Framing community entitlements to water in Accra, Ghana: A complex reality

Elizabeth K. Dapaaha\textsuperscript{a,}*, Leila M. Harris\textsuperscript{a,b}

\textsuperscript{a} Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability, University of British Columbia, AERL Building, 429-2202 Main Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4, Canada
\textsuperscript{b} STIAS, Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies, Stellenbosch 7600, South Africa

\begin{abstract}
Entitlements are generally defined as the commodities/resources (material and non-material), through which one can establish ownership or command access to resources. Applying this analytic to a case study of everyday water access in Accra, Ghana, we evaluate community water entitlements in two low-income communities with different locational and socio-cultural characteristics. We also evaluate how different entitlements to water map against variable dimensions of vulnerability. The study uses a mixed methods approach including a 200 household survey, focus groups with community members, and semi-structured interviews with local opinion leaders. Our results indicate that in both study communities, an entitlements approach provides a significantly richer portrait of water access beyond availability of piped water infrastructure. Among other factors that are important to everyday negotiations and entitlements related to water access, it is important to consider familial and kin networks, water storing options available to households and vendors, the distance and waiting time to fetch water, and local leaders’ perceptions of water issues, particularly how these compare with broader citizen understandings. In this way, an entitlements approach broadens the perspective beyond infrastructural endowments (e.g. piped water), to include a range of other socioeconomic, socio-cultural and local institutional characteristics. Drawing on the empirical examples, as well as related conceptual debates, the study questions how water access is defined, and how water governance processes might benefit from a broader understanding of entitlements, as well as links to differentiated vulnerabilities, notably in times of water-related stress or scarcity.
\end{abstract}

\section{Introduction}

Over the past decades, access to potable water in Ghana has improved substantially based on indicators such as those highlighted in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) progress report and other national level data (GSS, 2013; WHO/UNICEF, 2012). Even before the MDG target date of 2015, a significant increase in access to improved drinking water was recorded countrywide; moving from 53\% in 1990 to 86\% in 2010. In urban areas, access to improved drinking water increased from 84\% to 91\% over the same period (WHO/UNICEF, 2012). The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water-supply and Sanitation (JMP) defines improved drinking water sources to include piped water in homes, yards, or neighbour’s houses, rainwater, and covered boreholes and wells (WHO/UNICEF, 2012). In light of these numbers, in 2012 Ghana declared success in meeting the MDG for water in advance of the deadline, even as the sanitation goal remained out of reach.

Many concerns have been raised about WHO/UNICEF’s definition of improved water access which emphasizes particular water sources as more healthful and reliable, including a strong focus on piped water as paradigmatic of what constitutes an ‘improved source’. Recent works have challenged these understandings, particularly the suggestion that ‘improved sources’ will necessarily contribute to well-being and healthful outcomes (Mahama et al., 2014; Songsore, 2008).\textsuperscript{1} In Accra, studies have called for greater attention to be paid to the specific pathways through which access is negotiated (Mahama et al., 2014; Morinville, 2012; Songsore, 2009) to better understand implications and outcomes for water quality, affordability, health, and equity.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{*} Corresponding author.
\end{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{1} Mahama et al. (2014) redefine the WHO definition of improved water sources as ‘those with little likelihood of contamination with faecal matter and other pollutants’ (p. 323). Using this definition and with a sample of 1500 respondents distributed across migrants and indigenous communities across Accra, these authors found that only 4.4\% (piped water in dwelling 3.3 and bottled water 1.1) of the respondents had access to improved drinking water compared to 39.6\% using the WHO definition. Moreover, the study found that 88.7\% of respondents had access to improved water for domestic uses compared to 98.3\% using the WHO’s definition. The study suggested that using the WHO definition was invalid for low-income localities in Accra.

\textbf{Keywords:}
Entitlements, Water access, Piped water, Vulnerability, Accra, Ghana

\textbf{Corresponding author.}

\textit{E-mail addresses: elizabethdapaah@gmail.com (E.K. Dapaah), lharris@ires.ubc.ca (L.M. Harris).}

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.03.011

Received 15 July 2016; Received in revised form 31 December 2016; Accepted 13 March 2017
0016-7185/ © 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.
In many developing countries, governments’ responses to urban water provision challenges have relied heavily on technical expertise, often focused on increased capital investment, including efficiency improvements through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), and similar efforts (Ainuson, 2010). While there has been a de-emphasis on funding infrastructure for water provision from lending agencies such as the World Bank in the past decades (Bakker, 2003), instead pushing PPPs and other mechanisms that might fund these efforts through other means, there has nonetheless been a long-term focus on large scale infrastructure, including reservoir building, and piped water systems in response to the urban water crisis, often dominated by engineers and other technical ‘experts’ (Baker, 2015). The specific situation in urban Accra involved a privatization effort with the entity AVRL (Aqua Vitens Rand Limited, 2006–2011) required as part of loan conditions from the World Bank and IMF (Harris, 2013), as well as more recent PPP arrangements that have brought desalination and other infrastructure onboard to provide water to some of Ghana’s underserved communities, including Teschie (Andoh-Apiah, 2015).

At the global level, the MDGs, the International Decade for Water and Sanitation, and the recent policy emphasis on the Human Right to Water and Sanitation, have all contributed to the push for increased piped water access. To this point, it is estimated that almost two-thirds of total official development assistance (ODA) for drinking water and sanitation globally is targeted at the development of large piped water systems (WHO, 2010). However, in many developing contexts, piped water systems have not only been criticized for failing to provide water for those in greatest need (WHO, 2010; McGranahan and Satterthwaite, 2003), but also for promoting dependency and low levels of local access to water resources. These challenges have been exacerbated by the historical and cultural factors that have shaped water access and management in many urban settings (Amin, 1996; Amin and Harris, 2006). In addition, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of local knowledge and participatory approaches in water management (Peloso and Morinville, 2014; Ainuson, 2010; Songsore, 2008). However, these approaches have not always been sufficient to address the complex social and political dynamics that underlie water access in many urban areas, particularly in low-income communities.
دریافت فوری متن کامپ مقاله

امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات