Information and the Mediation of Power in Delft, Cape Town

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I explore the role of information in disputes over temporary relocations and housing allocation in Delft, Cape Town. Delft is a community with several temporary relocation areas (TRAs), and where massive housing construction takes place. Demands for information and grievances over limited transparency around the future of TRAs and the allocation of housing have become key issues in local politics. Using Mazzarella's work on mediation as an entry point, I explore how information works as a mediator of power in everyday politics. Information can be a resource for exercises of power, while also being something that is mediated in and through local political identities, social relations, and experiences. Depoliticized notions of information as a tool for frictionless development freed from interest-based politics can be perceived as a mode of regulation through which state actors aim to govern communities and regulate citizenship. But in the everyday politics of citizenship, claim-making based on the right to information also underlie political agency and influence multiple political practices in response to such disciplinary powers.

Keywords: *mediation, housing, urban politics, temporary relocation areas, Cape Town.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper I explore the role of information in local disputes over temporary relocations and housing allocation in Cape Town, South Africa. Temporary relocations are intended to facilitate informal settlement upgrading or help citizens in emergency situations (Department of Human Settlements 2009). The City of Cape Town (CCT) has constructed temporary relocation areas (TRAs) at the outskirts of the city which are also used to fulfill the obligation to provide alternative accommodation in the case of evictions (Tissington 2011). Temporary relocations and TRAs are therefore linked to broader debates about urban development, democracy and citizenship.

The largest emergency TRA in Cape Town is Blikkiesdorp (directly translated as Tin Town) in Delft; a poor township about 35 km outside the city center.[1] The

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[1]   After 1994 the ANC government initiated large-scale subsidized housing developments in Delft for the urban poor regardless of race. Residents proudly referred to themselves as one of the first desegregated communities in Cape Town, integrating mainly poor colored and black residents. Yet, racial identities have continued to play a role in organized politics in Delft (see Millstein 2008a).

construction of Blikkiesdorp and other TRAs in Delft has informed community politics, linking frustrations over TRAs with disputes over access to housing. Residents living TRAs as well as those who are referred to as backyarders, i.e. residents who rent dwellings constructed in the backyards of formal houses, are concerned with three issues: how temporary the TRAs are; how, when and where permanent housing will be available; and, given increasing housing needs in Delft in addition to TRA residents waiting for houses, who gets houses first.

The right to access information about plans for the TRAs and the allocation of housing opportunities has therefore emerged as a key demand. In 2013, I observed a meeting between a Delft community network and representatives of local and provincial government. The group had filed a complaint to the Western Cape office of the Public Protector. In the complaint they argued that the state had failed to respond in due time to a memorandum that listed grievances concerning the future of TRA residents as well as other housing needs in Delft. The group wanted information about how housing resources were to be allocated, and whether TRA residents and backyarders in Delft would be prioritized. The group argued that the lack of feedback was a breach of their right to information under the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) of 2000 and obscured the transparency and accountability of the housing process.

In the meeting the officials questioned the legitimacy of the complaint and shifted between instructing and pleading with the residents to follow proper procedures of participation. While acknowledging their right to file a complaint, the officials argued that the group had not used the opportunities available to them to stay informed. The officials also questioned the group's legitimacy as a community representative; in particular their right to voice the grievances of Blikkiesdorp, which had its own leadership committee. Groups in Blikkiesdorp and Delft had worked together to develop the memorandum in 2012, but community leaders in Blikkiesdorp had not endorsed the complaint sent to the Public Protector's office. However, some Blikkiesdorp residents remained part of the process and attended the meeting.

These proceedings reflect some of the disputes about access to, control over and dissemination of information related to housing in Delft. During the proceedings there were subtle and not so subtle efforts by the officials to put people in their place. They stated that in calling such meetings the group wasted time and resources the City could use to build houses. Simultaneously, they commended local initiatives, as long as they happened in an orderly manner. The community group would be awarded and listened to, if they played by the rules. Furthermore, the officials' questioning of the legitimacy of who were to be the voices of a community reflects a complex field of community organizing in Delft. There are fluid relations between community organizations, shifting between cooperation and conflict. Such shifting positions and conflicts are not detached from the state. As one activist observed,

> You know, half of us say no, half of us say yes. I know it is complicated,
> but this is the upper hand which the state has, we are so divided. It is

difficult to come to one point you see, that is the problem…. As a government official it will be very easy to have separate meetings with [different groups] (community activist, March 28, 2013).

TRAs and housing construction are managed by various spheres of government, which also tends to fragment community organizing (Millstein 2008b). When resources become available, demands are sometimes caught up in competing claims around who has rights and who belongs to the community (Millstein and Jordhus-Lier 2012). In this situation, accessing information about what is planned and implemented also becomes a means to build legitimacy and support in the community.

