

Update on CWGAR Project, EDGES/ PoWG

October 2016

Update on Research Project

Comparative Water Access and Governance in Urban Sites of Africa Research Project

Including L. Harris, SSHRC funded project on Water Governance in Accra and Cape Town: Access, Citizenship, and Narrative

PROJECT UPDATE, SEPTEMBER 2016

Project Overview

The CWGAR project is a multi-year, multi-sited, research project of the EDGES (Environment and Development: Gender Equity and Sustainability) research collaborative and UBC's Program on Water Governance, led by Dr. Leila Harris. The project involves several current EDGES and PoWG members: Lucy Rodina, Emma Luker, Scott McKenzie, Dr. Crystal Tremblay, and Dr. Julian S Yates, as well as a number of EDGES alumni: Cynthia Morinville, Megan Peloso and Elizabeth Dapaah (see: <http://edges.sites.olt.ubc.ca/people/edges-alumni-2/>). The team is based out of the University of British Columbia, with partners at the University of Ghana-Legon and at the University of Western Cape, South Africa. We also have several ongoing collaborations with faculty members at University of Cape Town and with several NGOs (Environmental Monitoring Group and Iliso Care Society in Cape Town, and ISODEC in Accra). EDGES work is broadly concerned with research on marginalized and vulnerable populations (e.g., women, the impoverished, work in underserved sites) and seeks to deepen knowledge and advance action on equity dimensions of socio-institutional questions related to resource use, access, and politics. The work of the Program on Water Governance involves interdisciplinary research on water sustainability, as well as promoting dialogue with communities and decision-makers. This project fits well between these mandates, with focus on underserved sites in Accra, and Cape Town and particular interest in water access, use, and governance. Our work draws from diverse research traditions and methods, including those associated with political ecology, feminist and postcolonial research, critical development studies, and coupled social-ecological systems approaches. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used for the project, including interviews, focus groups, document and policy analysis, participatory video, and statistical analysis of several surveys.

The CWGAR project has a specific focus on water access and governance in Accra, Ghana and Cape Town, South Africa. Our on-going studies focus on the intersections of water

access/governance and citizenship in impoverished urban, peri-urban and underserved sites (e.g., Khayletisha and Phillippi in South Africa; Ashaiman, and Teshie in Accra). The project also analyzes broad water governance trends in South Africa and Ghana, including the effects of neoliberal policies and market instruments in the water realm (including privatization, devolution and participatory governance, full-cost recovery measures, and so forth.) A key goal of the project is to draw out and analyze meanings and narratives related to water access and governance, key considerations related to the practice and implementation of the human right to water, and links to broader debates and practices linked to citizenship and democracy. Taken together, an overarching goal of the project is to provide textured understandings of the lived effects of ongoing governance shifts and the everyday experiences of water access and governance in urban informal or underserved settlements.

Funding sources and Project Goals

Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at UBC, and the Center for International Governance Innovation, the primary objectives of this project are:

- 1) To analyze the effects and experiences of shifts in contemporary water governance among relatively impoverished and underserved communities in Accra, Ghana and Cape Town, South Africa
- 2) To analyze relationships between water use, access, governance, and citizenship
- 3) To develop new approaches for narrative analysis, particularly for political ecology
- 4) To contribute to policy debates regarding possibilities for extending water access and promoting participatory governance, particularly in underserved areas.

We also aim to work with partners in each context to promote research capacity and to disseminate knowledge.

Project Timeline

Key elements of the project timeline have included:

2011

Work led by C. Morinville on participatory water governance and services in several sites in Accra, including in Teshie, Nima, Sukura. This resulted in several publications, including: [Policy brief for the Centre for International Governance Innovation](#), [chapter in Contemporary Water Governance in the Global South \(2013\)](#) and [publication in Ecology and Society \(2014\)](#) (link to all)

2012

Implementation of a 487 household survey implemented with University of Western Cape-AOW (J. Goldin and team in the Anthropology of Water Group) and colleagues at University of Ghana-Legon (A. Darkwah). The survey was conducted in two sites in and around Accra

(Teshie and Ashaiman) and two sites in Cape Town (Khayelitsha and Phillipi), using the following survey instruments: [South Africa survey instrument 2012](#) & [Ghana survey instrument 2012](#) (both available on the www.edges.ubc.ca website)

Ongoing research by two MA students in Accra, C. Morinville and M. Peloso, focused on participatory water governance institutions in Accra (Local Water Boards), and everyday access to water and participatory governance possibilities in Ashaiman. A field debrief and community response forum was organized to solicit feedback on the analysis of the Local Water Boards. The work in Ashaiman resulted in the following publication: [Peloso and Morinville, Water Alternatives \(2014\)](#), documenting everyday practices involved in procuring water for daily needs that routinely lead residents outside of the official water supply system.

