



Water, Culture, and Power: Local Struggles In A Global Context

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According to some estimates, at least 1.7 billion people do not have an adequate supply of drinking water and as many as 40% of the world's population face chronic shortages. Yet water scarcity is more than a matter of terrain, increased population, and climate. It can also be a byproduct or end result of water management, where the building of dams, canals, and complicated delivery systems provide water for some at the cost of others, and result in short-term gains that wreak long-term ecological havoc. Water scarcity can also be a product of the social systems in which we live. *Water, Culture, and Power* presents a series of case studies from around the world that examine the complex culture and power dimensions of water resources and water resource management. Chapters describe highly contested and contentious cases that span the continuum of water management concerns from dam construction and hydroelectric power generation to water quality and potable water systems. Sections examine: impact of water resource development on indigenous peoples varied cultural meanings of water and water resources political process of funding and building water resource projects tensions between culture and power as they structure perceptions and experiences of water scarcity, transforming water from natural resource to social constructio. Case studies include Lummi nation challenges to water rights in the northwest United States; drinking water quality issues in Oaxaca de Juarez, Mexico; the effects of tourism development in the Bay Islands, Honduras; water scarcity on St. Thomas, the Virgin Islands; the role of water in the Arab-Israeli conflict; and other national and regional situations including those from Zimbabwe, Japan, and Bangladesh. While places and cases vary, all chapters address the values and meanings associated with water and how changes in power result in changes in both meaning and in patterns of use, access, and control. *Water, Culture, and Power* provides an important look at water conflicts and crises and is essential reading for students, researchers, and anyone interested in the role of cultural factors as they affect the political economy of natural resource use and control.

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