

Radical Human Ecology

Minh Phuong Nguyen

Human Ecology is a field of study arising from challenges of human lives when people are facing more and more terrible natural disasters. In its most radical form, its proponents posit Earth as a sacred living entity which is being threatened seriously by human exhausted exploitation for what they call development. Part one of this paper introduces [Radical] Human Ecology. The second part of the paper provides an example of a project in which [Radical] Human Ecology was recognized as compatible knowledge that brings efficient solutions for human to solve their everyday inquires. Part three of the paper focuses more fully on the methodological issues that arise if [Radical] Human Ecology is the informing paradigm.

1) [Radical] Human Ecology

I examine the notion of Human Ecology through the review of 3 papers covering: i) radical human ecology, ii) social human ecology and iii) biological human ecology. The first article was posted by my teacher to introduce the increasing interest on human ecology in scholarly context – in particularly in organization studies. The second and the third paper come from theories that serve my organization approaches successfully to a working field of community development. After graduating from the University I started my initial career in a Vietnamese Center for Human Ecology Studies of Highlands (here after called CHESH). At that time, CHESH was an unique Vietnamese non-governmental organization working towards ethics minority development with its own organizational theory: Biological Human Ecology.

Scholars from an orientation in Human Ecology posit a relationship between peoples and their places of –or for – being. These scholars are affiliated with various sciences which study relationship of human beings and the environment. According to Ernst Haeckel (2009), human ecology is rooted in ecology. He describes the study of the relationship between organisms to the environment. In western sense, human ecology first emerged from perspectives based on materiality and externalities – i.e. from what people observe and from this they deduce as their understanding of reality and the nature of the universe. Mumtaz and Williams (2007) write that Human Ecology is the study relations between humans and their natural, social and created environment. Sears (1954) argues human ecology is a study of the impact of people on environment. The most radical of Human Ecologists conceive of Earth as a living entity – often portrayed as Earth Mother - a concept held in common with many indigenous peoples. From this perspective - people need to adapt to their living landscape and try to understand Mother Earth's responses.

Borden (2008) states that human ecology is “human intentionality for ecological wellbeing in terms of what [the human relationship with Earth] should be through problem solving, creative action and ethical concern”. Borden, thus, provides a ‘normative’ theory. He also believes that human ecology is not of “a prehistoric fireside or an academic symposium. It is an unconventional and timely pedagogy of hope”.

Bews and Quinn (1940) plots out that human ecology is drawn in the middle of a triangle of “geography – biology or sociology – epistemological pigeon holes of time” to set as a fourth circle with an intersection between other three as shown in the following diagram:

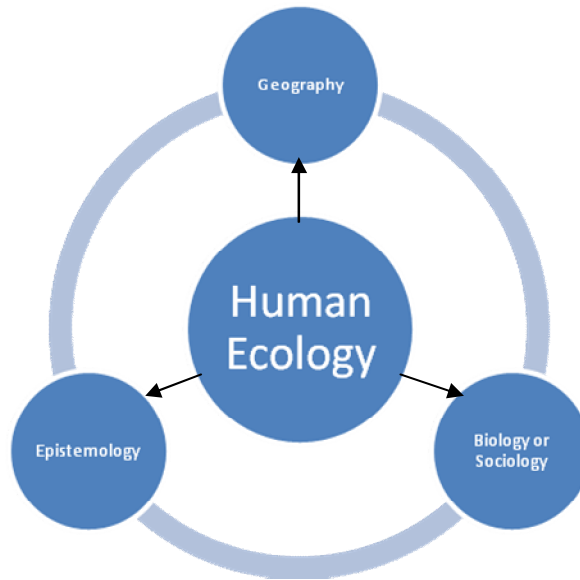


Diagram 1: Human Ecology – Bews and Quinn (1940)

They think that Human Ecology is reflected through knowledge/epistemology that people observe and understand about their living places (geography) and relations of living objects on the Earth (biology and sociology).

To have a closer look at this circle, in order to approach to a radical human ecology the element of epistemology is decisive because it is a study of knowledge that permit how people perceive things around. It likes an useful “glasses” for people to understand properly relationship between geography and sociology.

Many western societies are facing predominantly western-originated problems. Among those expressing concern, some are calling to the human ecology studies to monitor whether they have listened to Mother Earth or not and to evaluate what people may have done to break the natural balance between human and nature. Onto-epistemological mono-culturalism is not suitable to explain and guide how people can live harmoniously with the environment because the world is knowledged and exploited differently and diversely from people who come from multi-culture perspectives and unsimilar geographical locations. Thus, the explanation of a world view, and its justification, is the field of epistemology. How we posit the validity of a particular world view also informs how the assumed phenomena can be researched. For materialists, the notion of an animated Earth makes no sense. Even less so, a theory that invests a spiritual existence in or through nature. However, not so among the Radical Human Ecologists.

McIntosh (2008) posits that human ecology is “the study and practice of community: community with others (Society), community with the earth (Soil) and community with the Divine (Soul)”. The environment creates a space for spiritual performances that have chance to practice, maintain their beliefs and in return, nature is protected more strongly by community customary regulations. The Lao Lum people are majority group in Laos. Their national religious

belief is Buddhism hence their actions are very friendly and altruistic between man to man and even between man and nature. Their beliefs include when a tree has been tied by yellow threads, it will be protected. The tree lives very persistently with them. This example was achieved by my experience while I was working in a Lao Lum village Xieng Da, Nam Bac district, Luang Prabang province, Laos. Through this protection behavior of Xieng Da villagers, I understood that if people believe that a tree has its own spirit and behave with it as respectful as to human. As results, the tree will have long life in the community. The yellow threads were presented for the Buddha's wishes so when they were tied around the tree, it would be stronger, healthier and was able to avoid human violations.

