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Mobilizing Discomfort for Water Security as a Human Right: A Newspaper Analysis of Social Conflict in South Africa

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MOBILIZING DISCOMFORT FOR WATER SECURITY AS A HUMAN RIGHT: A

NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

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ABSTRACT

MOBILIZING DISCOMFORT FOR WATER SECURITY AS A HUMAN RIGHT: A
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Madison Gonzalez
Old Dominion University, 2021
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There are 884 million people globally that do not have access to improved drinking
water, while 2.5 billion do not have improved access to sanitation (Office of the High
Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010). Those living in informal settlements and slums—what I
call the 'solidaric disaffiliated' zones—represent one such location where individuals around the
world have found themselves in a situation of neglected crisis as their geographic, economic, and
social expulsion pushes them beyond the reach of opportunity and access to basic human rights
such as water and sanitation. As individuals feel their dignity deteriorating due to the extreme
precarity they are forced to live in, they have resorted to collective action that causes discomfort
in public spaces of appearance through protest action to gain recognition from other, often more
economically and politically privileged ('prosperous core'), members of society. This research
focuses on social conflict in the form of protests, riots, strikes, and mass mobilizations in the
Western Cape of South Africa. The failure of the government to ensure basic water rights
prompts protests in which the solidaric disaffiliated impose discomfort on the prosperous core to
force visibility of their struggle in an attempt to gain a broader solidarity base. After several
years of low winter rainfall, however, the 'Day Zero' water crisis caused precarity and
uncomfortable standards of living across all parts of society, regardless of socio-economic status.
This then led to the prosperous core participating in collective protest action with the solidaric
disaffiliated, reshaping the nature of protest events. In this study, I develop a qualitative analysis

of 1,066 newspaper articles covering the Western Cape from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2019. My contributions are two-fold, both methodologically—through the creation of a unique query, coding structure, and dataset—and theoretically, by characterizing the role of discomfort in social conflict. I identify two types of protests characterized by different levels and types of solidarity in the Western Cape. Through my newspaper analysis, I argue that discomfort is a mechanism that is connected to social conflict events.

This thesis is dedicated to those in solidarity movements around the world. May your voices be

heard and your struggle be recognized.

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INTRODUCTION

The apartheid era came to an end in South Africa 27 years ago in 1994, yet the social structure of society does not reflect this change. Communities remain divided along racial lines and deep pockets of poverty plague the majority black populous living in generally underdeveloped townships located on the fringes of urban life, or what I refer to in this thesis as the "solidaric disaffiliated" zone. Look to Cape Town, the third most segregated city in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2016) where majority of the population lives in townships and informal settlements (similar to "slums") characterized by legal insecurity, disconnect from formal basic services and city infrastructure such as water and sanitation, and housing fragility: both directly due to the material construction of housing and in regard to land tenure as many of these houses are not recognized or protected by the state or legal system (UN Habitat, 2020). Townships sometimes have informal settlements nearby, but they are not the same or interchangeable concepts. Townships are the racially constructed housing structures the apartheid regime built for non-white residents on the outskirts of urban areas. Informal settlements often "pop-up" next to or near townships, built by the people inhabiting them. Despite the constitutional guarantee for equitable access to water and sanitation, populations living in these communities struggle to live a "dignified life" (Organization of American States, 1978) without sufficient access to this basic human right: water. These communities stand in stark contrast to what I refer to as the "prosperous core" zones, comprised of the majority white, affluent parts of society that tend to be politically, economically, socially, and geographically prioritized near urban hubs with improved infrastructure and access to services.

Water is a vital and life-sustaining resource without which populations would cease to exist. Insufficient water supplies cause social instability by deteriorating individual health

through its direct impact on sanitation and hygiene (Govender, Barnes, & Pieper, 2011), threatening food security (Koren, Bagozzi, & Benson, 2021), and negatively impacting economic development (Miguel, 2007). While the sheer importance of water is very well known, the overflows of society who are forced to the fringes of cities in solidaric disaffiliated zones exist on the bare minimum requirements of water to sustain human life, causing feelings of disaffection and discomfort. I focus narrowly on water and the Day Zero crisis as a way to shed light on the phenomena of solidarity—where people come together to protect human rights through protest and pleas for government action—across fractured geographic zones in times when the literature predicts competition across ethnic and social classes for limited resources. By solidarity, here I mean the social unification and collaborative action of individuals across geographic, racial, and class divides against a common threat. This is useful for looking at other resources, other changing environments, and other global challenges to understand the social implications that unexpected and unpredictable events have on shaping human behavior. This highlights the nexus between water (and resource scarcity broadly), governance, and social systems.

While portions of the population in South Africa already lack adequate water services, a near apocalyptic drought from 2015 to 2018 made the situation far more complex by reducing water supplies in the country to dangerously low levels. Known as the "Day Zero" drought—the day the government would have to cut off the taps in the city—this catastrophic event caused the government to restrict residential water usage to 50 liters per person per day (Millington & Scheba, 2021; Wolski, Conradie, Jack, & Tadross, 2021), causing discomfort for the prosperous core. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2010) has determined that to live a healthy life, individuals require between 50 to 100 liters of water per person per day.

While township populations have been living at or below this level for decades—with the Free Basic Water (FBW) policy guaranteeing just 25 liters of water per person per day or 6kl per month per household for "indignant" households (Millington & Scheba, 2021)—this drought forced the more economically privileged of society living in prosperous core zones to significantly limit their water consumption to uncomfortable levels, though not as low as those experienced by the township and informal settlement residents.

Although the drought affected the entire population simultaneously, the burden was not equally shared. It disproportionately impacted already water-poor populations such as those in townships and informal settlements and residents in rural areas. Even though the government continually fails to provide sufficient water to fragile communities, township and informal settlement residents have not given up the fight to achieve a standard of living beyond mere subsistence. They have shown solidarity through community protests, demanding the government respond to community needs and redress the residue of apartheid that has left a lasting stain on the social fabric in South Africa.

Water helps illuminate many aspects of human (in)security that permeate the precarious lives of those who inhabit the urban periphery in townships, informal settlements, and even in refugee and forced migration situations—populations typically deprived of adequate means for survival. These water constraints inherently connect the problems of resource sharing in urban areas with those in rural areas as the lack of water reverberates far beyond the urban centers. While existing data sources already examine and thoroughly document social conflict events, none are specifically tailored to understand how droughts influence these occurrences. Furthermore, current data sources focus primarily on the national level or only urban areas. These gaps have led me to adapt an existing dataset, the Social Conflict Analysis Database, to

my very specific research on social conflict occurring within a province of South Africa during an extreme drought event. I have directed my focus at the provincial level to capture those living on the fringes who are the most at risk to extreme environmental events.

In this project, I introduce a data collection framework for cataloging events in newspaper articles that is specific to social unrest within a region/province. Collecting 1,066 newspaper articles from the provincial level newspaper, *Cape Times*, I coded newspaper articles to capture the instances of social unrest—protests, riots, strikes, and mass demonstrations—related to water and water insecurity in the years before, during, and after the 2015-2018 drought in the Western Cape. I find that, contrary to what the climate-conflict literature suggests, lack of water in resource-poor sections of the Western Cape inspired solidarity as a mechanism to achieve and protect human security interests. While human security is both a goal for the state to achieve for all citizens to ensure stability and a goal for individuals to obtain personal security in their day-to-day lives, it is also a process through which individuals use their agency to protect themselves and their community from external threats such as governmental failures to address their needs. In this case, my newspaper coding analysis suggests that water is an impetus for protests, but these protests take on the character of appeals for human security and the rights to not only water, but also the right to be heard and protected by the government. Solidarity through community protests occurs as individuals take matters into their own hands to protect their livelihoods and human dignity. As far as the local news coverage is concerned, if/when these events turn violent, there are few reported instances of people within these communities turning violent towards one another, even when the resources become increasingly stretched, as suggested in the climate-conflict literature. While this research does not propose to uncover all the complex social reasons why protests around water during the drought contradict the

predictions of the climate-conflict literature, it does shed some light on the different and unequal experiences of environmental change and government support and adaptation. This thesis answers the critical questions: *What characteristics of protest influence the ways that solidarity manifests within and across socio-economic, political, and geographic divides?* And, *what role does the purposeful use and the experience of discomfort play in protest events?* I have found that in some instances, significant environmental pressures can ignite moments of solidarity and internal community support in response to government failures. I argue that discomfort is a common thread connected to social conflict events through two facets. Feelings of discomfort first motivate individuals to take political action through protests against the threats to their well-being; however, discomfort is also a human security tool that individuals use to force others to listen when their needs and pleas have previously gone ignored.

This thesis begins with a background section describing the historical context of inequality, environmental crisis, and community protest in South Africa. The following chapter provides a review of common themes in the climate-conflict literature and explains why the human security approach better explains the phenomena of social conflict in South Africa. The methodology section then explains the data collection, coding, and analysis process. This is followed by two data chapters which compare the character of discomfort as a mechanism that motivates collective action and serves as a way to impose pressure as an act of agency to be heard by the politically and socially privileged. The data chapters explain first how the solidaric disaffiliated residents of informal settlements and townships *cause* discomfort, such as protesting in public spaces and dumping feces on the steps of parliament, as an act of agency in an instance of human security to restore their human dignity and human rights. Second, I show how universal discomfort creates necessary pressures to generate moments of collective action and

solidarity across socio-economic, political, and geographic divides. Through these two chapters, I explain the nature in which protests present themselves in society as related to water (in)security. In the final chapter, I use the data analysis to argue that discomfort is a universal experience inherently connected to social conflict events. The various threads of discomfort, however, cause protests to take on a different shape, nature, and experience.

THE LINGERING EFFECTS OF RACIAL EXCLUSION

South Africa is an upper-middle income country located at the southernmost tip of the continent of Africa, boasting the second largest economy on the continent: 351.4 billion U.S. dollars (Figure 1) (World Bank, 2020). Economic prosperity, however, does not translate to the entire population. Despite its relatively strong economy, South Africa is ranked as *the* most unequal country in the world having the highest Gini coefficient (63 out of 100), lacking inclusiveness growth, high wealth inequality, high wage gaps, and inequality of opportunity (The World Bank, 2018). Inequality presents itself not only in terms of economics, but in unequal access to basic services such as water, electricity, and sewage (Rodina, 2016), quality education (Seekings, 2013), transportation (Berrisford, 2011), and housing (Turok, 1994).
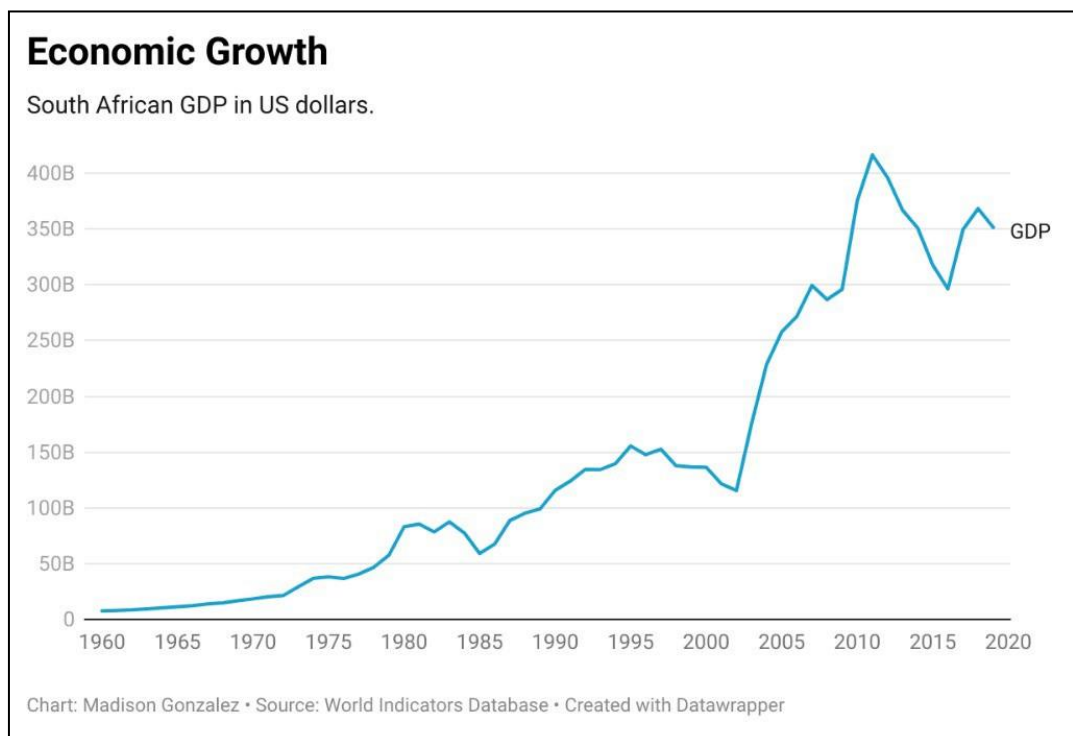
Figure 1. South African Economic Growth: GDP Measure

