

プロジェクト報告

Transnational Development in Asia and Europe: Focusing on Civil Networks in the Mekong Region¹⁾

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Today, the Mekong Region (or the Greater Sub-region Mekong)²⁾ is attracting the most attention in Asian International Development. The Mekong Region means transnational region that includes Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and Yunnan Province in China. There are roughly two major reasons of attention. Firstly, the Mekong Region is underdeveloped area because of the Southeast Asia's Cold War. Secondly, this region attracted attention owing to the chance of international development in post-cold war scenario. In the early 1990s, transportation network was underdeveloped, but the east-west corridor and, the north-south corridor have been completed in 20 years. This means the awakening of the regional economic development and the regional economic integration.

However, this development causes bad influences in social as well as environmental aspects. For example, Large-scale undocumented migrant workers, abuse of workers by multinational companies, trans-boundary environmental destruction by

1) This paper is based on presentation at the International Council for Central and East European Studies 2015 Conference, Makuhari, Japan, August 5, 2015. (Panel II-3-2: Comparative studies between European Integration and East Asian Regional Cooperation/International Relations/Conflict Studies. Presenters are Steven Rosefielde, Kumiko Haba, and Junichi Shibuya.)

2) The Mekong Region's geographical area is defined - redefined. Every Regions used by Regionalism or Regional Integration have such features. The Mekong basin's population is about 60 million people, the population of 5 countries and 1 province is about 230 million people. Generally, upper stream means Chinese area, and lower stream means other area (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam).

international development, problem of resource use of an international river, and so on. In this trend, efforts have begun towards the problem through regional cooperation. On the other hand, the cross-border civil society networks against these issues are emerging.

Image of traditional Asian regional integration³⁾ was centrism of politicians, bureaucrats and low institutional integration, in comparison to the EU. But, I would suggest that the qualitative changes were caused to Asian regional integration by the spread of regional economic integration and social integration. This paper attempts to show changes of Asian regional integration and new model. I'd consider important issues such as large dam issue and undocumented migrant workers in the transnational development in the Mekong region. This study purposes the making idea from empirical facts rather than theoretical examinations.

1. The Asian Regional Integration and Regional Society

Once, the Asian regional integration has not been given too much emphasis, because it was regarded as a regional cooperation, rather than a regional integration. Certainly, most of the attempts for the Asian regional integration didn't have intentions of supranational organization like the European regional integration. The reason was that most of Asian countries have to build regional international relations while they achieve decolonization and build nation states. It was a natural result in this sense. Delay of regional political integration, in other words thorough non-interference in internal affairs is still a problem.

But, the Asian regional integration became essential part of regional order after 1990's. It has two reasons. One is to make progress towards actual economic regional integration. Specifically, networks of trade and production in the Asia had been built since 1980's. It was absent intention by government or among governments. It is a so-called "de-facto regionalization"⁴⁾. Another one is flood of regionalism, which is

3) "regional integration" and "regionalism" don't have clear definition, and Those have various definition by researchers. I am using regionalism as the Will or the Power to build cohesion of the region, and regional Integration as process and results of regionalism and regionalization.

4) Hettne, Björn and Söderbaum, Fredrik, 2000, "Theorising the Rise of Regionness",

described as “multi-layered”. It has two meanings which include creation of various regions and variety of purposes and functions. The former means to create new region, East Asia, Asia-Pacific, some sub-regions, and so on. The latter means that different regionalisms of purpose and function are mixed. For example, ASEAN aims at comprehensive integration, but regionalism like APEC and GMS has interest in focusing on economic integration. Also, their Functions are often overlapped. Basically, each regionalism is independent to complement each other. Ten or so Asian regionalisms don't have the core to lead regional integration, realistic and idealistic.

However, we have to note that between nations, war did not occur in the region since the emergence of regional integration. Economic growth has progressed in all countries, and Asia has risen as one of the three poles of the world economy.

