

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Statement of the Problems

Fisheries in Cambodia have played an important role in the daily life of people as well as the national economy. Fishery resources contribute about 75 to 85 per cent of the total protein intake of the Cambodians and contribute to 5 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Cambodia is one of the leading freshwater fishery producers in the world with an estimated total catch of 290, 000-430,000 tons per year, generating US\$ 150-250 millions annually (Van Zalinge, Thouk and Tana 1998). This is probably an underestimated. Degen et al (2000) demonstrates that the total catch "might easily be 500,000 tons or higher", estimated to be worth about US\$300 million per annum. This equates to approximately 10% of official Cambodian Gross Domestic Product and is obviously of great national significance (see also Van Zalinge 2003)<sup>1</sup>.

The richness of the fishery comes from the hydrological regime of the Mekong River and the Tonle Sap Lake which creates a vast inland water system, comprising numerous rivers, streams, deep pools<sup>2</sup> and lakes extending into flooded forest, grassland, rice fields, and swamps (Thuok and Sina 1997).

Historically, the Mekong is one of the great rivers in the world, which flows 4, 200 kms from the Tibetan Himalayas of China through Myanmar, Thailand, Laos PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam (Öjendal and Torell 2000).

The river basin covers an area nearly 800,000 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to about 70 million people (Öjendal 2000). The water of the Mekong has shaped the pattern of human settlements in the region and created a vast natural resource-based such as

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<sup>1</sup> The Cambodia's freshwater capture fish is the fourth largest in the world after China, India and Bangladesh (Van Zalinge 2003).

<sup>2</sup> A deep pool is a confined, relatively deep area within a river channel, which acts as a dry season refuge for a number of important fish species, as a permanent habitat for other species or as a spawning areas of some other fish.

fishery that has historically provided the primary basic need of livelihood (Ahmed and Hirsch 2000).

One of the Mekong's natural resource-based is commonly known as wild fish is visible in the markets. The natural fisheries have played an important role to the local and national economies, and to urban people who do not produce their own food (TERRA 1999).

In terms of natural fishery resources, Cambodia remains one of the richest countries in the Mekong Region, but these resources have been rapidly destroyed in the past two decades of civil war. Over-fishing, the lack of law enforcement, and mismanagement of the government are claimed as the main reasons for destruction of fishery resource (Degen et al 2000). A lot of unsuitable fishing activities remain uncontrolled, for example, the use of explosives, electric shocking, poisoning, and blocking of public fishing grounds. As a result, the fishery resource has declined, resulting in negative impacts on livelihoods of local people (Sethi 2000).

The government has issued decrees and declarations to stop these activities. According to the Declaration-No.2, which was signed by Prime Minister Hun Sen on May 1999, authorities at all levels including the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and other relevant authorities must cooperate with fisheries officers to crack down on illegal sale to private fishery owners. The government of Cambodia, however, does not have the capability to control fishing practices and access to the fisheries resources, except through privatization of these tasks, as is done through the fishing lot system or commercial fishing (Van Zalinge, Thuok, Tana 1998).

Tana (1999) contends that the structure of fishing lots system is geared toward a few powerful interests making profits from fishing, so the incentives are all toward increasing the scale of fishing and reaping large profits within a defined time. He also explains that fisheries management by the State has always been a step behind commercial fishing practices in which its means of regulations, restrictions and taxes cannot keep up with the developing the commercial environment. So the State has always failed to do effective tax collection because large-scale fishers always claim that there has been a fish decline and they have a financial losses. But because the State has a financial stake in large-scale fishing, it has justified the intensity and expansion proposed by those activities.

Besides the limited effectiveness of the state in fish management, there are other external factors that influence the fishery. These include Mega projects of other states in the Mekong Region, and the growth-oriented development although there is unequal development of the riparian countries in the region. Economic development in Cambodia and elsewhere in the Mekong Region has considered natural resources, such as, water, fish, forests, mineral, and biodiversity as factor of productions (Öjendal and Torell 2000) and transformed natural resources into money that legitimizes only an exclusionary form of capitalism (Le billon 2000).

The recent admission of Cambodia into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community, brings with it the expectation that its economy will be raised to a comparable level of others member countries. It is not yet clear what effects the integration with regional and global markets management of natural resource (Degen et al 2000).