Experiencing a long history of racial exclusion, townships and informal settlements built on the outskirts of major cities that house majority black and colored populations are severely underserviced. Lacking infrastructurally, the unequal distribution of services has additional implications for the social cohesion of already fragmented societies. To make the issue of basic service inequality more complex, South Africa is prone to drought and flooding which disproportionately impacts the already limited services poorer populations receive.

HISTORY: APARTHEID AND ITS STRUCTURAL LEGACIES

Initially established under Dutch colonization, followed by nearly 100 years of British colonial rule based on racial discrimination, the torch was then passed on to the apartheid regime which continued the system of division along racial lines for another 46 years, establishing an unequal foundation for future development (Berg, 2010). Officially coming to power in 1948, the Afrikaner (white) National Party began to enforce a policy of white domination and racial separation known as apartheid (Bhattacharya & Lowenberg, 2010; Kay, 2004). Now, just 27 years after the turn to democracy, the majority population is angry that they continue to live in relative poverty. The apartheid system has had two significant lasting impacts on South African development that are spatial and governmental.

SPATIAL APARTHEID

Under the National Party's rule, the apartheid government forcefully evicted non-white nationals and relocated them to urban peripheries and faraway rural areas to protect the white minority population's interests. The government forcefully removed non-white populations from urban centers through the Group Areas Act (1950) which required people of different races (White, Indian, Colored, Black African) to live in separate areas (Turok, 1994). This process relocated non-whites to townships that the government purposefully deprived of adequate

housing (which has caused overcrowding), infrastructure, and essential services to deter any draw they would have to live closer to the city (Turok, 1994).

For example, Khayelitsha (the largest township in the Western Cape and in all of South Africa) is located 15 miles outside of Cape Town. It was established in 1983 as part of the government's plan to remove "legal" black South Africans from the City of Cape Town and to absorb migrants coming from the Eastern Cape (Seekings, 2013). Despite being located in close proximity to public railroad systems, the trains in the area have not operated since 2019 (Velapi, 2019), leaving residents disconnected from urban hubs. Individuals in Khayelitsha note having to take hour long bus rides to reach their place of employment because they lack access to reliable public transport and are far from the city center (interview, Chairperson, Africa Rise Empowerment Project, 25 February 2021). The distance from prosperous areas and employment opportunities has heightened the risk of unemployment in townships (Seekings, 2013). This is but one example of how strict racial zoning patterns prioritized whites at the center of the economic hub while non-whites were separated from the urban center by buffer strips of industry, transport infrastructure, and rivers (Turok, 1994). In addition to this, the government placed legal restrictions on the right for black people to own land (Berrisford, 2011), forcing them to live in limbo after their forced eviction.

The Group Areas Act was designed to racially rezone urban communities, but a series of more aggressive rezoning policies would come into existence in the 1970s. The Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act (1970) was a series of separate development policies calling for Bantu (black) self-governing, with the aim of removing blacks *entirely* from the white political system (Baldwin, 1975). This policy would forcibly relocated more than 3 million black South Africans to remote rural areas divided into ten separate ethnic groups (Baldwin, 1975). The Bantu

Homeland Citizenship Act went beyond spatial segregation and proceeded to racially divided political systems by creating ten autonomous nation states to remove black South Africans from the "White" South Africa. In this sense, the spatial component of apartheid boiled over into systems of governance. This style of urban planning not only put the black populous at a geographic disadvantage, but at a political and legal disadvantage as these increasingly hostile policies forced them to become unwelcomed visitors in their own country.

GOVERNMENTAL APARTHEID

The forced removal of black South Africans from the white political system has had significant implications for development. The call for separate nations was founded on the idea that economic integration (allowing blacks to work in white areas) would lead to political integration and ultimately, political domination by the black majority over the white minority (Baldwin, 1975). This very clearly would not support the white lifestyle and their advantaged political stronghold, reinforcing the idea that blacks *must* be removed to maintain this lifestyle. The Homelands effectively became "separate nations," causing black South Africans to become migrant workers if they sought to work in white areas. Black migrant workers would have to utilize an internal passport-like system (pass laws) that would allow them to cross now "national" borders (Turok, 1994). Pass laws sometimes allowed migrant workers (typically men) to move and live in the townships which were much closer than the rural Bantustans. This had negative implications on black family structures as the fathers would move away for work with the rest of the family left behind (Turok, 1994). Black South Africans became aliens in their own home country. They lost full social and political rights which were already extremely limited to begin with. Because migrants had no rights, White South Africa could now take advantage of their abundant cheap labor supply (Baldwin, 1975). To make matters worse for black South

Africans seeking employment in the Western Cape, the Western Cape was a designated "Colored Preference Area" (Baldwin, 1975). This meant that employers had a priority to hire colored individuals before they were to hire a black South African.

The enforcement of racial segregation dislocated communities and families, and significantly entrenched inequality through the marginalization of the majority population (Turok, 1994). The apartheid government's concern for creating separate political systems has had a significant impact on inequality in South Africa today. Previously designated black areas during the apartheid era still lack infrastructure. While the strict zoning patterns of apartheid are no longer in place, no longer requiring black Africans to remain in these underdeveloped areas, the levels of poverty they experience have become cyclical, making it nearly impossible for communities to climb the socio-economic ladder.

Located far from the city center, it is difficult for most black South Africans to reach employment, often having to use public transport that takes hours going both directions (Berrisford, 2011). Roads are poorly kept leaving those located in the rural Homelands severely disconnected from urban areas and disconnected from services, resources, and economic growth (Nkomo, Desai, & Peerbhay, 2016). The poor state of infrastructure in disadvantaged rural areas and townships becomes dire in times of environmental crises such as floods and droughts which make it even more difficult for these populations to meet their needs.

The structural and governance instruments implemented during the apartheid era have physically distanced and legally hindered the black population from obtaining most opportunities that could advance their lives and well-being. While South Africa is now a fully democratic state which would imply that opportunities for *all* citizens, this is not necessarily the case. Black South Africans are at a significant disadvantage. Centuries of barriers that have been built up to

block non-whites from opportunity have proven to be difficult to tear down, making inequality a constant battle for South Africans.

CURRENT STATE OF DEVELOPMENT

      The first fully democratic government in South Africa came into power in 1994, making the goal of reducing poverty and inequality within the country a central concern for development policies and programs. Internationally lauded as one of the world's most progressive national constitutions for explicitly guaranteeing human rights (Klug, 2002), the post-apartheid era carried with it the promise of a more equitable society with specific projects designed to undo the legacy of inequality in the country. The very first provision of the constitution states that this document was founded on the value of *human dignity* (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 3) affirming that, "everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected" (p. 6). Section 24 of the Bill of Rights guarantees that all South African citizens have the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health and well-being and that the environment will be protected for current and future generations (p. 9). Sections 25 and 26 guarantee equitable compensation of land tenure and housing for those who are not legally secure of housing due to previous racist policies and further guaranteeing the right to adequate housing (pp. 10-11). And finally, Section 27 of the Bill of Rights says *everyone* has the right to sufficient water even if they are unable to support themselves, and that the state *must* take responsibility to achieve this right within its available resources (p. 11). Promises to create a more equitable society for all South Africans are reflected in other governmental programs and decrees as well such as the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). The government founded the RDP on the principle that:

No political democracy can flourish if the mass of our people remain in poverty, without land, without tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation must be the first priority of a democratic government (The World Bank, 2018, p. x).

The RDP introduced various programs to relieve poverty and inequality through activities that addressed land reform, health care, electricity, water and sanitation, jobs, housing, transport, and a clean and healthy environment (Corder, 1997). Despite these very progressive policies and promises, 27 years after the transition to a fully democratic government, the country continues to face high economic, social, and structural inequality.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

According to the World Bank (2018), South Africa is *the* most unequal country in the world despite having a positive economic growth trajectory. Figure 2 below depicts the change in inequality measured by the Gini coefficient—a measure of income distribution across the population—over time in South Africa.

Within Country Inequality

Using the GINI coefficient as an indicator for within country inequality in South Africa.

Chart: Madison Gonzalez • Source: World Development Indicators Database • Created with Datawrapper
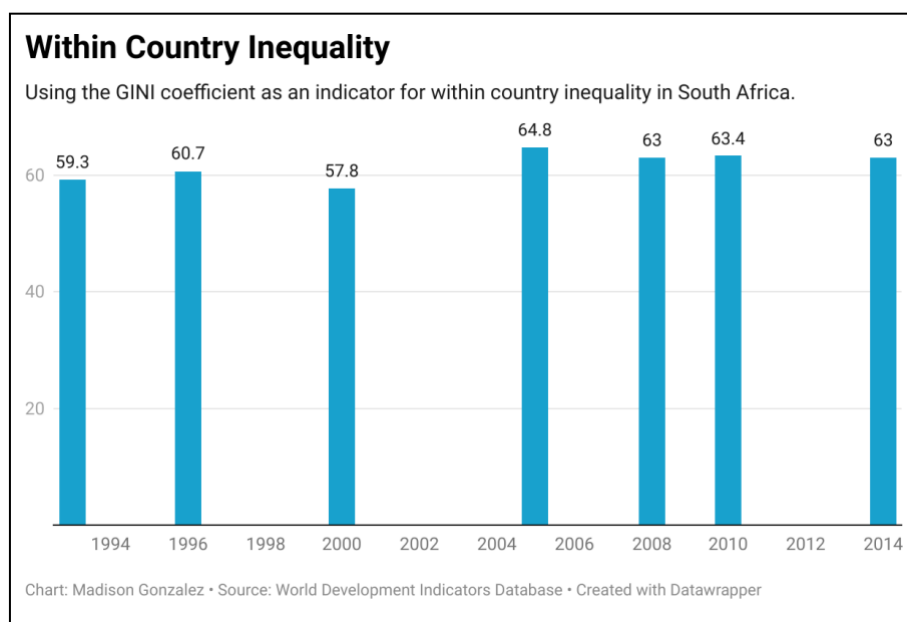
Figure 2. Within Country Inequality: South Africa's Gini Coefficient

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, economic inequality has actually *increased* in South Africa despite the new government's human rights focus. Figure 2 illustrates that the economic inequality in South Africa has changed very little in the past 30 years, with the disparity in the amount of wealth held by a small majority of the country worse now (63%) than during apartheid (59.3%). This translates to other aspects of society, with an increasingly large portion of the population without access not only to wealth, but basic services (water, electricity, sewage) (Govender et al., 2011; Harris, Kleiber, Goldin, Darkwah, & Morinville, 2015; Rodina, 2016), quality education (Seekings, 2013), and reliable transportation (Velapi, 2019).

