

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter is going to explain about the essential things of this thesis. It explains briefly the problem background which causes the appearance of the problem. Then the writer will explore about the theory which is used to answer the research question and finally get the hypothesis. This chapter also explains the purpose and the benefit of research, the research method, the range of research and the system of writing.

A. Background

The Mekong is the eighth largest river in the world, with a basin covering 800,000 square kilometers of mainland East Asia.¹ From its source in the snow-covered mountains of the eastern Tibetan Plateau, it runs over 2,610 miles south, flowing across Yunnan Province of China, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Burma. Those states that cross along the Mekong River are called riparian states, which means on or by the river. The Mekong becomes important sources and plays significant roles among riparian states especially in East Asia main land this is reflected from the Laotian name for the river Mai Lang Kong (Mother of all rivers).

The treasures of Mekong have attracted each riparian state to explore and to develop resources of The Mekong River Basin related to states interests since late

¹ A river basin is defined in hydrological terms as the catchment area or watershed of the river itself, including tributary and distributary streams, and the immediate surrounding land.

1980s. This interest in the Mekong Scheme Development is evolving together with new geopolitical and economics dynamics operating among the states of mainland Southeast Asia. The long range vision of the scheme is a legacy of the 1960s; a period in which grandiose dam projects were is vogue. However, the scheme's revival follows an intervening increase in awareness on social and environment consequences of building large dams. Meanwhile, sensitivity to greenhouse issues has encouraged a recent push by electrical generating authorities towards non-carbon dioxide emitting energy alternatives such as hydropower.

The Mekong River and its potential resources create complicated problems among states as a result of the interaction among three systems² which are political, hydrological, and ecological. As a political system of sovereign state, river resource is an autonomous right being explored and managed, which means that a state and its resources are sovereign and could not be intervened by other states. Focusing in the recent international security analysis, water could be a factor in the power of nations. In term of hydrological, the river basin is an integral unit, encompassing the waters of the river and its tributaries and distributaries, as well as the surrounding land making up the catchment area. Moreover, the wider level, ecological system is an interconnected relation between human and natural systems. Riparian states which cross the Mekong River have inter-relation between political and hydro-ecological in

² Andrew T.H. Tan & J.D. Kenneth Boutin, *Non-Traditional Security Issues in Southeast Asia*, Singapore, Select Publishing, 2001.

the Mekong River, and its relation may trigger to inter state tensions toward its potential resources which relate to human securities.

Interconnected relation between hydro-politics and human securities is a result of human dependency on the river. More than 80 million people (90% of the riparian population) depend upon the Mekong River for resources ranging from drinking water, fish, transport, and irrigation water to the fertile land and forest products of its catchment area. The Mekong takes significant roles for many states which owned that river. Unfortunately, the Mekong River utility presents problems among states or trans-boundary problem, and this happens because of the inequality within states to explore and manage the river especially the dams planning for each state interest such as electricity sources.³

The Mekong for centuries has been made in use by disparate riparian communities but the sharing of these resources is increasingly becoming a source of conflict because the scale, scope, and speed of recent developments have exacerbated underlying asymmetries and inequalities. The Mekong River existence increases political tension among riparian states where each state tries to achieve each interest, moreover creates new environmental problems among state and its individual.

The main problem focusing on human security concept is state domination to define, make, and implement its security policies. State tries to use unity, sovereignty, and national stability to apply security policies even it contradicts with human values. The contradiction creates huge repression to human that supports the implementation

³ Anton Lucas, *Environment and Development in Asia*, Australia, Flinders University, 2008.

of comprehensive security including human security. It shows that human component has been ignored from whole management process of national security.⁴ Changing paradigm of state security to human security is a revolution to understand resolution conflict by violence to humanist approaches that more comprehensive toward individual interest and needed. The Table below shows the transformation paradigm from state security to human security.

TABEL 1.
Transformation Paradigm from State Security to Human Security

	STATE SECURITY	HUMAN SECURITY
Focus	State	Individuals, households, communities
Menaces	Protecting territorial boundaries	Borderless menaces, i.e. environment pollution, infectious diseases, terrorism
Actors	State, (politicians, military)	Wider Range (NGOs)
Goals	Protecting state	Protecting and empowering people

Source: Bishop Antonio J. Ledesma, S.J., *Local Perspective and Initiatives in Peace building* (Quezon City: GZOPI, 2005), page 14.