One mechanism of economic integration proposed by the funding agencies (such as ADB, World Banks, IMF) is through the processes of a well-regulated market economy operating under the framework of a working democracy. This model is based on the idea of a society in which resources are governed by right rather than access. That is, by rules agreed by society through law or custom. By pushing this ideal model without being able to resolve unequal power relations, donors paradoxically strengthen only the shadow state<sup>3</sup> politics by validating an exclusionary system of resource access (Le billon 2000).

In mid-1990s, Cambodia's economy started to integrate with its neighbors and the world, and the exploitation of fishing grounds has been intensified. Fish become a source of wealth for influential people which has happened not only for the elite-controlled 'lot' established by the state fisheries department, but also in the more marginal areas left over for poor fisher families. On the other hand, intensified and presumably unsustainable fishing also has occurred in the 'open' areas of fisheries, where poor fishers scramble in a typically chaotic Cambodian version of "the tragedy

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<sup>3</sup> The term "shadow state" refers to the system through which rulers are 'drawing authority from their abilities to control markets and their material rewards'. The 'formal' and 'shadow' sides of the state are not neatly divided, as actors and relations overlap, but this conceptual division helps in understanding the supposedly 'irrational' behavior of the state during periods of crisis or transition. (Le billon 2000).

of the commons” (Meng Tarr 2003). In this sense, since the open economy has been introduced, it has caused the crisis of the common property such as fishery.

Through out the process of commercialization, the fishing ground, as the space, has been the subject for economic transformation by the implementation of standard capitalist institutions such as the exclusive right of private property, license, and corporate structure. Originating with fish, this powerful discourse was borrowed and built upon by common property thinkers such as Garret Hardin. St. Martin (2001) argues that the tragedy of the commons become a standard of explanation for a variety of resource scarcity and poverty issues and offered a clear remedy for them. The process of privatizing the common similar to these of modern capitalist society.

The tragedy of the commons has over emphasized competition while underestimating cooperation in ecological relationships (Berkes 1998). Many studies have demonstrated that the vision of the tragedy of the commons has become the foundation of the hegemonic discourse of fisheries management (St. Martin 2001). For instance, the centralized authority in Cambodia responsible for wild-capture fisheries management has historically been very weak or even non-existent in remote areas like in Stung Treng province.

In this part, I want to discuss Stung Treng province specifically. The province is situated in the northeast of Cambodia which consists of five administrative districts: Thalaboriwat, Stung Treng, Siem Bok, Se San and Siem Pang district. The Mekong river first flows through this province from Lao PDR and meets with three tributaries: Sekong, Se San and Sre Pok at the provincial town. The confluence of this river and tributaries have characterized by deep pools, and rapidly flowing water through uneven rocks in the riverine and thick flooded forest. This provides not only a good situation for transportation and fishing, but also good ecological condition for many species of fish to lay eggs and grow up in the flooded forest and those deep pools in the rivers.

Because it is located in remote areas and with the process of economy transformation from command economy to open economy, the fish and other natural resources are subject to be depleted by economic exploitation and expansion. This process has resulted in anarchic management. As a consequence, the fisheries sector has been in the state of crisis worldwide as well as in the Mekong region. This sector -

is being cited as an example of the “tragedy of the commons” (Garret Hardin 1968).

On the other hand, the tragedy can be overcome by necessary prescriptions designed to transform common-property to resemble private property regimes in structure and use (St. Martin 2001, Berkes and Farwar, 1989, Hving and Graham 1996) through the process of territorialization (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995).

Following this similar trend, in Stung Treng, ever since 1995 (except 1997) all streams and tributaries along the Mekong River have been mapped and leased to private companies. These processes are strongly supported by local elites and powerful people in the province for purpose of revenue improvement and for better resource management. The benefits from these concessions are expected to be spent on community and provincial development, but little has trickled down to the intended, as corruption prevails over the good intention (EWG 2000).

It may be “ unjust” but it is “anarchic” with lawless-disorder management. Because fisheries and other resources have been contested by various actors for economic exploitation. According to the report by the Provincial Fisheries Office on Stung Treng in 1997, fish production in the province was about 500 tons per year accounting for 0.2% of the national fresh water fish production. Nevertheless this figure is thought to be under-estimated as there were many illegal fishing activities happening through out the province (Vannaren 1999).

