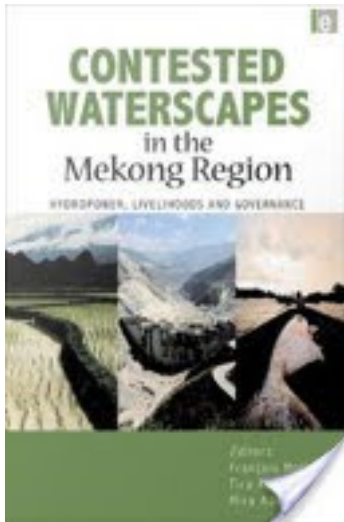


Contested Waterscapes in the Mekong Region



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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, CG AR Challenge Program on Water & Food, M-POWER, Project ECHEL-EAU and HEINRICH BOLL STIFTUNG

作者介绍:

目录: Contents.....	Page 4
List of Figures, Tables and Boxes.....	Page 8
List of Contributors.....	Page 11
Preface: About M-POWER.....	Page 17
Acknowledgements.....	Page 18
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	Page 19
Introduction.....	Page 24
Brief history of water resources development in the Mekong region.....	Page 27
Current challenges and dynamics.....	Page 34
Structure of the book.....	Page 36
References.....	Page 40
PART I – HYDROPOWER EXPANSION IN THE MEKONG REGION.....	Page 44
Introduction.....	Page 46
Old players and the region’ s new ‘electricity hunger’	Page 47
Brief history of dam development in the Mekong region.....	Page 49
Current trends in regional hydropower development.....	Page 52
A changing world: The banks seek to reinvent themselves.....	Page 64
Discussion and conclusions.....	Page 68
References.....	Page 73
Introduction.....	Page 78
Pre-operational patterns of contention, 1989 to 1994.....	Page 81
Post-operational patterns of contention, 1994 to 2003.....	Page 87
Pak Mun Dam: Perpetually contested.....	Page 97
Notes.....	Page 100
References.....	Page 101
Introduction.....	Page 104
The history of Nam Theun 2 (NT2).....	Page 106
Waiting for the World Bank: The NT2 debate in brief.....	Page 108
NT2 moves forward.....	Page 111
NT2’ s implementation.....	Page 116
Lessons and implications for Laos.....	Page 126
Conclusions and recommendations.....	Page 128
Appendix: Nam Theun 2 and Its Impact upon Hydropower Development in Laos.....	Page 134
Introduction.....	Page 138
Overview of the Nu-Salween watershed.....	Page 139
Development plans.....	Page 140
Principal actors.....	Page 150
Governance.....	Page 154
Conclusion: Leverage points.....	Page 156

Notes.....	Page 158
References.....	Page 159
PART II – LIVELIHOODS AND DEVELOPMENT.....	Page 164
Introduction.....	Page 166
Revisiting irrigation in the Lower Mekong Basin countries.....	Page 167
The beginning of a new irrigation era?.....	Page 178
Conclusions.....	Page 189
References.....	Page 190
Introduction.....	Page 196
The Nam Songkhram Basin.....	Page 197
Of grand visions and failed experiments.....	Page 201
Alternative visions, new approaches.....	Page 205
Field testing of new participatory approaches.....	Page 208
Old plans, new disguise?.....	Page 214
Conclusions.....	Page 217
Notes.....	Page 219
References.....	Page 221
Introduction.....	Page 226
Historical and geographical overview.....	Page 229
Total management schemes.....	Page 231
The delta as machine: A work without end.....	Page 235
Local adaptivity and responses to disasters.....	Page 239
Conclusions.....	Page 244
References.....	Page 246
Introduction.....	Page 250
Modellers and modelling.....	Page 252
Modelled flow change and methodological development needs.....	Page 253
The ecosystem and economic values of resources.....	Page 262
Peoples’ well-being under threat.....	Page 265
Notes.....	Page 268
References.....	Page 269
PART III – INSTITUTIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND POWER.....	Page 274
Introduction.....	Page 276
The ‘Greening of Isaan’ : A recurring syndrome.....	Page 277
Aspects and cross-cutting themes.....	Page 286
Conclusions.....	Page 298
Notes.....	Page 299
References.....	Page 300
Introduction.....	Page 306
Promises of protection.....	Page 307
Origins and consequences.....	Page 313
Discussion.....	Page 320
Conclusions.....	Page 324
References.....	Page 325
Introduction.....	Page 330
Perspectives on the ‘importance’ of fisheries in the Mekong.....	Page 331
Songs of the doomed: Fisheries in the Mekong.....	Page 335
Prospects for a fisheries-based counter-narrative: Crisis under scrutiny.....	Page 341
Conclusions.....	Page 347
References.....	Page 349
Introduction.....	Page 356
Hydrological models at the heart of the Mekong River Commission’ s (MRC’ s)	
knowledge production.....	Page 360
The MRC, the participatory turn in development and new openings in knowledge	

production.....Page 367

Conclusions: Governing water through depoliticized knowledge.....Page 373

Notes.....Page 374

References.....Page 375

Introduction.....Page 380

Underutilized.....Page 381

Tensions.....Page 386

Case study: Laos hydropower, Don Sahong and the Mekong River Commission (MRC).....Page 391

De-marginalizing.....Page 396

Conclusions.....Page 400

Notes.....Page 401

References.....Page 402

Introduction.....Page 406

Water governance in the Mekong region.....Page 407

Shifting water governance.....Page 421

Conclusions.....Page 428

Notes.....Page 430

References.....Page 431

Index.....Page 438

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