community belong to the upper economic group in the village and are lower-middle age generation, who can finance and manage the guesthouses by themselves.

Akha Festivals and Ceremonies

In joining the tourism industry, the Akha culture is on full display. Currently, the swings ceremony and the Akha New Year Festival were modified as a welcome ceremony for tourists and guests entering the village. The songs in the performance have been used in ceremonies in the past but now, together with the accompanying dance, were turned into a welcome program for the enjoyment of tourists.

Figure 27
Akha Performance for Tourism (September 2019)



Mr. Sorn commented that “We, our generation (30s), could not understand well the music used in the performance. We understand only around ten percent of the meaning.” According to Mr. Wuthichai, other than the traditional culture displayed, “We think coffee is a new culture, the “coffee culture.”

There are two cases of the stage performance. In case of a cultural show organized by Pangkhon Village, there will be performances by Lahu, Yao, and Akha. In case the Sub-District Administrative Organization sponsors the show, it will add Lisu people. According to the 2019 data from Huaichomphu Subdistrict Organization, the population of Pangkhon Village (Section 7 of the subdistrict) is composed mostly of Akha followed by Mien and Lahu.

The village head Mr. Sorn, together with Mr. Wuthichai, talked more about Akha rituals as quoted below. They speak of a coffee drinking event akin to an Akha ceremony.

Our agriculture has been linked to various rituals. There must be an offering before planting, during the planting process, and after the harvesting process. Ceremonies and offerings to the ancestor spirits and nature deities in Akhazang are not anymore the practice of the villagers today. In the past, we had to construct small shrines in our agricultural areas for offering food and beverages to spirits in the gardens.

The Gin Kao Mai Ceremony [celebrating the newly harvested rice] was usually conducted after the harvest season. However, if there were no rice cultivation, this ceremony would not be held that year [reflecting on the importance of rice and rice production to the people of the community]. (Mr. Sorn, the head of the village, interviewed in October 2021)

The Pangkhon Coffee Event or Jip Gafae Lae Pangkhon [coffee sipping and enjoying the Pangkhon scenery) organized by Pangkhon villagers were held in 2018 and 2019. [There were no such events in the year 2020 and 2021 due to the outbreak of COVID-19]. This is an event that we would like to organize once a year to promote coffee from Pangkhon.

Currently, we produce coffee to be sold for money for us to buy foods. Coffee nourishes our community. Therefore, I would like to redefine the Pangkhon Coffee Event as 'Gin Gafae Mai' which is “Drinking New Coffee Product”. The event will be quite similar to Gin Kao Mai Ceremony in the way that Akha would celebrate newly harvested rice.

On this notion of the rice harvest in the past and the current coffee harvest being comparable cultures, Mr. Phantamit added:

Traditional agriculture of crop rotation is of reduced importance today. The rotation cultivation area has changed into the coffee growing area. The new generation is already familiar with growing coffee. No crop rotation or other vegetables have been planted.

The Pangkhon Coffee Festival and Akha Swing

In the past three years, Pangkhon has organized the Pangkhon Coffee Festival. At the festival, an “Akha traditional house” has been constructed of bamboo and dried hay grass to demonstrate the Akha way of life. The kitchen utensils and house components are organized similar to how it used to be done in the Akha houses. Furthermore, there were representatives of Akha dressed in Akha costumes at the house to communicate with tourists and answer questions about the culture and traditions of the Akha.

There is something called an “Akha swing”, which is a tradition explained here by the village head Mr. Sorn:

The Akha swing was also constructed at the ceremony. In the first year when the event was held, the elders in the community were against the construction of the swing for entertaining the tourists. In the past, if not during the ritual, they would not be able to build a swing pillar. Moreover, when the ceremony was over the Akha were not allowed to play on the swings or touch the swing pillar. The elderly people did not accept the construction of the swing pillar. However, the organizing committee carried on with the construction but reduced its details in order not to cause problems to the community. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

Traditionally, there would be a swing ceremony in the eighth month of the Akha calendar. The Swing Ceremony was organized at the beginning of the harvest season in around November. The meaning of the Swing Festival is to celebrate the circulation of the world. Akha people build a swing with three columns with a height of 3 to 4 meters. During the ceremony, a representative of the community sits on the swing. The swing symbolizes the movement of the earth and the coming of the harvest season each year. This narrative is consistent with Geusau's study on Akhazang. Akha cannot swing beyond the three-day Swing Festival period during the New Year Festival (Geusau 1983, 253).

