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Water Services, Lived Citizenship, and Notions of the State in Marginalised Urban Spaces: The case of Khayelitsha, South Africa

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ABSTRACT: In this paper we argue that in South Africa the state is understood and narrated in multiple ways, notably differentiated by interactions with service provision infrastructure and the ongoing housing formalisation process. We trace various contested narratives of the state and of citizenship that emerge from interactions with urban water service infrastructures. In effect, the housing formalisation process rolls out through specific physical infrastructures, including, but not limited to, water services (pipes, taps, water meters). These infrastructures bring with them particular logics and expectations that contribute to a sense of enfranchisement and associated benefits to some residents, while others continue to experience inadequate services, and linked exclusions. More specifically, we learn that residents who have received newly built homes replacing shack dwellings in the process of formalisation more often narrate the state as legitimate, stemming from the government role as service provider. Somewhat surprisingly, these residents at times also suggest compliance with obligations and expectations for payment for water and responsible water consumption. In contrast, shack dwellers more often characterise the state as uncooperative and neglectful, accenting state failure to incorporate alternative views of what constitutes appropriate services. With an interest in political ecologies of the state and water services infrastructures, this paper traces the dynamic processes through which states and citizenship are mutually and relationally understood, and dynamically evolving. As such, the analysis offers insights for ongoing state-society negotiations in relation to changing infrastructure access in a transitioning democracy.

KEYWORDS: Informal settlements, water services, citizenship, access to water, South Africa

LEGACIES OF INEQUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY EXPERIENCES OF WATER SERVICES IN CAPE TOWN

The passing away of Nelson Mandela in late 2013 drew the world's attention to the incredible progress, as well as ongoing obstacles, in achieving socio-economic equity in the new South Africa. As promised by the country's first democratically elected government (1994) and new Constitution (1996), equitable access to basic services and related infrastructures, including water, sanitation, electricity, and roads, has been paramount to this vision (Tissington, 2010). Today, South Africa continues to undergo considerable social, economic, and political transformation – from land reform and housing development to improving and extending services infrastructure. Under apartheid, few would contest that lived citizenship and notions of the state were experienced in radically different ways by black,

coloured, Indian, and white South Africans.[1] Today as well, experiences of citizenship and the understandings of the state continue to be highly differentiated – spatially, racially and according to income, gender and other axes of difference. Cognizant of the apartheid legacy, our investigation considers the various notions of the state, and differentiated experiences of contemporary citizenship, as shaped by interactions with municipal service delivery infrastructures. Our empirical evidence highlights the ways that 'state' and 'citizenship' are interlinked and co-constitutive of each other – with state-society relations continuing to evolve in relation to differentiated and uneven infrastructures. As we detail, notions of the state, and state power and authority, are shaped by specific interactions with differentiated municipal water and sanitation infrastructures, which in turn shape how citizenship is understood and narrated. Given our focus on underserved and impoverished urban sites, we centre on ideas of inadequate infrastructures as they influence state-society contestations. This a critical focus of political tension in today's South Africa, where social protests against inadequate and unequal provision of water and sanitation infrastructure signal defining points in contemporary state-society dynamics. We investigate these questions through a political ecological lens, highlighting key inequalities in domestic water services and infrastructure through the narratives of residents in a marginalised urban site – Khayelitsha, Cape Town.

The study presented here is based on primary qualitative research in Site C – a subsection of the sprawling Khayelitsha township on the outskirts of the city. Our empirical discussion focuses on everyday experiences of access to water – a key resource for everyday household needs, almost exclusively provided by the municipality. Access to water (and indeed other basic resources) in this context is mediated to a large extent by the housing formalisation process and associated service delivery infrastructures, including formal housing, water pipes, communal taps and toilets, in-house water and sanitation connections, and water meters. Our analysis traces the differentiated and contested articulations of the state and state-society relations as a function of encounters with water and sanitation infrastructures. Our approach involves citizen narratives, which enables a focus on the ways that residents describe these issues, key points of resonance or tension between different narratives, as well as the discursive connections their narratives forge between evolving senses of the municipal government, or state, as well as shifting understandings of themselves as citizens.

As narrative research has demonstrated, stories are not simply statements of the world, but are often saturated with meaning, providing opening points to understand political contestation, or changing citizen subjectivities. As such, narratives are not only interesting vignettes of experience, but are revealing in terms of the ways that certain storylines may serve to authorise, to question, or actively resist governance processes or institutions (cf. Harris, 2009; Lawler, 2002). Here, we are most interested in the narratives of state-society that are clearly connected to water and sanitation service infrastructures. At this intersection, we trace four key themes that emerge from interviews and focus groups: a) migration pathways from the Eastern Cape and encounters with pipes, taps and meters in the Western Cape; b) housing formalisation in Khayelitsha and the roll out of municipal housing and basic services infrastructure; c) transitions from communal to private in-house water and sanitation services (linked to housing formalisation); and d) discourses of water scarcity that serve to legitimise particular infrastructures, notably water meters, and associated water conservation practices and technologies.

From these varied narratives we learn that residents who have received newly built homes replacing shack dwellings in the process of formalisation through the RDP process,[2] more often valorise and legitimise the state and its role as a service provider. Regarding citizenship, these residents also at times

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[1] These were the four official racial categories in South Africa during apartheid.

[2] The Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) was introduced by the ANC government in 1994, promising universal delivery of social welfare, including basic services.

suggest a willingness to comply with obligations and expectations for payment for water and responsible consumption. In contrast, shack dwellers, temporary residents or recent migrants more often characterise the state as uncooperative and neglectful, accenting government failure, and their own continuing marginalisation as 'less-than' full citizens in this context. In other words, the formalisation of housing and the roll out of associated service infrastructure serve in part to also 'formalise' particular visions of citizenship with greater definition and acceptance of rights and responsibilities by both the state and citizens. In contrast, shack dwellers articulate ongoing exclusion from certain understandings of 'citizenship', and in turn, contest state practices and institutions as not living up to their promises. By tracing these narratives in Site C, Khayelitsha, we show how notions of the state and citizen subjectivities are actively contested and renegotiated through varied encounters with physical service infrastructure. We further suggest that a focus on water provision in historically marginalised areas, such as Site C, provides rich insights into everyday, or prosaic, stateness (Painter, 2006), and socially and spatially differentiated experiences of 'states' (cf. Harris, 2012), in dynamic relation with shifting citizen subjectivities (cf. Nightingale, forthcoming).

Before turning to the discussion of related literatures, it is worth foregrounding that these issues are highly politicised in South Africa at present. Across the country there are ongoing service delivery protests (Booysen, 2007; Alexander, 2010; Thompson and Nleya, 2010) in addition to escalating violence against foreigners (Landau, 2010) signalling key tensions around the notions of adequate services, access to those services, as well as belonging and citizenship more generally. These issues have taken on salience in many aspects of daily life in South Africa, notably in impoverished communities where recent attacks on immigrants are at times framed in terms of who is a 'true' South African (ibid). Even as we do not address the issue of escalating xenophobic violence, we acknowledge its salience in larger debates about citizenship, statecraft, and access to services in contemporary South Africa. Our specific focus on water and sanitation services and infrastructures is only one part of the bigger puzzle of state-society negotiation and contestation (see Parnell and Pieterse, 2010; Weiss, 2014; Piper and Benit-Gbaffou, 2014). Nonetheless, our investigation into these dynamics speaks to the ongoing tasks of forging new governance capacities and citizen subjectivities on the heels of apartheid and overcoming inequalities in access to resources as part of efforts to build democratic state-society relations. While we discuss the 'state' throughout this piece, much of the analysis relates most directly to the local municipal government in Cape Town, led by the Democratic Alliance party, which has primary responsibility for service provision and water delivery.[3]

POLITICAL ECOLOGIES OF BASIC SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE, CITIZENSHIP AND THE STATE

The concepts of citizenship and the state have been theorised in varied ways. In academic and policy domains, citizenship is often understood as shared membership in a political community, in which citizens are political actors who actively constitute political spaces (Stewart, 1995). Citizenship has also been used to refer to the broader relationship between state and society variously defined by norms, constitutions, laws, and policies that delineate rights and responsibilities (Staeheli et al., 2012). Responding to a concern that 'citizenship' appears to presume equality in recognition and opportunity to participate in political processes,[4] alternative approaches have focused on differentiated

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[3] For Cape Town, this also has political importance as the municipal government is led by the Democratic Alliance (DA), while the national government has been led by the African National Congress (ANC). As such, while some of the concerns discussed do impinge on general notions of citizenship (and thus, links to the national government, given its role in relation to the promise of equitable access to services), the narratives we document in Khayelitsha should also be understood in the context of municipal politics, and expressions of discontent with the municipal DA government (Khayelitsha remains an ANC stronghold). These complexities are difficult to disentangle but important to keep in mind with the discussion that follows.

[4] See (Marshall, 1992) for an overview of classical liberal notions of citizenship.

understandings and experiences of citizenship. In this vein, many have highlighted 'everyday and lived citizenship' to foreground citizenship not only as a legal or abstract concept, but practised as people move through their daily lives and through different spaces – whether the home, community meetings, schools, or government offices (Staeheli et al., 2012). Following from this, municipal infrastructures that deliver basic services, such as water, sanitation, electricity, roads and others, serve as physical sites of everyday citizenship engagements as well as encounters with the state. Urban basic service infrastructures in the Global South are often politically contested due to complex colonial and historical patterns of uneven urban development (see examples in Kooy and Bakker, 2008; McFarlane, 2008a; Kooy, 2014). As such, we are particularly interested in the various ways that uneven and differentiated urban service infrastructure shapes notions of citizenship in line with these everyday senses.

Like citizenship, the 'state' has also been variously theorised and approached, ranging from discussions of the state as a given entity with particular form and function, to more diffuse approaches that seek to examine the state as emergent, 'coming into being', and as 'an effect' of specific historical and geographical processes (Mitchell, 1990; Painter, 2006). To some extent, focus on the state was sidelined following Foucauldian interest in capillary and diffuse power (see Alatout, 2008; Roy, 2009, for examples of governmentality approaches). Nevertheless, others have maintained the necessity of interrogating the state as a key institution around which power relations coalesce, or indeed, to understand the emergence of the 'state' as an object and category – itself an effect of power relations and dynamics (see discussions on bringing the state back in, or 'state as effect', Mitchell, 1990; Abrams, 1998). Relatedly, Painter (2006) centres attention on 'stateness' to capture the quotidian and everyday practices that give meaning to the otherwise difficult concept of the state, quite apart from the specific institutions and functions of the state apparatus.[5] As he emphasises, there is a need to approach the state not as a separate sphere from society, but as a social relation – highlighting the ways in which everyday life is permeated by relations and ideas of 'stateness' (cf. Meehan, 2014).

Following these interventions, our approach here is to read both the state and citizenship as interlinked and relational concepts, whose expression is shaped by daily encounters with water and sanitation services infrastructure. We understand citizenship as emergent from interactions between governance from above and citizens' tactics and negotiations from below (Corbridge et al., 2005). Consistent with ethnographic approaches to states, also trace the state not as a pre-existing coherent entity, but rather as varied and consolidated through specific narratives and experiences of citizen subjects (Gupta, 1995; Harris, 2009, 2012). The discussion that follows navigates these linked understandings of citizenship and the state, elicited through narratives of residents Site C, Khayelitsha – an underserved community located on the outskirts of Cape Town (see Figure 1). The focus on everyday experiences and narratives enables consideration of the state and citizenship not as abstract entities, but rather as emergent, relational, processual, and as embedded in historical, political, and contextual processes.

