Development Pathways: 
*The case of the Nu River*

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**Background**
- Length of the Nu River is 2020km:
  - 1401km in Tibet,
  - 619km in Yunnan.
- Nu-Salween River is a transboundary river.
- China is big country located in upstream.
  - It has development rights but should respect downstream countries rights.
- China, Thailand, and Myanmar has different Institutions and Ideologies and different socio-economic systems.
- Mutual understanding and respect to each other’s rights are principle of riparian countries.

**Methodology**
- In-depth interviews:
  - Government agencies: NDRC, NEB, MEP
  - Academics and retired experts: MWR, CASS, Beijing University, Energy Research Institute under NDRC
- Community research in
  - Bingzhongluo community,
  - Baihualing community
- Extensive literature review
  - Law and policy, plan review and analysis
  - Discourse study
Pathway 1: West-East Power Transfer (WEPT)

- Reform and opening up
  - After 1989, Gov. hands in economy, “Chinese Keynesianism”.
- “West East Power Transfer” (WEPT) was top policy for Western Development started from 2000, implemented by State owned large hydropower company.
- Hydropower special interest groups:
  - company, technocratic, academy, control decision-making process.
  - Dam company capture decision and disorderly develop power.
  - Academic service to capital + power, lost reality,
  - Energy official corruption result in “governance landslide”.
- Now, new government policy:
  - “Yunnan Power for Yunnan”, “Sichuan power for Sichuan”
  - Indicate the collapse of WEPT.
- Projects has high social and environmental costs, including seismic risks.

Pathway 2: Nu River protection by NGO and civil society

- Environmental NGOs were the core in the Nu River protection campaign. Approaches included:
  - Research social reality by SIA, EIA, HRIA, IPIA to let top decision makers be informed.
  - Communicate information to public by various kinds of media.
  - Close to social bottom, let communities to have voice.
  - Unite democracy parties, academic and officials, etc.
  - Using existing legal means to mobilize social participation
  - Using existing international conventions and obligations to persuade Gov. fulfilling commitment to protect Nu River.
- Bottom knowledge, discourse, narrative, advocacy, dialogue, using peoples’ knowledge to influence decision-making.
- NGOs could influence top decision makers:
  - Manwan dam on the Lancang River (Zhu Rongji 2002)
  - Nu River dams (Wen Jiabao 2004)
  - Tiger Leaping Gorge dam on the Jinsha River (Wen Jiabao 2006)
- Most recently Nu River dams have been excluded from 13th 5 year plan (Li Keqiang 2016)
Pathway 3: Energy Reform Pathway

- Energy technical reform
  - Diversify alternatives on supply and demand side
- Energy managerial reform
  - Full cost assessment: SIA, EIA, HIA, HRIA, GIA
  - Promote participatory and inclusive decision-making
- Energy governance reform
  - Reform special interests group
  - Government withdraw from energy capital operation, market operation and cut off interest relation with companies
- Shift of government duty focus:
  - From economy focus to social-environment and governance accountability focus
- Outcome: A trend towards green, flexible, durable, stable, poor affordable, accountable energy system.

Pathway 4a and b: National Park, World Natural Heritage, Community Ecotourism

- China government is promoting Ecological Civilization as a national strategy.
  - In 2003, Upper Nu Jiang River watershed incorporated into Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Areas, accorded World Heritage Status in 2003
  - In 2013, Central government issued “Deepening the Reform” policy promoting National Park system
  - In 2016, Yunnan provincial and Nu Jiang prefecture government decided to create National Park in Nu River Basin: Nu Jiang Grand Canyon National Park; and Dulong Jiang National Park
- There are two National Park possible pathways depending on future policy:
  - Inclusive or exclusive?
  - Green or quick money?
  - Community participate in park management or professional park management?
  - Community-based tourism or company based-tourism?
  - Pro poor or pro capital?
  - Multi-alternatives or uniform mode?
  - Community development or investor profit and government revenue?

Summary

- Four pathways:
  - WEPT pathway seems to have collapsed due to monopoly, special interest groups control decision-making process, corruption, and the high social and environmental costs, and seismic risks.
  - NGO protection pathway success: Research social reality, communicate information to leader, media, public. Unite people from social bottom and elite, democracy parties, and academics.
  - Energy Reform pathway: Multiple technical and managerial alternatives, truly assess social, environmental, indigenous right impacts, constrain special interest groups, pro-people pro-poor decentralize energy.
  - National Park pathway may succeed: Green and inclusive, World Natural Heritage, Community-based ecotourism, poverty reduction.

Thank you for listening