



NEWSLETTER

International Development Studies, National University of Laos

Issue 3



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REGIONAL INTEGRATION

As our Mekong sub-region has been quickly engaged in market economy since mid 1990s, our natural resources seem to be depleted and disappearing at an alarming rate. Mining concessions have denuded forested land, turning landscape into big holes, disrupting streams and rivers. Rubber plantations in Northern and Southern Laos reduce the richness of biodiversity of forest ecosystem, whereas dam construction projects in the region become a treat, not only to local livelihoods, but also survival of hundreds of fish species. The plan to construct Xayabour dam, the first one in the lower Mekong River, if built, has raised a serious concern among local people and environmentalists and academics. But the most important is the flows of capital and investment into the sub-region.

Regional economic integration has also led to increasing flows of people across borders. A large number of them become cheap labor in the expanding industrial and service sectors in the more developed economy in the region. Many fall victims of human trafficking. Among those who cross borders, investors and businessmen, mostly from China, have increased over time, particularly in Laos and Burma. Connectivity, competition and co-

operation seem to be true as Asian Development Bank told us in the early 1990s.

But what ADB did not tell us is that regional development has negative impacts upon local people's livelihoods, particularly the poor, women and ethnic minorities. However, we know less about how local livelihoods are affected by regional development and local people cope with the change of their livelihood. More studies focusing on this aspect of development needed to be encouraged.

The International Development Studies Program (IDS) has been established for two years with an aim to provide conceptual tools for a better understanding of development or, to be more explicit, politics of development. Students are advised once



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

they start the program to critically examine the interplay between regional integration and local people. What we wish to see is a new generation of researchers who can critically assess development. The first batch of IDS students, most of whom are now collecting data and writing their thesis have chosen to study issues related to regional development on, for example, rural-urban migration, women and development, rubber plantation and local livelihood, traditional medicine, eco-tourism, regional integration and ethnic identity, etc. The second batch students are developing their proposal which aim to study various social issues emerged as Lao society encounters regional development: single mother in urban context, urban space management, street vendors, Chinese migration in Vientiane, political economy of Hydropower development, etc.

IDS program is a collaboration project between CMU and NUOL in an attempt to strengthen human resource capacity. It is hoped that those who graduate from the program will take a leading role in development studies and research in Lao PDR. At the same time, at RCSD/CMU, 10 lecturers from NUOL, Souphanouvong and Champasak Universities have pursued their graduate studies in development studies. We hope that they will be valuable resource when they return to teach at their universities in the near future.

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Other student-lecturers from NUOL, Souphanouvong and Champasak Universities in Lao PDR who were awarded scholarships to study MA program in Sustainable Development at RCSD, Chiang Mai University in year 2010



Mr. Kongkham Keounvong,
from Champasak University
Thesis title: Living as Viet-Kieu in
Lao PDR, Phonbok Village, Pakse
District, Champasak province



Mr. Saengchan Khounphay,
from Champasak University
Thesis title: Consumption of Tourism
in the World Heritage Site of Wat
Phou Champasak, Champasak
Province, Lao PDR



Ms. Latdavone Khamphouvong,
from National University of Laos
Thesis title: Feminization of Moder-
nity: Case Study of Female Migrant
Workers in Garment Factory in
Vientiane, Laos



Ms. Souksamone Sengchanh,
from Souphanouvong University
Thesis title: Border Development,
Resettlement and Adaptation in a
Special Economic Zone: A Case Study
of Khuan Village, Tonpheung District,
Bokeo Province in Lao PDR



Ms. Alounyang Yongye
A lecturer from National
University of Laos, who
was awarded a scholarship
in 2010

Studying in this course is quite hard for Lao students I think, but I have never thought that I will stop them. For me, life in CMU does not easy as many people said because I have to deal with my long papers every day.

Before I came here, a notebook, a Longman dictionary, internet, go to the library and stay late at night are not necessary, here everything are needed, here is international level, here is education. Although, there are many people say that they want to go to study in the United States of America, New Zealand, Australia, Japan and so on, yet Thailand is enough and hard for me. I would like to say “thank you very much” here for Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency to provide the scholarship and give me opportunity to come to study in this program.

OBITUARY ON DAMRONG TAYANIN



Kammu Songs. The songs of Kam Raw

By: Håkan Lundström and Damrong Tayanin,
Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies
Published: 2010
ISBN-10: 8791114322.