In South Africa, initial qualitative fieldwork was conducted in Khayelitsha, South Africa (L. Rodina), in collaboration with the Iliso care society. Interviews with NGOs and government officials were conducted in both Accra and Cape Town, undertaken by all members of the project team (L. Harris and L. Rodina for the Cape Town work). Thus far, this research has resulted in two publications, one focused on lived experiences of the human right to water [Rodina \(2016\)](#) and one on notions of citizenship and the state in relation to water services and infrastructure in Khaletisha [Rodina and Harris \(2016\)](#)

2013

Field [debrief with community members](#) in Khayelitsha based on MA research by L. Rodina, facilitated by [Iliso Care Society](#) and the [Environmental Monitoring Group](#). Field work in Accra Ghana in Madina and Ga Mashie, focused on water access and governance, led by MA student Elizabeth Koryoo Dapaah. This work involved a 200 household survey, in addition to a range of interviews with local government officials and community members. One publication from this work is currently under review (focused on comparing the sites with respect to modes of access, differentiated entitlements, and vulnerabilities).

In 2013, L. Harris was also awarded a SSHRC partnership development grant for International WaTERS: Water related Training, Education and Research in the South, involving several partners in the earlier CWGAR collaborations (more details: www.international-waters.org)

2014 and 2015

Follow-up and ongoing collaboration related to all of the above, in addition to initiation of a participatory video project, led by SSHRC post-doctoral fellow Dr. Crystal Tremblay. Participatory video workshops were conducted in Site C, Khayelitsha in collaboration with the [Iliso Care Society](#) and with support from the [Environmental Monitoring Group](#); and in Teshie, Accra, in partnership with [ISODEC](#). The video [‘Water is Life’](#) is a collaboration with ISODEC documents community challenges related to water and sanitation in Teshie, Accra. The film [‘It’s Your Chance’](#) is a co-production with the Iliso Care Society in Khayelitsha based on community interviews youth conducted on water and sanitation concerns in the community (Site C, Khayelitsha). These videos have been screened in both communities and used in focus groups with local government officials as a communication and action research tool to raise awareness on issues related to water and sanitation. A number of publications are currently in process, including a book chapter and journal article exploring themes related to arts-based engagement, citizenship and participatory public policy.

2016

As detailed below, several research projects are currently underway (L. Rodina, E. Luker, S. McKenzie, and J. Yates). For six months in 2016, Leila Harris is also enjoying residence as a Fellow at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (STIAS). In August 2016, several of the EDGES crew worked to organize and host a Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies funded workshop on Water Equity and Resilience in southern Africa (<http://waterequity.pwias.ubc.ca/>), with co-funding from SSHRC, NEPAD Water Centers of Excellence, the South African Water Resources Commission and several other sponsors (also as part of the International WaTERS collaborations). The workshop brought together approximately 35 scholars and activists from throughout southern Africa, and was a great success. More details to be provided on the workshop website as soon as they are available. Additionally, L. Rodina and L. Harris participated in a workshop on *Water Equity and Resilience* led by Gina Ziervogel and Lorena Pasquini from the University of Cape Town and Mark Pelling of King's College London. We are also currently working together with the Cape Town based NGO, the Environmental Monitoring Group, in support of a workshop they are organizing in October outside of Cape Town: *Multi Stakeholder Symposium: Citizen Engagement in Local Water Governance*.

Upcoming and ongoing research efforts related to this project include the following:

Lucy Rodina's doctoral work looks at the intersection of water governance, climate change and resilience in Cape Town using a political ecology lens. This doctoral study aims to investigate key themes in resilience thinking as they apply to urban water governance, with specific attention to droughts, floods and associated water-related risks, such as water pollution. One of the key objectives of this research is to investigate the uptake and use of key constituents of resilience thinking in the context of urban water broadly, both conceptually and in practice. With a specific focus on a case study from South Africa, the goal is to theorize and develop a situated understanding of water resilience - attentive to specific biophysical environments, lived experiences, socio-political and governance contexts, power and marginalization – for water experts and decision makers on one hand, and residents of impoverished, peri-urban and informal settlements on the other. Lucy is conducting fieldwork in Cape Town from April to September, 2016.