Akha costumes are also on display not only during festivals but also on Fridays, as Mr. Sorn expounds:

We also promote Akha costumes. At Pangkhon Coffee Festival, Akha people wear tribal clothing for tourists to see the Akha culture. Moreover, villagers are encouraged to dress in Akha costumes every Friday. It is the same way that government agencies and schools in Thailand have the policy to wear Thai or Akha costumes every Friday. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

The Red Eggs New Year Festival

The Red Eggs New Year Festival (The Akha New Year Festival) is traditionally held after Gin Kao Mai Festival in early April before the start of rice cultivation and other crops in the new season. The planting season starts in May.

Pangkhon villagers, especially the head of the village, try to select some cultural activities from their “former traditional cultural events” when they were practicing the Akhazang. For example, the new year festival of Akha has been

reidentified and reinterpreted in a new form of cultural activity for welcoming guests to the village.

In the Red Eggs New Year, the Akha people dyed boiled eggs in red color because red is an auspicious color for Akha. The boiled eggs were dyed with wild aloe vera that creates a red color after being boiled. Originally, these were given to children or guests who attended the Red Egg New Year Ceremony. Therefore, now similar red eggs are being given to tourists who come into the community. Mr. Sorn gives more information on this ceremony:

Boiled eggs still have social functions. Nowadays, villagers who practice Chinese Buddhists [Mahayana Buddhism] boil eggs during Chinese New Year. Christians boil eggs during Easter. Red eggs are auspicious eggs used to welcome guests, so guests can eat them or keep them as souvenirs.

In the past, women used to weave red strings as necklaces with red-dyed eggs to make a necklace or hanging decorations in the hut as a sign of affection for men. If any man received a red-dyed eggs necklace from a woman, he would hang it in front of the hut. (Mr. Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

West (2006) describes the process of re-embedding coffee into Papua New Guinea culture. In the case of Pangkhon villagers, although they had previously supported coffee cultivation from a private agency, the World Vision Organization, and the royal development center, coffee had not been culturally “embedded” in Akha people’s “traditional culture”. However, after the promotion of coffee cultivation by the royal development project, it can be said that coffee production in Pangkhon has become more “embedded” with the Akha culture. This process did not happen

automatically. Rather, it arose from the effort of selection and modification of particular Akha culture by the locals.

The Akha Guesthouses

In addition, following the expansion of tourism in Pangkhon, the coffee farmers in the community built guesthouses to accommodate tourists coming into the community. The guesthouses were modeled from a young man's hut in Akha culture. It is a practice of Akhazang where young men, as they enter their teens from 15 years of age, have to build separate huts, from their fathers and mothers, where the family's ancestral spirits are located. At that time, people in the community practiced respecting ancestral spirits. The welcoming of visitors to the community can only be done when the main village gate is sacrificed before guests or outsiders can enter the community and live within the community. In the past, when young men wanted to welcome their friends or guests, they had to do so in their huts that were built separately from their parents' houses, known as *yumza*.

Guesthouses to welcome the guests to the villages were constructed with some reduction in details under the Akha cultural norms. For example, the removal of the details of the 'horn of the house' at the gable of the hut was done in order to not fully resemble the traditional style of the *yumza*, and consequently prevent any cause for bad luck in beliefs. This is because the detail of the horn of the houses around the gable is believed to be the dwelling place of the house spirits guarding the house. The community tourism committee prohibited the owner of the guesthouses to build a house that looks like or is close to a “traditional Akha home” to avoid the imitations of such beliefs. Mr. Sorn, the village head and leader of the Phangkhon tourism committee explained;

Under Akha customs, a young man at the age of 15 or 16 has to build their hut next to their parents' house for their private residence. This young man's hut will be a gathering place for the teenagers who will meet and talk to have privacy. If a young man has a girlfriend, according to the traditions of the Akha people, if they are not married, they will not be able to live or meet in their parents' house because it would be against the ancestor's spirit. A model of this old pattern hut built by a young man stands at the Pangkhon Coffee Festival for tourists to see. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

The Akha Cultural Performance

In addition, performances to welcome tourists have also evolved from rituals such as the Akha cultural dance during celebrations such as in the New Year festivals. When used in the tourism business, the details and social functions of these rituals are diminished. The dance is done to music by wooden drums, brass cymbals, and bamboo barrels used as percussions. Initially, this dance and chorus conveyed stories, legends, history, myths of the Akha people, moral teachings, and hymns of praise to the ancestors.

The Akha people do not have writing characters. Therefore, history, legends, and cultural teachings in the past were inherited in the form of songs and chants. However, after tourism in Pangkhon began to develop due to promoting coffee planting for conservation in the area, the dances and chorales for ceremonies were selected and then modified by reducing some details of the dance and chants. Mr.Wuthichai explained more:

The cultural performance at the Pangkhon Coffee Festival done by the parents' generation [50s-60s] showed the Akha dance as a show involving dancing and singing to cymbals, bamboo barrels, and drums. Thus, the performance had no

ritual function. The chants that were sung are simplified. Sometimes it was just playing idly without singing. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

Nowadays, the details of the dancing and chanting have been so diminished that it has been reduced to a show to welcome tourists. The performers are dressed in "traditional Akha clothes" and visitors can choose the performance they desire to watch from a package tour that includes the show. During the performance, tourists can take part in the show. Mr. Sorn gave more details as follows:

Tourists can book the show if they want to have the cultural show for their group. The head of the village team can arrange the show for the tourist group. The price of the show is 2,000 baht (US\$ 59.95). All the money for the show will be given to all the performers. Moreover, a red egg necklace, if tourists want it, they can order it for 35 baht (US\$ 1.5). (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

6.2.4 The Guesthouses at Pangkhon

The Hotel Act, BE 2547 (2004) defines the definition of "homestay" as a form of tourism accommodation where tourists stay with house owners under the same roof, or the accommodation has been modified to allow tourists to stay in no more than four houses temporarily, or rooms that accept less than 20 tourists (Thai homestay standards, Office of Tourism Services Development 2015). Mr. Sorn gives further details as follows:

According to the regulations of the Forestry Officers, each household can build only four homestays. However, at present, some homestay owners have built more than four homestays. The community is still not fully open for tourism in the community. Therefore, no measures have been taken.

The price of the homestay depends on the owner who sets the price. For example, my homestay costs 850 baht per night with shared bathroom facilities. The house with an internal bathroom costs 1,800 baht per night; on Sundays and holidays, the price will increase to 2,000 baht, including Akha foods for breakfast.

6.2.4.1 Homestay of Mr.Kwan

As mentioned earlier, the tiny houses built for homestays were constructed in the shape of the small traditional huts of young Akha men. This hut is called *yumza*.

Mr. Kwan, one of the biggest coffee business owners in Pangkhon, is the first homestay owner in the village. He organized two rooms in his house to welcome guests in 2015. It is the starting point of the homestay business and the development of tourism in Pangkhon. Moreover, he constructed a concrete cement house near his coffee factory. The house contains two rooms for tourists and one coffee shop. The homestay of Mr. Kwan is located on a high point in the village where tourists can see the whole of Pangkhon Village and the valley. Moreover, the tourists can walk into the coffee factory to observe the coffee production process of making dried beans and roasting process. However, after his coffee business expanded, the guesthouse did not receive any more tourists. Mr. Kwan said that he and his family has not enough time to manage the guesthouse and a coffee shop in Pangkhon. He has bought an area on the lowlands near Chiang Rai town and built a new coffee factory there. He said,

I bought an area on the plains [located 15 kilometres from downtown Ching Rai] to expand my coffee production. The location above, on the mountain in Pangkhon, is not enough. I built a ground to dry coffee beans, a coffee warehouse, fertilizer warehouse, and a coffee roasting factory in order to

produce enough coffee products for the orders coming from foreign countries such as Taiwan.