Although the newly elected government promised to redress these inequalities, the South African citizenry has yet to see any significant change. This brings to our attention that the legacy of inequality is deeply engrained in South African institutions, systems, and culture. Still to this day, black Africans make up the majority of the township population. These areas are typically characterized by having a lower percent of the population with access to piped water within their home or yard as compared to other racial groups (white households without piped water in their home or yard is less than 1% as compared to 46% of black households) (Small, 2017). They also have a lower proportion of the population with access to quality toilet facilities (and the most likely to have no toilet facility at all) (Small, 2017), and face higher rates of unemployment ("Economics of South African Townships: Special Focus on Diepsloot," 2014). The lingering effects of apartheid era spatial planning that reveal themselves as unemployment and poor conditions are consolidated in apartheid-created settlements that persist to this day: townships.

Another measure to understand inequality within South Africa is the proportion of the population living below the 50% median income level (Figure 3). This measure is used to

determine achievement of Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—reduce inequality within and among countries—as an indicator of relative poverty and inequality of income distribution in a country (United Nations, 2021). According to the SDGs, relative poverty is the percentage of households with incomes less than half the national median income, acting as an indicator of inequality at the bottom of the income distribution. Households in this range are noted as experiencing social exclusion and unequal access to opportunity (United Nations, 2021).

SDG Indicator 10.2.1
Proportion of the population living below the 50% median income.

Year	Value
2000	25
2004	20
2008	22
2010	23
2014	24

Chart: Madison Gonzalez • Source: SDG Indicators Database • Created with Datawrapper
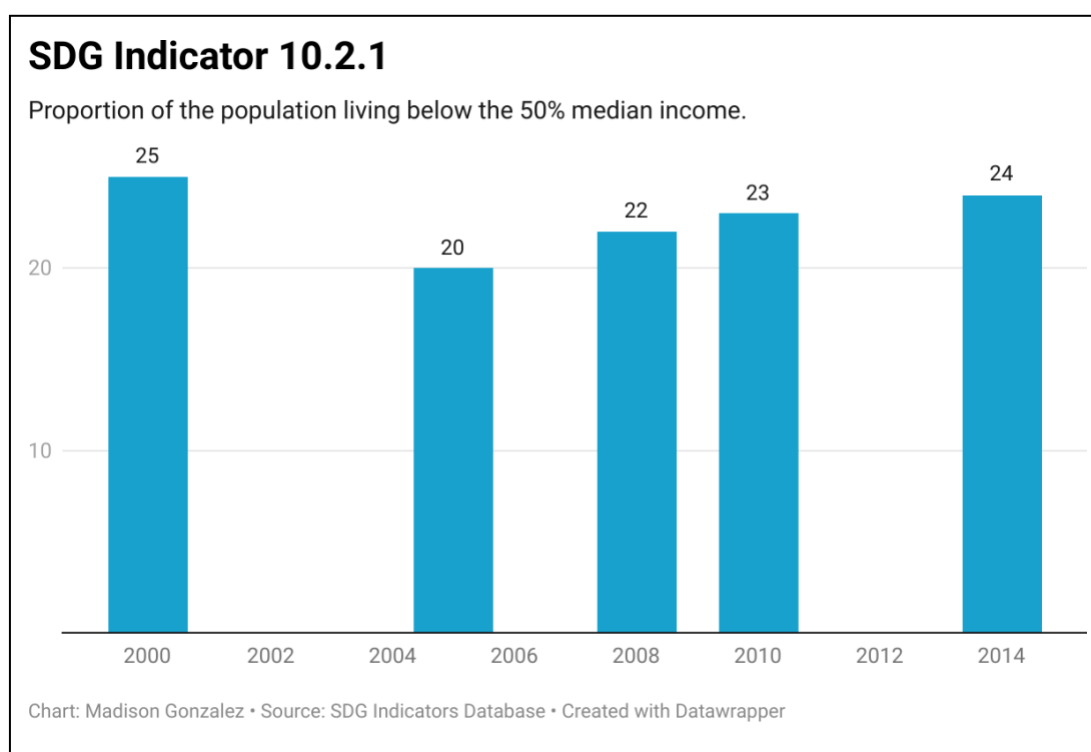
Figure 3. Proportion of South African Population Living Below 50% Median Income

From 2000 to 2014, the percent of the population living below the 50% median income level has barely gone down from 25% to 24% (Figure 3). And while the proportion of the population living below this level has declined slightly since 2000, we can see that it has actually been slowly increasing since 2005. This means that one quarter of the South African population is living in relative poverty at the bottom end of the income distribution. To compare, the United States last reported 18% of the population living below 50% of the median income level (United Nations, 2021).

Further disaggregating the data by age group, the younger population suffers the most, facing more than 50% unemployment rates (World Bank Group, 2018). High youth unemployment rates have led to an increase in abuse of drugs and alcohol (interview, Social Justice Coalition representative, 4 February 2021), and more instances of crime and violence (World Bank Group, 2018). The exclusion of large segments of the South African population from job opportunities further enforces the cycle of intergenerational poverty and puts a strain on societal relations ("Economics of South African Townships: Special Focus on Diepsloot," 2014).

INEQUALITY OF SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITY

Economic measures of inequality have additional consequences for housing and access to basic services. Black South Africans that were once stripped of their right to own property and forcefully relocated to impoverished townships largely remain in those settlements today. Due to the fact that townships were built on very limited land area (Turok, 1994), overcrowding has been and continues to be an issue. Overcrowding and rural to urban migration in the townships has led to the increase of informal settlements and the "land grabs" situation in South Africa (Berrisford, 2011). Informal settlements (very similarly to townships) experience five main challenges: legal insecurity of tenure, inadequate access to safe water, inadequate access to

sanitation and other services, poor structural quality, and overcrowding (Opción Legal, 2019).

Because households face an issue of land acquisition in tandem with natural population growth,

families have run out of space in their small township home for their families to continue living

there. Families in townships often find that the only alternative for them is to build an informal

shack in someone's back yard: the "land grabs" situation (interview, Khayelitsha Peacebuilding

Team representative, December 2020). This process includes illegally building "shacks" on

public land and constructing backyard shacks in pre-existing township homes (Turok & Borel-

Saladin, 2016). Due to their illegal and informal nature, these housing structures lack access to

basic services such as sewerage, electricity, and water which results in unsanitary living

conditions.

The growth of the land grabs situation has resulted in some townships now being partially

formal and informal, such as Khayelitsha, which houses the largest informal settlement in South

Africa: Site C where majority of the population lives in informal backyard shacks (Rodina,

2016). Increased urbanization and rapid population growth in already overcrowded townships

has put an additional strain on the poorly managed and maintained infrastructure within those

areas. For example, the government has said that the sewerage system in Khayelitsha when it

was constructed was only meant to supply 25,000 people, but today Khayelitsha hosts a

population of nearly 1.5 million (interview, Khayelitsha Peacebuilding Team, 27 January 2021).

Growing population numbers have placed an increased burden on already limited infrastructure,

causing service backlogs.

The proportion of the population living in informal settlements in South Africa has gone

down since 2000; however, nearly 25% of the population continues to live in informal

settlements (Figure 4). This number is likely larger than what the data shows considering the

amount of informal settlements and backyard dwellings that continuously pop up and make it difficult to keep an accurate count of population numbers in these areas (Gaunt et al., 2012).
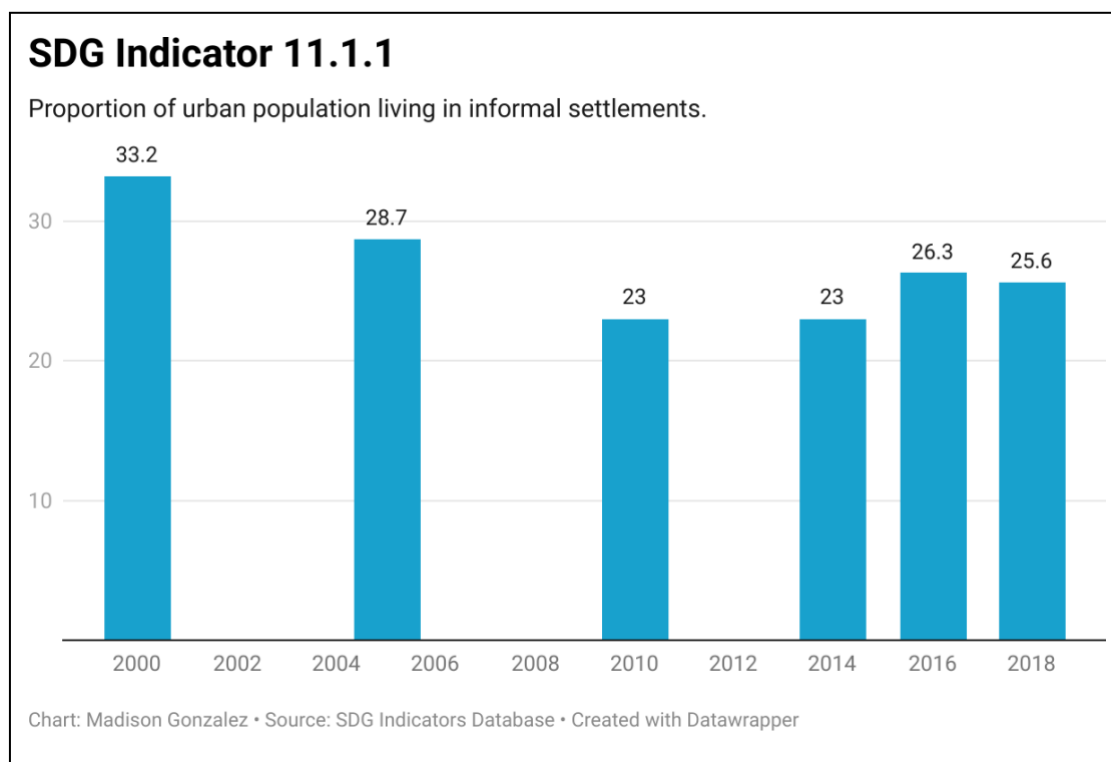
Figure 4. Proportion of the South African Population Living in Informal Settlements

Looking into some of the different regions in South Africa, the numbers are actually worse. In the City of Cape Town in the Western Cape, for instance—which according to the 2011 Census is the third most segregated city in South Africa—nearly 60% of the population lives in informal settlements (Statistics South Africa, 2016). The data has shown that informal settlements in Cape Town are mostly comprised of black South Africans (23.3% of the total urban population of Cape Town living in informal settlements, an additional 11.2% in backyard

shacks), second being Coloreds, then Indians, with no Whites accounted for living in informal settlements (Small, 2017). Black South Africans were also the least likely to have piped water and/or a toilet within their dwelling, while nearly 100% of the white population in other areas of the city report having access to these services inside their homes (Small, 2017).

