

Hydric Megatrends: *Storying* **W**ater Futures

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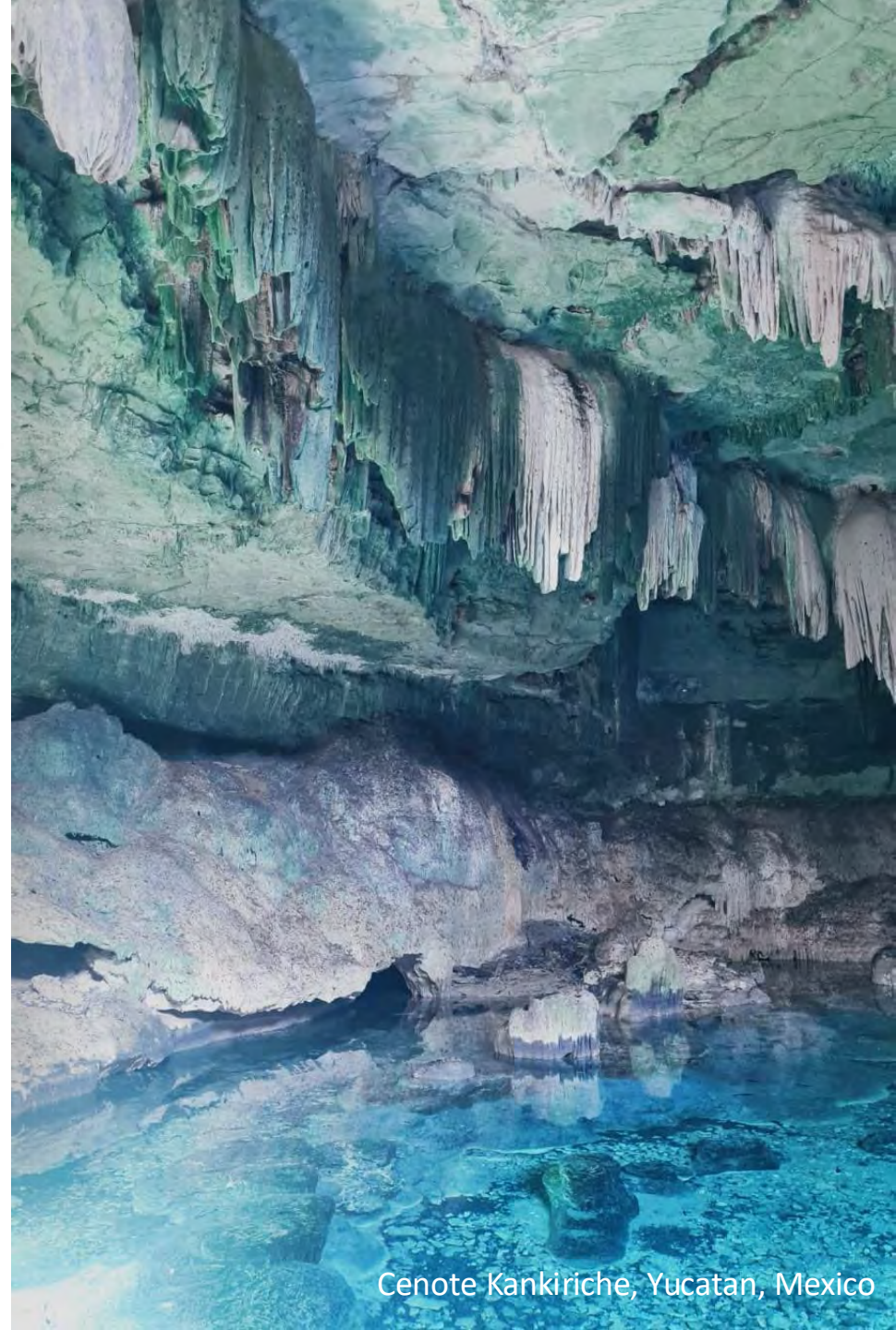
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Changuinola Dam, Panama

