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RESOURCE

Gender and Water

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Description / Abstract

This chapter of the Oxford Handbook of Water Politics and Policy “lifts the roof of the household” across the irrigation and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sub-sectors in agrarian low- and middle-income settings. Focusing on age-old intersections between gender, class, and agrarian technology, the chapter explores how colonial conquest was served by the ideology of the male breadwinner– female housewife as a divide-and-rule process to vest control over people, land, and water. After independence, the same ideology enabled top-down services in both sub-sectors and also marginalized women. This is contrasted with implications of global policy commitments to gender-equal households for the water sector. In particular, evidence of the multiple-use water services (MUS) approach is examined. This inclusive, people-driven water services approach meets both women’s and men’s multiple domestic and productive needs. Overcoming the same administrative silos in human rights frameworks, a gender-equal human right to water for livelihoods is proposed.

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