This book is the latest publication of Damrong Tayanin, a Swedish scholar of Kammu origin who recently passed away in April 2011.

He was born in Nalae district, Luang Namtha province in 1938 under the name of Kam Raw and had become the only member of his ethnic group to achieve a high academic status in a foreign university. The Kammu (sometimes also written Khmu or Kmhmu) are a Mon-Khmer speaking people of Laos and the largest minority of this country (11% of the total population).

In the early seventies, Damrong Tayanin left his native area and went to Northern Thailand, a frequent practice among the Kammu men of his region who often spend few years in Thai cities working as laborers during their bachelor years. In Lampang, he met Kristina Lindell, the late founder of the Kammu Language and Foklore Project of the Institute of East Asian Languages at Lund University in Sweden. He became quickly her translator, her assistant and her most important informant.

In 1974, at the age of 36, he was invited in Sweden where he stayed with his wife and his children until his death. During his academic career, he received an honorary Ph.D degree from Lund University and completed a Resident Fellowship in the Humanities in the prestigious university of Cornell in the USA.

He published numerous books and articles about Khmu customs, social organization, oral literature and music. He was himself a musician, a poet and a story-teller as well as a very friendly a knowledgeable man.

His last book contains all the songs of his repertoire (around 140) as well as an introduction written in a language accessible to all those interested in the anthropology of ethnic minorities in Southeast Asia. As most of his other books, it is bilingual, both in English and Kammu and represents an invaluable source of information on an oral culture which is quickly disappearing among the young Kammu generations.

Olivier Evrard, anthropologist,
Institute of Research for Development, France,
and Visiting Scholar at the Center for Ethnic
Studies and Development, Chiang Mai University.

PROFILE

Dr. Damrong Tayanin

Researcher and Native Language Consultant
Department of Linguistics and Phonetics
Center for Language and Literature,
Lund University, Sweden

Expertise & Interest:

Kammu culture, changing life of Kammu
people from 1950s until present

Research Projects:

Kammu Dictionary
Kammu Reference Grammar
Separating intonation from tone

IDS STUDENT PERSPECTIVES



The IDS course reminds me of one Japanese word ‘無心’ (Mushin), which means ‘no heart’, a term which is quite difficult to understand, even for Japanese people today. The course has stopped me concentrating solely on Japanese ideograms and has allowed me to step back and take a look at the current development situation in my own country, Laos. What is development? I am not quite sure I understand this, as we are moving forward and seeking something that is more suitable for our societies, and trying to do it according to the aim of achieving greater well-being. I would like to thank every ajarn (teacher) and ajariya - meaning someone who is knowledgeable and guides us towards prosperity.

Mr. Houmnilat Rattavong
IDS Student, Year 2009



The IDS course has improved my knowledge and enlightened me on development issues; thus I would recommend the program as very useful for anyone who wants to understand the impacts of development worldwide.

Mr. Itthiphone Xayyavong
IDS Student, Year 2009

I would like to share my feelings as a student undertaking the IDS program, a program which has changed my life. During the day I have to go to work and only have time to study or read my course material at lunch times or in the evening. As a result, I have to divide my days into three parts: work at the office, study at the University and looking after my family. This is very hard, and sometimes I find that I become confused over what is work and what is study, but in spite of this I consider myself lucky to have had the opportunity to learn from the many teachers on the course from Chiang Mai University, from other universities in Thailand and from NUOL, all of whom are kind and highly qualified, plus have a tremendous amount of experience. I have learned a lot from this course and truly believe it is an excellent program; however I do think that the program could be improved. As the class is taught and the documentation provided is all in English, there are many technical terms which are hard for us as students from Laos to understand; therefore, it would be beneficial if the program had an in-country advisor on hand, someone to provide assistance and clarification in terms of the course content, plus advice on the essays and assignments given to the students.

Ms. Vonemaly Mangnomek
IDS Student, Year 2009

"I consider myself lucky to have had the opportunity to learn from the many teachers on the course from Chiang Mai University, from other universities in Thailand and from NUOL, all of whom are kind and highly qualified, plus have a tremendous amount of experience."

I believe that my education will not stop while I am alive! Even though I have been working for a number of years, I still keep telling myself to learn more, not only as part of my job but also from the many other experienced people around me. I have thus decided to study on the IDS program at NUOL, and as I expected, it has confirmed to me that no one person can know everything about the world. The lecturers' and my fellow students' experience has helped to open my eyes - to see development from a different perspective, and I have also gained a better understanding of development issues in Laos. However, working and studying at the same time has been very hard for me, but I need to work hard in order to achieve my goals, as I believe that by 'working hard today - the future will be mine'. So, I hope I will be able to endure the many bumps on the road now, so that I can enjoy a smoother road further ahead.

Ms. Thippavanh Thammachith
IDS Student, Year 2009

OUR LECTURERS



Dr. Pattana Jierwiriya-pant is an Associate Professor in Agricultural Economics at the Faculty of Agriculture, Chiang Mai University. She has a Ph.D. in Food and Resource Economics from University of Florida, Gainesville in the US

and carries out research and gives lectures on Agricultural Business Management, the Principles of Agricultural Marketing and Advance Agribusiness Management, as well as having had a number of works published on these topics. She is a co-lecturer on Rural Economy and Market Systems for the IDS Program.



Dr. Buapun Promphakping has a Ph.D in Development Studies from Bath University in the UK., and is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kean University in Thailand. He recently became a

member of an ESRC Research Group called 'Well-being in Developing Countries' and led a research project in the northeast of Thailand. During the 2010/11 academic year, he is giving lectures on 'Gender Relations and Participatory Development' plus 'Rural Resource Management and the Social Conundrum'.



Dr. Manoj Potapohn, who co-teaches the IDS course on 'Rural Economy and Market Systems' with Dr. Pattana Jierwiriya-pant and Dr. Silinthone Sacklokham, has a Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the

University of Hawaii in Manoa, USA, for which he wrote a dissertation on water reallocation. Manoj currently serves as Director of Chiang Mai University's Center for Economic and Business Forecasts, and is an Assistant Dean for Research and a lecturer at CMU's Faculty of Economics. His research interests include the economics of natural resources and the environment (including water and climate), development, history and social institutions. He is involved in FAO training, workshop and policy research project on climate change adaptation in agriculture as national climate expert.



Dr. Kabmanivanh Phouxay (PhD in Social and Economic Geography)
Faculty of Social Sciences,
National University of Laos

Dr. Kabmanivanh Phouxay has a Ph.D in Social and Economic Geography from Umea University in Sweden, and is now head of the research and post-graduate division at the Faculty of Social Sciences - NUOL, and also gives lectures on 'Gender Relations and Participatory Development', and 'Rural Livelihoods, Transformation and the Social Conundrum' for the IDS Program. Her main interests include migration and development; socio-economic impact assessments; ethnicity and resettlement, plus gender and rural livelihoods. She has carried out research on internal and international migration - especially rural-urban migration and cross-border migration into Thailand; resettlement and ethnic livelihoods, socio-economic impact assessments and gender migration, worked as a consultant for the Asian Development Bank's 'Lao: Greater Mekong Sub-region Northern Power Transmission Line Project', and now works for the World Bank project, 'Firm Surveys, Labor Migration and Gender Analyses'.

In addition, she previously worked as a lead country researcher for the International Labour Organization (ILO), and now also works as a country research team coordinator in Lao PDR for the Mekong Migration Network (MMN). She has also written contributions to books on migration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, annotated bibliographies and contributed to the book: 'Trans-border Issues in the Greater Mekong Sub-region', published by Ubon Ratchathani University in Thailand. In 2010, she had articles published in the Migration Letter Journal ('Internal Migration and Socio-economic Change in Laos') and in Population, Space and Place ('Rural-Urban Migration, Economic Transition, Status of Female Industrial Factory Workers in Lao PDR'..

► Read her article: *Patterns of Migration and Socio-Economic Change in Lao PDR* on the next page....

PATTERNS OF MIGRATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE IN LAO PDR

By Dr. Kabmanivanh Phouxay,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
National University of Laos