According to the Fiat-Law of Fisheries in 1987, Stung Treng is considered an important spawning habitat situated in northeast of Cambodia along the Mekong River. The province is characterized by the confluence of the Mekong River and three other tributaries: Sekong, Srepok and Sesan which create a vast flooded forest, floodplain, creeks, streams, and many deep pools that support fish spawning and migration (Vannaren 1999).

Ahmed et al (1998) demonstrate that some fish species spawn in Stung Treng and migrate to Tonle Sap, where they mature during the rainy season. When the water starts receding, they have to migrate back to the Mekong River in northern Cambodia (Kratie and Stung Treng province) where there are a lot of deep pools for their breeding and spawning cycle.

In recognition of the importance of these areas, in 1987, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) declared the provinces which form the

upper part of the Mekong in Cambodia as protected areas for fish spawning grounds and prohibited fishing lots.

In 1999, the Mekong River from Stung Treng town up to Lao border were designated as a Ramsar Site (a Wetland Ground of International Importance), which remains under government protection according to the International Ramsar Convention Treaty. In practice, some concessions and private fishing grounds are within the Ramsar Site, in connection with the concept of wise use prescribed by the convention.

Historically, local authorities have failed to prevent illegal fishing and are commonly reported to be involved in the illegal activities or selective implementation of fisheries legislation in favor of commercial interests for personal gain. These activities appear to be opportunistic rather than to be coordinated. Local communities, however, are also widely involved in using illegal fishing in contestation with these powerful people, which most often resulted in face-to-face confrontation with company owners (EWG 2000).

Even though the Fishery Law designated the fishing grounds in Stung Treng as spawning ground and protected areas, since the 1990s, access to these fishing grounds have become more chaotic with the foreseeable degradation of fish stocks. This situation has drawn the attention of stakeholders, in particular the local fishers; NGOs and government departments to look for the alternative management measure. As a consequence, the Fishery Community Management has been set up as a form of measure, which is controlled by local fishers with certain rules and regulations. Brosius, and Tsing (1998) argue that community-based natural resource management programs are based on the promises that local populations have a greater interest in the sustainable use of resources than does the state or distant cooperate managers. They are more cognizant of the intricacies of local ecological processes and practices and effectively manage those resources through local or “traditional” forms of access.

Since the establishment of the fishery community committee, the illegal practice and anarchic management of fishery resource have reduced and the state of fishery resource management become more normal in the area. Unfortunately, private fishing operations are also introduced and given concession in which the local authority has divided up fishing ground into fish conservation and commercial

fishing.

The demarcation of space into different fishing grounds have been made and remade, reflecting the power relations among the powerful, local elites and business. This is thereby legitimizing and emphasizing the claims of these agents as against the needs, practices and claims of local communities for the control of natural resources (Harley 1994, Vandergeest and Peluso 1995, Scott 1998). In this sense, the common property resource has been seen as being contested by different groups of actors competing to fishing ground in order to gain more profit.

Given what has been described above, this study set out to explore the current state of fisheries management in Stung Treng. The main emphasis was on identifying how access to fishery resources were being modified and what strategies small-scale fishery-folk who were being excluded were adopting to try and regain access needed to maintain their livelihoods. That is, how small-scale fisher-folk create space.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This study aims to investigate how small-scale fishers create the space by focusing on local fisher-folk in Koh Sneng village of Thalaboriwat district. The research will explore the power relations and effects of social and political conditions on the process of transformation of the resource management regime. The following questions will be addressed:

1. How have power relations among different actors involved in the fishery resources developed their strategies in response to processes of social, political, economic, and ecological changes?
2. How have different actors competed for these resources in the context of fish conservation in the area?
3. How have dominant discourses of conservation and scientific fisheries management been used to justify or resist the commercialization of the fishery?

## 1.3 Research Objectives

To enquire into the above research questions, this study is set to achieve specifically the following objectives.

1. To examine the historical development and social ecological contexts of fisheries resource management and the power relations in fishery resource management in Stung Treng.
2. To contextualize the policy and fishery management by the state and how such a policies affect the property relations at the local level.
3. To understand the local context of space making through the formation of fishery community.
4. To find out what changes have occurred after different actors gained access to fisheries management.

#### **1.4 Research Methodology**

The research methodology is divided into three parts: the site selection, data gathering and data analysis.

