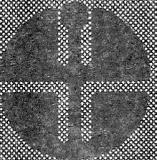


**ETHNICITY AND TRANS-NATIONAL COMMERCE
IN THE MEKONG RIVER BASIN IN CAMBODIA
1975-2005**



RESEARCH CENTER FOR REGIONAL RESOURCES
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Preface

This research on the 'Ethnicity and Transnational Commerce in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia: 1975 – 2005' is the result of the second year of the four year research plan for research on the Mekong River Basin. Conducted by researchers from the Research Centre for Regional Resources, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (PSDR – LIPI) it focuses on the topics of ethnicity and transnational commerce, particularly in the aspects of interethnic relationships, migration, inter-ethnic and transnational commerce, as well as the government policies on managing and developing the Mekong River Basin during various periods.

There are many people to whom the team has to convey its appreciation for help during this research. First our heartfelt thanks to Mr Noor Rachman Oerip, the Ambassador of the Indonesian Embassy in Cambodia and Mr W.R. Hendro, Counselor in the Embassy of the Republic Indonesia who were so patient and kind in preparing the invitation letters for the team to work in Cambodia safely and also acting as our hosts during the ten day field research in the country. Our thanks are also addressed to Mr Mohammad Bin Marwan, Secretary General Cambodian Islamic Association, who took the team to Kampong Cham Province and helped with interviews with the local people. We would also like to express our gratitude to Haji Sufri, Deputy Governor of Kampong Cham Province, Haji Abdul Rozak bin Ismail, Haji Yusuf and Haji Ismail, who gave us valuable information about Kampong Cham and the Cham people. As well, we would address our thanks to the Cambodia National Mekong Committee, which gave us valuable resources on Mekong Studies, especially thank you Mr So Sophort, Deputy Director Projects Department, for inviting the team for discussions and giving it priceless information and suggestions.

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We really hope that this book provides information for students, academics, researchers and people concerned with or interested in Cambodia. We realize that there are still limitations and weaknesses in our report. Thus, we would very much appreciate any criticisms and/or suggestions for better quality research in the near future.

Jakarta, 21 November 2006

Yekti Maunati
Director of Research Center for Regional Resources (PSDR)
Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI)

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ABBREVIATION

ADB	: Asian Development Bank
AMC	: Asian Migrants Centre
CAS	: Center of Advanced Studies
CNMC	: Cambodian National Mekong Committee
CDRI	: Cambodia Development Research Institute
DOF	: Department of Fishery
EIC	: Economic Institute of Cambodia
FGD	: Focus Discussion Groups
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	: Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IDP	: Internally Displaced Person
IOM	: International Organization of Migration
MRC	: Mekong River Commission
MoU	: Memorandum of Understanding
NIS	: National Institute of Statistics
NGO	: Non Governmental Organization
OAAs	: Other Aquatic Animals
PRK	: People's Republic of Kampuchea
UNEP	: United Nations Environment Programme
UNDP	: United Nations Development Program
UN	: United Nations
UNTAC	: United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
USSR	: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHO	: World Health Organization

CHAPTER I

ETHNICITY AND TRANSNATIONAL TRADE IN THE CAMBODIAN MEKONG RIVER BASIN

An Introduction

Rucianawati

I. Background

Since long ago the river basin has been the destination for migrants to come and stay. The river basin promises a better life because of the fertility of its soil and ease of transportation, since in the past rivers and seas were the main traffic lanes for commerce. Hill (1996:12) notes that the Mekong River, for a long time, has been a main traffic lane for commerce and geographically has become the political boundary of several countries. People from many places and many ethnic groups were attracted to the towns along the Mekong River. The migrants, mostly traders and fishers, who came to this area, created colonies in towns which grew up in the Mekong River Basin.

The Mekong River has a high economic value that is very important as a source of living for the people who live in its basin. The majority of the people in the Mekong River Basin rely on agriculture, fishing and forestry. Steinberg (1989: 7) notes that 85% of the people who live around the Mekong River Basin depend economically on those three sectors. The advantages of the economic values of the Mekong River attract migrants to come and stay in its basin, as well as the Europeans who wanted to con-

trol this area in the past. The process of migration of thousands of years still goes on in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia, where the people are always looking for a better life.

The significant role of the Mekong River in attracting migrants has formed the characteristics of the people who live around it, with different backgrounds of ethnicity, culture, tradition and religion. The people who live in the basin are not only the original people of this area but also the migrants from other places. In the first year of this research in Thailand we found that there are many ethnic groups living in Mukdahan, a town in Thailand that lies in the Mekong River Basin, such as the Thai, Lao, Vietnamese and Chinese. The central market in this town is known as the 'Indochinese Market'. In Cambodia (Kampong Cham Province), the Cham people live together with other ethnic groups, such as Khmer, Chinese and Vietnamese.

The people of many ethnic and cultural backgrounds, who live around the Mekong River Basin, have strengthened the role of the river as the centre of civilization, especially its specific function in interethnic commerce for many ethnic groups. Now, there are about 25 trade centred towns along the Mekong River (www.mrcmekong.org). In Cambodia, Phnom Penh, the capital city of the country, lies on the bank of the Mekong River. Other towns that have grown up in the Mekong River Basin are Stung Treng, Kratie and Kampong Cham.

Cambodia is the fifth country among the six countries where the Mekong River flows. In this country, the Mekong plays a significant role in the lives of the people who live in its basin, especially of the farmers and fishers. It is noted that 86% of the total land area of Cambodia (181,535 sq.km.), lies in the Mekong

River Basin (Gartrell 1997). Besides that, about 74% of this area is timber rich forest land. Cambodia is also wealthy in biodiversity, as it has the Mekong River, the Tonle Sap River and the Great Lake as the sources of aquatic life and fish both for consumption and export. These factors have enabled Cambodia to enjoy comparative advantage if compared with other countries included in the Greater Mekong Subregion (<http://big5.chinabroadcast.cn/gate/big5/my.chinabroadcast.cn>).

In Cambodia, many ethnic groups live in the Mekong River Basin. The Khmer are the majority, with more than 90% of the total population. The minorities are the Cham, the Khmer Loeu, the Vietnamese, the Chinese, the Europeans and Indians. The Cham people, resulting from the exodus of the Kingdom of Champa, are estimated to have lived in Cambodia since 1456. They live along the Tonle Sap and the Mekong River, especially in Kampong Cham. The Khmer Loeu is the minority who stay in the northeastern part of Cambodia. One of the Khmer Loeu communities lives in Stung Treng. The communities of Vietnamese are found in the basins of the Mekong and Tonle Sap Rivers. Most of the Vietnamese are fishers and workers in rubber plantations. The Chinese are scattered in many places with most of them gaining a livelihood from trade activities and money lending (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/>).

II. Scope of the Study

This research looks at many ethnic groups involved in trade activities in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia, especially at their ethnicity and relationships among the ethnic groups, migration, trade activities and the policies of the government in managing

and developing the natural resources. Some of the variables used in this research are:

1. Ethnicity

In social anthropology, the term 'ethnicity' refers to the relations of interethnic groups that awake their consciousness of the differences of culture among them and arouse respect for the differences. Ethnicity refers to a big family categorized as a community or identity that stands up with certain elements (Abdillah 2002: 77-79). Based on these definitions, in Cambodia the Khmer are defined as the local ethnic group, while the Cham, the Vietnamese, the Lao, the Indians, the Chinese and the Europeans are the migrants.

2. Transnational Trade

Transnational Trade is defined as commercial activity involving commodities from one country to another country. Economists usually use the principle of specialization and comparative advantage to formulate the theory of international trade (transnational trade). In the principle of comparative advantage, it is explained that a country will produce and export commodities which have the cheapest cost. The difference of comparative advantage from any country makes it possible to engage in transnational trade.

The research, conducted in Phnom Penh and Kampong Cham, chose the period of 1975 – 2005 with the assumption that the commercial activity in the Mekong River Basin, especially in

the lower part, restarted to be busy after the Viet Nam war. The commercial activity in the Mekong River Basin suffered more or less negative impact of this war, since Viet Nam is the estuary of the Mekong River.

III. The Issues

This research about Ethnicity and Transnational Trade in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia is in the second year of a four-year research plan, with the issues almost the same as in the previous research in Thailand. This research focuses on the following issues:

1. What is the dynamic of ethnicity in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia? Who are the local ethnic people and who are the migrants? What is the social interaction between the local ethnic people and the migrants?
2. What are the interethnic relations in trade activities in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia?
3. What is the impact of the trade activity on the local ethnic group?
4. What is the government policy in managing and developing the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia, especially in managing the natural resources?

IV. The Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are:

1. To look at the dynamics of a multi ethnic society in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia from 1975 to 2005;

2. To understand the history of trade activities in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia, the interethnic relations in the trade activities and the trade patterns;
3. To look at the impact of interethnic trade on the local ethnic group;
4. To understand the policy of the Cambodian government in managing and developing the Mekong River Basin, especially in the sectors of agriculture and fishery.

V. The Theoretical Framework

The main issue in this research is ethnicity and transnational trade in the Mekong River Basin. In his book, *Asia Tenggara dalam Kurun Niaga 1450-1680*, Reid says that from the 15th to the 17th centuries, Southeast Asia was a bustling place in East – West commerce. The main lane for commerce was the ocean and it is clear that navigation was very busy. Reid calls this period ‘the commerce era’, since the commercial activity was very intensive (Reid 1992: 10). Based on Reid’s research, it is estimated that in this era the big rivers such as the Mekong, also played a big role as a lane of transportation with its function very significant in supporting commercial activity. The river connects the inland area to the harbours, where commodities were carried to be sent on to other cities or countries and vice versa.

The trade activity in the Mekong River Basin is generally categorized as transnational trade, since many countries included in the Greater Mekong Subregion are involved in the commerce in this area. In Mukdahan and Chong Mek in Thailand for example, there are many ethnic groups, such as the Thai, the Lao, the Viet-

name and the Chinese, involved in commercial activities. In Kampong Cham, Cambodia, transnational trade is not visible, while the commercial activity is seen as interethnic trade, which involves the ethnic Khmer, the Cham, the Vietnamese and the Chinese. The transnational commerce in the Mekong River Basin in Thailand is intensive, because the Mekong River is also the boundary between Thailand and the Lao PDR, while in Cambodia the Mekong River cleaves the inner country of Cambodia.

Transnational trade plays a significant role in the economy of a country. It means that the countries involved in transnational trade need each other. The important meanings of commercial activity in the economy of a country are: (Todaro 2000 : 25-26)

1. Commerce is an important factor to stimulate the economic development of a country. Commerce will make the consumption capacity of a country greater, increasing the output of the world and providing access to the limited resources and international trade potential of any export commodity;
2. Commerce tends to promote the equality of income distribution, as well as domestic and international wealth. This happens through the process of equalization of the values of the production factors in every country, increasing the real income of every country involved in international trade activities and supporting the efficiency of the use of resources in every country in order to increase the advantages of the world resources as a whole;
3. Commerce helps a country in development through the promotion and emphasis of economic sectors that contain comparative advantage, both the generous supply of production factors and efficiency advantage or productivity in every country.

Theories of international trade majority use the concept of comparative advantage that basically is a static pattern. This concept is based on one input variable or factor of production that is, the cost of the workforce. These theories push a whole specialist approach to show the benefits that can be reached by any country which wants to establish international trade relations.

The patterns of international trade started to grow in the 19th century, mostly based on the ideas of David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill. The comparative advantage theories of David Ricardo and J.S. Mill explain that a country will specialize in exporting its commodity if the country has comparative advantage and importing the commodity to the country has comparative disadvantage (Tambunan 2001: 25-26). This theory is a criticism but also a completion of the theory of absolute advantage of Adam Smith. In the context of the commerce in the Mekong River area, agriculture and fishing have become the comparative advantage. In Cambodia, fishing is the comparative advantage in trade activity with fisheries playing a big role in the economy of this country.

The comparative advantage of the Mekong countries attracts migrants, especially for economic reasons. Economic activity (commerce) brings the local people in contact with the migrants from other places or other countries. Transnational trade in Southeast Asia has happened over a long time, following the process of migration, since one, among many factors causing *human migration*, is to fulfill economic needs. This is in conformity with the concept of Mochtar Naim about migration, cited by Singarimbun (1977:9), which analyzes nine factors that influence the process of migration: ecology, geography, demography, economics, education, political turmoil, the pull of the city and the policy of migration or transmigration.

Of the nine factors that influence migration, it seems that ecology, geography, and economics are the main causal factors in the Mekong River Basin. The ecology factor is driven by the fact that the Mekong is rich in biodiversity and natural resources. Geography refers to the position of the Mekong as a big river that cleaves the mainland of Asia, flowing past a number of countries and for a long time being a main traffic lane for transnational commerce (Hill 1996: 12), while the economic factor is related to the function of the Mekong River in navigation, the trading towns have grown up in its basin.

Human migration as the process of spatial mobility accompanied by a change of permanent residence, inter political unity, statistics or administration bring out a new order, system and social structure in the new place. Migration as a factor that enriches the membership of a society or nation has positive impact, such as the process of assimilation, acculturation or the mixture of tradition and culture between the migrants and the local people. On the other hand, migration also has negative impact both on the migrants and the local people. It shows in the political and cultural conflict and the damage to the environment. In this case, the conflict will be worse if nativism appears towards the migrants. The native here refers to the local people who claim to be the indigenous people of a certain area (Abdillah 2002: 99 and 109).

Ethnicity, defined as the claim of an ethnic group as the original group entitled to a certain area, usually will show up if there is another ethnic group which comes and stays in this area. The migrants sometimes become more dominant in some sectors, for example, in the economy and politics. If the domination starts to move, the local people start to feel that they are isolated and then, will try to fight the claim as the local ethnic group, the origi-

nal which is more entitled to a certain area. The term 'ethnic' turns up because of the interaction process between different groups or different individuals.

VI. Research Method

This research tries to apply a multidisciplinary approach, particularly the historical, economic and social-anthropological approaches. The local history approach was used to look at the role of the Mekong in different periods, the history of commercial activity in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia, as well as the ethnic migration in this area. The economic aspect, as the background of commercial activity, its contribution to the Cambodian economy and the impact of the commercial activity on the local people was analyzed using an economic approach. This research applies the social-anthropological approach to categorize the local ethnic group and the migrants, look at the dynamic relations of the local ethnic group and the migrants and the conflicts between them as well.

To obtain the primary and secondary sources, the team of researchers conducted both library and field research. The gathering of the primary sources, in the field research in Cambodia (2006), was conducted by interviewing and discussing with academics and people in institutions involved with Mekong research, the government and the local community. The team stayed for some days in Phnom Penh, the capital of the country and also went to Kampong Cham, a town in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia.

The primary and secondary sources were analyzed through the descriptive-qualitative method to explain the dynamics of in-

terethnic relations, transnational and interethnic commerce, the socio-economic impact of the commercial activity in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia and the interaction between the local people and the migrants.

VII. Organization of the Report

This report is organized into seven chapters:

Chapter 1 : Introduction

This chapter contains the background of the study, scope of the study, the issues, aims of the study, the theoretical framework, research method and the organization of the report.

Chapter 2 : Cambodian Mekong River Basin at a Glance

Basically, this chapter describes the role of the Mekong River in Cambodia, especially in the sectors of agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Besides that, the function of the Mekong River as a lane for transportation is also explained.

Chapter 3 : Ethnicity in Cambodia: Ethnic and Ethnic Groups in the Mekong River Basin

Firstly, this chapter gives an understanding about ethnic groups and ethnicity. Furthermore this part describes the ethnic groups which live in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia and the relations among of them.

Chapter 4 : Migration and its Problems in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia

This chapter describes the history of migration in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia, its patterns, causal factors and the impact and the relations between the migrants and the local people.

Chapter 5 : The Dynamics of Interethnic Trade Activity in Kampong Cham

The interethnic trade activity, especially in Kampong Cham is explained in this chapter. In detail, this part analyses the factors which influence the interethnic trade, the economic activities of ethnic groups and the impact of interethnic trade on local traders.

Chapter 6 : Government Policies on Resource Management in the Cambodian Mekong River Basin

This chapter describes the government policies on resource management in the Mekong River Basin, particularly in fisheries management. This chapter also takes up the issue of ethnicity and its impact on the policies of fisheries management

Chapter 7 : Conclusion

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CHAPTER II

THE CAMBODIAN MEKONG RIVER BASIN AT A GLANCE:

The Role of the Mekong in Cambodia

Rucianawati

I. Introduction

The Mekong River plays a big part in the lives of people in Cambodia who depend on its waters, especially for fishing and agriculture. In this country, some towns have grown in the Mekong River Basin, such as Strung Teng, Kratie, Kampong Cham and Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia. The Mekong River enters northeast Cambodia downstream of Khone Falls in the Lao PDR and flows on to Viet Nam.

Cambodia, the fifth country through which the Mekong flows, has unique characteristic compared with the other five Mekong countries. In Cambodia the Mekong River has a water reserve, called Tonle Sap (Great Lake). The lake has the important function of absorbing water from the Mekong River in the rainy season and to supply water in the dry season. Besides those functions, Tonle Sap is a main source of fish production in Cambodia.

The Mekong River, which flows for about 502 km in Cambodia, plays an important role in agriculture, fishing, forestry and transportation. The river rich in various species of fish is a very important source of livelihood for thousands of fishers of the

Mekong basin, especially around the Tonle Sap. To know more about the role of the Mekong River in Cambodia, it is very important to learn about its characteristics and its functions in agriculture, fishing and forestry. It is also important to understand the function of the Mekong River as a lane of transportation.

II. The Characteristics of the Mekong River in Cambodia

The Mekong River in Cambodia is part of the Lower Mekong which begins in the Golden Triangle and empties into the South China Sea. According to Kasetsiri (2003), the river, which in flowing over 5000 kilometers is divided geographically into three parts: the upper stretch, from the Tibetan Plateau to the Golden Triangle, the middle stretch, from Ubon Province in Thailand to Champasak in Laos and the lower reaches, from Khone Falls in Cambodia to the delta in Viet Nam. This means that the Mekong River in Cambodia is part of the lower reaches of the river.

The river enters Cambodia from Laos in the northeast and flows through Stung Treng, Kratie, and Kampong Cham. At Phnom Penh, the Mekong divides into two main downriver branches, the Bassac River and the Mekong River. Both rivers form the wide Mekong delta starting in southeast Cambodia and enlarging further in Viet Nam (Gartrell 1997: 7). Hortle et.al. (2004: 10) describe the characteristics of the Mekong River in Cambodia below:

From the Lao border to Kratie, the Mekong is a large braided river, with a variety of habitats: rapids, pools some of which are up to 80m deep, rock bars and sandbars, as well as fringing

seasonably-flooded forests. Near Kratie, the Mekong River becomes a meandering lowland river with a slower current, a muddy/sandy bed, less variation in depth and fringing wetlands and floodplains. Near Phnom Penh, the river divides into a larger eastern branch, the Mekong, and a smaller western branch, the Bassac River. In this place also the Mekong is joined by the Tonle Sap River.

From this description, it looks as if the Mekong has different characteristics from the upstream to the downstream in Cambodia. At Stung Treng, the first Cambodian town along the banks of the Mekong River, the river joins the flow of three major tributaries, the Sesan, the Sekong and the Srepok Rivers, which are essential in the life cycle of many migratory Mekong fish.

The Mekong River, called *Mékôngk* or Tonle Thom (great river) in Cambodia (Kasetsiri 2003; Butwell 1988) has special characteristics, since it has a large tributary (Tonle Sap River) that connects it to the Great Lake (Tonle Sap Lake). The Mekong River meets the Tonle Sap River in Phnom Penh. About 86% of the land area in Cambodia is within the Mekong area and 20% of the Mekong River's catchment is within Cambodia (Hortle et.al. 2004: 8).

Figure 2.1

Map of the Mekong River in Cambodia



Source: <http://worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/lgcolor/khcolor.htm>

Tonle Sap

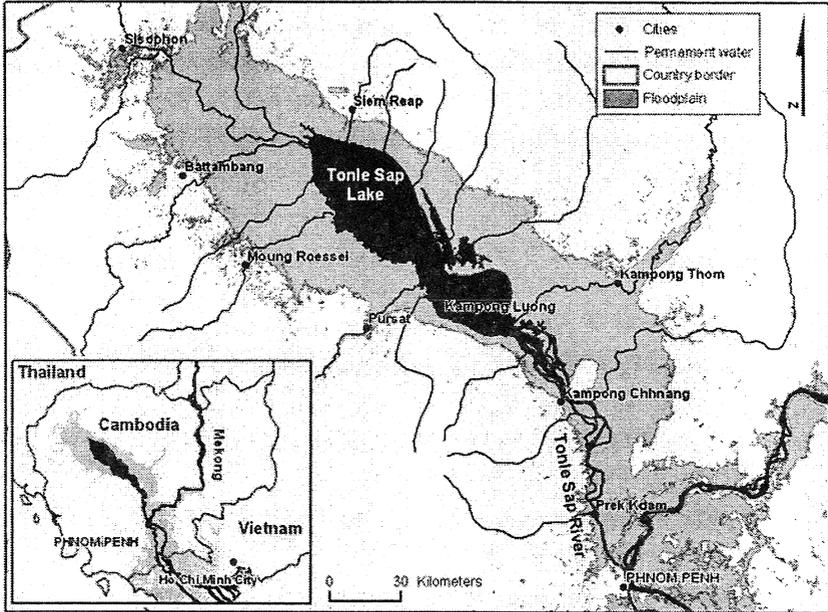
Discussion about the Mekong River in Cambodia cannot be separated from the Tonle Sap River and the Tonle Sap Lake (Great Lake). The Tonle Sap River is 120-km long and connects the Mekong River to the Great Lake. The relationship between the Mekong River and the Great Lake sometimes is compared to a body and its lungs (ADB Review December 2004: 29). The Great Lake, which is located in the Province of Siem Reap (western Cambodia), is the largest lake in Southeast Asia and is estimated to have formed some 5,000 – 6,000 years ago (Sverdrup 2002: 78).

The Tonle Sap – Great Lake system is significant in intercepting, retaining, reserving and releasing the water of the Mekong in the different seasons. In the rainy season, when the level of the Mekong rises, water runs to the Tonle Sap and towards the Great Lake, while in the dry season, when the level of the Mekong falls, the Tonle Sap flows towards the Mekong. The change in the flow direction can first be seen at a point called Chaktomuk (the four faces). The level of the water in the Great Lake in the dry season (December-June) is 1-2 m in depth and at the peak of the flood it may increase up to about 10 m. (Hortle et.al 2004: 10).

Usually, in the wet monsoon season the rain and the melting of the snow in Tibet causes the Mekong to swell. In this season, the Tonle Sap Basin is turned into a great lake more than twice its original size (Figure 2.2). The area of this lake expands from 2,500 – 3,000 km² in the dry season, while during the flood season it covers 10,000 – 14,000 km², or about 5-8% of the total land area of Cambodia (Hortle et.al. 2004: 10).

Figure 2.2

The Floodplain of the Great Lake



Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:TonleSapMap.png>

The high water of the Mekong River brings great blessing to the people who live in its basin, especially to the fishers around the Tonle Sap - Great Lake system. The waters carry an abundance of fish and other aquatic animals (OAAs), which in Cambodia are noted as about 500 species. Tonle Sap provides fish as a livelihood, as well as source of protein and staple food for the poor people in Cambodia. In the Tonle Sap biosphere live about 1.1 million people, while in Tonle Sap Basin as a whole, live 4.4 million people (Malikaew 2005). In some places of Tonle Sap,

these people live in communities in houses built on stilts in the water.

III. The Mekong and Fishing in Cambodia

Since ancient times, fish and fishing cannot be separated from Cambodia. Now fishing is also a very important sector in the economy of Cambodia. In this country, there are three places defined as Cambodia's water and fisheries resources: the Mekong River, the Tonle Sap River and the Great Lake. At least 60% of the inland fish production of Cambodia comes from the Great Lake and Tonle Sap River (ADB and UNEP 2004: 55).

According to the Economic Institute of Cambodia (EIC), in 2003 the fishery sector's estimated share was 3.6% of the GDP. This sector employs about 5% of the total workforce of Cambodia. MRC reports that millions of people work full or part time in fisheries related activities. Women play an important role in the fishing industry in Cambodia. They are involved in fishing and usually use small-scale gear. They are also involved in processing the fish, both for their own households and for sale, for example, in making *prahok*, a kind of preserved fish. In Kampong Cham, the majority of fish vendors in the local market are women, who usually also fish or are the family/wife of a fisherman. MRC reports that 85-95% of sellers in rural fish markets in Cambodia are women (Hortle et al. 2004: 5). This means that women play a significant role in marketing and furthermore, in supporting the economies of their families.

In catching fish, Cambodians use various aids of all sizes, noted as numbering more than 150 types. *Dai*, *barrage* and *fences*¹ with traps are examples of the largest gear, while castnets, dipnets, small gillnets and traps are the smaller. Cambodia also has the *fishing lot*² system, only found in this country, and which has become one of the government's main instruments for extracting revenue from fisheries (Sverdrup-Jensen 2002: 19).

Based on the various types of fishing, Hortle et al. (2004: 26-28) categorize the fisheries in Cambodia into three: (1) Small-scale fisheries (subsistence/family fisheries), which are based on small gear fishing. In this type, anybody can fish, and a license is not needed. Sometimes the fishers fish on their own land, in nearby water bodies, flooded forests and floodplain areas. (2) Middle-scale fisheries, based on large gear, with the most popular being gillnets and seines. In this scale fishing, anybody can fish, but a license is required and the fishers are not permitted inside commercial fishing lots. (3) Commercial-scale (large-scale) fisheries, based on lot fishing areas auctioned every two years. In the large-scale fisheries, the fishers are only permitted in fishing lots, which can only be fished in the open season (October – May).

¹ *Dai* is a stationary trawl or bagnet which filters the current and is typically 25-45 m wide and 100 m long. *Fences* are built across flooded areas or lakes to direct fish into traps and their length is up to several kilometres. *Barrage* are smaller gear that block a stream and direct fish into traps (Hortle et al. 2004: 28).

² Fishing lots (*loh nesaat*) are concessions auctioned off by the Cambodian government to the highest bidder for a two-year period of exclusive exploitation (Sverdrup-Jensen 2002: 19).

In 2001, the government auctions rights to large fishing lots were noted as up to nearly two million dollars worth per year. It means that only the very wealthy can afford to place a bid on these fishing lots. Officially, one can own a large fishing lot for only two years but the same person often owns the rights for the next year (MRC 2003: 15).

Table 2.1

**Characteristic Features of Fishing Practices
in Freshwater Fisheries in Cambodia.**

	Family Fishing	Middle-Scale	Large-Scale
Fishing Period	Round the year	October - May	October - May
Major Gear Technique	Harpoon / spear; castnet (<5m); small gillnet (<10m); single hooked lines; and bamboo traps.	Seine net; gillnet; castnet; hooked line; and bamboo traps.	Bagnet; bamboo/wooden barrage; and bamboo fence and traps.
Fishing Rights Allocations	Free within areas outside fish reserves and fishing lots.	Annual license fee according to gear type and size.	Leasing of designated fishing grounds every two years through competitive bidding.
Background of Fisheries / Operators	Artisan fishers; subsistence farmers and landless.	Artisan fishers from river and lakeside communities.	Financially and politically powerful people and their agents.
Source of Fishing Labour and Terms of Employment	Family members.	Family members and co-villagers as partners, and occasional hired workers; income sharing.	Hired workers from non-fishing communities; fixed wages (cash and food) according to skills.
Average Size of Crew	1-3	3-6	50-80

Source: Ahmed, M. and Thana, T.S. (1995), quoted in Gartrell (1997: 26-27)

Sverdrup-Jensen (2002: 67) notes that most of the 1.2 million fishers in the Great Lake area are engaged in middle- and small-scale fisheries. Most of them live at the edges of the floodplain but some live in floating villages. Based on Table 2.1, most of the fishers in Kampong Cham also can be categorized as family fisheries and middle-scale fisheries, particularly the Cham fishers. They work with their family members and co-villagers as partners in both fishing and marketing.

In the Tonle Sap River, the users of the larger *dais* are currently considering closing down, as they are responsible for catching most of the giant fish (especially giant catfish) migrating from the Great Lake (Coates et al. 2003: 21). Those fish are listed as an endangered species and their existence should be preserved. In 2000 only 11 giant catfish were caught in the Mekong and in 2001, only eight. In Cambodia, the Lao PDR and Thailand, the fishers still catch and sell them for consumption, because some fishers believe that the fish will never become extinct, as they lay hundreds of thousands of eggs (Wongruang 2004: 18).

Table 2.2

Number of Dai lots

Season	Number	Reduction
1938-1939	128	-
1983-1988	86	33%
1995-2000	63	27%
2001-2002	60	5%

Source: Sverdrup-Jensen 2002: 19.

Table 2.2 shows that the number of *dai* lots decreased sharply in the 1980s. Although the reduction in the recent season was not so significant, it had a big impact on fish catching, as at the peak times *dai* can land up to 0.5 tonnes of fish per 15-minute period (Coates et al. 2003: 12).