This invisible connection presents a mutual interrelation between human and ecology to maintain and generate people's lives. McIntosh also states that human ecology should be a spiritual grounding to reality. Susan Griffin reveals human consciousness can be rejoined not only with the human body, but with the body of earth, between self and the universe. Mehl-Madrona and Mainguy conclude radical human ecology is the "intersection of the energetic ecology of relationships – between people, places, spirits, rocks, trees and ancestors – all of which speak". Finally, as Thomas Berry (1988) asserted that "the universe carries within it a psychic-spiritual as well as a physical-material dimension...the human activates the most profound dimension of the universe, its capacity to reflect on and celebrate itself in conscious self-awareness".

These notions of Radical Human Ecology reviewed above can be compared and contrasted with ideas of Dr. Terry Rambo (1984) on social human ecology and Lanh Tran Thi (1989) on biological human ecology which are reviewed below.

Review the original human ecology promoted by Dr. Terry Rambo (1984) – Eastwest center– Honolulu – Hawaii and biological human ecology developed by Lanh Tran Thi (1989)

According to Dr. Rambo, human ecology is an interrelation of two systems: ecosystem and social system. Ecosystem including air, water, soil, climate, microorganisms, plants, animals, insects, etc while social system reflects social values, population, ideology, knowledge, economy, social organizations, language, industry, resource extraction forms, etc. Ecosystem interacts, selects and adapts to social system through the exchange of three flows: i) energy, ii) materials and iii) information in the development process.

Dr. Rambo's ideas of social human ecology were absorbed by the Founder of CHESH, Lanh Tran Thi. Returning Vietnam in April 1990, Lanh Tran Thi applied Rambo's theoretical framework into a research on the reduction of structural poverty in the mountainous areas in Vietnam, Laos and Northern Thailand. This framework was understood as a successful approach to ethnic minority communities development.

In order to suit to Vietnamese mountainous context, Mrs Lanh Tran Thi introduces her Biological Human Ecology (here after called BHE) to illustrate a community lives in a particular eco-region that structured as a living body cell. The theory was initiated during she took her PhD research on "Dzao ethnic minority and Bavi National Park 1992-1999".

The BHE defines that the structure of a living cell has three portions, a community also has three parts: the central layer is similar to the human values of community, including faith, beliefs and standards system. The central values also serve to maintain characteristics of an

ethnic group as a function of the cell's genetic. The second layer wraps around the centre is the cytoplasm, and its functions are to foster and maintain the genetic function of the nucleus. For a community, the cytoplasm is the community's customary law, which functions to maintain and foster trust, belief and behavior system standards of the community. The laws contribute to decide distinguishes of culture, economic and social relations as well as ethical standards among an ethnic group with other ethnic groups. The third layer is cell membrane. It has function to protect cells, consistent with this membrane is the behavior of community members who live together and with their natural surroundings through daily working, laboring and production.

Regarding to the eco-system, BHE illustrates that natural ecosystem is as similar as structure of a living cell. The central layer is central biomass which decides natural features of the ecosystem, helps to distinguish an ecosystem with others. Outside of the central layer is many sub-biomass that form the diversity of an eco-system.

According to BHE (Lanh, 2009) relationship between the human system and eco-system is presented through organic exchange between i) the materials flow in order to generate ii) the energy flow and from both materials and energy flows it creates a needs of exchanging on iii) information flow of the two systems together and with the other system.

A summary of Biological Human Ecology is briefly introduced as a diagram 2 below:

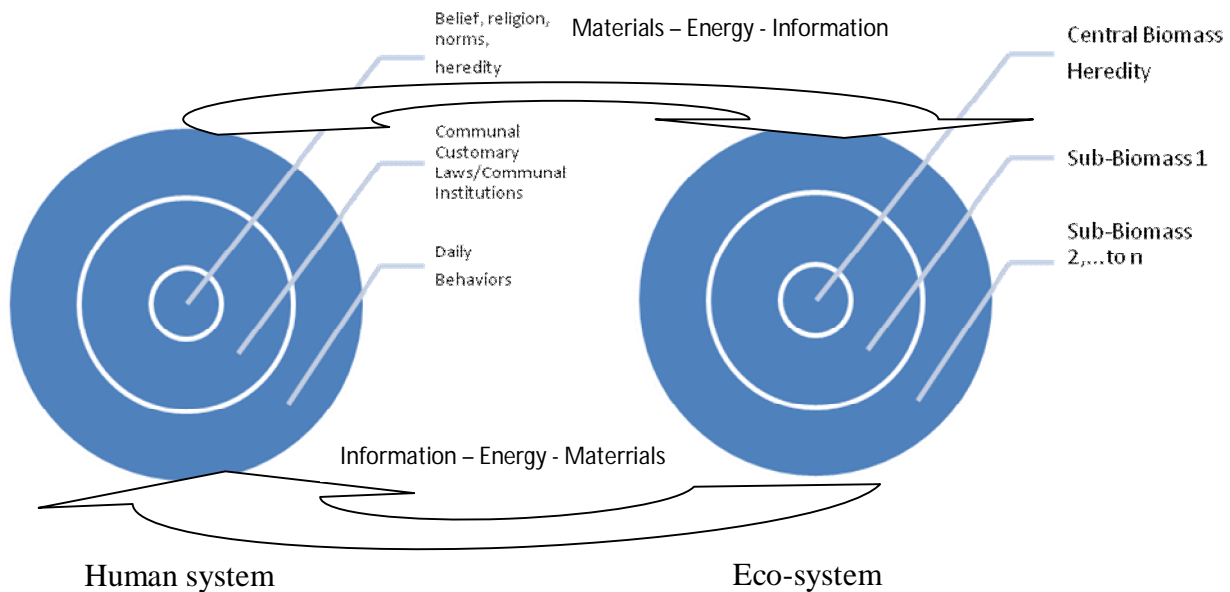


Diagram 2: Biological Human Ecology – Lanh Thi Tran – 1989-2009

Research results in the Me Kong community development showed that the community's values (faith, belief, system standards) are dominated by the central biomass of the ecosystem.

