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Downstream on the Mekong Earthscan

An international river basin is an ecological system, an economic thoroughfare, a geographical area, a font of life and livelihoods, a geopolitical network and, often, a cultural icon. It is also a socio-legal phenomenon. This book is the first detailed study of an international river basin from a socio-legal perspective. The Mekong River Basin, which sustains approximately 70 million people across Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, provides a prime example of the socio-legal complexities of governing a transboundary river and its tributaries. The book applies its socio-legal analysis to bring a fresh approach to understanding conflicts surrounding water governance in the Mekong River Basin. The authors describe the wide range of uses being made of legal doctrine and legal argument in ongoing disputes surrounding hydropower development in the Basin, putting to rest lingering caricatures of a single, 'ASEAN' way of navigating conflict. They call into question some of the common assumptions concerning the relationship between law and development. The book also sheds light on important questions concerning the global hybridization or crossover of public and private power and its ramifications for water governance. With current debates and looming conflicts over water governance globally, and over shared rivers in particular, these issues could not be more pressing.

Network for Sustainable Hydropower Development in the Mekong Countries (NSHD-M); Training Manual LIT Verlag Münster

This book assesses river health in the Lancang River Basin with regard to the impacts of hydropower projects. It studies key components of the transboundary effects of Chinese dams on the Lancang River including its hydrology, sediment transport, water temperature, and fish community. It also investigates the specific impacts of hydropower on women's lives and livelihoods, and factors that influence women's participation in river health management. In closing, the lessons learned regarding environmental protection and hydropower development in the Lancang River Basin are shared, e.g. with hydropower developers and regulators in Laos.

Development and Environment in Press Routledge

Water-related infrastructure could contribute significantly to the development of the Mekong region. At the same time, poor water infrastructure could lead to development challenges for the countries in the region. Innovation for Water Infrastructure Development in the Mekong Region discusses the challenges facing the region as well as the possible innovative policy options, including those used in Emerging Asian countries, and with reference to the experiences of OECD member countries.

Case of the 3S Basin Routledge

The catchment area of the Mekong River and its tributaries extends from China, through Burma/Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and to Vietnam. The water resources of the Mekong region - from the Irrawaddy and Nu-Salween in the west, across the Chao Phraya to the Lancang-Mekong and Red River in the east- are increasingly contested. Governments, companies, and banks are driving new investments in roads, dams, diversions, irrigation schemes, navigation facilities, power plants and other emblems of conventional 'development'. Their plans and interventions should provide some benefits, but also pose multiple burdens and risks to millions of people dependent on wetlands, floodplains and aquatic resources, in particular, the wild capture fisheries of rivers and lakes. This book examines how large-scale projects are being proposed, justified, and built. How are such projects contested and how do specific governance regimes influence decision making? The book also highlights the emergence of new actors, rights and trade-off debates, and the social and environmental consequences of 'water resources development'. This book shows how diverse, and often antagonistic, ideologies and interests are contesting for legitimacy. It argues that the distribution of decision-making, political, and discursive power influences how the waterscapes of the region will ultimately look and how benefits, costs and risks will be distributed. These issues are crucial for the transformation of waterscapes and the prospects for democratizing water governance in the Mekong region. The book is part of the action-research of the M-POWER (Mekong Program on Water, Environment and Resilience) knowledge network. Published with IFAD, CGIAR Challenge Program on Water & Food, M-POWER, Project ECHL-EAU and HEINRICH BOLL STIFTUNG **Political, Socio-economic and Environmental Perspectives** OECD Publishing

Project finance is a system of financing employed to fund large infrastructure facilities, and it has been a driving force of investment in undeveloped countries. While project finance's capacity to facilitate high levels of investment is facially appealing, its implementation and management illustrate an alarming accountability problem. Project finance's dispersal of risk has created a glaring accountability gap that allows project participants to systematically force environmental and social harms upon local communities. Moreover, because infrastructure development often occurs in undeveloped countries, host governments and third parties are often disinterested or incapable of stepping in to mitigate those harms. Nowhere are these flaws more plainly illustrated than in the Mekong River Basin, where hydropower development has sharply risen since the 1990s. This rapid and widely criticized development has caused both acute and cumulative harms throughout the Basin. Nearly one hundred dams are causing irreversible damage to the Basin's ecosystems, and the region's 60 million inhabitants are bearing the brunt of that harm through flooding, destruction of farms and fisheries, and forced resettlement. Although project finance's principal actors have taken steps to mitigate these harms, their efforts have largely fallen short. There is thus a critical need for a new mechanism that addresses project finance's accountability gap and holds project participants accountable for the harms inflicted upon project-affected communities.