Increasing pressure on fishing causes fishers to use many ways to get high total fish capture, for example, by using monofilament gillnets and fine mesh fences with traps (*say yoeun*). However, this type of gear is categorized as illegal. In the Fisheries Law, gillnets are limited to 10 m in length but most nets are 50 m or longer. *Say yoeun* made from plastic mosquito netting is also not permitted because this gear catches very small fish of all species before they grow. Other illegal fishing methods are electro-fishing, poisoning and use of explosives, which kill non targeted species and damage habitats (Hortle et al. 2004: 33-34). Respondents in Kampong Roka (Kampong Cham Province) explained that the Vietnamese fishers sometimes use illegal ways in fishing, while the Cham fishers still use traditional ways. The people can do nothing because of the lack of government control.³ For this reason, fisheries management needs to be improved to reduce the impact of illegal fishing and over-fishing, for example, by establishing fishing communities.

Fish products, such as dried or salted fish, fish oil, fish paste and fresh fish have long been the main export commodities of this country. In 1910, Petillot, as cited by Hortle et.al, (2004: 20) reported that 50,000 tonnes of fish products were exported

³ Interview with some fishers in Kampong Roka, Kampong Cham Province, 30 May 2006

from Cambodia and in the 1930s Chevey noted that about 23,000 tonnes/year of fish products were sent to Java. The main species of fish caught in the Mekong River and Tonle Sap is *Trey Riel*, a tiny, energetic, silvery fish. Trey riel can migrate as far as 1000 km from the Tonle Sap Lake to Savanakheth and Mukhdahan. For 4-6 days before the full moon in December-March every year, large areas of the Mekong Basin are almost boiling with these small fish (MRC 2003: 22). This is the harvest time for fishers around this basin.

In the period of the Khmer Rouge regime (1975 – 1979), the fish production was greatly reduced, because the infrastructure was disrupted and most of the population was forced into rice production. Activities in fishing since this period have been increasing again. Commercial fish production in Cambodia 1982 – 1992 can be seen in Table 2.3

Table 2.3
Commercial Fish Production in Cambodia 1982-1992
(in tonnes)

Year	Total	Inland	Marine	Aquaculture
1982	68,71	65,700	3,01	n/
1983	68,16	58,717	9,44	n/
1984	64,42	55,093	7,24	1,610
1985	70,57	56,400	11,174	3,000
1986	73,62	64,181	7,24	2,200
1987	82,07	62,154	17,417	2,500
1988	86,80	61,200	21,000	4,600
1989	82,08	50,500	26,050	5,538
1990	111,40	65,100	39,900	6,400
1991	117,80	74,700	36,400	6,700
1992	117,15	68,900	33,700	8,550
Average (1990 - 1992)	113,450	69,567	36,666	7,217
Percent	100	61	32	6

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Fisheries, Phnom Penh, 1992, quoted in Ministry of the Environment / UNDP, 1994 *State of the Environment Report*. Phnom Penh.

Table 2.3 shows that 61% of the fish production of Cambodia comes from the inland fisheries, while 32% comes from marine fisheries and the rest from aquaculture. Although it accounts for only 6% of total fish production in Cambodia or about 10% of the total fish production in the Lower Mekong Basin, aquaculture or fish farming in the future will become more important. The environmental problems, such as pollution and construction of dams in the river will have a negative impact on the inland fish catch and will destroy fish habitats. So, aquaculture will be an alternative way to support fish consumption.

So far, fishing in Cambodia still depends on fish caught in the Mekong River, Tonle Sap River and the Great Lake, with ethnic Vietnamese (Khin) and Cham disproportionately represented in this sector. Many Chinese – Khmer are involved in fishing, particularly in leasing commercial fishing lots and trading fishery products. Some ethnic Khmer, although they are farmers, also are involved in fishing or fishing-related activities as a secondary occupation (Hortle et.al. 2004: 22). In Kampong Cham, fishing is dominated by the ethnic Cham but in using technology and building networks, the numbers of ethnic Vietnamese are higher. Further information can be seen in Chapter 5 (The Dynamics of Inter-ethnic Trade Activity in Kampong Cham).

The recent data of MRC notes that officially Cambodia's inland fisheries produce about 400,000 tonnes per year, valued at US\$300 million, making them the fourth largest inland fisheries in the world, after China, India and Bangladesh (Hortle et al. 2004: 6 and 24). In 2000 the annual consumption of freshwater fisheries products in Cambodia was 719,000 tonnes and per capita consumption was 65.5 kg (ADB and UNEP 2004: 95). Cambodia's

fish and OAAs consumption is about one quarter of the total of the Lower Mekong Basin. 40% – 70% of the total protein consumption in this country is provided by the Tonle Sap (Malikaew 2005).

Besides for local consumption, fish and fish products of Cambodia are also exported to other countries, especially Thailand, Viet Nam and the Lao PDR, with minor quantities exported to other Asian and western countries (Hortle et al. 2004: 24).

IV. The Function of the Mekong River in Agriculture

As in other Mekong countries, in Cambodia, the river plays other significant roles in the lives of the people along its length. The water of the Mekong nourishes forest and wetland in its basin, especially around the area of Tonle Sap. Quoting Helmers (1997), Hortle et al. (2004: 5) note that farmers in Cambodia have cultivated rice for at least 2,000 years. Of course, this cannot be separated from the role of the Mekong River. It also confirms what Hall (1988: 726) calls the Mekong River Basin - including Cambodia - the old centre of rice plantation.

In Cambodia, agriculture and its related sub-sectors employs 80-85% of the workforce. Rice is the main product of agriculture and the most important staple food in Cambodia. Basically, there are two main types of farming systems in Cambodia: rice based farming systems and multi-cropping systems. Rice based farming systems are estimated to cover about 90% of the currently cropped area, while the rest is for the cash crops such as cassava, sugarcane, corn, sweet potatoes, soya beans, mung beans, tobacco, sesame seeds, peanuts, jute and black pepper (Gartrell 1997: 9-10).

According to data from the ADB and UNEP (2004: 92), the primary crop products of Cambodia in 2002 were: Rice (3,740,002 tonnes), Vegetables (473,000 tonnes), Fruit (322,200 tonnes), Cassava (186,800 tonnes), Sugarcane (168,850 tonnes), and Maize (168,060 tonnes). Until 1995 Cambodia imported rice to satisfy its needs but since then, the country has become self sufficient in rice production.

Cambodia has a rice growing area of about 1.8 million ha. Most rice is grown on the extremely flat, poorly drained areas of infertile soil around the Tonle Sap Lake Basin and the upper reaches of the Mekong Delta. The centres of rice growing around the Tonle Sap Lake are Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey and Battambang Provinces, which are usually called ‘the country’s traditional grain basket’ (ADB and UNEP 2004: 9 and 89).

Table 2.4
Area Cultivated for Rice in 1993

Province	Area Cultivated (ha)
Banteay Meanchey	122,000
Battambang	144,000
Kampong Cham	180,000
Kampong Thom	133,000
Kampot	102,900
Prey Veng	254,000
Siem Reap	159,000
Takeo	216,000

Source: Gartrell 1997: 13.

Table 2.4 shows that Prey Veng has the largest cultivated rice area, followed by Takeo. In Kampong Cham Province, rice is not the main product, although this province is situated in the basin of the Mekong River. Actually, there is a vast agricultural area in Kampong Cham but it is not well managed yet. An irrigation system is one among many factors that would encourage the development of agriculture. This is ironic, since farmers in Cambodia in the 12th and 13th centuries were able to develop complex irrigation systems, so their country was the most productive and prosperous country in this area. At that time, it was noted that more than five million ha of farmland was irrigated.⁴

Now, a large part of agriculture in the Kampong Cham Province depends on rain- water for irrigation. This means that the farmers plant paddy only once a year. In subsequent development, rubber plantations became the favorite livelihood that brought big profits. Besides that, the main agricultural products from Kampong Cham are, cassava and cashew nuts.

In 1990, the agricultural sector share was 55% of the GDP of Cambodia but in 2001, the percentage decreased to less than 40%. The main factor that caused the problem was land mines, especially in prime rice growing areas. The specific cause was flooding in 2000, which severely damaged rice and other agricultural crops. (ADB and UNEP 2004: 9)

⁴ The prosperity of Cambodia can be seen at the development of Angkor Wat since the period of King Suryawarman II (1113-1150). The reliefs of Angkor Wat show the activities of the people at that time, especially in fishing and agriculture (Butwell 1988: 194 and 196).

V. Forestry in the Cambodian Mekong River Basin

For the people in the Mekong River Basin, the forests have important meaning in providing vital protection from soil erosion and subsistence to rural communities. The forests provide timber for housing and medicinal plants. In his report, Hoskin (1991: 24-26) says that the most valuable and thoroughly exploited of the forest products along the Mekong River has been teak. Forests also have a function as water preservers, as well as the lungs of the world in minimizing air pollution.

According to the ADB and UNEP Report (2004: 63), in 2000, about 40% (94 million ha) of the total land area in the Mekong Sub region, was covered by forest. In Cambodia particularly, more than 50% of its total land area is forested. In the 1950s and 1960s, about 70% of this country was covered by forest but in 1997 this declined to about 60% (Hortle et al. 2004: 8). However, unlike most other Mekong countries, Cambodia still retains most of its natural forest cover. The tropical forest in this country still reaches all the way to the seashore.

Forests in Cambodia have become a main resource and foreign exchange earner. Since 1989 when market reforms were put into place, exploitation and degradation has become more intensive. In 1990 the total forest area in Cambodia was nearly 10 million ha and in 2000 about 9.3 million ha. Deforestation in this country averages annually 0.6% and largely is caused by the increase in the demand by households for wood, for fuel and handi-craft production; expanding fishing lot operations and conversion of inundated forest land to farming, caused by increasing seasonal migration towards the lake of people looking for income earning opportunities. Illegal logging and lack of sound forest manage-

ment also have become factors causing deforestation (ADB and UNEP 2004: 11 and 65).

VI. The Mekong's Function in Transportation

Besides supporting fisheries and agriculture, especially in the rice growing areas, the Mekong River also supports transportation. For thousands of years, the Mekong River has been the main communication route for internal transport in the heart of the Asian mainland. The Mekong River basically, has two navigable stretches: First, from its estuary (Viet Nam) to the Khone Falls; Second, from the southern Lao PDR up to Jinghong in the Yunnan Province (Hoskin 1991: 12).

History notes that the European expeditions through the Mekong River among others were to look for a river way for trade to southwestern China.⁵ They brought various goods and ascended the river from its mouth (Viet Nam), expecting to sell them in Yunnan. The strenuous trips (1866 to 1868) failed, as there are waterfalls and rapids in several places (e.g. the Khone Waterfalls at the border between Cambodia and the Lao PDR) are impassable (MRC 2003: 8-9).

Recently, the function of the Mekong River as a transportation lane in Cambodia has decreased. Respondents in Kampong Cham Province describe that in the past many boats operated on

⁵ The first Mekong exploration, known as the 'French Mekong Expedition', was led by Ernest Doudard de Lagrée and Francis Garnier (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mekong>).

the Mekong River. After the building of main roads, the people tend to use land transportation since the cost is lower than transportation via the river. Since then, boat owners are going bankrupt.⁶ The migrants from Viet Nam for example, at present prefer to enter Cambodia via the main road, since it has been well developed (from the border - Kampong Cham - Phnom Penh).⁷

The low number of migrants from outside Cambodia in the provinces passed by the Mekong River (Kratie, Stung Treng, Kampong Cham) may also indicate the decrease of the Mekong's role as the lane of transportation for entering Cambodia (especially from other Mekong countries). Even though the Mekong still has a function in navigation, especially for boats that bring timber, rubber and agricultural products from the inland to the harbours with some products flowing from the harbours to the trade towns along the Mekong River. On a small scale, the river has become the best choice in transporting commodities among the trading centres.

The commerce through the Mekong River in Cambodia (especially the transnational trade between Cambodia and Viet Nam) usually is informal trade. Many boats from Viet Nam, which bring many products, enter Cambodia in an informal way (without official check).⁸ In Chbar Ampeov market for instance, many agricultural products (such as fruit and vegetables) are available, sent by boat from Viet Nam daily. Not only Vietnamese boats, but Malaysian and Singapore ship containers also play a role in this

⁶ Interview with H. Sufri, Deputy Governor of Kampong Cham Province, 30 May 2006.

⁷ FGD with Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), 6 June 2006.

⁸ FGD with Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), 6 June 2006.

activity. These commodities then are distributed to some markets in Phnom Penh, such as Deumkor and Tuol Tompong markets.⁹

Together with the development of the tourist industry, the Mekong River has an additional function in the transportation system, which supports tourism. At the present time, the tourist boats sail via the Mekong River, the Tonle Sap River and the Great Lake, to reach Siem Reap, where the Angkor Wat, the best tourist destination in Cambodia, stands elegantly. In addition, on this trip tourists may see villages along the river and river fishing activities.¹⁰

The function of the Mekong River as a transportation lane in Cambodia is different from its function in Thailand where it is busy in transportation activities, especially in connecting trade towns, for example, Mukhdahan in Thailand and Savanakheth in Lao. Even though, both of the countries have similarity in managing the river to support the tourist industry.

VII. Conclusion

Cambodia is one among the six Mekong countries greatly blessed by the Mekong River. The river has a significant role, in fishing, agriculture and forestry, so it can be said that the Mekong River has become the source of livelihood for the people who live in its basin.

⁹ Interview with Mr. Sulaiman, Phnom Penh, June, 2006.

¹⁰ FGD with Cambodian MRC, Phnom Penh, 31 May 2006

In Cambodia, fish and rice production is the basis for food security. Fish and rice remain the nation's staple foods. This cannot be separated from the function of the Mekong River, together with the Tonle Sap River and the Great Lake, in fishing and agriculture. The Great Lake itself is crucial to the economy and environment of Cambodia and beyond, since it is not only a reservoir but also a giant nursery for the Mekong River.

The Mekong's abundant resources of fish give advantages to the fishers, both as a source of protein and of livelihood. The people in Kampong Cham Province, especially in Kampong Roka, mainly depend on fishing on the Mekong River. Nevertheless, the Vietnamese fishers now dominate this sector because they have higher technology and stronger networks among of them.

In the transportation system, the Mekong River may be called an important channel for trade along the lower reaches. Although it is not as busy as in the past, the floating markets that still survive in some parts of the Mekong River and the ecotourism through the river as well, prove that the river has not lost its function as a transportation lane.

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Data from Interviews and Forum Group Discussions

Interview with H. Sufri, Deputy Governor of Kampong Cham Province, 30 May 2006.

Interview with some fishers in Kampong Roka, Kampong Cham Province, 30 May 2006

Interview with Mr Sulaiman, Phnom Penh, June, 2006

FGD with Cambodian MRC, Phnom Penh, 31 May 2006

FGD with Cambodian Development Resource Institute (CDRI), 6 June 2006.

CHAPTER III

ETHNICITY IN CAMBODIA:

Ethnic and Ethnic Groups in the Mekong River Basin

Heri Yogaswara

I. Introduction

Cambodia is a state comprised of various ethnic groups. This ethnic grouping is connected with the arrival of several communities from other countries, such as China, Vietnam, Lao, Thailand and Malaya. Therefore, some social scientists indicate ethnic groupings in Cambodia as ethnic Khmer, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cham, Laotians and Khmer Loeu, the indigenous people in the Cambodian region. In addition to these relatively large ethnic groups, there are also some very small ethnic minority groups.

This chapter will focus on the issue of ethnicity in Cambodia, with the introduction of ethnic concepts and religion and ethnicity, to make clear the conceptual choices applied. Further, the composition of the population based on ethnic affiliation, geographical locus and a brief description of each ethnic group will be drawn followed by an indication of the development of inter-ethnic relations. Interethnic relations usually develop in the pull-and-slackening position between harmony and tension. For that reason, it is important to understand the historical context. This chapter will be ended by looking at the connection between ethnicity and control of natural resources in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia.

II. Ethnic and Ethnicity

The concept of ethnic is popularly understood as a race or linguistic group. In addition, there are local concepts in some countries, such as in Indonesia, the term *suku* being used to refer to the concept of tribe, i.e. a group with typical differences from other groups in the aspects of language and race, while Malaysians use the concept *bangsa* and *kaum* to indicate differences in races and communities. Similarly to this, the movements of the Moro in the Philippines indicate the identity of the struggle for independence from the Filipino nation as the majority (Trijono 2004:4). Therefore, according to Ashutos Versney (ibid.) the term ethnic (ethnicity) is a collection of concepts concerning religion, race, language and identity of sects attached to a community.

The extent, and simultaneously the vagueness, of the ethnic concept is no new matter in the domain of academic research. Thus, Harold R. Isaacs (1993:34) found that out of 65 sociological and anthropological studies, related to ethnic connection, only 13 turned out to contain a definition of the term ethnic. The remaining 52 did not contain a clear definition of it. So, there should be clarification concerning the definition of 'ethnic'. Even though, using a definition of this term is closely related to the objective of a study or research, for example, the census carried out in Indonesia in 2000, used the variable of 'ethnic' in the sense of 'self determination', i.e., giving the respondent concerned, the freedom to identify him/herself as part of a specific ethnic group. Although this method is considered democratic, in its application it causes many problems as many people identify themselves as connected with geographic location, such as calling their *suku* according to a river basin they originate from.

There are several meanings of the term ethnic. Quoting Burkey (1978), Aris Ananta points out that 'academically, the term ethnic refers to common ancestry which may be factual or an illusion'. This also refers to cultural identity comprising language, tradition and pattern of behaviour. Almost identical with this meaning, Wsevolod W Isijiw (in Isaacs 1993:34) states that the most general meaning of ethnic is common cultural, religious, racial and linguistic ancestry. In this sense, ethnic and religion are inter-sectional, such as when mentioning the word Tausug, which refers to a community in Mindanao, the Philippines, using the Tausug language and having a majority of Muslims. In mentioning ethnic Sundanese, comes to mind a community using the Sundanese language, generally of Muslim origin and employing specific customs.

Quoting from Thomas F. Pettigrew on a report concerning ethnicity and the management of forestry resources in Cambodia gives a definition of ethnic group as: a group of people with characteristics in common that distinguish them from most other people of the same society. Members of one ethnic group may have ties of ancestry, culture, language, nationality or religion; a combination of these characteristics (Bann, 1998: 3)

The concept of ethnic enters the domain of ethnicity or the construction of identity attached to a specific ethnic group. There are two currents of thought, namely the primordialist and the constructivist. The primordialists look at ethnicity as all that is attached to a group based on primordial relationships, such as blood, kinship and neighbourhood ties, while the constructivists consider ethnicity more as something liquid, easily changing shape for pragmatic purposes. An example is ethnic Chinese in Cambodia. On

entering the political and economic area of Cambodia, they use the Khmer identity to achieve political positions or economic concessions.

The dynamics of interethnic relations in Cambodia are reflected at some levels: First, the history of the arrival and development of various ethnic groups in Cambodia caused further claims to being native and dominant, including the appearance of indigenous people in Cambodia; Second, political dynamics in Cambodia, including political assimilation to integrate hill tribes in the ethnic Khmer and political dynamics during the Khmer Rouge regime as well; Third, the current inter-ethnic conditions in Cambodia.

III. Population and Ethnicity

Based on the 1998 census, Cambodia's population numbered more than 11.4 million, with the number of heads of households of more than 2.1 million. On tracing the history of population growth in Cambodia, it is interesting to observe this in connection with the genocide during the Khmer Rouge regime (1975), and consequently in millions of internally displaced people (IDP) in some specific provinces. Eventually, population growth in border area provinces should also be observed.

One report indicates that during 1874-1921, population growth soared from 940 thousand to 2.4 million, then to 4 million (1950), to 5.7 million (1962) and 7.3 million (1975). After the Khmer Rouge took over control, followed by their genocide of urban and rural population in Cambodia, a significant decrease of

the population took place. It is estimated that during 1975-1978, around 1.2 million people were killed by the Khmer Rouge. In 1981 the Cambodian government announced the population as numbering 6.7 million; another source disclosed that, more accurately, this should be between 6.3 - 6.4 million.

Political dynamics in Cambodia are of great influence on the migration pattern in this country as well as on international migration. During the political instability at the beginning of the 1970s an urban migration pattern developed. On the other hand, during the Khmer Rouge rule, migration in the reverse direction - from urban to rural areas - occurred. Phnom Penh was one case which discloses the phenomenon of connection among the geographical, political and demographic aspects. During 1962-1971, the number of inhabitants in Phnom Penh grew from around 390 thousand to 1.2 million. In contrast, because of various violent measures of the Khmer Rouge, the inhabitants of Phnom Penh in 1985 dropped to 500 thousand. This significant decrease in inhabitants occurred for various reasons, namely migration to rural areas, death by execution and death from famine and the poor health conditions. Another factor was the influence of emigration, i.e., a number of the educated studying abroad, were unable to return to Cambodia, or emigrated to Thailand and Vietnam.

Local political dynamics and relations with neighbouring countries such as Thailand and Vietnam have a significant connection with population growth based on ethnicity. It is reported that in 1969 there were some 250-300 thousand ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia, but in 1984 there remained only 56 thousand. The genocide by the Khmer Rouge and forced repatriation caused this drastic drop in the Vietnamese population. This is also true

for the ethnic Chinese who controlled trade and lived in urban areas but had to move to rural areas, in order to avoid being murdered by the Khmer Rouge.

Another report also discloses that refugees and IDPs¹¹ during the Khmer Rouge period were everywhere. Around 50 thousand people migrated to Thailand and around 150 thousand others to Vietnam. Afterwards, around 208 thousand people emigrated to other countries such as 136 thousand to the US, 32 thousand to France, 13 thousand to Australia and about 13 thousand to Canada. This large emigration number, including educated people, formed a serious problem for human resource development in Cambodia. From the aspect of ethnicity, emigration in large numbers causes various problems, e.g. an increase in the number of migrants causing a balance gap between members of the native population and migrants. Furthermore it causes less strong links in the minority groups. Other factors include some economic activities, such as trade, agriculture and fishing being controlled by certain ethnic groups, because the large-scale emigrating groups are replaced by other ethnic groups.

¹¹ In literature on forced migration, a difference is made between refugees and internally displaced people (IDP). One of the important differences between the concepts is related to location where the forced migration takes place. When still in the territory of the related state, the migrants are called IDPs, while if they came from out of the state's territory, their status is that of refugees. In accord with the international convention concerning refugees, a difference is made between refugees and IDPs; refugees are the responsibility of an international agency such as UNHCR, while IDPs are the responsibility of a connected state. International intervention may only be carried out at the request of the related state.

Migration is an important factor in observing the dynamics of ethnicity, as migration is not only a matter of people moving from one place to another but also movement of goods and services, ideology, cultural values, traditions, interests and so forth. Often ethnicity plays an important role, especially in the phenomenon of chain migration, where people wishing to move to an area considered new, need a social network which may guarantee their social security in the future. Usually the social network developed comprises kinship and regional networks, so that from this phenomenon develops a living area based on common areas of origin, kinship, ethnicity and religion. In Cambodia, Malay Muslims migrants will feel more secure when on first arrival they stay at the Muslim village in Kampong Cham, rather than straightaway living in the area of the Chinese. This runs true for Vietnamese migrants as well; they tend to live in groups in their community on the border area of the state, as well as in Phnom Penh.

Migration may be distinguished into several types: First, migration based on the length of their stay in the place of migration. This type may be divided into lifetime migration and recent migration¹². Second, migration based on geographic location of the starting place of migration. In Cambodia, formal statistics divide migration within the same province, from another province and also from outside the country. Third, migration with respect to motive for migration, divided into forced migration and voluntary migration¹³.

¹² Lifelong migrants are those, whose place of birth and current stay differs, while recent migrants are those who have migrated within a maximum of 5 years.

¹³ In addition, they can be called spontaneous or voluntary migrants. In Indonesia, the term spontaneous migrant sometimes is used as the opposite of sponsored migrant, i.e. a migrant sponsored by the government (transmigration).

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In forced migration we find refugees, internally displaced people, victims of human trafficking, asylum seekers and environmental refugees, people who migrate because of natural disaster or because natural resources in their environment do not anymore provide food and drinking water or other basic necessities. In Cambodia these types of forced migration can be found in various forms.

Lifetime and recent migrants are connected with their length of stay in a migration area. From these two types we may analyze the way a group of migrants interacts with the local population which was there first (including natives). Interaction between migrants and local people is important to be understood in view of ethnicity dynamics. Social conflicts often occur between new migrants and the local people considering themselves hosts, as a result of inability on the migrants' part to adapt. By observing their length of stay, some migrants who have discarded their label of migrant may be found, because of economic adaptation (with a relatively similar livelihood as the local people), social adaptation (by becoming members of clubs), cultural adaptation (by using the local language and adhering to local traditions) and even forming kinship ties through marriage. Social relations between ethnic Laotians and Khmer may develop because of similarity of religion and way of life within the framework of the Buddhist religion.

Types of migration based on area are also interesting to observe. Table 3.1 indicates migration in Cambodia in 1998. Various matters may be analyzed from these data. First, urban areas and the capital Phnom Penh are areas receiving a maximum number of migrants, especially from other provinces. The number of migrants exceeds 73% of the total population and 54% are migrants from other provinces. The same goes for the Stung Treng Province where about 58% of the migrants come from other provinces but their component is only about 19% of the total population. Second, provinces in the border areas with Thailand and Vietnam are recipients of migrants from other countries in quite large numbers, such as Otdar Meanchey with about 19% of immigrants from other countries. Third, five provinces by the Mekong River, i.e. Kampong Cham, Kracheh, Phnom Penh, Stung Treng and Takaev on average have a low percentage (1-7%) population from outside Cambodia. This number may indicate that the role of this river as means of entering Cambodia as migrants is small. Even though, its role in the commuting and moving of population is considerable. More detailed information concerning the pattern of migrant commuting via the river is necessary.

Table 3.1
Migration in Cambodia

Code	Province	Watershed Areas	Number of Migrants	As % of Population	Percentage of Migrants		
					Within same Province	From another Province	From outside Cambodia
	Cambodia		3,597,774	31.5	58.8	35.3	5.9
01	Banteay Mean Chey	Border Thai	192,714	33.4	50.5	36.1	13.4
02	Bat Dambang	Border Thai	312,350	39.4	65.9	22.1	12.0
03	Kampong Cham	Yes	386,675	24.0	70.4	28.4	1.2
04	Kampong Chhnang		194,731	46.6	78.5	16.7	4.8
05	Kampong Spueu		149,453	25.0	74.6	23.9	1.5
06	Kampong Thum		101,961	17.9	82.5	16.6	0.9
07	Kampot		95,909	18.2	79.1	18.4	2.5
08	Kandal	Yes	306,891	28.5	51.8	41.5	6.7
09	Kaoh Kong		76,591	58.0	19.7	75.0	5.3
10	Kracheh	Yes	52,868	20.1	53.8	42.8	3.4
11	Mondol Kiri		14,821	45.7	59.8	33.4	6.8
12	Phnom Penh	Yes	733,745	73.4	40.6	53.9	5.5
13	Preah Vihear		24,456	20.5	66.7	31.8	1.5
14	Prey Veang		170,849	18.1	78.6	17.0	4.4
15	Pousat		147,956	41.0	76.0	18.4	5.6
16	Rotanak Kiri		18,956	20.1	49.8	46.3	3.9
17	Siem Reab		188,415	27.1	82.7	14.1	3.2
18	Krong Preah Sihanouk		81,249	52.2	27.5	68.7	3.8
19	Stueng Traeng	Yes	15,716	19.4	36.2	58.0	5.8
20	Svay Rieng		164,430	34.4	32.1	57.7	10.2
21	Takaev	Yes	115,003	14.6	73.0	19.7	7.3
22	Otdar Mean Chey	Border Thai	26,413	38.7	38.7	42.3	19.0
23	Krong Kaeb		7,887	27.5	9.6	89.1	1.3
24	Krong Pailin		17,735	77.4	19.4	68.5	12.1

Source: Population Census Cambodia, 1998

IV. Ethnic Groups in Cambodia

Some communities considered as ethnic groups in Cambodia are: the Khmer, Khmer Loeu (hill tribe), Cham, Chinese and Vietnamese. Ethnic groups such as the Cham, Chinese and Vietnamese are interesting to discuss in the context of trans border ethno nationalism, keeping in mind that the three above-mentioned ethnic groups have strong ties with their community of origin in China, Vietnam and the Muslim Malays (as stock of the ethnic Cham). In addition, there are some other ethnic groups considered minority and from neighbouring countries such the Lao (Lav) and the Thai (ef).

From the aspect of the size of the population and its distribution, ethnic Khmer are the dominant ethnic group, spread all over Cambodia, except in the highlands such as Ratanikiri and Mondulkiri. Following are the ethnic Cham who are concentrated in some places, including Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Kampong Chhnang, Kampot, Kandal, Pursat, Battambang, Kampong Thom and Takeo. Ethnic Vietnamese cluster in the provinces of Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Prey Veang, Kampong Chhnang and Kracheh, while ethnic Chinese mass in the area of Phnom Penh and other urban centres. Ethnic Laotians tend to live in the area of Siem Reap and ethnic Thais are concentrated in the area of Stung Treng Province. In addition, various communities of indigenous Cambodian people occupy the highlands of Cambodia in the north-east, especially the areas of Ratanakiri, Mondulkiri, Stung Treng and Kratie. These communities are called hill tribes or Khmer Loeu.

