Comments to Authors

The authors conduct an interesting study that explores how rural Loa communities experience boom and bust cycles of agriculture. I appreciate the authors integration of theory and efforts to gain local insights on global commodity markets that influence smallholder agriculture. The article has potential but requires substantial revisions. The primary concerns include lack of references and engagement with existing literature to justify study and design, and contextualize findings. The manuscript could also benefit from substantial reorganization. I also think the topic of understanding how to desing policies that align with local communities interests is important but I think the authors don't provide enough justification on how the policies they propose align with local perspectives and are supported by literature. If these changes are made, I believe this article could provide interesting local insight into local experiences on boom and bust cycles.

1. **Introduction/Literature review:**
    - The topic is interesting on looking at livelihood solutions and community perspectives on boom and bust cycles but there is insufficient engagement with specific literature explaining what has been studied and how what you are contributing is different from existing work. Right now it feels as if I am being asked to trust the authors claim that it isn't studied without much evidence at all.

    - Look into social values literature which pre-dates relational values substantially and also discusses nature related to spirituality and culture.
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2. **Theory: Is the connection to theory clearly made?**
    - A Figure or two of the theories and maybe even a figure that integrates the theories to highlight the theoretical contribution being made would strengthen the introduction.
    - The introduction/theoretical section requires much more detail on past applications of theory. Saying it has been widely applied with a few citations does not provide a sufficient evidence base to understand how this application is different or what it aims to contribute.

3. **Methods:**

This section is lacking information and requires substantial reorganization and revisions.

- I think this section would be greatly improved if it was broken into sections and that would help improve organization of the information. For example, the authors have a lot of info about study region but it is sprinkled throughout the methods. I think it would be better as a stand-alone section on study region, history, and cultural context prior to sections dedicated to the study design and data collection. This will help guide readers and make it less challenging to understand methods and design. I think maybe some details could also be removed to add space for other methods info.
- citations for justification of methods used for this.
- Were focus groups audio recorded?
- Table of questions that were asked or more concrete detail on process of focus group activities
- Who selected the farmer, trader, and teacher to participate in the focus group? What kind of bias potentially resulted from the sampling design? I see you discuss the mix up with the 4th village but there are other aspects of sampling design that could use more info to justify choices.
- Were the co-moderators of the focus group both locals/Loas Nationals? Include this info.
- I think a positionality statement would improve the article. It does mention two local collaborators which is great but it is helpful to know how the lead author has thought about their positionality when designing the study.
- Include human subjects approval protocol number or statement of human subjects ethics review procedures if institution does not provide a protocol approval number.
- Did participants receive any incentive for participating? It is very nice that a picnic was the conclusion of the workshop. What a great way to connect at the end!
- Please include protocol for focus group in main text or at minimum in Supplementary materials

- 180: “building on previous literature” is very vague. How were you building on it and in what way specifically
- Can you include any pictures of participants engaging in the mapping activity? That is nice for readers to see how it was conducted.

4. Results

- What was the total sample and the sub populations for each village? I only se the number of stickers (98) but sample data and characteristics is missing such as age, gender, education etc.
- Would like quotes from participants if available thought it seems like perhaps the workshops were not recorded. It is nice to hear participants own words related to their perspectives rather than researcher interpretation. It is an important approach to elevating local voices and ensuring that researchers voices and interpretations are not the only ones included in the results. This is something to consider for future research if audio is not available for this study.
- I am finding the results a bit challenging because it talks about topics mentioned but it doesn’t mention them to be major themes or indicate if some themes were more prominent than other themes. For example in the transitional pathways section. Line 330 “the stakeholders” but like is this everyone? Or most people across all villages? I am finding the results to be sparse in specifics and it is making it hard to understand when something was a theme across all villages vs. an important theme in 1, 2 or 3 villages? And even within those villages did communities have different perspectives?
- The results reporting is falling a little flat for me for the future visions. I am confused as to why there are only two major themes that came out of a framework that deals with different time horizons. I believe it was mentioned that specific horizons were not asked about but is it possible to organize the data and responses in a way that aligns with the future frameworks model? I am not familiar with this theory so it was just a quick google but it feels as if there is very little information on this section. If there were challenges with asking these questions that should be addressed in a limitations section. Right now it doesn’t feel as if the results mirror the framework so I am having a hard time connecting the theory and results and discussion.

5. Interpretation: Has the author analyzed and interpreted the data properly?

- The discussion makes a broad conclusion that “the framework revealed that stakeholders are feeling the onset of the bust” but that was not my takeaway. I think the results need clarifying and perhaps reorganizing if that is the primary finding.
- Much of the article doesn’t have citations at all despite the fact there is ample literature that could be cited. For example, the authors on lines 349-353 suggest different policies that may support sustainable development but don’t justify or contextualize how they got their or what available literature supports that claim.
- 350-353: I am surprised to see the authors list specific types of policies without any discussion on how those tie directly to the results, justification for how those types of policies can address local needs and environmental challenges, and citations of past research and literature that discusses similar topics and issues.
- 362: three citations in a row with no clear indication of which part of the long sentence they are referring to. That sentence should be broken up and elaborated on. I think policy recommendations are important but much more context is needed.
- Line 404: “These feedbacks are consistent with previous case studies (Okayasu et al. 2025).” Given the importances of the previous case studies, I find it essential to go into details about how and when it was similar and where it differed. Both in the intro and the discussion these case studies are mentioned but concrete information is missing
- I find it interesting that all communities are located closest to the “Nature of Society” corner of the triangle and yet it doesn’t feel like this was explicitly discussed. Is this truly a reflection of these communities or a result of the questions asked and frameworks imposed to guide the research? Western tend seem to separate humans from nature and thus theories and frameworks

perpetuate this worldview even in cultures where that is not necessarily the case. Now, I am not from Loas nor familiar with Loas culture but I would like a more in depth discussion on the results derived from the framework and the potential limitations of said framework.
- In relation to the previous comment, I request a Limitations section be added to address concerns listed above and others related to the methodology.
- I also think perhaps it is worth more directly addressing future research needs to address limitations of this study or future research that aims to use the frameworks applied here that can address gaps and challenges the authors experienced during their study.

6. **Style: Is the writing clear and unambiguous?**
    - The writing of the manuscript itself is clearly written but my primary concern is the use of AI. While I cannot confirm AI has been used, the style of writing and the way in which the article engages with citations (or a lack there of) is an indicator that AI was used in the preparation of this manuscript. Using AI in and of itself is not an issue for improving clarity, grammar, flow etc. but AI is not capable of knowing when the nuance is necessary in scientific writing. In this article, the primary concern is the lack of engagement with relevant literature (primarily in the discussion) to contextualize and explain results. The authors have limited citations and often to expand on the relevance of those citations.
    - **Note:** consider capitalizing "Indigenous"; see this article explaining why: https://www.sapiens.org/language/capitalize-indigenous/

Line item notes:
- 419: "proved effective" is a bit strong. It is a judgement statement not a fact. I would soften this language to say it was useful or informative.