

List of topics for Bc- and Msc-Thesis and Selected Topic Paper / aktuelle Themen

The role of culture in the transfer of participatory water management policies

There is a broad consensus that culture can influence how policy transfer occurs. Similar to many other so-called best practices promoted by international organizations, participatory practices have become global and participatory approaches are transferred from the global North to the global South and sometimes vice-versa. Within the early phase of a research project on participatory flood risk management in Ghana this Msc thesis topic shall focus on the question how concepts and practices of participatory water management have been transferred from one country to another and how "culture", e.g. in form of cultural connotations or biases, is embedded in participatory devices or processes. Conceptual considerations could, for example, be based on the participatory governance approach and should ideally be applied empirically to participatory water management in a country of the global South.

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Illegal water use as tragedy of the commons? A case study

When using water, there are sometimes users who consciously or unconsciously violate existing regulations on water use and use water illegally or unauthorized, e.g. through unauthorized extraction for irrigation purposes, illegal discharges of waste water or exceeding of permitted thresholds for emissions. The "tragedy of the commons" refers to a social science model according to which freely available but limited resources are not used efficiently and are threatened by overuse, which in turn can affect the users themselves. Political Economist Elinor Ostrom has formulated principles for the political management of common goods. In a case study, the thesis explores reasons and management options for illegal water use with the help of institutional economics. Case studies from European or non-European countries are welcome. The thesis will involve empirical research; first experiences with qualitative social science methods are helpful.

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Illegal water use as a question of framing?

When using water, there are sometimes users who consciously or unconsciously violate existing regulations on water use and use water illegally or unauthorized, e.g. through unauthorized extraction for irrigation purposes, illegal discharges of waste water or exceeding of permitted thresholds for emissions. Illegal water uses are not always made public when they are reported to the authorities or discovered by them. The conflicts associated with them are also usually conducted away from the public. Applying a frame analytical approach, this thesis investigates how water users legitimize their non-compliance with legal or official requirements for water abstraction from ground or surface waters or other unauthorized water uses and their illegal practices. Case studies from

European or non-European countries are welcome. The thesis will involve empirical research; first experiences with qualitative social science methods are helpful.

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The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD): analysis of a transboundary conflict

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