The Mekong Springer

It will be shown that in many cases hydropower projects are built because they benefit international and regional elites. Their access to political power, corrupt practices, policy influence, the patronage of jobs and to regional control more generally come with serious consequences for the environment and for the livelihoods of much of the Basin's population. These insights provide lessons learned that are relevant to global autocratic states developing their natural resources.

Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Global Dam-Building Routledge

There is much controversy over the development of new dams for hydropower, where concerns for environmental protection and the livelihoods of local people may conflict with the goals of economic development. This book analyses the opportunities and barriers that NGOs and civil society actors face when conducting advocacy campaigns against such developments. Through a comparison of two NGO coalitions in Cambodia and Vietnam advocating against the Xayaburi hydropower dam on the Mekong River, the book explores the intricate interactions of formal and informal rules and norms and how they influence advocacy strategies. A framework for analysis is proposed which serves as a tool for analysis by civil society actors. The author generates fresh insights into the way in which opportunities and barriers are created for NGOs to influence state-centric decision-making processes. The book also discusses Mekong riparian states' negotiation process over the Xayaburi hydropower dam in detail, providing an analysis of the Mekong River's governance under the 1995 Mekong Agreement. The book concludes by suggesting ways to improve the engagement of civil society actors in the governance of transboundary rivers and development projects.

Role of Science in Hydropower Development Decision- Making in China: The Case of the Upper Mekong Dam Cascade Routledge

In Southeast Asia, China's growing economic and political strength has been accompanied by adept diplomacy and active promotion of regional cooperation, institutions and integration. Southeast Asian states and China engage in 'strategic regionalism': they seek regional membership for regime legitimation and collective bargaining; and regional integration to enhance economic development, regarded as essential for ensuring national and regime security. Sino-Southeast Asian regionalism is exemplified by the development plans for the Mekong River basin, where ambitious projects for building regional infrastructural linkages and trade contribute to mediating the security concerns of the Mekong countries. However, Mekong regionalism also generates new insecurities. Developing the resources of the Mekong has led to serious challenges in terms of governance, distribution and economic externalities. Resource-allocation and exploitation conflicts occur most obviously within the realm of water projects, especially hydropower development programmes. While such disputes are not likely to erupt into armed conflict because of the power asymmetry between China and the lower Mekong states, they exacerbate Southeast Asian concerns about China's rise and undermine Chinese rhetoric about peaceful development. But the negative security consequences of developing the Mekong are also due to the shared economic imperative, and the Southeast Asian states' own difficulties with collective action due to existing intramural conflicts.

Hydropower Development in Vietnam Social and Environmental Policies, Practices, and Impacts Past, Present, and Future Routledge

This Brief provides a cross-sectional analysis of development-directed investments in the wider Mekong region. The wider Mekong region includes Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, and the Chinese province of Yunnan. Evidence highlights that a few critical dynamics, including human migration, natural resource flows, and financial investments, generate a high level of connectivity between these countries. Such high levels of connectivity increase complexity and the potential for ripple effects of national decisions. The emerging links between countries can unfold in financial investments, migration, or the flow of resources. As these links intensify the regional connectivity increases and over time a highly connected region can emerge, as experienced by the Mekong region. This Brief also contains a chapter at the end of the book featuring numerous charts and diagrams further illustrating the impact of development activities in the area.

ADB Approves Grant for Hydropower Development Study in Greater Mekong Subregion Academic Press

The Mekong Basin is home to some 70 million people, for whom this great river is a source of livelihoods, the basis for their ecosystems and a foundation of their economies. But the Mekong is also currently undergoing enormous social, economic, and ecological change of which hydropower development is a significant driver. This book provides a basin-wide analysis of political, socio-economic and environmental perspectives of hydropower development in the Mekong Basin. It includes chapters from China, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Written by regional experts from some of the region's leading research institutions, the book provides a holistic analysis of the shifting socio-political contexts within which hydropower is framed, legitimised and executed. Drawing heavily on political ecologies and political economics to examine the economic, social, political and ecological drivers of hydropower, the book's basin wide approach illuminates how hydropower development, and its benefits and impacts, are linked multilaterally across the basin. The research in the book is derived from empirical research conducted from 2012-2013 as part of the CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food's Mekong programme.

Planning the Lower Mekong Basin Hydropower Development in the Mekong Region Political, Socio-economic and Environmental Perspectives

The Mekong River is a vital and valuable resource, with huge development potential for the six states through which it flows. Given the significant asymmetry of power between those states, however, there is a real risk that some might utilise it to the detriment of others. Without a sense of regional belonging, it is difficult to imagine that these states and their constituent communities will take regional imperatives to heart, participate in joint regulatory frameworks, or adopt behaviours for upstream-downstream and lateral cooperation over the appropriation and use of their shared resources. How effectively has closer interdependence of the Mekong countries accommodated the development of a political-social-cultural space conducive to the growth of a regional "we-ness" among not only political elites, but also the general public? The contributors to this volume approach this question from a range of directions, including the impacts of tourism, regional development programmes, the Mekong Power Grid, and Sino-US rivalry. This edited volume presents valuable insights for scholars of international relations, Asian studies, development studies, environment studies, policy studies, and human geography.