Disputes about information are therefore integral to complex mediations of power in local politics in Delft. I do not elaborate on the broader production of and contestations over knowledge, but I want to briefly examine relations between the politics of information, mediation, and local knowledge. Jordhus-Lier et al. (forthcoming: 1)[2] argue that knowledge perspective on urban informality must include 'power dynamics, lived experiences and social relations.' Knowledge is (re)constructed when information 'is put into a larger context [Bruckmeyer and Tovey: 316] or set of meanings (Jordhus-Lier et al. forthcoming: 2).' These meanings are also imbricated with mediations through which people make sense of their realities (Mazzarella 2004, 2006). Information as a resource to exercise power (Allen 2003) is thus also mediated through local relations and experiences, and can (re)construct political identities and practices. These latter dynamics are the main focus in this paper.

The paper builds on fieldwork in Delft, including TRAs, in 2013 and 2014. It also draws on a longer engagement with community groups in Delft which started in 2004 when I did fieldwork for my PhD project (Millstein 2008a). The interviews with TRA residents focused on their housing history and background for relocation, experiences with temporary living and daily engagements with the state, and their involvement in community organizing before and after the relocation. The analyses are not about revealing the truth about who said what, but how interviewees describe the provision of information, how they make sense of information and to what extent this informs, and is informed by, political identities, strategies, and practices.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: I start with a discussion of a political geography of mediation before I place the use of temporary relocation and TRAs in a broader field of housing in Cape Town I also provide some historical context and the background for TRAs in Delft. In the final section I discuss the role of information in the mediation of power between state actors and community representatives. I unpack shifting political identities that are

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[2]   I got access to the final chapter draft as the book went into print, so page numbers do not correspond to pages in the forthcoming book but to pages in the draft document.

critical to understanding local mediation, and I also touch upon some implications of mediation for the politics of community organizing.[3]

2. THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF MEDIATION

The discourse on mediation is central in research on the role of the media and communication in the era of globalization (Mazzarella 2004, Boyer 2012, Klauser 2013). Mediation can more generally refer to the production and reproduction of various social dispensations 'through a particular set of media' (Mazzarella 2004: 346), where what is mediated and doing the mediation moves beyond communication technologies. This approach suggests that we can explore numerous transformations as mediated processes. My contribution in this special issue is to shift the focus towards the relational mediation of power imbricated with sociospatial change (Allen 2003, Klauser 2013), and the role of information in these processes. Klauser (2013: 95) sees the concept of mediation as a 'more than relational' conception of power and space. Commenting on the influence of Foucault in political geography, Klauser suggests that

> taking Foucault seriously in political geography…requires not merely recognition of the relational nature and spatial dimension of power, but, furthermore, demands a systematic focus on the mediating tools and procedures shaping and underpinning the exercise of power (p. 95).

Klauser argues that a foucauldian governmentality lens is particularly useful to understand these dimensions, which can also contribute a lot to analyses of TRAs. TRAs can be seen as mediated manifestations of governmental interventions underpinned by a set of discourses of urban development and the individualization of citizenship under neoliberalism (Millstein 2013, Raco and Imrie 2000). Furthermore, to keep people waiting in 'uncertainty and arbitrariness' is one way the state can exercise political domination (Auyero 2012: 19). TRAs emerge as 'grey spaces' in which residents live in a state of 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel 2012: 154) and are expected to patiently wait for housing (Greyling and Oldfield 2014, Millstein and Jordhus-Lier 2013). Daily behavior is governed through disciplinary measures such as regulating conditions for occupancy and direct and indirect surveillance (Hannah 1997, Millstein 2013).

Mediated relationships are not merely about exercising dominating power, which has been a main focus in the governmentality literature on urban transformations in South Africa (Parnell 2008, Parnell and Pieterse 2010, Pieterse 2010). The over-emphasis on dominating powers 'from above' triggering a resistance 'from below' tends to conceal how multiple mediations of economic,

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3   Due to space constraints I emphasized state-community relations at the expense of equally important analyses of how information mediates power in community politics and also shapes everyday experiences of urban citizenship.

social, cultural and political processes shape the everyday experiences of urban citizenship (Robins 2002, Oldfield and Stokke 2006, Pieterse 2008, Bénit-Gbaffou and Oldfield 2011). As mediators between state actors and residents, for instance, activists and community representatives can act as local knowledge brokers (Jordhus-lier et al. forthcoming) that also shape legitimacy and political representation in community organizing. Also, this everyday politics encompasses multiple political practices that challenge simplistic dichotomies of either self-regulating citizens, or visible collective resistance (Barnett 2005).