In Table 3.2 some information is listed concerning the presence of some ethnic groups in Cambodia¹⁴, including an estimate of the size of the population and provinces where these ethnic groups live as majorities. Considerable ethnic diversity in Cambodia naturally is connected with control of certain economic sectors in the society, such as trade which is controlled by the Chinese in urban areas like Phnom Penh. Even though, trade in markets of mountainous areas such as in Bantung, Ratanakiri Province is controlled by the ethnic Khmer, followed by the ethnic Vietnamese, Laotians, Chinese and Cham, while the groups of indigenous people who are native in those areas, are the minority. Traders in Ratanakiri mostly are from the Kampong Cham area.¹⁵

¹⁴ In the list issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (1992) and the Ethnic Minorities of Cambodia (1997), there are about 41 ethnic groups, including the group of indigenous people in the northeastern part of Cambodia. The list of names uses English and Khmer terms. The forty one groups are (in English) Khmer, Cham, Vietnamese, Chinese, Lao, Thai, Tumpuen, Kuy, Strieng Kra Ay, Lmoun, Brao, Mil, Phnong, Kreung, Por, Kravet, Shouch, Lun, Chrey, Kachrouk, Cola, Khmer Ke, Ahnrach, Kanung, Po Ang, Kachak, Chhung, Nong, Rad, Samre, Kachhang, Morn, Thnal, Arab, Kayoung, Anong, Sibre, Kra Ul, Robel and Jarai. This long list of ethnic groups in Cambodia reflects that besides the ethnic majority of Khmer, there are various minority groups. Even though, in this essay we will only discuss some of them, namely the Khmer, the Cham, the Chinese, the Vietnamese, the Laotians and the hill tribes.

¹⁵ These data are based on a study by John P. McAndrew, *Indigenous Adaptation to a Rapidly Changing Economy: The Experience of Two Tampuan Villages in Northeast Cambodia*, CIDSE Cambodia, December 2001. CIDSE is an international nongovernmental organization which does much work in assisting the people of Laos and Cambodia. It is based in France.

Tabel 3.2**Population and Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Cambodia**

No	Ethnic Group	Approximate Population	Areas of Distribution
1	Khmer	9.303.172	Everywhere
2	Cham	203.881	Phnom Penh, Kompong Cham, Kompong Chhnang, Kampot, Kandal, Pursat, Battambang, Takeo Kompong Thom,
3	Vietnamese	96.597	Phnom Penh, Kompong Cham, Prey Veang, Kompong Chhnang, Pursat, Kandal
4	Chinese	47.180	Phnom Penh and urban areas
5	Lao	21.805	Siem Reap
6	Brou, Jorai, Phnong, Kuy, Strieng (ethnic minority)	-	Rattanakiri, Mondolkiri, Strung Treng, Kratie, Preah Vihear, Pursat

Source: Ethnicity and Forest Resource Use and Management in Cambodia.

1. The Khmer¹⁶

The name Khmer has a variety of meanings; as noun and adjective referring to the language in Cambodia: people, culture and as an ethnic and language identity rather than just as a political entity. (<http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Cambodia.html>) During the period of 1970-1975, this state was named the Khmer Republic. With the change into the Kingdom of Cambodia, the identity of state and ethnic groups became separated; Cambodia refers to the identity of the state, while Khmer referred to the ethnic identity,

¹⁶ The sources of data in this part are from (1) Ethnicity and Forest Resource Use and Management in Cambodia (t.t), (2) <http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Cambodia.html>

including language and script used, culture and traditions. Even though the Cambodian (amended) Constitution of 1999 uses the term 'Khmer Citizen' as a concept distinguishing ethnic and state identities, while actually Cambodia comprises various ethnic groups which do not take the Khmer identity like the Cham, Lao-tian, Arab, Vietnamese and Chinese.

Like the form of state based on the monarchical system, there are three pillars forming the basis of daily life of the Cambodian population: nation, religion and king. This symbol of three pillars is reflected by state and daily community life in Cambodia. In the state administration, Prime Minister is chief executive; nevertheless the people still pay respect to the king's influence. The legitimacy of the king is inseparable from the religion, with the majority of the population adhering to Buddhism.

The ethnic Khmer, who live in almost all areas of Cambodia, are the largest ethnic group in this country, comprising about 80% of the total population in 1998. The history of the Khmer Kingdom and its political dynamics around the beginning of the 1970s resulted in many ethnic Khmer living scattered in many places outside Cambodia. The ethnic Khmer in Thailand seem more integrated with the Thai and only a few have ties with their identity in the Cambodian kingdom. In addition, there are other ethnic Khmer outside Cambodia who have strong social and political ties with Cambodia. This group is called the Khmer Kraom with an area of living in South Vietnam. Different from the Khmer in Thailand, Khmer Kraom have produced several influential politicians in Cambodia. Besides the two groups of Khmer outside Cambodia, other groups which actually are the educated of Cambodian which emigrated to other countries when Cambodia was controlled by the Khmer Rouge.

Identities tying the ethnic Khmer are based on common ancestry, culture, language and religion. From the point of religion, the majority of the population adheres to Theravada Buddhism, while from the point of source of livelihood, the majority is based on rural activities, such as wet-rice cultivation, animal breeding, handicrafts and fishing. General characteristics of Khmer livelihood may be concluded as producers and consumers of agricultural products as well. This is different from the position of the ethnic Chinese in Cambodia who function primarily as traders.

Language is a most easily detected identity. In daily intercourse some dialects have developed in the population, with the roots from Sanskrit and Pali languages. Nevertheless, elements absorbed from other foreign languages, such as Chinese, French and English keep developing, following the trail of modernization in Cambodia. As for the written language, the Khmer script is used, comprised of 38 consonants, 24 bound vowels, 12 independent vowels and several diacritics.

As the dominant ethnic group, Khmer have a big chance to access political and bureaucratic domination, i.e. in positions of Premier and Cabinet Ministers, also heads of provinces and districts. Even though, such political positions are also very much accessible with resistance from other minor ethnic groups.

2. The Khmer Loeu

The term Khmer Loeu or Highland Khmer, as substitute for the western term of highlander or hill tribe, was introduced in the 1960s, by Prince Norodom Sihanouk in order to increase the feelings of

unity between the highlanders as a minority and the majority of the Khmer in general. These identity politics with the Khmer label actually are a most generally applied method of many Southeast Asian countries in assimilating and integrating indigenous groups of people into a system of a unitary state. Actually, communities of indigenous people have their own identity, namely they have their own specific local political system, their own language, a local religion separate from the mainstream (Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim or Christian) with a specific cultural tradition. These groups actually feel much better with their local identity, such as regarding their ancestry based on names of mountains, rivers, forests, etc.

In Cambodia, especially in the provinces of Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri, Stung Treng and Kratie, there are some communities of indigenous people, as can be seen in Table 3. 3

Table 3.3
Indigenous People Communities

Indigenous people	Population
Pnong or Mnong	19.000
Kui	16.000
Rhade or Ede	16.000
Barau (Including its subgroups Kravet and Krung)	15.000
Jarai	15.000
Tampuan	13.500
Stieng	5000

Source: http://www.culturalprofiles.org.uk/cambodia/Directories/Cambodia_Cultural_Profile/-1732.html

Nevertheless, the population and number of communities of indigenous people could be much larger, as they live in small communities in remote areas and are often overlooked by the state censuses. The characteristics of the economies of indigenous communities in general¹⁷ are highly dependent on forest resources (including their need for agricultural land and hunting) and rivers. In general, the population depends on subsistence agricultural products; especially the slash and burn cultivated ones. In addition, there are also non-forest timber products, handcrafts, hunting and river fishing.

The communities of indigenous people become minorities in the political sector because of their geographical position, high diversity and disadvantage in education and health matters. The high migration rate of ethnic Khmer into the highland areas also increases the pressure of the indigenous people both in the economy and politics.

3. The Cham

The Cham of Cambodia, who are estimated to be more than 203,000 people (1998) are refugees from the Champa kingdom in Vietnam of hundreds of years ago. From the ethnic and language view-

¹⁷ Even though, this does not mean that there are no community members among indigenous people, who are active in commerce, transportation and plantations. In many cases, often a community member is part of the commercial system. For instance, according to the survey report from CIDSE Cambodia (2001) at Balung market, Ratanakiri, there are indigenous people involved in business, although only selling secondhand clothes. They are also involved in the trade chain of the forest products.

points, the Cham fall into the Malay-Polynesian group. In Cambodia, many of the Cham people intermarried with the Muslim Malay group which also migrated to this country. The culture, language and religion brought by the Malay group became a stronger identity for the ethnic Cham by becoming Muslim, communicating in the Malay language, as well as mastering the Arabic language within the religion.

Based on the way of following religious rites, the ethnic Cham are divided into two groups, the orthodox and the traditional. The orthodox (about one third of the total ethnic Cham in Cambodia) majority live in Phnom Penh, Takeo and Kampot, while the traditional live in areas of central Cambodia, such as Battambang, Kampong Thom, Kampong Cham, Kampong Chhnang and Pursat. Even though these two groups have similar characteristics, they tend to live together in one living area. This may be connected with their ideology as a minority and the practical interest of their religion, which requires one community with mutual relations.

As for the aspect of the economy, the ethnic Cham - the orthodox as well as the traditional - usually work in activities, which they can carry out themselves. Mostly, they engage in fishing, planting vegetables or fruit, selling fish to the Khmer or other groups, weaving, working metal, slaughtering cattle and raising buffaloes. They carry out activities concerned with animal husbandry because Khmer people cannot do so for religious reasons.

4. The Chinese

Ethnic Chinese in Cambodia mostly (about 60%) live in urban areas and are involved in trading activities, while the remaining (40%) live in rural areas and work as shop assistants, traders and processors of rice, producers of palm sugar, fruit and fish. A small number of Chinese lives as moneylenders, so that it is estimated that about 90% of ethnic Chinese work in the commercial sector. Some Chinese, who live as moneylenders in rural areas acquire strong power to control the Khmer peasants who are in debt to them. In brief, it may be said that the ethnic Chinese control the urban as well as the rural economies. (Bann, 1998: 4)

The number of Chinese in Cambodia seems to be underestimated. Their population is reported as only about 47,000, while that same report states that 'the Chinese in Cambodia form the country's largest ethnic minority'. There is, however, a possibility that the ethnic Chinese here have assimilated and become part of the ethnic Khmer. Based on language, the Chinese in Cambodia are divided into five different groups, i.e. Teochiu (largest, about 60%), Cantonese (20%), Hokkien (7%), Hakka and Hainanese (each about 6.5%). (ibid) These groups have developed a specific pattern of livelihood, for instance, the Teochiu, 90% of whose population are estimated to be living in rural areas, running small stores, controlling provision of rural credit and the network of the rice trade and cultivating vegetables. In urban areas these Teochiu are involved in the export-import businesses, selling medicines and living as small-scale traders. The Cantonese who mainly live in urban areas, move in the transportation and construction sectors as mechanics, or as carpenters, while the Hokkien move in the export-import and banking sectors. From the Hokkien the wealth-

est Chinese in Cambodia are born. Hainanese, started to cultivate pepper in Kampot Province, and then began to control the pepper trade up till now. Eventually some of them moved to Phnom Penh and around the 1960s they controlled the network of hotels and restaurants, as well as controlling the network of garment producers. The Hakka, who mostly live in Phnom Penh primarily, work as folk dentists, sellers of traditional Chinese medicine and as shoe makers.

5. The Vietnamese¹⁸

The ethnic Vietnamese live in the southeast and central parts of Cambodia. Most of them are concentrated in Phnom Penh and in the Kandal, Prey Veng, Kampong Cham and Kampong Chhannang provinces. Their population is estimated at about 96,000. The presence of the ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia has a long story, starting in the reign of King Jayajetha II (1618-1628). The marriage of Jayajetha II to the daughter of Nguen Phuc Nguen, the king of Vietnam, enabled the people of Vietnam to live in the kapok forests which currently are called Chroculeung, in an area which is called Prey Nokor. Since 1707 many Vietnamese have lived along the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake in the Kampong Chhannang Province. In the era of the Sangkum dynasty, the Vietnamese had

¹⁸ This part has been taken from some papers at 'the National Symposium on Ethnic Groups in Cambodia and Multicultural Awareness Day' organized by the Center for Advanced Study, Interdisciplinary Research on Ethnic Groups in Cambodia, 18-19 July, 1996. This symposium discussed ethnic Chinese, Vietnamese, Laotians, Khmer Loeu and Phnong. There were three papers focused on the Vietnamese.

many rights; i.e. they used Cambodian identity cards and owned fields and houses, as well as having similar rights to the Khmer people.

However, the presence of the next regimes (starting from Lon Nol) suppressed the Vietnamese since 1970. Many Vietnamese were killed or returned to Vietnam. The culmination came during the Pol Pot era, when many Vietnamese became the victims of genocide. Nevertheless, after the freedom era (in 1979), many Vietnamese returned to Cambodia and brought a new generation of immigrants with them. There are at least three categories of Vietnamese in Cambodia: (1) Vietnamese born in Cambodia but returned to Vietnam during 1970-1975. This group held Cambodian identity cards and communicated fluently in the Khmer language; (2) Children of the first group, born in Vietnam during the war years (1970-1975). This group does not speak the Khmer language well; (3) Vietnamese who arrived in Cambodia within the framework of doing business or to work, and stayed as foreign residents. Actually there are two more categories of Vietnamese in Cambodia; the group of anti-communists and pro-communists, both in hiding in this country to promote their movements.

The relations between the ethnic Khmer and the ethnic Vietnamese seem to be filled with prejudice developed in the course of a sufficiently long history. How the Khmer see the concept of ethnicity for the Vietnamese may be seen in the description below:

“The Yuon and the Vietnamese are a race, and Viet Nam is the term for the name of their country. For Khmer people, the word ‘Vietnamese’ is an honourable one, whereas the word ‘Yuon’ is degrading. In fact, the word

'Yuon' is the real name for this race. According with some documents, the word 'Yuon' derives from the Sanskrit 'Javana', meaning a group of people without religion, who are aggressive, violent and savage" (Chou Puitteany 1996:1).

The Vietnamese in Cambodia work in various sectors. They mostly are fishermen, both river fishers and fish breeders. Many of them also work in the field of construction, in factories and industries such as processing coffee, making wine and working in rubber plantations. Some of them are involved in small-scale trade, work as carpenters, mechanics, make jewelry, practice as physicians, teachers, fortune tellers, give massages, own coffee stalls and are prostitutes or thieves.¹⁹

6. The Laotians

The ethnic Laotians have a relatively smaller population than the Cham, Chinese or Vietnamese and have been in Cambodia for quite a long time. Presumably around the 17th and 18th centuries the Laotians entered Cambodia, especially the areas of Stung Treng, Ratanakiri, Svay Reng and Prey Veng. They moved because of the war, for business purposes and the custom of migration, especially based on the permits provided by the Cambodian government in the past. In Cambodia, they became involved in trading, hunting, small-scale gold mining and fishing.

¹⁹ Actually during 1964-1970, under Norodhom Sihanouk, there were 18 types of work inaccessible to Vietnamese, such as barbers, hairdressers, carpenters, fish auctioneers, etc. Those jobs were only allowed to Khmer.

There are two groups of ethnic Laotians each with a different ethnic identity: the first groups are the ethnic Laotians who live in the Stung Treng and Ratanakiri provinces, while the second group live in the Svay Rieng and Prey Veng provinces. The first group is often known as 'the Lao Ethnic Minorities', as they stay in Cambodian areas of indigenous communities. This group still adheres to their specific traditions, language and art and strongly maintains their identity from their place of origin, while the second group mostly has discarded their identity characteristics from their place of origin. The second group speaks the Thai and Khmer languages fluently, and only the old people (aged 50-80) still speak the Laotian language. Sometimes the government even puts this group down as ethnic Khmer.

V. The Mekong River Basin and Ethnicity

A river basin comprises various parts and ecosystems, divided into the upstream area, the middle and the downstream parts. In the upstream, usually there are forest areas and agricultural fields, while other parts consist of intensive agricultural areas, urban and coastal areas. The main products of the upstream areas are forest and agricultural products and in some cases there are also mining areas. In addition, a river basin can be divided into several ecosystems, such as forest, urban and coastal ecosystems and also comprise some other hydrological elements, such as water catchments areas, the river stream and its branches, lakes, estuaries, deltas and coastal areas.

Parts of the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia consist of various ecosystems, such as: forest, river, lake and urban ecosystems with their various resources. The forest ecosystem for instance, has timber, rattan, honey, rubber, coffee, fruit and often minerals, as well as important valuable stones. Control of certain resources, usually are related to ethnicity. For example, in the rubber trade system, producers are local people (Khmer, Cham, Khmer Loeu), however, the trade network is controlled by ethnic Chinese or Vietnamese.

The river and lake ecosystems usually have fish as very important resources. Tonle Sap Lake which connects Phnom Penh with Siem Reap may be considered part of the Mekong River Basin, as its dynamics are related to the aspect of hydrology of the Mekong River. Fishing in this area is controlled by ethnic Vietnamese. Even though, this does not mean that Vietnamese also control the river, as in the river systems' controllers usually are those who control the river transportation systems. So far, the transportation system in Cambodia is mostly dominated by ethnic Chinese.

The trade activities via the Mekong River are very important as this river connects trade points in Thailand, Lao, Cambodia and Vietnam. Various commodities, including agricultural, forest and industrial products are transported via this river. In this context, it is possible that the trade network is controlled by certain ethnic groups or it is possible that there have been negotiations between the elite of certain ethnic groups to 'share the area' and 'share the commodities'. The ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese seem to hold the reins as 'distributors', while the ethnic Khmer, Cham and Khmer Loeu are producers of these commodities.

VI. Conclusion

Ethnic groups and ethnicity in Cambodia are marked by several characteristics: (1) The concept of the majority (Khmer) and minority, including ethnic minorities. The minority groups are the Cham, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai and many sub ethnic groups, while minority ethnic groups are Khmer Loeu and Laotian. (2) Ethnicity mostly refers to ancestry of migrant groups from neighbouring countries like Vietnam (including Cham), Thailand and Lao. (3) There are heterogeneous groups among those ethnic groups, such as ethnic Chinese (Teochiu, Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka and Hainanese), ethnic Cham (traditional and orthodox), ethnic Laotians (from the hills and the lowland), ethnic Vietnamese (before and after the Khmer Rouge era). (4) There is the tendency of relations among sources of livelihood and domination of certain ethnic groups, e.g. trade by Chinese (certain types of trade), fishing by Vietnamese and Cham, agriculture or cultivation of vegetables by ethnic Khmer, Cham and Vietnamese and subsistence agriculture by the Khmer Loeu.

Data of the number and composition of population based on ethnicity and ethnic groups in Cambodia is still inaccurate, as there has not been a census utilizing the variable of ethnic groups in Cambodia yet. Sometimes the data of minority ethnic groups are underestimated, as a census usually refers to the more dominant ethnic groups. Even though, some reports state that the population of ethnic Khmer numbers 88-90% of the total population, the Vietnamese 5%, the Cham 2.5%, the Chinese 1%, and some ethnic groups together (the Thai, Laotians and minority hill tribes or Khmer Loeu) 2.6%. The data indicate that the ethnic Khmer are the majority and also that the process of assimilation has gone on

among some ethnic groups who call themselves ethnic Khmer, although their ancestors came from Lao, Thailand or China.

Interethnic relations are normally dynamic. On the one side there are tensions that can be seen from stereotypical developments in one ethnic group against another. One ethnic group may call another savage, having no religion, lazy, stupid and other negative labels. On the other hand, inter-ethnic relations show integrating relations, e.g. acknowledgment of certain ethnic groups, who voluntarily call themselves Khmer, although there are some economic motives behind this.

As mentioned before, an ethnic group does not only develop traditional and cultural sentiments but often is included in controlling certain political and economic resources. The ethnic Khmer have privileges in the matter of controlling political positions. The history and political dynamics in Cambodia seem to require that non-Khmer should avoid the political sector, although during the 1960s some specific occupations that had been inaccessible were entered by non-Khmer. This policy cannot be kept for long, as the market cannot be controlled by one group which only relies on the power of politics, but by groups which have capital and the skills to manage the distribution network between producer, consumer and other activity chains. In addition, the experience acquired by a group in managing a certain enterprise, also plays an important role in controlling important economic resources, including trade.

Although not strictly, an ethnic group tends to live in the same source of livelihood. For instance, most ethnic Khmer live in rural areas, Khmer Loeu and hill Laotians have subsistence sized agricultural fields and are employed in pig breeding. Groups stay-

ing near forest areas (such as the Khmer Loeu) are peasants and collect forest products. Fishing (primarily in rivers and lakes) is mostly done by the Vietnamese and the Cham, while the world of business and services, starting from petty trading up to distribution, from construction work up to banking are controlled by ethnic Chinese, although many ethnic Vietnamese also enter these sectors. The ethnic Cham mostly live from subsistence agriculture, fishing and animal husbandry, including slaughtering cattle (cows and buffaloes) with a few also involved in trade.

The characteristic of a river basin positions the river as an important lane, so that transportation via the river has turned into an important sector. It can be said that if one group controls river transportation, they control economic activities in the area. In addition, the river lane connecting Cambodia with other states provides larger possibilities for ethnic groups which have 'roots' in neighbouring countries, such as the Vietnamese, Thai, Laotians and some of the Cham. We may conclude that the ethnic group which controls the river basin is the group which controls the resources and the transportation in the river.

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CHAPTER IV

MIGRATION AND ITS PROBLEMS IN THE MEKONG RIVER BASIN IN CAMBODIA

Lamijo

I. Introduction

Since World War II ended, some countries in Southeast Asia, such as Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Myanmar, continued as the least developed in this region because of conflict. As the conflicts diminished in the last two decades, these countries increasingly embarked on development efforts to catch up with the rest of Southeast Asia. All have opened their doors to development by extending their search for foreign investment. Thailand and the Yunnan Province of China, for example, represent the other end of the wealth disparity spectrum in the Greater Mekong sub region. Thailand and the Yunnan Province of China have developed their economies successfully over the past two decades while the rest of the region was caught up in conflict. It is not surprising that Thailand and Yunnan then became logical magnets for people fleeing turmoil or simply seeking jobs and means of survival (Asian Migrant Centre 2002: 2). The wealth disparities in the Greater Mekong sub region increased migrant flows, both internal and international, among countries in this region. It is estimated that there are now more than 6.6 million migrants living and working outside of their countries of citizenship in Southeast Asia with up to half of these migrants believed to be undocumented (Royal Government of Cambodia 1998).

In the context of Cambodia, after the Civil War, the number of migrants in Cambodia was very high. Up to one third of the country's 13 million people have migrated at least once in their lifetimes. In Cambodia, rapid and drastic population movements occurred in the early 1970s, when large numbers of rural Cambodians fled to the cities to escape the fighting in the countryside and between 1975 and 1979, when the government forcibly relocated urban dwellers to rural sites throughout the country. Large-scale emigration also occurred between 1975 and 1979 (<http://countrystudies.us/cambodia/40.htm>). During the Khmer Rouge regime (1975 –1979) people were forced to move away from the urban areas when Pol Pot was executing his idea of an agrarian country; forcing up migration among urban residents. Additionally, many people were forced to move from one rural area to another where free agricultural land was available (<http://www.eldis.org/static/DOC14257.htm>). In 1979 the Khmer Rouge regime fell and the reestablishment of stability in Cambodia began. These more peaceful times drove economic growth, including rapidly growing migration in search of livelihood.

Peaceful times in most Southeast Asian countries after a civil war ended, including in Cambodia, drove economic growth marked by significant social and economic change. The transitional economies of Southeast Asia have experienced labour migration, both internal and international, for all of their recorded history. Such movements have continued in contemporary times, and have increased owing to rising population pressures and external demands for local resources. In Cambodia, out migration has emerged in response to growing landlessness, unsettled populations looking for settlement and a rapidly growing labour force in search of livelihood. Increased numbers are also (informally)

going to Thailand (<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/population/workingpapers/LabourMigration/index.asp#34>).

This chapter discusses migration in Cambodia and will address questions such as: What is the history of migration in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia? What are the most important reasons for migration? How great is the impact of migration in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia? How is the government coping with the problems of migration? Divided into 8 sections, this chapter begins with this introduction, followed by the history of migration in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia, migration patterns and processes, typology of migrant and people movement groups, causal factors of migration, the impact of migration, coping with the impact of migration and conclusion.

II. History of Migration in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia

Migration is always an ongoing process of transition. It is a journey of physical displacement, as well as social and psychological dislocation. While circuits of migration may involve a wide range of people from transnational elite entrepreneurs to underclass migrant workers, it should be noted that migration itself is a journey which entails costs both emotional and material/physical (Beatriz P. Lorente, et al. 2005: 4; 155).

Migration, especially for work, is not a new issue in the Mekong region where there is a long history of movement by people among the Mekong countries and between the region and the rest of the world. Thailand has benefited from Lao, Khmer and Myanmar labour for hundreds of years. Historically, labour was

the key variable in the calculus of leader power. It was common in practice, by all sides in the time of Ayuddhaya, to take captive, after the battle, large portions of the population and relocate them into the victor's territory. These people would then be integrated into the hierarchy of the kingdom and provide labour to the monarchy and nobles, replenish supplies of warriors while denying the opponent the same and to generally repopulate an area. With the arrival of western European powers to the region with their sense of nation/state, boundary and border lines, Thailand moved to define the territory constituting the Thai state and the populace enclosed therein (Sudthichitt Chintayananda et al. 1997: 1). Following World War II, especially in the early 1950s, migrants still moved back and forth across the borders to seek employment in their comparatively wealthy neighbouring countries in the Mekong sub region. However, it is important to note that intra-Mekong regional migration is growing without any official mechanism in place, so it is often growing without control.

As mentioned in the introduction, massive migration in Cambodia occurred during the Civil War since the 1970s. Before the migration wave in the 1970s, there had been a migrant flow since the 1950s. After independence, the first migration in Cambodia took place between the 1950s and the 1960s. In this period the ethnic Chinese were permitted to settle in the mountainous and wasteland areas and cultivate land that was not inhabited. Nevertheless, about 200,000 Vietnamese living in Cambodia were repatriated to Vietnam in 1970, seemingly as a preventative. (<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Cambodia-MIGRATION.html>).

The migration process continued during the Civil War in Cambodia. The new government at that time issued a sweeping

nationwide resettlement program and moved some 2.5–3 million people from Phnom Penh and other cities into the countryside. They were organized into work brigades in government interest. This was a massive people movement which caused human tragedy. The food shortages in rural areas were only slightly less critical than in the cities and widespread starvation led to the deaths of probably over one million people during the transition.

The Khmer Rouge was replaced by the PRK (People's Republic of Kampuchea) in January 1979. However, the fighting still continued and political instability resulted in a new exodus of refugees. Hence, there were about 630,000 Cambodians who left the country between 1979 and 1981, of which about 208,000 were able to resettle in other countries, including 136,000 in the United States. Most of the rest remained in camps on the border with Thailand but they were repatriated to Cambodia in May 1993. Between 1979 and 1987 there was a new migration of ethnic Vietnamese into Cambodia. Official sources insisted that the total number was under 60,000 and was comprised, for the most part, of residents who had left in the early 1970s but opposition groups contended that the number totaled over 500,000 and was intended to consolidate Vietnamese control over the country (<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Cambodia-MIGRATION.html>).

Massive people movement, particularly of rural populations, happened once again in 1997. The conflicts between government forces and the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) in 1997 drove rural populations from their homes. To cope with the refugees, in 1997 and 1998, UNHCR assisted up to 60,000 Cambodians who had fled the fighting in northwest Cam-

bodia. The UNHCR also helped several thousand ethnic Vietnamese fisher families return to their Cambodian homes after having camped on the Vietnam border. Most refugees returned to their homes after the signing of the peace settlement between the government of Cambodia and resistance forces in December 1998. The repatriation of approximately 36,000 refugees remaining in camps in Thailand was also rapidly implemented. By April 1999, all of the camps were closed and by June 1999 some 47,000 refugees had returned home. The net migration rate for Cambodia in 2000 was 0.7 per 1,000. In that year there were 211,000 non-citizen residents living in Cambodia. The government continues to view the emigration level as too high (<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Cambodia-Migration>).

Besides massive movements of people because of political instability in the country, Cambodia also faced Vietnamese refugees entering Cambodia. In March 1993 for example, just weeks before the UNTAC conducted elections in the country, hundreds of fishing boats were towed down the Mekong River under a UN naval escort, towards the Vietnam-Cambodia border. This flotilla of boats carried an estimated 30-40,000 ethnic Vietnamese fisher folk and their families who were fleeing politically motivated ethnic violence against them. Many others are still living in the country and scattered along various parts of the Tonle Sap and Mekong Rivers notably in Pursat, Kampong Chanang, Kampong Cham, Kampong Tom, Kandal and Phnom Penh areas. In the fishing ports of Krakor (Pursat), Kampong Chhnang, Kandal, Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Siem Riep etc. thousands of local and mobile fisher folk and Vietnamese migrants gather. They are part of the large community of ethnic Vietnamese who

have been living in the country for many generations. Most of these people live in floating villages and have their families with them. The exact number and the nationality of these people is an extremely sensitive matter in Cambodian government politics (Supang 2000: 18).

According to Supang, there are two other distinguishable groups of Vietnamese people in Cambodia, namely migrant construction workers and sex/entertainment workers. Vietnamese migrant workers comprise a large number of construction workers employed in house building and other urban development. They also work in bridge and transport infrastructure development. Numbering thousands, this predominantly male population works in Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Battambang and all other large provinces. Only some of them have families with them, mainly those who have been living in the country for a long time. There are also Vietnamese blacksmiths, goldsmiths and other artisans. Among female workers, there are many barbers, tailors and dress-makers. Vietnamese sex and entertainment workers are another prominent group of immigrants to the country (Supang *ibid*).