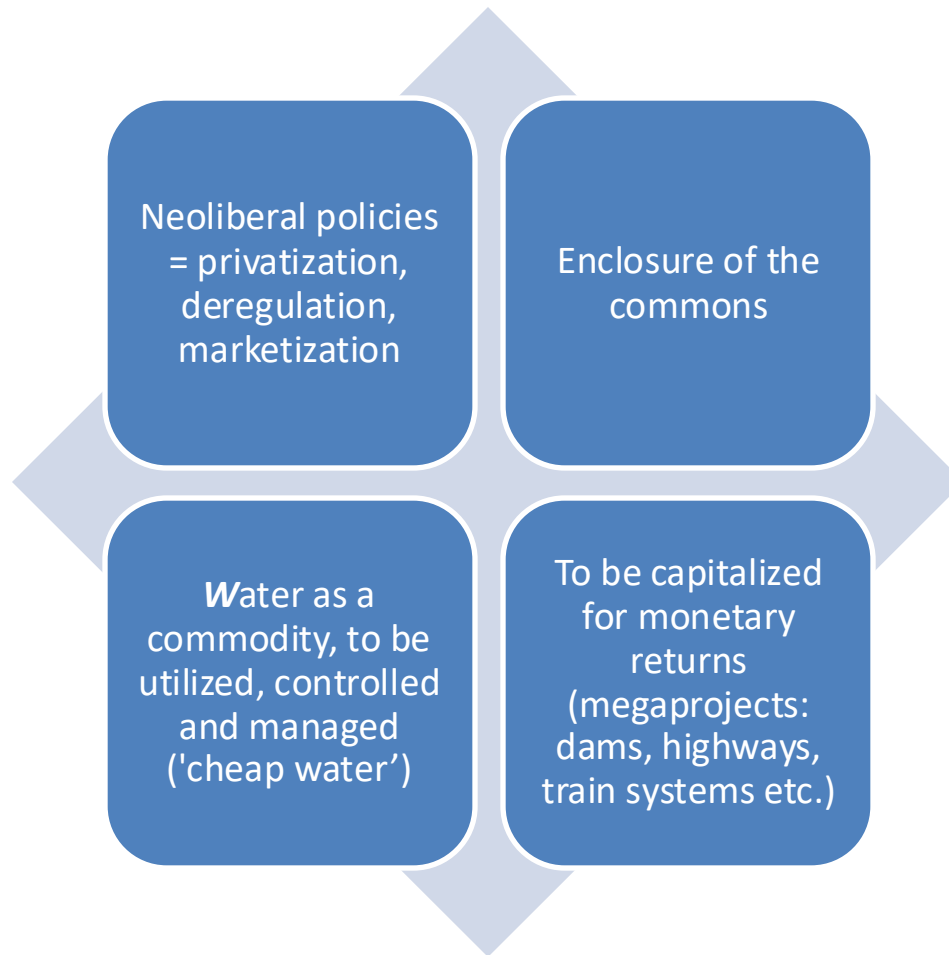
Why **W**ater? Why *S*tory?

- **W**ater: essential, yet increasingly commodified
- *S*torying: a mirror of socio-ecological concerns
- In what ways does storying represent **W**ater's realities under neoliberalism?



Cenote Kankiriche, Yucatan, Mexico

The Neoliberal Organization of **W**ater





Extreme Crisis, Extreme Politics

- Contemporary academic literature depicts floods, scarcity, mega-infrastructure developments– all on the rise
- Reflective of China's aggressive **W**ater engineering practices
- Theme: state power vs. ecological collapse

Early Warnings in the Global South

- Stories before the 2000s warn of **W**ater privatization
- Focus on the commons enclosure
- Writers, authors, poets, and artists anticipate neoliberal reforms