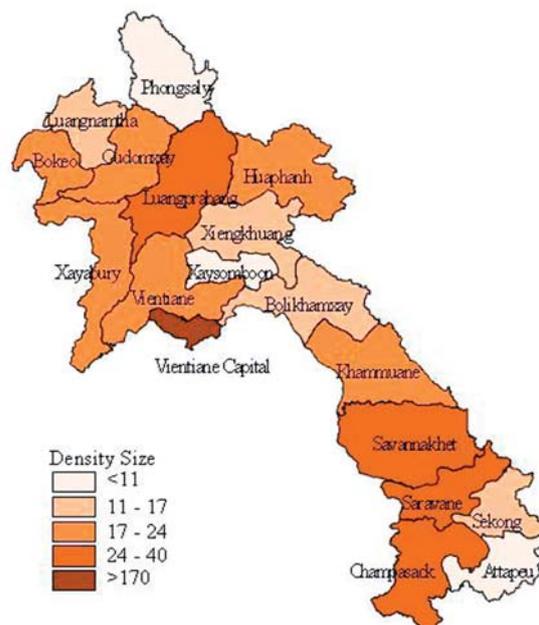
The aim of the thesis is to investigate patterns and consequences of internal and international migration in Laos during the period 1985-2005 on both a macro-and a micro-level. The thesis focuses on the influences of socio-economic change and government policies on inter-regional and rural-urban migration as well as on cross-border migration from Laos to Thailand. The study also examines the effects of migration and industrial factory work on gender relations during economic transition and consequences of undocumented migration to Thailand. The background consists of a discussion on socio-economic change within the country and on government policies influencing migration patterns, as well as on how socio-economic change, urbanization and industrialization in the region affect internal and international migration in Laos.

The thesis consists of three empirical studies which derive from different sources of data; the first is based on Population Censuses in 1995 and 2005 and the second and the third draw from empirical surveys in 2004-2005 and 2006. Paper I focuses on how socio-economic factors and government policies influence migration patterns in Laos. The paper found that the inter-regional migration rate decreased in the later census period. This was

due to significantly higher rural-urban migration in the earlier period, which in turn was influenced by various types of government policies. Papers II and III are based on micro surveys; paper II focuses on an urban industrial area in Vientiane Capital and explores the current feminization of rural-urban migrations during economic transition with specific focus on the effects of industrial work on gender roles and status of women as industrial workers. Industrial work was seen by the women as temporary jobs for saving money, for sending remittances, and for either returning home or moving to other jobs

in Vientiane or Thailand. Paper III is based on surveys in three provinces, and deals with undocumented migration from Laos to Thailand and its consequences. Different income levels, existing social networks, similar language and socio-cultural backgrounds were determinants of cross-border migrations. The study found that migrants who had contacts with informal brokers were highly exposed to risks of human trafficking and violence.

Density of Population by Province
(Population Census 2005)



Source: <http://www.nsc.gov.la>



MA THESIS - RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The 'Modernity' of Young Women Migrant Workers in the Garment Industry in Vientiane, Lao PDR (Rakounna Sisaleumsak, IDS Student - Year 2009)

The implementation of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) in Laos since 1986 has, among other things, encouraged women in rural areas to seek employment in large cities, particularly in Vientiane, where the garment industry flourishes. This non-farm activity has become an attractive source of income for young women, particularly those with few skills, and as a result, they have changed their lifestyles and adopted new cultural values. Their consumption patterns have changed, as have their perceptions of the 'traditional' way of life from which they come.

Inspired by May Beth Mills' work: 'Migrants, Modernity and Identity in Northeast Thailand' (1993), Rakounna plans to study these young, mostly unmarried migrant workers in the garment factories of Vientiane, in order to understand

their aspirations and how they view and define 'modernity', as well as to explore the changes and impacts caused by modernity on their way of life.

The study of modernity began in the mid-1970s, and was then mostly carried out by American sociologists. For example, Alex Inkeles developed the 'Overall Modernity' (OM) scale, to measure the level of modernity among sample populations from different countries - a scale based upon the Western concept of modernity. In contrast, Mills sees modernity as a constructed phenomenon associated with lifestyles, those which the Isan female migrant workers in his study aspire to.

Rakounna has already begun interviewing female migrant workers in the factories, mostly in the eve-



nings after work, but it is still too early for her to draw conclusions regarding their aspirations. She has received a good deal of cooperation from the workers, although from the data she has collected thus far, she has not been able to develop a clear idea about the meanings they attach to modernity. With more time spent in the field, it is hoped that she will establish how the migrant workers' lives in her study differ from those covered in Mills' work.