Several efforts have laid the groundwork for the approach taken here to conjoin our interest in state-society relations and citizenship inclusions and exclusions, with explicit attention to water-related infrastructures. In general terms, a political ecological approach invites attention to key inequalities and uneven experiences of service delivery or access to key resources. As detailed by Nightingale (forthcoming), in many ways the governance of resources shapes possibilities for state (trans)formation – materially, symbolically and politically. Other contributors have highlighted the role of inequalities and differentiated resource access in understanding shifting state-society relations as well as materialities of nature as central to state practices or institutional forms (Robbins, 2008; Harris, 2012).

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[5] Other contributions have also highlighted differentiated encounters with the state, for instance, through focus on impoverished urban populations, or marginalised ethno-linguistic minority populations (Corbridge et al., 2005; Harris, 2009, respectively).

Highlighting water-related infrastructures, Meehan (2014) draws on an object-oriented philosophy to detail the concretisation of state power in Mexico through the physical objects of water storage and delivery (rain barrels, tube wells, conduits, latrines and others). As she notes, "[s]tate power is the capacity of the object to arrange and affect: to tame a seasonal flood, to channel an unruly river, to grid a city…" (p. 223). Foregrounding the role of infrastructures, and related material objects, she notes that these 'things' are both 'constitutive of stateness, and generative of force' (p. 223) and thus contribute to the uneven spatiality of state power, highlighting the 'role of objects in constituting new worlds' (ibid). Recognising the centrality of these infrastructures in cementing state power, as Meehan does, does not negate the potential for other modes of authority, decision-making, or power. Instead, Meehan points to the need to theorise the specific roles of infrastructures, both to consolidate dominant modes of power, and to enable alternative democratic forms.

Figure 1. Map of Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa.

Other works have similarly suggested that the 'state' can be concretised and made to appear as separable from society through infrastructure, whether that be pipes and water supply in contexts such as Mumbai or Johannesburg (Bawa, 2011), or through irrigation infrastructure that extends state influence vertically and horizontally in Turkey's contested southeast border region (Harris, 2009, 2012) Directly relevant to the case of South Africa, water metering technologies have been highlighted as 'human technologies of rule' that condition particular citizen responsibilities (see Corbridge et al., 2005; Loftus, 2006; von Schnitzler, 2008). Highlighting similar issues in the context of Mumbai, Anand (2011)

speaks to the 'pressure' of urban hydraulic systems, investigating the ways that citizens demand improved access to services from state agents and engineers.[6] We understand through such examples that service delivery infrastructures are important sites of encounter and negotiation that affect understandings and experiences of the state in everyday lives (Harris, 2009, 2012), as well as linked understandings of citizenship (i.e., including ideas of rights or responsibilities).

While linking infrastructures to evolving notions of state, 'stateness' and citizenship is not unprecedented, the analysis we offer adds to the increasing recognition of the importance of the 'resources-state nexus'[7] (Bridge, 2014), and understandings of resource access, citizenship, and state power as co-constitutive. Given the ongoing efforts to democratise South Africa, as well as the recent upsurge in service delivery protests, tracing the narrative contours of these dynamics in a relatively impoverished and underserved site such as Khayelitsha allows us to understand how and why certain ideas about the state and citizenship relate to senses of ongoing inclusions/exclusions, in part linked to uneven service delivery infrastructure. As the analysis highlights, these notions are not 'fixed', but rather shift dynamically with the rollout of the housing formalisation process and linked infrastructures and upgrades. We can thus gain insights into the processes through which citizens understand states, and themselves, as evolving in this dynamic context. This is particularly timely in South Africa, where the state is at the core of societal and political expectations for social inclusion and well-being, particularly among low-income, black, or coloured residents (Oldfield, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

To illustrate how notions of, and encounters with, the state are dynamically changing at the 'margins', we investigate a case study from the Site C area in Khayelitsha, a partially informal[8] and predominantly black township[9] in Cape Town in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The empirical base for this work is drawn from 39 interviews with community residents, local leaders and city officials, and four focus groups with community residents. We worked with local youth (men and women, all native Xhosa speakers) from Site C and collaborators from Iliso Care Society and the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) who all assisted us with the conduct of research, translation, and community relations. Due to safety concerns (crime as well as protests related to increased incidence of service delivery protests around water and sanitation), visits were scheduled on weekday mornings. This likely has affected our sample by excluding members of the community with jobs during regular work week hours or those who commute to the city searching for income opportunities.[10] Interviewees are split almost evenly between men and women, with roughly half residing in shacks and half residing in upgraded homes (see discussion on RDP homes below). Considering the politics and realities of racial segregation in South Africa, it is important to note the positionalities of the researchers as white females from a

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[6] See also McFarlane (2012) for extensive discussion of informality and formality in relation to our theorisation of contexts such as our study site in Khayelitsha.

[7] While not always attributing their focus to political ecology, a number of works have foregrounded resource access as central to negotiations of stateness and citizenship. Among these contributions are works that focus on claims to urban space and access to services as key citizen-state negotiations (Appadurai, 2002; Purcell, 2002; Bakker, 2003; McFarlane, 2008b; Holston, 2009; Roy, 2009; Bond and Dugard, 2010; Bawa, 2011; Thorn and Oldfield, 2011)

[8] In South Africa informal settlements are sites that played an important role in the dismantlement of the apartheid state through massive social mobilisation. The term 'informal', however, as used across different contexts to designate illegal or unregulated urban development, tends to omit the historical and political significance of these areas in South Africa. As well, residents of these settlements often do have formal title or are formally recognised as legitimate residents in these areas.

[9] In South Africa, the term 'township' usually carries apartheid connotations and refers to impoverished urban areas that under apartheid were reserved for non-whites, such as black Africans, or Coloureds (referring to peoples of mixed race).

[10] The unemployment rate in Khayelitsha is estimated at 38% according to the most recent census (CCT, 2013c).

Western/Northern country, working in a mostly Xhosa community (see discussion of some of the implications for these tensions in Alkon, 2011).