Of course, regional social integration also proceeded. Regional social integration means to create transnational social space of regional scale. It brings border relativization, increasing human mobility, changing people's sphere of activity more regional, and the common regional identity and issues. Regional integration of a certain field does not necessarily spread to other sectors, but regional economic integration causes inevitably regional social integration. The Asian regional integration was formed this way too. As compared to attentions of political cooperation between governments and regional development such as creating an economic zone, the reality is difficult to say that enough attention is being paid to the social side of the issue, such as how a cross-border regional society is created as a result of such regional integration.

In the European regional integration, efforts for workers and vulnerable people have been carried out at the same time as regional integration's social sector. Economic growth must strengthen the social cohesion. In contrast to the European integration, Asia has been delaying efforts to these aspects as integration of social and economic is ahead of political integration. As will be described later, several million migrant workers as 3D (Dirty, Dangerous and Demeaning) labor and mushrooming of large dams development plans are typical issues. An obstacle to political integration is a traditional non-interference in internal affairs. But, Asian

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regional integration is not to ignore these aspects. For example, the ASEAN charter refers to new issues caused by regional integration, and shows the attitude to strive.

2. Transnational Development in the Mekong Region

I will describe the Mekong regional integration to development. The attempts have started from an early stage after the W.W.II.

Mekong Committee

The Mekong River⁵⁾ became International River during the colonial period and the modern states building period. This river channel strides over six countries, China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In 1957, the Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin - the Mekong Committee- was established as the beginning of Mekong Regionalism. This organization's purpose changed into the regional development from the flood control to avoid poverty, and especially worked for investigating, planning, and financing for the dam development⁶⁾.

On the surface, this regionalism's character is understood as the state-centrism, but it is not the most important factor of establishment at that time. It was of more significance that external actors worked on the regional development cooperation. ECAFE designed a number of ideas of regional development cooperation to reconstruct the land of Southeast Asia. The U.S. and Western countries supplied funds to defend against a communism. This idea was stood by lower basin countries, Cambodia, Laos, South Vietnam, and Thailand.

The beginning of the Mekong Regionalism can be explained by external factors rather than internal factors. For instance, the word of 'Mekong Spirit' means the donors' spirit for the regional developments at that time. The Mekong Region appeared with external actors. However, this regionalism had been stopped because three states became communist states. Therefore, the US has lost intention to commit

5) In geographically, the Mekong river is consider that the 13th longest in the world, and the 10th largest by volume. Its estimated length is 4,023 km.

6) Hori Hiroshi, 1996, The Mekong River the development and the environment, Kokinsyoin. (Japanese)

this region.

Mekong River Commission

In the 1975, Mekong Committee was renamed as Interim Mekong Committee because of Cambodia's withdrawal. Due to the absence of aids, this regionalism became a space of confidence building for three countries rather than regional development cooperation during the Cold War. However, the end of Cold War did not mean the revival of Mekong Committee.

At that time, the Interim Mekong Committee had two problems. The one was the re-accession of Cambodia, the other one was Thailand – Vietnam water conflict relating to dam project in Thailand⁷⁾. The Interim Mekong Committee was driven to a deadlock by these problems⁸⁾. The restart as Mekong River Commission -- MRC was in 1995 by the mediation of UNDP. The new organization adopted idea of the sustainable development and the protection of environment. It did not mean that this organization abandoned regional development cooperation. However, MRC have fallen behind other regional development cooperation which was given name of 'Mekong'.

Moreover, the intention of seeking environmental regime made upper basin countries hesitated to accession.

It means expectations to engage Peoples Organizations and NGOs on regional society. In this regard, its efforts are not sufficient at this moment. Today, it is often known as information center of this region.

Today, MRC is expected specialized knowledge and making rules of water resource use. However, the rule-making is not going well

Grater Mekong Sub-region

For actors related to international development, the coming peace in this region was a chance. They suggested some regional development cooperation schemes

7) Nakayama Mikiyasu. 1997, "Successes and Failures of International Organizations in Dealing with International Waters," Water Resources Development, Vol.13, No.3.