6.2.4.2. Akha Noi Homestay and Coffee Shop by Mr. Sorn

Mr. Sorn's homestay, one of the leading homestays in Pangkhon, had five houses which were built with bamboo woods and the roofs were covered by dry grass. The pattern of the house replicated the traditional hut of young men called *yumza*. However, in 2019 Mr. Sorn decided to reconstruct his guesthouse using wood from the forest area in Pangkhon. Mr. Sorn bought used woods that was demolished from old wooden houses from lowland Chiang Rai.

Figure 28
Akha Noi Guesthouse



6.2.4.3. Akha Pangkhon by Mr. Phu

Mr. Phu is a young coffee entrepreneur in the village. At 35 years old, he is a businessman who has developed his business quickly. He is a local assistant to the officer of the royal development center. He is also a middleman trader collecting coffee beans for the Pangkhon Royal Initiative for Highland Agricultural Development Center for processing to coffee under the brand of the Royal Initiative Project. He also works as a middleman trader between local villagers and Pangkhon Coffee, the business of Mr. A who is the first director of the Pangkhon Development Center. Moreover, he is the head of a coffee community enterprise group selling coffee beans to San Palang Company.

Figure 29

The Guesthouse of Mr. Phu



Mr. Phu constructed a concrete guesthouse at his coffee factory. The guesthouse contains three rooms. In October 2021, he renovated the guesthouse and constructed a new roofdeck for his guesthouse business.

6.2.4.4. Guesthouse of Mr. Armue

Mr. Armue, a coffee businessman, had his guesthouse constructed on his coffee garden. His guesthouse is located beside the road to the church of the Korean Missionary Association. It has a total of ten houses which were modeled in the form of the hut of the young men, *yumza*. However, the small huts have been modified into a more modern form. The huts have a bamboo wall and a dried grass roof. The number of guesthouses of Mr. Armue has exceeded the regulation of the guesthouse policy. Normally, the guesthouse owners should have only four houses in their business. In the case of Mr. Armue, he constructed ten houses. The number of guesthouses of Mr. Armue exceeded the community's regulations and the law on the guesthouse business so the village committee passed a resolution to control the number of tourists staying in his guesthouses to not more than five groups. This was done in preparation for the time when tourism restarts in the village after the COVID-19 epidemic ends. However, due to the COVID-19 situation now, the tourists still could not enter the community. However, Mr. Armue is a member of the Pangkhon community's leader team (Wuiyaku 2021). Mr. Armue violated the terms of homestay business regulations. However, the community committee had not yet considered penalizing Mr. Armue, a community committee that built up more guesthouses that exceeded the maximum quota based on the regulation.

Figure 30

Semi-Akha Hut Style Homestay in Pangkhon



6.2.4.5. Krob Krua Ma (Ma Family) Guesthouse

Mr. Ken is one of the biggest coffee traders in Pangkhon. He is the middleman trader of Mr. Bunmee who is a prominent coffee businessman from Chiang Rai. Mr. Bunmee owns “Doi Luang Coffee” (Big Mountain Coffee) in Mae Suay District, Chiang Rai. Mr. Ken and his family organized the guesthouse on their coffee garden to allow the tourists to enjoy the scenery of the coffee garden. The guesthouse consists of three houses. The houses were built in isosceles triangle form, the designs for which they got from the Pinterest website. Each house has a bathtub; therefore, the Krob Krua Ma guesthouse uses the most modern architecture pattern in the village.

Traditionally, at the top of the roof of the Akha house, there would be a wooden cross called “*Ba Kha*” (or Kalae in Northern Thai vocabulary). The Ba Kha is a beautifully carved wood to decorate the roof of the traditional house. Based on Akhazang, the beliefs of the Akha, the Ba Kha is the dwelling place for spirits that protect the household.

However, in the construction of small huts like the yumza, there will be no Ba Kha on the roof because it is not a permanent house. Thus, the guesthouses do not have the Ba Kha on the roof.

