



7. Future Research Directions

The upper Mekong borderlands constitute a dynamic region with a complex tapestry of social, historical, economic, cultural, political relations across multiple scales. More studies need to be carried out to understand this multifaceted region. Geography can contribute to this region through pulling the disparate disciplinary studies together and understand the region, its people, fauna and flora in an integrated manner. Although my research is currently focused on the using geographical concepts of space, scale and political ecology to examine common-pool resource conflicts in the upper Mekong borderlands, this analytical framework can be applied to other spatial domains of the Mekong Basin whenever there is rivalry and subtractibility among different stakeholders across scales.

To link it back to the literature review in the first chapter, although there are many and various ecological and environmental studies across different disciplines in the Mekong delta and basin (Bakker, 1999, Chomchai, 1995; Hashimoto, 2001; Miller & Hirsch, 2003; Miller, Nguyen & Do, 1999; Sneddon & Nguyen, 2001), very few such studies in the upper Mekong borderlands exist. More quantitative data on the biological health of the fishes, and river's ecology will substantiate many of the present environmental groups' claims, and simultaneously disprove distorted claims. These studies should also be published to ensure transparency and stand up to international scrutiny based on the veracity of the data.

Where there are some studies into hydropower development (Bakker, 1999; Hirsch, 1998; Hori, 2000; Osborne, 2000; Roberts, 1999; Rothert, 1995), it would be purposeful to transcend purely examining and evaluating relationships between natural resources and stakeholders. In other words, there is a need to focus on for whom the research is conducted.



To set the objective of finding a practical application for the research needs to be integrated into the planning phase before embarking on the research. Work which leads to tangible and useful ideas should be encouraged. The scope of work that organizations such as ADB and the United Nations could be linked to the form of research in the upper Mekong borderlands.

Another fascinating research area is in the sociological and anthropological disciplines. Cross-border Sino-Thai trade has also created the problem of migrant labour. Although there are historical studies into the social linkages between the people of China and Southeast Asia (Toyota, 2000; Walker, 1999, 2000) and socio-cultural linkages among the minorities (Berlie, 2000; Cheung, 2000; Thi Hai Chau, 2000), research into contemporary cross-border labour movements, their working and living conditions, their countries of origin among others could prove fascinating research topics that could improve the lives of the migrant workers.

Of the studies that have considered the legal environmental frameworks in the Mekong region, some have limited themselves to the reiteration of the various government statements and official plans made on paper, rather than evaluate their implementation (Boer, Ramsay & Rothwell, 1998; Chomchai, 1997). The few studies that have begun the harder tasks of evaluation have been valuable contribution in recognizing regional patterns in dealing with environmental issues (Matics, 1997). Few studies have looked into the existing legal instruments that could be used to resolve lower and upper riparian riverine conflicts in the Mekong River though there are some studies on rivers in other parts of the world (Benvenisti, 2002; Dellapenna: 2001). Many international watercourses have been prolific due to the output from academics Hendriks, 1996; Meijerink, 1999; Newson, 1992). There is, perhaps, a need to focus on rivers in Southeast Asia.



Political scientists, economists, economic and political geographers studying the political economy of the upper Mekong borderlands may encounter a challenging task in applying the economic theories in this part of the world. Researchers will perhaps find that the processes of observations, the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, and analyzing this information to produce socio-economic theories is more realistic. Some areas that can be focused on includes regional and global relational networks, border political economies, migrant labour relations, changing socio-economic impacts on local *and* indigenous people, shifting regional power centres in the Mekong borderlands.



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Appendices

Country	Population, 2000-2001 (millions)	Population Growth Rate %	Population Density (persons/km ²)	Crude Death Rate per 1,000 people	Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 people	GDP/Capita Growth (%)	GDP/Capita in PPP (\$)
Cambodia	13.0	2.5	69.0	12.0	30.0	2.7	1,446.0
Yunnan, PRC ^a	42.4	0.7	135.0	7.0	16.0	7.2	3,976.0
Lao PDR	5.2	2.5	23.0	13.0	37.0	3.3	1,575.0
Myanmar	49.0	2.0	73.0	12.0	25.0	-	-
Thailand	62.4	0.8	122.0	7.0	17.0	3.5	6,402.0
Vietnam	77.7	1.6	239.0	6.0	19.0	4.1	1,996.0

Table A.1 Demographic and Economic Data by Country, 2000

- Data not available

^a All figures refer to the entire PRC except for the figure on population.

Sources: World Bank 2002; ADB 2001, 2002a; <http://tdctrade.com/mktprof/china/mpyun.htm> for Yunnan, PRC data on population; ADB and UNEP (2004). 194.