Sustainable Hydropower Development in the Mekong River Basin Routledge

Celebrated for its natural beauty and its abundance of wildlife, the Mekong river runs thousands of miles through China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Its basin is home to more than 70 million people and has for centuries been one of the world's richest agricultural areas and a biodynamic wonder. Today, however, it is undergoing profound changes. Development policies, led by a rising China in particular, aim to interconnect the region and urbanize the inhabitants. And a

series of dams will harness the river's energy, while also stymieing its natural cycles and cutting off food supplies for swathes of the population. In *Last Days of the Mighty Mekong*, Brian Eyerl travels from the river's headwaters in China to its delta in southern Vietnam to explore its modern evolution. Along the way he meets the region's diverse peoples, from villagers to community leaders, politicians to policy makers. Through conversations with them he reveals the urgent struggle to save the Mekong and its unique ecosystem.

Hydropower, Livelihoods and Governance Routledge

The Center for Development Research (ZEF) is an international and interdisciplinary research institute of the University of Bonn, Germany. This book focuses on how various social actors influence the planning process for Se San River Basin's management in response to the effect of Vietnamese Yali-Falls dam on Cambodian local communities' livelihoods. The author examined why responses employed by dam development agencies produce a particular outcome. He attempted to demonstrate their strategies and cultural means in taking control over negotiation process to win the battle for expanding hydropower exploitation in the Se San River for maximum economic gain. The organizing responses by local communities and their distant supporters are constrained and resisted by politics, resources and strategies of dam promoting agencies.

The Political Ecology of Mekong Riparians, Investors and the Environment Zed Books Ltd.

This issue brief discusses the current status of hydropower planning, development, cooperation and decision-making in the Mekong Basin. Hydropower dams, especially large dams on major tributaries and mainstems, have long been highly controversial because of their negative impact on other components of the water-food-energy-livelihoods 'nexus.' Growing pressures by governments and commercial developers to build up to 11 dams on the mainstream of the Lower Mekong have roiled the Mekong River Commission (MRC), an intergovernmental body created by Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam in a 1995 treaty to promote cooperation on the sustainable and equitable use of the Mekong River's mainstream. Without a more clear and binding process to address development disputes, the MRC faces complete marginalization of the organization and the Mekong basin will become an uncoordinated rush by commercial developers to build as many as seven more mainstream dams on the Lao and Lao-Thai stretches of the river and two more under consideration by Cambodia. The cumulative impact of even some dams will put at risk the food security and livelihoods of tens of millions of people.

Transboundary Water Management with the Mekong River Commission Springer Science & Business Media

The water resources of the Mekong river catchment area, from China, through Thailand, Cambodia and Laos to Vietnam, are increasingly contested. Governments, companies and banks are driving new investment in roads, dams, diversions, irrigation schemes, navigation facilities, power plants and other emblems of conventional "development." Their plans and interventions pose multiple burdens and risks to the livelihoods of millions of people dependent on wetlands, floodplains, fisheries and aquatic resources.

Technical Assistance to the Lao People's Democratic Republic for Preparing the Greater Mekong Subregion: Nam Theun 2 Hydropower Development Project Independently Published

Decreasing supplies of fresh water, growth of the global population, and the transnational nature of much of the world's water resources have made global competition over water increasingly common. In Southeast Asia, Chinese hydroelectric dams at the Lancang Cascade have enabled China to control the headwaters of the Mekong River and threaten downstream states' access to this vital resource. Cambodia and Vietnam are two Southeast Asian states whose economic prosperity is inextricably linked to undisturbed access to the Mekong. Despite similar requirements for river usage, the two states have responded to Chinese control in surprisingly different ways. This study investigates the different Vietnamese and Cambodian responses to China's Mekong River development by analyzing their requirements for the Mekong River and contrasting each state's relationship with China. The study finds that Cambodia has developed a strategy of appeasement toward China, placing its short-term interests in Chinese economic assistance ahead of its long-term requirements for riparian productivity, while Vietnam has balanced against the super power, demonstrating the resolve to protect its riparian interests. Similarly, the two states both use institutions to offset the super power's significant size and power advantages, providing them an alternative path to shape China's actions. I. INTRODUCTION * A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION AND FINDINGS * B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION * C. LITERATURE REVIEW * 1. Global Water Politics and Regional Water Requirements * 2. China's Bilateral Relations with Cambodia and Vietnam * D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES * E. RESEARCH DESIGN * F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE * II. DOMESTIC DRIVERS OF CHINESE ACTIVITIES ON THE MEKONG * A. ENERGY DIVERSIFICATION * B. DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN PROVINCES * C. POLLUTION REDUCTION * D. INCREASE TRADE WITH DOWNSTREAM NEIGHBORS * E. CONCLUSION * III. CAMBODIAN RESPONSE TO CHINESE HYDROPOWER DEVELOPMENT ON THE MEKONG * A.

