Most studies on drip irrigation use plot-level studies to demonstrate the technology’s ability to save water or improve efficiencies and use a narrow and rather prescriptive engineering or economic language. They tend to be grounded in a firm belief in the technology and focus on the identification of ways to improve or better realize its potential. The technology also figures prominently in poverty alleviation or agricultural modernization narratives, figuring as a tool to help smallholders become more innovative, entrepreneurial and business minded. Instead of focusing on its potential, this book looks at drip irrigation-in-use, making sense of what it does from the perspectives of the farmers who use it, and of the development workers and agencies, policy makers, private companies, local craftsmen, engineers, extension agents or researchers who engage with it for a diversity of reasons and to realize a multiplicity of objectives. While anchored in a sound engineering understanding of the design and operating principles of the technology, the book extends the analysis beyond engineering and hydraulics to understand drip irrigation as a socio-technical phenomenon that not only changes the way water is supplied to crops, but also transforms agricultural farming systems and even how society is organized. Field evidence is provided from a diversity of interdisciplinary case studies in sub-Saharan Africa, the Mediterranean, Latin America, and South Asia, thus revealing some of the untold stories of drip irrigation.

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**Table of Contents**

### Foreword

**Andy Keller, Jean-Marc Faurès and Peter Mollinga**

**Panda or Hydra? The Untold Stories of Drip Irrigation**

**Marcel Kuper, Jean-Philippe Venot et Margreet Zwarteveen**

### Section I: Setting the Scene: Diverse Perspectives on Drip Irrigation

1. From Obscurity to Prominence: How Drip Irrigation Conquered the World
   **Jean-Philippe Venot**

2. Decentering the Technology: Explaining the Drip Irrigation Paradox
   **Margreet Zwarteveen**

3. The Practice of Designing and Adapting Drip Irrigation Systems
   **Harm Boesveld**

### Section II: Efficiency and Water Saving

4. Re-allocating Yet-to-be-Saved Water in Irrigation Modernization Projects, the Case of the Bittit Irrigation System, Morocco
   **Saskia van der Kooij, Marcel Kuper, Charlotte de Fraiture, Bruce Lankford and Margreet Zwarteveen**

5. Unraveling the Enduring Paradox of Increased Pressure on Groundwater Through Efficient Drip Irrigation
   **Marcel Kuper, Fatah Ameur and Ali Hammani**

6. Sour Grapes: Multiple Groundwater Enclosures in Morocco’s Saïss Region
   **Lisa Bossenbroek, Marcel Kuper and Margreet Zwarteveen**

### Section III: Modernization and Agrarian Change

7. Creating Small Farm Entrepreneurs or Doing Away with Peasants? State Driven Implementation of Drip Irrigation in Chile
   **Daniela Henriquez, Marcel Kuper, Manuel Escobar, Eduardo Chia and Claudio Vasquez**

8. Conquering the Desert: Drip Irrigation in the Chavimochic System in Peru
   **Jeroen Vos and Anais Marshall**

9. An Elite Technology? Drip Irrigation, Agro-Export and Agricultural Policies in Guanajuato, Mexico
   **Jaime Hoogesteger**

10. Collective Drip Irrigation Projects between Technological Change and Social Construction: Some observations from Morocco
    **Mostafa Errahj and Jan Douwe Van der Ploeg**

### Section IV: Poverty and Development

11. Historical Perspective on Low-Cost Drip Irrigation Design and Promotion
    **Robert Yoder and Brent Rowell**

12. Low Cost Drip Irrigation in Zambia: Gendered Practices of Promotion and Use
    **Gert Jan Veldwisch, Vera Borsboom, Famke Ingen-Housz, Margreet Zwarteveen, Nynke Post Uiterweer and Paul Hebinck**

13. The Conundrum of Low Cost Drip Irrigation in Burkina Faso: Why Development Interventions that Have Little to Show for Continue
    **Jonas Wanvoeke, Jean-Philippe Venot, Margreet Zwarteveen and Charlotte de Fraiture**

    **Douglas J. Merrey**

### Section V: Alliances, Networks and Innovation

15. ‘Bricolage’ as an Everyday Practice of Contestation of Smallholders Engaging with Drip Irrigation
    **Marcel Kuper, Maya Benouniche, Mohamed Naouri, Margreet Zwarteveen**

    **Mohamed Naouri, Tarik Hartani and Marcel Kuper**

17. Intermediaries in Drip Irrigation Innovation Systems: A Focus on Retailers in the Sais Region in Morocco
    **Caroline Lejars and Jean-Philippe Venot**

18. Drip Irrigation and State Subsidies in India: Understanding the Success of the Gujarat Green Revolution Company
    **Janwillem Liebrand**

**Postscript: A Dialectic Inquiry in the World of Drip Irrigation**

**Henk van den Belt**

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