The South African law holds that basic water supplies must be sufficient, but poorer black communities continue to have insufficient access to water and sanitation. Residents of poorer townships have accused the government of going from a system of racial apartheid to economic apartheid where populations are no longer separated by race but by social class (Desai, 2002, p. 48). This is in part due to an economic policy turn to neoliberalism. Market-oriented policies have put a price on all things that the government promised to South Africans in the Bill of Rights (Alexander, 2010; Republic of South Africa, 1996). For example, free basic water (FBW) has been a policy in South Africa since 2001 based on Section 27 of the constitution; however, the FBW policy only requires the guarantee of FBW to *registered* impoverished households that are unable to afford to pay for water supplies. The requirement for registration has proved to be a deterrent in many instances due to the complexity and costs of the process, leaving many poor and vulnerable households excluded from this security (Millington & Scheba, 2021). Similar processes are reflected in the form of forced evictions, water cutoffs, and electricity disconnections due to their debts and inability to pay, disconnecting people from their constitutional protections because they cannot afford them (Desai, 2002).

Now, instead of being excluded from access to services due to race, citizens feel they are being excluded due to their level of poverty, mostly affecting the non-white population, particularly black South Africans. This economic policy continues to leave majority of the population behind in terms of development. Disparities in access to basic services leaves these

communities in insecure situations—a direct threat to their livelihoods. Water is a lens for seeing how communities respond to environmental stressors such as the Day Zero drought to meet their own needs when the government will not provide relief and protection for them.

SUSCEPTIBILITY TO WATER STRESS

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has projected that the mean global temperature will increase between 1.8 and 4.8 degrees Celsius over the next 100 years (2013b). With temperature increases come more frequent instances of drought, desertification, and severe precipitation variability. Key risks to Africa due to climate change are stress on water resources, reduced crop productivity, and incidence of vector- and water-borne diseases (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2013a). Experiencing a Mediterranean climate, the South African water supply system is very reliant on winter rainfall, particularly in regions like the Western Cape which relies almost entirely on winter rainfall that is captured and stored in six major dams surrounding the city (City of Cape Town, 2018). Their strong reliance on winter rainfall has proven to be critical to the Western Cape, leading to the onset of the Day Zero drought (Archer, Landman, Malherbe, Tadross, & Pretorius, 2019).

From 2015 to 2018, South Africa experienced its worst drought in history. In the city of Cape Town, taps nearly ran dry. As the water crisis deepened, Cape Town experienced 30-50% below average rainfall, decreasing water levels in the reservoirs to dangerously low levels (Archer et al., 2019). The diminishing water supply limited water available for irrigation; caused harsh restrictions on water for showers, flushing the toilet, and other such daily uses; led to unemployment for those operating carwashes and for dishwashers in restaurants due to water use restrictions; and disrupted the daily lives of the population. While the drought impacted everyone simultaneously, the burden was not equally shared (Millington & Scheba, 2021). One news

article reported more affluent communities hiring companies to dig boreholes and wells on their property, purchasing truckloads of bottled water, and installing desalination machines to maintain their swimming pools before Day Zero arrived (Baker, 2018). Rural and marginalized populations in townships and informal settlements that have historically lacked access to adequate water infrastructure on the other hand, were reliant on the government to provide services to them that were already lacking. Systemic and institutionalized racism has put marginalized communities at a disadvantage to cope with environmental stressors. Having inferior and insufficient infrastructure in their communities, climate variability as seen by the Day Zero drought further deepens the divides built by apartheid era policies as these communities are unable to adapt to their changing environment to meet their basic needs.

Figure 5 shows how levels of water accessibility has changed over time in South Africa. SDG indicator 6.1.1 measures the proportion of the population using improved drinking water sources located on premises, accessible when needed, and free of contamination (United Nations, 2021). The graph shows that there has been a steady decline since 2006 of people having access to improved drinking water services on their premises. The decline in water accessibility is likely because majority of the population lives in rural areas that lack adequate water infrastructure. Additionally, while South Africa as a nation only faces medium levels of water stress (Figure 6), regions like the Western Cape and Eastern Cape face extremely high levels of water stress that limit water supplies and accessibility (Gassert, Landis, Luck, Reig, & Shiao, 2014).
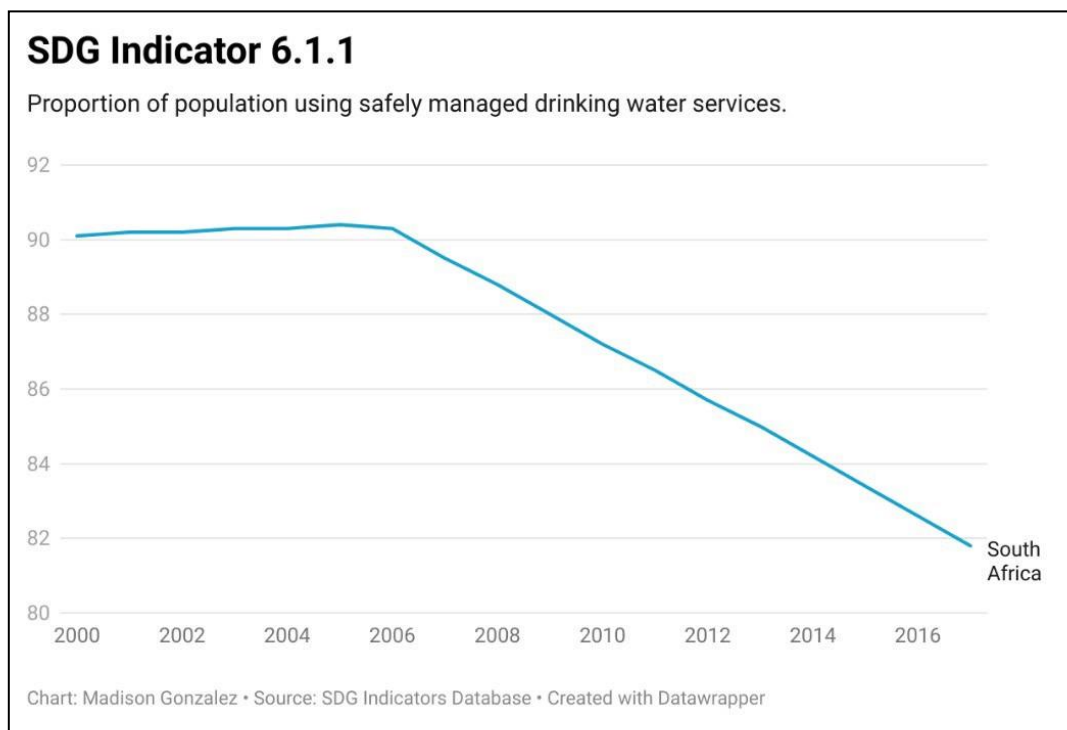
Figure 5. Proportion of South African Population Using Safely Managed Drinking Water Services

Residents of the Khayelitsha township in Cape Town report waiting in long lines to access communal taps and that these taps are often in poor condition, raising fears of contracting water-borne diseases due to unsanitary conditions (Rodina, 2016). Geographical segregation means that different areas of Cape Town were constructed and planned for differently, therefore having varying infrastructures available. These geographies furthermore largely continue to define racial divides. One can assume from both quantitative (e.g., GINI) and qualitative data (e.g., accounts from townships) that the massive economic inequalities fall along these lines. When we see this sharp decline in water access disproportionately affecting those who rely on communal taps for their supply, it is easy to infer that this also reflects the geographic, racial, and

economic institutionalized apartheid that exists today where rich communities do not line up at dilapidated taps.

Additionally, if we put this in the context of water that is available within the country the situation becomes much more dire. Figure 6 below shows that the level of water stress within South Africa has increased over time. The United Nations (2021) uses water stress as an indicator to determine when the demand on water supplies will impact a nation's sustainability and result in potential conflict and competition between water users. At the national level, South Africa is defined as having medium water stress (United Nations, 2021), but in regions like the Western Cape, populations experience extremely high levels of water stress (World Resource Institute, 2019).
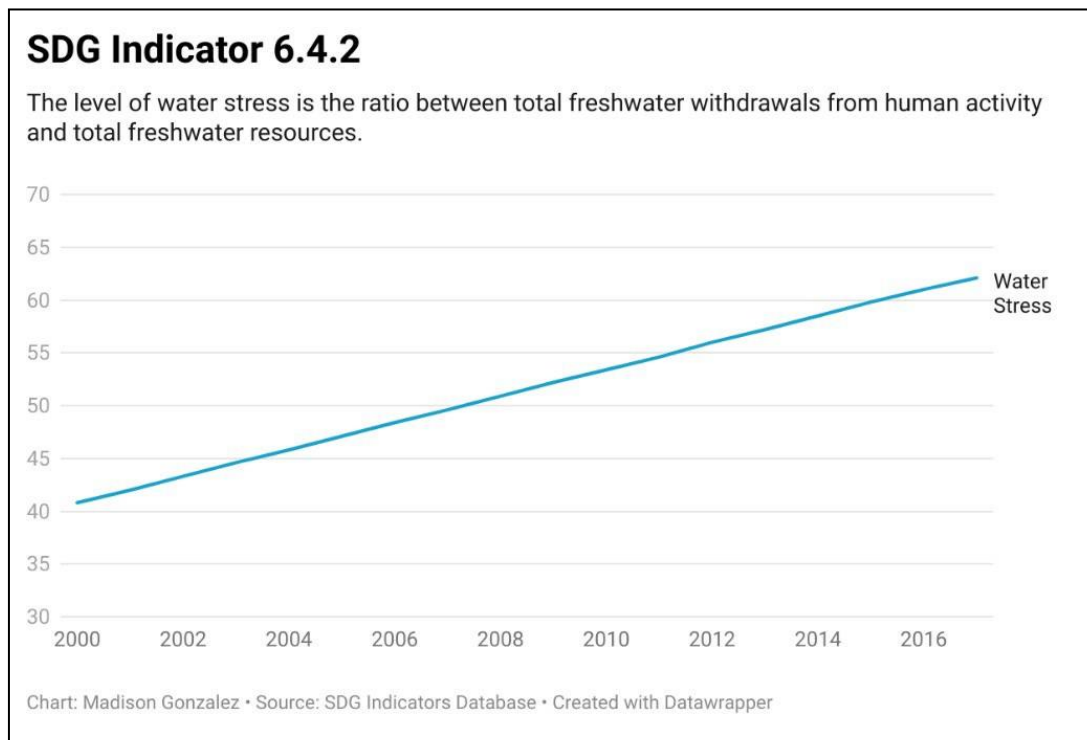
Figure 6. Level of Water Stress in South Africa

The decreasing levels of water *available* to the population in tandem with declining proportions of the population having *equitable access* to water resources puts higher levels of stress not only on available water resources, but on the population, and on the government as they struggle to mitigate the negative consequences of climate change. Climate change has an adverse effect on various human rights such as the right to health, housing, food, water, and sanitation. Low rainfall in South Africa undermines access to clean water, directly impacting human livelihoods with vulnerable populations being the most at risk. The government has an obligation to prevent the impacts felt by climate change but government failure to respond only exacerbates the issue.