Also worth noting is the increased police presence and investigations in Khayelitsha and Site C at the time of research due to ongoing service delivery protests. One potential consequence of this is that residents of Site C may have been suspicious about the researchers' connections with the police, which in turn may have affected the details respondents were willing to share with us (recent protests had included burning of temporary toilet facilities, dumping of faeces in the central business district, among other actions, Robins, 2014). It is therefore possible that the discussions that took place sidestepped some of the important state-society encounters involving strong government responses, police interventions, and violent clashes (see Thompson and Nleya, 2010; Alexander, 2010; Thompson, 2011 for details on service delivery protests). Thus, the claims we make about experiences of the state and of everyday citizenship 'at the margins' likely represent only a partial portrait of these relations. Nonetheless, several key themes were of considerable interest, as detailed below.

CONTEXT: SITE C, KHAYELITSHA

South Africa in general, and Cape Town in particular, have often been regarded as successful in extending access to basic water services to populations largely underserved during apartheid. The ANC-led post-apartheid state has had a strong commitment to redressing historical inequalities in resource access through extensive expansion of service delivery infrastructure and a series of policies aimed at reducing poverty and inequities in access to basic resources (Tissington, 2010). In addition to the constitutional guarantee of the right to water (Republic of South Africa, 1996), the Free Basic Water policy was adopted in 2001 to set a minimum amount of water for basic needs free of cost (a minimum of 25 l per person per day within 200 m from home) (DWAF, 2007). In 2007, the Free Basic Water Policy was revised to recognise that the amount of 25 l/p/d might not be enough for many households (DWAF, 2007).

Many authors have pointed out that the implementation of these policies has been spotty, with high variability from municipality to municipality (Smith, 2004). For instance, Loftus (2006) argued that for the poor in Durban, in effect, the free basic minimum has become the maximum amount that households consume. Cost-recovery measures in many municipalities throughout the country have also led to the rollout of pre-paid water meters, and tariff structures that effectively penalise consumption in excess of the free basic minimum (Bond and Dugard, 2008; McDonald, 2008). As well, the ongoing rollout of water demand management devices in Cape Town (and elsewhere) have had major political and practical implications (Mahlanza, 2014; Pereira, 2009). As work of groups such as the Environmental Monitoring Group have shown, these technocratic cost-recovery approaches have had significant implications for people's daily experiences as well as notions of well-being and belonging, often with considerable costs for the poor (Bond and Dugard, 2008; McDonald and Pape, 2002). As such, despite the rhetoric of equitable service delivery suggested in the existing legal frameworks, current approaches [including neoliberalisation shifts, such as corporatisation of water (Smith, 2004), or water metering devices] have at times served to exacerbate socioeconomic inequalities (McDonald and Pape, 2002).

In terms of water services in Cape Town, recent official statistics report that 96.6% of the households in greater Cape Town have access to piped water within 200 metres of home (CCT, 2012). This suggests compliance with South Africa's constitutional guarantee of the right to water as well as with the Free Basic Water policy. In line with efforts to address ongoing issues with poverty, a grant programme in Cape Town was put in place in 2005 to subsidise amounts of water (and other services)

beyond the free basic minimum for households that qualify as indigent.[11] A progressive tariff structure was also put in place, whereby the payment above the free basic minimum increases incrementally; however this policy has had minimal success in dealing with underlying inequalities (McDonald, 2008: 234). Official Census 2011 data show that in Site C, 50% of households have access to piped water inside the dwelling or yard, and a further 33% have access to piped water within 200 metres from the dwelling, primarily from outside communal taps (for a total of 83% with access to piped water within 200 metres from home, below the overall statistics for all of Cape Town) (CCT, 2013a; 2013b). Unfortunately, the official picture does not capture the lived conditions of service access, including the often inadequate sanitation services, dirty and broken communal taps, safety concerns around access at night due to high levels of crime, etc. (Dugard, 2013; Rodina, 2016).

Figure 2. This image shows a communal tap, and nearby shack housing – A scene that is typical in (photo taken by L. Rodina).

Site C – one of the poorest sites in one of Cape Town's largest townships – is currently undergoing a housing formalisation process, whereby designated shacks are gradually upgraded to formal housing structures, commonly known as RDP homes, referring to the 1994 Reconstruction Development Programme. Currently, in Site C about 35% of households are living in RDP homes, with roughly 63% of households living in informal dwellings, including backyard shacks made of corrugated aluminium and similar materials (CCT, 2013a, 2013b). In concept, with continued implementation of the formalisation

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[11] It is worth noting, however, that the indigent policy has been very challenging to implement and many residents are not aware of it (interview with City official, 2012).

process, all houses in Site C (and other sections throughout Khayelitsha) will eventually be upgraded, with associated titling, registration, and formalisation of ownership. Yet, as housing supply backlogs continue to be a challenge across South Africa, community members of Site C may wait 10 years or longer to receive their houses. Throughout Site C the formalisation involves the conversion of double occupancy sites to single occupancy plots, as a result of which some residents will be relocated elsewhere. This is particularly the case for shacks that are located in precarious sites (apart from designated double occupancy sites) where no formal housing will be possible. In sum, while formal housing is long awaited, the process, delays, and associated uncertainties cause stress and frustration for many.

As part of broad-scale cost recovery efforts (McDonald, 2002), the City of Cape Town has been leading a concerted water conservation and water demand management programme since 2007 (CCT, 2015), which involves the installation of water meters and demand management devices throughout the city (see Mahlanza, 2014). The installation of these devices has been highly contentious as it happens mostly in lower-income townships where there are high levels of debt. In addition, pipe leaks have contributed to impossibly high water bills, which in turn contribute to indebtedness (Pereira, 2009; Mahlanza, 2014). Despite the ongoing Integrated Water Leaks project, launched around 2005 (CCT, 2006) and the progressive tariff system, researchers have found that levels of debt remain high, which likely feed into the ongoing resistance to installation of these devices. In terms of payment for water services, currently households in Site C are not required to pay for water, even as water flow management devices are being installed in newly built RDP houses. From interviews with City staff we learned that payment for water services will not be required until the formalisation process, and associated upgrades, are complete. Even so, as mentioned above, tensions around payment and installation devices remain high in Site C (as elsewhere) in anticipation of the eventual payment, anticipated with the ongoing meter and device installations.

