

Abstract

Over the past 4 decades, since the word "dam" was introduced into Thai society, its significance has diversified into many dimensions. First of all, dam has become a symbol of dominant economic growth within the development discourse advocated by Thai government. Secondly, dam has also been the symbol of calamity or "damned" (deforestation and destruction of local people) which is announced by Thai NGOs' discourse since 1970s A.D.. Hence , the truth about dam in Thai society , like all other symbols, is never stable and keeps changing all the time ; from the symbol of nation's economic growth to the symbol of destruction. Therefore, the signification of dam has no essence and all discourses of dam struggles with each other to become the dominant symbol. This thesis attempts to examine each discursive practice which creates power to make their representations of dam to be true.

From the study, discourses about dam , both the supporting one (which is belonging to EGAT and the Royal Irrigation Department) and the anti-dam discourse, use the same strategy in creating their representations of dam ; i.e. using rhetorics such as "growth", "progress" or "local wisdom". These strategies operating at different places and time have affected the truth about dam differently. Even though the pro-dam

movement is still the dominant discourse along the signification process, the anti-dam discourse has been able to gain more and more power in recent years. Therefore , the truth of dam is still in flux, it is shaped by the discursive struggle between the pro-dam discourse and its adversaries.