Social Protests and Water Service Delivery in South Africa

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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Dr Barbara Nompumelelo Tapela
Senior Researcher, PLAAS
Overarching Aims

To develop:

• Clear understandings of the linkage between social protests and water service delivery.

• An evaluation framework to enable government, municipalities and other stakeholders to more effectively address problems relating to social protests associated with water services delivery.
Research Objectives

1. Review Literature
2. Characterize Protest Contexts
3. Identify Key Drivers
4. Clarify Pathways
5. Make Recommendations
KEY POINT 1

• ‘Social protests’ lens leaves out the majority of people who are affected by water service delivery issues but do not engage in protest action.

  – ‘Action’ distinguishes between various forms and types of protest.
  – ‘Action’ can also exclude coping strategies of groups with no agency or means to take protest action.
KEY POINT 2

• Protest action is largely an urban phenomenon. Violent protests tend to occur in low to middle income residential areas. But recent evidence shows increase in rural protests.
  – Differences between rural and urban contexts pose challenges to singular Evaluation Framework.
  – Urban focus raises ethical issue: marginalization of rural grievances.
KEY POINT 3

• SA protests are complex, and thus require innovative methods of enquiry, amid politically charged terrains.
  – Constantly changing milieu
  – Diversity of contexts
  – Diversity of explanatory frameworks (eg theories)
  – Diversity, conflation and dynamism of grievance issues, actor networks & repertoires of contention.
Exploratory Study
Social water scarcity and water use

Literature Review
Social protests and water service delivery

Protest Events Catalogue

Stakeholder Engagement
Site Selection

Mapping and Analysis
Mapping of Geographical Distributions
Grouping of grievances; Protest typology
Narrative & Critical Discourse Analysis
Protest Event Analysis

Empirical Studies

Evaluation Framework
Design and Bricolage
Protest Event Selection

• Direct, indirect and no relationship between protest events and water services delivery.
  – Problem: conflation, muting and masking

• Categories: violent, non-violent, non-protest.
  – PEA can reinforce, through exclusion, the silencing of those who cope or protest quietly.

• Migratory protests: How to deal with protests that migrate within people, who carry the same grievance from place to place and act it out in seemingly disjointed protest events?
Evaluation Framework approach

• Indicator development
• Predictive modelling
• Scenario Building
• Challenge: Developing sufficiently flexible and robust evaluation framework applicable to varying contexts, especially rural and urban, and with practical applications for the co-governance of water service delivery.
• Possible dilemma: Citizenship monitoring roles versus constituency representation at local levels.
Towards multi-scenario building

- Coping strategies / Non-protest
- Violent Protest
- Non-violent Protest
- Resilience failure

Access
Affordability
Governance
Other factors (e.g. triggers & contributors)

WRC-PLAAS Water Currents Dialogue Seminar, 13 September 2013: Social protests and Water Service Delivery: Methodology, Dr Barbara Tapela, Institute for Poverty Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS)
Water security: Thresholds

WRC-PLAAS Water Currents Dialogue Seminar, 13 September 2013: Social protests and Water Service Delivery: Methodology, Dr Barbara Tapela, Institute for Poverty Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS)
Frequency distribution of water service delivery-related protest events 2005 - 2013

Based on Catalogue of Protest Events
Percentage frequency of water services related protest events by province

2005 to July 2013

2011 to July 2013
South Africa: Frequency of protests by province (MLGI, 2012)
Comparison of water services needs and protests

Overall need, based on water services backlogs (DWA 2009)  % Distribution of water services related protests (mostly 2005 - 2013)

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Protest distribution by municipality: Hot and cold spots (2005 – 2013)
Cape Metropolitan Council: Frequency of water services-related protest events by Neighbourhood, 2005 - 2013
Ethekwini Metropolitan Council: Frequency of water services-related protest events by Neighbourhood, 2005 - 2013

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