CAMBODIA'S RIVER NEEDS * B. CHINESE INTERESTS IN CAMBODIA * C. RELATIONSHIP BENEFITS FOR CAMBODIA * D. CAMBODIA'S RESPONSE STRATEGY * E. CONCLUSION * IV. VIETNAMESE RESPONSE TO CHINESE HYDROPOWER DEVELOPMENT ON THE MEKONG * A. VIETNAM'S RIVER NEEDS * B. VIETNAM'S RESPONSE TO CHINESE CONTROL OF THE MEKONG * C. ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP * D. VIETNAM'S RESPONSE STRATEGY * E. CONCLUSION * V. CONCLUSION * A. EVALUATING THE NEOREALIST HYPOTHESIS * B. EVALUATING THE NEOLIBERAL HYPOTHESIS * C. IMPLICATIONS * D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Actors and Narratives in the Lower Mekong Basin's Hydropolitical Constellation Routledge

In Southeast Asia, China's growing economic and political strength has been accompanied by adept diplomacy and active promotion of regional cooperation, institutions and integration. Southeast Asian states and China engage in 'strategic regionalism': they seek regional membership for regime legitimation and collective bargaining; and regional integration to enhance economic development, regarded as essential for ensuring national and regime security. Sino-Southeast Asian regionalism is exemplified by the development plans for the Mekong River basin, where ambitious projects for building regional infrastructural linkages and trade contribute to mediating the security concerns of the Mekong countries. However, Mekong regionalism also generates new insecurities. Developing the resources of the Mekong has led to serious challenges in terms of governance, distribution and economic externalities. Resource-allocation and exploitation conflicts occur most obviously within the realm of water projects, especially hydropower development programmes. While such disputes are not likely to erupt into armed conflict because of the power asymmetry between China and the lower Mekong states, they exacerbate Southeast Asian concerns about China's rise and undermine Chinese rhetoric about peaceful development. But the negative security consequences of developing the Mekong are also due to the shared economic imperative, and the Southeast Asian states' own difficulties with collective action due to existing intramural conflicts.

Sustaining River Basin Ecosystems in Hydropower Development

In recent years, both Chinese overseas investment and hydropower development have been topics of increasing interest and research, with Chinese actors acting as financiers, developers, builders and sub-contractors. Chinese Hydropower Development in Africa and Asia explores the governance and socio-economic implications of large Chinese dams' development in low- and middle-income countries in Asia and Africa and asks how these big infrastructure projects promote sustainable local and national development in the recipient countries. The book first discusses general aspects of Chinese involvement in hydropower development in Africa and Asia, looking at political and economic aspects, before presenting selected case studies from large dams built and financed by Chinese actors in Asia and Africa. Based on these results, the book further makes recommendations on how to improve the planning, implementation and governance of large dams for sustainable global dam-building. This volume is a valuable resource for academics, researchers and scholars in the areas of Development, Environmental Studies, Politics and Economics.

A Literature Compilation

The Mekong is the most controversial river in Southeast Asia, and increasingly the focus of international attention. It flows through 6 counties, China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam. The 4 downstream countries have formed the Mekong River Commission to promote sustainable development of the river and many of their people depend on it for their subsistence ? it has possible the largest freshwater fishery in the world, and the Mekong waters support rice agriculture in the delta in Viet Nam (which produces about 40% of that country's food) as well as in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. China is now building the first large mainstream dam on the river, and has proposals for several more. These dams are likely to affect the downstream countries. Several of the downstream countries also have plans for large scale hydropower and irrigation development which could also impact the river. This book will provide a solid overview of the biophysical environment of the Mekong together with a discussion of the possible impacts, biophysical, economic and social, of some possible development scenarios. It is intended to provide a technical basis which can inform the growing political and conservation debate about the future of the Mekong River, and those who depend on it. It is aimed at river ecologists, geographers, environmentalists and development specialists both in the basin and (especially) outside for whom access to this material is most difficult. This book will be the first comprehensive treatment of the Mekong system. The first comprehensive overview of all aspects of the Mekong River system Deals with a regionally critical ecosystem and one under threat The Mekong supports the world's largest freshwater fishery and provides water underpinning a major regional rice paddy system Presents the authoritative findings of the Mekong River Commission's research for a wider audience for the first time outside of limited distribution reports

Regionalism and Regional Security in China-Southeast Asian Relations

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