III. Migration Patterns and Processes

Migration in Cambodia has specific patterns and processes. After the Civil War ended, followed by development in many sectors, it can be said that mostly migrants were moving from poorer provinces to richer provinces to seek a livelihood. Migrant movement from rural to rural tends to be more dominant rather than from rural to urban or even urban to rural. This pattern has a close relation to the fact that looking for a job in the urban areas needs skills.

In contrast, not much skill is needed to seek a job in the rural areas. While in the process of migration, recent migrations from the peasantry as well as other working classes has continued and intensified to this day in one form or another and serves to bridge the gap between the demands for labour in specific segments of the market, as well as to reduce the resource/labour imbalance between different regions. In the process, it becomes a survival strategy for large sections of the populations concerned. With rising demographic pressures and consequently increasing resource imbalances, the need to move in search of a livelihood is increasing. What makes the transitional economies different from others is their history of long wars in the recent past, experimentation with socialism and then a transition to a market economy. Each of these factors, particularly the civil wars, has been responsible for creating prolonged periods of instability in the country. This instability has had negative effects on social, economic, investment, infrastructural and human developments. In the process, the poverty situation has not improved, and has induced further migration (<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/population/workingpapers/LabourMigration/index.asp#34>).

After the end of the Civil War in Cambodia in the 1990s there emerged many problems such as lack of jobs throughout the country. As a result, Cambodia has become a new entrant in the phenomena of international labour migration. Sandwiched between Thailand and Vietnam, Cambodia is a labour sending, receiving and transit country for migrants in the region. Chronic poverty, landlessness, lack of employment, market for goods, materialism, debt and natural disasters such as droughts and floods are compelling push factors for many rural Cambodians to migrate cross border to Thailand to seek work for a better life. Those push factors

are also well supported by the ease of traveling within the country, the long porous border with Thailand and the existence of an established network of recruiters and intermediaries that help facilitate migration together with established routes and a tradition of migration. The pull factors are the high demand for less skilled labourers in 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous, difficult) in countries such as Thailand, the prospect of paid employment and a better life, kinship and social networks in destination countries. So, those push and pull factors of migration had a close relation with the existence of the international migrant wave from Cambodia to neighbouring countries.

Industry and service sectors are still in very early stages, with the partial exception of the garment sector that has provided, in the last ten years, more than 250,000 jobs, mostly for young female migrants coming from the provinces surrounding Phnom Penh. The country faces a serious problem of job shortage and underemployment. The informal sector has become an important source of income for many, especially women, who find work as fruit and food sellers, agricultural labourers and construction workers. Cambodia, due to its peculiar position in the middle of the Greater Mekong sub region, is both a sending and receiving country of migrants, even if in a much lesser measure than Thailand. Migration in Cambodia is, by and large, concentrated within its borders. Even if reports from the Ministry of Planning set the percentage of migrants at 35% of the total population (NIS 2004), most of these internal movements are very short range and intra provincial. The international out migration of Cambodian nationals is mainly to Thailand, which in the last few years has become the main destination for migrant workers in the region. In migration to Cambodia comes almost exclusively from Vietnam and in

a much lesser measure from China, Laos and Thailand (Mekong Institute 2006).

Talking about the Vietnamese migration to Cambodia, it has a long history and has specific patterns and processes. The Vietnamese, who had lived in Cambodia for generations, were deported during the Lon Nol regime (1970-1975) and later during the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979). During the 1980s, they gradually returned to Cambodia, along with friends, relatives and neighbours. In the 1990s, a new wave of migrants from Vietnam was attracted by the opportunities offered by the sudden opening up of a market economy in Cambodia (Sarthi Acharya 2003: 12).

Acharya (2003) explains that it is very difficult to estimate the number of the Vietnamese migrants in Cambodia. According to Acharya, in 1995, the governments of eight provinces (Kandal, Battambang, Phnom Penh, Takeo, Kompong Chhnang, Pursat, Prey Veng and Siem Reap) indicated that the total Vietnamese population in these provinces, was 227,000. The Kompong Chnang Immigration Office, in April 2000, estimated that there had been a big increase in the number of Vietnamese in the province since the 1980s, from 1,269 households containing 7,064 people in 1985 to 2,708 households with 13,445 people in 1997 (Sarthi Acharya 2003: 12).

Because of different locations of settlement, the occupation of Vietnamese migrants and workers varies depending on their location. Vietnamese in Kompong Chnang are almost all involved in fishing the year round. Acharya notes that these small and medium-scale fisher people earned on average around 10,000 riel (US\$ 1 = 3,852 riel) per day, in addition to earnings obtained from caged fish cultures. The most important to be noted is that the

Vietnamese are especially dexterous in fishing activities; this is the reason why they have been successful in retaining their hold on this activity in Cambodia. A different situation of Vietnamese migrant workers can be seen in Phnom Penh. According to Sarthi Acharya (2003), in Phnom Penh, most of them work as construction workers, traders and skilled workers in machinery and electronic repair workshops, wood processing enterprises, etc. so, it is no surprise that around 80% of the small-scale contractors and supervisors in the construction industry in Phnom Penh are believed to be of Vietnamese origin. Employers of skilled workers in Phnom Penh say that they prefer to employ workers of Vietnamese origin because they find them to be skilled, hard working and patient. In contrast, local Cambodian workers tend to be confined to less skilled work; for instance, in construction, as labourers carrying sand, gravel and cement (Sarthi Acharya 2003 : 13)

IV. Typology of Migrants and People Movement Groups

Before discussing the typology of migrants and the movements of people groups in Cambodia, we should know that there are differences between migrants and people movement groups. There is a fundamental classification of population mobility and migration in the country, namely internal or domestic migration and mobility and external or international migration and mobility (Table 1). The international migrants are then divided into immigrants, that is, foreigners entering the country and emigrants - (Cambodian) nationals going out of the country. This classification is very important for determining the legal status of the migrants, particularly that of the international migrants. International migrants are often divided into regular or documented migrants and irregular or undocumented migrants.

It should be emphasized here that there is a significant overlapping between internal and external migration especially at the cross border locations where both groups converge. People who are internal migrants today may end up crossing the border and become international migrants. Similarly, some regular migrants may become irregular (often termed illegal in police records) through overstaying or losing their registration.

From Table 4.1 below, for example, Supang (2000) explains that the migrant and mobile people can be identified by occupation. This is perhaps the simplest way to classify a population as they can be found on particular work-sites. But this is also considered over simplistic in terms of HIV risk situation assessment. Most of the migrants are unskilled and tend to change jobs frequently. Table 1 also explains that many migrant labourers in Thailand started in construction work and then switched to agriculture or fisheries. Some female domestic helpers and retail workers became sex and entertainment workers. Although there are some strong correlations between occupation and HIV vulnerability, it is important to understand the overall dynamics of migration and the risk situations associated with it. Migrants should also be classified by gender as there has been a 'feminization' in Asia of many migration streams and this includes Cambodia. There are gender implications for HIV vulnerability that are different for men and women. Besides the broad classifications as described above, Supang (2000) also explains that migrants can also be grouped into some of the following criteria, particularly in the 'micro-analysis' of the situations that are very closely related to their HIV vulnerability:

1. Age: very crucial as young people are more likely to get involved in risky situations;

2. Marital status and accompanying family: marriage may not be so significant unless the migrant is accompanied by family members;
3. Duration of stay: often signifies integration with the host community;
4. Living situations (with whom staying): single people are more likely to get involved in risky behaviour;
5. Income level: higher income of men increases buying power of commercial sex but lower income of women increases their vulnerability to selling sex (Supang 2000: 19)

Table 4.1

Typology of Migrant and Mobile Population Groups with HIV Risk in Cambodia

No.	Migrant and Mobile Population Groups	Geographical Location
A.	Internal Migrants/Mobiles	
1	Road Construction Workers	Svay Rieng, Prey Veng and along Highway #5
2.	Garment workers	Phnom Penh, Kandal, Sihanoukville
3.	Students and Trainees	Phnom Penh and other big cities
4.	Sex and Entertainment Workers	Many cities and towns, including border areas
5.	Male and Female Traders	Many cities and towns, especially Thai border areas
6.	Road Transport Workers	Along Highway 5, 4, 1, 6, border crossings etc

7.	Fisherfolk and Seafarers	Koh Kong, Kg. Som, other ports, including borders
8.	Tourists and Visitors	Large cities, border and tourist destinations
9.	State Officials	All over the country, including border areas
10.	Uniformed Officials and Deminers	All over the country, especially in the border areas
11.	Private Sector/Businessmen	All over the country, including border areas
12.	Street Children	Phnom Penh and cities, including border areas
B.	Cambodian Emigrants	
13.	Contract Labours Abroad	To Malaysia
14.	Migrant Labourers	To Thailand
15.	Migrant Fisherfolk	To Thailand
16.	Migrant Sex Workers	To Thailand
C.	Foreign Immigrants	
17.	Vietnamese Sex Workers	Many large cities
18.	Vietnamese Construction Workers	Major cities
19.	Tourists and Visitors	Mostly Asian in Phnom Penh and other cities

Source: Supang Chantavanich, 2000. *Mobility and HIV/AIDS in the Greater Mekong Subregion*. ADB and UNDP, page 21.

The typology of migration in Cambodia, particularly internal migration, it seems, in Cambodia is quite often seasonal, even though long-term migration cannot be forgotten. Seasonal migration is mostly focused on the urban areas but can as well be occurring between rural areas. Seasonal migration is marked by people traveling everyday to work in the city from the rural prov-

inces nearby or moving from the rural areas for a couple of months, especially in the dry season or during the period of waiting for the coming of the rice harvest, to work in the urban areas. Many people who have motorbikes come from the provinces nearby to work as a motorbike driver in Phnom Penh. As a result, we can see that there are many more motorbike driven vehicles in Phnom Penh rather than public transportation. Besides Phnom Penh, the second largest city in Cambodia, Battambang, attracts migrants within the province who either commute daily or weekly to work on construction sites or in hotels. We also can see that Poipet, as the main land crossing to Thailand, attracts a lot of young migrants for short periods to work as head loaders. Similarly, the smaller market centres attract workers with their opportunities of paid jobs. ([http://www.mekonginfo.org/mrc_en/doclib.nsf/0/EBCA83925F2AC49F47256DB900252DB2/\\$FILE/FULLTEXT.pdf](http://www.mekonginfo.org/mrc_en/doclib.nsf/0/EBCA83925F2AC49F47256DB900252DB2/$FILE/FULLTEXT.pdf)).

Based on the explanation above, the migration within Cambodia, so far, has been directed from labour surplus provinces to resource rich areas. Acharya (2003) reports that in 1998, five provinces accounted for over half of all 'recent' provincial out migrants. Four of these were provinces with high rural population densities and low land-to-population ratios: Kompong Cham, Prey Veng, Kandal and Takeo (Sarathi Acharya 2003 : 5). Acharya also explains that this migration pattern seems well entrenched and fairly stable, judging from the very similar results obtained for both 'very recent' migrants and 'recent' migrants, in 1996 as well as 1998. As a capital of the country, Phnom Penh is the favoured destination for about one-third of all inter provincial migrants seeking jobs, followed by Kandal, Banteay Meanchey and Koh Kong. Phnom Penh and Kandal are the main urban/non agricultural des-

tinations, while the two rural provinces of Koh Kong and Banteay Meanchey have high average farm sizes and low population densities. Thus, people move to locations where they feel there is potential for employment. (Sarathi Acharya 2003: 6).

V. Causal Factors of Migration

There are many reasons or factors behind migration in Cambodia. The high and large-scale migration in Cambodia is mainly explained by the turbulent history and large displacement projects, which at present can be seen in high repatriation numbers. Although, there are other matters as well, that has affected the high migration numbers. These are population growth, problems in the agricultural sector, poverty and decrease in natural resources, which together create pressures to move away from the rural areas to other rural or urban areas. The urban pull is the force that together with rural push draws migrants to the urban areas. Urban pull attracts people mainly to the cities but some rural places may have similar effects that draw population towards them. The urban pull is not as strong as the rural push in Cambodia but it cannot be forgotten either. Employment and education are now becoming the most important pull factors for migration, especially migration to the urban areas.

In this case, particularly in internal migration in Cambodia, push factors are more dominant rather than pull factors. Cambodia has had a very traumatic history in its recent past, beginning from the early 1970s and extending into the early 1990s. During the early phase of the war about a third of its population died due to mass killing and starvation and almost the whole population

was displaced. Many people fled the country to seek refuge in Thailand, and about half a million were granted resettlement in the US, Canada, Australia, France and other countries. Following a UN-brokered peace agreement in 1991, the remaining 370,000 refugees returned home from the Thai border camps. A great many of these people, as well as those who had stayed in the country, experienced trauma and disruption in their families and neighbourhoods. Their traditions and culture were severely disrupted, including sexual and social mores. The resettlement and reintegration that took place after 1991, saw many people not returning to their places of origin (National Institute of Statistics 1998). Many of them resettled elsewhere, especially in the urban areas of Phnom Penh, Battambang, Siem Riep, Sihanoukville etc. Even today, a large number of people continue to search for a suitable place to live and move from province to province.

During 1991-94, a large contingent of about 24,000 UN peacekeepers and other personnel came to Cambodia. Predominantly young men and without families, these peacekeepers played a crucial role in the social and economic life of Cambodia at that time. Along with the peacekeepers and UN election organizers, a large number of Cambodian interpreters and support staff moved from place to place inside the country. This population attracted a large number of entrepreneurs with large entertainment venues opening and an expansion of the commercial sex industry. Thousands of Cambodian sex workers were joined by Vietnamese, Thai, Filipino and Chinese sex workers. The growth of the sex industry attracts both men and women migrants to seek livelihoods.

The Cambodian government has been trying to develop the country seriously since 1993. As a result, the economy achieved

annual growth rates of 7-8% for four years thereafter. However, this situation changed in 1997 because of the resurgence of civil unrest in 1997. With peace returning in 1998, business continued as usual. According to Acharya (2003), in 1998/99, the annual population growth rate averaged 2.2%. As of 1999, the proportion of people living below the poverty line was estimated at around 40%. Almost 90% of the poor were in rural areas (Sarathi Acharya 2003: 3). Acharya also adds that the major problems faced by Cambodia were the large rural-urban gap, the high demographic upsurge and excessive dependence on international aid for the regular activities of the state. The first two of these three problems also create conditions for push factors of migration. By reducing the rural-urban gap and controlling the high demographic increase, the migration flow will decrease.

The Population Census of Cambodia conducted in 1998 resulted in data on Cambodian population, including migration. In the 1998 Census, individual information was collected on birthplace, previous residence and reasons for migration from the previous residence (National Institute of Statistics 1998). The Census showed that 26.8% of the total population moved from its birthplace, with a much higher proportion in urban areas (56.6%) than in rural areas (21.2%). Over two-thirds (68.5%) of the population had never changed their residence. This was higher in rural areas (73.7%) than in urban areas (41.1%). There was no significant gender difference in the mobility. Of the 31.5% of the population which had lived outside their present residence, 58.8% had moved within the province, 35.3% moved to another province and 5.9% moved outside Cambodia. The latter were refugees in Thailand (Supang 2000: 12).

Population Census 1998 also noted that there were around 3,597,774 migrants in Cambodia living in both urban and rural areas (Bruno 2005). According to Bruno (2005), family movement was the main reason for internal migration followed by search of employment, marriage, natural disaster/insecurity and repatriation as in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2
Reason for Migration (Percentage)

Reasons	Total		Urban		Rural	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
In search of Employment	17.09	10.92	22.55	14.80	14.88	9.26
Marriage	16.32	9.01	6.48	4.14	20.30	1.10
Family Moved	25.29	45.74	33.62	54.56	21.92	41.96
Natural disaster/Insecurity	5.44	6.14	2.55	2.69	6.61	7.61
Repatriation	12.20	14.57	5.92	7.02	14.74	27.80

Source: Bruno Maltoni, "Internal Migration in Cambodia. An Overview", IOM Regional Conference on Migration and Development in Asia, Lanzhou, 14-16 March 2005.

Bruno also explains that the Census further identifies that the migration stream was more from rural to rural rather than rural to urban, urban to urban or even urban to rural (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3**Migration Paths (Percentage)**

Paths	Males	Females
Rural – Rural	59.57	56.68
Rural – Urban	18.47	20.05
Urban – Urban	13.84	15.30
Urban - Rural	8.11	7.97

Source: Bruno Maltoni, “Internal Migration in Cambodia. An Overview”, IOM Regional Conference on Migration and Development in Asia, Lanzhou, 14-16 March 2005.

Meanwhile, according to Supang (2000), the Census does not document many others who move from place to place for short or long periods, usually within the country but also abroad. The purposes of such movements vary greatly but are mostly related to economic or work matters, such as migrant labourers, truck drivers, fisher folk and seafarers, traders and businesspeople, military and border police officers, students and trainees, and tourists and visitors. Human trafficking enters into the broad picture of the movements as well. Among the international migrants, most of them travel abroad for employment. Cambodia has a long porous border with the economically much more prosperous Thailand. As a result, large numbers of people cross the border, often illegally. In recent years, Cambodia has joined other countries in the region as a labour exporting country, mainly to Malaysia.

VI. The Impact of Migration: Appearance of New Problems

Migration flows in Cambodia, particularly seasonal migration, created new problems. Some provinces lost population because of migration, while other provinces increased their population after becoming a destination for migrants. Migrants from around Tonle Sap Lake, such as Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Cham, and Siem Riep, migrated to Phnom Penh, Krong Pailin, Kratie, Mondol Kiri, Banteay Meanchey and Otdar Meanchey in search of a livelihood. It is not surprising that recently Krong Pailin, Phnom Penh, Banteay Meanchey and Battambang have been the most attractive provinces for migrants around Tonle Sap Lake ([http://www.mekonginfo.org/mrc_en/doclib.nsf/0/EBCA83925F2AC49F47256DB900252DB2/\\$FILE/FULLTEXT.pdf](http://www.mekonginfo.org/mrc_en/doclib.nsf/0/EBCA83925F2AC49F47256DB900252DB2/$FILE/FULLTEXT.pdf)).

Migrant flows which are still running in Cambodia, both internal and external or international migration, also cause social problems. This is new in Cambodia after decades of Cambodian experience of a traumatic Civil War. In the large cities in the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia, such as Phnom Penh, Siem Riep, and Kampong Cham, there were massive migrant waves in search of a better life in those cities. Increased numbers of migrants to the large cities in the Mekong River Basin without good control have had great impact. The most important impact of migration, which should be discussed here, is the trafficking of women and the high-rate of HIV/AIDS.

1. Trafficking of Women and Children

Human trafficking has become an extremely serious problem in Cambodia in the past years, mostly in internal but also international migration, particularly across the border to Thailand. Needless to say, most of the subjects of trafficking are women and children, with linkages between trafficking and prostitution. It has been found that most of the Cambodian sex workers enter the business involuntarily, either by deception, abduction or selling by 'friends', parents and relatives. There are active networks of agents, pimps, and brothel owners. According to Supang (2000), this situation prevails for many girls and women working in brothels in Phnom Penh and other major cities and towns in the country. In Poipet, some of the women described the process as follows:

- Tricked by a trafficker who promised a good job but instead sold her to a brothel for 7,000 Baht;
- An agent contacted her in the village and, with her consent, paid 5,000 Baht to her parents that she is now paying back by working in the brothel;
- A soldier kidnapped, raped and then sold her to the brothel for 5,000 Baht.

Trafficking of women for prostitution on the Thai-Cambodian border is concentrated around the areas where there is a border trade or fishing industry, such as Poipet and Koh Kong respectively and perhaps at O'smach. Supang says that IOM (International Organization of Migration) has reported several studies, detailing trafficking of women into prostitution in Cambodia and Thailand. The IOM report also describes the situation of some of the Cambodian and Vietnamese women and children arrested

for illegal entry into Thailand. Out of 107 arrested 40, or 37.4%, got help from the facilitators to enter Thailand. Facilitators take a 'fee' to arrange the travel and offer jobs and good income in Bangkok. Some Vietnamese girls and women are also trafficked into Cambodia and some to Thailand (Supang Chantavanich 2000: 13).

2. HIV/AIDS Spread

During 1991-94, population mobility was very intense throughout the country, especially in the northwestern provinces bordering Thailand. The mobility involved UN peacekeepers and civil officials, Cambodian police and military, traders and businesspeople, returnee refugees, migrant workers, state officials, transport workers and sex and entertainment workers. This situation resulted in the rapid transmission of the disease in Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Koh Kong and Siem Riep (<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/population/workingpapers/LabourMigration/index.asp#34>).

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is an important problem for all countries. At the end of 2003, between 4.1 and 9.6 million adults and children in South and Southeast Asia were living with HIV/AIDS. Approximately 430,000 to 2.0 million adults and children were newly infected with HIV during 2003. There were two primary foci of HIV/AIDS in Asia: 1) India; and 2) Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Cambodia is spreading faster than in any other place in Asia. Sakaew Province in Thailand is contiguous with Cambodia, about 170 kilometres along the border. Daily population movements between the countries is at 4 checkpoints, Klongleuk, Ban Nongpreu, Ban

Beungtakuan and Ban Kaodin checkpoints, which are connected with Banteay Meanchey Province of Cambodia and have become tourist attractions. About 180,000 Cambodians were infected with HIV in 1999. Of these, 25,000 became AIDS-infected patients (WHO 2001). Table 4.4 below describes HIV/AIDS situation in the GMS Countries in 1999.

Table 4.4
HIV/AIDS Situation in the GMS Countries (1999)

Country	Estimated Number of People with HIV/AIDS	Adult infection rate (%)	HIV in Pregnancy (%)	Estimated Adult Death
Cambodia	220,000	4.04	2.6	14,000
Lao PDR	1,400	0.05	n.a.	130
Myanmar	530,000	1.99	3.4	48,000
Thailand	755,000	2.15	1.8	66,000
Vietnam	100,000	0.24	0.15	2,500
Yunnan	600,000 all PRC	1.18	0.2	260

Source: Supang, 2000:4

Table 4.4 above shows that estimated number of people with HIV/AIDS in Cambodia is high in Southeast Asia, third rank after Thailand and Myanmar. Table 4 also indicates that the percentage of adult infection rate in Cambodia is the highest among Southeast Asia countries.

Since 1999, the Sakaew Provincial Health Office has collaborated with the Cambodian authorities to conduct surveillance of Cambodian labourers working along the border, and started taking blood tests in 2000. HIV, STD and risky behaviour surveil-

lance are essential tools to explain trends, transmission, the impact of the epidemic and the effects of interventions designed to reduce HIV incidence over time, as little study has been done of the behavioural and epidemiological patterns of this mobile group. Furthermore, this group can serve as a 'bridge', creating the potential for widespread diffusion of HIV. Therefore, this study aims to estimate the prevalence of HIV infection among Cambodian labourers who commute along the Thai-Cambodian border and to determine the factors affecting HIV/AIDS risky behaviour (Suwannapong et al. 2004: 1).

VII. Coping with the Impact of Migration

There have been a number of responses to cope with the impact of migration, especially on trafficking in women and children and spread of HIV/AIDS. Related to the effort of combating those impacts, Cambodia has a very active domestic and international NGO community working to cope with the impact of migration, particularly HIV/AIDS spread and trafficking of children and women. The Cambodian government has been trying to combat HIV/AIDS spread. The Law on HIV/AIDS Response and Prevention was passed by the National Assembly and became law in mid 2002. This progressive piece of legislation was enacted to provide a legal framework for HIV/AIDS prevention and care and support within Cambodia. Articles 7 and 8 of the Law on HIV/AIDS Response and Prevention are relevant to cross border mobility and state that the government will provide HIV/AIDS education documents at international border crossings and provide education seminars for all Khmer labourers, diplomats and government officers before departing to work overseas. While Article 26 states that the

government will ensure basic health care free of charge for people living with HIV/AIDS and Article 27 states that the government will enhance participation of community and religious groups in care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS. The Law prohibits discrimination in employment, education and access to health care and sets out penalties for discrimination including fines and imprisonment (Suwannapong et al. 2004).

The Cambodian government has also tried to cope with the impact of migration by signing an MOU with Thailand in May 2003. The MOU that Thai government signed with Cambodia aims not only at the management of labour migration between the two countries, but at the identification and return of irregular migrants and at the definition of focal points for migration issues to be debated in the countries signing the MOUs. The characteristics of the MOU are almost the same (with few differences) to the MOUs signed with the other two neighbouring countries (Myanmar and Laos). One of the main aims of the MOUs is to minimize the negative social and economic impacts caused by illegal employment. The MOU signed with Cambodia recognizes the ‘principles enshrined’ in the Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration. The first article of the MOU signed with the government of Cambodia calls for “Proper procedures for employment of workers” and ‘effective repatriation of workers’, who have completed terms and conditions of employment or are deported by relevant authorities of the other party before completion of terms and conditions of employment, to their permanent addresses”. The MOU between Cambodia and Thailand foresees the implementation of an elaborate system for the temporary employment of the nationals of one country in the other. The experience of European countries in the 60s and the new agreements developed by European Union mem-

ber states with the neighbouring countries has strongly influenced the design of the MOUs (Mekong Institute 2006).

VIII. Conclusion

Over the decades, some movement of the rural population in Cambodia— either to urban areas in quest of employment or to other villages in search of more favourable agricultural sites, has been customary. Warfare in the early 1970s drove large numbers of rural people to the cities in search of safety.

Since the 1990s, internal migration in Cambodia has been directed from labour surplus provinces to resource rich areas. Migrants from overcrowded areas in the south and southwest of Cambodia are attracted to provinces where land is seen to be available, often in the wake of road improvements. Many of the provinces targeted by the migrants, Preah Vihear, Pursat, Battambang, and Mondolkiri, for instance, are also those supporting sizable populations of former refugees, displaced people and/or demilitarized soldiers. The reality for many of the more vulnerable new settlers is harsh. Land is not always available in the far-flung places where they spend their limited resources to travel. Commune chiefs do not always give permission for migrants to settle. Any available land is often mined, in an area where infrastructure, including water, is scarce, or is in a protected forest area.

This movement of new settlers from the south and southeast to the north and northwest is still ongoing. Thousands of poor, vulnerable people continue to move about the country in search of a permanent place to live. These people are in need of assistance.

The problem of land tenure is one of the most critical and complicated, facing displaced people in Cambodia today. Land grabbing from the poor and vulnerable by high ranking officials and other well-placed people is a major concern. A lack of clear legal processes, political will (in some cases) to enforce the law, high levels of corruption, ambiguous land titling agreements and lack of clarity of land rights, complicates the process.

Therefore, it is no surprise that migration is increasing in virtually every form: Seasonal migration from rural to urban areas to supplement agricultural income; internal migration between rural areas, predominately from provinces with high rural population densities; migration from rural to urban areas, particularly Phnom Penh and international migration, primarily to Thailand. This movement reflects growing underemployment and landlessness in rural areas. Promoting development in rural areas and better land and natural resource management are crucial to address this issue.

Besides internal migration, Cambodia is also facing international migration issues. The international out migration of Cambodian nationals is mainly to Thailand, which in the last years has become the main destination for migrant workers in the region. Chronic poverty, landlessness, lack of employment, markets for goods, materialism, debt and natural disasters such as droughts and floods are compelling many rural Cambodians to migrate across borders to Thailand to seek work.

There are many impacts of migration, both internal and external, in Cambodia. Trafficking of women and children and HIV/AIDS spread are the most important impacts of migration. Though the Cambodian government has been trying to combat and to cope with these impacts, such as by signing the MOU with

Thailand in May 2003 and by implementing the Law on HIV/AIDS Response and Prevention in mid 2002, it has not been successful. The Cambodian government has so far shown a lack of legal, institutional or operational capacity to effectively address the issues.

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CHAPTER V

THE DYNAMICS OF INTERETHNIC TRADE ACTIVITY IN KAMPONG CHAM

Betti Rosita Sari

I. Introduction

Kampong Cham Province is located in the east of Cambodia around 124 kilometres northeast of Phnom Penh and is the third largest province in Cambodia with a total population of 1,750,000 people (2006)²⁰ It consists of 16 districts, 173 communes and 1,767 villages. (<http://www.cambodia.gov.kh/>) The ethnic groups which inhabit Kampong Cham Province can be divided into four main groups: Cham, Khmer, Chinese and Vietnamese. The interesting point of these ethnic group relationships in Kampong Cham is interethnic trading activity because it involves ethnic groups which have a different livelihood and culture, with each ethnic group plying a different trade, as big traders, middle men or small-scale traders. Usually, trade activity is conducted in a traditional way using either money or *barter* in transactions.

In looking at interethnic trade activities, this paper will explore the relationships between ethnic groups and look at: Who are the traders? What are the trade patterns? What are their livelihoods and economic activities? And, What is the impact of ethnic

²⁰ Interview with Haji Sufri, Deputy Governor of Kampong Cham Province, Kampong Cham, May 30, 2006

trading activities on the local traders? Consisting of seven parts, this paper begins with the Introduction; while Part two explains the concept of interethnic trade activity; Part three analyses the factors that influence ethnic trading activity; Part four explains the economic activities of ethnic groups in Kampong Cham, including interethnic trade activity, traders, commodities, patterns of trade and the market; Part five explains the impact of interethnic trade on local traders in Kampong Cham; Part six is the conclusion; and the last part is the Bibliography.