These mediated entanglements of dominating and resisting powers (Sharp et al. 2000) suggest that the workings of power are more complex; various modes of power are at work, with different effects (Allen 2003). In these processes, information can be a medium through which different modes of power are exercised (Allen 2003). Information is in itself a mediated representation, in that someone constructs it for particular purposes. Once produced, it can be withheld or used to seduce, convince, or manipulate (Allen 2003). Information can be provided partially and for particular purposes, serving some interests over others (Painter 2008). As a tool for the mediation of power, it can work through proximity and distance (Allen 2003). Information is also associated with discursive practices that shape local political identities and collective action, and will be interpreted differently through local discourses, perceptions, and community actors' positions.

2.1 INFORMATION AND THE POLITICS OF IMMEDIATION

In development agendas pushing for institutional reforms, information is integral to achieving transparency and, thus, limiting corruption. Although the politics of transparency can be contentious, state discourses on transparency are framed by what Mazzarella term the 'utopia of immediation:' frictionless social mechanisms. In this discourse politics is perceived in negative terms to describe the messy realities that (local) mediations necessary involve (Mazzarella 2006: 500). As a political practice aimed at limiting these disruptions, the politics of immediation 'in the name of immediacy and transparency, occludes the potentialities and contingencies embedded in the mediations that comprise and enable social life' (Mazzarella 2006: 476). Similarly, in depoliticized development discourses that underpin technocratic good governance agendas (Mohan and Stokke 2008), interest-based politics is perceived as processes that stand in the way of frictionless development interventions.

In contrast to such utopias, politics is inherent in mediation and can enable as well as limit specific actions. Information as a medium to exercise power and as something mediated through local experiences – in this case about housing interventions – can have multiple and often unpredictable effects. Information about a process or project in the name of immediacy and transparency can trigger multiple reactions. It can fuel allegations of unfairness and corruption rather than

eradicate them, and blend with local rumors and allegations. It can instigate conflicts between groups of citizens, raise expectations but also disappointment; it can trigger protests but also contain them; and it can fuel resentment or hope for some, but rarely all, residents. It can be used for particular purposes in ways that can be both progressive and regressive. The latter also reflects the openness of mediation which informs political subject formations and open spaces for political agency. The right to information can be a basis for claim-making and mobilization. Mazzarella warns that claims based on the universal right to information can serve to reproduce a modernist state discourse that assumes the possibilities of immediation; although he argues that the politics of transparency is highly positional (p. 489). In this paper I argue for an open-ended analysis of information as a basis for claims and political practices when viewed as everyday politics.

3. TEMPORARY RELOCATIONS AND HOUSING ALLOCATION IN POST-APARTHEID POLICIES

Temporary relocation features in two national housing programs in South Africa: the Emergency Housing Program (EHP) and Informal Settlements Upgrading Program (ISUP) (Department of Human Settlements 2009). These policies reflect gradual shifts in how the state seeks to realize its constitutional obligation to provide adequate housing. While the initial policies emphasized the delivery of housing units, recent programs such as ISUP suggest a more diverse approach through which the state acts on its constitutional obligation by providing more diverse housing opportunities such as serviced sites that can be developed incrementally (Millstein and Jordhus-Lier 2013).

Housing policies and programs are regulated through an increasingly complex governance system based on categorizations of beneficiary citizens, who then can then be targeted for different policies and interventions. Citizens do not have consistent information and knowledge of and experience with such processes, which also inform local disputes. A key difference between the two programs is that in the case of informal settlement upgrading, residents relocated temporarily can be eligible for housing support based on geography, i.e. as residents of the settlement targeted for intervention,[4] while emergency relocations provide assistance to citizens regardless of their eligibility for state housing support. Once relocated as an emergency response, eligibility becomes decisive in the opportunity to move to a permanent solution. Relocated residents who do not qualify for housing support, or were only recently registered on the waiting list, may thus end up in a state of permanent temporariness (Yiftachel 2012). The

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[4]   The kind of support will depend on whether they fulfil criteria for subsidies for a top structure (full or partial subsidy), or whether they will only get a serviced site which can be developed incrementally.

politics of temporary relocations is therefore intrinsically linked to contestations over housing allocation.

Temporary relocations and TRAs[5] seem to fit well with analyses that emphasize how neo-liberal urban governmentality exercise disciplinary powers and construct individualized, self-regulating active citizens (Raco and Imrie 2000). It is important to note that urban discourses and policies in South Africa are not merely neo-liberal transcripts. The politics of urban citizenship is more complex than merely being a result of constructing the self-regulated citizen under neo-liberalism, or a collective resistance to these dominating powers (cf. Barnett 2005). South Africa's urban transformations are, for instance, informed by partially contradictory discourses in policies and strategies. Parnell and Robinson (2012) argue that interpreting the changes in state power since 1994 as a retreating state conditioned by global neo-liberalism ignores how civil society and social movements also sought to limit state power based on more radical notions of community participation. Urban policies and practices are thus mediated politics which inform and are also informed by local history and geography.