The effects of dam and its implications toward social stability cannot be ignored. The linkage between environment and human is being explored recently as part of state-level focus of non-traditional security issues as “human security” concept. According to S.J. Bishop Antonio J. Ledesma stated that human security can be defined as protecting fundamental *freedoms* that are the essence of life, protecting people from severe and widespread *threats*, using *processes* that build on people’s

⁴ Landry Haryo Subianto, “*Konsep Human Security: Tinjauan dan Prospek*” dalam *Analisis CSIS Tahun XXXI/2002 No. 1*, CSIS, Jakarta, 2002, page 16.

strengths and aspirations, creating *systems* (social, economic, political, cultural) that together help people attain survival, livelihood and dignity, joins the main agenda items of *peace, security, and development* and encompasses freedom of *want*, freedom of *fear*, and freedom to have a healthy *environment*.⁵ The concept emphasizes the primary importance of protecting individuals from both violent and non-violent threats to their safety, rights, and social systems which threats that including environment degradation.

Concept of human security is also introduced by UNDP on *Human Development Report 1994* defined human security as including "...safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease, and repression, and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily lives, whether in homes, jobs, or communities."⁶ UNDP identifies threatening toward human security into seven categories which are:

- Economic security
- Food security
- Health security
- Environmental security
- Personal security
- Community security
- Political security

The context of human security issues in Mekong River shows human as main object who being affected by existence of state interest through the Mekong River

⁵ S.J. Bishop Antonio J. Ledesma, "Local Perspectives and Initiatives in Peace Building", in *Waging Peace in the Philippines and Asia: Facilitating Processes, Consolidating Participation*, GZOPI and UNDP Philippines, Quezon City, 2005, page 15.

⁶ *United Nation Development Programme (UNDP). Human Development Report 1994*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), page 23 retrieved from <http://www.undp.org/hdro/1994/94.htm>, on December 16, 2008.

Development. Human Security can be defined as protecting human violations which most related to basic needs of people such as economic prosperity, health, food, etc.

The status of the Mekong which crosses six countries with imbalance capacity on economics and political condition creates its own dilemma to manage and explore the Mekong resources. The Mekong River Basin, China, one of riparian states, is the most upstream country and a political and economic super power in the region. China has begun a large scale exploitation of the Lancang's Massive Hydropower potential since 1993, it has completed the first two in series of seven planned hydropower stations designed to tap 60% of the flow of the river.⁷ Together, the entire cascade will have a combined installed capacity of 15.55 million kw (15.550 MW) and will generate 74.1 billion kwh of electricity per year. China purposes to develop Lancang's Massive Hydropower because economic raising pressure which needs electricity supplies for its industries and investment.

China's domination on the Mekong River in upstream basin contradicts with other riparian states politics and economics ability in exploring and managing the Mekong. Conflicting interests among riparian countries still happen until now while exploitation on the Mekong become bigger by dams planning of China and Lao on electricity need. Economic rising in China is a factor why China prepares to build a dam. Water electricity is justifiable for China governance to support its plan on

⁷ Tian Fang, Lin Fatang & Bi Daolin, eds., "Lancang Jiang – Xiao Taiyang" (Kunming: Yunnan People's Press, 1989) available from Evelyn Goh, *China in The Mekong River Basin: The Regional Security Implications of Resource Development On The Lancang Jiang*, Singapore, Working Paper Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, July 2004.

economic expansion. Therefore, Laos tries to build another dam as its plan becomes electricity supplier to Thailand and Vietnam. Those plans seem controversial to others riparian states which depend on the Mekong for irrigation and fisheries such as Tong Le Sap in Vietnam and Thailand rice fields. If China builds the dam, flows of water to downstream will decrease and it will harm the people around the river side who depend on it.

The Existence of economic development among riparian states in the Mekong River triggers to harm human security. The linkage between environmental degradation and national security in terms of the effects of social stability is migration and inter-community tensions on political stability.⁸ The protest campaigns from affected communities are clear implications for human security and social stability related to environmental problems.