##### **1.4.1 Research Site Selection**

I chose Koh Sneng<sup>4</sup> in Thalaborwat district, for several reasons. First, in terms of its ecological setting, the village is situated along the channel of the Mekong River surrounded by many islands where rich natural resource and biodiversity, such as, flooded forest, water birds, reptiles and amphibians, and fish can be found. They are the main source of local people's livelihood. Diversified activities for their livelihood are rice cultivation, fishing, farming and collecting Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP), animal raising, and conducting small trading.

Because of this ecological setting, there are two kind of fishing grounds: the first is referred to the public space such as tributaries, river channels where people can catch fish year round by using traditional fishing techniques and equipments. The second is the protected fishing ground for certain endangered fish species such as: Trey Reach (*Giant-catfish*), Trey Traw Sok (*Probarbus jullieni* or *Seven-line Barb*), Trey Koul Raing (*Giant barbs*) and Trey Pra (*Iridescent shark-catfish*). The signboard of these fish species had been put in the village since 2001 as the symbol of fish conservation and protection.

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4. Koh Sneng means Horn Island which derives from the hunter whose gun made from horn to hunt wild pigs. Unfortunately, he lost his gun in this island while hunting. Later on people prefer to call the village Koh Sneng.



Second, historically, fishing grounds and fishing domains in Koh Sneng used to be well managed in traditional ways and fish have been available. But since the 1990s, fish resources have declined as modern fishing equipments, and the privatization of fishing grounds have been introduced both in open access and protected areas. Most of the fish caught are not only sold in the provincial town, but also in Phnom Penh and at the Lao PDR border (*Veun Kham*). This anarchic management has been restored gradually with the formation of Village Fishery Community in early 2000. This process has resulted in the dramatic change in property relations in terms of natural resource management through the actions of the authorities. Some of the productive space in the village has been leased for private exploitation, while leaving the less productive space for the local fishers. This allowed me to find out the complex system of sources of livelihood and contestation in shifting of property relations. In addition, it allowed me to review the theory of the tragedy of the commons in the village.

Third, I had spent some time as an NGO worker in this area so that I understood this situation in the area relatively well. Many activities were taken place in the village which involved the local government participation. In 1998, I was in this village for tree plantation ceremony which was one of the environmental awareness campaign. In 1999, I was involved in organizing the regional workshop on the Ramsar Convention and local participation in natural resource management in which Stung Treng was designated and declared as one of the Ramsar Sites in Cambodia. Since then, my life has been attached to the natural resource and the nature of conflict to natural resource, in particular the conflict to fish resource in the village.

Fourth, fishing ground in Koh Seng has attracted different ethnic groups who come to fish in this area seasonally. These ethnics are Cham, Vietnamese and Khmer-Lao who are from other places, which allow me to study the inter-ethnic relations between fishers, the conflict over access and the space they make in order to get maximize and maintain their catch. The village is about 1 km width and 4.5km length consists of 945 people with 168 families which is small enough for me to conduct my study.

Based on these reasons, Koh Sneng is the place where I can find examples and observe the tragedy of the commons, which involves different actors: NGOs, business exploitation and conservations and contestation.

### 1.4.2 Research Methods

The issues of fishery resource management in Koh Sneng is complex and dynamic. To study this, I have employed four main research methods: Documentary research, participant observations, key informant interview, and participatory methods.

(1) Documentaries research (19 October-30 October 2002):

Fortunately, I arrived in Phnom Penh on 19 October 2002 after I defended my thesis proposal in September 2002. Before I entered the field, I spent some time in Phnom Penh collecting existing data which are related to social and economic studies in fisheries, fish catch and fishery laws. The main source of these related documents were obtained from Oxfam GB, Oxfam American, CDRI (Cambodia Development Resource Institute), NGO Forum on Cambodia and FACT (Fisheries Action Coalition Team). I also visited to the MRC-Department of Fisheries, and Ministry of Environment for these relevant documents.

Since I was an NGO worker, I decided to contact some NGOs in Stung Treng province. Fortunately, I had been invited by the representative from ICLARM, IUCN, and Action Aid to discuss about PPA (Participatory Poverty Assessment) training and survey in the Ramsar Site. During this period, I was not staying in the village, instead I stayed in the provincial town where I could spend some times visiting relevant institutions: the Department of Environment, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Stung Treng Province, in particular the Provincial Office of Fishery to obtain their annual report and other documents related to my study in Stung Treng. In addition, I was able to visit some NGOs who are working directly with local community such as CAA (Community Aid Abroad), CEPA (Culture and Environment Preservation Association), PFD (Partner For Development) based in the province.