Indicator	Unit	1990	1995	2000
Population	millions	-	-	42.4
Population Growth Rate	%	1.6	0.9	0.7
Population Density	persons/km ²	122.0	-	135.0
Crude Death Rate	per 1,000 people	7.0	-	7.0
Crude Birth Rate	per 1,000 people	20.0	-	16.0
GDP/capita growth	%	-	-	7.2
GDP/capita in PPP	\$	1,394.0	2,692.0	3,976.0

Table A.2 Demographic and Economic Data – Yunnan, PRC, 1990, 1995, and 2000

- Data not available

All figures refer to the entire PRC except for the figure on population.

^a Population growth rates in 1990, 1995, and 2000 refer to average population growth rates in 1985-1990, 1995-2000, and 2001-2001, respectively.

Sources: World Bank 2002; ADB 2001, 2002a; <http://tdctrade.com/mktprof/china/mpyun.htm>; ADB and UNEP (2004). 195.



Indicator	Unit	1990	1995	2000
Population	millions	55.8	59.4	62.4
Population Growth Rate	%	1.6	1.0	0.8
Population Density	persons/km ²	109.0	-	122.0
Crude Death Rate	per 1,000 people	6.0	-	7.0
Crude Birth Rate	per 1,000 people	20.0	-	17.0
GDP/capita growth	%	-	-	3.5
GDP/capita in PPP	\$	3,835.0	6,289.0	6,402.0

Table A.3 Demographic and Economic Data – Thailand, 1990, 1995, and 2000

- Data not available

All figures refer to the entire PRC except for the figure on population.

^a Population growth rates in 1990, 1995, and 2000 refer to average population growth rates in 1985-1990, 1995-2000, and 2001-2001, respectively.

Sources: World Bank 2002; ADB 2001, 2002a; ADB and UNEP (2004). 195.

Country	GDP per Unit of Energy Used (\$), 1999	Carbon Dioxide Emissions per Person (tons), 1998	Proportion of Population with Sustainable Access to an Improved Water Source (%), 2000	Proportion of Population with Access to Improved Sanitation (%), 2000
Cambodia	-	0.1	30.0	18
Yunnan, PRC ^a	4.2	2.5	75.0	38
Lao PDR	-	0.1	58.0	46
Myanmar	-	0.2	70.0	70
Thailand	5.2	3.2	80.0	96
Vietnam	4.1	0.6	56.0	73

Table A.4 MDG Indicators – Environment Sustainability

- Data not available

^a Figures refer to the entire PRC

Sources: World Bank 2002; Government of the Union of Myanmar for 2000 data on proportion of population with access to improved water resource and sanitation; ADB and UNEP (2004). 193.

Country	1990	2001
Cambodia	55.6	39.2
Lao PDR	61.2	51.3
Myanmar	57.3	57.1 ^a
Thailand	12.5	8.6
Vietnam	38.7	24.3 ^a

Table A.5 Share of Agriculture in GDP (%)

^a 2002 data

Sources: ADB 2002; ADB and UNEP (2004). 86.



	Land Area	Arable Land	Permanent Crops	Permanent Pasture	Total	% of Land Area
	'000 ha	'000 ha	'000 ha	'000 ha	'000 ha	
Cambodia	17,652	3,700	107	1,500	5,307	30.1
Yunnan, PRC	39,679	-	-	-	4,365	11.0
Lao PDR	23,680	877	81	878	1,836	7.8
Myanmar	65,755	9,900	595	316	10,811	16.4
Thailand	51,089	14,700	3,300	800	18,800	36.8
Vietnam	32,549	5,750	1,600	642	7,992	24.6
Subregion	229,804				49,111	21.4

Table A.6 Agricultural Land

- Data not available

Sources: FAOSTAT; Yunnan Institute of Environmental Science; ADB and UNEP (2004). 87.

Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) Countries	Population in LMB (millions)	Per Capita Consumption (kg)	Total Fish Consumption (tons)	Capture Fisheries (tons)	Reservoir Fisheries (tons)	Aquaculture Production (tons)
Cambodia	11	65.5	719,000	682,150	22,750	14,100
Lao PDR	5	42.2	204,800	182,700	16,700	5,400
Thailand	23	52.7	1,187,900	932,300	187,500	68,100
Vietnam	17	60.2	1,021,700	844,850	5,250	121,600
Total LMB	55	56.6	3,133,400	2,642,200	232,200	259,200

Table A.7 Annual Consumption of Freshwater Fisheries Products in the Lower Mekong River Basin, 2000

Source: FAOSTAT; van Zalinge et al. 2003; ADB and UNEP (2004). 87.