6.3 The Akha way of Harmonious Link with Nature and Rituals

Geusau (1983) explained the holistic cosmology under the Akhazang of the Akha. Akha people aims to live harmoniously with the nature and ecology (Geusau 1983: 253). During ceremonies and rituals, Akha people had to stay in the village and their houses. They called this *Jam Wan* or rest day. They do not go out for gardening or go into the forest for hunting. Everyone must stay inside the house or within the community. Women would spend that time embroidering or craft making. The men will sit and talk together to exchange knowledge or discuss various topics in their community. Mrs. Wan (The Coffee farmer and a coffee barista at the coffee shop of Mr.Panthamit) explained that "Nowadays, Jam Wan has been transformed into a weekly holiday for Christians that they usually have a day-off every Sunday. It's a 'memory day'. Do not do gardening or hunting in the forest." Geusau mentioned that in the Akha practice, there are a belief in good day and bad day good month and bas month (Geusau 1983, 253).

Moreover, in the Akha calendar, there are *Wan Gam* (unlucky day). Akha people also cannot go anywhere. They do not farm or hunt on that day.

Mr. Sorn also said:

In the past, when there was a ritual or ceremony, every household had to donate money to buy cows, buffalos, or pigs for offering in the ceremony.

After the ritual is finished, the meat will be divided into equal portions for

every household. Currently, only the common facilities development, village meeting, or coffee-related activities can include villagers in the village to meet up together.

Cultivation of coffee is a forest conservation agriculture. Recently, at Pangkhon, there is not any monoculture cash crop cultivation requiring clearing the forest or cutting down trees like in the past. This area was a red zone forest [a degraded forest area according to the definition of the Royal Forest Department]. However, nowadays, coffee production made this area become an all green zone [abundant forest area].

Coffee is such a beneficial plant. We can use all parts of the coffee. The coffee leaves can be used for cooking. Coffee flowers can be used to make tea. Coffee beans are used to make coffee drink. The bark of coffee beans we use for fertilizer. The residue left from coffee brewing can be sold to make scrub soaps. The trunk can be used as firewood. Coffee is therefore the main crop of the Akha people. (Mr.Sorn, interviewed in October 2021)

This chapter explained the attempt to adapt the culture of Akha people to reflect the nature of its cultural and indigenous knowledge (IK). Agrawal (1995) has pointed out that the limitation on the dichotomous distinction between scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge (IK) is a problem in explaining the development and study of culture. After the era of essential infrastructure development under the grand theory of development, international organizations and NGOs adopted the concept of indigenous knowledge as the foundation of the alternative development approach. This empowers indigenous people and enable their local knowledge to fit in the development program (Agrawal 1995: 416-417). Development agencies and some scholars differentiate between scientific knowledge of

development and indigenous knowledge as binary opposition developmental knowledge. However, Agrawal argued that indigenous knowledge is not static and may be relatively developed in the actual context.

In the case of traditional culture modification and revitalization of Akha people in coffee production projects for forest conservation, their traditional culture is also not a static system. It is constantly being modified through a period of time. This study has presented how, thus far, the “traditional culture of Akhazang” has been modified and revitalized under the context of conservation along with the process of nationalization and the making of citizenship

6.4 Summary

The Akha, an ethnic group in the Southeast Asia, have roots in the Zomia area, which according to Scott (2009) serves as a hideaway from being citizens. People here tried to escape from the burden of tax control and the official agricultural systems managed by a state. He analyzed the process of escaping from becoming a citizen of a state as the “art of not being governed”.

However, as the situation has changed today, the previously blurred boundary between the states has now become clearly controlled and governed by laws. In the same wise, agricultural farmers are now unable to migrate, rotate their agricultural area, or grow crops such as opium or short-term cash crops as they could do in the past.

Those ethnic farmers must now become citizens of a certain national state; they have to settle in a village within a certain boundary. They have to do agriculture on permanent land, and they have to plant crops that the state promotes for them to plant in reservation areas. This study, therefore, is interested to learn more about the strategies of

ethnic farmers in not being governed, and then explore how the cultural identity of that ethnic group has changed in today's contemporary time.