Ongoing hydropower projects along the Mekong River create huge critics from environmentalists and pressure groups as part of increasing awareness of the adverse socio-environmental effects of dams in recent decades. There are three criticisms of ongoing hydropower projects⁹, that is, critics on existing structures and procedures to evaluate and mitigate the environmental impact of such projects are inadequate. Second criticism asserts that there are inadequate procedures to evaluate and mitigate both the direct and indirect social impact of hydropower projects. And

⁸ Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "*Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases*", *International Security*, Vol.19, No.1 (Summer 1994), pp.20-31

⁹ The most active environmental organizations working on the Mekong are: California-based International Rivers Network (IRN), Toronto-based Probe International, and TERRA.

the last criticism is about the indirect impact of hydropower projects and their mitigation and compensation procedures.

The first critics about existing works and position of Environmental impact assessment (EIAs) are primary needed to measure the construction projects in general. Basically, EIAs should collect baseline data covering key aspects of the existing environmental and socio-economic systems which are predicts and evaluate the relative effects of alternative project sites and designs on these variables and also describe and evaluate the effectiveness of measures that may be employed to mitigate these impacts. But, in the same time, environmentalist stated that EIAs is failed to assist the probability projects related with its impacts in socio-cultural.

The second critics mainly discuss the direct social impact of dam building which is a relocation of local communities whose land will be inundated. The human security implications are clear: in the absence of well-planned and well-executed resettlement programs, such communities stand to lose their subsistence, life hoods and way of life. There is a huge controversy on the process of implementing resettlements plans in hydropower projects in Laos, particularly in the case of Nam Theun 2, which is being held up by the World Bank as a model of public participation.

There is a greater controversy over the indirect impact of hydropower projects and their mitigation and compensation procedures. This controversy has become a high-profile issue in the region because the Dam in Thailand caused a huge demonstration on compensation because of the loss of people life hoods such as

fisheries. In the Mekong Basin, a similar case also happens since the local government does not solve provide sufficient compensation and proper location of life for people getting life source from this river. In facts, the problems in the Mekong River remain unresolved although the power company was suggested to pay compensation for local people.

Development of dams in purposing to hydropower projects takes huge demonstration and rejection from people who live along the river. In Laos where the government tries to build dams for electricity purposes takes huge critics from its people who have resulted in negative impacts on their environment and livelihood. Phomma Khoutmany, deputy chief of Phahang village, one of many communities affected by the project states that they rice fields is damaged by flooding from the dam every year after the construction of the dam.¹⁰ Protest from people toward the impacts of Mekong River Development is also about the compensation given by the government. Still, many residents worry that the compensation would not be enough to match what they have lost, “We do not think we will get compensation at the same amount as what we have lost,” said Phanmally Sisomphone of Thanatai village, whose residents are among those to be relocated.¹¹

¹⁰ *DEVELOPMENT: Laos Struggles with Dam Dilemma* retrieved from <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=44346> on December 16, 2008.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

In Thailand, the huge critics come from people who affected from the dam development. Sompong Viengchan from Thai province was delivering her speech on the negative impact of dams on the lives of residents along the Mekong River and its tributaries. "I will not give up and I will fight to the end. My family has lived along the river for generations. If you want to build dams, do it in your own house if you want!" she told the more than 200 participants at the Mekong Public Forum on mainstream dams, held on November 12-13. "We've been fishing there for generations and lived our lives not dependent on the government. Now we can't even find enough fish for our families," added Sompong, who was displaced by the construction of the Pak Mun dam. For 20 years, she had been protesting plans to build the dam along the Mun River, a Mekong tributary, as well as its destruction of fisheries after its completion in 1994.¹² The protest from people also comes from Vietnamese who being affected from the existence of Mekong Development. Around 20 million Vietnamese in Mekong Delta, who rely on fish for export and water for irrigation, would be negatively impacted by dam building.¹³ Nguyen Huu Chiem stated that bad impact of development triggers to the rice field and biodiversity

¹² *South-East Asia: Opposition to Mekong Dams Overflows at Meet* retrieved from http://www.newsmekong.org/south-east_asia_opposition_to_mekong_dams_overflows_at_meet on December 16, 2008.

¹³ *Development-Vietnam: Rare Criticisms on Dam Surface* retrieved from <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=44797> on December 16, 2008.

surround the river. He said that government has to be responsible to the number of damage made by dams planning.¹⁴

In comparison, the Mekong River problem has a similarity with the International disputes of The Suez Canal 1956. The conflict among countries on Nile River took huge concern from many parties. The opening of the Suez Canal is inherent with the purpose of Egypt government to build such a dam. In contrary, the 1888 Constantinople Convention stated that the Canal was to be opened to the shipping of all countries both in peace and war. Long debates among the international conflict resolution towards the Suez Canal, Egypt made a declaration to the UN Secretary-General whereby in accordance with the Constantinople Convention and the six principles of 13 October 1956, and it would maintain free and uninterrupted navigation of the Canal for all nations. Finally, on July 13th, 1958, Egypt's Suez Canal Authority and the Compagnie Universelle signed an agreement between them.¹⁵

The Mekong River has complicated problems starting from its existence among riparian state management in sharing water utilization and its effects toward human security issues. The Mekong management is a main problem that has taken seriously by riparian states in order to prevent other problems such as conflict and human scarcity.

¹⁴ *A farmer's son tries to save the Mekong Delta* retrieved from <http://internationalrivers.org/en/node/2939> on December 16, 2008.

¹⁵ H. Thomas, *The Suez Affair*, revised edition, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1970.

B. Research Question

According to the problem background, this research is going to answer the question on:

“How do riparian states manage human security issues in Mekong River?”

C. Theoretical Frameworks

To understanding the reason how to manage the Mekong River and its background of management establishment, it can be drawn through the international regimes concepts and conflict resolution theories. In this case, the international regimes introduced by Stephen Krasner will explain the existence of regimes as a response managing the Mekong River among riparian states by establishing Mekong River Commission.

According to Stephen Krasner, international regimes are “*sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in an issue area of international relations*”.¹⁶ The scholar stated international regimes which consists some points in explaining the definition could not be separated from the role of state as unanimous actor in maximizing their own interests in an anarchic context. The existence of regimes appears to overcome collective goods dilemmas by coordinating the behaviors of individual states. Rather, regimes do not imply directly to the problem that can be

¹⁶ Stephen D. Krasner, “*Structural Causes and Regime Consequence: Regimes as Intervening Variables*”, in Stephen D., Krasner, ed., *International Regime*, p.2., London, Cornell University Press, 1983.

managed through unilateral application of leverage. States form frameworks to coordinate their self-interest although states gain their own interests. Basically, regimes emphasize on cooperation even within anarchy in an international system.

Krasner added that principles are beliefs of facts, causation, and rectitude. These principles are based on the matter of facts that happened on the problem background. Each member who has same ideas in governing them-selves agrees to acknowledge first point of regimes. In defining norms, Krasner focused on the standard of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action. And Krasner defined decision-making procedures as prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice.

Looking at the role of international regimes responses toward a problem is an important solution even in authoritative system because every single party has already the same ideas and certain values that can be implemented. The running of regimes will be easier to be acknowledged by members because of the idea of cooperation.

In line with the process of management and problem solving in the Mekong River that would appear, conflict resolution theories can be driven to explain solvency among riparian states through negotiation model. Conflict resolution is comprehensive words showing the source of conflict have to be solved. It implies that conflict behavior is not only violation, danger, and the structure changing. Negotiations are talks between conflicting parties who discuss ideas, information and options in order to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. Initially at least, negotiations may not be face-to-face. The important point here is that parties directly

communicate, or talk, to each other, attempting to work out an outcome. This model is described as non zero sum game or mixed motive. It means that parties have competitive and cooperative choices.

Negotiation paradigm can be dividing into two, bargaining and problem solving. Peter Harris and Ben Raily in their book wrote that conflict appears because conflicting parties gain to achieve their purposes through fulfills their needed, keeps the values, and forces the interests. Causing of conflict such as insufficient resources, less communication among parties, different perspectives of problem, less of trust, does not respect, and centralization of power.¹⁷

In the Mekong case, negotiation model in problem solving emphasizes on the cooperation aspect that relates to how to discover, create, and make a line interest among riparian states. This method is called the win-win solution or integrative method. Negotiation is a representative method to manage the process of conflict resolution among riparian states.

International Relations studies has a significant development in the recent years, once issues becomes huge concerning is environment issues. In the present time, there are four main worldviews on global environmental change and its relationship to the global political economy: those of *market liberals*, *institutionalists*,

¹⁷ Peter Harris dan Ben Raily, *Demokrasi dan Konflik yang Mengakar: Sejumlah Pilihan untuk Negosiator International*, Jakarta, IDEA, 2000. hal 12.