When diverse of ecosystems is replaced naturally, the chance to practice of faith is also changed therefore human values of community are at risks of deformed. The nature and diversity of the ecosystem system weave a diversity and distinct cultural characteristics of each ethnic group. By selecting a suitable theory Lanh Tran Thi was successful to learn and understand

indigenous perceptions about the world. A valuable lesson was drawn from this practical ideal was “biological characteristics and nature of an ecosystem are crucial decisive elements to the process of forming the basic culture and concept of civilized behaviors of ethnic minority groups” (Lanh Tran Thi, 2009).

In sum, this part focuses to present briefly three angles of the human ecology theory: from radical notions to the theories that interpreted from social background of Dr. Terry Rambo or from biological background of Lanh Tran Thi. It is necessary to know diverse definitions about a concept of human ecology but it may be more important to also explore which foundations created that difference in order to perceive a holistic picture of a theory then apply it properly to explain live activities.

On the way to explore different definitions on human ecology I have chance to approach to a challenge of scholars in interpreting what human ecology does really mean to our everyday lives? It is right to find indicators of a theory in practice in order to explain relevantly to fundamental categories of reality. When we look at a term “human ecology” in two single words human and ecology we will easily get a deeper analysis of this term. Talking about human, the unique component that makes people different to others is human has spirit world and this affects back to what human behaves in their lives. Ecology is understood as a science of nature. Paul Shepard states that “the central problem of human ecology may be characterized as the relationship of the mind to nature” while McIntosh suggests the challenge of the radical form of human ecology to the academy is that it invites scholars to integrate our perception of Earth (as the physical exteriority of reality) with Spirit (as its metaphysical interiority).

Among challenges proposed by different scholars, I agree with William, Roberts and McIntosh (2011) that the ultimate challenge facing Human Ecology is an onto-epistemological one – our experience of reality (including what – or who- we think we are), and what we count as “knowledge”. The reason why I think onto-epistemology is an ultimate challenge because if we have chance to know diverse themes on human ecology and have your own experiences of human ecology in practice we would know to select and perceive a theme which is closest to its existence/nature. Moreover, each person is grown and educated in different cultural context of family and society so scholars who come from unsimilar foundations will reflect the world in various ways. The light of onto-epistemology teaches me that there is not right or wrong notion on human ecology. Each concept may have many definitions about this which stem from various onto-epistemology positions of authors. Every theory has its own ontology, epistemology and consequently its own methodologies.

2) Applying Human Ecology theory to meet human inquiries

Nowadays, there is an evitable reason why people need to return and support to human ecology rule is a seriously and unambiguously appearance of environmental degradation and natural disasters which causes social chaos and preventing a sustainable development of human persons.

According to Alcira Kreimer and Mohan Munasinghe, disasters such as drought, scarcity of water created long-standing problems such as deforestation, rural poverty, soil erosion and

inefficient land use and tenure patterns. Moreover, the damage caused by extreme weather events has also increased faster than population growth (1950s).

The article radical human ecology: a pedagogy of Hope, on the whole, argues that supporting a balance between people and environment, as Paul Shepard counseled “human ecology will be healthiest when it is running out in all directions” while Alastair McIntosh proposes “if we do not call back the soul into the endeavor of Human Ecology, it, and we, are as good as dead anyway”. Goodman discusses human ecology in different lens: as peace-building, peace as “wholeness” and relationship including our ability to listen deeply to what the earth is telling us. The article also introduces an idea of ecology of culture which means that diverse cultures were brought together in ways that are grounded in a local ecosystem and therefore builds on the knowledge of its indigenous inhabitants and create culture of peace. This can be explained more touchable is that if multicultural people lives in a place, they rely to each other to live harmonizing with the ecological landscape. By doing this, they can protect their harvests, cope with natural disaster for their survival. In order to achieve sustainable development, people should listen to the Mother Earth and adjust their behaviors appropriately with its natural rules. Makere Stewart-Harawira advises recovering indigenous ontology into knowledge for ecological action may contribute to making our world a better place to live.

Here is an example of H’mong ethnic people listened deeply to what the earth telling them to fix their water system. This story I achieved while I was working in the village. This activity was a part of a community development project with H’mong people in Long Lan village, Luang Prabang province, Laos in 2004. In this case, we can see value of human’s understanding on their landscape that will bring efficiency outputs as well as a sustainability for village’s survival. The story tellers are the traditional elder Xay Khu Zang who is living in Long Lan village and Mr Ka Le Van, my senior colleague.