Storying as a Hydrological Critique

“Storying Water...” setting, metaphor, system



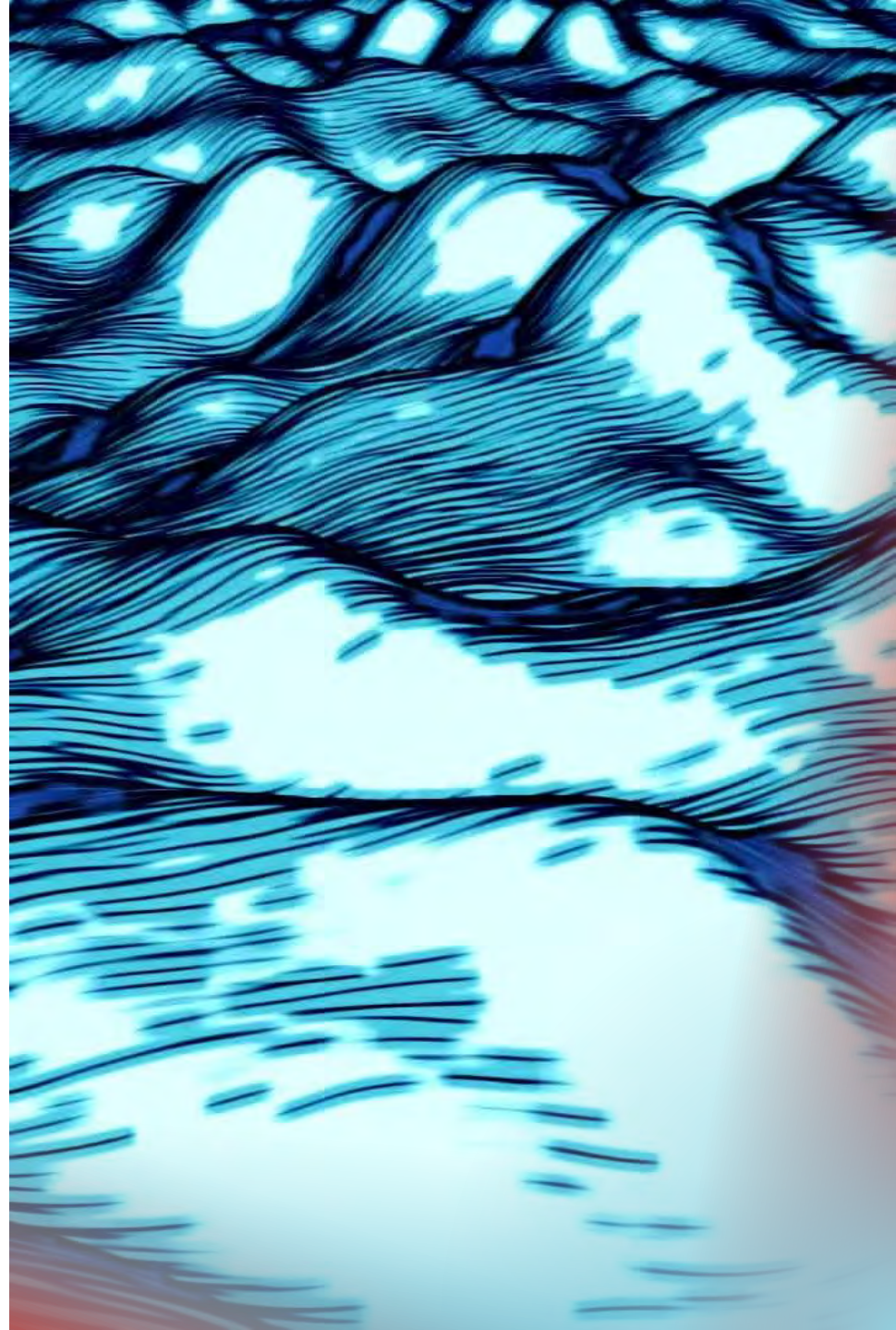
Storying that center **Water's** socio-ecological dimensions:
culture, identity, community = 's hydrosocialities



Reveals deeper power structures: hydropolitics

When **W**ater Becomes "Unreal" or “Intangible”

- Hydro-irrealism:
speculative, surreal
depictions of water
- Intangibility of **W**ater:
beyond physical or
material
- Challenges technocratic
control
- Underscores the limits of
current and conventional
hydrological thinking





Homun, Yucatan, Mexico

The Politics Beneath the Surface

- Euro-American stories = anxiety over loss of dominance
- Chinese ascendancy = framing as a water threat
- **W**ater as a metaphor or a bridge for geopolitical power

Rethinking **W**ater through **S**torying



Storying helps us see **W**ater as cultural, social, and political



Hydro-imaginaries critiques neoliberalism and state control (top-down and utilitarian)



Raises critical questions about justice, climate, and water futures

Reflecting on (our) **W**ater stories

- What role can hydro-imaginaries play in understanding climate and water crises to counter the impacts of hydric megatrends?
- How can “**Storying**” with **W**ater influence policy or public perception?
- How do different regions and sites imagine **W**ater futures?



Mekong River, China