My project examines the impact that Thai television programs have, and in particular Thai soap operas, on the behavior of young Lao people. Over the past decade, there has been concern aired by the Government in Laos, plus school teachers and parents, over the negative impacts that Thai television programs have in terms of the increasingly violent behavior of young Lao

Violent Images on Thai Soap Operas: The Perceptions and Responses of Lao Secondary School Students

(Sisaveuy Chanthavisack, IDS Student Year 2009)

people. This research study therefore sets out to examine how Lao teenagers perceive and respond to violent content in the Thai dramas shown on TV. However, my ongoing research, conducted using in-depth interviews with twelve high-school students (aged sixteen to eighteen), has found no direct relationship between increasingly violent behavior and the watching of Thai dramas. My findings include that: 1) Lao teenagers do not have an interest in watching Thai television dramas, 2) their perception of

Thai TV dramas is not that they are violent, but that they are boring and repetitive in terms of plots and themes, and 3) they prefer to watch Korean dramas (by renting DVDs/VCDs and/or watching Youtube), or chat on their mobile phones/using Facebook, for they perceive these activities as more modern. These findings point to the fact that there are different views held by different generations of Lao people about what constitutes violence, and what it means to be 'modern' in Laos today.

GMS RESEARCH PROJECTS

Voices from the Mekong: Social Networking and Identity Negotiation in the Era of “Regional Development” in a Thai-Lao Border Community

By Ms. Pakakrong Makpun, RCSD Alumni, Chiang Mai University (2008)

This thesis is an ethnographic study about the survival tactics of local people living along the course of the Mekong River, in a border village between Thailand and Lao PDR. The field research was conducted mainly in a fishing village on the banks of the Mekong River called Ban Pak Ing situated in Chiang Khong district, Chiang Rai province, Thailand. However, since the study also deals with cross-border issues such as networks, the research site covered the other side of the Mekong in Laos, where local people from both sides are still closely connected. In the context of the Mekong regional development, the process of contemporary regionalization has brought varied benefits to many people across many nations. Inevitably, this process has also led to the marginalization of other groups, particularly for downstream people.

The study, therefore, aims to understand and investigate the complex livelihood of borderland communities along the Mekong River, focusing on network formations both horizontally with other Lao people on the opposite side of the Mekong in Lao PDR and also vertically with the local NGO in Chiang Khong. During the time of a “fish decline crisis” due to rapid blasting and the upper Mekong dam construction, the horizontal type of network between local people from both sides of the Mekong which has existed from before the modern nation-state era, has been reproduced to benefit both Thai-Lao people in Ban Pak Ing and also Lao people from the opposite side. During the Mekong regional development era, a new kind of vertical network has been established between local NGO and local people in Ban Pak Ing.

The study finds that Thai-Lao people in Ban Pak Ing have maintained and reproduced a network with their Lao kin and friends in order to get cheap labor in this ‘fish decline’ crisis. The thesis illustrates that different groups of people in Ban Pak Ing have employed their tactics in a variety of ways, in particular for the usage of their social capital which is also related to other capitals they can access in terms of economic and natural resources. Between the rich and the poor, the tactics for sustaining their livelihoods are different. In a complex local reality, the

horizontal kind of network also involves unequal power relations between the Thai-Lao employers in Ban Pak Ing and their “Phi-Nong Lao” employees. Lao female workers, who come across the Mekong to work in tobacco fields, often find that as well as field work, they are required to work in their employee’s household. Nevertheless, their life struggle is not always inactive. Many Lao girls coming to work, also have another goal, that is to tactically look for their possible future “Thai” husband in a ‘Lao-Thai village’ like Ban Pak Ing, expecting to have a better life in terms of economic aspects.

Living at the Mekong borderland, the Thai-Lao people in Ban Pak Ing have distinguished themselves both from “Thai” people and “Lao” people from Lao PDR. They have carved out their own identity and dynamically choose to present their multiple identities in a different context. Joining an environment oriented NGO also provides a space for local people to negotiate with the hegemonic powers from China and the GMS countries. In this case, they tactically present themselves as “Children of the Mekong”, regardless of whether they are “Thai” or “Lao”.

In doing this, they have gained a ‘strategic identity’, attempting to announce themselves as ‘fishermen’ who should have rights over



the riparian resources where their lives have been bonded together. Network formation with different groups of people has shown that local people are not always passive; instead, they know who to make friends with in a time of difficulty. In a complex ground reality, tactics in everyday life are dynamically used differently depending on the context of class, gender and economic status and one should not overlook the unequal power relations which are negotiated at different levels.



