Water Security for Whom? - Social and Material Perspectives on Inequality around Multipurpose Reservoirs in Colombia

Initiative: Globale Herausforderungen – Integration unterschiedlicher Perspektiven

Ausschreibung: Global Issues – Integrating Different Perspectives on Social Inequality

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Exemplary for the global resurgence of large hydropower infrastructure, this project investigates in/equalities in water security across the water-energy-food nexus of multipurpose reservoirs in Colombia, both historically and in a post-conflict society by way of scenarios. The notion of equality is broadened from a social to a social-ecological concept, operationalised through the concept of 'hydrosocial territory' in three cases. Recognising the large body of literature on conflicts surrounding the construction of hydropower dams, the project advances under-represented research on the post-construction phase of multipurpose reservoirs, in post-conflict societies, and emphasising the socio-material nature of in/equality. Embarking from previous infrastructural research in science and technology studies and political ecology, and the ethnographic notion of infrastructural violence, the consortium pioneers a novel methodology of interdisciplinary integration and contrast. This new approach of 'situated modelling' is deepened and empirically tested to enhance conversations between social and natural sciences and affected communities around predictive knowledge. The project thus advances the emerging socio-material study of how dams may disrupt or reconfigure local livelihoods and water, energy and food sectors.

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