3.1 THE APARTHEID LEGACY

In apartheid's racial hierarchy,[6] the population of mixed descent was classified as colored. The colored population was concentrated in the Western and Northern Cape, with preferential access to work and services under the Coloured Labour Preference Policy. Black South Africans were not officially citizens of South Africa but of their respective ethnic homelands as set up by the apartheid regime. They could only reside temporarily in designated areas in South Africa's cities and towns, provided they had work. Under the spatial logic of urban apartheid, new townships for the non-white population were constructed on the Cape Flats on the outskirts of the white CBD and suburbs. Towards the end of the apartheid years, an escalating housing crisis faced many South African cities, which made urban transformation one of the most critical issues in post-apartheid South Africa. In the formal townships many people lived as backyarders, renting a shack (an informally constructed dwelling) in the backyard of formal houses. There was also a mushrooming of informal settlements that housed mainly black South Africans who migrated to cities such as Cape Town in greater numbers when influx control was relaxed in the 1980s.

These legacies continue to influence urban development. Under apartheid a waiting list was used to allocate housing for the colored population, but black residents were excluded from this list and constituted a majority of informal

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5   I explore this is another conference paper (Millstein 2013).
6   Apartheid was a legal institutional system based on racial segregation between white, colored, Indian/Asian and black South Africans. While no longer a legal and political dispensation, apartheid-constructed racial identities continue to shape South African society and politics.

settlement dwellers in Cape Town. A key challenge has been to combine allocation practices where beneficiaries are drawn from the City's housing database, still commonly referred to as the waiting list, with the accommodation of informal settlement dwellers. Recently, the CCT seemed to have put increasing weight on the waiting list, encouraging residents to register. However, in implementation, developers still have to negotiate community dynamics where the waiting list, informal settlement dwellers, and local community demands intersect (local official 1, March 18, 2013).

3.2   BLIKKIESDORP AND TSUNAMI TRAS IN DELFT

Although not divided by racial identities, the TRAs in Delft reflect some of these legacies of apartheid. The first TRA, Tsunami, was constructed after a fire in the Joe Slovo informal settlement in the township of Langa in 2005. These settlements had already been targeted for upgrading under the N2 Gateway project, a planned mega-housing project presented by the ANC government in 2004. Tsunami residents were promised housing as part of this project, based on their residency in Joe Slovo.[7] The host community, Delft, initially resisted the relocation in 2005, and they also challenged the decision that only 30% of N2 Gateway houses would be allocated to waiting list residents, while informal settlements would get 70%.

The perception that informal settlement dwellers got preferential treatment while local backyarders were excluded led to the invasion by local backyarders of about 1,000 N2 Gateway houses built in Delft in 2007. The CCT built Blikkiesdorp as an emergency response to accommodate these residents after they were evicted in 2008. Most of the evictees accepted the relocation, but a group of a little more than 100 residents linked to the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign refused to be relocated and built a squatter camp in Delft. The Symphony Way pavement dwellers were eventually relocated to Blikkiesdorp after a final eviction order in 2009. In contrast to Tsunami[8] which was initially a relocation directly linked to a planned project, there was never a planned solution for Blikkiesdorp (local official 1, March 18, 2013). However, many residents claim that they were screened and approved for houses when they were relocated, and that they were told they would only stay in the TRA for a short time. I will return to this below.

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[7]   This and subsequent relocations to Delft were also contested in Joe Slovo, and ended up in the Constitutional Court. Although the relocation was approved, the ruling set out important requirements for the quality of temporary accommodation and the importance of community participation (Tissington 2011).

[8]   Original Tsunami residents still qualify for N2 Gateway houses, but the settlement has changed over time. Thus, there are many so-called non-qualifiers for housing in Tsunami. Two possible solutions have been mentioned for these residents: Let them stay in a TRA indefinitely, or relocate them to serviced sites that can be upgraded incrementally; the criteria for getting a serviced site are less strict than receiving a full housing subsidy.