8) Makim A. 2002, "The Changing Face of Mekong Resource Politics in the Post-Cold War Era: re-negotiating arrangements for water resource management in the Lower Mekong River Basin (1991-1995), " Australian Mekong Resource Centre WORKING PAPER SERIES, No. 6, Australian Mekong Resource Centre University of Sydney.

instead of the Mekong Committee. The Greater Mekong Sub-region -- GMS which was founded by Asia Development Bank's leadership in 1992 became a mainstream.

This idea had some significant advantages. First is ADB's financing. Second is enlargement of development field including not only a river development but also a highway net, a facilitating trade, promoting investments and so on. Third is a comprehension of China and Myanmar.

In particular, the third advantage is important. Today, China (Yunnan province) has ten or more dam projects at upper basin. Participation of environmental regime means a possibility that developments are bind by rules and norms as a whole. GMS is 'unofficial scheme'⁹⁾. Therefore, GMS can't bind the member countries strictly.

GMS has a Cabinet-level ministerial conference as a top legislative body. Moreover, GMS summit was held in 2002. By degrees, driving seat is transferred to member countries by ADB.

As concrete results, since the 1990s, four international bridges, connecting the two countries' borders, have been built through multifarious international and regional cooperation. Three road networks, known as economic corridor, have been built to connect cities and towns that were otherwise vulnerable, enabling movement of people and goods. With the exception of Thailand, transportation network in the region was extremely vulnerable. Road that has been paved with asphalt was less or broken. The developing corridors, moving time becomes about one third.

Interest in the economy of the Mekong Region is extremely high now, and in fact, there are affluent people who have achieved business success in the border region. However, increasing concerns have been raised about undocumented migrant workers, human trafficking, and cross-border crimes behind the scenes.

Table 1 summarizes the overview of the Mekong Region. In spite of Asian currency crisis, per capita GDP of internal countries has made about twice the growth for 15 years.

9) ADB Japan Office, 2001, *The Regional cooperation in The Greater Mekong Subregion*, ADB Japan Office (Japanese).

Table 1 The Economic Overview of the Mekong Region¹⁰⁾

	Cambodia		Lao PDR		Myanmar		Thailand		Northeast Thai	Vietnam	
year	1995	2010	1995	2010	1995	2010	1995	2010	2010	1995	2010
GDP (billion \$)	3.4	11.3	1.9	6.8	–	49.6	168.0	318.9	40.8	20.8	112.8
per capita GDP (\$)	316.8	783.5	385.8	1069.7	–	998.4	2825.7	4740.3	2164.9	288.9	1297.2
Population (million)	10.8	14.4	4.9	6.4	–	49.7	59.5	67.3	18.8	72.0	86.9

Table 2 Changes in the Number of Foreign Nationals Entering Thailand¹¹⁾

	1998		2002		2007		2013
	Arrivals	Land route	Arrivals	Land route	Arrivals	Land route	Arrivals
Cambodia	–	–	70,187	46,716	99,945	64,695	481,595
Lao PDR	47,333	34,620	90,717	70,681	513,701	484,677	976,639
Myanmar	–	–	36,111	1,564	72,205	763	172,383
Vietnam	39,452	1,649	84,219	9,538	237,672	114,652	725,057
China	604,472	1,808	797,976	5,318	907,117	19,168	4,637,335
ASEAN	1,670,755	807,419	2,474,523	1,341,165	3,520,051	1,821,778	7,282,266
East Asia	4,282,589	844,958	6,236,246	1,416,917	7,611,931	1,934,819	15,911,375
World	7,842,760	986,871	10,872,976	1,693,114	14,464,228	2,208,689	26,546,725

3. Human Mobility and Social Integration in the Mekong Region

Whether economic integration caused any changes in the community? Table 2 indicated changes in the number of foreign nationals entering Thai. For example, Laotian arrivals' number was about 80 000 people in 1998, and about 980 000 people in 2013. It was increased to 12 times. In addition, regional countries have been issued the border pass intended for residents of the regions that is a simple pass than the passport. System is different at each gate, but residents can across the border easily for the purpose such as sightseeing, shopping, etc. Agreement of cross-border mobility procedures, including human and goods, are connected by the GMS (Ishida 2008), cost, in many ways, to cross-border expenditure shows tendency of reduction.