Agrarian Changes and Sustainable Livelihood Strategies in Sub-urban Vientiane, Lao PDR

By Mr. Sivilay Keobountham, RCSD Alumni, Chiang Mai University (2007)

During the last two decades, Lao peasants have had to cope with rapid economic, social, cultural and ecological changes, which in some instances have created new alternatives for conducting sustainable livelihood strategies. This study investigated the government policy of the market-oriented economy (New Economic Mechanism) and commodity production, including irrigation development projects. Simultaneously, this study examined effects of these policies on peasants' traditional subsistence livelihoods. This study focused on the peasants in Thin Pheer village, Hadxaifong district, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR. A number of 99 households of peasants in this village were interviewed and observed to gain in-depth information about their sustainable livelihood strategies after these policies

implementation, particularly strategies of coping with fluctuating market prices and new consumerism.

As a result, this study found out that the peasant moral economy has rapidly changed from subsistence-based economy to market-oriented economy. The peasants' agricultural practices now focus mainly on economic benefits. All agricultural products have to be sold and bought by using cash. All peasants aim toward their own interests rather than the interests of their community. Money becomes a dominant objective for everyday activities. These activities of the peasants' livelihood strategies have rapidly led economic, social, cultural and ecological changes in their community.



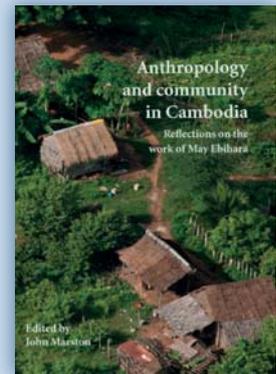
In terms of the market-oriented economy, many peasants in this village have adopted different livelihood strategies. Some households have adjusted their land use patterns in order to achieve food security and cash income for buying consumer goods and other services. Land is more distributed to individual household and market has become the major driving force for peasants' household economic development. Large landowners invest more in monoculture and cash crop cultivation, while small-sized landowners continue to

practice commercial agriculture on their own land. Similarly, the peasants who have no land have to rent carefully for growing cash crops to sustain livelihood sustainability. Some households have changed to working as hired laborers, weavers, retailers, and van drivers to earn cash income. In contrast, the peasants who have no labor forces are still engaged in subsistence agriculture as before.

Under the processes of commercial agricultural production, the peasants who are far from irrigation canals and the Mekong River have to use underground water for their agricultural practices, while peasants who are closer to the road have changed from agricultural practices to perform businesses activities. However, the activities of the peasants' livelihood strategies have both agricultural productive patterns and non-agricultural patterns. The market economy has created the processes of competition for more economic benefits than common social benefits. At the same time, the traditional kin-based social relations have been replaced by new economic-based social relations, which have changed earlier moral social meanings and values. Besides, a market economy has also created unequal access to livelihood resources, and the inequalities have led to wider

economic and social differentiation among peasant households.

Nowadays, growing cash crops requires more supply of water. Moreover, chemical fertilizers, pesticides and land have intensively been used for economic benefits. But this practice has led to socio-economic problems and environmental deterioration because of increased chemical fertilizer inputs and the competition of market price. Agrarian changes seem very complex and challenging for the peasants' sustainable livelihoods. The different livelihood strategies showed the peasants' response to the policies of the market economy and commodity production. Based on the arguments on sustainable livelihoods put forth by the theories and concepts of development in the last few decades, this study considered that sustainable livelihoods comprise main resources of four types of capital: (1) natural capital, (2) economic or financial capital, (3) human capital, and (4) social capital. These resources are basic essential factors for human sustainable livelihoods. Therefore, this study suggests that organizations both in the state and private sectors should create more opportunity for access to livelihood resources for peasants to achieve sustainable livelihoods.



Anthropology and Community in Cambodia - Reflections on the Work of May Ebihara

Edited by Marston, John

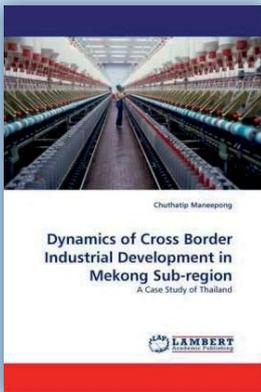
Published 2011

ISBN 9781876924744

This collection explores - in rich detail - the nature of community in rural Cambodia. It examines the debates about the ways community - or its absence - is reflected in social organization, reciprocity, religion, gender, and a shared sense of trust. It also considers questions of community in the lead-up to and the aftermath of the catastrophic Pol Pot period. The book's essays have been inspired by the life and works of the late May Ebihara, who was a pioneer in the anthropology of rural Cambodia, and who was a friend and mentor to all of the contributors to the collection. Taken as a whole, like much of Ebihara's pathbreaking work, this book deals with processes of grass-roots transformation. The book also includes a bibliography of Ebihara's works, as well as an interview with her, in which she reflects on Cambodia and her career in anthropology.