Given the high-profile invasion and struggle against relocation from 2007 to 2009, Blikkiesdorp has become a symbol for urban challenges in Cape Town. Described as a place 'where hope is dying'[9] Blikkiesdorp is known for harsh living conditions, sub-standard services and high levels of violence and crime. While the CCT defends Blikkiesdorp as a temporary solution in which residents get access to services, residents describe the TRA as a dumping ground and concentration camp.[10] These public discourses are themselves mediated representations that aim to build legitimacy for the TRA's existence (from the view of the CCT) as well as its dismantling (from local activists who struggle to get permanent houses). Despite these disputes, the City gradually expanded Blikkiesdorp to accommodate citizens from all over Cape Town in response to emergency situations, including many state-initiated evictions. Today the TRA has a little more than 1,760 units providing accommodation for somewhere between 8,000 and 10,000 people (local official 2, March 22 2013).

4. THE ROLE OF INFORMATION IN THE MEDIATIONS OF LOCAL POWER DYNAMICS

The sections above sketch the complexity of the mediated politics and relational dynamics between the state and communities, between the TRAs and Delft as well as in the TRAs. In these dynamics, access to information and demands for transparency play key roles: who has the right to access information and to provide information about which processes, and how should information about ongoing processes be disseminated among community residents? How do actors interpret what is being informed? As argued above, a desire for a politics of immediation suggests a frictionless flow of (in this case) information, free from political interests, to ensure successful development interventions. Politics is seen as something that disrupts otherwise well-planned interventions, as reflected in the quote below:

> The people who live in TRAs are under the impression that they must get all the houses that are possible…. There is a little bit of politics there because the organizations are not giving *the right report-backs* to the communities and up to now things got… we are expecting things to get worse (local official, March 27, 2013, author's emphasis).

9   Cape Argus (2012). Shanty town where hope is dying. March 12, p. 4.
10   On CCT statements, see for instance Cape Times (2009). Temporary settlements meet need to shelter people caught up in crises. Dan Plato, executive mayor of Cape Town, November 23, 2009, p. 6; Cape Argus (2009). Blikkiesdorp is city's safest informal settlement, says council housing boss. May 4, p. 4. On protests and living conditions, see for instance Cape Argus (2009). Delft residents slam Blikkiesdorp conditions. May 8, p. 4; Cape Argus (2010). They've forgotten about us. December 1, 2010, p. 4; City Press (2011). Life is tough here, *broer* (meaning brother). October 23, p. 12. Cape Times (2012). Councillor has yet to visit the area: Blikkiesdorp community protests. January 25, p. 7.

In this perspective, problems emerge because people do not behave as good democratic citizens waiting their turn, and because community organizations disrupt the City's good interventions with divisive politics. These are not neutral processes. Information can also be seen as a resource and a mediating tool through which power is exercised (Allen 2003, Klauser 2013), and shapes the everyday experiences of urban citizenship. Before I explore some examples of this politics of information, it is important to understand the shifting identities that shape, and in turn is also shaped by, such mediation.

4.1   POLITICAL IDENTITIES AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

TRA networks and community organizations have complex relationships with organizations and activists in Delft. This everyday politics is informed by, and inform, overlapping political identities in Delft and the TRAs. One identity relates to place-making and a sense of belonging in a bounded Delft community. In my previous work, I found that while racial identities have an impact on organized politics, people were also proud to live in a desegregated community (Millstein 2008a). It was invariably used to mobilize and challenge the state's decisions to, first, construct the Tsunami TRA in 2005, and later to challenge the limited number of houses set aside for Delft backyarders. As a shared sense of belonging, this emerges as a 'Delft against the rest' argument when housing is allocated to non-Delft residents. At times this notion transcended racial identities in local mobilization (Millstein 2008a).

Today, the 'Delft against the rest' logic partially includes, but sometimes also excludes, the temporary residents. This depends to a certain extent on the previous residential status of temporary residents. Thus, many Blikkiesdorp residents who themselves used to be backyarders are included, while Tsunami residents from informal settlements fight their own struggle (although there have been efforts to mobilize across these settlements). These dynamics of inclusion and exclusion take us into the second dimension: a tension between backyarders and informal settlement dwellers. This tension links housing issues to a third dimension – racial identities – since backyarders historically were colored residents while informal settlement dwellers were dominantly black residents who were perceived as newcomers. While no longer divided as neatly along racial lines, such perceptions reflect the continued legacies of urban apartheid.

Since 2004 there has been a shift towards using a backyarder identity as a means to local mobilization:

> I think you have heard those echoes from the meeting, but what we attempt to do, we know the backyarders and the backyarders have been marginalized in the process, which are the Delft backyarders.
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> I think we have to go right from the beginning when we raised it with Nomaindia [Nomaindia Mfeketo, ex-mayor of the CCT]. Nomaindia came, we had a community meeting, [and the] understanding in the

meeting was 70% relocated from Langa, Joe Slovo [informal settlement], to the N2 Gateway and 30% from Delft backyarders. There were no objections when that was given over. Up to today that thing you heard people echoing in the meeting yesterday, *Delft backyarders haven't been allocated houses*. Whether the City switches policy, and allocate people from other areas… at the end of the day, Delft backyarders haven't been allocated houses. So I think that is something we feel that needs to be addressed (community activist, March 28, 2013, author's emphasis).

