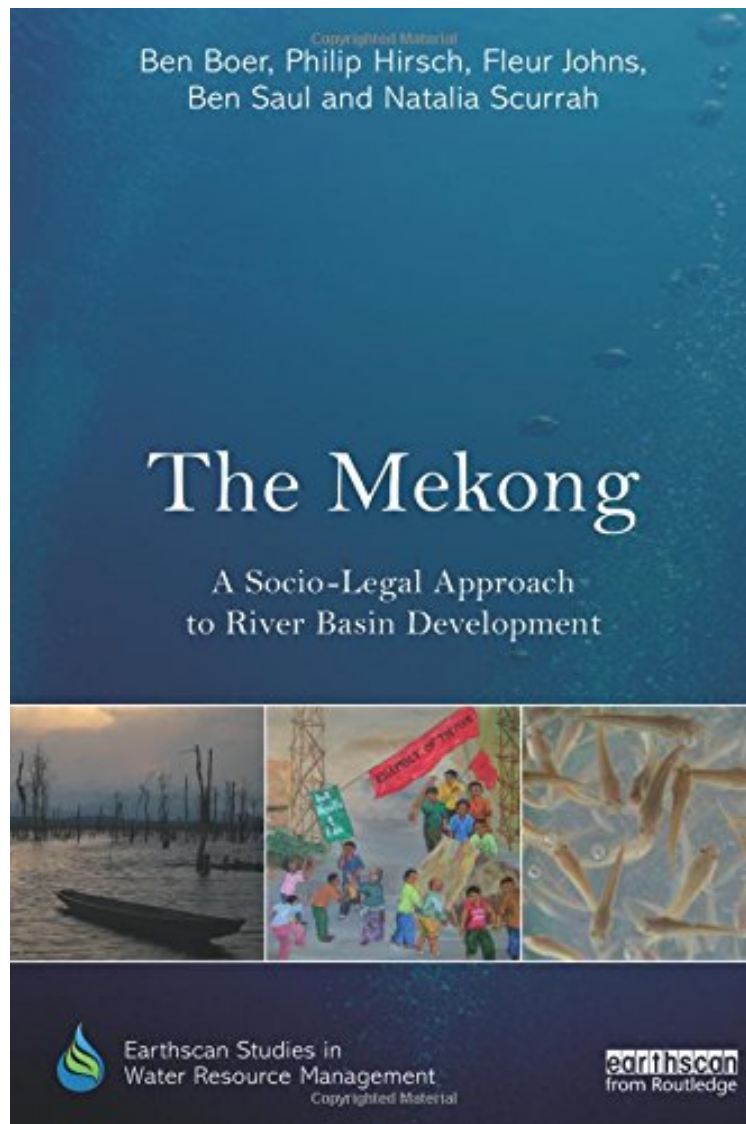


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The Mekong: A Socio-legal Approach to River Basin Development (Earthscan Studies in Water Resource Management)

Ben Boer, Philip Hirsch, Fleur Johns, Ben Saul, Natalia Scurrah
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Development (Earthscan Studies in Water Resource Management):

An international river basin is an ecological system, an economic thoroughfare, a geographical area, a font of life and livelihoods, a geopolitical network and, often, a cultural icon. It is also a socio-legal phenomenon. This book is the first detailed study of an international river basin from a socio-legal perspective. The Mekong River Basin, which sustains approximately 70 million people across Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, provides a prime example of the socio-legal complexities of governing a transboundary river and its tributaries. The book applies its socio-legal analysis to bring a fresh approach to understanding conflicts surrounding water governance in the Mekong River Basin. The authors describe the wide range of uses being made of legal doctrine and legal argument in ongoing disputes surrounding hydropower development in the Basin, putting to rest lingering caricatures of a single, ASEAN way of navigating conflict. They call into question some of the common assumptions concerning the relationship between law and development. The book also sheds light on important questions concerning the global hybridization or crossover of public and private power and its ramifications for water governance. With current debates and looming conflicts over water governance globally, and over shared rivers in particular, these issues could not be more pressing.

"This book presents a tour de force in analyzing the complex and overlapping legal jurisdictions, authorities, meanings, and scales that are generated by the mighty Mekong Rivers transboundary course. Its a spectacular illustration of why all legal scholars need to think about legal pluralism and inter-legality in their work, even when ostensibly studying local domestic law." Eve Darian-Smith, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA and Author of *Laws and Societies in Global Contexts: Contemporary Approaches*. "This is an immensely important and timely book that offers new ways of thinking about transboundary water governance. Analyzing hydropower construction in the Mekong basin through the lens of legal pluralism, it fills a critical gap to explain how conflict over this mighty river has unfolded." Carl Middleton, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. "For researchers, policy-makers, NGOs and others within the Mekong River basin, this book offers compelling insights into how the practices of different stakeholders influence, or are influenced by, law. However, it is perhaps as a pioneer in the socio-legal analysis of transboundary river basins that the book should be most commended." Alistair Rieu-Clarke, Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science (under the auspices of UNESCO), University of Dundee, UK. "This book is a valuable addition to scholarship on law in Mekong societies, and a significant contribution to understanding the politics of hydropower development in the Mekong River basin. Scholars of hydropower development in other transboundary rivers will also find the approaches and insights of this book to be of value." - Louis Lebel, in *Journal of Mekong Societies* (2016)

About the Author Ben Boer is Distinguished Professor of Law in the Research Institute of Environmental Law at Wuhan University, Peoples Republic of China, and Emeritus Professor at the University of Sydney, Australia. Philip Hirsch is Professor of Human Geography at the School of Geosciences, University of Sydney, Australia. Fleur Johns is Professor of Law at the University of New South Wales, Australia. Ben Saul is Professor of International Law and Australian Research Council Future Fellow at the University of Sydney, Australia. Natalia Scurrah is a Researcher in Human and Environmental Geography at the School of Geosciences, University of Sydney, Australia.