Name	Country	Status	Capacity (MW)	Reservoir (Ha)
Manwan	Yunnan Province, PRC	Completed 1993	1,500	311
Dachaosan	Yunnan Province, PRC	Completed 2001	1,350	653
Nam Ngum	Lao PDR	Completed 1971	150	370,000
Nam Leuk	Lao PDR	Completed 2000	60	1,300
Theun Hinboun	Lao PDR	Completed 1998	210	630
Xe Set	Lao PDR	Completed 1991	45	run-of-river
Houay Ho	Lao PDR	Completed 1999	150	3,750
Ubolratana	Thailand	Completed 1968	25	-
Chulabhom	Thailand	Completed 1965	40	-
Pak Mun	Thailand	Completed 1994	136	6,000
Sirindhom	Thailand	Completed 1971	36	-
Yali	Vietnam	Completed 1996	900	6,450
Dray Ling	Vietnam	Under construction	13	-

Table A.8 Existing Hydropower Projects in the Mekong Basin

- Data not available

Sources: ADB, based on ADB, UNEP, Mekong River Commission, Stockholm Environment Institute 2001; ADB and UNEP (2004). 40.

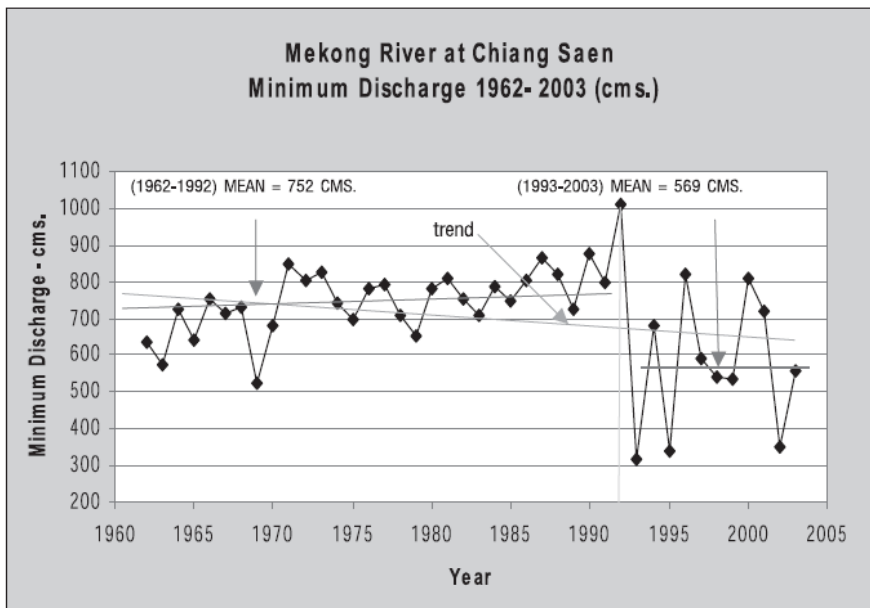


Figure A.1 Minimum Discharge of the Mekong at Chiang Saen, 1962 – 2003.

Sources: Table taken from “Downstream Impacts of Hydropower and Development of an International River: A Case Study of Lancang- Mekong.” *Southeast Asia Rivers Network*. November 2004. Data from Water Resources Department, 2004, Thailand.