Scott McKenzie's project will investigate the triangulated relationship between citizenship, state provision of water, and space in under-served areas of Accra, Ghana and Cape Town, South Africa. Scott is interested in two primary research questions. First, how does water provision, access, and affordability affect notions of constructed and everyday citizenship for relatively impoverished residents living in Accra and Cape Town? Second, how do citizens in these locales engage their civic rights, or discourses of rights, to influence state practices and water provision? Scott is planning to undertake field-work on this project in late 2016 and early 2017.

Emma Luker's project looks at water supply diversification in the face of the ongoing drought in Cape Town, South Africa. More specifically, Emma will be focusing on barriers and opportunities for groundwater governance as an emerging dimension of regional water management. This work is aimed at producing an analysis of Cape Town's institutional framework surrounding the integration of groundwater and surface water management with respect to other urban, semi-arid water policy trajectories that are facing similar water constraints as Cape Town. Insights will analyze the groundwater landscape from an interlinked institutional and hydrological perspective in relation to the broader conversations surrounding

water supply diversification and urban water resilience. She recently wrapped up a field work season in Cape Town (June to September 2016).

Julian S. Yates, a post-doctoral fellow, is currently working with Leila Harris and Crystal Tremblay to analyze the qualitative data collected during the PV project. The projected output is a publication in an international development journal that focuses on the intersection of the neoliberalization of water services and the human right to water as an emerging rule regime.

As a fellow at STIAS, **Leila M Harris**, will be in South Africa from July 2016 to February 2017. Apart from overseeing different aspects of the project, and writing up publications with team members and partners, she is also working to conceptualize and write on several of the broad themes related to the research effort, including questions of radical democracy theory in relation to equity and justice, narrative approaches to political ecology, and connecting to debates around subjectivity and citizenship, drawing on the multiple layers of work conducted to date.

Our latest project updates can be found here (<http://edges.sites.olt.ubc.ca/research/edges-comparative-water-governance-in-africa-research-project-cwgar/>). Several policy briefs related to the policy and institutional contexts in South Africa and Ghana, and an overview data from the 2012 survey will soon be available.

Recent publications related to the project include:

Rodina, L. L. Harris (2016) Resilience in South Africa's Urban Waterscape, OpEd in The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/resilience-in-south-africas-urban-water-landscape-60461>

Rodina, L. (forthcoming). Reflections on water ethics and the human right to water in Khayelitsha, South Africa. In: R. Ziegler and D. Groenfeldt (Eds). *Global Water Ethics: Towards a global ethics charter*. London and New York, Routledge.

Rodina, L & L. M. Harris (2016). Water Services, Lived Citizenship, and Notions of the State in Marginalised Urban Spaces: The case of Khayelitsha, South Africa. *Water Alternatives* 9(2): 336-355.

Rodina, L (2016). Human Right to Water in Khayelitsha, South Africa – lessons from a 'lived experiences' perspective. *Geoforum*. DOI:10.1016/j.geoforum.2016.04.003.

Harris, L. M., Kleiber, D., Goldin, J., Darkwah, A., and C. Morinville (2016). Intersections of Gender and Water: Comparative approaches to everyday gendered negotiations of water access in underserved areas of Accra, Ghana and Cape Town, South Africa. *Journal of Gender Studies*. DOI:10.1080/09589236.2016.1150819

Harris, L., Rodina, L. & C. Morinville (2015). Revisiting the Human Right to Water from an Environmental Justice Lens. *Politics, Groups and Identities* 3(4): 660-665.

Policy Summary: Analyzing Participatory Urban Water Governance in Accra, Ghana, C. Morinville & L. Harris <https://watergovernance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Participatory-water-gov-in-Ghana-Brief-June-2016.pdf>

Community Videos:

'*Water is Life*' (2015), a community documentary co-created with ISODEC in Accra, Ghana (*Video*). Co-production by Tremblay, C., Harris, L., Shang-Quartey, L., and members of the PV project. Available on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVZblhLGNqU>

'*It's Your Chance - Ithuba Lakhu*' (2015), a community documentary co-created with Iliso Care members of the Iliso Care Society production team. Available on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbG_ljQ-hVo