II. Interethnic Trade Activities: Supply and Demand Approach

The concept of trading activities in this paper is traditional trade conducted by some ethnic groups in the Kampong Cham Province. Mostly, the commodities traded are agricultural products, such as rice, vegetables, fruit and fish; manufactured products; electronic products, clothes, bicycles and daily necessities of low scale and low volume. All of the transactions are not only using money as a medium of transaction, but also the barter system still applied by some ethnic groups in Kampong Cham. Economically, *barter*, the exchange of goods and services, under certain requirements, such as double coincidence of wants or the same needs and necessities between two people who conduct barter is quite difficult. However, this system has been practiced within villages and sometimes between villagers and even between tribes. The exchange of goods and services or barter is important to support mutual needs for survival as well as security and refers to the degree of inter and intra ethnic relationships.

The inter ethnic trading activity conducted by some ethnic groups in Kampong Cham, due to the desire to fulfill daily necessities, are based on supply and demand. The law of demand says that if the demand for the product is high, it is followed by an increase in price and vice versa, if the demand for the product is low, the price of the product will decrease. (Sukirno 2002: 75-76) The demand comes from the consumers to fulfill their needs and consume the product. On the other hand, the supply law says that if the supply of the product is high, the price will decrease and if the supply of the product is low, the price will increase. (Sukirno 2002: 86-87) The supply comes from the producers who produce the commodities to satisfy consumer needs.

III. The Factors which Influence Interethnic Trade Activities

The different characteristics in livelihoods, culture and social lives of ethnic groups in Kampong Cham have an impact on economic activity, especially trade activity. For example, some ethnic groups conduct trade not only for economic purposes but also social purposes as a form of ethnic interaction between different ethnic groups. There are some factors which influence interethnic trading activity in Kampong Cham:

1. Daily Necessities Fulfillment

Economically, the people conduct trade to fulfill daily needs, such as for food, or maybe to earn some money. The supply and demand in trade activity shows that there is a desire to fulfill the daily necessities. Trade activity, even bartering would never happen if there were no buyer who needs the goods and seller who

offers the goods. Besides that, the goods traded must be different because the traders need different kinds of goods or commodities. For example, if one trader sells rice and another trader sells rice too, there is no trade or transaction between them.

2. Profit Making

Traders conduct trade to fulfill the daily necessities and to earn profits. There is no trader who wants to suffer loss through his/her trade activity because the profit can be used to cover transportation costs, time and energy. Profit differs among traders. The Chinese traders have big profits because they sell manufactured products, such as clothes, electronic products, soap, school stuff etc. The commodities are durable goods and do not have a risk of damage. It is very different with agricultural products which very easily go rotten, mouldy or too dry. resulting in being pushed to a lower price. The agricultural products are usually sold by Cham or Khmer traders and make little profit.

3. Production Surplus

The traditional pattern of a production system in the economic activities of ethnic groups in Kampong Cham has forced the people to only produce a small number of commodities. The subsistence farmers and fishermen only produce rice or fish to fulfill their daily needs with the surplus sold in the market. In the harvest or fishing seasons, there are over supplies of rice and fish in the market and the price of the product becomes low or cheaper due to the over supply. Then, in the dry season there is a lack in the supply of rice and fish in the market and the price increases significantly. The

Khmer farmers produce rice only to eat with their families and there is no surplus to sell in the market. This also happens among the Cham fishermen when the number of fish caught is only enough to fulfill the family needs and there is little fish to sell in the market. The amount of rice and fish sold in the market is limited and the price becomes higher than in the harvest and fishing seasons.

4. Geography: distance and place

The traders in Kampong Cham prefer to trade in the region which is very close to trading centres, like towns and big markets because they are concerned about the transportation costs and the long distances. They usually conduct trade activities in the local market in Kampong Cham but sometimes they take the goods to Phnom Penh. The distance from Phnom Penh to Kampong Cham is around 124 kilometers and it takes 2 hours to get there. They bring the commodities, especially agricultural products by truck and mobile boxes. In the Phnom Penh market, they get a better price for the commodities than in the Kampong Cham market.

Besides Phnom Penh, the traders in Kampong Cham, especially in Kampong Steng also trade in the Cambodia-Vietnam cross border areas. The distance between the two regions is around 45 kilometres and can be reached in one hour by taxi, mobile box or *romoh* (modified tractors to transport people). The commodities are *gajus* (cashew nuts), fruit and vegetables. The traders in Kampong Steng prefer to conduct trade in the Cambodia-Vietnam border areas rather than in Phnom Penh because the distance from Phnom Penh to Kampong Steng is very long and the journey takes a long time. The transportation cost is very high and the profit they earn cannot cover the transportation costs.

IV. The Economic Activities of Ethnic Groups in Kampong Cham

Due to its abundance of natural resources, the economic activities of ethnic groups in Kampong Cham are dependent on natural resources (land, forest and river), limited goods and services (farm products, agriculture based tools) and small-scale production. Labour and skills are derived locally and the distribution of land, labour and the production process are determined to a large extent by social status and relationships. The economic activities are usually conducted by the people who have a large amount of capital and factors of production (land, labour, tools) while the type of business is family businesses or businesses conducted by solidarity groups.²¹ The production system is labour intensive, like in wetland cultivation and rubber plantations with the labour mostly unskilled because of the lack of education in the villages. They also use traditional tools in the production processes so the output is still limited in amount to fulfill daily consumption needs with the surplus sold in the market.

Referring to economic activities in the agricultural sector, the villagers in Kampong Cham can be included in the agrarian society.²² Typically unproductive due to the limitations on the di-

²¹ Solidarity groups (*krom samaki*) were established during the Heng Samrin regime (1979-1989) as a form of collectivization in the agricultural sector. These groups are small aggregates of people living in the same locality, known to one another and able to a certain extent to profit collectively from their work. These groups can be found in the rice farming and fishing activities. In rice farming this was a form of 'peasant labour association'.

²² An agrarian society is one of the societies the economic activity of which is based on agriculture as its prime means for support and sustenance. The society acknowledges other means of livelihood and work habits but stresses agriculture and farming, and has been the main form of socio-economic organization for most of human history (www.wikipedia.org)

vision of labour and the earning of hard currency, agrarian systems feature low standards of living, lack technology and show low levels of growth. As an agrarian society, the main economic activity of ethnic groups in Kampong Cham can be divided into three forms of activities all very dependent on natural resources.

1. Rice Farming

Rice, the staple food of Cambodians, continues to be the principal commodity in the agricultural sector which has a significant contribution to the economy of Kampong Cham Province. The agricultural sector and its related sub sectors (fisheries and forestry) absorb around 85.4% of the total labour force in this province (MRC 2000). Besides that, rice is one of the important export commodities of Cambodia which brought US\$ 2,388,000 in 2001 and increased significantly to US\$ 4,463,000 (around 97%) in 2002. ([http://www.intracen.org/.](http://www.intracen.org/)) The farmers in Kampong Cham are Khmer growing paddy, vegetables and fruit, including pepper, cashew nuts (*gajus*), durian, rambutan, lychees and longans in fertile orchards. The total area cultivated for rice production in Kampong Cham in 1993 was around 180,000 ha and produced more than one tonne of rice per hectare every year. (Gartrell 1997: 4).

The rice production in Kampong Cham is very dependent on the silt laden flood- waters of the Mekong for their fertilizing effect and also on the waters of the rainy or wet season. Traditionally, it has produced only one rice crop per year because of shortcomings in the extensive irrigation system needed for double cropping. Under the traditional patterns of agriculture, the season of rice crops each year in Kampong Cham can be divided into two

seasons; a wet-season crop and a dry-season crop. The major wet-season crop is planted in late May through October, when the first rains begin to inundate and soften the land and the farmers start to plant the paddy. Planting or sowing of paddy begins in the months of May-June and the main harvest is usually gathered six months later, in August-September every year. In the dry-season (November-February), the farmers do not plant paddy, but a secondary crop, like vegetables, corn (maize), beans, soybeans and sweet potatoes. The principal fruit crops, all of which are consumed locally, include oranges, bananas and pineapples supplemented by a variety of other tropical fruit, including breadfruit, mango, mangosteen and papaya. Khmer farmers typically grow vegetables and maize as a part of *chamkar* or in home gardens for subsistence purposes and usually used as livestock feed or for human consumption. The seasonal activities in the rice farming and fishing can be seen in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1

**Generalized Seasonal Calendar of Rural Livelihood Activities in Cambodia-
Period during which Main Activities Are Conducted¹**

Livelihood Activities	Wet Season						Dry Season					
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Wet-season rice (lowlands)												
Dry-season rice (lowlands)												
Rice/chamkar ² (uplands)												
Vegetables (lowlands)												
Small-scale family fishing												
Ricefield fishing												
Forest product collection												

¹ Rural livelihood can differ markedly from place to place. The intention here is to provide a general overview of the main times when rural Cambodians conduct important livelihood activities. Shaded areas indicate the time of main/peak activity, while dashes (----) indicate a lower level of activity.

² While definitions of *chamkar* can vary, here it refers to the technique popular in upland areas of mixing rice and vegetable farming in a single field.

Sources: Bruce Mckenney and Prom Tola, Working Paper 23, <http://www.cdri.kh.org/>

After harvesting, the rice is carried in baskets from paddy field to village homes for daily consumption, barter or sale to the market or sometimes put in the rice barn as stock for the dry season. In rice trading, the farmers sell the rice in the local market or barter it for fish products from Cham people. The farmers also sell rice to the Chinese traders as middlemen. The middlemen push the price down to very low because the sale of the product is done through the middlemen reserving the crop by making a down payment before the harvest. It is widely known among middlemen that they have to contact the farmers ahead of time and make an agreement to buy by appraising and giving a quote for the crop. The price is set by the middlemen, with the farmers not having any right to bargain but selling the rice to them at the offered price.

2. Fishing

Fish are the traditional staple food in the Cambodian diet, especially for the people who live along the Tonle Sap Lake and in the Mekong River Basin. They consume fish in both fresh and processed forms. According to CDRI, the average consumption per person varies widely from 13.3 kg to over 70 kg per year in

some areas. (<http://www.cdri.kh.org/>) On the other hand, fishing also provides job opportunities for the people along the river or lake. The villagers in Kampong Cham engaged in fishing are ethnic Cham and Vietnamese, while ethnic Khmer more often rely on agriculture. It seems that few ethnic Vietnamese or Cham own agricultural land which can be seen from that most of the roughly 83,000 people living in floating villages on the Great Lake are ethnic Vietnamese (NEDECO 1998).

The fisheries sector can be divided into small and medium scale fishing activities which tend to be organized on a kinship basis rather than through fishing associations, clubs or co-operatives. The fishermen in Kampong Cham are in family businesses with their relatives or neighbours. A husband has the responsibility to catch the fish using middle-scale fishing gear or travel to remote areas to fish and his wife has the responsibility to process, market and sell, tend fish culture ponds and cages and maintain the fishing gear.

The fishing activities in Kampong Cham can be called small or medium scale, although there are some fishing lots owned by Khmer or Chinese-Khmer. The fishing lot owners usually hire Vietnamese fishermen to operate fishing activities within the lot and some Vietnamese also become small-scale fishermen. In recent years, the Vietnamese²³ and Cham fishermen have been involved in conflict because the Vietnamese usually use more sophisticated fishing gear and poison to catch the fish so the amount

²³ The Vietnamese here are the newcomer migrant ethnic Vietnamese to Cambodia, not the Vietnamese who have lived a long time in Cambodia and have an ID card as Cambodians.

of fish available to others has decreased significantly. One of the community leaders in Roka village (male, 57 years old)²⁴ said:

“Nowadays, it’s very difficult to catch the fish in the river due to the decreasing of fish resources. The Khmer and Vietnamese always use fishing gear to catch the fish and cause the destruction of fish habitat so the fish resource decreased in number. Besides that, the population of ethnic Cham in Kampong Cham is increasing significantly in recent years and makes the fish not adequate to fulfill the necessities of all the people anymore. Due to the difficulties to catch the fish, some fishermen shift their activity from fishing to farming in wet-land cultivation and growing vegetables, like corn and gajus (cashew nuts)”

The Cham fishermen think that the Vietnamese were stealing their fish in the Tonle Sap Lake and Mekong River because they are newcomers in Cambodia and fishing without permission from the Cham or Khmer people. This causes widespread prejudice against Vietnamese and determines where they live and fish. Degen and Nao (2000) note that Vietnamese tend to settle near police stations and military posts and rarely take extended fishing trips or fish far from home. Very different from Cham fishers who take extended fishing trips, sometimes away from home for the entire fishing season.

The fishing season in Cambodia is three months long, December, January and February (Table 5.1). In this fishing season, the fishers go to the river to catch the fish because there are a lot of

²⁴ Interview with Haji Abdul Rozak, Kampong Roka, May 30, 2006

fish. A fisherman we met in Roka village (male, 59 years old)²⁵ said:

“When the fish season came, my neighbours and I (around 10 people) went to the river very early in the morning, 5.30 a.m and did not go home in the evening. I stayed in the river to catch the fish because the fish show themselves in the night. My friends and I were very happy; our nets full of fish”

The fish catch could reach 1 ton per day in the fishing season and only 4-5 kilograms per day in the other season (interview result). The fish are usually for daily consumption and the surplus is sold in the market. The Khmer always buy the fish from the Cham to consume it or make it into *prohok*.²⁶ Around 80% of the Khmer families have a *prohok* home industry from which they sell to the market.

Now, many Cham people complain that they can no longer support a family by fishing as they had been able to do before 1970. This is because of the increasing Cham population, while the fish resource in the Mekong River is constant or maybe decreasing because of the destruction of the natural habitat of the fish. Besides which, the Cham almost universally use traditional floating nets and have not adopted the fishing technology often employed by commercial fishing enterprises (Collins 1996:63).

²⁵ Interview with Ahmad bin Abdullah, a fisherman, Kampong Roka June 3, 2006

²⁶ *Prohok* is a pungent, highly nourishing way of preserving fish and an essential part of the meals of every Cambodian. The fish is usually preserved by salting, smoking or fermenting and the smell is very strong.

3. Rubber Plantations

Rubber plantations have become popular among the Cham since late 1989, because these are more profitable than rice cultivation due to the higher price of natural rubber in the world. The price of the rubber increased sharply in recent years and has become one of the major export commodities in Cambodia, besides garments and fish products. In 1986, the total rubber production was about 24,500 tonnes from an area of 36,000 hectares and mostly cultivated in Kampong Cham Province. This province is one of the centres of rubber cultivation in Cambodia. (www.countrystudies.us/cambodia/63.htm)

The people who are engaged in rubber plantations are Khmer and Cham with both becoming the landowners and labourers. The owners of the rubber plantations are the government and private or family businesses of the Cham and Khmer. The first landowners of the rubber plantations were the Khmer who then sold them to the Cham because they had difficulties in management. However, some Khmer still own rubber plantations.

The Cham and Khmer people manage the rubber plantations as family businesses. They employ the labour of their relatives or village neighbours. One of the informants in this research (male, 65 years old) is a *tauke* or owner of a rubber plantation. He has 8 hectares of rubber plantation land in Memot village and 18 hectares in Pu Pao village. He employs 10 workers to control and manage the plantations. Most of them are his relatives and neighbours from Kampong Cham. He works and stays in Phnom Penh, while his rubber plantation is managed by his wife with the help of the leader of the labourers (*mandor*). Some workers also have rubber plantations which they got from their parents or in-

herited from the French protectorate. The *mandor* in Mr Marwan's rubber plantation (male, 31 years old)²⁷ said:

“My family has a 10 ha rubber plantation and I manage it right now. In the past my parents were workers in the French protectorate's rubber plantation and I got my knowledge to tap rubber trees from my parents. In the wet season, I work in paddy fields, but in the dry season, I work in the rubber plantation with Mr Marwan”

The task of labour in the rubber plantation is to control the plantation and tap the rubber trees for latex which needs three hours. The tapping process can be done three times a day, in the morning, afternoon and evening. The latex is collected in one place and then sold to the buyer. The labourers in the plantation area stay for 2-3 days in a week. The owner pays around 13,000 riel (US \$3.2)²⁸ per day. The payment depends on the amount of latex they collect and how many times they can tap the rubber trees in one day. They get around 60 kilograms per 1 ha of rubber plantation on ordinary soil and 100 kilograms per 1 ha on fertile soil (red soil) in one day. The description of economic activities in Kampong Cham above, we can see in Table 5.2 below.

²⁷ Interview with Mr Hamid bin Ali (31 years old), *mandor* (a leader of labour) on Mr. Marwan's rubber plantation, Memot Village, June 3, 2006

²⁸ Exchange rate for US\$ 1 is 4.000 Riel

Table 5.2

Livelihoods and Commodities of Ethnic Groups in Kampong Cham Province

No.	Ethnic Groups	Livelihood	Commodities
1	Khmer	Farming, growing vegetables and fruit	Rice, vegetables, fruit
2	Cham and Vietnamese	Fishing	Fish (fresh and processed fish)
3	Cham and Khmer	Rubber plantation Work	Natural rubber
4	Chinese ²⁹	Merchant trading	Clothes, electronic products, daily necessities (sugar, soap, etc)

4. The Interethnic Trade Activities in Kampong Cham

The interethnic trade activity is one of the economic activities among ethnic groups in Kampong Cham. These activities naturally happen due to the economic interaction between ethnic groups to supply the daily necessities which can be shown in the supply and demand and are conducted by ethnic Khmer, Cham, Chinese and Vietnamese. Each ethnic group has a different kind of commodity based on their livelihoods (Table 5.2). The Khmer people engage in wet-rice cultivation and vegetable growing so they sell rice and vegetables. The Cham and Vietnamese carry on fishing activities and they sell fresh and processed fish in the market and

²⁹ The Chinese is one of the ethnic groups in Kampong Cham Province but only a few are engaged in the agricultural sector or producing certain commodities. Most of them are engaged in money lending and as merchant traders.

so on. The interaction between the traders makes a trade pattern formed by habitual trade activities over a long time, and the pattern of trade can be seen in the interethnic trading networks. These trade activities involve the traders, the commodity, the market, and the trade pattern. The section below describes the interethnic trade activities.

4.1. The Traders

There are some traders in Kampong Cham who come from different ethnic groups and livelihoods. The traders who are involved in the trade activities are big traders, intermediate traders and small (petty) traders. The big traders are the traders who are able to mobilize large amounts of capital and are mostly Chinese or Chinese-Khmer. These traders provide transport or payments with some labourers helping them to run their businesses. They also have their own stores clustered in Kampong Cham cities or well-known Indo-Chinese markets. Besides that, they have excellent networking with the traders in Phnom Penh and other towns in Cambodia.

The intermediate traders are people who become connectors between producers (farmers, fishers) and consumers (villagers, companies) or between small traders and big traders. They are Khmer and Chinese or Chinese-Khmer and usually invest their own money or borrowed capital to buy, transport and sell the commodities from producers to consumers or from big traders to small traders. As dependent traders they generally operate on behalf of bigger traders, typically with borrowed capital and with the stipulation that they must sell their entire consignment to the trader to whom they are indebted.

The small or petty traders are the people who conduct trade activities by using small amounts of capital and dealing in low-volume and low-value of products for sale in local markets. They usually sell agricultural products like rice, corn, vegetables, fruit and fish. The people who become small or petty traders are Khmer, Cham and Vietnamese and the number of these traders is large in Kampong Cham.

Ethnic Cham

There are 123 Muslim villages in the Kampong Cham Province with a population of around 183,950 (Statistics of Islamic Villages and Population, 2003). They live in villages in rural areas inhabited by Cham and other ethnic groups, such as Khmer, Chinese and Vietnamese. The villages may be along the shores of watercourses or river villages (*play krong*) and inland or upper villages (*play ngok*). The inhabitants of the river villages engage in fishing, growing vegetables, cattle breeding and butchering. The women in these villages earn money by weaving and selling vegetables or fish in the traditional markets. The Cham who live inland support themselves by various means, depending on the village. Some villages specialize in metalwork or rubber plantation work while others raise fruit or vegetables.

According to Haji Sufri³⁰, the Deputy Governor of Kampong Cham Province, the Cham people in Cambodia can be divided into three groups based on their livelihood. First, the Cham people who live in inland areas (Phnom Penh) with most engaged in agriculture and wet-rice cultivation. Second, the Cham people

³⁰ Interview with Haji Sufri, Kampong Cham, May 30, 2006

who live on the Mekong River bank and occupy themselves in fishing. Third, the Cham people engaged in trade activities. The Cham people in Kampong Cham mostly engage in fishing, wet-rice cultivation and growing vegetables with some working in rubber plantations.

Collins mentions that the Cham people (as distinct from the Malays or Chvea), especially Cham men, have traditionally not been much oriented to trade. Trade was left to women because of the bargaining involved in buying and selling, one of the forms of transaction. The Cham men were very against this interaction because winning or losing in the transactions was too close to issues of pride and the possible need to defend one's pride with violence. (Collins 1996: 64)

Based on our field research, the trade in the traditional market in Kampong Cham is dominated by women. All of them wear a beautiful sarong and the coloured head wrappings of the Muslim faith. They sell vegetables, fruit and fresh fish. Both buyers and sellers are women; Cham men are very rare in the market, because in the Cham community, a husband is responsible for providing shelter and food for his family, while the wife is generally in charge of the family budget where she has considerable authority, especially in family economics. It means that Cham women play a significant role in the trade activities in Kampong Cham, because they allocate the family budget to buy and sell in order to fulfill the family needs and also to earn some money from the trade activities.

Ethnic Khmer

Ethnic Khmer are the largest ethnic group in Cambodia, constituting more than 90% of the population and making the country the most homogenous in Southeast Asia. (Ministry of Commerce 1998) Even though they are the majority population in Cambodia, in Kampong Cham their population is less than of the Cham people. The majority population in Kampong Cham is Cham but the Khmer and other ethnic groups live there in harmony with them. Many Khmer in Kampong Cham live inland, settled in fairly permanent villages in the down town areas. They usually stay with other ethnic groups or representatives of ethnic groups, typically including sizeable Chinese communities (Ministry of Commerce 1998). They occupy themselves in wet-rice cultivation, rubber plantations, as government officials, in handcrafts, the garment industry and small commerce activities.

Haji Sufri says that ethnic Khmer have a close relationship with ethnic Chinese with most of them marrying Chinese people. The same belief in Theravada Buddhism, allowing the eating of pork and many other ways encourage the ethnic Khmer and Chinese to be close to each other. The Khmer people who marry Chinese are usually rich and have a business, such as shop, restaurant, fishing lot or rubber plantation. Some of them even have a position in the government and great influence in the Khmer community.

The traders of the ethnic Khmer group are mostly small traders like the Cham, with some of them middlemen. They sell agricultural products, such as rice, vegetables and fruit produced by themselves or by other farmers. Most of them conduct trade activities in Kampong Cham market but they also bring commodi-

ties to Phnom Penh market. In Kampong Cham market, they have to interact with other ethnic groups such as Cham, Chinese and Vietnamese. Among the traders, they often speak the Khmer language. The trade transactions in Kampong Cham are generally in Cambodian riel or US Dollars.

Ethnic Chinese (Sino-Khmer)

Ethnic Chinese are the smallest group in the Kampong Cham Province and most of them are rich through marrying into rich Khmer families. They live in urban rather than rural areas and occupy themselves in merchant trading, money lending, restaurants and as *tauke*. As traders, they dominate the market with about 90 % of the traders in Kampong Cham market ethnic Chinese. They supply certain commodities from Phnom Penh and China. Around 70 % of the products in Kampong Cham market are supplied by the Chinese traders³¹ and most manufactured products, such as electronic products, like televisions, radios, DVD players; clothes, diesel machines, bicycles and daily necessities are sold by them. They sell the commodities in their own shops clustered with other Chinese shops and restaurants in the urban areas (Kampong Cham cities) or in well known Indo-Chinese markets.

In rural areas, they work as shopkeepers, buyers and processors of rice, palm sugar, fruit and fish and as moneylenders. They lend the money to rural dwellers, especially Khmer farmers and they have considerable economic power over the ethnic Khmer peasants. As moneylenders, they charge the farmers high interest and if the farmer cannot pay the debt, they sell the crop to the

³¹ Interview with Haji Sufri, Kampong Cham, May 30, 2006

Chinese cheaply. The rural people always call the Chinese *tauke* because they have large capital and control the economy of Khmer farmers. They also employ Khmer people as workers in shops, restaurants, paddy fields and fishing lots. Besides that, they are active as middlemen in trade activity. They buy the commodities, especially fish and rubber products from the farmers/fishermen and resell in the market. As middlemen, they get a higher profit than small-scale traders because they buy the commodities at low prices and sell them in the market at high prices.

Ethnic Vietnamese

Haji Sufri, Deputy Governor of Kampong Cham Province says that around 200 families were ethnic Vietnamese spread over Kampong Cham Province in 2006. They live along the Mekong River and are engaged in fishing, construction labour, motor repair shops, motorbike taxi driving and small-scale trading while the Vietnamese women work in brothels and barber shops. They had been prohibited to work in government offices because they were not local people, but migrants from Vietnam.

The ethnic Vietnamese in Kampong Cham have increased significantly since 1979 when the Vietnamese troops helped Hun Sen to defeat the Pol Pot regime. After that the Vietnamese newcomers found it very easy to enter and stay in Cambodia. Most of them occupy themselves in fishing because they do not have land to support their lives. As fishermen, the Vietnamese have often been in direct economic competition with the Cham. The Vietnamese fishermen often use different fishing gear and poison to catch the fish and there could emerge new conflicts but until now there is no tension between them. On the other hand, the Vietnam-

ese are also engaged in small-scale trading when they sell fresh fish from the yield of the fish catch.

4.2. The Commodities

There are some commodities traded by the traders in the Kampong Cham market. These commodities come from local production, such as agricultural products and some commodities supplied from Phnom Penh or other provinces in Cambodia, such as manufactured products or some commodities not produced in Kampong Cham. The ethnic traders sell different kinds of commodities based on their livelihoods (Table 5.2) and most of them sell these in the local market.

The ethnic Khmer traders sell rice, vegetables and fruit; ethnic Cham and Vietnamese traders sell fresh and processed fish (*prohok*) and the Chinese traders sell electronic products, bicycles, clothes and daily necessities. There are many kinds of fruit in the market produced by local farmers, such as oranges, rambutans, durian, longans, lychees, bananas, mangoes, papayas and jackfruit. The price of the local fruit is very low, only 3000 riel for 1 kilogram of rambutans and 5.000 riel for 1 kilogram of longans. However, the local fruit and other agricultural commodities face great competition from imported products from Thailand and Vietnam. The imported fruit and vegetables are supplied by Chinese or Khmer traders or Thai and Vietnamese traders. The Vietnamese traders here have a Vietnamese supplier in Vietnam who supplies vegetables and fruit products from Vietnam which are distributed by Vietnamese ethnic traders who have lived in Cambodia for many years. The vegetable imports from Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City

and Dalat Province) cover almost 70% of the vegetable demand in Cambodia, with Cambodian production meeting the remaining 30%. The last few years have seen a growing share of Vietnam in this trade, completely displacing Thailand. (CDRI 2005:45).

There are some factors which make the Thai and Vietnamese traders able to penetrate the Cambodian market easily and carry out trade activities with the local traders. First, the bribes and corruption in the cross border areas between Cambodia-Thailand and Cambodia-Vietnam increase the smuggling activities in the border areas. The Vietnamese traders only pay 15,000 riel to the police at cross border checkpoints. (Van Vi 2005) to cross the Cambodia-Vietnam border. The influx of illegal commodities from Thailand and Vietnam has increased sharply in recent years and forced the local traders to decrease the price of local commodities in order to compete with the imported commodities.

Second is the strong relationship of ethnic trading networks in Cambodia where there are three ethnic trading networks: the Chinese, the Vietnamese and the Thai. These ethnic trading networks are stronger than local trading networks so they can distribute and monopolize some commodities in Cambodia. The local traders cannot go through those networks and meet difficulties in selling their commodities in the local market, so the commodities from Thailand and Vietnam dominate the local markets in Cambodia.

The ethnic trading networks consist of the big traders (suppliers) from Thailand and Vietnam who supply the products and the distributors or middlemen who distribute the products to the small/petty traders in the local markets in Cambodia. Both are of the same ethnic group, for example, the Vietnamese ethnic trading

network is made up of traders who come from Vietnam and suppliers in Vietnam, Vietnamese importers and Vietnamese ethnic traders, who are their friends or relatives and have lived in Cambodia for a long time with some having a Cambodia ID card as Cambodians.

Third is the low quality control of agricultural commodities from the Cambodian government. The demand for quality agricultural commodities such as fruit and vegetables has increased in recent years, especially for hotels and restaurants in Cambodia. The booming tourism industry is a good market for high quality commodities from Thailand or Vietnam because the local production cannot provide this domestic demand. As well, the hotel and restaurant owners in Cambodia are usually Thai and most of them prefer to use Thai commodities rather than Cambodian ones.

Fourth, the infrastructure of roads and bridges is very bad making it difficult to transport the commodities to the local markets. The bad condition of the roads pushes the final price of the local commodities to increase significantly thus forcing them to be uncompetitive against the imported products. The local commodities are very expensive due to the higher price of fuel in Cambodia which further increases the transportation costs. The imported commodities from Vietnam are cheaper in Cambodia because the road that connects Kampong Cham – Phnom Penh – Siem Reap is very good and allows the Vietnamese commodities to come to Cambodia more easily. Besides that, the government has built the bridge that connects Cambodia – Vietnam near *Chbar Ampeov* market, so the Vietnamese traders can carry a lot of commodities from Vietnam. The Vietnamese traders bring a few commodities, but the intensity is very frequent because they can pay

less tax to the Cambodian government. The imported commodities are more competitive than local commodities due to the differences in the final price and better quality. The impact of the ethnic trading networks on the local traders should be investigated in further research.