Thus far, I have attempted to illustrate the multifaceted ways in which geographic, economic, and social inequalities have been deeply embedded into the physical and societal fabric of South Africa. I focus on water—scarcity, equitable access, and stress—in order to show how environmental stressors like the Day Zero drought press upon these already fragile social systems. Though there are many scarce resources among the spatially, economically, and socially marginalized populations of South Africa, water is a basic human right that is guaranteed in the constitution of the country, but has been an increasingly stressed resource, particularly in the Western Cape.

THE CULTURE OF MASS PROTESTS

South Africa has come to be known as the "protest capital of the world" (Odendaal, 2016), having one of the highest rates of public protests around the globe. Frequently referred to as "service delivery protests" in mass media (Alexander, 2010; Alexander et al., 2018), the literature has turned to the term "community protests" to capture protests where "collective

demands are raised by a geographically defined and identified 'community' that frames its demands in support/and or defense of that community" (Alexander et al., 2018, p. 27).

The role of community protests in South Africa most prominently dates back to the 1980s where local protests have been attributed with effectively dismantling the era of white domination under the apartheid regime (Alexander, 2010; Turok, 1994). Social unrest experienced in South Africa has a natural connection to the struggle for dignity and inclusion by marginalized populations. Wieviorka (2013) provides a thorough overview of accepted theories on social conflict by prominent scholars within the field of sociology over time. He explains that at one extreme, social conflict has been considered a negative disruption to society (Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons), but at the other extreme (Georg Simmel and Lewis Coser), it is the positive outcome of the merciless struggle to change the status quo (Wieviorka, 2013). Georg Simmel—an author who has been highly influential on American sociology—explained in his original analysis on social conflict that conflict is a fundamental source of unity for society, regulating social life (Wieviorka, 2013). This is highly applicable to the South African case where social conflict—protests, riots, strikes, mass demonstrations—occurs as a means to change what has generally been considered acceptable in South African society.

The majority non-white population in South Africa knows the true potential of their collective action, reaping the reward of it decades ago with the downfall of the apartheid regime (Alexander, 2010; Turok, 1994). One news article has gone so far as exclaiming that "protests and strikes are a proudly South African phenomenon" (Ncedani, 2012). Protestors challenge the status quo and have used protest as a tool to express their grievances and to make their voices heard. A catalyst for social change, protests in South Africa openly challenge perceived human rights violations at the hands of the government (Alexander, 2010).

HISTORY OF PROTESTS

In 1983 the United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed (headed by the African National Congress (ANC)), creating a bottom-up movement for practicing politics that had "never previously been seen in South Africa" (Suttner, 2006, p. 62). The UDF acted as an umbrella organization for activists in the resistance movement against apartheid in South Africa (Taylor, 2002). Hundreds of community organizations aligned with the UDF to dismantle the apartheid regime. Swilling (1987) explains the four phases in which UDF mass protests were oriented: (1) "reactive politics" where the UDF organized a national campaign against the new constitution; (2) "community struggle" where community organizations began focusing on township issues; (3) "ungovernability" where township governments began to collapse due to militant uprisings; and (4) "organs of peoples' power" in which grassroots activists began creating durable organizational structures to keep up with long-term demands. Some of the most effective tools of these mass demonstrations were boycotts of rents and rates which caused financial deterioration in the nation (Turok, 1994). Furthermore, impoverished populations responded to homelessness by invading vacant farmlands and inner-city areas—likely the starting point for the "land-grabs" situation seen in South Africa today (Turok, 1994). The increasing hostility between oppressed South Africans and the state forced the apartheid regime to come to an agreement with the ANC government.

Youth and student organizations were significant participants in this movement which is likely why the culture of mass protests continues today. The ANC fought on the ground with these individuals for a more equitable life for all and equality has not yet been realized. For this reason, individuals today may hold the ANC government to a higher level of responsibility

considering the ANC government was an advocate for change and yet change has not happened (Atkinson, 2007; Desai, 2002).

Protests in South Africa today are mostly centered around issues of service delivery which are predominantly directed at the local level government (Booysen, 2011). Young unemployed people are some of the most prominent actors protesting the bigger issues within townships and informal settlements: water, sewerage, electricity, and housing (Booysen, 2011). Booysen (2011) finds that the uptick in service delivery protests began in August 2004 and that majority of South Africans believe that "protest works" when it comes to issues of service delivery (p. 138). Booysen (2011) affirms that protests are more likely during election periods as a tool for citizens to hold the government accountable. Atkinson (2007) agrees that protests are a tool to hold the government accountable but focuses more so on the *management* of services rather than service delivery when it comes to protest action.

Alexander (2010) characterizes Mbeki-era protests (through the 2006 election into 2008) by the focus on a lack of service delivery and local government response, and the prominence of the unemployed youth in protest events (p. 31). Zuma-era protests (2009 to 2017) were similar to the Mbeki-era with housing becoming a main concern. However, now instead of there being anger because of government inaction, there is anger because of government corruption (Alexander, 2010). The prominence of the unemployed youth continues to be a factor and protest events continue to mostly take place in townships and informal settlements. During both of these "protest eras," issues of xenophobia were raised (xenophobic outbreaks in 2008 and 2015) (Alexander, 2010).

From this analysis, we can see that the dynamics of protest in South Africa are unchanged. Township and informal settlement residents remain at the forefront of the battle,

raising concerns over housing and other services that democracy has failed to bring to fruition. What is notable is that when protests do turn violent, violence does not occur between participants but toward an outside entity—the government. Scholars and public media suggest that violent conflict is inevitable when it comes to resource scarcity, but when pushed to the brink, violence did not occur as a result of competition between individuals but toward the state that is seen as the oppressor. In the following literature review I will dig deeper into the types of conflict that scholars describe arising from resource scarcity and analyze how a three-year drought in South Africa in tandem with poor planning and government management have impeded on human rights, thus reshaping the character of social conflict events and how they unfolded overtime.

THE WATER-CONFLICT NEXUS

The idea of environmental security is relatively new, emerging as a concept of study in the 1990s signifying the growing importance of climate change in the security realm (Hough, 2019). Environmental security refers to how national and human security can be threatened by climate change. In 2014, the Department of Defense in their Quadrennial Defense Strategy called climate change a "threat multiplier" as it exacerbates other stressors a society is coping with such as poverty, environmental degradation, political instability, and social tensions (p. 8). This has different implications for both national and human security. From a state perspective, environmental security is the intersection of environmental issues and security at the national policy level. From the individual's perspective, the environment affects security when people are unable to adapt to environmental changes (Hough, 2019).

I focus on water specifically because it is a staple resource that is essential for human life. Water scarcity negatively impacts human livelihood by reducing safe drinking water supplies, having further implications for health and economic well-being. The lack of available water supplies forces individuals to fight for their survival whether that be through competition with other water users, protesting grievances to the government, violent conflict and wars, or acting in solidarity with their community members to protect their scarce water supplies. Environmental change directly impacts human behavior. Scholars have agreed that water serves as a motive for conflict events, both armed violent and social, but there is little agreement on the connection linking water and conflict (Döring, 2020; Fjelde & Von Uexkull, 2012; Hendrix & Salehyan, 2012; Koren et al., 2021; Koubi, Spilker, Böhmelt, & Bernauer, 2014; Miguel, 2007). I find that in the face of the Day Zero drought, instead of turning to violence, water insecurity united

individuals in a fight to protect their scarce human right: water. This is more broadly applicable to other environmental events that threaten human livelihood.

The rest of this literature review will (1) discuss the link between water and armed violent conflict, and (2) the link between water and social conflict. I then turn to the human security framework to fill the gaps in the climate-conflict literature. Armed violent conflict is a national security concern (with implications for human security) with war-like characteristics. Social conflict occurs on the individual level as a result of human insecurity where individuals express grievances. The broader literature finds that water motivates the onset of conflict events through its impact on migration, agriculture, and economics but, these determinants neglect the role that human rights play in motivating conflict events. Furthermore, these studies primarily take a national level approach rather than subnational which runs the risk of masking intra-community dynamics. For these reasons, I have centered my research on the Western Cape of South Africa—the province hardest hit by the Day Zero drought—so I can better understand community dynamics at a more granular level. Taking this approach, I find that appeals for the protection of human rights are highly influential for motivating social conflict events during a drought period and when in the face of other environmental stressors.

THE CLIMATE-CONFLICT LINK

Extreme climate events by nature do not affect everyone equally, making it difficult to compare across countries or even within them to create a comprehensive understanding of their disproportionate impacts. The impact a climate shock has on an individual is dependent upon their situational context such as their socioeconomic status and geographic location (rural or urban) (Koren et al., 2021). Vulnerability indicates an inability to adapt (Muyambo, Jordaan, & Bahta, 2017). Because of the varying impacts climate shocks have on individuals, climate-

conflict research has had often contradictory findings (Koubi, 2019). For example, using the

Uppsala Conflict Data Program Georeferenced Event Dataset (UCDP-GED), Theisen,

Holtermann, and Buhaug (2012) found no relationship between drought and civil conflict on the

African continent, but Fjelde and Von Uexkull (2012)—using the same dataset—found that

negative deviations in rainfall were associated with higher risks of communal conflict in sub-

Saharan Africa. Other studies have found that water abundance is more likely to result in conflict

than water scarcity (Hendrix & Salehyan, 2012; Koubi et al., 2014) while Stalley (2003) found

that water does not influence conflict at all. The data, modelling approach, scope, and level of

analysis the researcher selects often influences conclusions made, raising question about the

types of conflicts studied. None of these studies have taken a subnational approach to understand

why and how water scarcity shapes conflict events which would likely influence different results.

Figure 7 presents a scale of the severity of climate related conflict with the least severe

(peaceful demonstrations) positioned at the far left, and global conflict being the most severe

form of conflict at the far right. The presentation of conflict on a linear scale does not imply that

conflict progresses linearly, suggesting that peaceful demonstrations will ultimately turn to

global conflict. It does however suggest that less severe social conflict events can evolve into

more severe conflict events.
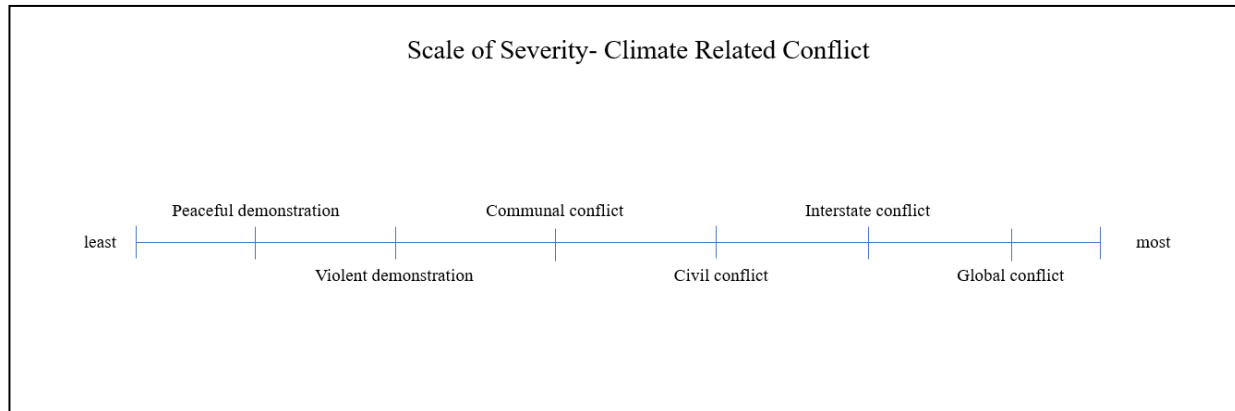
Figure 7. The Scale of Severity for Climate-Conflict

My research falls between the realm of peaceful demonstrations and violent demonstrations as sometimes peaceful events turn into more violent ones as protesters burn tires and break windows. While this is a "less severe" form of conflict, this does not negate its importance and potentially influential power to change the status quo.