The water system of Long Lan was upgraded from 2004 with support of our program and internal strengths of the community. In 2004, the villagers requested to the water company of Luang Prabang district to design and propose an estimated budget for the water system upgrade. The district authority suggested a budget of 105 million kip (equivalence to 13,125US dollar) while the villagers’ estimation was only 47 million kip (equivalence to 5,875US dollar). Finally the villagers implemented by themselves and after six year running, the water system still works well and supplies enough clean water for the whole village. By knowing clearly the terrain of the water area, the village’s leaders mobilized labor contributions of all households in the village, they did not hire any technician from the district. In order to design for the water system, all elders and village leaders went together to the watershed area and surveyed the water pipes. They discussed and agreed on techniques and operational plan before implementing. Woods to serve the construction was prepared by the youth, they bought only plastic pipes, sand and cement from the down mountain market. After finishing the water construction, villagers came up with a regulation on maintaining the water system and establish a team for water system management and maintenance. This team regularly goes to filed check and repairs any damage in time. Every month, each household contributes 2,000 kip to the Fund of Drinking Water. Through a case of water upgrade in Long Lan village, a lesson learn is withdrew, when people understand and

listen to nature they can nurture nature and returning the Mother Earth this able to provide living sources to people.

Thus, if human ecology theory suits to explain and encourage a way people should behave properly to nature, it is necessary to choose compatible research methods to apply the theory and in return new requirements from reality will refresh and enrich to the theory.

3) [Radical] Human Ecology and the methodological issues that arise

The study of the research methods that can be considered 'valid' within a world view – e.g. secular positivists would have little room for angels in their ontological considerations – and thus they have no need for a 'proof' of their existence or for a theory to study them. Positivists, however, 'see systems' (ontology), and have ideas about how we can 'know them' (epistemology) and then ideas about how to research them. Spiritual people may say there are angels (ontology) and some die as about how we 'know them' (epistemology) and how we would research [about] them (methodology). Now for some 'Mother Earth does not exist - and thus these people do not need theories about a relationship with a living being. For some – Earth is a planet – a source of minerals to be mined and their research methods need to be concerned about relational ethics...Such researchers 'see' perhaps, only 'minerals' and can devise research to measure or extract these mineral with perhaps a view on environmental sustainability – but they would approach it very differently if they saw Earth as a living entity on which all other living entities are dependent and with whom they, as researchers, have a relationship.

The methodologies of each scientist has different systems of investigative techniques within their focus of study. The biologist Lanh Thi Tran and the sociologist Dr Terry Rambo traditionally apply different procedures for accomplishing and approaching the phenomena they focused on. They used different scientific methods studying human ecology theory with different epistemology and ontology. Divergent social realities exist cross-nationally so the theory may be different across cultures. For this reason, it becomes important to recognize the assumptions that are embedded in research methods. Through recognizing these assumptions, scholars can acknowledge the limitations of their own research methods in terms of practical application and engage in methods that employ different ontology and epistemologies. Moreover, methodological pluralism in human ecology can allow for increased greater theoretical and empirical contributions in addition to making the future of human ecology research better than its past.

If above parts introduce to readers theories of Human Ecology the following paragraphs focuses on presenting an action research in order to prove correctness of a statement "theory without action is meaningless" (Reason & Bradbury, p.2). According to William's evolving, participatory action research is a methodology helpfully focuses on intercultural approaches to ecological well-being. Before approaching to participatory action research, I studies on action research first, then access to participative worldview later in order to learn the logics and values of participatory action research as a tool to apply biological human ecology theory in practice.

In order to answer a research question is why an action research is seen as a method to apply human ecology in reality, the section introduces three components: i) notions of action research, ii) aims and iii) necessity of action research? as below:

According to a Vietnamese scholar Anh Nguyen Thi Phuong (2011), action research is theoretical basis for action that helps people know how theories are applied in practice and how usefulness of theories bring to life. There is a significant feature of action research “is only possible with, for and by persons and communities, ideally involving all stakeholders both in questioning and sense-making that informs the research, and in the action which is its focus” (Reason & Bradbury). That is why action science is defined as a necessarily practical and participatory form of human inquiry.

They also shares that action research is a bridge of action and reflection, theory and practice. By implementing action research all related stakeholders are participated and it is seen as a tool to find practical solutions for people’s concerns. As a result, action research creates foundation for “more generally flourishing of individual persons and their communities”. In the handbook of action research, Reason and Bradbury clarify specific comparisons between normal science and action research that support readers how to differentiate action research with the others. Normal science and academia have created a monopoly on knowledge making process and take pure research as its primary value, it means that knowledge creation under these kinds of research is unmindful to answer practical questions. In contrast, Reason and Bradbury mention that the primary purpose of action research is not to produce academic theories based on action or about action, nor to produce theoretical or empirical knowledge that can be applied in action; “it is to liberate the human body, mind and spirit in the search for a better and freer world”. Daniel Selener has similar opinion about action research that it can help human persons to build a better and freer society.

Mentioning on action research simply is carry out a research for action, is about working toward practical outcomes and creating new forms of understanding. Therefore, a primary purpose of action research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in everyday conduct of their lives. This practical knowledge aims to increase human persons’ well being such as economic, political, psychological and spiritual. Moreover, communities’ relationship are strengthening more equitably and sustainably with the wider planet’s ecology of which we are an intrinsic part (Reason & Bradbury).

Thus, the inside meaning of action research has already partly reflected the relationship between human and ecology so it is an useful and necessary method to explore the human ecology theories in practice.