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE STATE AND CITIZEN SUBJECTIVITIES IN SITE C, KHAYELITSHA

Four themes related to shifting state-society encounters around water and sanitation infrastructure were distilled from the narratives of residents of Site C: a) migration pathways from the Eastern Cape and encounters with pipes, taps and meters in the Western Cape; b) housing formalisation in Khayelitsha and the rollout of municipal housing and basic services infrastructure; c) transitions from communal to private in-house water and sanitation services (linked to housing formalisation); and d) discourses of water scarcity that serve to legitimise particular infrastructures, notably water meters and associated water conservation technologies. While varied and contested among different residents, these four themes were prominent features of the experiences of residents of Site C with water services infrastructure.

Migration – Narratives of contrasting experiences of access to water in rural and urban contexts

Asking residents in Site C about experiences of access to water often invokes recollections of the Eastern Cape – a majority of residents of Khayelitsha are migrants from this region. In-migration is an ongoing process, especially as the economic situation in the Eastern Cape remains precarious. From a water access perspective, access to piped water inside dwellings or in yards in the Eastern Cape remains the lowest in the country – 49.4% as compared to the national average of 73.4% (SSA, 2012). Linked to migration pathways, there is a sense of temporality invoked in residents' narratives, recalling a past where conditions were different, highlighting senses of non-modernity associated with the direct and unmediated access to water. Many residents of the Eastern Cape access water directly from rivers, streams and boreholes or harvest rainwater in water tanks. These forms of water access are associated with water as a natural resource or, at times, as a 'gift from God'.

In other words, in the Eastern Cape, water is not owned by anyone and is accessible by everyone, unmediated by infrastructure, and without cost. In this configuration, access to water infrastructure and the state as a service provider are largely, if not entirely, absent. A number of residents invoked this contrast to question the issue of payment for water (i.e., if water is a gift from God, then it should be free), while others mentioned it to highlight that the infrastructural investments made by the state to provide 'improved' water merited payment. These tensions between rural and urban forms of water access are illustrated in the following example from an interview with a female shack dweller in Site C:

> Water cannot be free in a city – unlike in the Eastern Cape, because there we were getting water from the rivers. So it is impossible for water to be free (in the city).(…)We have to pay because the water that is provided by the City is different from the one in the Eastern Cape. Here in the city the water is treated and pumped. It is even different in taste with one in the rural areas so that is why we have to pay. (Interview #14, female, mid-fifties, lives in shack).[12]

Here we see that treatment and pumping of water are invoked to justify the need for the state as a provider to collect revenue to ensure the safe treatment of water, even when affordability concerns remain (as we will see below). In essence, access to safe water in the city is mediated by water 'services' and the physical infrastructures that make access possible – pipes, taps and water treatment facilities. In addition, narratives of residents reveal a strong sense that the state, and certain state agents in particular (i.e., municipal government, councillors), play paramount roles in ensuring access to water. Our argument is, in part, that these mediations do not only determine who gets access to safe and reliable water, but also forge senses of state legitimacy, as well as more general notions of what the state is, or should be.

> Because it is an urban area, where there are other services… there are councillors… things like that. But in Eastern Cape, in rural areas, there is nothing like that. You just fetch the water… the taps… they are far (not many taps, unlike in Site C)! But it is different now here in urban areas – they talk about 'the services'. But in Eastern Cape you can buy a big tank and put the gutters around the roof and the water comes and then when you open the tank you drink the water, you cook and you even do your washing. Here there are 'services', you must pay for water, pay for everything. (Interview # 2, female in her mid-fifties, lives in an RDP home).

From these examples, it is clear that in comparison with past access prior to migration, or in contrast to rural spaces of the Eastern Cape, 'the state' in Khayelitsha emerges as paramount provider and regulator of infrastructure and services, such as water treatment and delivery to people's homes. More importantly, this shift to a more technocratic state that occurs with the migration to the Western Cape also signifies changing citizen subjectivities through the notions of payment for services.

Formalisation process

Another important shift that affects many impoverished urban dwellers throughout South Africa is the housing formalisation process. In the narratives of residents of Site C, improved (in-home and reliable) water access is realised through a shift from shacks to RDP homes, which has important implications for a sense of belonging and citizenship. More specifically, we see that formalisation – as access to municipal housing and in-house water and sanitation services – is linked to a sense of inclusive citizenship for some (i.e., access to RDP housing and in-home taps as symbolic of recognition by, and inclusion in, the state and the citizenry), and exclusion for others (i.e., shack dwellers, whose lack of housing and access to adequate basic services of infrastructure is symbolic of their ongoing exclusion). Further, this division between shack dwellers and RDP residents is somewhat surprisingly reflected in

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[12] These are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the participants.

notions of appropriate water use. For instance, informal shack dwellers are at times represented in narratives as *irresponsible* water users who are using communal taps in wasteful and uncontrollable ways – implicitly situating those residents as 'lesser', receiving water free of charge and not fulfilling their citizen obligation to conserve (and pay for) water (see more on this in Section 5.4). Here we observe a sense that those who rely on communal taps are also less able to adequately achieve the expectations associated with individuated responsible citizenship (via conservation and/or payment).

A sense of exclusion is further evident in the disillusionment with the quality of the services among shack dwellers. The hopes of many for housing and private services have not been met, which enhances a notion that the government is not living up to its promise – whether for water services, sanitation, or housing. Here, a male shack dweller summarises the expectations of the formalisation process, the tensions it causes and the sense of being 'left out' as a shack dweller:

> Our municipality come to us and said 'Now we want money for the water, everybody who has been spending water must pay now, because everybody is developed (formalized). So we need money because everybody is staying in a good conditions (in proper houses) so we need payments now'. So we go with the other comrades and respond to the municipality members that 'No, we are not going to allow the municipality to just do that way to our people because here we are *not the same* (emphasis added by authors). We do not have the same rights, because some people are staying in good houses… and in beautiful houses, which have been built with good conditions! But other people are still staying in the shacks! How can we (shack dwellers) pay for water?! [.] We are not going to pay water (because) we are still staying in shacks! Those who have been qualified to pay water are those people who have (already received) built houses by the government! (Interview #24, male shack dweller in his late thirties).