Water scarcity stems from environmental change, population growth, and inequitable distribution of water resources (Homer-Dixon, 1994). All three of these components are reflected in the South African case as the nation faces more frequent droughts, rapid urbanization, and inequitable access to available water resources. Climate change intensifies other pressing threats by causing migration from resource poor areas to other areas that may be perceived as having less of a threat (Homer-Dixon, 1994). This is seen in the South African case as rural residents migrate to already resource poor townships placing even more of a strain on a population that already struggles to meet their basic needs. Water scarcity also creates new threats such as its impacts on food supplies causing shortages (Homer-Dixon, 1994; Koren et al., 2021), economic deprivation (Homer-Dixon, 1994; Miguel, 2007), and other social interruptions. Various

challenges due to water insecurity and accessibility in South Africa suggest a higher likelihood for conflict events to occur.

HOW WATER SHAPES ARMED VIOLENT CONFLICT

Much of the climate-conflict literature is centered around different forms and levels of armed violent conflict. Armed violent conflict can take place on an international level through interstate conflict; it can take place on the national level through civil wars; and it can take place at the regional or local level through communal conflict (Table 1). In Table 1, the column "Author(s)" includes the names of the researchers; "Conflict Type" indicates if the research was about armed violent or social conflict events; the "Dependent Variable" column indicates what changes due to the following column "Independent Variable" which is what influences conflict; "Location" indicates where the stud takes place; and "Central Findings" is the author(s) argument. Though there is extensive literature on armed conflict, the link between armed conflict and environmental stressors is relatively scant and inconclusive.

Studies at the international level find little support linking droughts to instances of armed violent conflict (Fjelde & Von Uexkull, 2012; Stalley, 2003). Research has suggested that states tend to cooperate rather than fight over shared water resources due to the risk of damaging already limited supplies in a physical altercation (Koubi, Spilker, Böhmelt, & Bernauer, 2014). Instead, studies have suggested that resource *abundance* has a stronger link to situations of violent conflict than resource *scarcity* as resource wealth could fund rebels and conflict is more likely to occur when one group has control of the resource (Koubi et al., 2014). Koubi et al. (2014) argue that resource scarcity actually *stops* the onset of violent conflict as populations are forced to fight for survival.

Table 1. Armed Violent Conflict Literature

Author(s)	Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	Location	Central Findings
Koubi, et al. (2014)	Interstate and intrastate armed conflict	Resource abundance	Global sample	Resource abundance more likely to lead to armed conflict rather than resource scarcity.
Stalley (2003)	Militarized international disputes	Population density, fish catch, soil degradation, and water availability	Global sample	Population density and soil degradation increase conflict however water does not cause conflict.
Miguel (2007)	Civil conflict	Rainfall deviations	Africa	Drought causes sudden economic shock in rural areas leading to civil conflict.
Fjelde (2012)	Communal conflict	Rainfall deviations	Sub-Saharan Africa	Political exclusion reinforces conflict-inducing effect of negative rainfall deviations.

The link between water scarcity and civil conflict is a bit more muddled. Miguel (2007) argues that drought leads to civil conflict by causing an economic decline in agriculturally reliant societies. They see the link between water scarcity and conflict through an economic lens rather than a direct environmental focus, which positions drought not as the direct cause of civil conflict, but a precipitator of economic decline that leads to conflict. This invalidates the influencing power environmental stressors have on conflict events by prioritizing economics. Selby and Hoffmann (2014) instead argue that water abundance contributes to violent conflict as unstable regimes exploit these resources for economic gain. This occurs when corrupt governments hoard available resources and prioritize their distribution to particular communities, decreasing the resources available to other populations. This argument suggests that abundance causes conflict due to scarcity elsewhere as resources stop flowing in their direction. At the

national level, then, the direct linkage between water scarcity and civil conflict is very context specific.

Communal conflict, on the other hand, does not involve state actors but is an inter-group conflict. Fjelde and Von Uexkull (2012) and Döring (2020) argue that communal conflict is a more likely result as populations compete for limited resources and clash over access to water resources. This occurs when community members turn violent against each other. Both studies find that dry years (less rainfall, i.e., water scarcity) consistently yield more communal conflict events than wet years (higher rainfall, i.e., water abundance). This would mean that water scarcity does have an influence on violent conflict events.

While much of this literature has suggested that water scarcity has limited influence on violent conflict, this is likely not the case for instances of social conflict. The research suggests that scarcity is more likely to result in internal conflict within the state rather than external conflict (Koubi et al., 2014). This is likely a result of perceived inequalities across populations (Atkinson, 2007; Booysen, 2011). As environmental events impact societies differently, sentiments of deprivation may increase in populations struggling to adapt during an extreme environmental event. In fact, armed violent conflict is very rare in South Africa, with social conflict events occurring at a much higher frequency.

WATER (IN)SECURITY AND SOCIAL CONFLICT

While various authors have explored the role water plays in shaping armed violent conflicts such as international war (Green, 2005; Koubi et al., 2014; Stalley, 2003), civil conflict (Miguel, 2007; Selby & Hoffmann, 2014; Theisen et al., 2012), and communal conflict (Döring, 2020; Fjelde & Von Uexkull, 2012), water insecurity's impact on social unrest has been far less studied in the literature. Social conflict is the struggle for power and agency in society between

actors who have opposing interests (Wieviorka, 2013). Actors mobilize themselves through protests, strikes, riots, and mass demonstrations, sometimes resulting in violence to achieve their end goals. In the case of South Africa, citizens mobilize through protest events to voice their concerns to the government with the goal of having the power to shape their current situation. It is a relationship of opposition where societal structures influence the potential for conflict. There is a higher potential for social conflict in communities that suffer from inequalities rather than in communities that experience no perceived inequalities. For example, in South Africa where the black majority suffers from economic and social inequalities, social conflict events frequently occur in the more marginalized communities as they express grievances to the government about these injustices. While social conflicts events are mostly peaceful in nature, they sometimes do turn violent as protest participants burn tires, throw stones at police, and break building windows. Table 2 below provides an overview of some of the social conflict literature.

Table 2. Social Conflict Literature

Author(s)	Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	Location	Central Findings
Gleick (2014)	Violent social conflict	Drought	Syria	Factors related to drought like agriculture failure and related economic downfall lead to rural-to-urban migration, causing social unrest. In this case, social conflict spilled over into civil conflict.
Hendrix and Saleyhan (2012)	Demonstrations, riots, strikes, communal conflict, and anti-government violence	Rainfall deviations	Africa	Wetter years more likely to suffer from violent conflict whereas dry years are more likely to experience political conflict
Koren, et al. (2021)	Urban social unrest	Food and water insecurity	Kenya	Social conflict events likely to occur when populations experience staple insecurity

The social conflict literature suggests that in periods of water scarcity, social conflict is a more likely outcome than armed violent conflict (Hendrix & Salehyan, 2012; Koren et al., 2021). This is because resorting to armed conflict is very costly and requires far more organization and planning from participants (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Typically, those who are most vulnerable to the impacts of water shortage and scarcity are the least equipped to organize and financially support an armed rebellion against the government such as township and informal settlement residents who already struggle to get enough resources to meet their basic needs (Hendrix & Salehyan, 2012). Since protests, mass demonstrations, strikes, riots, and other forms of social conflict require less funding and sustained organization, this is the more likely outcome. This

does not necessarily mean that social conflict cannot eventually turn into a more violent form of conflict like civil war, such as the case in Syria.

There is a common consensus that migration, food insecurity, economic decline, and government failure to respond to population needs are drivers of social conflict over water scarcity (Gleick, 2014; Hendrix & Salehyan, 2012; Koren et al., 2021). Gleick (2014) finds that water scarcity caused unemployment among rural farmers who were forced to migrate due to crop failures. This led to more competition for work in the city that spurred social conflict. Hendrix and Salehyan (2012) argue that the distribution of the scarce resource is more impactful on instances of social conflict than the level of the resource itself. This means that water *accessibility* has a great influence on social conflict events than water *availability*. In this case it is easy to infer that in South Africa—which has declining levels of water accessibility for its population (refer back to Figure 5)—water is highly likely to influence social conflict events.

Koren et al. (2021) recognize that the literature does not thoroughly examine the role of water scarcity by itself on social conflict. This is something they try to overcome by examining what they call "staple insecurities" (food and water) which are essential for life. The authors argue that water scarcity is not influential for social conflict unless paired with food scarcity. Water scarcity is only influential through its mutually reinforcing relationship with food insecurity. This approach still does not look at the role of water scarcity independently.

Water is a basic resource that is necessary to sustain life, yet billions of people still lack access to it, and it is inequitably distributed. Social conflict literature regularly stresses relative deprivation—the manifestation of inequitable access and distribution—as a motivator for individuals to participate in social conflict events (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). In other terms, it is the result of perceived inequalities within a community (Braithwaite, Dasandi,

& Hudson, 2016). While some literature has found that grievances and inequality are not great predictors for civil conflict (Fearon & Laitin, 2003), they are more influential in understanding social conflict as the inequitable distribution of resources increases sentiments of relative deprivation (Hendrix & Salehyan, 2012). As droughts reduce water supply, those with inequitable access to existing water supplies will feel the brunt of the burden. In South Africa, where water availability is low—and decreasing due to sudden droughts—in tandem with large proportions of the population having poor access to available water supplies, there will be a higher likelihood of social conflict events occurring.

Social conflict is the more likely outcome than armed violent conflict during a drought period. There are three pathways through which environmental stress will impact social conflict: (1) direct, (2) indirect, and (3) threat multiplying (Martin-Shields & Stojetz, 2019). Through the direct pathway, conflict arises as an immediate response to drought impacts such as an increase in food prices due the drought's negative impact on agricultural output. The most common way to analyze this pathway is through understanding the impact water stress has on food prices (Koren et al., 2021; Martin-Shields & Stojetz, 2019). The indirect pathway is highly contextual where social conflict events arise from the government's (in)ability to mitigate the adverse effects of the drought (Koren et al., 2021). The indirect pathway is observable in the South African case as service delivery protests are directed at government failures. The motivation for the protests in this case is not the drought but rather government ineffectiveness. Finally, droughts can act as a "threat multiplier" by intensifying existing frictions in society (Koren et al., 2021). For example, South Africans already have a negative perception of "foreigners" which has caused outbreaks of xenophobic violence (Alexander, 2010). Already having a negative perception of this group, the drought could lead to an increased perception of threat from that

group due to their water consumption of the already scarce resource. The "threat" of foreigners multiplies the perceived threat of sharing scarce water resources because of drought. Furthermore, Barry and Rüther (2001) explain that residents in informal settlements exhibit in-group solidarity and out-group schism where residents in a community are likely to cooperate together to maximize community interests but potentially act violent in nature toward external agents such as foreigners or the government that has continually failed to address their concerns. While protests may become violent in nature, violence is not directed toward participants within the group but toward the external agent: the government. These pathways help us understand what motivates individuals to participate in social conflict events as a result of drought.