4.3. The Trade Patterns

Interethnic trade activity in Kampong Cham is an economic interaction which naturally happens between the traders based on supply and demand. This interaction is an ongoing activity to form a pattern of trade. The trade pattern in this paper can be defined as routine activities carried out by some traders and identified by the trading networks among the traders over a long time. In the field research, we looked at the trade pattern in fish and rubber commodities because the two products are the greatest commodities in the Kampong Cham Province.

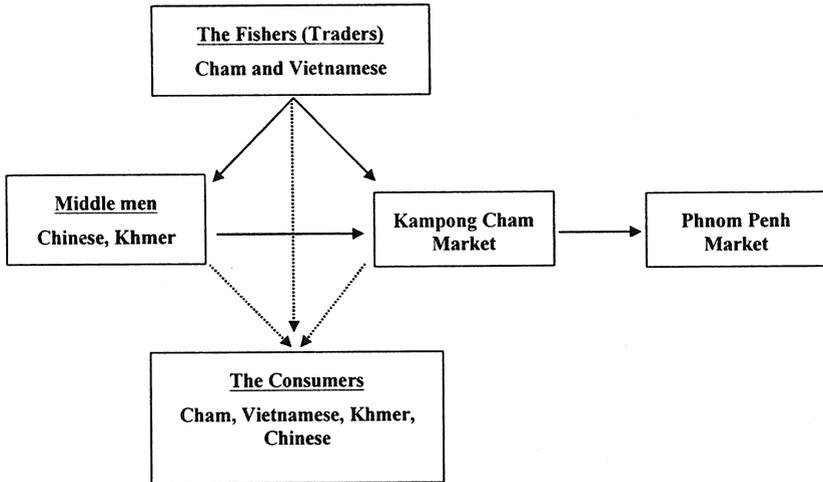
4.3.1. The Trade Pattern of the Fish Commodity

There are several studies on the market structure and distribution of the fish commodity in Cambodia. As described by Touch (2002), Cambodia's fish supply and marketing chain can be quite complex involving many intermediaries. Fish are supplied by small, medium, and large-scale fishers, illegal fishers, rice field fishers and fish farms to a variety of traders, processors, wholesalers, distributors and exporters, who then sell the fish on the domestic market and export markets. (CDRI 2003) Kusakabe (2003) focuses on the female traders in fish border trade in Cambodia-Thailand border areas and describes the market route and actors involved in

the fish trade. In her study, the small- scale trade is dominated by women, due to a lack of capital and fewer connections with government officials or with fishers/fish lot owners. Yim and McKenney (2003) in their study of fisheries in Cambodia point out that overexploitation of small traders could lead to the collapse of the trade and thus would not benefit the development of the fish trade.

The trade pattern of the fish commodity in Kampong Cham is quite similar to the trade pattern of fish production above. The fishermen in Kampong Cham supply the fish for domestic or local markets in Kampong Cham and Phnom Penh, thus needing middlemen or wholesalers to connect the fishermen and the traders or consumers. However, women also have a great role in the fish trade as small-scale traders in the Kampong Cham market. The trade pattern of the fish commodity in Kampong Cham can be seen in the Figure below.

Figure 5.1
The Trade Pattern of the Fish Commodity



From Figure 5.1, the market route and actors involved of the fish commodity are:

1. Fishers → Consumers;
2. Fishers → Middlemen → Kampong Cham Market → Consumers;
3. Fishers → Middlemen → Consumers;
4. Fishers → Kampong Cham Market → Consumers;
5. Fishers → Middlemen → Kampong Cham Market → Distributor or wholesaler → Phnom Penh Market.

- **Fishermen**

Fishermen are here defined broadly to include people catching fish through a variety of different methods and gear types (small, medium and large-scale). These fishers operate throughout the year regardless of whether it is the open or closed fishing season and the amount of fish catch is usually very small due to the traditional methods of catching the fish.

In the dry season, the fish catch is consumed by themselves with sometimes the surplus sold in the market. During the fishing season, the fishers sell the fish to the middlemen at the fishing ground (i.e. from boat to boat) or bring it to the local market. Some fishers sort the fish by species and size and the prices are set through negotiation. In the fishing season, the price for 1 tonne of fish is 80,000 riel (US \$ 20); cheaper than in the dry season because of an over supply of fish.

The majority of fishers in Kampong Cham are ethnic Cham, followed by Vietnamese and a small number of Khmer people. Most of them operate as fishermen and also as small-scale traders due to the small amount of fish caught. They usually sell the fish to the Cham or Khmer or sell it directly in the local market and sometimes they barter it with rice from Khmer people in another village. The small-scale trade is dominated by women or fishermen's wives because Cham men, have traditionally not been much oriented to trade activity.

- **Middlemen or wholesalers**

Middlemen purchase small amounts of fish from fishermen in villages and fishing grounds to sell to consumers and on the domes-

tic market. Both women and men work as middlemen and most are ethnic Khmer or Chinese. They operate on a small-scale as a family business and work throughout the year. Price negotiations with fishers depend on information as well as assessment of fish quality, size and overall fish supply/ availability.

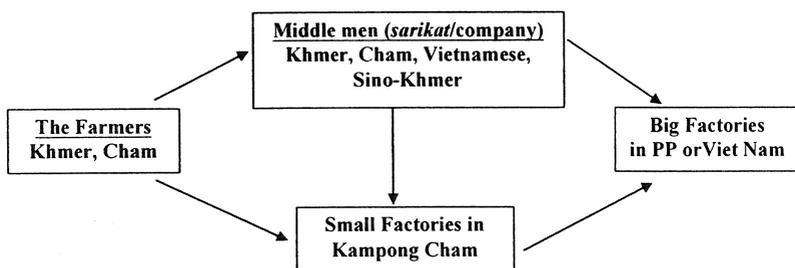
- Consumers

Most of the ethnic groups in Kampong Cham are consumers of fish. They consume it in both fresh and processed forms. Fish is an important staple and a main source of protein for the rural Cambodian people. According to CDRI estimates the average consumption per person varies widely from 13.3 kilograms to over 70 kilograms per year in some areas. (<http://www.cdri.kh.org/>) The consumers get the fish directly from the fishers, from the middlemen or buy it in the market. The fishermen also barter fish for rice from Khmer people.

4.3.2. The Trade Pattern of the Rubber Commodity

The trade pattern of the rubber commodity is carried out between the farmers (rubber plantation owners) and the middlemen or traders. The interaction between them is a continuing activity and established through years of trade. The traders or the owners of the rubber plantations are Khmer or Cham and the middlemen are Khmer or Sino-Khmer people. The pattern of the rubber trade in Kampong Cham can be seen in Figure 5.2 below.

Figure 5.2
The Trade Pattern of the Rubber Commodity



From Figure 5.2 the flow of the rubber commodity is:

1. Farmers → Middle men → Small Factories in Kampong Cham → Big Factories in Phnom Penh (PP) or Viet Nam
2. Farmers → Small Factories in Kampong Cham → Big Factories in PP or Viet Nam
3. Farmers → Middle men → Big Factories in PP or Viet Nam

Note:

1. Small factories in Kampong Cham only process 50-80 tonnes of latex with further processing done by big factories in Viet Nam. The traders usually use the Mekong River route to transport the rubber from Kampong Cham to Phnom Penh and from Kratie – Phnom Penh – Sihanoukville - Vietnam.
2. Big factories in Phnom Penh or Vietnam process more than 80 tonnes of rubber. The rubber from Cambodia is exported by *sarikat* Vietnam (Vietnamese trading network) which has a license to export the rubber to Vietnam.

- **Farmers**

In the rubber plantations, the farmers (the owners of the rubber plantations) act as sellers. They usually have a *mandor* who has the duty to control the plantation and represent the owner in selling the rubber or latex to the middlemen or small factories. The middlemen usually come to the rubber plantations and buy directly on the plantation land. One of the rubber plantation workers (male, 54 years old)³² said:

“Everyday the buyer comes to the rubber plantation and buys the latex with cash. The price of the latex is US\$ 1.800 per tonne for good quality latex and only 2.400 Riel (US \$ 0.6) per kilogram for poor quality latex³³. We often get US \$ 200 a day from the latex sale”

Besides to the middlemen, the farmers also sell directly to the small factories in Kampong Cham. If they sell to the factory they will get a higher price than from the middlemen. The informant said:

“From the buyer we get 3.700 riel for 1 kilogram of latex, while from the factory we get 3.900 riel for 1 kilogram of latex”

However, most of the trade pattern in the rubber commodity is farmers selling directly to the middlemen on the plantation ground because they do not need to spend money for transporta-

³² Interview with Mr Ali bin Husein, *mandor* at a rubber plantation, Kampong Memot, June 3, 2006

³³ Latex of poor quality means that the latex still contains water, so the price is low

tion costs from the plantation to the factories. There are 3 small rubber factories in Kampong Cham built in 2004 to collect the latex from the rubber plantations and then send it to be processed in a big factory in Phnom Penh or exported to Vietnam (interview result).

- **Middle men (*Sarikat*/company)**

Middle men (*sarikat*) purchase the rubber or latex from farmers, collect it and then sell larger amounts to small factories in Kampong Cham or to exporters. They are ethnic Sino-Khmer, Cham, Khmer or Vietnamese. Most of them either act as independent traders or join an association of rubber traders (*sarikat*). The *sarikat* consists of several traders or middlemen and they have a good relationship with the farmers.

There are differences between middlemen and *sarikat*. First, middlemen buy the latex directly from the farmers and then sell it again to the small factories in Kampong Cham or sell it to *sarikat* (larger collector). While, the *sarikat* buy the latex from the farmers and middlemen, collect it to a larger amount and then sell it again to exporters. The exporter of rubber from Cambodia to Vietnam is a Vietnamese *sarikat* (Vietnamese trading network) and they have a license from the government to export the rubber to Vietnam. They transport the rubber to Vietnam along the Mekong River by boat. The route of trade is Phnom Penh river port to the seaport in Sihanoukville and then to Vietnam. Second, middlemen have less capital than the *sarikat*, so they only purchase the rubber in small amounts. The *sarikat* has big capital because it consists of a number of people so it can collect the rubber in large amounts and the profit from the trade is divided among the members.

4.4. The Market

The Cambodians call a market *Pshar*, a place where the buyers and sellers meet and conduct trading activities. The characteristic of a traditional market in Kampong Cham is that the vendors are mostly women. The condition of a traditional market is that it is a typical outdoor market, with various foods, vegetables, fruit, fish and daily necessities being sold from stores and small shops. Here the sellers sometimes sell the fruit from a fruit basket and some of them only spread out a piece of plastic and put the goods on it and then sit down behind the goods and serve the buyers. The sellers who own shops or small stores are Chinese (Sino-Khmer) and Khmer traders. The market in Kampong Cham is only covered by canvas or plastic to protect the traders from the sun and the rain. Public facilities like parking areas and garbage places are not available in the market so the market condition here is very crowded, untidy and dirty. This market is open the whole day, from the morning until the evening, but some traditional markets in Roka village just open in the evenings.

The condition of a modern market in Phnom Penh is better than of a traditional market in Kampong Cham. There are four big markets in Phnom Penh; *Phsar Chbar Ampeov*, *Phsar Deumkor*, *Phsar Tuol Tompong* and *Phsar Thom Thmei*. The modern markets have a permanent building and are built of cement and bricks, covered by permanent roof-tiles. The market area is very large to accommodate a large number of traders. Most of the traders are women selling the goods in their own shops. Men work as taxi drivers, *tuk-tuk* drivers and porters in the market. The public facilities are quite good with parking areas, garbage places and very nice trade stalls.

Phsar Chbar Ampeov lies near the Vietnam Bridge in the Cambodia-Vietnam cross border area. Trucks and boats transport the goods from Vietnam to Phnom Penh markets. They bring agricultural product, like vegetables, fruit and other kinds of Vietnamese products to sell in Phnom Penh. The traders from Vietnam drop the goods in *Phsar Chbar Ampeov* and then the retail traders from Phnom Penh take the goods to sell again in small markets in Phnom Penh or directly to the consumers. *Phsar Deumkor* is the biggest market in Phnom Penh. There are very many goods from Vietnam, Thailand and other provinces in Cambodia in this market; mostly agricultural products, like rice, fish, vegetables, fruit and daily necessities. *Phsar Chbar Ampeov* and *Phsar Deumkor* are the centres of vegetable marketing in Cambodia.

Pshar Tuol Tompong, also known as 'Russian Market' provides Cambodian souvenirs, like Khmer silk, scarves and miniatures of Angkor Wat, Buddhist statues, Cambodian T-Shirts, traditional bags of Cambodian silk and many other beautiful souvenirs. This market is very well known to antique collectors searching for antique goods from thousands of years ago. *Phsar Thom Thmei* or Central market, the biggest souvenir market in Phnom Penh lies near the Sorya Mall. We could find Cambodian souvenirs and beautiful jewelry set with gemstones in this market. Besides that, traders here also sell books at cheaper prices than in the bookstores. All the markets are accessible by *tuk-tuk* or taxi.

V. The Impact of Interethnic Trade Activities on Local Traders

The relationship between the different ethnic traders, such as ethnic Khmer, Cham, Sino-Khmer and Vietnamese in Kampong Cham

is harmonious, even though they come from different livelihoods and economic conditions. However, competition between the local traders (Cham; Khmer) and the newcomer traders sometimes occurs, such as among Thai, Chinese or Vietnamese traders.

The Chinese or Sino-Khmer traders are big traders and dominate the trade sector in Kampong Cham. This condition is encouraged by some factors influenced by Chinese trader domination. First, the Sino-Khmer traders (through marriage between Chinese and Khmer) are rich and have family businesses. Most of the Chinese had married into rich Khmer families. Second, the Sino-Khmer dominate some commodities in Kampong Cham market and they have no competitors from the local traders because they mostly sell manufactured commodities, such as clothes, electronic products, bicycles and daily necessities. Third, the Sino-Khmer traders have a strong ethnic trading relationship between the Chinese traders in Phnom Penh and other provinces in Cambodia or even in China and supply around 70 % of the commodities in Kampong Cham market. Fourth, the Sino-Khmer traders dominate the distribution of important commodities in Kampong Cham, such as rice, fish and manufactured products, with most of them active as big traders and middlemen.

Besides the Chinese, the Thai and Vietnamese traders are great competitors for the local traders in Cambodia. They sell the same commodities as the local traders, especially agricultural products, like rice, vegetables and fruit and the prices of their commodities are very competitive. Compared with the prices of the Thai and Vietnamese commodities, the prices of the local commodities are higher because the local traders have to pay more in transportation costs and the lack of infrastructure makes the distri-

bution of products difficult. Apart from that, the Thai and Vietnamese traders have strong ethnic trading relationships in Cambodia and they control the market distribution for Thai or Vietnamese products.

The local traders cannot compete with the Thai and Vietnamese traders due to the higher final price, lack of capital, low volume, low quality and the weakness of ethnic trading relationships. Agricultural products such as, rice, vegetables, fruit and fish in the Kampong Cham market, are supplied by local traders, with most selling the same commodities. This condition causes an over supply of agricultural commodities and pushes the price down (law of supply). The demand for agricultural products from the local buyers is not high enough because they also produce the same commodities, for example, fishers catch the fish for family consumption with the surplus sold in the market. If they get enough fish, they do not buy fish from the market. This also happens in the other agricultural commodities, such as vegetables and fruit because the local people also plant vegetables and fruit in their own yards so they can satisfy their needs themselves. This situation causes a low demand for agricultural products and is followed by the price decreasing (law of demand).

This condition is very different with the agricultural products from Thailand or Vietnam. The demand for the commodities is very high, especially from the hotels and restaurants in tourism centres in Cambodia, such as Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville with most of the hotels and restaurants owned by Thais. They need good quality products and the price is cheaper than of local products. Besides that, as the supply of the product is not as great as of the local product, the volume of the products in

the market is limited. The higher the demand and the lower the supply the greater the increase in the price of the agricultural product from Thailand or Vietnam. Moreover, the Thai and Vietnamese traders get greater benefits from the trade than local traders. The local traders are marginalized in their own markets and cannot improve their welfare.

VI. Conclusion

Interethnic trading activity in Kampong Cham is a natural economic interaction involving some ethnic groups in a traditional framework. The traditional framework can be seen in the low volume, small scale of market distribution and the agricultural products they sell. Therefore, the traders still follow the barter system -exchanging goods with other good- as a means of trade. This economic interaction in Kampong Cham is not only for daily necessities, but also illustrates the degree of inter and intra ethnic relationships. The degree of ethnic relationship can be seen in the high intensity of interaction between some traders in Kampong Cham, for example, between the Cham and Khmer traders. They not only conduct trading activity in the market but also barter among themselves. Another interesting point on Kampong Cham trade relations is the relationship between the local traders and the newcomer traders or outsiders. The local traders lose in the competition with Thai and Vietnamese traders (outsiders) in agricultural products due to the strong ethnic trading networks and competitive prices of their products. With the local market dominated by Chinese traders, the government does not pay much attention to the local traders. This condition puts the local traders into small-scale trading which will not improve their welfare.

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CHAPTER VI

GOVERNMENT POLICY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEKONG RIVER BASIN IN CAMBODIA:

Fisheries Policy and its Influence on Illegal Fishing and Ethnicity

Suribidari

I. Introduction

This chapter looks at the policy of the Cambodian government in managing the Greater Mekong sub region. The main emphasis is on the impact of the policy on ethnic relationships particularly on the relationships of the Cham community with other ethnic groups such as, Vietnamese, Khmer and Sino-Khmer. At the same time, attention is also given to their economic activities, mainly fishing in coastal villages, greatly influenced by CNMC (Cambodian National Mekong Committee), external (globalization and transnational trade) and internal (fishing and navigation) policies.

As said in the previous chapters, 86% of the total Cambodian territory is situated in the Mekong River Basin which is hydrologically managed with the Mekong and Bassac Rivers and Tonle Sap (the Great Lake). The system has been developed into the dominant irrigation system which has become the backbone of the agricultural economy of this country that supports nearly 80% of Khmer peasants (McKenney and Prom Tola 2002: 14). Although

there is no accurate statistical data available, it is estimated that the Mekong River downstream contributes around 475 billion m³ of its resources to the South China Sea. Consequently, any policy decided by the governments along the Mekong River will automatically have mutual effects.

The Mekong River Basin is divided into two different geographical units. First, the lowland territory is located in the middle and is at the altitude of 10 metres, with the dominant features of the Mekong River and Tonle Sap. Topographically the Mekong River enters Cambodia through Laos from the northeast. In Phnom Penh, the Mekong River is divided into two river branches; Bassac River and Mekong River. Both of these rivers meet at the vast delta, which extends from southeast Cambodia to Vietnam. As a whole, the Mekong River flows 486 km in Cambodia.

Second, The Tonle Sap (Great Lake) covers the greatest water reservoir in Southeast Asia with two rivers uniting in Phnom Penh and forming a long stream of around 120 km, functioning as a stabilizer and preventing the possibility of big floods. According to FAO (FAO Hydrological data, pers. Comm. 1995), 20% of floods along the Mekong River were caused by the increases of Mekong River water supply, which reach around 60% in the rainy season (June - September) (Sin Niny, 1994). However, Tonle Sap is also useful as a water reserve during the dry season.

As said in previous chapters, almost one million Cambodians rely on fishing for their livelihood.³⁴ Most of them live as

³⁴ Fisheries production in the Mekong is fundamental to local livelihoods. Current estimates are that almost 2 million tonnes are harvested each year from the Mekong fishery – 1.75 million tonnes from the ‘capture fisheries’ valued at US\$ 1.45 billion, plus another 250,000 tonnes from aquaculture (Report, Mekong River Commission, 2002).

fishermen along the Mekong. Even though in most research reports they are categorized as fishermen, actually the real fishing time is during the dry season (November - February) when the water levels in other rivers drop significantly and fish migrate to the Mekong. However, not only those fishermen take advantage of the Mekong River but peasants in the basin also benefit from the river by making traditional shrimp, crab and frog ponds in their rice field areas. Like fishermen, these peasants also enjoy their harvest of this aquaculture during the dry season, when fish and other water species migrate from their rice fields to deeper water.

As in most Asian countries, rice and fish are important staple foods for Cambodians. Fish are consumed both in fresh and preserved forms (i.e. *prohok*). It is estimated that in Cambodia the average per capita consumption of fish is 27 - 38 kg per year. This amount shows the significant proportion of fish in the total consumption of protein, which is around 40 - 90%, particularly in the coastal villages. Considering the fish production per year which was around 290,000 - 430,000 tonnes from 1994 - 1997, the Cambodian fisheries are regarded as the most productive in Southeast Asia and the fourth largest in the world (CDRI Working Paper No.23, 2002). Tonle Sap is known as the richest fish resource area in Cambodia. Government statistics show its production contributes from 50 - 60% of the total fish production to the market. This amount can be even higher for allegedly much illegal fishing happens along the river.

II. Historical Background of Policy on Fisheries Management in Cambodia

The government policy is implemented by formal and informal groups which are granted access and rights to fishing. This policy can be traced back as far as the King Norodom Sihanouk government (1859 - 1897) and its successors. Under King Norodom and his successors, revenue from fisheries was collected through granting fishing concessions. Investors and traders from China were granted these concessions by the king and they would lease them to fishermen. They often even gained benefits twice the amount they submitted to the Cambodian kingdom. These concessions were divided into lots and each of these was rented by the investors to the local business people who were mostly Chinese-Khmer. This system of management resulted in relatively high benefits for the investors and the Chinese-Khmer with little effort or risk (Degen and Nao, 2002).

The coming of the French Protectorate did not change the existing system significantly. Laws and regulations regarding fisheries, i.e. leasing out fishing lots, were formalized and socialized through the colonial administration in 1908 but the aim of these regulations was only to generate income for the colonial administration, not to change the existing pattern of exploitation. During this period, fish resources were not equitably distributed because most of the benefits fell to a handful of minority elite whereas the general community received only small benefits from this fisheries resource.³⁵

³⁵ Simon Bush, "Give a man a fish: contextualising living aquatic resources development in the Lower Mekong Basin", Australian Mekong Resource Centre, University of Sydney, August 2003: page 11.

After independence in 1954, the Cambodian government continued the fishing lot leasing system. During the 1960s, there were conflict problems in the form of disputes between lot owners and villagers. In 1973, the Lon Nol government issued a ban on the fishing lot system, reasoning that this system was unsuitable. Not until the fall of the Pol Pot regime, did significant changes in the system of giving concessions and work contracts in fishery management occur. During the Pol Pot regime, the activity of fisheries was very limited. There were very few 'fishing units' regulated by the regime, successful in producing and preserving fish. During this period, most of the fishery sectors were abandoned and ignored compared to the agricultural sector. Fish exploitation was very low while the rice sector was strong because most of Cambodia was converted into rice fields.

After the fall of the Pol Pot regime in 1979, fishery groups re-emerged and gained support and attention from the government until the end of the 1980s. In the 1980s, these sectors in Cambodia were managed through the solidarity group system, which was called 'krom samaki'.³⁶ The 'krom samaki' was established as a cooperative to protect fishermen. Ideally, the fishing activities should be done through these groups but in practice it did not work as expected. Instead of following and respecting the regulations of 'krom samaki', many stronger groups ignored and violated this agreement.

³⁶ McKenney, Bruce and Pram Tola. (2002). "Natural Resources and Rural Livelihoods in Cambodia: A Baseline Assessment", *CDRI Working Paper* No. 23: page 54-59. The *krom samaki* system was also implied in rice milling and other food processing, furthermore look at Sarthi Acharya, et. al., "Off-farm and Non-farm Activities and Employment in Cambodia", Development Analysis Network 2003: 27.

During the time Cambodia was under Vietnamese occupation in the 1980s, people were free to fish in any way. During this time, there was a lot of destructive exploitation such as by the use of electricity, explosives, etc. In 1988, the government reintroduced the fishing lot leasing system in order to increase state revenues. The government wanted to increase local sources of finance after the sudden fall of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and its assistance. As a result, many conflicts occurred during the period when the government leased fishing lots. The conflicts between farmers and lot owners occurred when pumping ponds dry left no water for dry season rice. Wherever there were no clear lot boundaries, small-scale fishermen were in conflict with lot operators. This situation got worse when foreign fishermen (Vietnamese) also took part in breaking this system by freely fishing illegally. Another negative aspect of this disobedience was the obligation to present a certain amount of fish products to the military group and government officials (Chheng, 2000).

In 2000, the government initiated fishery reform by releasing 56% of leased lots to the fishing community, on purpose to reduce conflict and share more resources with the poor.³⁷ Some fishing communities were established by the government and some of them were created by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) even though there was not yet a law on the establishment of fishing communities. This reform led to out of control exploitation when the government decided to withdraw the officials of the Department of Fishery (DOF) from the fishing ground for two months. As a result, illegal fishing was high during that time.

³⁷ Sarthi Acharya, et. al., "Off-farm and Non-farm Activities and Employment in Cambodia", Development Analysis Network 2003: 44-45.

In 2001, the government ended the lot leasing system. The objective of the policy was to improve rural livelihoods of the poor and to enhance food security, sustainable development and equitable use of the fish resource base. The government established 375 fishing communities throughout the country. It has drafted a law on fisheries, a regulation on management of fishing communities and on establishing fishing communities. With this policy, conflicts between farmers, small-scale fishermen and lot operators were reduced. The small-scale fishermen in the community no longer need to pay for fishing in any area (McKenney and Prom, 2002).

III. Cambodian Government Policy on the Mekong River Basin: Globalization, Decentralization and Their Influence on the Mekong River Basin and Fisheries Policy

The total population of the Mekong region is approximately 250 million. The annual average of the population increase is around 1.9%. The population at the grassroots level varies in ethnicity, culture and religion. The social relationships among the groups, based on ethnicity, culture and religion were realistic in the early 1990s, after the political tensions in the regions subsided. Nevertheless, these relationships historically were common aspirations for a large number of people who have settled themselves in the Mekong River Basin without thinking of the national boundaries. For the greater part of the region, the people believe in Buddhism, which is against materialism and individual greed. Yet they do not constitute a social or political force against capitalism and globalisation that are principally discordant with their beliefs. This is due to the fact that the grassroots level is mostly weak in politi-

cal participation. According to Khien Theeravit (2003: 54) the majority of the grassroots people, religious or non-religious, are often passive to change, whether involving globalisation or other processes and this analysis may also apply to newly recovered Cambodia, particularly relating to the definition of civil society, that he quotes from Gyimah-Boad (Khien Theeravit 2003: 55):

Civil society has been defined by Gyimah-Boad (1996:131) as *“the ensemble of intermediate organisations that lie between the state and the household, that are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect and advance their interests and values, and that are separate from the state and largely autonomous”*.

In any case, Cambodia and most of the Mekong Region countries belong to the developing world, where their grassroots' destinies have been greatly affected by global actors'³⁸ decisions (Khien Theeravit 2003: 49-50). Nevertheless, Siamwalla claims that the Mekong Region as a whole is one of the least globalise areas. In his study on the influence of globalisation in the Mekong River Basin, Siamwalla (2003) shows that the first wave of globalisation has affected unequally the various parts of the Mekong Region, due to the exigencies of the technology that propelled the process of globalisation, as he states below:

The primary impact of the First Globalisation on the Mekong Region was economic. But this impact was quite uneven. Parts of the region with easy access to the sea enjoyed a tremendous economic boom. The three delta regions, those of the

³⁸ He defines the global actors as the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and the Group of Seven or G7, TNCs, and International Organizations.

Irrawaddy, the Chao Phraya and the Mekong, were completely transformed. They became the suppliers of rice to the rest of Asia, [...]. (Siamwalla, 2003: 22).

[...] Broadly, the coastal regions were drawn rapidly into the global economy, while the rest were scarcely affected. This inequality was due to the exigencies of the technology that propelled the process of globalisation (Siamwalla, 2003: 36).

The transformation of the region was shown with the great migration into the three deltas, Mekong River, Irrawaddy and the Chao Phraya, where formerly there were inhabited areas. However, the inequalities of the influence of First Globalisation clearly shown in the Cambodian Mekong River Basin, even until the Second Globalisation which was started by the US hegemonic power (Siamwalla 2003: 34-36).

Responding to the social conditions of the region, in his study on the Governance of the Mekong Region, John Dore (2003: 435) states in its conclusion, that:

Enhancing governance is a key social challenge for the Mekong Region. [Though] there is increasing regionalism in the Mekong Region, but it would be a mistake to construe all of this as 'cooperative' and 'good'. Much of the state-led cooperative regionalism is focused on economic growth, freeing up trade and installing infrastructure to facilitate increased interaction and economic activity.

This statement is supported by the study of Ehrentraut (2004), who emphasises decentralization. He points out that decentralization in Cambodia is the key point for government policy

reform, particularly in its influence at the local level. The program towards decentralization was followed by the power of the de-concentration and was implemented at the province and district levels. This program later was associated with the downward accountability, starting from the Commune Councils to the local people who chose them (Ehrentraut 2004: 71). It is expected that the Commune Councils play a significant role on managing and implementing the policy for the local communities based on ethnicity, culture and religion.