Following the introduction of action research as a helpful tool to apply human ecology theories in reality, there is a crucial feature of action research that I want to more deeply analyze: participatory worldview. Since 1990, Stephen Toulmin’s *Cosmopolis* has introduced an emerging participative worldview in scholar world. Thisblend together of action research and participative characteristic created a perfect method of participatory action research in translating human ecology understanding in daily lives. There are various notions on participatory research as Robin Mc Taggart situates participatory research as a process that help oppressed group or community identify their problems, collect and analyze information and act to tackle the problems with the aim of finding most suitable solutions and to promote social and political transformation. In order to act, to do not to think so an inevitably aim of participatory action

research is to change practices (John Heron). Greenwood and Levin (1998) also assert same opinion that action research contributes actively to processes of democratic social change. Once again Reason & Bradbury in the handbook of action research confirm that action research is “a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment”. Thus, participative research must be action research and action research grounded in a participatory worldview. As Toulmin’s argument that a participative worldview does the way to “draw on the twin legacies of the exact sciences and the humanities”. Participation reflects human’s activity because participation forms of inquiry aimed at solving practical problems which have existed forever in human culture and this form have contributed to all life-supporting human activities from basic daily activities (such as plant and animal husbandry) to political democracy. David Selener (1997) shared same idea and emphasized that major goal of participatory research is to solve practical problems in a community.

According to Reason & Bradbury, our world does not consist of separate things but of relationship which we co-author. We participate in our world, so that the “reality” we experience is a co-creation that involves the primal givenness of the cosmos and human feeling and construing (p.8). This point of view is opposite with the positivist worldview that sees science as separate from everyday life and the researcher as subject within a world of separate objects. We live in a participatory world so I agree with Heron (1996a) and Heron & Reason (1997) in saying that participation is fundamental to the nature of our being, an ontological given. As human persons are a part of the whole so we need to be actors within it. If participation is an ontological given, the long ago argument of the Scottish philosopher John Macmurray (1957) was convinced when he says “I do” rather than “I think” is the appropriate starting point for epistemology and “...most of our knowledge, and all our primary knowledge, arises as an aspect of activities that have practical, not theoretical objectives; and it is this knowledge, itself an aspect of action, to which all reflective theory must refer”. A group of scholars (Berman, 1981; Berry, 1988; Skolimowski, 1993) has similar view and states that primary purpose of human inquiry is not so much to search for truth but to heal. To heal means to make whole: making whole necessarily implies participation. Thus one characteristic of a participative worldview is that individual person is restored to the circle of community and next the human community to the context of the wider natural world. Reason (1994) also discussed on this issue and he revealed that to make whole also means to make holy therefore another characteristics of a participatory worldview is that meaning and mystery are restored to human experience, so that the world is once again experienced as a sacred place to live. Beside the meaning of participative world is participation of stakeholders, Reason & Bradbury reconfirm that centre of a participatory worldview is a participatory understanding of “the underlying nature of the cosmos we inhabit and which we co-create”.

In order to wrap up this section Reason & Bradbury pick up that action research is a best process because of two reasons: i) its explicitly aims to educate those involved to develop their capacity for inquiry both individually and collectively; ii) this process of engaging with self, persons and communities which needs to be sustained for a significant period of time.

As results of studying from human ecology theories to action research then a participatory process, my knowledge on how to connect academic research to serve everyday conducts is more visible. More than ever, knowledge is a key to change the world become a better place to live because epistemology is theory of knowledge that explain what we think we know and how do we know. In order to make the world better, it is very important to affect to the knowledge of people (epistemology). By affecting that, actions will appear consequently to implement what people think and are knowledgeable. Human persons then will know how to behave properly to the existences/resources/ontology that has been changing by time under pressure of people's survival needs as Bateson wrote long time ago was "the environment will be yours to exploit...[so you may need to save it for your next generations]" (Reason & Bradbury, p.13).

Through above analysis, I see the interconnection between theory, action research, practice and knowledge. Knowledge is always gained through action and for action. Theories help us reflect on our planet within the ecology and contemplate human's spiritual purposes. This process leads us to different ways of being together, as well as providing crucial guidance and inspiration for practice (Reason & Bradbury). In action research, knowledge is a living and evolving process of coming to know rooted in everyday experience. Therefore, action research can not be defined as hard or fast method, but is, in Leotard's (1979) sense, a work of art.

According to Gregory Batesons (1972a) "the most important task facing us is to learn to think in new ways". So the challenge of changing our worldview is central to our times. Why we need to change our worldview is an inevitable question raised following Gregory Batesons' argument. Reason and Bradbury state that the Reformation, the beginning of the era of modern science, and the Industrial Revolution made enormous strides in our material welfare and our control of our lives. At the same time we can see the costs of this progress in ecological devastation, human and social fragmentation, and spiritual impoverishment. So if we fail to make a transition to new ways of thinking our civilization will decline and decay. There was another explanation to why we need to think in new ways as Brown (1999) and Hall (see chapter 15) point out that we are increasingly aware that the damage that is being done to the planet's ecosystems and the sustainability crisis have origins in our failure to understand the systemic nature of the planet's ecosystems, failure in humanity's participation in natural processes. They assert that this participation is an ecological imperative. To have more explanation on the connection between human persons and the universe, Swimme (1984) states that humans are part of the cosmos capable of self awareness and self-reflection, then human inquiry is a way through which human presence can be celebrated (Skolimowski); "we need to take the courage to imagine and reach for our fullest capabilities. Thus the practical inquiry of human persons is a spiritual expression, a celebration of the flowering of humanity and of the co-creating cosmos, and as part of a sacred science is an expression of the beauty and joy of active existence". Fox, Adelaide of Bath strongly emphasizes that "if we didn't appreciate the beauty of the cosmos we deserve to be thrown out of it!".