*bioenvironmentalists, and social greens.*¹⁸ Those environmental approaches explain the environment phenomena based on different perspectives and concerns. According to Oran Young, mentioned in his book entitled *The Effectiveness of International Institution; Hard cases and Critical Variables* that the most effective and practical means is to negotiate and strengthen international environment regimes.¹⁹

An institutionalist on the environment perspectives sees a lack of global cooperation as a key source of environmental degradation. This perspective does not reject the way we have organized political and economic life on the planet. Instead, they believe that the problem of sovereignty as the organizing principle of the international system by building and strengthening global and local institutions promote state adherence to collective goals and norms.

The Mekong River existence and its resources can be managed through an international cooperation among riparian states. An institution, a product of international regimes can be a mean to manage the running of development in Mekong River because the institution has a significant role in influencing the government decision and formulization into certain policies. Forming an international government institution will be an effective tool for countries in managing the sources through negotiation process. It means an institution as “formal organization” for countries in bridging their interest. Historically, the study of systematic theories of

¹⁸ Jennifer Clapp and Pelir Dauvergne, *Path to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment*, Australia, Flinders University, 2005. p. 1-17

¹⁹ Oran Young, *The Effectiveness of International Institutions: Hard case and Critical Variables* (Cambrige University Press, 1992).

politics was introduced by Richard N. Rosecrance who used of historical materials in an effort to construct and validate models of international behavior. Rosecrance bases his systems analysis on the study of nine historical systems. He divides West European History from 1740-1960 into nine periods or systems, each of which is demarcated by significant changes in diplomatic techniques and objectives. According to Rosecrance, there are possible to construct essentially two models of the international system which are a model with characteristics of stability and a model with characteristics of instability. A stable system is based on a comparison of system I or European model. In the system the amount of disturbance was at a minimum and the regulator, be it Concert of Europe or the United Nations, was able to cope with actor disturbance. In the European model through a formal system, United Nations adopted the model being converted into an institution such Mekong River Commission. The model purposes to enhance the number of riparian states interests through an organizational structure and procedures.

The organization is a tool to cooperate and negotiate interest among riparian states in Mekong River. In this case, the river resources cannot be separated from its natural character crossing the borders of nations. It means that river stands on global ownership from ecological perspective. Therefore, the institution will be a bridge to distribute different interest of countries into one management formulation.

D. The Hypothesis

From the theoretical framework and data mentioned before, to manage human security issues in Mekong River, the riparian states establish The Mekong River Commission, a formal regime commits to human security in Mekong River.

E. Aims of the Research

1. To explain the Mekong River Commission
2. To explain the existence Mekong River Commission in Mekong River.
3. To describe the process of Mekong River Commission (MRC) in managing human security issues in Mekong River.

F. The Method of Research

The research uses a deductive method. It means that theoretical frameworks and approaches are explored first then the hypothesis can be drawn. The hypothesis will be proved through data and analysis.

The method of collecting the data is library research in which the data are secondary sources. Therefore, all data are taken from books, scientific papers, scientific journals, magazines, newspapers, websites, and other relevant data. Those data will be analyzed with the theories that are determined before. It is to prove that the hypothesis is accurate and finally answer the core problem. Although this paper uses secondary data, the author selects the accurate and checks the reliability of the data to accomplish the trustworthy research.

G. The Scope of Research

The research is focused more on the management of the Mekong River Commission from 2006 to 2010. This issue is important to be discussed because existing of Mekong River trigger to conflict appearing that related to hydro politics and human security issues.

H. System of Writing

Chapter I describes the brief explanation of the paper. It explains about the background and also the core problem that needs to be figure out. Besides, it also shows the framework of theories that are used to explain the problem on the paper and from the theories; it draws the hypothesis that will be proved in the next chapter. Furthermore, it also explains the objectives, range, method, and system of the research.

Chapter II will explain the interest of each riparian state toward the Mekong River. It describes interests of each riparian state in part of economic reason, political reason or social reason to explore and utilize the Mekong River. Besides, it shows the correlation between states interests and human security issues in Mekong River.

Chapter III will explain the management of Mekong River through the existence of the Mekong River Commission. It describes the working of Mekong River Commission in managing the river and prevent the conflict among riparian that would appear.

Chapter IV will explain the hypothesis proven by theoretical frameworks. It shows the linkage between the Mekong River Commission toward human security and conflicting interest of riparian state through theoretical framework.

Chapter V will be a conclusion from chapter I to chapter V.