This was combined with claims about racial discrimination, although activists would avoid using apartheid-constructed categories and emphasized Afrikaans-speaking versus isiXhosa-speaking residents (ethnically speaking, many black South Africans in Cape Town are Xhosa, with origins in the Eastern Cape):

We went as far as to say … institutionalized racial prejudice in terms of housing allocation on the part of the state, where we say we are living in a diverse community, speaking Xhosa and Afrikaans, but only Xhosas are allocated houses.

Importantly, these are not seen as racial tensions, but two equally critical sources for local mobilization and claim-making. These political identities intersect and overlap in daily organizing and are not inherently in conflict. In community meetings, for instance, isiXhosa-speaking backyarders living in Delft South agreed with the claim that the government was practicing institutionalized racial prejudice against Afrikaans-speaking backyarders. These are cases where houses have been given to outsiders, bringing the Delft against the rest logic into play. They then have a mutual interest in getting information about how housing allocation in ongoing projects has been decided.

4.2 MEDIATION OF POWER IN TEMPORARY RELOCATIONS AND IN THE TRA

Ayuero (2012) shows how evictions in Argentina involved both coercion and persuasion. Actors of the state – police and welfare officers – played different roles in relation to those who were being evicted; force with one hand, persuasion and access to welfare with the other. Experiences of relocation to Blikkiesdorp after evictions tell similar stories. After clashes with police and eviction units, housing officials and/or councilors would inform them about options, such as what Blikkiesdorp would provide. To use Allen's differentiations of power, these experiences suggest that both modes of coercion and inducement are involved in temporary relocations. Many residents claim that they were promised they would only have to stay for some time before they would get houses, only to be left waiting without knowing when a solution could be found.

Once relocated, what has been promised and how permanent solutions might be realized depending on residents' eligibility under ordinary housing programs is far from clear. The CCT increasingly insists that the only way to govern allocation is to follow the waiting list. But while the government seems to follow the first come first served principle, other criteria still come into play in specific housing projects. These processes are less known, and information about exactly how allocation is being done is scarce (see SERI 2013). This might reflect the limits to transparency (Mazzarella 2006) despite claims to ensure that housing interventions are transparent and accountable to citizens. In daily mediations, withholding information or only providing partial information can be ways to create arbitrariness, with the effect that it can also fragment collective action.

Promises made by the state when relocated can work as a mode of inducement or manipulation (Allen 2003). These promises and the confusion about who were eligible for what had an impact upon the relations within as well as between various groups evicted to the TRA at different times. These experiences emerge from the contradictory ways government interventions work in relocation and allocation, where the latter is based on individual eligibility, and on what people have been told about temporary living and prospects for permanent housing. In one eviction-relocation case, TRA residents said that only some of them got houses.

> The time we moved here [Blikkiesdorp TRA] they [city officials] said… between three weeks and three months. The thing is in 2009 we filled in subsidy forms, all of us qualified for subsidies, you see. We were 43 people from [hostel], they only selected 11 people and from them 8 people moved. They were telling people they were coming back for other names because we were next, but they never pitched up. … That is what my husband told them in the e-mail [to housing official]. They moved us one day all together [to Blikkiesdorp] but from 43 people they only moved 8 people? (TRA resident 5, March 22, 2013)

While this might be correct according to housing lists and criteria for support, they were relocated as a group and expected to be assisted together. There are also weak and invariably conflictual community networks in Blikkiesdorp. There is a Blikkiesdorp committee, but their legitimacy seemed to be contested. Many interviewees described a low level of trust and cooperation between groups that had been evicted to Blikkiesdorp at different times, reflecting low levels of social cohesion:

> I can walk freely around this place. But you can't trust anyone here. Really, you can't trust them. Why? Since the housing thing now, people [are] giving you wrong information, they don't want you [from another group] to get a house, they don't want you to get out of here, they only want their people in [to new housing opportunities] and then they put other people out. That is what happens here, there are a lot of back stabbers here (TRA resident 9, March 21, 2013).