Exclusion of shack dwellers also occurs in formal governance spaces – so-called 'invited' spaces of participation (Thompson, 2007). Some of the narratives of exclusion highlight that the concerns of formalised dwellers are systematically prioritised in formal governance processes – a tendency that serves to further limit the possibilities for citizenship claims by informal residents and shack dwellers. For instance, in a focus group discussion about engaging in council community meetings, one of the participants mentioned the following:

> Yes, it is like that they (RDP residents) are given more way than us people who are living in the shacks, because the councillor is with them, with the ones who live in the RDP houses. We don't have a councillor at our shacks! That's why their grievances are solved much more quickly (Focus group #4, male, late-thirties, lives in a shack).

With these examples we see narratives that create a sense of difference, and division, among residents of Site C, based on their residence in informal shacks or formalised homes. In linked ways, the state is also narrated differently as a function of housing and service infrastructures, and linked senses of marginality or inclusion.

Shifting from communal to private taps – Notions of responsibility

Linked to the formalisation process is a shift from communal water and sanitation services (used primarily but not exclusively by shack dwellers) to in-house and individual connections provided for RDP homes. This shift was a key theme in many of the narratives of water access in Site C and was often invoked in relation to notions of responsible water use – an important, albeit nuanced and complex theme. Generally, interview and focus group participants were in agreement that having an in-house private tap helps conserve water through monitoring and control of water use. One male living in a shack tells us:

> First of all, you are safe… because it's in your own yard. And secondly, you can also monitor how much water you are using, you see… That's when it's inside the yard. Unlike when it's outside. Then you have to make estimations. Inside you will know because you have a water meter, and it will tell you how much

water you have used a day. But now you don't know because we are using the community tap. (Focus group #4, male, mid-forties, lives in a shack)

We also note that many residents assert their own responsibility to conserve water, to pay for water and to minimise demand. Thus, the material presence of infrastructure, and its placement in individual homes (rather than communal access) endorses and enforces notions of individuated responsibility. The narratives of responsibility are strongly linked to ideas of payment for water as an incentive and also as a mechanism to enforce conservation. For example,

> I feel like water must not be free. I know that people are suffering, but how can you be responsible for something that you do not pay money for? How can you take care of something that comes for free whenever you want it? (…) When you know that there is a little bit of money that you put on that thing, then you know that I must respect that thing because it's going to cost me at the end, you see… so I disagree when they are saying that water must be free. Yes! Even if it's less money taken out of their pocket…. even if it's 20 Rand on a monthly basis…you see.. when something is taken out of their pocket, they will be responsible but when you say that people must be responsible but not paying, they will be careless. (Focus group #2, male, later thirties, lives in an RDP home)

This quote clearly points to the anticipation of water bills, which are not administered in Site C at the moment, but the physical installation of water meters serves as a clear signal that metering will happen in the future. Even as some residents agree with payment in principle, payment remains hotly contested, and affordability remains a paramount concern.[13] Unemployment and poverty levels in Khayelitsha are very high, as evidenced in both official statistics [estimated at 38% in Site C (CCT, 2013c)] and in the interview narratives. For example, women in one of the focus groups suggested that there is a need to implement water tariffs that are proportionate to income to alleviate the burden on those without formal employment, or for the elderly.

> I was thinking, if there can be a door-to-door campaign to look at each and every house because… there are people that are not working, some of the people are pensioners and some of them are depending on governmental grants. Those ones who are working should and those who are having permanent jobs should be the ones that must pay for water. For example the disabled, old age and unemployed people should not pay for (it). (Focus group #1, female in mid-forties, lives in RDP home)

In this spirit, others similarly noted that even if there is acceptance of payment for services in principle, it should be implemented in a socially just way as to not burden impoverished or vulnerable households. We also observed senses of worry and anticipation associated with lack of clarity from the state in terms of what might be expected for water services and access in the future.[14] Consider the following statements by an RDP dweller:

> Volani: I would not like to pay for water because I am not working. I think water is very expensive, because I have been witnessing in one of the townships around, Kwezi, people who were not paying for water were losing their property. Some of the people have been losing their furniture and others have been losing their houses. Therefore water (must) be very expensive …

> Interviewer: So do you think what happened in Kwezi could also happen here as well?

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[13] This finding is also supported by our survey of 487 households conducted in 2012 in four underserved and relatively impoverished settlements, two each in Cape Town, South Africa and Accra, Ghana. The survey data for Khayelitsha and Phillippi show good quality of water services, but high affordability concerns (Harris et al., 2012). Notably, 90% of the South African respondents suggested that water should be free.

[14] In interviews with state agents, it was emphasised that residents in Site C do not presently pay for water, and may continue to qualify for relief through the indigent policy in the future. Yet, for residents the worry about future metering and payment is palpable.

Volani: Yes it will happen, obviously it is going to happen.

Interviewer: What do you think will happen when they ask you to start to pay for water, when you start receiving water bills?

Volani: I will go to municipality and tell them that I am unemployed.

Interviewer: Would they give you water for free if you do that?

Volani: No, they will not, because here is a good example in Kwezi, where they took people's houses… why would they do that to me?! (Interview #12, male, late fifties, lives in a RDP home).

Here we see sense of fear and insecurity for having to be subject to the municipal requirements for payment for services a worry that the state may require payment even from unemployed residents, with the potential to lose one's furniture or home. In these nuanced narratives we see an active contestation of an emerging notion of citizenship that is forged through everyday negotiations with service delivery infrastructure. Citizenship in this context appears to equate with being a responsible service consumer who conserves water and pays for the services provided by the municipality. At the same time, we see significant tensions in accepting the set of expectations that come with 'responsible' citizenship, evidenced in worries around affordability, insecurity and even fear.

