

Interactive comment on “Framing hydropower as green energy: assessing drivers, risks and tensions in the Eastern Himalayas” by R. Ahlers et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

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This is an important and well-written paper. It speaks to what I tend to call 'mission creep' of big dams. Now that 'dams for development' no longer washes, dam infrastructure is reframed in climate and green energy terms, sure. The financial side the paper highlights on the other hand is less known/discussed. I congratulate the authors for flagging this up (and in their earlier paper in GEC)

I see some problems with this paper I'd like the authors to address:

- It pretty much only draws from critical dam literature, which risks making the argument circular: dams are bad, because other people who also don't like dams, also say that it is.

C606

- While the financialisation of dams is definitely an intriguing and compelling analysis We don't learn all that much about the mechanics of the financialisation of dams, . Dams as speculative objects: is this new? Why should we see it in this light? Do people in the trade agree that this is indeed what it's all about? I would like to see this sharpened up.

- Any intervention in the Himalayas has potentially enormous effects downstream. Downstream effects on Bangladesh are not discussed. Should the authors decide it is outside the scope of the paper, this merits a rationalisation.

- The 'dam greenwash' is also well argued in Jeremy Allouche's work for STEPS on the 'nexus'. That paper argues that dams promote stability of control in a context of turbulent insecurity. The present paper on the other hand claims dams bring insecurity. Is this only an apparent paradox or is there more to it?

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C607