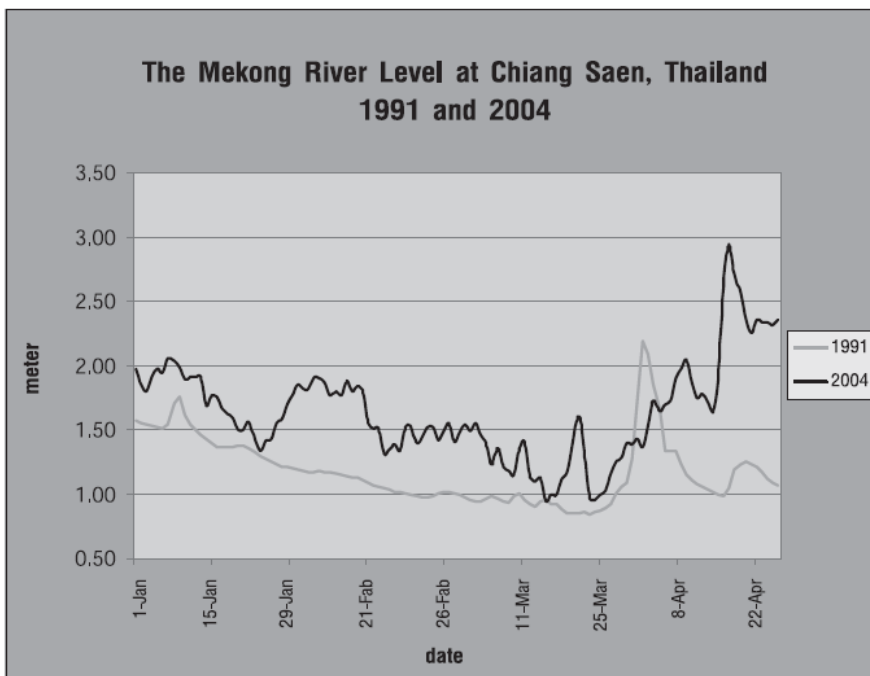


Figure A.2 Water-level of the Mekong River at Chiang Saen, Thailand.

Sources: “Downstream Impacts of Hydropower and Development of an International River: A Case Study of Lancang Mekong.” *Southeast Asia Rivers Network*. November 2004. Data from Water Resources Department, Thailand.

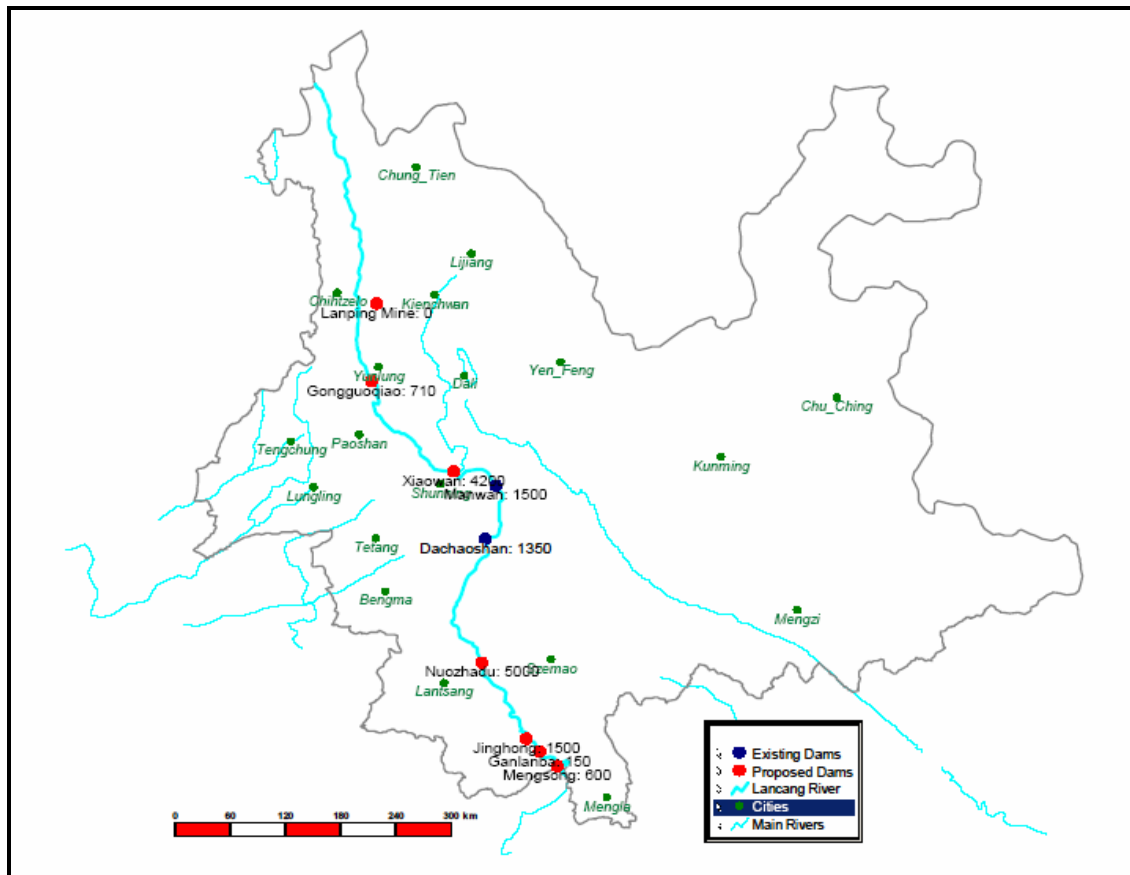


Figure A.3 Lancang Dams in Yunnan Province, PRC.