IV. Cambodian Fisheries Policy: Small Scale Fisherman Versus Illegal Fishing

One of the most important industries in the Cambodian economy is the fishing industry. It is estimated that 3.6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)³⁹ of Cambodia is from this industry. Furthermore, the fisheries sector employs approximately 5% of the labour force, about 1.3 times more than the garment industry in Cambodia. Besides rice, fish is an important staple food and a main source of protein for the rural Cambodian people. People in the flood area catch fish in flooded rice fields for local consumption. The Tonle Sap contributes more than half of the fish production each year and also provides rural poor Cambodians (about 1.2 million people around the lake) with fish for their food security.

However, the management of fisheries exploitation is problematic. Unsustainable exploitation has occurred in most parts of the Tonle Sap. As a result, the fish production has decreased and the price of fish has increased. This has greatly impacted on live-

³⁹ (Economic Institute of Cambodia), Report, 2003.

lihoods in rural Cambodia. Based on the importance of the points above, the government has taken fisheries reform as a main element in natural resource reform policy since the 1980s. Despite some progress in fisheries reforms, such as establishing a legal framework for fisheries management, there is still illegal fishing especially on the Tonle Sap.

One of the reasons for the increase in illegal fishing activities is the lack of coordination between the government and the community in enforcing the law. This exploitation is ignored even though fishery officials are informed of violations. Because of the lack of law enforcement, the community is unable to protect fish resources. When there is over-fishing, especially by big, powerful boats, the community lacks the power to enforce the law. Several fishing communities argue that they can only stop small illegal fishing activities. But they do not dare to get into conflict with the big ones involved in over fishing practices. Additionally, poor local governance discourages the fishing community, which results in more illegal fishing activities by the powerful elites.

The weakness of the community is the main limitation for dealing with the illegal fishing. The lack of funds is common in communities created by the Department of Fisheries, thus limiting the participation of the communities in protecting fish resources. The reduction of fish stocks threatens the rural livelihoods of the poor in the Mekong River Basin, particularly around the Tonle Sap. This also causes inequitable fish exploitation. The small-scale fishermen are the majority but they benefit much less than the minority large-scale fishermen who do the over-fishing. One single, illegal, large-scale fisherman can catch many times more fish than the entire community.

The degradation of fish resources impacts the rural economy, specifically the poor and the private sector. Fishery is an important sub-sector of agriculture, the degradation of fish resources impacts on the entire economy. In 2004, the EIC Report shows that fish production decreased about 7.4% while agriculture decreased 4.2%.⁴⁰ The unsustainable fishing influenced the stock of fish in the Tonle Sap. The reduction in fish catch, per boat, and the high price of fish in 2004, indicate that fish stocks were under pressure. This has increased the price of fish. For example, the price of fish in Anlong Rang, Kampong Tralach and Kampong Cham in 2004 was three times higher than in 2003.⁴¹ This tended to worsen the poverty of 1.2 million people living around the Tonle Sap. When the catch is too low to support the living of the poorest people, who benefit from the low price of *prahok*⁴² fish, they suffer from the high price of the fish and their lives become more difficult.

For the medium-scale fishermen, the amount of fish bought was reduced significantly, causing a significant reduction in their incomes. Certain areas show that the medium-scale fishermen complained that their fish purchases declined by 10% from 2003 to 2004.⁴³ The decline also impacted on the private sector whose products are made from fish. Fish processing⁴⁴ is one of the important

⁴⁰ Economic Institute of Cambodia projection data, 2004.

⁴¹ Touk Khy, „Fishery Management in Cambodia: Case study in Anlong Rang and Kampong Tralach Fishing Communities”, Economic Review Volume 2 No. 1, 2006.

⁴² *Prahok*, preserved fish made mostly by the Chams.

⁴³ Data from Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT), i.e the data show the area of Chnouk Trou; cited from Touk Khy, „Fishery Management in Cambodia: Case study in Anlong Rang and Kampong Tralach Fishing Communities”, Economic Review Volume 2 No. 1.

⁴⁴ Fish is dried, salted (or pickled), smoked and fermented. The well known processing preserved fish among Cambodian, is called *prohok*.

industries and the local fish sauce industry is affected. The fish sauce factories mostly produce lower end fish sauce for local markets in Cambodia using low quality fish, especially *prahok* fish.

V. Ethnicity and Its Influence on the Fishery Policy

Ethnicity plays a very important role and has become a sensitive factor particularly related to the policy on fisheries in the Mekong River Basin. Most of the middle-scale fishing activities tend to be organized based on kinship systems rather than through cooperative or fisher associations (FGD, CDRI – Phnom Penh, June 6, 2006⁴⁵; McKenney and Prom Tola 2002: 58).

There is a tendency for people of Vietnamese and Cham ethnic backgrounds to rely on fishing as their main livelihoods, while the Khmer are more dependent on agriculture. 83,000 of the fishermen living in the floating villages in Tonle Sap were of Vietnamese ethnic background (NEDECO 1998).⁴⁶ Data collected show very little of the Cham and Vietnam ethnic background people owning agricultural land (interview and FGD, CDRI-Phnom Penh,

⁴⁵ Focus Group Discussion, CDRI – Phnom Penh, Dr. Brett Ballard and CDRI research Team, June 6, 2006.

⁴⁶ Cambodia attracts migrants primarily from Vietnam and China. The Vietnamese are by far the largest economic migrant group in Cambodia. There is no reliable estimate of the number of Vietnamese migrants in the country. Data from the Ministry of Economy and Finance indicate that roughly 1.1 million immigrants relocated to Cambodia between 1985 and 1998, a substantial portion of whom were Vietnamese (Harima, Varona, DeFalco, in Mingsan Kaosard and John Dore, 2003). Furthermore look at Chapter 4 on “Migration in Mekong River Basin Cambodia” discussed in this book.

6 June 2006; Swift 1997; Degen and Nao 2000). However, there is also a tendency for the owners of the fishing lots to be the Khmer or specifically Sino-Khmer. The Vietnamese, who are expert fishers, are usually hired to work on their lots. Most of the lot owners state that besides having fishing licenses, Vietnamese and the Cham are also expert in fishing and are hardly ever involved in any conflicts with the lot owners.

Nevertheless, in getting a fishing license, the Cham and Vietnamese are often discriminated against by the local Khmer authority (particularly in the Fishery Department at province and district levels). These discriminative actions are particularly experienced by the Vietnamese because there is prejudice among the Khmer that the Vietnamese 'rob' the Khmer of economic opportunities (Field interview, May-June 2006). This allegation is supported by the fact that most Vietnamese live close by police stations or military compounds hoping for protection from them (Degen and Nao 2000). Moreover, these Vietnamese seldom sail to far fishing areas. Unlike the Cham, who are known for fishing even in dangerous areas during the fishing season.

VI. Impact and Implication of the Policy on the Future

Even though statistics show that the increasing amount of fish production is bigger than in the previous years, it is suspected that the real production is not very different. The impressive sum of this production today is caused partly by the use of better management and recording of the production. On the other hand many reports predict that fish production will decrease in the future because of the uncontrolled spread of illegal fishing and the destruction of fish habitats in the Mekong River Basin.

Reports on habitat damage and illegal fishing should be taken as warnings for serious potential damage of fishing resources and biodiversity, which in turn will effect the limited reserves of fish sources and will endanger other under water species (CDRI, Working Paper No. 23, 2002: Chapter 3). Cambodia's Fishery Department officials have reported that the population of around 20 species of catfish is under threat from illegal fishing and that the fish production has dropped from 20,000 tonnes in 1984 to only 3,000 tonnes in 2000⁴⁷. It is also believed that the bigger the variety of fish species in the Mekong River, the smaller the total amount of fish that can be caught per species per year. It is because each species reproduction needs a full year cycle and they are harvested in different fishing seasons.

Some efforts had been made to solve the existing problems, such as by encouraging fishermen to collaborate with their fellow fishermen in a more systematic and well managed association in their own villages, where they can also learn new methods and gain knowledge concerning fisheries and exchange information that could upgrade their fishing capabilities. CDRI (Cambodian Development Research Institute) for example, has actively participated in supporting these fishermen's associations, by not only supplying them with needed and useful information but also had carefully recorded all their activities from 2001 - March 2002. It successfully identified as much as 162 fisher folk communities spread over 230,000 ha.

⁴⁷ Mekong River Development Issue – Cambodia, Media Assessment, Mekong Media Seminar, Bangkok and Chiang Rai, Thailand; 22-26 June 2004.

Most of the support comes from NGOs. However, similar activities have also been conducted by government agencies. The most important policy of the government in supporting this program was to free more than 500,000 ha of fishing area from the lot system in 2001 and to establish the Office for Fishing Community Development under the Department of Fisheries (DOF). The government is also preparing laws regulating these fishing communities.

Even though there are still many obstacles, weaknesses and red tape in bureaucracy that can slow down the effort, the government shows its commitment to solve the problems by making policies supporting fishermen. These policies give opportunity for the fisher people to actively take part in a bigger scheme in an effort to promote Cambodian fisheries and prepare them for better competition in the global market.

VII. Conclusion

Even though the government has shown some willingness to push reforms forward, there is not yet a link between reform policies and actual implementation of them. This is due to the weakness at the grassroots level in terms of political participation, thus people's destinies have been greatly affected by state and global actors' decisions. The legal framework and good governance must go hand in hand in handling illegal fishing. Most of these illegal activities are supported by the big boat owners, mostly Sino-Khmer with Vietnamese workers.

Passing laws is not sufficient to benefit the poor. The government should ensure that the law is enforced to enable good governance to reach its reform objectives. But the local community of fishermen, who mostly are Cham, is still weak. Participation, particularly of the Cham, is still low in most of the fishing communities in Cambodia. The revenue of small-scale fishermen is still many times lower than that in Thailand. The community is strong if revenue for each member is high enough. Thus, the fishing community should be strengthened.

However, overall, the government fishery policy has failed to reach its policy objectives.

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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Rucianawati

The Mekong River has a significant role in Cambodia, especially for the people who are involved in fishing, agriculture and forestry. All three of those sectors depend on the water of the Mekong and its tributaries. Like in almost all the Mekong countries; in Cambodia, the Mekong has become 'the river of life' for the people in its basin. Its abundant resources give advantages for the fishers, farmers and the government as well.

The ethnic Cham and Vietnamese are examples of the ethnic groups which benefit from the natural resources (especially fish) of the Mekong River. Fishing in this country is dominated by these ethnic groups, which actually are categorized as minority groups, while the Khmer majority, dominates agriculture or cultivation. The ethnic groups, both the local and the migrant, generally live in harmony and issues, such as illegal fishing and over fishing, mostly done by the migrants (Vietnamese), do not become big problems. So, relations among these ethnic groups are imper-turbable.

In Cambodia, it can be said, it is not so difficult for migrants to get a new identity, especially for the Vietnamese. The two countries (Cambodia and Viet Nam) have a long history, when Viet Nam helped the Cambodians to topple the Khmer Rouge regime. As compensation, Vietnamese sometimes get privileges in

Cambodia, for example, in land ownership. Indeed, some Vietnamese in Cambodia call themselves Cambodian.

Political positions in Cambodia are dominated by the ethnic Khmer; although ethnic minorities (e.g. the Cham) recently, have been able to occupy some important positions. In economic activity, as in many countries, the Chinese play a big role in the world of business and services. On a limited scale, ethnic Vietnamese and Thai also enter these sectors, while other ethnic minority groups are only involved in a small way. This economic activity is one among many reasons for the process of migration in the area of the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia, which have been going on for a long time.

The migration in Cambodia is not only external migration (from other countries), but internal migration also, especially from labour surplus areas to resource rich areas, such as Phnom Penh and some of the border cities. To look for better incomes, many Cambodians also go to other countries, such as Thailand and Malaysia. From Kampong Cham, a province in the Mekong basin, many people went to Malaysia to look for work. Poverty is the main reason for this migration. In this province, the majority of people live from agriculture and fishing. For the new generation, so far, Kampong Cham does not promise a better life, since almost all of the economic activity (agriculture, fishing, trading) is still done in the traditional way.

A modern irrigation system is not developed yet in Kampong Cham. So, mostly the farmers depend on rainwater for irrigation. Among the Cham fishers, the majority use traditional means, so they lose in competition with the Vietnamese. The position of local traders is weakened by Thai, Vietnamese and Chi-

nese outsiders with their greater capital and better networks. In commercial activity sometimes the local people still use a barter system. It needs a long time to change a traditional to a modern system and depends on the will of the local people to thrive and the attention of the government to improve their welfare.

Since the stability of the political condition in Cambodia has just been re-established, after the Khmer Rouge rule, the government seems to focus on developing the political and economic sectors. The government has shown some willingness to push reforms forward, although the results have not yet been good enough. In managing the development of the Mekong River Basin, it is proper that the government should make and enforce policies to preserve the natural resources of the area. In addition, the government should pay more attention to the local people, so they have the capacity to compete with outsiders.

Executive Summary

ETNISITAS DAN PERDAGANGAN TRANSNASIONAL DI DAS MEKONG - KAMBOJA, 1975 – 2005

A. Pendahuluan

1. Latar Belakang

Sejak jaman dahulu daerah aliran sungai merupakan tempat yang menjadi tujuan para pendatang untuk datang dan menetap. Daerah Aliran Sungai (DAS) menjanjikan prospek yang lebih bagus, terutama karena kesuburan tanahnya dan juga kemudahan dalam transportasi dimana pada masa lalu jalur lalu lintas banyak dilakukan melalui jalur laut dan sungai. Sungai-sungai besar, semisal Sungai Mekong menjadi salah satu tempat lalu lintas antar bangsa yang cukup ramai. Hill (1996:12) mencatat bahwa Sungai Mekong sejak lama menjadi lalu lintas utama dalam perdagangan, dan secara geografis menjadi batas politis beberapa negara. Masyarakat dari berbagai daerah dan berbagai etnis datang dan tinggal untuk mengadu nasib di daerah ini.

Sungai Mekong memiliki nilai ekonomis yang sangat penting sebagai sumber mata pencaharian bagi penduduk yang tinggal di sekitarnya. Sebagian besar penduduk yang tinggal di DAS Mekong mengandalkan mata pencaharian dari sektor pertanian, perikanan, maupun dari hasil hutan. Steinberg (1989: 7) mencatat sekitar

delapan puluh lima persen dari masyarakat DAS Mekong secara ekonomis bergantung pada ketiga sektor tersebut. Keunggulan nilai ekonomis inilah yang menarik para migran untuk datang ke DAS Mekong, termasuk bangsa Eropa yang pada masa lalu pernah menguasai daerah ini. Proses migrasi yang telah berjalan ribuan tahun masih terus berlangsung sampai saat ini, demikian juga dengan proses migrasi di DAS Mekong Kamboja.

Besarnya peranan Sungai Mekong, terutama dalam sektor pertanian dan perdagangan, telah membentuk karakteristik masyarakat yang hidup di sekitarnya yang terdiri dari berbagai latar belakang etnis, budaya, tradisi dan agama. Penduduk yang tinggal di daerah ini bukan hanya penduduk asli / lokal, akan tetapi juga kaum migran dari berbagai daerah. Dalam penelitian di DAS Mekong Thailand (2005), dapat dilihat berbagai kelompok etnik tinggal di Mukdahan, antara lain Thai, Lao, Viet Nam, dan China. Pusat perdagangan di daerah ini terkenal dengan sebutan '*Indochinese Market*'. Di Kamboja (Provinsi Kampong Cham), terlihat bahwa masyarakat Cham hidup bersama dengan kelompok etnis lain seperti Khmer, China, dan Viet Nam.

Masyarakat dengan berbagai latar belakang etnik dan budaya yang tinggal di sekitar DAS Mekong telah menguatkan peranan Sungai Mekong sebagai pusat kebudayaan, khususnya fungsi Mekong dalam perdagangan inter-etnik. Saat ini lebih kurang terdapat 25 kota dagang di sepanjang sungai Mekong (www.mrcmekong.org). Di Kamboja, Pnom Penh yang merupakan ibukota negara

tersebut juga terletak di tepi sungai Mekong. Kota-kota lain yang muncul dan berkembang di DAS Mekong di Kamboja antara lain adalah Stung Treng, Kratie dan Kampong Cham.

Kamboja adalah negara kelima di antara enam negara yang dilalui Sungai Mekong. Di negara ini Mekong sangat penting bagi masyarakat, terutama bagi mereka yang hidup dari sektor pertanian dan perikanan. Dari 181.535 km² luas negara Kamboja, 86% termasuk dalam kawasan DAS Mekong (Gartrell, 1997). Selain itu, sekitar 74% dari wilayah Kamboja merupakan kawasan hutan yang kaya akan simpanan kayu. Kamboja juga termasuk sebagai salah satu negara yang kaya akan *biodiversity*, terutama karena keberadaan Sungai Mekong, Sungai Tonle Sap, dan Great Lake. Faktor tersebut merupakan keunggulan komparatif Kamboja jika dibandingkan dengan negara-negara lain yang tergabung dalam *Greater Mekong Subregion* (<http://big5.chinabroadcast.cn/gate/big5/my.chinabroadcast.cn>).

Di Kamboja, terdapat beberapa kelompok etnis yang juga berdiam di DAS Mekong. Khmer merupakan mayoritas penduduk Kamboja, yang jumlahnya lebih dari 90% dari total penduduk, sedangkan yang termasuk kelompok minoritas adalah etnis Cham, Khmer Loeu, Viet Nam, China, Eropa dan India. Etnis Cham yang merupakan pelarian dari kerajaan Champa diperkirakan telah tinggal di Kamboja sejak tahun 1456. Mereka tinggal di sepanjang Tonle Sap dan sekitar Sungai Mekong, terutama di Kampong Cham. Khmer Loeu merupakan kelompok minoritas yang banyak tersebar di daerah timur laut, salah

satu komunitasnya tersebar di Stung Treng, di tepi sungai Mekong. Etnis Viet Nam juga banyak ditemukan tinggal di lembah Mekong dan Tonle Sap. Banyak dari mereka yang berprofesi sebagai nelayan dan pekerja pada perkebunan karet milik Perancis. Orang Cina, sebagaimana di daerah lain, sebagian besar bergelut dalam bidang perdagangan dan jasa peminjaman uang. Mereka menyebar di berbagai daerah di Kamboja. (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/>).

II. Perumusan Masalah

Mekong, sebagaimana yang dijelaskan oleh Charnvit Kasetsiri (2003), memiliki 3 keunikan, yaitu keragaman suku yang tinggal di sekitar daerah alirannya, besar dan panjangnya sungai, serta kekayaan sumberdaya alam yang dimiliki. Tidak terlepas dari keunikan Sungai Mekong, penelitian tentang etnisitas dan perdagangan di sekitar DAS Mekong di Kamboja ini mengangkat beberapa isu yang berkaitan dengan penelitian sebelumnya yang telah dilakukan di Thailand (2005). Permasalahan difokuskan pada beberapa hal, yaitu:

1. Bagaimana peran dan fungsi sungai Mekong di DAS Mekong di Kamboja?
2. Bagaimana dinamika etnisitas dan migrasi di DAS Mekong di Kamboja, etnis mana saja yang termasuk etnis lokal dan etnis pendatang serta bagaimana interaksi sosial mereka?

3. Bagaimana perdagangan antar etnis dan dampak-dampak perdagangan tersebut terhadap etnis lokal di DAS Mekong di Kamboja.
4. Bagaimana kebijakan pemerintah Kamboja dalam pengembangan DAS Mekong di Kamboja terutama yang berkaitan dengan manajemen sumberdaya alam.

III. Kerangka Analitik

Kajian pokok dalam penelitian ini adalah masalah etnisitas dan perdagangan transnasional di DAS Mekong. Dalam bukunya *Asia Tenggara dalam Kurun Niaga 1450-1680*, Reid, menyatakan bahwa sejak abad ke-15 hingga abad ke-17, Asia Tenggara merupakan tempat yang ramai dalam perdagangan antara dunia Barat dan Timur. Jalur utama perdagangan dilakukan melalui samudera, sebagaimana dijelaskan bahwa pada masa itu jaringan pelayaran sangat ramai. Oleh karena ramainya perdagangan pada waktu itu, Reid menyebut periode ini sebagai “kurun niaga” (Reid; 1992: 10). Bertolak dari penjelasan Reid, maka dapat diperkirakan bahwa pada masa itu sungai-sungai besar, termasuk sungai Mekong, juga menjadi urat nadi utama dalam lalu lintas perdagangan. Jalur sungai pula yang menghubungkan daerah pedalaman dengan daerah pesisir, dimana barang dagangan diangkut untuk kemudian dikirim ke luar daerah atau ke negara lain, demikian juga sebaliknya.

Perdagangan di DAS Mekong termasuk dalam 'perdagangan transnasional' karena melibatkan para pedagang dari negara-negara yang dilalui Sungai Mekong dan melewati batas-batas wilayah suatu negara. Di Mukdahan dan Chong Mek di Thailand sebagai contoh, terdapat berbagai kelompok etnik yang terlibat dalam perdagangan, misalnya Thai, Lao, Viet Nam, dan Cina. Di Kampong Cham, Kamboja, perdagangan transnasional tidak begitu terlihat, tetapi aktivitas perdagangan inter-etnik yang ada melibatkan etnis Khmer, Cham, Viet Nam, dan Cina. Perdagangan transnasional di Thailand lebih intensif karena di kawasan ini Sungai Mekong juga menjadi batas politis antara Thailand dan Laos, sedangkan di Kamboja Sungai Mekong terdapat di wilayah tengah negara ini.

Perdagangan transnasional telah memainkan peranan yang penting dalam perekonomian suatu negara. Tidak ada suatu negara yang dapat mencukupi kebutuhannya sendiri, semuanya saling tergantung dan saling membutuhkan. Arti penting perdagangan bagi perekonomian suatu negara adalah: (Todaro 2000 : 25-26)

1. Perdagangan merupakan faktor penting guna merangsang pertumbuhan ekonomi di setiap negara. Perdagangan akan memperbesar kapasitas konsumsi suatu negara, meningkatkan output dunia, serta menyajikan akses ke sumber-sumber daya yang langka dan pasar-pasar internasional yang potensial untuk berbagai produk ekspor.
2. Perdagangan cenderung mempromosikan pemerataan atas distribusi pendapatan dan kesejahteraan domestik

maupun internasional. Hal ini berlangsung melalui suatu proses penyamaan harga-harga faktor produksi di semua negara, peningkatan pendapatan riil setiap negara yang terlibat dalam kegiatan-kegiatan perdagangan internasional, serta memacu efisiensi Penggunaan sumber daya di setiap negara yang pada akhirnya akan meningkatkan pemanfaatan sumber daya dunia secara keseluruhan.

3. Perdagangan dapat membantu semua negara dalam menjalankan usaha-usaha pembangunan mereka melalui promosi serta pengutamaan sektor-sektor ekonomi yang mengandung keunggulan komparatif baik itu yang berupa ketersediaan faktor-faktor produksi tertentu dalam jumlah yang melimpah atau keunggulan efisiensi atau produktivitas di setiap negara.

Teori-teori tentang perdagangan internasional lebih banyak menggunakan konsep-konsep keunggulan komparatif yang pada dasarnya merupakan model-model yang statis karena hanya didasarkan pada satu variabel input atau faktor produksi saja (yaitu biaya tenaga kerja). Teori-teori tersebut menonjolkan pendekatan spesialis menyeluruh untuk menunjukkan manfaat atau keuntungan yang bisa diraih oleh setiap negara yang mau menjalin hubungan perdagangan internasional.

Model-model tentang perdagangan internasional mulai berkembang pada abad kesembilan belas yang banyak bersumber dari pemikiran David Ricardo dan John Stuart Mill. Teori Keunggulan Komparatif David Ricardo dan J.S. Mill menyatakan bahwa suatu negara akan akan

mengkhususkan diri pada ekspor barang tertentu bila negara tersebut memiliki keunggulan komparatif (*comparative advantage*) dan akan mengkhususkan diri pada impor barang bila negara tersebut memiliki kerugian komparatif (*comparative disadvantage*) (Tambunan; 2001: 25-26). Teori tersebut merupakan kritik sekaligus penyempurnaan dari teori Keunggulan Absolut Adam Smith. Dalam konteks perdagangan di kawasan Mekong, pertanian dan perikanan menjadi keunggulan komparatif. Di Kamboja khususnya, keunggulan komparatif terletak pada sektor perikanan. Perikanan memainkan peranan yang cukup penting dalam perekonomian di negara ini.

Keunggulan komparatif negara-negara di DAS Mekong merupakan daya tarik tersendiri bagi para pendatang untuk berdagang maupun tinggal di sekitar DAS Mekong. Interaksi perdagangan inilah yang mempertemukan antara penduduk lokal dengan pendatang dari berbagai bangsa. Perdagangan transnasional di kawasan Asia Tenggara telah terjadi sejak berabad-abad yang lalu. Perdagangan antarbangsa, antarnegara dan lintas benua tersebut diikuti dengan proses migrasi. Pergerakan manusia (*human migration*) salah satunya disebabkan oleh pemenuhan kebutuhan ekonomis, dalam hal ini menjual ataupun membeli barang. Hal ini sesuai dengan konsep dari Mochtar Naim tentang migrasi, yang dikutip oleh Singarimbun (1977: 9), dimana disebutkan adanya sembilan faktor yang mempengaruhi migrasi, yaitu: ekologi, geografi, demografi, ekonomi, pendidikan, kegoncangan politik, tarikan kota, dan kebijaksanaan migrasi atau transmigrasi.

Dari kesembilan faktor yang mempengaruhi migrasi tersebut, faktor utama yang mempengaruhi proses migrasi di DAS Mekong lebih ditentukan oleh ekologi, geografi dan ekonomi. Faktor ekologi disini dimaksudkan dengan kekayaan alam, termasuk hutan dan kekayaan biodiversity yang dimiliki oleh Sungai Mekong. Faktor geografi menyangkut letak/posisi sungai Mekong sebagai sungai besar yang melintasi beberapa negara, dan sejak dahulu telah menjadi jalur arteri perdagangan antar bangsa (Hill; 1996: 12). Daya tarik ekonomi, berkaitan dengan fungsi sungai sebagai jalur pelayaran, dimana pada akhirnya terbentuk kota-kota dagang di sepanjang sungai tersebut.

Migrasi sebagai proses mobilitas spasial yang diikuti dengan perubahan tempat tinggal yang permanen, antar unit politik, statistik atau administratif yang jelas, telah memunculkan sistem dan struktur sosial yang baru di wilayah yang didatanginya. Migrasi sebagai salah satu faktor yang memperkaya keanggotaan suatu masyarakat atau negara, kadangkala memberi dampak positif seperti adanya proses asimilasi, akulturasi atau campuran tradisi dan budaya masyarakat pendatang dengan penduduk lokal. Namun di lain pihak kadangkala memberi dampak negatif bagi keduanya. Oleh karena itu, dapat dipahami mengapa akibat proses migrasi sering menimbulkan dampak negatif yang berupa munculnya persoalan-persoalan lingkungan, pertikaian atau konflik politik dan kebudayaan. Dalam persoalan terakhir ini, antara lain dapat dipicu oleh sentimen pribumisme (nativisme) yang berhadapan dengan para pendatang. Penduduk pribumi ini mengacu pada

masyarakat yang mengklaim diri sebagai penduduk asli (*indigenous people*) dari suatu wilayah tertentu (Abdillah; 2002: 99 dan 109).

Sentimen etnis, dalam hal ini pengakuan diri sebagai penduduk asli yang berhak atas suatu wilayah, biasanya akan muncul setelah ada kelompok atau etnis lain yang datang dan berdiam di daerah tersebut. Kaum pendatang ini tak jarang di kemudian hari menjadi lebih dominan dalam berbagai sektor kehidupan, misalnya dominasi dalam sektor politik dan ekonomi. Disinilah kaum pribumi mulai merasa tersisih, dan mencoba memperjuangkan pengakuan sebagai etnis atau penduduk asli yang lebih berhak atas wilayah tersebut. Jadi kata etnis muncul karena ada proses interaksi antara kelompok atau individu yang berbeda. Dalam antropologi sosial, kata etnisitas mengacu pada hubungan antar kelompok yang menimbulkan kesadaran diantara mereka akan perbedaan-perbedaan budaya dan penghargaan terhadap perbedaan tersebut. Etnisitas mengacu pada sebuah keluarga besar yang dapat digolongkan sebagai sebuah komunitas atau identitas yang berdiri dengan elemen-elemen tertentu (Abdillah; 2002: 77-79).

B. Hasil Temuan

Penelitian tentang Etnisitas dan Perdagangan Transnasional di DAS Mekong di Kamboja ini merupakan penelitian tahun kedua dari rangkaian 4 tahun penelitian tentang DAS Mekong. Penelitian yang dilakukan pada tahun pertama

(2005) di Thailand dapat memberikan gambaran tentang perkembangan fungsi Sungai Mekong, pola migrasi dan sejarahnya, etnisitas, serta sentra-sentra dan pola perdagangan di DAS Mekong.

Penelitian tahun kedua difokuskan di daerah Kampong Cham yang merupakan perkampungan muslim etnis Cham (etnis minoritas di Kamboja) serta salah satu etnis yang terlibat dalam perdagangan di Sungai Mekong. Penelitian di Kamboja berhasil mengumpulkan data lapangan yang didapat dari *deep interview* dengan pihak akademisi, masyarakat, tokoh masyarakat, maupun pihak pemerintah. Selain itu juga dilakukan *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD) dengan beberapa LSM dan Institusi. Peneliti juga melihat secara langsung beberapa kegiatan yang berlangsung di DAS Mekong, seperti perdagangan, pertanian, perikanan dan perkebunan.