Rather than talking with one voice, relocated groups engaged separately and differently with the state when making their claims. This made it difficult to form a more inclusive community committee that had legitimacy as a voice of the TRA. Such fragmentations are influenced by differentiated access to housing as individuals and also different strategic engagement between community groups and state actors. These divisions also link to the particular history of Blikkiesdorp, where it started out as an emergency solution for the Symphony Way struggle with stronger links to the Delft community, but then got extended to accommodate people from all over Cape Town. For instance, reflecting identities of belonging, some residents who were only recently relocated to Blikkiesdorp assumed that they would be excluded from the housing projects. Although they had lived as backyarders in other areas of Cape Town, they were not part of the original group of backyarders from the Symphony Way struggle. When rumors emerged that some of the leadership from this group were on the allocation list, other evicted groups in Blikkiesdorp questioned why they had not been allocated houses since they were also promised a solution. These rumors made them reject the committee leadership, and fight for their own groups' access to housing.

4.3   INFORMATION AND MEDIATION OF POWER IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE: PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS

> I'm gonna blame the organizations that are representing the people because the representatives from those organizations are not *giving the right message* to their supporters, and I do have a problem with that. I told people last week we had a report-back meeting and I told him again listen here, I'm the only one who is going to give you feedback on the housing project assisted by the official on the project because people want to boost their own image (local councilor, March 28, 2013, author's emphasis).

In the meeting I described in the introduction, the CCT officials disputed the legitimacy of the group's actions since they did not use the structures available to them at ward and sub-council level (personal observation, March 15, 2013). These platforms, and the information provided through such fora, reflect power dynamics that relate to how legitimacy and representation is structured and contested. According to the community network that filed the complaint to the Western Cape office of the Public Protector, the project steering committee (PSC) for the City project did not provide sufficient information, and the specific information they requested about allocation procedures was not made available. They claimed that PSC members, including local councilors, did not give feedback from the PSC meetings, leaving residents in the dark. These committees have also limited power. Although they could discuss local needs and give recommendations, final decisions were taken elsewhere and were thus not transparent to the community.

There is a divergence between activists and residents' sense of not being informed and a perception among state actors that they are continuously informing the community either directly (for instance with leaflets, social media, web information, posters, and open meetings) or via community representatives. The CCT expects the well-informed and participating citizens to ensure successful development, and the City responds with frustration when these processes are challenged. As a councilor expressed after the meeting, it is frustrating that people 'will not listen' (personal conversation, local councilor, March 15, 2015). Seen from the City's perspective, participatory institutions are forum through which information can be orderly provided between a democratic state and citizens. State actors have clear ideas of what constitute legitimate community voices as set out in formal regulations for local participatory governance (Millstein 2008a). These modes of invited spaces for participation (Cornwall 2002) are often seen as tools for state control and where local councilors can serve their own interests, rather than for more popular participation (Bénit-Gbaffou and Piper 2011, Benit-Gbaffou 2008, Millstein 2008b, Miraftab and Wills 2005). Yet, and as the quote on the previous page suggests, local politicians also try to free themselves from the dirty field of politics when doing community development (also see Millstein 2008b).

The legitimacy of these platforms is therefore contested, and the information and discussions that emerge through participatory forums are reinterpreted through particular positions, interests, and identities. Activists can function as local knowledge brokers, and these dynamics get imbricated with contestations over legitimacy and representation in community politics. For the group in question here, it was not only about proving that backyarders were in fact ignored in allocation. The mere position of being perceived as informed actors who are well-placed to access information that residents or other actors could not, would strengthen their legitimacy as a community voice. In community meetings, activists giving report-backs would also interpret information and experiences from different meetings or documents in ways that underpinned their interests and objective to specifically mobilize backyarders. As we saw earlier, this sometimes overlapped with accusations of institutionalized racial prejudice against Afrikaans-speaking residents.

In an effort to discipline the activists based on what they perceived to be ordered participation, the City saw the coordinator of the network as playing a divisive role, calling meetings to get information while causing conflict by raising the Public Protector's office case based on flawed information and unsubstantiated accusations. But for the group, getting the Public Protector involved was a way of getting an independent investigation into their claim that the state was ignoring Afrikaans-speaking backyarders and simultaneously investigate several other claims of limited transparency and corruption in the housing projects. These demands built upon rights-based claims to information, framed by activists' engagement with a national campaign called the Right to Know (R2K), but were informed by local experiences such as being provided no

or only partial information and denied access to information when approaching the state through formal channels. In this case activists sought critical engagement and aimed to use channels available to them to challenge the state on their right to information in the name of transparency. But these demands have invariably also triggered direct action, including several protests organized in the Tsunami TRA in March 2013. These protests were also partially about disputes over information that intersected with unclear perceptions and rumors about what kind of houses were about to be built for these residents.

Mazzarella (2006) argues that insisting on the right to information builds upon similar utopias of immediacy as a politics of immediation. In the everyday reality, however, local demands around transparency and access to information emerge from multiple experiences with the mediated exercising of power and the role of information in these processes. Political practices – whether taking legal action or move their frustrations to the street – framed by claims to information can potentially also repoliticize otherwise deeply technocratic and managerial housing delivery processes.

