

Nya vatten, dunkla speglingar

Industriell kolonialism genom svensk vattenkraftutbyggnad i renskötselområdet 1910-1968

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New Waters, Reflections of Obscurity. Industrial Colonialism through the Swedish Hydropower Development in the Reindeer Herding Area 1910-1968.

Abstract

Industrialisation of watercourses was one of the first systematic large-scale exploitations in the reindeer herding areas within Swedish borders. Therefore, this thesis departs from postcolonial approaches wherein the Swedish state policy and practice towards Sami, reindeer herders and Sápmi, the Sami homeland, is analysed as colonialism in relation to hydropower development.

The study spans over the first large-scale hydropower projects in the reindeer herding area during the 1910's and 1920's, continuing with the decreased legal security during the second world war, and finally the opposition and opinion in the 1950's and 1960's, enabled by the establishment of a national association for Swedish Sami, SSR.

The industrialisation of watercourses were brought about by the works of an institutional framework consisting of the Water Act and the Reindeer Grazing Act together with the tutelage of a Lapp Administration. These institutions made invisible both reindeer herding as an industry and the herders rights. Authorities as well as hydropower companies acted and argued within an industrial colonial discourse. The Swedish hydropower system was built up based on cheap energy from the North, at the expense of stakeholders' rights. This was made possible by arguing that exploitation was for the sake of "the common good". When reindeer herders eventually were noted in the process, reindeer herding was regarded as a vested interest and reindeer herding rights as a privilege given to the Sami by the state. In this system reindeer herders were given a more vulnerable legal position than farmers, in addition non-reindeer herding Sami were in some aspects even more affected by discriminating structures. During the 1950's and 1960's the self-evidenced hydropower development was questioned by a Sami struggle for justice. The industrial colonial discourse and the governing of hydropower politics were challenged. Nevertheless, the Sami were denied representation and involvement in governing the finances that were aimed at alleviation of the consequences of various interferences in the herding area.

Keywords

Sami History, Reindeer Husbandry, Hydropower Development, Industrial Colonialism, Governmentality, Discourse Analysis.

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