(2) Participant Observation: to gain entry to the village and the observation.

#### a) Gain entry to the village

On 30 October 2002, I jointed a team from IUCN, the Mekong River Commission, and the Department of Fisheries to visit Koh Sneng commune. The purpose of visit was then to get an impression and see what was the village in Ramsar Site like? So, they know which village for them to conduct the PPA. Finally, they

decided to choose an other village, which are poorer than Koh Sneng in the Ramsar site.

On 4 November 2002, I went to Koh Sneng alone to start my fieldwork rapport. The elders in the village were so generous to invite me for lunch with them and I took up this opportunity to introduce myself that I was a graduate student from Chiang Mai University (Majoring in Sustainable Development) and explain my purposes in the village. Even though Koh Sneng is a remote area, the village elders understand what was Master Degree, but they did not understand what Sustainable Development meant? Because they have heard everyday, the government and NGOs are talking in on radio and development program.

After the lunch, there were six or seven villagers who came to joint me who later became my friends and key informants. Mr. Pot Phory (head of cluster school), and his deputy Mr. Vy Savorn, Mr. Norm Sisamuth and Mr. Kreung Vuth (the Environmental Ranger in Rasmarsr Site), Mr. Sorn Soby (head of Village Development Committee), Mr. Sai Soy and finally Mr. Duong Chheurn, the commune chief. They were so interested in me. Most often, they come to ask me about what I was studying and what was Sustainable Development about? I tried to explain them as simple as I could. Finally, I was clearly recognized by one villager who is now the environmental ranger and also the member of fishery community in the village. So, he offered me to stay in his house while I was conducting my fieldwork in the village.

#### **b) The observation**

While staying in the village, I started to observe the fishing grounds, the fishers' way of life and their daily social interactions within the fishers and fisher and also the local traders.

Throughout this method, I learned how fishers in Koh Sneng identify their fishing grounds and the fish movement in the river and streams. Meanwhile, informal interviews were also used in supporting these methods to identify how fishers understand space, fishing grounds, and communal rights; how they find the fishing law in the village negative or positive and how they developed strategies to gain access to the fishing ground.

Data on day-to-day activities, fishing systems and social interaction among villagers has been obtained by this method. Meanwhile, I was participating many

activities in the village: I visited their farming one the other island, accompanied them fishing, and went with them to harvest rice from the field. Throughout these activities, I could understand how the fisher works and practices their livelihood.

At weekend, I often joined them in small boat (Known as Touk Ev) which was commonly used to transport people and goods from village to the market at the provincial town and then I spent my time in the office writing my field notes. Often, I stayed in different families' houses in a few villages in the area and found opportunities to interview people about village history and investigate social memories or discuss the problems in the village as well as in the commune.

In brief, during my fieldwork, participant observation was very important for me in getting data on every activities in which I could build up my rapport and trust among people and was also the opportunity to identify the key informants and differentiate different actors in the whole commune.

### (3) Key Informant Interview

I used the key informant interviews to collect information about local history; kinship networks, fishing knowledge and skills, and social relations. The key informant interview was used to identify ways of life different techniques, ideas about ownership, their access to resources and strategies they use in coping with changes. In particular, to ask how they used different strategies in gaining access to fish, and how the process of privatization of fisheries system affects their livelihood opportunities.

The key informants included: fishery officers based in the local area, the village headman, and skillful fishers from different ethnic groups in the village and NGOs workers based in the areas. And the interaction between villages as well power relations of all actors involved in fish conservation and management in the areas.

After I had spent some times in the village and I had been acquainted with the fishers, I wanted to obtain some quantitative data about fishing network and their relationships within the village. So, I decided to use methods of Semi-Structured Interviews to determine the role of fishing for the households in the village and examine social and economic status. In addition, the interviews identified the problems and opportunities in fishing villages in relation to the changes in fishing environment, resource availability, and resource access and nearby villages.

This technique also helped me to obtain the demographic specific information (household information, education, health care), and resource availability, access and control to wetland resources, economic activities, social activities, fishing practices, consumption techniques, equipments and types of ownership, the intervention of government's policies and in particular information on source of livelihood as well as strategy to support their living within the village's structure.