We are right to need changing our worldview from fully exploiting our resources to respecting and appropriately utilizing our living sources. In order to change our current ways of

thinking, it is necessary to implement many action research in diverse issues to find proper results that serve well to our sustainable lives. Reason and Bradbury do not exaggerate when saying that “action research is emancipator, it leads not just to new practical knowledge, but to new abilities to create knowledge”. They also suggest that origins of action research was to seek new epistemologies of practice to once again reconfirm the living value of action research in creating new ways of thinking that help to solve nowadays conducts of humans.

Following the theoretical analysis above, I would introduce a practical example during my work in Laos last six years. This is a vivid example clearly reflects the role of participation in the action research process. Community participation has brought a great success for a land allocation program in H’mong ethnic group of Long Lan village, Luang Prabang district, Luang Prabang province, Northern Laos. This success brings me an authentic understanding on what a community-based developmental program is. This land allocation program is an action research because it reflects biological human ecology theory in the context of forest and forest land management in order to strengthen local capacity to manage more efficiently their own natural resources.

There are seven steps defined as Participation, Share - Responsibility for Transparency and Equality (PASTE) that applied as a tool to translate participative worldview into practice. PASTE is given by Lanh Tran Thi as a strategy that applies the biological human ecology in community development of Mekong ethnic minority groups.

This part describe PASTE strategy as an example of participatory action research so it focuses on analyze methodology, and its limitations are not discussing about Transparency and Equality.

There are three points I analyze about each step: i) names that reflects participative element in it, ii) lesson learn withdrew from each step in order to see what good result this step contributes to practice and iii) introduce my own experience on each step with the aims to see how my knowledge/epistemology on community-based land allocation program was gradually changed.

Step 1: Study and learn language, customs, religious belief, knowledge and experience of community. This first step helps development workers realize differences between notions and values; understands traditional social structure and behavior sceremonies between human persons and nature. From these to understand who you are, what you do and how you do, start from which point will suit to ethnic group’s psychology and do not violate communities’ self-esteem. This first step reflects the participation from inside, it means that a person always tends to learn from other person in order to understand them and find the ways to cooperate with them. For my case, I had chance to know Laos language naturally after living six-month home-stay with Laotian family (Lady Sim at Phon Pheng village). I do not intend to learn Lao language because I communicate in English in my work. Lao language permeates me in a way that not intended at all. I lived and daily communicated with Laos colleagues and villagers and after a certain period I’d found I knew Laos language. My Laos vocabulary is sufficient to help me communicate in everyday activities and especially to serve the land allocation program that I facilitated. Because I can listen and speak Laos so I lived with villagers in their village as their

family member. I accommodated with the family and discussed everyday housing work with home-stay parents such as how to transport corns from highland field to the storage, pigs and cows raising or look after the vegetable garden, etc. Usefulness for my land allocation program was the elders regularly shared their viewpoints on this program and criticized openly the implementing method for each stage of the program. By joining closely as community's member, I caught their expectations as well as the ways to operate each step of the program; from which I connect and explain these local needs to related specialized departments of local authorities. As results the local villagers had chance to deploy the program as they desired.

Step 2: Development workers coordinate closely with traditional elders, village leaders and continuously link between the customary laws of the community with the local government's officially legal system.

By implementing this second step, the land allocation program received maximum promotion on the role of traditional leadership in the community, increased the autonomy and self-responsibility from them, detected outdated policies, analyzed impacts of the inadequacy policies in practice. This participative method also created opportunities for traditional elders discussed and criticized with the district's governmental officials with the aim to integrate the village's regulation on forest management with national law on natural resource management. Besides that, the program organized some study trips for the traditional elders, village leaders and key farmers to exchange experiences and lesson learns with other villages in Vietnam in order to learn the values of keeping forests and how to use the land after the land allocation finish. Understand the meaning of autonomy and self-responsibility of traditional leaders, from that encourage maximum opportunity for the community to participate in their village's development activities, reduce inferiority psychology, then gradually increased the confidence and mutual understanding between the traditional and governmental system to find the most suitable answers for village inquiries: how to manage the forest efficiently by local inhabitants.

Step 3: A development plan provides opportunities for groups of different ethnic minorities freely to meet, interconnect to each other in the process of interest groups formation.

By approaching this way, the community itself can detect their common problems, also find solutions to resolve issues themselves that follow their customs, culture and particularly geographical, ecological conditions of each group. Thus the community will provide us practical solutions in the way we do psychological approaches as well as communicate with the community in order to continue exploring their mystery and their strengths.

Each interest group for example animal raising and veterinary, herbal medicine, traditional handicraft, saving and credit, etc self-determine their key difficulties, causes, consequences and finally propose implementing methods for development organizations and local policy implementers to avoid their subjective imposes on their villages' development master plans.

Step 4: After understanding community's values and its internal potentials, it is necessary to stimulate supports for villagers to self-establish pilots on community development and poverty reduction as well as provide facial tools for them to self-monitor and cross-check between the interests groups of the village.

The participation in building community's development pilots that encouraged opportunities to practice local experiences in household and households link-level poverty reduction pilots. These pilots are done by farmers themselves so they are consistent with the will of local people, show appropriate qualifications, easy application and bring observable, trusted indicators for other households in and out of the village to apply and expand. These living indicators are also used for analysis, presentation and criticism of the policies on poverty alleviation and autonomy and self-responsibility development.

If the first to fourth steps above concentrate to analyze participative worldview of development workers when they first come to work with communities in order to learn and explore community's internal cultural and ecological values that help the practitioners propose working orientations that meet well with local developmental needs; the last three steps present participations of the community with external stakeholders in order to find common concerns on their development scenarios. These expectations try to wake up community's traditional values to orient their current living inquiries which is changing fast under pressures of the national modernization and industrialization programs.