It is generally accepted that the link between conflict and environmental stressors is not direct; however, research has established common themes linking the two together: economics (Miguel, 2007), migration (Gleick, 2014), and competition for limited resources (Selby & Hoffmann, 2014). These drivers of conflict fall in line with widely accepted theories on natural resource conflict in general (Green, 2005, pp. 4). While armed violent conflict and social conflict events appear on opposite sides of the severity spectrum (Figure 7), similar factors drive the emergence of both. However, these factors do not fully explain the social conflict occurring in South Africa. For that reason, I next turn to a human security approach.

WORKING TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PHENOMENON OF POPULAR PROTEST IN SOUTH AFRICA

The concept of security has historically focused on the protection of the state and national interests through the militarization of its borders (Jolly & Ray, 2006; Kaldor, 2007); however, this notion of security overlooks the ordinary citizen and any real or perceived threats that challenge their daily lives (United Nations Development Program, 1994). The human security

framework shifts the main focus of security from the state to the individual, focusing on

protecting individuals from the expansive threats that pose a risk to their daily well-being (Jolly

& Ray, 2006; Kaldor, 2007; Owens, 2011). The *Human Development Report 1994* defined

human security as "protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social

conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards" (United Nations Development

Program, 1994, p. 22). All of these components are interconnected, so a threat to one is a threat

to all. In this way, looking through the lens of human security provides a holistic view of the

multitude of ways that people confront threats in their daily lives. For example, while Day Zero

was successfully avoided, various parts of South Africa still suffer from drought conditions.

With the onset of the Covid-19 global health pandemic, drought conditions have exacerbated the

public health threat as rural citizens explain that they cannot waste the water they have available

on washing their hands because it must be prioritized for drinking and cooking ("'We can't waste

precious water on washing hands': The making of a public health time bomb," 2020). This goes

to show how deeply intertwined these factors are and how they interact to create a more insecure

and volatile situation.

 The very broad definition of human security allows the United Nations (UN) to react to

protect a wide range of threats to "the vital core of all human lives" (Owens, 2011, p. 548).

While the threat of war is realistic and has potential for occurring, for individuals not located in a

war-torn country, this is likely not a challenge that raises feelings of insecurity for them in their

daily lives (Owens, 2011; United Nations Development Program, 1994). However, ensuring a

child's health and safety is something parents must worry about every day. Families must figure

out how to put food on the table every day or they will starve. Individuals must be able to access

clean water to live. People must maintain stable employment so that they can continue to

provide stability to their household. Human security is about the everyday security of individuals and communities they live in rather than the protection of state borders from the threat of foreign enemies (Kaldor, 2007; Owens, 2011; United Nations Development Program, 1994) and it is about "freedom from fear and freedom from want" (Kaldor, 2007, p. 4).

Critics of the human security framework see this as a way of North-South regulation. The framework is perceived as a way of imposing norms on the global South as a means of reconstructing society to behave in a way that is not seen as threatening to the global North (Owens, 2011). This allows states to justify military interventions in countries for the sake of protecting human security, no matter how contradictory in nature that may be. Other critics argue that human security is just a catchy rally cry or slogan rather than a useful framework for academic work due to its purposefully broad definition that renders everything a security concern (Paris, 2001; Walt, 1991). Despite these criticisms, human security remains critical in that it recognizes human agency and holds the states as the ultimate provider of security (Kaldor, 2007). I then use human security to narrowly focus on the nonmilitary threat of water scarcity that is an external threat to communities and individuals and further, to highlight the agency that individuals manifest to impose discomfort to demand rights and water access.

The prioritization of human rights is the key distinguishing factor for the human security approach which is lacking in the climate-conflict literature (Kaldor, 2007). The climate-conflict literature has largely neglected the role of human rights regarding water and how the pursuit to have your dignity respected and rights fulfilled motivate the onset of social conflict. Government failures to address the adverse effects of environmental threats such as drought places an excessive burden on vulnerable communities and motivates a social response.

Within the human security literature, environmental threats include water scarcity, air pollution, deforestation and overgrazing, and natural disasters. Environmental change threatens human security by limiting the capacity that individuals have to respond and change their condition to enhance their well-being, having the most adverse effects on marginalized and impoverished populations (O'Brien & Barnett, 2013). In South Africa, water scarcity is a prominent threat to human security.

The human security framework also recognizes the individual and their ability to act on their own behalf and on the behalf of others to mobilize for community security and demand respect for their dignity and human rights that are being infringed upon, where the individual is the ultimate referent object (Edwards & Ferstman, 2010, p. 33; O'Brien & Barnett, 2013). While the state is the ultimate provider of security, it cannot be let off the hook for its failures. In South Africa, the state is a very unreliable provider, but South African citizens attempt to hold the government accountable by acting as the activism center of the world. The human security framework has a very rich understanding for how social conflict is a process to achieve social change and respect for human rights. This relates back to Marx's social conflict theory as summarized by Coser (1957) where it is understood that the social system undergoes change through conflict. The social conflict theory was embedded in the dynamics of society where the lower-classes were subservient to the higher-classes; in many ways, this is reflective of societal relations in the Western Cape. Marx explained that these relationships would never end unless there was a revolution that would ultimately reshape society.

Arendt (2019) would go on to add to Marx's argument through her coining of the terms "political action" and the "space of appearance." Her concept of "political action" is a means to secure what she calls the "right to have rights" (Oman, 2010); what we call today human rights.

For Arendt (2019), it was not enough to take political action, but to take political action in a "space of appearance" or public space. In this space, individuals would gain recognition from other parts of society in hopes of achieving a broader base of solidarity. Perhaps the unintentional mother of human security, she argued that the only way to achieve human rights and dignity is by taking action, recognizing human agency as the only means to achieve social change and protection of human rights. Through her philosophical foundation, scholars such as Butler and Athanasiou (2013) have further differentiated between what is means to act as a collective body instead of as an individual. Butler and Athanasiou (2013) explain that collective action is not a collection of individuals, but a political performance in plurality where collective action is a *performance* in defense of collective precarity. This performance is an attempt to act against disposability, forming a "body politic."

Further still, theorists such as Lorey (2015) have dismantled arguments by international precarity scholar Castel (2000) by arguing that precariousness is a tool that ignites social change in pursuit of human security. This is in contrast to the four zones of disaffiliation model proposed by Castel (2000) which views precarity through a biopolitical immunology lens, where precarity is seen as a security threat as it spreads through society like a virus. The four zones model divides society into four groups—integrated, assisted, vulnerable, and disaffiliated—from most to least economically and socially integrated or, from most to least precarious in living. The only option is to either integrate or exclude groups, with the marginalized being excluded because of the threat that they pose to the rest of society (Castel, 2000). This presumes that precarity is not an innate human trait. Lorey (2015) counters this argument in finding that *every* individual experiences some kind of precariousness, where precariousness becomes the starting point for

political action. Precariousness has evolved in this scholarship to no longer be seen as a dividing factor but almost as a uniting factor to motivate social change.

While Castel's four zones model is controversial in his understanding of precarity, when applying it to the South African case, it creates a new perspective to understand why community protests in informal settlements are generally not successful and poorly received by society as compared to protests that have participants from the more affluent members of society. In this thesis, I will refer to informal settlement and township residents as the "solidaric disaffiliated" as an adaptation of Castel's "disaffiliated zone." His disaffiliated zone was comprised of those who are economically and socially excluded from society. I argue that the solidaric disaffiliated are indeed socially and economically excluded from *affluent* parts of society; however, they are extremely reliant upon the existing social networks they have within their communities. What makes these social networks less powerful than the affluent in society is not the lack of social networks, but that they are comprised of fellow solidaric disaffiliated voices which the government continues to ignore and neglect.

I will refer to the majority white, well off, middle-class population as the "prosperous core," adapted from Castel's "integrated zone." Castel's original four zones model was not originally intended to understand and explain the role of racial segregation and how that influences feelings and experiences of precarity within society. I have adapted his model to capture this complex dynamic of racial and geographic exclusion within the South African society, a lasting relic from the apartheid regime. These concepts are applicable to the South African case where residents collectively mobilize themselves to vocalize the threats to their security from water shortages, sanitation shortages, housing shortages, and other human rights

that the government has neglected to address, most often taking these protests to public arenas or spaces of appearance in front of the prosperous core and causing discomfort.

Looking at the SDG indicators, we can see that South Africa has high water stress (Figure 6) and the proportion of the population with safe access to drinking water is decreasing (Figure 5). This is but one dimension of resource inequality in the country that presents a threat to citizens' everyday livelihoods, spurring social conflict events as the government fails to provide relief for its citizenry. The human security approach captures this complex relationship where the shared struggle to live a dignified life and to have human rights respected motivates the solidaric disaffiliated to participate in the collective action of community protests to protect their human rights.

The transnational nature of environmental events naturally warrants a collaborative response from a multitude of actors. From the human security perspective, solidarity is essential for obtaining personal and community security (Edwards & Ferstman, 2010; Gervais & Estevez, 2011; Inter Pares, 2009). Much of the research on solidarity has envisioned the relationship between solidarity and security on the international level as one that takes places between states or as motivators for civil society action (Dalby, 2015; Haaland & Wallevik, 2019; Inter Pares, 2009; Kaldor, 2007; Owens, 2011; Slaughter, 2005; Thompson, 1997); however, the relationship between solidarity and security is particularly relevant for individuals in the pursuit of achieving human security.

People, particularly those in resource deprived situations, rely on solidarity to protect their access to water, sanitation, and housing. For example, women in Honduras have explained that solidarity during political turmoil in the country gave them the courage to protest against the government to address political wrong-doings and repression stating that "our security lies in our

solidarity with each other" (Gervais & Estevez, 2011, p. 3). Surveys conducted by the Visible

Policing Unit (VPU) have shown that this is extremely relevant in the case of South Africa. From

a list of "prominent reasons for gathering," the VPU found that "solidarity," "mobilizing the

masses," and "in sympathy with the oppressed" (Alexander, 2010, p. 26) frequently appeared as

a motive for protest action. In this case, the marginalized population united to vocalize their

concerns about human rights abuses at the hands of the government. Because of South Africa's

history of inequality and mass protest and the geographic and cultural connections tied to those

events, I argue that solidarity is a prominent feature of social conflict events in the face of

drought and helps explain the lack of armed conflict in response to environmental stress.

FILLING THE GAP: THE HUMAN SECURITY FRAMEWORK

The armed violent conflict literature has established little connection linking water

scarcity to violent outbreaks. In South Africa, this is true as armed violent conflict events are

reported far less regularly than social conflict events. The social conflict literature finds that

climate-induced conflict will arise as the result of population competing for limited resources. In

the South African case, solidarity is a particularly important phenomenon to observe. The history

of mass protests in the country has shown the capability of South Africans to unite in pursuit of

their shared common interests which ultimately led to the downfall of the extremely oppressive

apartheid regime (Ehrenreich, 2013)—a goliath task. Collective action has worked in society's

favor, which motivates individuals to pursue their human security interests in the same fashion.