#### (4) The Additional Methods

After I interviewed a group of informants in the village, I wanted to cross check my data. I decided to use participatory methods such as resource mapping and Wealth Ranking with groups of key informants in the village which include: the environmental rangers, the elderly people, the head of primary school, and the secretary of the commune and the member of the village fishery community. In the process of drawing resource map and social map, I asked them to identify where are their fishing places, how they access to this place and how do they come to fish there. How the fish come and stay in the areas.

In brief, I have used four main different methods: Documentary research, Participant Observations, Key Informant Interview, and participatory methods. In each method brought me with four different ways of getting and obtaining data during my fieldwork from November 2002 to early of April 2003.

#### 1.4.3 Data Analysis

After collecting data from day to day, I classified data by reading my fieldwork note so that I could contextualize this information. Based on these data classification, I could read and reflect on my concepts, which have been built based on literature review so that I will not include any information, which was not relevant.

- (1) I classify them by looking at hidden transcript and pattern of fishing. I also look at the conflict based on local history and livelihood.
- (2) The data analysis has been classified based on the pattern livelihood. How do they perceive fishing laws and conflicts in the village?
- (3) The data collected had been analyzed based on descriptive, tables and figures.

## 1.4 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. It starts from wider context then narrow down to specific situations of people's lives, inland fisheries, relations with the local authorities, and the case of privatization of the common in the commune. The discourse of claims and strategies made by various actors over access to resources under the context of conservation and the penetration of privatization of the common. Then, the thesis concludes by raising the major findings from the study and its significance. Each chapter has the contents as follow:

Chapter I presents the introduction of the study. It includes research background, its questions and objectives, research methodology, and its organization.

Chapter II presents a literature review and the conceptual framework. This chapter consists of four parts. First, I review major theories used in studies of fishery resources and then a number of studies discussing people and environmental relationships and human adaptability in natural resources management under conditions of resettlement and the changes in people's way of life as a result of the ecological experimentation going on around them. In addition, previous studies on the political ecology approach and its critiques are also reviewed in this section with the emergence of the new paradigm of liberation ecology approach. Second, I propose three concepts (space, access and discourse), as the approach for my study of fishery management in Stung Treng. Third, I review fishery management in general which consists of two parts: the studies of fish management in general in Cambodia and then I look at specifically at Stung Treng to see who and how the study in the province has been carried out. The last part proposes the conceptual framework which is based on the regional political ecology approach.

Chapter III explains the general characteristics of Stung Treng province where it serves as the natural ecological link and form the upper Mekong of Cambodia. The chapter divides into three main parts:

The first part describes the historical and ecological setting of Mekong River in Stung Treng province by showing how the outsiders perceived this province in the past and the present. The second part of this chapter deals with the complexity of the ecological zones and the different uses of these zones. In the last part, I describe the patterns of migration of fish and fisher in the province and how they link to human

adaptability in the province. It presents the broad social setting and different forms of access and space to fisheries resource by different fishing communities and different ethnic groups along the rivers and tributaries in the provinces.

Chapter IV focuses on the socio-economic context of fishing in my research site in Koh Sneng village. The first part of the chapter, I present the general landscape of the village both from inside and outside, as well as the people adaptation to the these ecological terrain. Then I move on to describe the fishers' livelihood and their social differentiation of the productions in the village. Here, I distinguish different groups of fishers both from inside and outside and how they get access to fish resource in the areas. The final part, I compare fishing techniques, fishing tenure and fishing management, emphasizing different access to fishing grounds.

Chapter V discusses the process of changes in fishery resources and the making of space in fishery resource in the Koh Sneng. I try to show the evolution of access and changes in property relations. I also discuss the conflicting access and discourse over fishery community management by showing different case studies of each group of fishers on how local fisher-folk make space based on different types of social relations in order to gain access to fishery resources.

The final chapter is the conclusion. It represents my field research findings, and the discussion of these findings related to the other research that has been done in this field. The significance of this study will contribute to the background and knowledge of policy makers by helping to untie the knot of ongoing dialectical complexity and to better understand the differences of ecological and social niches. Moreover, the other theoretical contribution of this thesis will be emerging conceptual literature.

In Cambodian context, these case studies on the politics of resource management will be useful tool for the NGOs who are advocating for Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and the policy makers whose knowledge lack of local complexity. The studies will enable greater reflection into livelihood dynamics and sustainable resource management in the local context of Cambodia, which shaped by the web of power, social, and patron-client relations.