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Abstract

Staudämme und der Mythos der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit in Südostasien: Konfliktpotentiale und involvierte Akteure, ihre Netzwerke, Raumbilder, Strategien und Machtpotentiale

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There is hardly a day passing by, where the media does not remind us of the critical stage of the global climate and the rising energy demands. Thus experts are calling for securing nations' power supplies and the therefore needed natural resources – mainly oil, gas and water. All these sources are becoming scarce and are often found in 'developing countries'. Hence most of the 'developed nations' put the topic on their political agenda, closely linking it to geopolitical security issues and 'development assistance', which therefore more and more adopts a 'neo-colonial' style. New – and for Western Countries probably even more challenging – is the fact that nations such as China, India or Thailand are entering the competitive arena as well. Thus a 'global footrace for energy resources' takes shape – representing a sensitive and manifold issue that touches economical, socio-political and ecological spheres. Through increasing resource conflicts on diverse spatial levels – and formed by multiple features – the scenario becomes more and more visible. These controversies apparently represent a global phenomenon and symbolize a crucial issue in current debates. Particularly water is an essential and irreplaceable source for life that is getting rare. So it has become a disputed resource. And in (Southeast) Asia water conflicts are found especially around dam- and hydropower schemes. The article focuses this topic through examining three dam projects in Thailand, Laos and Burma. These dams are currently in different stages and are all interweaved by development assistance. Consequently this approach offers to analyze the complexity of the issue and to unveil the multiple actors involved, their networks, strategies and power relations.

Keywords: resource insecurity, dam conflicts, Southeast Asia, actors networks, strategies & power relations, political geography