



This paper explores, in the context of a present phenomenon in human security agendas, the relations between the riparian people and states on the Sesan River hydropower projects: the Yali Falls Dam and the Lower Sesan II Dam, created by the Vietnamese and Cambodian governments respectively. In this paper, I explore the human-security agendas arising from the contested relations between riparian people and national states with respect to two Sesan River hydropower projects: the Vietnamese government's Yali Falls Dam and the Cambodian government's Lower Sesan II Dam. The Sesan River, whose total catchment area is 19,250 km² (7,630 km² in Cambodia and 11,620 km² in Vietnam) (MRC 2014: 5), is one of the largest tributaries of the Mekong River. It originates from the Central Highlands of Vietnam, flowing from two provinces: Kon Tum and Gia Lai, to four districts within Cambodia's Ratanakiri province. Specifically, the Sesan River flows from Kon Tum and Gia Lai Provinces in Vietnam's Central Highlands to the Oyadav, Andong Meas, Taveng, and Veun Sai Districts in Cambodia's Ratanakiri Province: Oyadav, Andong Meas, Taveng, and Veun Sai, converging. Ultimately, the Sesan River converges with the Sekong and Srepok Rivers in Stung Treng Province, located west of Ratanakiri. According to *The General Population Census of Cambodia 2008*, the population in Ratanakiri (149,997) and Stung Treng (111,734) is was 261,731. People living along the Sesan River in Cambodia numbered are 94,919: 85,029 were in Ratanakiri and 9,890 were in Stung Treng (Baran *et al.* 2013: 32). Most riparian people are from indigenous groups, including the Brao, Jarai, Kachok, Kavet, Kreung, Lung, Phnong, and Tampuan.

Due to increasing increases in domestic demand for energy have prompted, the Vietnamese government (since the mid-1990s) and the Cambodian government (since the mid-2000s) to have initiated the hydropower projects along the Sesan River. Both The two governments' narratives offer similar arguments: are that the hydropower projects will could provide benefits such as electricity and job opportunities, all of which will could enhance living standards and reduce poverty. However But, neither of the governments has invited the majority of the Cambodian Sesan River's riparian inhabitants have not been invited by both governments in regards to participate in the dams' decision-making processes related to the dams. Also, they have not enjoyed the benefits that both governments claimed and they have been left facing social and environmental impacts caused by hydropower dams' construction and operation. Also, while reaping few

of these much touted benefits, the local inhabitants have been left facing many social and environmental repercussions traceable to the hydropower dams' construction and operation.

The concept of Hhuman_-security ~~concept~~ emergeds in from the mid-1990s in the realm of international relations and which has been dominated by state-centric discourses. The Hhuman-security concept emphasises that the need of individuals need for protection and empowerment, and re-defines the role of states as security-providers. Thus, , which means that in according to the human-security concept, the primary security referent is individuals rather than states. The Cambodian and the Vietnamese government claimed that hydropower projects would bring riparian people benefits to reduce poverty and improve living standards. Both governments shouldered the responsibility to provide freedom from want needs Both the Cambodian and the Vietnamese governments have, as regards the aforementioned hydropower projects, promised to shoulder the responsibility of meeting the riparian people's freedom-from-want needs. It is reasonable to say that the hydropower projects are human-security oriented. However, the absence of t majority of the Sesan River's riparian people from in the decision-making processes surrounding the and hydropower- development of hydropower projects is compelling evidence that means that these human-security oriented hydropower the projects have seldom do not empowered non-elite stakeholders individuals. This distressing outcome, which reflects a present-day phenomenon in human-security question agendas debated by that critical theorists in the realm of international relations have; been arguing, which is that has the human-security concept has reinforced the power of states while failing to 'power but not empowered historically marginalised and disenfranchised local communities individuals (McCormack 2008)?.

In this study, I will explore relations between riparian people (mainly the ones living in Stung Treng and Ratanakiri) and nation-states (the central governments of Vietnam and Cambodia) in the context of a present phenomenon in human-security agendas. I argue that, regarding the Sesan River's hydropower projects, relations between riparian people and states on the Sesan River's hydropower projects are have been highly contested: the riparian people have been y are struggling to assume a degree of influence for supremacy over on the hydropower projects while the states have been easily preserving their supremacy in this regard. and t The resulting causes of contestation, which reflects the hegemonically superior status of states and the woeful disempowerment of the masses, has helped shaped important are associated with two repercussions caused by a present phenomenon in human-security agendas.

~~I have two objectives in T~~this study ~~has two objectives~~. First, ~~I this article~~ attempts to broaden the scope of ~~current research devoted to the study of~~ Mekong hydropower development. ~~The~~ Mekong River's riparian states, ~~which~~ including not only Vietnam and Cambodia but also China, Myanmar, and Thailand, have all developed hydropower dams to meet increasing domestic energy needs. Numerous studies ~~have~~ focused on riparian states' ~~relations including bilateral and multilateral~~ cooperation and conflicts ~~bilaterally and multilaterally~~ (Dosch and Hensengerth 2005; ~~Goh 2007~~; Hensengerth 2009; ~~Goh 2007~~; O'Neill 2014: 185–190). However, local ~~non-governmental organisations (NGOs)~~ and riparian people have organised campaigns against dam projects. Their movements have influenced riparian states' hydropower policies. ~~Riparian~~~~The~~ states have either adopted an intimidation policy or revised their hydropower policy to respond ~~to the~~ local NGOs and riparian people (Baird 2016; Yeophantong 2014). ~~With respect to the dam projects,~~ there is no doubt that local NGOs ~~and as well as~~ riparian people have been the ~~main stakeholders actors to~~ interacting ~~with riparian the~~ states ~~in the dam projects~~. Thus, ~~the attention given to~~ relations between ~~the~~ local NGOs and ~~riparian the~~ states ~~should be equivalent to the attention given to and~~ relations between ~~the~~ riparian people and ~~the~~ states ~~should receive equivalent attention as relations between riparian states have~~. ~~The findings of the present study is article can~~ should enrich ~~research the study of on~~ Mekong hydropower development ~~by focusing on the often overlooked in the area of~~ relations between ~~non-state actors riparian people~~ and states. ~~My Ssecond objective in the study is, this article attempts~~ to expand on ~~discourse of~~ critical theory ~~as it has helped shape on the~~ human-security concept. Critical theorists ~~have~~ argued that ~~the~~ human-security concept ~~serves to~~ reinforces states' power but disempowers individuals. I take this argument further, ~~proposing to say~~ that states' predominance and individuals' disempowerment have ~~created two repercussions making relations turned the interactions~~ between states and individuals ~~into~~ contested ~~relations~~.

~~For my research presented here,~~ I ~~have~~ conducted two field studies. The first one ~~is~~ took place from November to December 2015, and the second one ~~is~~ took place from April to May 2016. ~~In the process,~~ ~~From these studies,~~ I interviewed workers and directors of local ~~non-governmental organisations (NGOs)~~ based in ~~the City of~~ Banlung town. The ~~three main se~~ NGOs ~~are~~ were Save Vulnerable Cambodians (SVC), the Highlander Association (HA), and the 3S Protection Network (3SPN). ~~All~~ of which have been providing support to ~~the Cambodia Sesan River's dam affected riparian dam-affected Cambodians living along the Sesan River~~ people. ~~In addition~~ Moreover, I ~~used in-depth and semi-standardised interview methods to guide my~~ interviewed ~~with a sample of~~ 25 riparian people including elders and chiefs of local