By working closely between the development workers and villagers, the local farmers had chance to really participate in the community-based land allocation program in order to make a master plan of the village, then allocate pieces of land to each household and groups based on that consensus plan. The program implemented a further more step than other basic land allocation programs was it also provided initial supports for land use planning to introduce more technique that suit to local experiences to use the land more efficiently than before. Long Lan people is H'mong ethnic in Laos so in order to encourage them share and discuss their issues of the land allocation program with other stakeholders in workshops, seminars, translating become crucial tool to decide the success of their external communications. In those meetings, there were two languages Laos (national language) and H'mong used that helped the villagers felt very comfortably to speak out what they were dreaming for their better life in the watershed forest area. As results of participating in sery of workshops, seminars on forest and forest land management, the community realized that their traditional notions on ownership rights, on natural resources such as forest, land and water were perceived differently with legal papers. For instance, legal documents tend to mention about wood as material resource to log and consume and if someone breaks the rules they will receive a fine; while wood means tree and forest with indigenous people. H'mong villagers believe on spirits of forests, they respect and worship the biggest tree to protect them avoid natural disasters, without forests they can not survive. Moreover, the farmers enlighten that their public concerns to protect and manage the forest and forest land were distinguished with other stakeholders. In order to keep the forest staying with the village, the villagers need not only protect the forest by themselves but also share their concerns and ideas of developing the forests with related partners and 13 surrounding villages. Only when the values of the forest are wide spread out of village's border, when all people have similar understanding about how to live harmonizingly with the forests so the forests can be protected and developed naturally.

After recognizing clearly related stakeholders were an important factor to co-protect the forests, Long Lan villagers clarified more obviously their inquires for their own development. They demanded to have direct talks and negotiations with the policy implementers and makers; determine utilization sovereignty on forest land as means of production; involve in consultation, monitoring, feedback processes and comment directly in policy implementing progress of all local authorities levels.

It is necessary to create understanding environment on institutional process so the community will self-establish their autonomy and self-responsibility regulations to reach their expected goals. Lesson learns of this institutional participation are the development workers understand that there are some important ways needed to create opportunities for a community to basically approach a sustainable development: the villagers are subjective to analyze, decide to accept or not accept the direct influences from the outsiders, directly communicate and access to markets, exchange information and culture between the communities to learn what they need to adjust, what they need to keep for the villages' development. For example, when Laos farmers visited Kim Son commune, Huong Son district, Ha Tinh province, Vietnam they saw the natural forests were cut down a lot, and there were no big trees. The Vietnamese farmers here had to replant small trees from the beginning so they said that returning home, they would teach their children not to cut the trees and did not support deforestation to have not to take a lot of growing time as in the visited village.

There was a significant practical lesson learn withdrew when the villagers were really involved in the institutional process. In the past, from many years ago, the Long Lan villagers protected their forests by their customary law. This traditional regulation was not written but orally transmitted through generations. Because the elders and village leaders knew that in order to prevent forests destroyers from surrounding villages, they needed to write their customary law down on papers and asked for approval of the district authority, only by doing this their customary law was respected and implemented in current changing situations. Long Lan managed a very large square of forest and forest land while the 13 neighbors were huge lack of land for cultivation, animal husbandry, therefore a regulation should be formalized in writing and it was a suitable solution of the community.

Living in a complicated reality which effected regularly by the external development programs such as industrialization, modernization, globalization, the ethnic minority farmers not only need to confident on your identified values, adapt their customary law with national law but they also need to look to expand cooperation with other developmental partners. Cooperation will help the villagers capture the changes in time, find the right solutions which initially come from these expanding links between the community - business - state.

Covers all participations of the community in above example of a participatory action research - from teach local language for the development workers when they first come then combine traditional regulations into the national laws, establish interest groups and poverty reduction pilots, attend workshops, seminars to involve in institutional process and subjectively expand cooperation with diverse partners – All these premise a formation and development in public's cognition and understanding on the role of indigenous communities who have chance to

live and behave with the Mother's Nature more directly and frequently than us who live in noisy, busy and crowded cities.

Thus epistemology takes a very unique role to decide the ways of people's thinking. If knowledge is built that the H'mong people is forest protectors as above example in Long Lan village, Laos so development activities which relate to the forests should have attendance of them, on the contrary, if the knowledge is built that H'mong people is forest destroyer so related policies may exclude them from the policy making process. For instance, H'mong people in Ea Kiet commune, Cu M'gar district, Dak Lak province, Vietnam was reported involving in deforestation, trading, encroachment and unauthorized transferring forest land which was managed by Buon Ja Vam Company Limited Commercial Forestry Limited Company (Dak Lak online newspaper, May, 2012).

Through practical example above, it's frankly to say that participatory action research is a compatible method to connect theory to serve everyday activities. As a result, the knowledge generates from action research often properly match human inquiries because it is one of the designed method to meet living lives. But how to evaluate a method is compatible is always a following question. According to my understanding, there are two factors may help a researcher chooses a suitable method for his/her specific research issue: i) ethics in research and ii) traditional education of family.

Regarding ethics in research, through the article What is Ethics in Research & Why is it important, David B. Resnik introduces four basic spheres of the ethics in research: i) definitions, ii) important role of ethical norms in research, iii) some general summary of ethical principals in education and iv) ethical decision making in research.