Source: Mekong River Commission; Strategic Environmental Framework for the Greater Mekong Subregion.



Figure A.4 Greater Mekong Subregion
Source: ADB and UNEP (2004). 8.

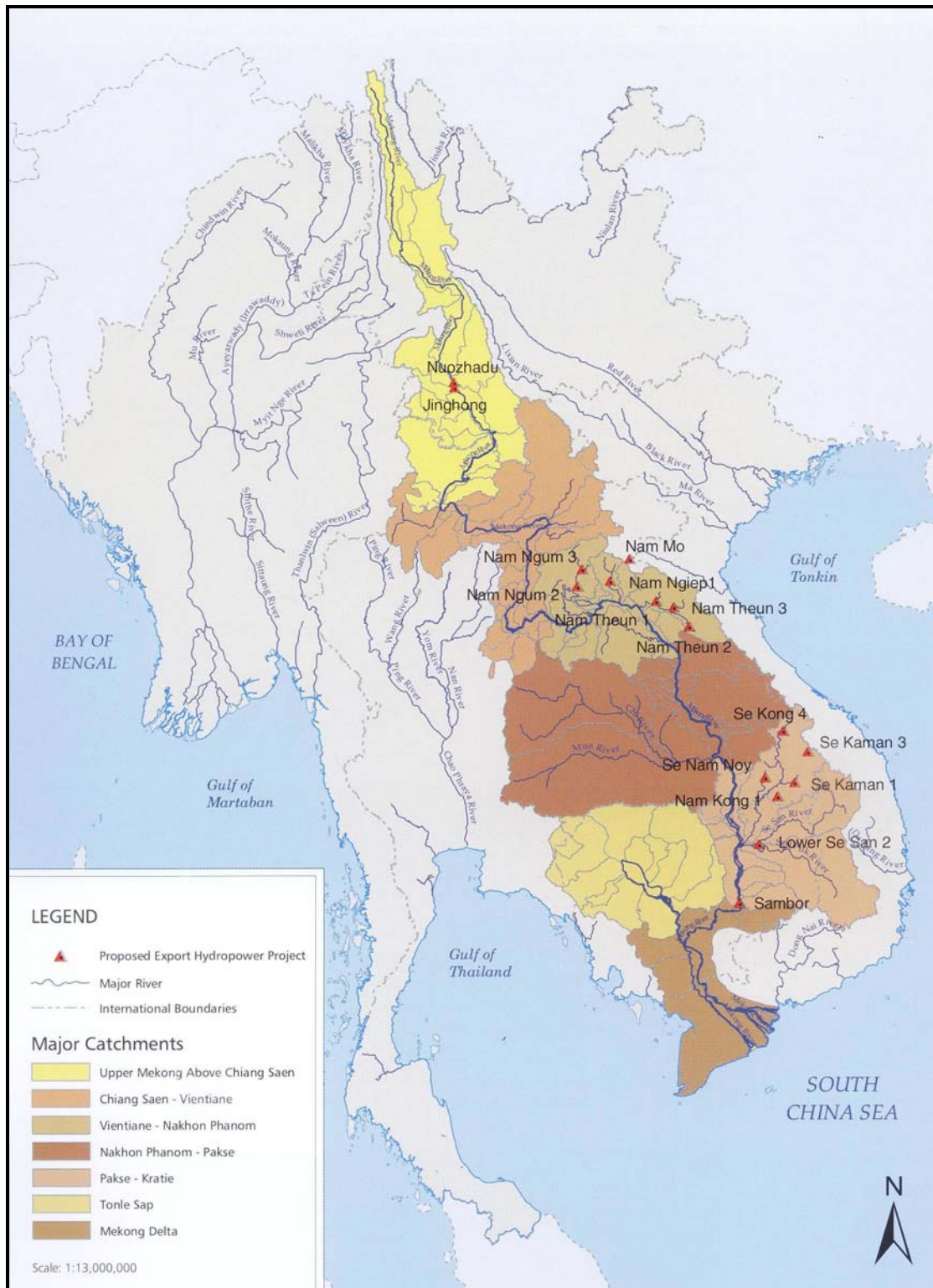


Figure A.5 Proposed Export Hydropower Projects in the Mekong River Basin
 Sources: ADB, based on ADB, UNEP, Mekong River Commission, and Stockholm Environment Institute, 2001; ADB and UNEP (2004). 52.



Figure A.6 Regional Power Interconnections in the Greater Mekong Subregion
 Source: ADB and UNEP (2004). 122.