Scarcity

Water scarcity was also mentioned as a reason for taking responsibility to conserve water – as such, this is also linked to shifting notions of responsible citizenship. In our analysis of the narratives we observed a clear merging of citizen narratives with state narratives related to lack of water availability, and the need to conserve (through metering, education and other demand management efforts). For instance, a 50-year-old male shack dweller mentioned:

We are saving because we are constantly hearing that water is very scarce and the dams are drying out. So now we have to think of our future because if we don't save water, where are we going to get it? (Focus group #4, male in his fifties, lives in a shack)

Among the water conservation campaigns conducted throughout Cape Town at the time are the Integrated Water Leaks Project and numerous conservation workshops conducted in Site C as part of the City's Water Demand Management strategy, which frequently emphasises that limited water resources necessitate strong demand management in part to avoid costly options of increasing municipal water supply (interview with city official, August 2012). Indeed, we found that elements of these campaigns are mirrored in citizen narratives.

In addition, water scarcity was at times linked to the occasional water cutoffs in the townships, implying that the municipality imposes rather forceful restrictions to conserve resources:

Interviewer: And why do you say that we need to save water? Is it only because you have to pay for it or there are other reasons?

Nome: Because there is an ad saying that water in Cape Town is continuously depleting! Therefore we have to save it…

Sitela: The water is becoming scarce in Cape Town! Water does become scarce here… (for example) we went for two days without receiving any water. And we had to run all the way to the A section by the tracks, there would be nothing at all [for] us but a few little drops dripping out of the tap… Then you have to take five buckets and you have to not waste that water because we never know when the water is going to return. (Focus groups #3, female in late thirties, lives in a shack)

On other occasions, narratives link scarcity and water cutoffs to individual behaviour:

> Interviewer: How can a person save water? What can a person do in order to save water?
>
> Kristina: You shouldn't play with water. You shouldn't just open the tap and let the water flow out mindlessly and should not just pass by a tap if the water is flowing. You are saving water if you do not do all of this.
>
> Interviewer: And why is that? Why should people not waste water?
>
> Kristina: Water could be closed if it is seen (by the municipality) that people are misusing the water… or they will start charging for the water, and end up paying for water (Interview #20, female, late thirties, shack dweller).

Worth noting in this example is that responsibility for possible future water shortages is placed on the residents of Site C who are careless about water and 'let the tap run', potentially resulting in cutoffs or increased charges. On the other hand, we also observed that many residents were very conscious about their water use and often mentioned the different strategies they use to conserve water. This clearly points to a discursive formation of two kinds of citizens along the lines of responsible water use. For instance:

> Interviewer: Do you think you will use more water when you have your own (inside) tap?
>
> Mzu: I think it depends how you use your water, as I said, the people need to know more about the water because if you don't know how to use it a lot of houses will misuse the water. You will see that the water runs almost the whole day just because she is rinsing the clothes from washing and just opens (the tap) and leaves it like that. So that is not good… (Interview #10, male, late forties, lives in a shack).

Interestingly, despite this acceptance of ideas of responsible water use, we also observed significant contestation of municipal scarcity discourses. Specifically, we observed a level of distrust of government and the technocratic aspects of service provision, illustrated in the following example:

> Interviewer: Do you think the water is scarce? Do you believe that the water is scarce?
>
> Anele: Not really, sisi (sister). I would say like that, when I was born, and growing up, it was raining and it's still raining! God still gives us that rain, the same rain, neh? You understand, my point? What I think [is that] the government is using a lot of money on water infrastructure. Maybe… I am not sure about that. That is why they are talking about the scarcity of water, you understand? They say a lot more money (is going to be used) on water than on people, but the rain is still raining as when I was born! So I don't really believe that (Interview #7, male, mid-forties, lives in a snack, owner of a small shop located in a different shack).

In sum, there is a sense that the very idea of water scarcity itself may be linked to particular notions of government responsibility for water provision. More specifically, notions of scarcity appear to reinforce and legitimise the idea of the state as a manager of a limited and highly important livelihood resource.[15] In turn, we also observe that this is associated with notions of citizenship that reinforce the individual responsibility of residents to conserve water. This expectation to conserve in this context is served by the idea of water in Cape Town as scarce, but also through a sense of worry that the city will indeed punish irresponsible use by cutting off water. Water delivery infrastructure thus becomes a vehicle for municipal control over water consumption, legitimised by the notion of scarce water resources. Meanwhile, despite widespread education campaigns around water conservation, there remain

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[15] There is an implication that the state may also have a purposive interest in promoting notions of scarcity, whether to save money, to meet human right to water goals, or to promote responsible environmental citizenship and water conservation (e.g. justification of payment, minimisation of services, or cutoffs, cf. Mehta, 2001; Mahanyi, 2013 for other discussions of politics of water scarcity and notions of 'constructed scarcity').

tensions between the technocratic discourses of municipal water supply and notions of water as natural and available. We see this active contestation in that some of the respondents are in agreement with conservation narratives, while others clearly contest state narratives of scarcity, conservation, and payment for services.

REVISITING POLITICAL ECOLOGIES OF CITIZENSHIP AND THE STATE

These diverse and contested narratives reveal the nuanced and problematic nature of the post-apartheid state, local municipal governance and service provision, and linked shifting citizen subjectivities in Site C. As discussed in the introduction, the post-apartheid state as a political project has foregrounded the promise of universal, equitable and adequate service delivery – a theme that is very prominent in early narratives of ANC's state transformation, and that has since been articulated in the form of legal requirements for municipalities to deliver safe and affordable water to residents, including to impoverished and historically marginalised locations. Indeed, we see that for many in Site C access to services infrastructure (i.e., 'being connected') signifies an encounter with the post-apartheid state and a strong indicator of one's status as a citizen. This encounter is bound up with specific expectations and responsibilities for both sides – the state is seen as responsible to treat water, to manage scarce resources, and to put in place and maintain adequate infrastructure,[16] while citizens are expected to pay for water above the basic minimum, conserve water and comply with the City's demand management objectives. Different narrations suggest compliance and resistance with these expectations, in part linked to senses of adequacy and equity related to the infrastructures they access and experience on a daily basis.