Ethical norms are defined in different ways in light of different own values and their life experiences. This explain why there are many ethical disputes and issues in our society. According to Resnik, sense of right or wrong is determined when it compared to commonsense of the public. In this article Resnik assumes that the commonsense was nothing more than morality. People often learn ethical norms at school, at home or other social institutions in order to be acceptable and respected. Mentioning about "ethics" Resnik refers to "disciplines that study standards of conduct" or as "a method, procedure, or perspective for deciding how to act and for analyzing complex problems and issues". For instance, in a complex issue like human ecology, Dr. Terry Ramboo takes a social ethical perspective on the problem. While the biologist Lanh Tran Thi simulates the human ecology relationship as similar as structure of a living cell to understandably explain the biological human ecology theory.

Resnik (2009) states that there are five reasons to explain why it is essential to adhere to ethical norms in research. Firstly, the ethical standards promote aims of research, such as truth, knowledge then lead to error avoidance. For instance, prohibitions giving money to the villagers who participated in the land allocation program promote they come to work for collective concerns and avoided attitude of sitting and waiting for money then work later. Secondly, ethical norms are seen as foundations for different researchers who come from different disciplines, institutions to cooperate in implementing a master project with specific expected objectives. It means that ethical norms contribute to "promote the values that are essential to collaborative

work” such as mutual respect, self-responsibility or fairness. Protecting copyright or intellectual property while research collaboration is popular example of this case. Thirdly, in terms of research projects are funded by public supports, ethical principals help these researchers held their accountability to the public. In return, once these ethical standards are formulated practically, they are factors to mobilize more public supports for their operations. It is true that “people more likely to fund research project if they can trust the quality and integrity of research” (Resnik (2009)). Lastly, it is necessary to attach ethical norms in doing experimental research because without these standards people or animal’s health may be harmful and even be dangerous to their lives.

Thus, it is crucial to apply ethical norms in research so what are particular ethical principals to abide? Shamoo and Resnik introduce a very general summary of several ethical principals which adapted from Responsible Conduct of Research (2009). These authors clarify sixteen ethical principals but they can be grouped into three main categories: principals which belong to personality of a researcher such as honesty, objectivity, integrity, carefulness, openness, respect intellectual and confidentiality. Second group is principals towards social or common values such as responsible publication, responsible mentoring, respect for colleagues and treat them fairly, social responsibility and non-discrimination. The third group of ethical principals more focus on research techniques: human subjects protection, animal care and legality of the research.

In the context of various ethical principles are understood differently by diverse background researchers so ethical decision making in research is concerned. Complex living situations can not be covered fully by determined ethical principals therefore it is important for researchers to learn how to evaluate, make decisions and act in various situations. The choice more often belongs to the decision that meets straightforwardly applications of ethical rules and reduce maximum of deviations. In research it may arise ethical dilemmas because it’s not easy to get an agreement on an appropriateness of the implementing action because each researcher tries to protect his/her ideas and want to prove his/her ethical application is properly.

Beside exploring on scientific ethics in research, in my perspectives, Vietnamese family traditional education is also a very important element to form personality that closely causal relationship with ethics. Whether human personality lightens people to capture what is moral standard which are acceptable by society.

According to Thuan Tran Huy collector, family is the first living and most important environment of every human being, later when they become more mature they start to communicate with broader society’s members. In order to build a family foundation, our ancestor carefully formulated a lot of family regulations in which children were grown up by educational system on morality and individuality. Each personality more or less reflects through proper vocative ways, gestures or dresses, etc for example a person should respect the older and compromise the younger. Family rules help to prepare the best way for every human being to become useful and integrated into the social environment therefore it is necessary to make family to become morality foundation of the society.

Family has an unique function is to form human personality. Anh Nguyen (2011), a staff of Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism, Hoa Binh province, Northern Vietnam shares that personality formation function is done when people just born as a child. Then this function extends throughout every human life, and divided into three phases: From 0-3 years old; 03-05 years old and from 06-18 years old. All these individuals’ stages are growing up with care,

protection, teach, guide and train which helping them to know and implement moral standards in family and society. Step by step adjust their behaviors and communication skills to fit in the social relations and gradually become an independent citizen in social life.

Family's attitudes, psychology, emotion and blood relationship are lasting regularly, persistently and skillfully that have imparted to each individual the exemplary, loving behavior to react between family members and social relationships. These special connections inside the family gradually shape good behaviors, and preventing contrary acts to social norms of the individuals. Thus, together with science ethics as described above education and formation of human personality in the family are initial foundation to maintain family traditional values and help people more easily approach to ethical principals in their everyday conducts as well as at their works.

Conclusion

Human ecology theory is important to guideline for human's action. It likes we know several directions before going through the dark forest to reach our expected destination. In order to understand a theory in a properly way, researcher needs to understand what knowledge was accumulated to build that theory. Human persons should act as an intrinsic part of the Mother's Earth so it will lengthen our living sources sustainably.

Action research with participative worldview is compatible method to apply and human ecology theory into practice. There are two factors to judge suitable methods: scientific ethical principles and traditional learning as a Vietnamese proverb: school teaches literacy and family teaches how to become human persons who are useful citizen for society.

By carefully implementing action research in Me Kong regions for community development projects for more than 10 years, a Vietnamese Non – Governmental Organization (Social Policy Ecology Research Institute) has introduced a practical strategy to approach successfully to ethnic minority groups' development. With subject participations of the local villagers in all steps of a pilot on community-based land allocation program, the role of indigenous people on protecting efficiently their forest and forest land is recognized more obviously and officially. This helps to change social image on them from forest destroyers to forest protector and developer.

If knowledge is establish in a proper way, it leads to proper action. People live in a whole so we should strengthen relationship between human and the ecosystems where people are parts of it to change our world become a worthy place to live on.

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