The Akha coffee farmers modified their culture, the Akhazang, to be the foundation of their coffee business. The Akha gate has been modified from the boundary between Akha's world with the outside world (Kammerer 1998). This Akha gate has now become a symbol of welcoming travelers and tourists to the village.

In addition, the meaning of New Year's rituals has also been redefined for tourism and coffee business development, such as redefining the meaning of red-dyed eggs as a symbol of prosperity which used to be a welcome item for visitors traveling into the village. It has become something that is used to welcome tourists who come to travel in the village.

Moreover, there are modifications and reductions in the details of folk dances which used to be rituals that tell the history of the community, including the customs and practices of the Akha people in daily life and morality, including their genealogy. These rituals in the form of song and dance have now become a show to welcome tourists.

The design of guesthouses to welcome tourists has been adapted from the young man's hut yumza. However, there is reduction in the details of the building.

Moreover, the Akha at Pangkhon also reduced the details of the swing ceremony, and the Akha swing, which was once a ceremony to celebrate the harvest and symbolize the rotation of the seasons. This too has become a part of tourism activities.

Most importantly, the effort to adapt the "Kin Kao Mai" festival, which is a ritual to celebrate the rice harvest in the production season, has been transformed into the "Gin Kafae Mai" (Drinking new coffee) event at the coffee festival of Pangkhon.

All these speak of a form of cultural adaptation taking place in the context of creating a Thai identity through the process of nationalization and the making of citizenship under the Thai state. The Akha farmers modified some dimensions of their "traditional culture" after adopting coffee production as a new commercial crop that has never been linked to the Akha culture before. Therefore, the Akha in Pangkhon have connected Akha culture with coffee production. As a result, there was no resistance to the conservation process by coffee production in the case of Pangkhon.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This research aims to explore the complexity of power in conservation by coffee production and the internalization of conservation ideology to the local villagers. Under the process of multiple forms of power, the response of the local villagers can demonstrate through the process of cultural modification and revitalization of ethnic culture (Akhazang) in the case study.

This research examined the creation of environmentality under the neoliberal context of coffee cultivation that is promoted by the royal initiative of Thailand for conservation in highland areas as well as sustainable development in the highland protected forest areas. The process of environmental consciousness among the local people through the promotion of coffee production in northern Thailand occurred under the coordination of “*direct*” and “*indirect*” forms of power. Environmentality, under the conservation project of coffee production, come in multiple forms in actual practice. The concept of “*multiple environmentalities*” has been developed in the recent debate on environmentality (Fletcher 2017; Youdelis 2013; Montes 2019 and Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez 2020).

Some studies have used the concept of multiple environmentalities to explain that in the conservation process, environmentality or conservation consciousness/awareness among the local villagers may be constructed in multiple forms. Environmentality creates the *environmental subject*, individuals in the conservation process who embrace environmental consciousness to control their resource use and conservation practices. Moreover, environmental consciousness is also shaped by economic incentives that push

the agenda of environmental awareness. Environmental consciousness is also developed through processes in which local people benefit from conservation such as ecotourism.

As a comparative case, it is significant to examine the study on environmentality and the Karen ethnic group. Youdelis (2013) highlights the contradiction of environmentality ecotourism in the Karen ethnic group's community in Northern Thailand. Youdelis proposed that the attempt of neoliberal environmentality to develop ecotourism in the Karen community contradicted with the Karen's traditional sense of self-sufficiency, or the "Karen consensus" (Walker 2001). Karen people tried to limit their engagement with the free market. Therefore, ecotourism contradicted with their traditional sense of self-sufficiency. As a result, the conservation consciousness of Karen people was constructed through the form of disciplinary environmentality rather than through neoliberal environmentality.

In this study of the Akha in Pangkhon, the concept of multiple environmentalities is essential as it shed light to the interaction between *direct power* and *indirect power* in the conservation project by promoting coffee cultivation.