By tracing these evolving state-citizen dynamics, we learn that basic services infrastructure is not only about basic access to water, sanitation and housing, but holds meaning for broader democratisation processes in South Africa. Yet, the state-citizen dynamic is not universal across all residents of Site C, but is articulated differentially based on histories of migration, encounters with the municipal water infrastructure, or the ongoing formalisation of housing and services. In these narratives, we see vastly different perspectives of the state and notions of citizenship for those living in informal shacks compared with their formal dwelling counterparts. Albeit shifting, this 'formal-informal' division is evident in the differentiated senses of belonging, expressed in terms of who gets access to safe housing, safe water, sanitation, and so forth. This division is also firmly inscribed onto the differentiated infrastructures that provide basic shelter and services for residents of Site C – the formalised houses with individual in-suite service connections in contrast with the informal shacks that share communal water and sanitation services.

For residents of RDP homes who receive private, in-home services, there is a visible and observable sense of the presence of the state as a service provider (for housing, water and other services), with whom residents have a more direct connection through infrastructure (e.g. meters, taps, toilets) and through receiving letters from the utility (even if not yet in the form of billing), or having a direct phone number to call when there are issues with the water service. In this way, formalisation of housing, and the access to water and other services this affords, enables clearer definition of rights and responsibilities – both by the state, and of citizens. Further, the adoption of the language of responsibilisation among residents of Site C is not simply a form of compliance – it should be understood as a form of active citizenship where people embrace certain citizenship obligations to be able to leverage the state in meeting its contractual obligation (cf. Thompson, 2007). In contrast, we see shack dwellers, and recent migrants as experiencing and narrating fundamentally different dimensions.

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[16] For detailed discussion on the process of 'responsabilisation' of democracy in South Africa see Thompson et al. (2007).

Here we note deep senses of disillusionment and frustration, evident in numerous acts of resistance, including contesting dominant municipal narratives (as noted above), as well as through social protests.

The growing number of service delivery protests in Khayelitsha, in nearby Philippi, and in other underserved communities across the country signifies divergent notions of what the state as well as citizenship should look like (Weiss, 2014; Piper and Benit-Gbaffou, 2014). As others have argued, protests should be understood as forms of engagement in that resistance and protest are ways of engaging the state – particularly to claim better services infrastructure (ibid). As such, these protests are forms of active resistance to the lingering apartheid legacies of inequity, exclusion, and segregation, as well as a reflection of a strong civic willingness to engage in re-formulating and reimagining the post-apartheid state. In essence, we see clear tensions, and conflicting narrations of multiple 'states' in South Africa, reflected and actively negotiated through differentiated and uneven infrastructures. As such, the state and its citizens are both dynamically refashioned and actively negotiated in relation to basic services, whether housing and water services.

CONCLUSION

In South Africa the state as well as citizen subjectivities have undergone major transformation since the end of apartheid. During the apartheid regime, the state was often experienced as oppressive and closed off to many non-white residents of the country. The post-apartheid democratic political platform was largely built on the promises of equal citizenship rights and universal and adequate provision of services, particularly to redress the infrastructure inequalities created under apartheid. The new South Africa has often been praised both for its progressive Constitution and policies, and for relative successes in extending access to basic services for formerly marginalised populations. However, as we have detailed, the lived realities of service provision suggest that considerable inequalities in access to basic services infrastructures remain. Our analysis suggests that there are multiple lived realities and complex narratives of the South African state shaped by shifting access to basic service infrastructures. In effect, we see the formalisation process linked to basic municipal service infrastructures contributing to senses of enfranchisement for some, while maintaining a sense of exclusion for others. Somewhat surprisingly, despite a broader context of protests and resistance, our research also finds narratives of 'responsible citizenship', expressed as compliance with the idea of payment for services[17] despite acute affordability concerns linked to use of meters and other technologies of water conservation. Our research also encountered narratives of ongoing resistance and exclusions, whereby infrastructures are cited as evidence of a state that is neglectful, unapproachable, and unresponsive. Citizens reliant on these infrastructures remain on the margins, articulating senses of exclusion and that they are not able to participate fully in the promise of a democratic South Africa. The persistence of these narratives help to understand and contextualise the recent spike in service delivery protests increasingly becoming the currency of engagement of lived citizenship practice for many (cf. Thompson, 2011).

With our interest in political ecologies of the state and focus on water services infrastructure, we can begin to trace the important processes through which state and citizens are mutually and relationally understood, as well as their ongoing negotiation and transformation in a transitioning democracy, such as South Africa. We conclude by making several points. First, we find value in investigating the state 'at its limits' – not only through evaluation of policies and the extent of basic services infrastructure, but also in relation to the experiences and understandings of communities most often marginalised in spheres and discourses of the state (cf. Harris, 2009). By focusing on the marginalised and underserved black township of Khayelitsha, we are able to think through, and trace,

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[17] As such, the analysis from Site C provides evidence that contrasts with wide spread commentaries about the culture of non-payment in South Africa (McDonald and Pape, 2002).

the state as it aims to extend and find validation in its most contested sites. This focus is instructive in thinking about state building in the post-apartheid context precisely due to the fact that incorporations of these populations and spaces are key to ongoing projects of state consolidation and legitimation. Second, we find value in considering state-society relations not only through electoral politics, or social protests, but also through everyday experiences and narratives around things as ordinary and 'prosaic' as accessing water for drinking, washing, or other household needs. These are key terrains where citizens encounter the 'state' and formulate notions of citizen roles and responsibilities. Finally, political ecological focus on access to resources has proven to be insightful in untangling ongoing and complex negotiations of rights, roles and responsibilities – all key targets of a range of political economic shifts and policies (from neoliberalisation to efforts to implement the human right to water and sanitation). Investigating the daily encounters of citizens in marginalized urban spaces with basic services infrastructure provides a rich portrait of what these broad and abstract policy shifts mean on the ground, and for people's everyday lives.

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