4.4   THE PARADOX OF TRANSPARENCY: PUBLISHING THE BENEFICIARY LISTS

> [Government] says we must not listen to anything other people say, just then when the council comes. And they come from the housing department and when they tell us something, then we must believe it because there are a lot of stories going around this place, you know. Lots and lots of stories, making you excited. People say we must move off from this place because the airport wants their ground and we must be out by June. I don't actually know if that is true. I don't really believe it. I only believe it if somebody comes down and tells me yes this is the house, this is the key, you got the house (TRA resident 12, March 25, 2013).

There are currently two ongoing housing projects in Delft: the N2 Gateway project managed by the Housing Development Agency (HDA) – an agency running the project on behalf of the Western Cape Provincial Government – and a project managed by the CCT. These projects deal very differently with information and criteria for allocation. In contrast to the N2 Gateway project, the CCT has agreed to publish lists of potential beneficiaries. Open beneficiary lists were a demand from community activists to ensure transparency and accountability, and were seen as an important victory for community activists.[11] After a first screening of beneficiaries, residents could check their status, but also

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[11] In 2014 some new controversies emerged around a second list of beneficiaries, where community organizations wanted the list sorted according to neighbourhoods in Delft.

give feedback if there were names on the list of people who already got houses or did not qualify in other ways.

Publishing housing allocation lists in the name of accountability and transparency is a double-edged sword. It gives a sense of transparency and can be a tool for keeping the state accountable, but it can also function as a mode of governmentality through which residents govern and discipline themselves. Although names are public and residents understand that there is a waiting list at work, other criteria for allocation and the process through which allocation is done are unclear. Thus, residents were upset because some beneficiaries had not been on the waiting list long enough, although there might be other criteria that circumvent the principle of first come first served. As a result, rumors of corruption, unfair practices and preferential treatments that were already going around were strengthened.

The shifting identities described above are also mediated through similar rumors and perceptions of what 'others' have benefited. This was most clear when they talked about the N2 Gateway project, but it also informed their discussions over and subsequent demands for information about the City-led project. In everyday experiences, residents have difficulties in separating the two projects and the differentiated processes connected to them. Backyarders in Delft and Blikkiesdorp were frustrated that they had been waiting for years and suddenly a 'young Xhosa girl got a house' or they knew people that had 'several houses.' How information is perceived and mediated through local perceptions thus informs different political practices. The emphasis on an identity as a backyarder partially informed this local mobilization, increasingly so as they perceived the N2 Gateway project to conduct unfair and corrupt allocation practices in which local housing needs were ignored. Activists used this information to build up under claims of preferential treatments and demanded a more detailed breakdown of how allocation decisions were made.

5. CONCLUSION

The implementation of and disputes about temporary relocations, the TRAs and the politics of housing allocations in Delft highlight the different ways in which citizens are being governed, constructed but also acting as political citizens. The concept of mediation can be used to think about how these experiences and practices are understood politically in everyday struggles over urban citizenship. In this paper I specifically explored how information can be seen as a resource for the mediation of power and can influence citizenship experiences. Information can be produced and provided, withheld and used by various actors with multiple objectives and effects. As a resource for the mediation of power seen from 'above,' information aims to structure and regulate a particular understanding of the active and well-behaving citizen. This belief that development interventions effortlessly can be implemented as along as citizens are given the right

information, clashes with the local politics of mediations that shape legitimacy, authority, and political representations in community politics.

In this case study such mediated politics is informed by everyday experiences with and overlapping identities of being a backyard dweller and/or an informal settlement dweller, by racial identities, and the experiences with waiting for housing opportunities. These dynamics are not delinked from the workings of the state (Auyero 2012), which tended to fragment community organizing; although there are also times when such fragmentations can be transcended. Information works as a resource for the mediation of disciplinary powers, but information can also be a basis for contesting and resisting such powers. Information also informs shifting community politics in which actors seek to position themselves as knowledge brokers, which in turn could strengthen their legitimacy as community voices.

There is a risk that claiming citizens' universal rights to information as means to expose corruption and ensure transparency ends in an impasse where struggles simply mean demanding more information, reproducing technocratic discourses and politics of immediation (Mazzarella 2006). But seen through everyday politics, claims to information are also imbricated with local discursive practices and can form part of broader community struggles. Thus, we need a more open-ended approach where possible effects are a matter of empirical investigation. As we saw with the beneficiary lists, making such information public may have had a disciplinary effect, but at the same time it provided a basis for political agency. Mediated in and through local history and geographies, the way information works as a resource for the mediation of power is imbricated with a complex everyday politics of urban citizenship.

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