10) IMF Data and Statistics and Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (Thailand)

11) Department of Tourism (Thailand)

Regarding the human mobility in medium as well as long term, the number is increasing. About 170 to 400 million migrants exist in the region, and 70% migrant's flow is towards Thailand. Serious problem is a lot of migrants are undocumented. There are illegal immigration or refugee or overstay. In some cases, they are victims of human trafficking. Most of them work as 3D labor because of shortage of Low-wage workers such as factory workers, agriculture workers, forestry and fisheries workers, and housekeepers. But, for the farmers of neighboring countries, migrants working in Thailand have a chance to get two to three times more revenue. In the anxiety of exposure and harsh environment, they support substratum of Thailand's society.

For a long time, the Thai government has tolerated the situation. But, the government has begun to address this problem which became large scale from 1990's. By creating a labor registration system, the government is aiming at circulation of the labor force and prevention of settlement of migrant workers. In addition, it signed with neighboring countries the MOU to accept the new migrant workers. However, it has not quite reached the improvement of the actual stay and work environment, because procedures are complex and cost is high. It has become one of the GMS agendas.

4. Large Dams Development in the Mekong Region

Mushrooming of Large-scale Dam Development Plans

As described above, in the GMS, water resource development in the Mekong is not positioned on the main shaft. However, the current situation is mushrooming of large-scale dam development plans. Water resources development is worthwhile, because the border area, which is Mekong River basin, has not notable industry. In addition, the electricity demand of Thailand and Vietnam is greater. However, large dam development has been seen as outdated development, because cost of the environment and society is enormous. Specially, large dam development in the Mekong Region has been pointed out as a large problem by NGO and specialists. The first is lack of governance in the region as well as the nation's environmental problems. The second is Brute Force development by the Development Corporation. The third is damage to the ecosystem, and impact on the semi-subsistence of life in

rural areas. The fourth is failure of compensation to the resettled residents. In fact, mainstream dam required large-scale construction is not built even once at the lower stream.

Why the momentum has arisen for large dam development again? The first factor is significant rise in electricity demand due to economic development. The second is Lao PDR's Strategy which builds ASEAN Battery by a large number of dam constructions. The third is an inflow of private capital, a very good example is the Build - Own - Operate - Transfer (BOOT) scheme. As a result, countries have been removed necessary to prepare a huge development costs. The forth is interest of dam-related companies around the world. The fifth is China factor. China has built mainstream large dams in the Mekong upstream basin (4 dam completed). Chinese companies that form the front and back with Chinese government commit many dam development projects in the Mekong Region. To counter this, the United States and Japan are interested in large dam development.

Keeping this situation in mind as a background, a large dam project of the mainstream in the downstream region has been steadily progressing. In fact, several feasibility studies are underway. Table 2 exhibits a summary of the mainstream development plan. In particular, it has raised eight mainstream projects in Lao PDR. In addition, 17 dams are already running, 14 dams are under construction, and 20

Table 3 mainstream development plan¹²⁾

MOU	Project	Country	Developer
2007	Pak Beng	Lao PDR	China
2007	Xayaburi	Lao PDR	Thailand
2007	Pak Lay	Lao PDR	China
2007	Luang Prabang	Lao PDR	Vietnam
—	Pak Chom	Thai—Laos	China
2007	Sanakham	Lao PDR	China
2006	Don Sahong	Lao PDR	Malaysia
2008	Lat Sua	Lao PDR	Thailand
2008	Ban Khom	Thai—Laos	ITALY—Thai
2009	Stung Treng	Cambodia	Russia
2010	Sambor	Cambodia	China

12) Save the Mekong Coalition, 2009(Retrieved February 10, 2015, http://www.savethemekong.org/issue_detail.php?sid=21).