First of all, compared to the Youdelis study, there was no consensus among the Akha that contradicted with their engagement to the neoliberal market. Therefore, although the Akha and Karen are ethnic people of Thailand, their reactions to the neoliberal market are markedly different. Geusau (1983) proposed that compared to other ethnic groups, the Akha people do not have a self-sufficient tradition like other ethnic groups such as Karen. Akha has a long history of engaging with cash crops production such as cotton, sesame, and pepper (Geusau 1983, 264).

In addition, this research pointed out the complexity of creating environmental subjectivities of local farmers in the process of promoting coffee production, which is also closely related to the process of nationalization and citizenship.

In the case of Pangkhon, multiple environmentalities came into play during the transition of Akha farmers to Thai citizens under the Thai state. Clearly, neoliberal environmentality coming in the form of economic incentives alongside the royal hegemony on conservation processes, through coffee production, shaped subjectivities in the Akha as Thai citizens who are loyal to the Thai royal family and coffee farmers who concern about the conservation. Therefore, the formation of the environmental subjects among local villagers could coincide with the process of becoming Thai citizens. Under this scenario, the resistance and unmaking of the environmental subject would be a rare occurrence in the case of Pangkhon. It is worthy to note that the royal hegemony existed in both environmental consciousness and conservation as well as the process enabling the Akha to become Thai citizens. These helped make environmental subjectivities in the Akha people, whose conservation consciousness closely connects them to becoming Thai people.

The main concept of this study is the ‘eco-governmentality’ which was developed from the concept of governmentality from Foucault to analyze the environmental conservation consciousness of the local people under the conservation projects. The concept of eco-governmentality has been developed from Agrawal’s (2006) study on the conservation ideology of local villagers in the Northern India. The concept of eco-governmentality become a significant concept in social studies on conservation and the formation of the environmental subjectivity of the local people, or in the Foucauldian term of ‘environmental subject’.

Still, many scholars proposed that in the various context around the world, some local people in their case study did not transform to be environmental subject. Cepek (2012) concludes that the Cofán people, an Amazonian indigenous people of Ecuador did not transform into environmental subjects after the conservation projects initiated by an outsider environmental NGO due to their contradicting traditional cultural and conservation consciousness. Segi (2013) also mentioned that the local fishery villagers in coastal areas in the Philippines did not transform into environmental subjects through the conservation projects of marine protected areas due to their cultural values, moralities, and their resistance in everyday life as ‘the weapon of the weak’.

However, in this case study of highland area conservation by the promotion of arabica coffee cultivation in Pangkhon Chiang Rai, Thailand, the local villagers who used to be known as opium cultivators and forest destroyers transformed into ‘environmental subjects’ who produce environmentally friendly coffee.

The process of creating this modern environmental ideology has come in multiple forms in both direct and indirect ways of power. In order to reach an understanding of such process, this study applied the concept of ‘multiple environmentalities’ of Fletcher and his colleagues. Fletcher proposed multiple environmentalities (2010, 2017, 2020) including disciplinary environmentality, neoliberal environmentality, sovereign environmentality (fortress conservation) and traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) to explain the process of ecogovernmentality in diverse contexts and lead to further understanding on conservation ideology internalization, environmental subjectivity formation, and multiple environmentality.

This research aimed to present that there are multiple forms of environmental conservation practices through 'ecogovernmentality' – both ‘soft’ and 'indirect power' of

disciplinary environmentality and neoliberal environmentality – by the state promoting coffee production and the market providing an economic incentive. On the other hand, the fortress conservation practices of ‘hard’ and ‘direct’ forms of power can also coexist with the indirect power. Moreover, in that process, ecogovernmentality from the royal family's initiative project can coexist with direct and indirect power in conservation through the royal hegemony in conservation. Therefore, the local villagers in Pangkhon transformed into environmental subjects. When power in the conservation project among the local villagers was present, in both direct and indirect forms, the resistance and negotiation to the conservation project by local villagers became an uneasy practice.

Nonetheless, this research also aimed to present how the local villagers who transformed into environmental subjects have tried to keep their own culture by revitalizing some parts of their traditions.

