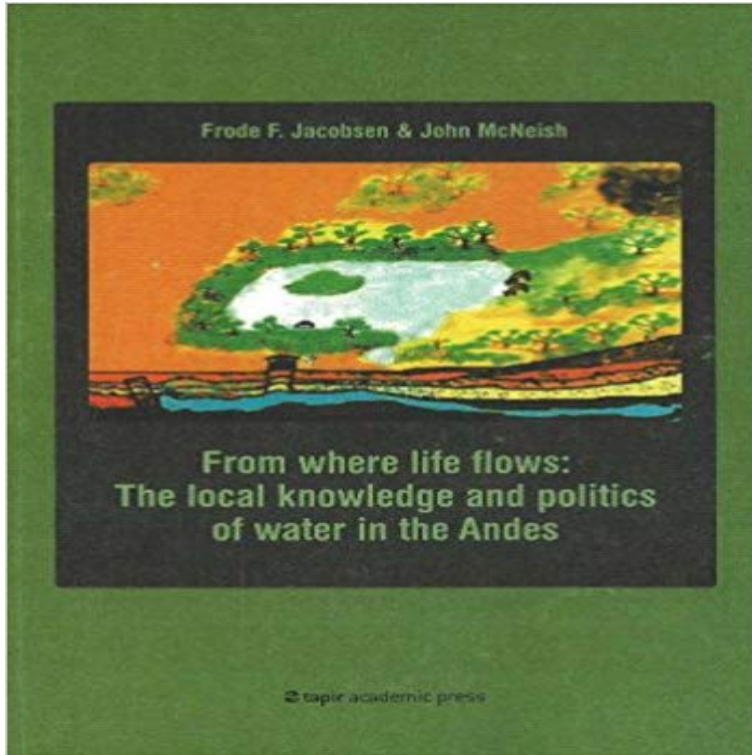


From Where Life Flows: The Local Knowledge and Politics of Water in the Andes



While a large number of foreign and state initiated water management systems have failed for various reasons, locally developed water harvesting systems have proven their viability by surviving for hundreds of years. While there has to be some recognition of the geographical limits and some questions asked about the quality of these water supplies, even with these detractors accounted for, these systems often remain superior to those imposed by political and private interests, not only in terms of their reliability, but also in terms of their flexibility and more equitable control. This book offers a closer look at Andean flexible strategies for securing water resources under demanding climactic conditions and during environmental changes. The book identifies a range of initiatives that have been created by and for members of indigenous communities to address challenges, such as traditional structures for collecting run-off and rainwater. It poses the questions: How have these strategies been formed and made to operate? What positive and negative lessons can be learned from the interplay between local knowledge, subsistence strategies, and the influx of knowledge and initiatives from the outside? The book highlights the wider political and economic context of local knowledge about water harvesting and its uses, and the impact of contrasting management strategies on social development in the local communities involved. Together with the management of land, the management of water resources frequently provides the basis of social institutions and relationships to which ideas of belonging and community membership are tied. Water resources, along with other natural resources, comprise not only a vital element of subsistence, but also a vital field of social and political interaction and practice.

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