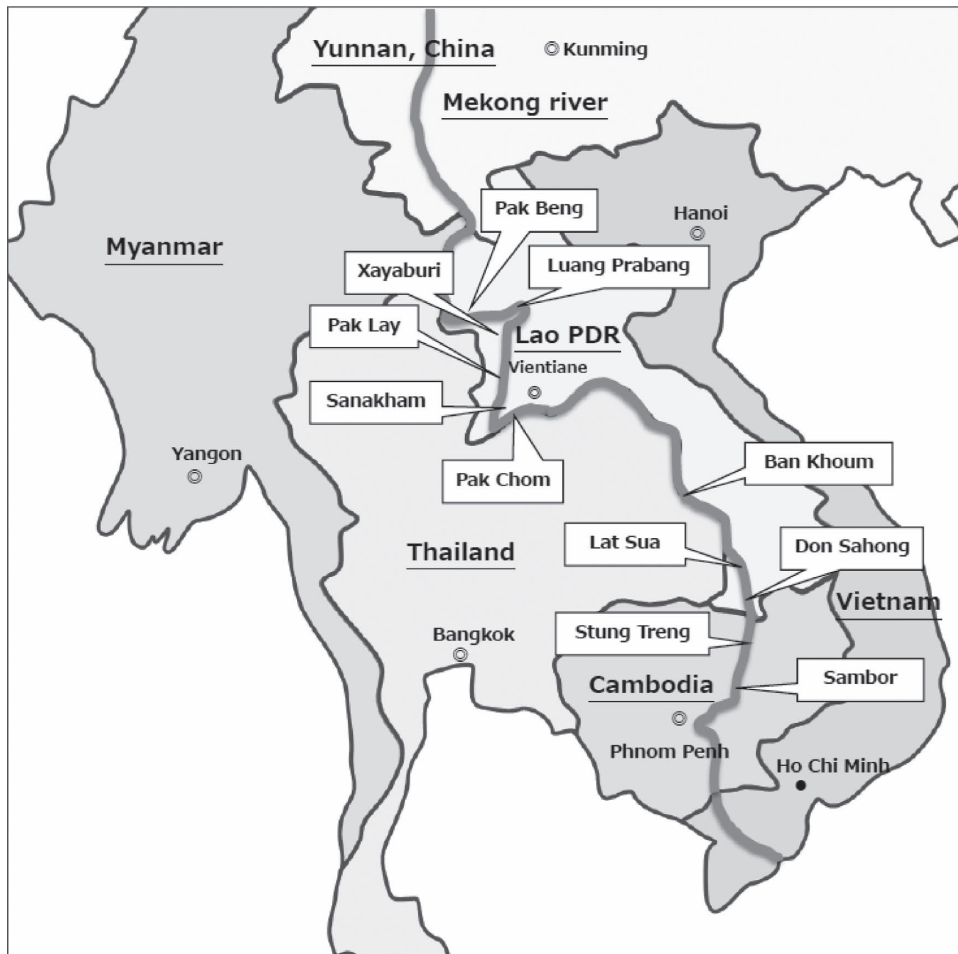


Figure 1 Map of Mainstream Dam Development Plans

dams are being planned.

Against mushrooming of large dam development, MRC has expected coordination among regional countries. MRC have principles on the Water Resources Utilization, but, rulemaking has been delayed. According to the principles of the MRC, the development of the upstream country is required to provide sufficient explanation to the downstream countries, but there is not enough discussion, downstream countries are having the anxiety and are discontent. Also, in the GMS, it does not have a mechanism of intervention because of the framework of development cooperation.

Civil Network Against Dam Development

In terms of large dam development, what kind of reaction in the region has

occurred? The Central role has been played by Thai NGOs of urban areas. Thai NGOs have the character that they develop conflicting relationships between NGOs and government rather than complementary relationship. In 1990's, some NGOs that specialize in large dam problem were born. They accepted the cooperation and support of the international NGOs interested in the region, and have expanded the range of activities. At the same time, local People's Organization is active, because dam development is carried out in their residence. Assembly of the Poor is a well-known People's Organization that sit-in Prime Minister's Office to open the floodgate of the dam for fisheries and ecosystem.