To create a connection to coffee, a new economic crop that has never been linked to Akha culture, the Akha modified and selected parts of their tradition and created cultural meaning for coffee. They looked into their culture, called Akhazang, which means the way of life of the Akha people. This includes both religious practices and the relationship between people and nature and supernatural spirits in the worldview of the Akha people. In Pangkhon, the role of Akhazang has declined in the present everyday life of the Akha. However, nowadays, the local villagers especially the village leaders and coffee business owners have been trying to select and revitalize some parts of the Akha cultural activities and cultural artifacts for use in the development of coffee production and the improvement of tourism in the community.

On the one hand, Akha farmers have become citizens of the Thai state under the environmental conservation law and the law of citizenship of Thailand. Under the process

of promoting coffee planting in the highlands for conservation, they internalized the conservation ideology and practiced as citizens loyal to the Thai state and the Thai royal family.

However, their Akha ethnic identity remains in a form that has been modified and selected accordingly and is the foundation of coffee development and ecotourism in the community. “Traditions” and rituals, which are perceived as “superstitious practices” even by the local villagers by themselves, have been modified and selected to become cultural resources that can entice the tourists to come.

This research presents efforts to modify and apply culture. Agrawal (Agrawal 1999) has pointed out that knowledge is not something that is naturally static without a process of change. Therefore, Akha culture, Akhazang, day-to-day way of life of Akha. (Geusau 1983, 254) has been modified.

In this study, the modification of cultural activities and artifacts is also the focal point of this research. Firstly, the Akha gate in the community and its social function; the Akha gate used to be the boundary separating Akha society from the outside world (Kammerer 1988, Toyota. 1998). The gate is the village's most important sacred area for religious ceremonies to offer food and agricultural products to the guardian spirits of the community. However, after the expansion of coffee cultivation in the area, the gate has been modified the function, and new meaning has been added to the newly constructed gate. The gate's sacred meaning has been reduced, especially the wooden sculptures on the gate. This change caused the meaning and supernatural function of the gate to be removed.

Secondly, the performances or dances to welcome tourists that developed from the ritual practice of Akhazang were modified, and the ceremonial duties are also reduced. It remains only for the show to entertain the guest who visits the community. Moreover, the

swing ceremony that used to be a ceremony to celebrate the harvest season has been modified and reduced the details of the ceremony for being a cultural activity for tourists.

In addition, under the development of tourism, guest houses developed from young men's huts, known as yumza, were modified to serve as accommodation for tourists with a deliberate attempt to reduce architectural styles such as roof structures to be modern and reduce cultural details of the house to welcome tourists.

Indeed, culture, rituals, and local knowledge are not static, however, the cultural modification of the Akha people under process of promoting coffee cultivation practices the reduction of supernatural function of “the traditional culture” (Akhazang). Although it leads to contradiction and conflict, especially with the elders to reduce the procedure and details of the ritual, it sees efforts to dismantle the function of culture to link coffee as a plant that has never been linked to Akha culture.

Geusau has mentioned that opium is not a crop in Akha-zang (?) because opium is not a plant in Akha culture (Geusau 1983, 265). However, cultural modification under the promotion of coffee production attempts to create "neo-zang", or new culture, that link with coffee. The village headman team of the community is trying to define the new definition of “drinking new(ly harvested) coffee” (Jip Kafae Mai) to replace the former ceremony of Gin Kao Mai (“eating newly harvested rice”).

Scott (2005) once defined Akha as a stateless ethnic group in the Zomia. Akha practiced escaping agriculture and escaping from central state power as the “art of not being governed” (Scott 2005). However, in the case of Pangkhon, Akha farmers are in the process of promoting coffee cultivation and becoming citizens of the Thai state. Akha becomes Thai and being governed by ecological practices of environmentalities, and resistance is difficult. However, Akha has made efforts to adapt the Akhazang and present their "(New)Akhaness" in coffee production and ecotourism. This attempt is the art of

being governed environmentally and politically, while maintaining their own cultural uniqueness and creativity as the Akha, in time of globalization and neoliberalism in the ethnic minority community.

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