Reference:

<http://www.isbs.com/partnumber.asp?cid=27363&pnid=334926>



Dynamics of Cross Border Industrial Development in Mekong Sub-region: A Case Study of Thailand

By Chuthatip Maneepong

Published 2010

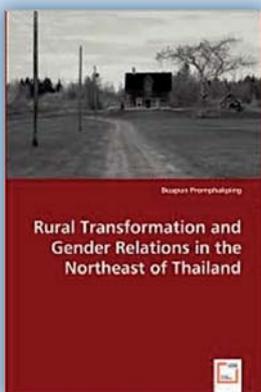
ISBN 978-3838319100

An important strategy for turning the periphery of border area into centre of growth, and for accelerating economic concentration away from capital cities is maximizing the value of border location. Large-scale industry located in border areas and relocated to bordertowns has a growth potential by exploiting the location advantages of the abundant and cheap labour force in peripheral area, as well as cross border infrastructure services with the support of ethnic ties between two adjoining countries. This theory has been successfully applied in several cross border areas, e.g. the US-Mexico border zone, and Singapore - Johor - Riau Growth Triangle zone. It is not matter of whether policies supporting the industrial development in border towns are right or wrong. This book

raises the question of whether they are applicable, feasible and effective in less developed border region with a majority of small and medium-scale industries such as in Thai border towns, especially during times like the Asian Economic Crisis. The book thus discusses: what produces entrepreneurs and how do they operate?, What are advantages of border locations for entrepreneurs?, What are impact of government investments and other measures? What other factors contribute to and hinder industrial establishment and growth in border towns, and how?

Reference:

<http://www.amazon.com/Dynamics-Border-Industrial-Development-Sub-region/dp/3838319109>



Rural Transformation and Gender Relations in the Northeast of Thailand

By Buapun Promphakping

Published 2008

ISBN 978-3-639-05445-3

There has been competing views about gender relations in Thailand. On the one hand studies suggest that women status was underpinned by traditional institutions. In this view, the transformation has largely undermined women status. On the other hand women are viewed being oppressed by traditional patriarchal types of institutions, such as Buddhism. The transformation therefore serves to release women from being exploited. This book examines rural transformation taken place in rural the Northeast of Thailand, and considers how gender relations are implicated by these changes. It is argued

that gender relations during the rapid transformation are fluid and ambivalent. The transformation in which households diversify their means to sustain their livelihoods generates a complex terrain in which new social relations are established. The transformation can result in either the decline or improvement resources women control. A decline tends to undermine their position, while increase in resources can enhance the leverage for negotiating their relationship.

Reference:

http://www.bod.ch/index.php?id=1132&objk_id=178608

RESOURCE CENTERS



<http://www.plurality.net>

The Center for Research on Plurality in the Mekong Region (CERP) was established in 2003. It aims to conduct research and generate new body of knowledge on the pluralistic societies and cultures in the Mekong Region, and will suggest development alternatives that are sustainable and respectful of cultural differences. This center will also integrate research into graduate-level education and build a body of knowledge based on Asian experiences as well as disseminate information for academic and development purposes.

Contact details:

Center for Research on Plurality in the Mekong Region (CERP)
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University
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Tel / Fax: 043-203215
E-mail: cerp2001@hotmail.com123



<http://www.laostudies.org>

Center for Lao Studies is founded in 2006, has established itself as a resource center for both the general public as well as those of Lao heritage, and serves as a liaison to cultural and community organizations, universities, and academic institution. The mission of the Center for Lao Studies is to advance knowledge and engagement in the field of Lao Studies through research, education and information sharing.

Contact details:

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<http://www.mpowernetwork.org>

M-POWER, or the Mekong Program on Water Environment and Resilience, began in 2004 as a knowledge network with members from the six countries of the Mekong Region that encompass the territory, ecosystems, people, economies and politics of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Burma/Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and China's Yunnan Province. The network is undertaking action based research, facilitated dialogues and knowledge brokering to improve water governance in the Mekong Region in ways that support sustainable livelihoods and healthy communities and ecosystems.

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