1. Perkembangan Peran dan Fungsi Sungai Mekong di Kamboja

Sungai Mekong yang mengalir sepanjang 502 km di wilayah Kamboja memiliki peranan yang sangat penting dalam sektor pertanian, perikanan, kehutanan, dan juga sebagai jalur transportasi. Mekong yang sangat kaya dengan biodiversitas menjadi sumber mata pencaharian pokok bagi ribuan nelayan yang tinggal disekitarnya, khususnya di kawasan Tonle Sap, Kamboja. Sungai Mekong yang di Kamboja juga disebut Tonle Thom (: sungai yang besar) mempunyai karakteristik khusus yang berbeda dengan lima Negara Mekong lainnya. Di Kamboja sungai ini mempunyai cabang yang cukup besar, yaitu

Sungai Tonle Sap, yang menghubungkan Sungai Mekong dengan Great Lake (Tonle Sap Lake).

Sebagaimana yang telah disebutkan sebelumnya, perikanan merupakan salah satu sektor unggulan di Kamboja. Sejak jaman kuno sektor perikanan tidak dapat dilepaskan dari kehidupan masyarakat Kamboja. Hal ini bisa dilihat dari relief yang ada di Angkor Wat, yang menggambarkan kehidupan sehari-hari, yang berkaitan dengan sektor perikanan. Sampai kinipun, sektor perikanan memegang peranan cukup penting setelah pertanian dalam perekonomian di Kamboja. Economic Institute of Cambodia (EIC) memperkirakan pada tahun 2003 sektor ini memberikan kontribusi sebesar 3,6 % terhadap Pendapatan Domestik Bruto (PDB). Sektor ini juga menyerap tenaga kerja sebesar 5 % dari total angkatan kerja di Kamboja.

Hortle, et.al (2004: 26-28) mengategorikan industri perikanan di Kamboja menjadi tiga: pertama, perikanan dalam skala kecil/subsistensi (*small-scale fisheries*); kedua, perikanan dalam skala menengah (*middle-scale fisheries*); ketiga, perikanan dalam skala besar (*commercial/large-scale fisheries*). Pembagian tersebut pada intinya berdasarkan pada peralatan yang dipakai, jumlah pekerja, dan area penangkapan ikan. Sejauh ini, sektor perikanan di Kamboja sebagian besar disuplai dari hasil penangkapan di Sungai Mekong dan Tonle Sap. Sektor ini dikuasai oleh etnis Viet Nam dan Cham.

Permasalahan utama dalam sektor perikanan adalah adanya penangkapan ikan secara liar (*illegal fishing*) dengan menggunakan berbagai peralatan yang terlarang

karena dapat merusak habitat ikan itu sendiri. Responden di Kampong Roka (Provinsi Kampong Cham) menjelaskan bahwa para nelayan dari Viet Nam seringkali menggunakan cara yang ilegal, sedangkan nelayan Cham masih menggunakan cara-cara tradisional. Disini terlihat bahwa pemerintah kurang tegas atau kurang memberikan perhatian untuk menangani permasalahan yang ada.

Sektor lain yang tak kalah penting adalah pertanian, dimana sektor ini dan sektor yang terkait mempekerjakan sekitar 80-85% dari total angkatan kerja. Hasil utama dari sektor ini adalah padi, dengan area tanam seluas hampir dua juta hektar. Pusat penanamannya di sekitar Danau Tonle Sap, tepatnya di provinsi Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey, dan Battambang, yang seringkali disebut sebagai *'the country's traditional grain basket'* (ADB and UNEP, 2004: 9 and 89). Hortle, dkk., (2004: 5) mengutip dari Helmers (1997), mencatat bahwa para petani di Kamboja telah menanam padi setidaknya sejak 2000 tahun yang lalu.

Permasalahan utama pembangunan sektor pertanian di DAS Mekong Kamboja adalah belum tersedianya sistem irigasi yang memadai, sehingga sebagian besar lahan pertanian mengandalkan air hujan. Hal ini sangat ironis jika mengingat sejarah pertanian di Kamboja yang mencatat bahwa pada abad 12 dan 13 Masehi telah dibangun sistem irigasi yang cukup modern, yang mampu mengairi lebih dari lima juta hektar lahan pertanian. Pada waktu itu bahkan Kamboja dikatakan sebagai negara yang paling produktif dan cukup makmur di kawasan itu. Pada

masa ini pula Angkor Wat mulai dibangun, tepatnya pada periode pemerintahan Raja Suryawarman II (1113-1150) (Butwell, 1988: 194 and 196).

Selain mendukung sektor perikanan dan pertanian, Mekong juga memiliki fungsi tersendiri dalam sistem transportasi. Fungsi Sungai Mekong sebagai jalur transportasi pada saat ini sangat jauh berkurang, terutama sejak dibangunnya jalan raya yang menghubungkan antar kota di DAS Mekong. Jalur darat ini lebih banyak dipilih karena biayanya lebih murah dibandingkan transportasi melalui jalur sungai. Namun demikian, Sungai Mekong juga tidak kehilangan fungsinya dalam navigasi, terutama bagi kapal-kapal yang membawa kayu, karet, dan hasil-hasil pertanian dari daerah pedalaman ke pelabuhan. Sebaliknya, beberapa produk, seperti buah-buahan dan sayuran dari Viet Nam juga dikirim ke Kamboja melalui Sungai Mekong. Dalam sistem transportasi ini, Sungai Mekong juga mempunyai fungsi lain, yaitu sebagai pendukung sektor pariwisata, sebagaimana yang terlihat bahwa kapal-kapal berlayar melalui Sungai Mekong menuju ke Great Lake, kemudian ke Siem Reap (Angkor Wat).

2. Etnisitas di DAS Mekong Kamboja

Kelompok etnis (*ethnic group*) dan masalah etnisitas (*ethnicity*) di Kamboja ditandai oleh beberapa ciri, antara lain (1) dikenalnya konsep mayoritas (Khmer) dan minoritas, termasuk etnik minoritas. Kelompok minoritas ini adalah Cham, Cina, Viet Nam, Thai dan beberapa lusin

sub-etnik lainnya. Sedangkan yang disebut etnik minoritas, adalah kelompok-kelompok Khmer Loeu dan orang-orang Lao, (2) etnisitas kebanyakan merujuk kepada keturunan kelompok-kelompok migran dari negara yang berbatasan langsung, seperti Viet Nam (termasuk Cham), Thailand dan Laos, (3) terdapat heterogenitas didalam kelompok-kelompok etnis itu sendiri, seperti etnis Cina yang terbagi kedalam kelompok Teochiu, Kanton, Hokkien, Hakka dan Hainan; kelompok etnis Cham yang ortodoks dan moderat; kelompok etnis Lao pegunungan dan dataran rendah; kelompok masyarakat Viet Nam sebelum dan sesudah rejim Khmer Merah, dan (4) ada kecenderungan kaitan antara lapangan usaha dengan dominasi etnis tertentu. Misalnya perdagangan oleh Cina (jenis perdagangan tertentu), nelayan oleh Viet Nam, pertanian tanaman pangan oleh etnis Khmer, Cham dan Viet Nam dan pertanian subsistensi oleh Khmer Loeu.

Karena belum adanya suatu sensus penduduk yang menggunakan variable etnis di Kamboja, maka data-data tentang jumlah dan komposisi penduduk berdasarkan etnis tidak dapat diketahui dengan pasti. Seringkali suatu kelompok etnis minoritas datanya dibawah angka perkiraan (*under estimated*), karena dalam sensus biasanya mengacu kepada etnis yang lebih dominan. Namun beberapa laporan menyebutkan bahwa etnis Khmer berjumlah antara 88-90%, Viet Nam 5%, Cham 2,5%, Cina 1% dan gabungan beberapa kelompok etnis (Thai, Lao dan kelompok minoritas *hill tribe* atau Khmer Loeu mencapai 2,6%. Walaupun masih bersifat kasar, data tersebut memberikan indikasi bahwa etnis Khmer adalah mayoritas dari segi

jumlah penduduk di Kamboja. Data-data tersebut juga menunjukkan kemungkinan adanya proses asimilasi beberapa kelompok etnis yang menyebut dirinya sebagai etnis Khmer, walaupun mungkin kelompok etnis tersebut mempunyai akar yang berasal dari negara Laos, Thailand dan Cina.

Hubungan antar etnis biasanya bersifat dinamis. Pada satu sisi terdapat ketegangan-ketegangan hubungan yang dapat dilihat dari stereotype yang muncul dari satu etnis terhadap etnis lainnya. Satu etnis menyebut etnis lainnya "savage", "have no religion", malas, bodoh dan sebutan negative lainnya. Namun tidak sedikit hubungan-hubungan yang bersifat integrative munculnya, misalnya pengakuan etnis tertentu secara sukarela menyebut dirinya Khmer. Walaupun ada motivasi ekonomi di belakangnya.

Seperti yang disebutkan sebelumnya, suatu kelompok etnis tidak hanya mengembangkan suatu sentimen tradisi dan cultural, tetapi seringkali masuk pada wilayah-wilayah penguasaan sumber daya politik dan ekonomi tertentu. Etnis Khmer mempunyai privilese dalam hal penguasaan jabatan-jabatan politik, sesuatu posisi yang tidak terlalu diinginkan oleh kelompok-kelompok etnis lainnya, terutama etnis Cina. Sejarah dan dinamika politik di Kamboja seakan-akan memberikan isyarat agar kelompok-kelompok etnis non-Khmer tidak terlalu memasuki lapangan politik. Walaupun pada tahun 1960-an pun beberapa lapangan pekerjaan terlarang dimasuki oleh etnis non-Khmer. Kebijakan nasionalis ini tampaknya

tidak dapat berjalan terlalu lama. Karena pasar memang tidak dapat dipegang oleh suatu kelompok yang hanya mengandalkan kekuatan politik, melainkan oleh kelompok-kelompok yang mempunyai capital dan mampu mengelola jaringan distribusi antara produsen, konsumen dan rantai usaha lainnya. Selain itu, “pengalaman” yang dimiliki oleh suatu kelompok dalam mengelola usaha tertentu juga memainkan peranan yang penting dalam penguasaan suatu sumber daya ekonomi penting, termasuk perdagangan.

Walaupun tidak ketat, tetapi terdapat kecenderungan suatu kelompok etnis terkelompok kedalam suatu mata pencaharian tertentu. Misalnya kebanyakan etnis Khmer di pedesaan, Khmer Lou, dan Lao pegunungan mempunyai mata pencaharian pertanian skala rumah tangga (subsistensi), termasuk beternak babi. Kemudian bagi penduduk yang tinggal di dekat kawasan hutan (seperti Khmer Loeu) bertani dikombinasikan dengan pengumpulan hasil hutan. Sedangkan mata pencaharian menangkap ikan (khususnya di sungai dan danau), banyak dikerjakan oleh orang-orang Viet Nam. Dunia perdagangan dan jasa, dari mulai pedagang kecil (*petty trader*) hingga distributor dikuasai oleh etnis Cina. Demikian halnya dengan jasa-jasa, mulai dari tukang bangunan hingga perbankan dikuasai oleh etnis Cina. Walaupun, etnis Viet Nam-pun banyak yang memasuki sektor-sektor jasa dan perdagangan. Etnis Cham kebanyakan menghidupi dirinya dari pertanian dan peternakan skala rumah tangga, termasuk usaha pemotongan hewan (sapi dan kerbau) dan sebagian kecil juga berdagang.

Model kaitan antara kelompok etnis dengan mata pencaharian inipun polanya tidak jauh berbeda di wilayah Daerah Aliran Sungai (DAS) Mekong yang ada di wilayah Kamboja. Sebagai suatu DAS, maka sumber daya pentingnya bermacam-macam. Mulai dari hasil hutan, perikanan, pertanian dan perkebunan. Kemudian sektor perdagangan dan jasa, khususnya transportasi sungai menjadi usaha-usaha penting. Karakter suatu DAS yang menempatkan sungai sebagai jalur penting yang menghubungkan satu tempat ke tempat lainnya, menyebabkan transportasi sungai menjadi sektor yang sangat penting. Apalagi karakter DAS Mekong yang menghubungkan beberapa negara, seperti Thailand, Laos, Kamboja dan Viet Nam, maka kelompok yang menguasai transportasi sungai, maka merekalah yang dapat mengontrol aktivitas ekonomi di wilayah tersebut. Selain itu, jalur sungai yang menghubungkan Kamboja dengan negara-negara lainnya, memberikan kemungkinan yang lebih besar kepada kelompok-kelompok etnik yang mempunyai “asal-usul” di negara-negara tetangganya, seperti orang-orang Viet Nam, Thailand, Laos, dan sebagian Cham.

Kesimpulannya, penguasaan terhadap sumber daya dan alat transportasi yang berkaitan dengan sungai, kelompok itulah yang akan menguasai suatu DAS. Namun, dinamika yang ada didalam kelompok tersebut juga penting untuk dipahami, seperti adanya “pembagian kerja tradisional” di kalangan lima kelompok etnis Cina dan kelompok orang Lao.

3. Migrasi dan Permasalahannya di DAS Mekong Kamboja

Sejak berakhirnya Perang Dunia II, beberapa negara di kawasan Asia Tenggara seperti Kamboja, Laos, Viet Nam, dan Myanmar masih terbelakang karena konflik berkepanjangan di dalam negeri. Berakhirnya konflik di beberapa negara tersebut dalam kurun tiga dasawarsa terakhir berdampak pada upaya pembangunan di berbagai sektor untuk mengejar ketertinggalanya dengan negara-negara lain. Di antara negara-negara yang dilalui Sungai Mekong di kawasan Asia Tenggara daratan, Thailand merupakan salah satu negara yang telah maju pembangunan dan perekonomiannya sejak dua dekade terakhir, sehingga sangat wajar jika menjadi magnet bagi para pencari kerja dari Viet Nam, Laos, Myanmar, dan Kamboja. Ketimpangan kemakmuran di antara negara-negara di DAS Mekong mengakibatkan terjadinya arus migrasi, baik internal maupun internasional di antara negara-negara di kawasan ini.

Di Kamboja, sejak berakhirnya perang saudara di dalam negeri jumlah migran sangat tinggi, yaitu sepertiga dari total jumlah penduduknya. Migrasi di Kamboja secara cepat sudah terjadi sejak tahun 1970-an (masa regim Lon Nol) dengan alasan untuk menghindari perang dan kemudian berlanjut sampai pada masa regim Khmer Merah (1975-1979) yang memaksa penduduk perkotaan meninggalkan kota menuju ke daerah pedesaan untuk mengerjakan lahan pertanian. Jatuhnya Khmer Merah membawa perubahan ke arah yang lebih baik dengan

adanya peningkatan stabilitas negara, yang mendorong adanya pertumbuhan ekonomi dan juga meningkatnya arus migrasi untuk mencari penghidupan yang lebih baik. Walaupun demikian, pemerintahan RPK (Republic's People of Kampuchea) yang berkuasa setelah Khmer Merah ternyata tidak bisa menjaga stabilitas negara. Pada masa RPK ini terjadi pula arus migrasi besar-besaran, terutama ke daerah perbatasan, karena perang saudara masih sering berkecamuk. Stabilitas negara Kamboja mulai kembali stabil setelah terbentuknya Monarki Kamboja pada tahun 1993.

Kemiskinan yang kronis, ketiadaan tanah untuk digarap, keterbatasan pasar penyedia makanan, serta berbagai bencana alam seperti banjir dan kekeringan, telah menjadi faktor pendorong penduduk pedesaan di Kamboja untuk melakukan migrasi antar propinsi maupun lintas batas ke Thailand. Migrasi di Kamboja, terutama yang internal, biasanya lebih bersifat musiman walaupun migrasi jangka panjang atau bahkan pindah secara permanen tidak bisa diabaikan. Migran semacam ini di Kamboja biasanya berasal dari propinsi yang kelebihan tenaga kerja ke propinsi yang memiliki sumberdaya alam/ekonomi yang besar dan potensial, seperti migran dari Propinsi Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, dan Takeo yang melakukan migrasi ke Propinsi Kandal, Banteay Meanchey, Koh Kong dan juga Phnom Penh.

Selain menghadapi arus migrasi internal dan internasional yang menimbulkan berbagai dampak, Kamboja juga harus menghadapi masalah migran

(pengungsi) Viet Nam yang secara masif masuk ke Kamboja mulai tahun 1990an. Mereka umumnya tinggal secara berkelompok di sepanjang DAS Mekong di Kamboja, seperti di Propinsi Pursat, Kampong Chnang, Kampong Cham, Kampong Tom, Kandal, dan Phnom Penh. Mereka yang tinggal di Kampong Cham sebagian besar bekerja sebagai nelayan, sedangkan yang tinggal di Phnom Penh sebagian besar bekerja sebagai pedagang, pekerja konstruksi, juga pekerja di industri mesin dan pengolahan kayu. Kondisi ini sangat kontras jika dibandingkan dengan pekerja lokal Kamboja, yang hanya bekerja pada tingkat yang lebih rendah. Perbedaan-perbedaan semacam ini kadang memicu timbulnya konflik di antara mereka dalam upaya mempertahankan eksistensinya.

Gelombang migrasi yang masih berjalan hingga saat ini menimbulkan banyak masalah. Beberapa propinsi mengalami kekurangan jumlah penduduk karena bermigrasi, sementara beberapa propinsi lainnya mengalami peningkatan jumlah penduduk karena menjadi tepat tujuan migrasi. Peningkatan jumlah migran ke kota-kota besar di sepanjang DAS Mekong di Kamboja tanpa adanya kontrol juga menimbulkan berbagai masalah sosial, terutama terkait dengan meluasnya peyebaran HIV/AIDS dan penjualan perempuan (*trafficking of women*). Pemerintah Kamboja sebenarnya telah berupaya menanggulangi permasalahan ini, antara lain bekerja sama dengan NGO lokal maupun internasional untuk lebih aktif memerangi perdagangan perempuan dan penyebaran HIV/AIDS. Pemerintah Kamboja juga telah mengeluarkan

undang-undang pada tahun 2002 “*The Law on HIV/AIDS Response and Prevention*” untuk melawan penyebaran HIV/AIDS. Selain itu, Kamboja juga telah menandatangani MoU dengan Thailand pada Mei 2003 untuk mengatasi dampak dari migrasi, terutama ditekankan pada penanganan masalah migrasi antara kedua negara dan pemulangan migran gelap yang tertangkap. Walaupun berbagai upaya telah ditempuh namun hasil yang didapat belum maksimal, karena masih kurang tegas penerapannya, kurangnya institusi lain yang mendukung, serta masih banyaknya korupsi di Kamboja.

4. Dinamika Perdagangan Antar-etnis di Kampong Cham, DAS Mekong Kamboja

Kegiatan perdagangan di sekitar DAS Mekong di Kamboja sudah berlangsung sejak lama. Sungai Mekong menjadi salah satu rute perdagangan sungai yang ramai pada masa kurun niaga dimana banyak barang-barang dari pelabuhan laut di Funan (sekarang Sihanoukville) yang dibawa ke Phnom Penh melalui jalur Sungai Mekong. Selain sebagai jalur perdagangan, Sungai Mekong juga berfungsi sebagai jalur transportasi dan penghubung antara Thailand, Laos, Kamboja dan Viet Nam. Sebagian besar lalu lintas barang dan orang menggunakan jalur sungai ini meskipun saat ini peranan Sungai Mekong sebagai jalur perdagangan mulai berkurang dan tergantikan dengan jalur transportasi darat. Kampong Cham sebagai salah satu daerah yang dilalui oleh Sungai Mekong mempunyai peranan yang signifikan dalam kegiatan perdagangan karena banyak etnis yang tinggal di sekitar Sungai Mekong

menggantungkan hidupnya dari sungai ini, seperti pedagang, nelayan dan petani. Berdasar pada keberagaman etnis yang tinggal di daerah tersebut yang memiliki sejarah, budaya dan mata pencaharian yang berbeda-beda maka tulisan ini ingin melihat bagaimana dinamika perdagangan antar etnis di Kampong Cham. Selain itu mengingat fungsi Sungai Mekong sebagai lalu lintas perdagangan sungai yang semakin berkurang maka tulisan ini lebih menyoroti perkembangan kegiatan perdagangan di darat (*inland activities*).

Perdagangan antar etnis dalam tulisan ini adalah perdagangan tradisional yang dilakukan oleh etnis-etnis yang tinggal di Kampong Cham, baik itu perdagangan antar etnis maupun perdagangan intra etnis. Perdagangan yang terjadi skalanya masih kecil dan komoditas yang diperjualbelikan sebagian besar berupa hasil-hasil pertanian, perikanan dan perkebunan, meskipun ada juga hasil-hasil industri yang didatangkan dari Phnom Penh dan dijual oleh etnis China. Kegiatan perdagangan ini merupakan salah satu bentuk dari aktivitas ekonomi masyarakat setempat yaitu adanya permintaan dan penawaran untuk memenuhi kebutuhan sehari-hari. Alat transaksi yang digunakan adalah Riel atau Dollar AS sebagai alat pembayaran, tetapi pola perdagangan barter juga masih dilakukan. Pola barter -kegiatan tukar menukar barang dengan barang dengan syarat-syarat tertentu- tidak hanya untuk memenuhi kebutuhan hidup, tetapi juga menunjukkan tingkat hubungan etnis, baik itu intra etnis maupun antar etnis dalam suatu komunitas.

Ada beberapa faktor yang melatarbelakangi terjadinya perdagangan antar etnis di Kampong Cham, yaitu adanya keinginan untuk memenuhi kebutuhan sehari-hari, mencari keuntungan, terjadi kelebihan hasil atau surplus dari komoditas yang diproduksi serta jarak dan lokasi. Etnis-etnis yang terlibat dalam kegiatan perdagangan adalah etnis Cham, Khmer, China dan Viet Nam. Masing-masing etnis mempunyai mata pencaharian yang berbeda-beda sehingga komoditas yang dijualpun juga berbeda tergantung dari sumber penghidupan mereka. Etnis Cham sebagian besar bekerja sebagai nelayan dan petani kebun karet sehingga komoditas yang dijual adalah ikan, *prohok* (ikan yang diawetkan) dan karet alam. Etnis Khmer bekerja sebagai petani, menanam sayuran dan buah, menganyam, pedagang kecil dan komoditas yang diperjualbelikan adalah beras, sayuran, buah-buahan, anyaman bambu, pakaian, dll. Etnis Viet Nam banyak yang bekerja sebagai nelayan, montir motor, tukang cukur dan sebagian besar menjual ikan. Sedangkan etnis Cina sebagian besar bergerak di bidang perdagangan, misalnya sebagai pemilik toko atau restoran, pedagang besar dan kecil, jasa peminjaman uang, pemilik *fishing lot* dan bos atau tauke. Barang-barang yang dijual adalah barang kebutuhan sehari-sehari, seperti sabun, rokok, gula, alat-alat tulis, sepeda, peralatan elektronik, mesin diesel, jala, pakaian yang sebagian besar (sekitar 70%) didatangkan dari Phnom Penh atau Cina. Mereka menjual barang dagangannya di toko-toko milik sendiri atau di pasar-pasar di Kampong Cham dan mendominasi dalam kegiatan perdagangan.

Kegiatan perdagangan antar etnis yang berlangsung terus menerus membentuk suatu pola atau jaringan perdagangan akibat interaksi tersebut. Pola perdagangan yang akan dijelaskan dalam tulisan ini adalah pola perdagangan ikan dan karet karena melibatkan beberapa etnis yang berperan sebagai pemasok (*supplier*) dan pedagang. Selain itu, ikan dan karet merupakan salah satu produk unggulan di Kampong Cham. Dalam pola perdagangan ikan, yang bertindak sebagai pemasok adalah etnis Cham dan Viet Nam, sedangkan yang berperan sebagai pedagang perantara (*middlemen*) adalah etnis Khmer dan Cina. Pemasok dapat menjual ikan secara langsung kepada konsumen, ke pasar atau dijual terlebih dahulu ke pedagang perantara yang kemudian mendistribusikan ke konsumen, pedagang kecil atau ke pasar. Sebagian besar pedagang kecil adalah kaum perempuan dan mempunyai peranan yang signifikan dalam pola perdagangan ikan ini. Hal ini disebabkan karena kaum laki-laki dari etnis Cham sangat sedikit yang terlibat dalam perdagangan sehingga kaum perempuan lebih dominan dalam kegiatan perdagangan.

Dalam pola perdagangan karet, yang bertindak sebagai pemasok adalah etnis Cham dan Khmer, dan yang berperan sebagai *middlemen*/sarikat adalah etnis China, Viet Nam, Khmer dan Cham. Pemasok dapat menjual secara langsung ke pabrik-pabrik kecil yang berada di Kampong Cham atau ke pedagang perantara yang biasanya datang langsung ke kebun karet untuk membeli getah karet. Harga jual karet ditentukan oleh kualitas karet dan jika dijual langsung ke pedagang perantara harganya lebih

murah dibanding ke pabrik-pabrik pengolahan karet. Setelah itu, pedagang perantara atau pabrik-pabrik kecil akan menjual lagi karetnya ke pabrik besar di Viet Nam untuk diolah lebih lanjut. Jalur transportasi yang digunakan untuk mengangkut karet dari Kampong Cham/Phnom Penh ke Viet Nam melalui jalur Sungai Mekong.

Hubungan antara pedagang lokal yang berasal dari etnis yang berbeda-beda, antara lain etnis Cham, Khmer, Viet Nam dan Cina berlangsung dengan baik, meskipun pedagang Cina lebih dominan. Hal ini berbeda dengan hubungan antara pedagang lokal dengan pedagang pendatang, yaitu etnis Thai dan Viet Nam. Sejak Kamboja mulai membuka diri dan berintegrasi dengan dunia luar, maka semakin banyak pula pedagang pendatang yang masuk ke Kamboja, terutama pedagang dari Thailand dan Viet Nam. Pedagang dari kedua negara tersebut merupakan saingan yang berat bagi pedagang lokal, karena mereka sebagian besar menjual komoditas yang sama (sayuran, buah-buahan) dengan harga yang lebih murah dan kualitas barang yang bagus. Selain itu, mereka mempunyai jaringan perdagangan etnis (*ethnic trading network*) yang kuat di Kamboja sehingga sebagian besar jalur distribusi barang dikuasai oleh jaringan perdagangan tersebut. Sedangkan pedagang lokal kalah dalam bersaing dan mulai terpinggirkan dengan pedagang pendatang karena harga akhir yang lebih mahal. Hal ini disebabkan oleh sarana transportasi yang kurang baik, modal yang kecil, volume barang yang sedikit, dan jaringan perdagangan yang lemah. Diantara beberapa pedagang lokal, hanya pedagang Cina yang mempunyai jaringan perdagangan yang cukup kuat

karena mereka didukung dengan modal yang besar serta jalinan kekeluargaan yang kuat. Selain itu peran pemerintah untuk melindungi pedagang lokal masih kurang sehingga pedagang lokal hanya menjadi pemain kecil dalam pasar mereka sendiri yang semakin lama mulai dibanjiri dengan komoditas dari Thailand, Viet Nam dan Cina.

5. Kebijakan Pemerintah dalam Pengembangan DAS Mekong Kamboja

Dalam pengurusan kawasan DAS Mekong, pada dasarnya Pemerintah Kamboja telah menunjukkan beberapa kesiapan dan keinginannya dengan mendorong reformasi kebijakan secara terus menerus. Namun demikian, ternyata belum ada kaitan yang kuat antara kebijakan reformasi dengan implementasi aktual di lapangan. Tidak adanya kaitan ini dikarenakan adanya kelemahan pada tingkat kalangan rakyat kebanyakan dalam hal partisipasi politiknya, sehingga segala kepentingan yang menyangkut nasib dan masa depan mereka sebagian besar merupakan akibat dari hasil keputusan pemerintah dan aktor-aktor pada tingkat global.

Kerangka kerja pemerintah yang telah diresmikan dan keinginan untuk menuju ke pemerintahan yang baik harus sejalan beriringan dalam hal manajemen Mekong terutama dalam masalah penangkapan ikan secara illegal. Kebanyakan dari aktivitas penangkapan ikan secara illegal ini didukung oleh para pemilik (tauke) perahu-perahu besar, yang hampir kebanyakan dari mereka berasal dari etnis Sino-Khmer, dengan para pekerjanya para etnis Viet Nam.

Hanya dengan melakukan transformasi hukum tidaklah cukup terutama manfaatnya bagi kalangan rakyat miskin. Pemerintah seharusnya mempunyai keyakinan terlebih dahulu bahwa hukum yang ada memang mempunyai kekuatan hukum dan mempunyai kemampuan untuk melakukan *good governance* untuk mencapai tujuan reformasi kebijakan yang sesungguhnya. Namun komunitas lokal para penangkap ikan, yang sebagian besar berasal dari etnis Cham, pada dasarnya mempunyai kelemahan dalam hal partisipasi politik. Bila penghasilan dari komunitas penangkap ikan terutama orang Cham tidak lebih rendah daripada para pendatang orang Viet Nam, atau bila dibandingkan dengan komunitas penangkap ikan di Thailand, pada dasarnya mereka akan membentuk komunitas yang kuat. Oleh karena itu, peningkatan penghasilan dapat memperkuat komunitasnya.

Secara umum, kebijakan pemerintah Kamboja dalam pengelolaan DAS Mekong terutama dalam masalah perikanan sampai saat ini belum berhasil dan mencapai sasaran tujuan kebijakannya.

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