Assertion of the anti-dam movement we are summarizing below. The first is skepticism to poverty reduction by dam development. The second is environmental destruction, especially impact on the catch of the reduction and rare species. The third is proper implementation of the environmental assessment. The forth is appropriate compensation of resettlement. The fifth is a question of the economics of electricity sales plan. The last is presentation of alternative.

Among these movements, we want to pay attention to Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA). It was founded in 1991, and it is one of the actors which try to solve the problem by region unit. It was set up as sister organization of Thailand environmental NGO, Foundation for Ecological Recovery. TERRA works to support the network of NGOs and people's organizations in the Mekong Region. In particular, TERRA maintains to make political space of the region unit (Dore 2003). Their act changed local and national issues into regional issues. TERRA publishes magazine¹³⁾ which carries articles by various actors.

For example, TERRA held the Mekong Public Forum in 2008. There participants of more than 300 regional organizations and the Thai ministry officials were invited along with many NGO activists, they had a discussion (TERRA 2008).

When the mainstream development became apparent in 2009, NGOs formed the Save the Mekong coalition in order to strengthen the unity. It consists of NGOs, POs,

13) The magazine is *Watershed*. It has been published since 1995. Watershed consists of feature articles interviews with local people, nongovernmental organizations and funding institutions; profiles and reports of projects, companies and government policies; and current news and updates of development in the region. TERRA, 2007, "Watershed: People's Forum on Ecology" (Retrieved February 10, 2015, <http://www.terraper.org/watershed.php>)

Table 4 Save the Mekong coalition members¹⁴⁾

Country	Names
Cambodia	The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF)
	Sesan-Srepok-Sekong Rivers Protection Network (3SPN)
	Conservation and Development on Cambodia (CDCam)
Thailand	Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA)
	Thai People's Network for Mekong
	Living Rivers Siam (SEARIN)
	Palang Thai
	Salween Watch Coalition,
	Focus on the Global South
Vietnam	Center for Water Resources Conservation and Development (WARECOD)
	People and Nature Reconciliation (PanNature)
Myanmar	Burma Rivers Network
China	China Development Brief
External	Manna Gum (Australia)
	Mekong Monitor Tasmania, Australia (Australia)
	Probe International (Canada)
	Mekong Watch (Japan)
	Both ENDS (Netherland)
	Association for International Water Studies (FIVAS) (Norway)
	The Corner House (U.K.)
	World Rainforest Movement (WRM) (Uruguay)
	EarthRights International (U.S.)
	International Rivers (U.S.)
	The Mangrove Action Project (MAP) (U.S.)
	Bank Information Center (BIC) (U.S.)

academic persons, artists, and living persons (29 partners). A break down by countries includes Cambodia 3 organizations, Thailand 6 organizations, Vietnam 2 organizations, Myanmar 2 organizations, China 1 organization, external countries 12 organizations. It aims at doing two things: to raise further public awareness about the risks associated with damming such an important international river, and to persuade policymakers to adopt more sustainable and peaceful ways of meeting people's energy and water needs.

14) Save the Mekong Coalition, 2009 (Retrieved February 10, 2015, <http://www.savethemekong.org/link.php?langss=en>)

Conclusion

The new Asian regional integration has some features. The first is that regional integration is expanded more powerfully by non-state actors. The pressure of regional economic integration is larger by the companies and the market. As a result, the human mobility to promote regional social integration is increasing. Also, the civil network of citizens against the excessive regional development has emerged. The second is coexistence of different quality regionalism in the same region. Specifically, there is complex three - way regionalism, one is state-centrism regionalism, another is regionalization by companies and the market, the other is regionalism by civil networks.

These relationships are not complementary. Therefore, we need ideas for harmony. In general, such a role is expected from regional organizations. It may be very difficult, but institutional strengthening of the MRC and the GMS is required for deeper integration.

Strengthening of each country's civil society for civil network is also required. There is a need to watch the backlash against NGO activities in CLMV countries.