In the following chapters, I use a local news analysis of the Western Cape in South Africa

to show the ways in which the unfulfilled realization of human rights such as equitable access to

water and sanitation reshape the nature of popular protests as citizens take action in an attempt

protect scarce resources and demand governmental action. Keeping in mind that poor and

marginalized populations are typically the most vulnerable to extreme climate events, I expect

protest action to most frequently be taken by those in townships and informal settlements where

the population already struggles with accessibility and the drought now acts as an additional

stressor. The newspaper article corpus will show that human rights and the role and use of

discomfort link water scarcity to social conflict as individuals unite as a means to achieve their

common goal and raise their voices to pursue those interests.

METHODOLOGY

In this study I define media documentation of social unrest as the written account, either first or second hand, of protests, riots, and mass demonstrations of a collective group to express public dissent with relation to water accessibility and/or availability as seen in the local newspaper articles and reports in the Western Cape province. While I collected and coded all social unrest events whether they were related to water or not, the purpose of this study is to understand how an extreme drought period shapes the occurrence and nature of social conflict events within society. The purpose of the study is not to analyze the number of articles captured but how events unfold in the media. My novel data collection framework is founded on existing, well-known datasets but tailored to the unique granular insights about social unrest I am trying to explain.

My primary source is the Dow Jones' Factiva news aggregator. I restricted my sample to printed articles published by major English-language newspapers in South Africa from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2019. Considering the very large sample size this yielded (75,394 articles), I have restricted my sample even further to only consider articles published at the regional level, since my research focuses specifically on the Western Cape and not the entirety of South Africa. Table 3 shows a list of newspapers in South Africa and their characteristics gathered from general online sources and Factiva. I collected this information on all of the newspaper sources so that I could fully be aware of why one newspaper may be a better data source than another based on their different traits.

Table 3. National and Local Level Newspaper Numbers Derived from Factiva Database

Newspaper	Language	Circulation	Level	Type
Sunday Times	English	2016182	National	Weekly
Daily Sun	English		National	Daily
Rapport	Afrikaans		National	Weekly
City Press	English		National	Weekly
The Sowetan	English		National	Daily
Mail and Guardian	English		National	Weekly
Sondag	Afrikaans		National	Weekly
Sunday Independent	English	21205	National	Weekly
Business Day	English	18201	National	Daily
Die Burger	Afrikaans		Regional	Daily
Cape Argus	English	23815	Regional	Daily
Cape Times	**English**	**25376**	**Regional**	**Daily**
Daily Voice	English & Afrikaans	13012	Regional	Daily
Die Son	Afrikaans		Regional	Daily
Vukani	Xhosa & English		Regional	Weekly
The Times	English		National	Online
News Everyday	English		National	Online

There are just six regional newspapers specific to the Western Cape, only three of which are included in the Factiva news aggregator: Cape Argus, Cape Times, and the Daily Voice. To decide which of these three newspapers should be my data source, I used the newspaper circulation based on Factiva search results. A newspaper's circulation is the number of copies it distributes. Newspapers that do not have circulation numbers included in the figure are either because the newspaper is not present in the Factiva Database *(Rapport, The Sowetan, Sondag, Die Burger, Die Son, Vukani, The Times, and News Everyday),* or because Factiva did not have circulation numbers for that specific newspaper *(Daily Sun, City Press, and Mail and Guardian).* Out of the three regional sources, Cape Times had the highest circulation (25,376). Using my original search query (Table 4), the *Cape Times* newspaper alone generated 2,618 articles.

A similar study used international news sources (Barrett, Appendino, Nguyen, & Miranda, 2020), while I instead use a regional news source to focus on the specific province that was hardest hit by the Day Zero drought: the Western Cape. Barrett et al. (2020) explain that they used a collection of very well-known international news sources in their study because these newspaper sources generate large sample sizes, and the authors can better account for the newspaper biases because of their popularity and known political leanings. Knowing this information allows the researchers to be very transparent about any biases their data may present. Barrett et al. (2020) also argue that by using international news sources they avoid any agendas that within-country news sources may have that influence their reporting on social unrest events. One potential disadvantage of conducting a study using international news sources is that they may overlook or miss smaller-scale protests occurring within communities. This has influenced my decision to use a regional news source in my study. By consulting with an in-country expert, I have come to know that the Cape Times newspaper is generally more sympathetic to the African National Congress (ANC), having a left-leaning bias. Despite this, another study has considered Cape Times as a reliable news source (Gaibie, 2002). Utilizing a local news source allows me to capture small-scale events and give insight on community dynamics. I use one news source instead of various news sources to eliminate the risk of miscounting events.

Furthermore, the motives behind our research are very different which helps explain the differences in our approaches. The intent of their research was to create an index on a sample of 130 countries that would provide an indication of when major events happened shown by a higher frequency in news reporting. The intent of my research on the other hand is to understand how a drought event motivates social unrest, uncovering the drivers behind social conflict. I am interested in one very specific location and want the data source to have a close relationship with

the people who experienced this specific event and consistent drought-related environmental stressors so I can understand the motives behind the conflict events. For this reason, local newspapers rather than international sources are a better source of data for my research because they have a better understanding of the people they are representing.

SEARCH CRITERIA

My search criteria has been adapted from the IMF Working Paper: *Measuring Social Unrest Using Media Reports* (Barrett et al., 2020) in which the authors created the Reported Social Unrest Index. The search criteria are the text string that must be matched for an article to be included during data collection. The search criteria for this study are summarized in Table 4. The inclusive requirements pick up specific articles related to social unrest; the exclusion requirements prevent articles from being included in the data collection process that were a mismatch or misuse of terms in the search query, such as an article written on a movie about protests, but where no protest event actually occurred. I have adapted the inclusive requirements from Barrett et al. (2020) to include search terms utilized in the "Factiva Expert Search"—a search function within the Factiva database for building unique search queries—on civil unrest. The Factiva Expert Search allows you to limit your search to specific categories such as civil unrest and provides a pre-built search query.

Table 4. Factiva Search Query

Text	("Cape Town" OR "Western Cape") AND (atleast2 protest* OR atleast2 riot* OR atleast2 disobedience OR ((rally AND anger)) OR ((civil OR domestic) w/10 unrest)) NOT ("vote of protest" OR "protest vote" OR "protestant*" OR "anniversary" OR "war" OR "memorial" OR "movie" OR "book") AND wc>100
Inclusion Terms	Location terms AND (protest* OR riot* OR disobedience OR ((rally AND anger)) OR ((civil OR domestic) within 10 words of "unrest")
Exclusion Terms	Vote of protest, protest vote, protestant*, anniversary, war, memorial, movie, book
Date	01/01/2012 to 12/31/2019
Source	Not all blogs
Author	All authors
Company	All companies
Subject	All subjects
Industry	All industries
Region	South Africa or Cape Town
Language	English
News filters	Source: Cape Time (Cape Town, South Africa)
Results found	1066 articles

SEARCH QUERY LOGIC

The text portion of Table 4 shows my exact search query. Using the connector "OR" requires the article to include one or more of the words entered in the text string. Using the connector "AND" requires all the words or phrases to be included in the article. The connector "NOT" tells the data processor to exclude articles that contain words in the "NOT" group. Using parentheses groups words together. In my search, I grouped together the location search terms, terms for inclusion, and terms for exclusion. The double parentheses indicate words within the group that must appear together such as ((rally AND anger)) in my search. Surrounding search terms in quotations means that the words must appear in the article exactly as they are within the

quotation marks. Additionally, the command "w/10" requires that the grouped words must appear within 10 words of each other. For this, "civil" or "domestic" must appear in the articles within 10 words of "unrest."

An asterisk (*) allows for different variations of the word with the asterisk to be included in the articles. For example, protest* yields articles containing the word "protest," as well as protests, protesting, protested. However, this would also include articles with the word "protestant" in it because it has the same stem, "protest." This is why "protestant" is listed in my exclusion terms. Other exclusion terms disregard articles that are a misuse of my inclusion terms and would falsely increase my article count.

The search option "atleast2" requires that the word following this command must be mentioned in the article at least two times. I included this requirement after reviewing articles collected with a preliminary search query that did not include this command. Upon revision, I realized that many articles only had the term "protest" mentioned once. In these cases, "protest" would be mentioned at the very end of the article where there would be a threat of future protest if certain citizen demands were not met. These articles did not report on a protest event, but rather reported on a threat of protest, falsely increasing my article count. Finally, "wc>100" requires that all articles must be at least 100 words in length to be included in my dataset.

The date section shows that I have limited my search to articles published between January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2019. My search begins three years before the onset of the drought, so I am able to gauge if protest events increase or decrease during the drought events as compared to non-drought years. I have only included one post-drought year (2019) because of limitations due to the coronavirus pandemic. Beginning in 2020, the coronavirus caused global lockdowns that in some instances kept people inside, thus limiting protest events, and in other

instances prompted protests because of anger about the lockdowns. This was an outlier year which could have potentially skewed my data. Furthermore, Factiva has stated that for all newspapers, they have had a gap in coverage from December 10, 2020 to March 11, 2021. For these reasons, I only included one complete post-drought year in my data collection.

The source section indicates which types of sources I want collected. I excluded all blogs. The author section allows specification if there is a particular author that I want to have written the articles in order to be included in my search. I opted to include all authors. Additionally, the company and industry sections allow restricting searches to articles that pertain to certain companies or industries. Since I want a holistic representation of the Western Cape, I allowed all companies and industries to be included in the search.

One significant change that I made to my search query that is different from that of Barrett et al. (2020) is the subject tag. They used the subject tags "domestic politics" or "civil unrest" in their search query. Applying this subject tag restricts the article collection to articles that are specifically categorized in the database as being about domestic politics or civil unrest. I did a search utilizing both of these subject tags and found that after spot checking my article collection, my preliminary dataset did not include an article that I knew existed and had also inspired my research. This article was not included in the collection because it was not categorized as either a domestic politics or a civil unrest article, despite being about a protest event that was triggered by the Day Zero drought. The exclusion of this article led to me to eliminate the subject tag requirement so as to not miss articles that may not be included in the tag even though they are about a protest event.

The region section restricts my search to articles from South Africa or Cape Town and the language section limits my article collection to only those that are in English. While my

Factiva search did attempt to filter out duplicate articles, this was less successful. There were 47 duplicates included in my data collection. Excluding those articles from my dataset brought the article count down to 1,019. Although my search query was strategically created to limit articles to those that are specific to my research, there were still some limitations which further reduced my article count. Upon spot checking the articles to ensure they meet my criteria, some were about past events that predate my time frame of interest which were not included in my dataset, further reducing the article count. Once I completed the data collection process, I manually coded the articles into my own dataset which I have adapted from well-known conflict databases.

CREATING A DATASET

My work is very closely related to other databases measuring social unrest, directly building off the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD) methodologies. There are widely used datasets that provide some systematic way of coding newspaper articles and reports which I wanted to draw from. I examined these different major databases and found that two were most closely aligned with my needs. These main databases are: the Armed Conflict Location and Events Database (ACLED); the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD); the Urban Social Disorder (USD) dataset; and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program- Georeferenced Event Database (UCDP-GED). I conducted a comparative analysis to inform my decisions about how to adapt their tested coding structures so I could systematically code newspaper articles at the sub-national level about social and not armed/violent conflict (Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of Existing Conflict Databases

Database	ACLED	SCAD	USD	UCDP-GED
Dates	1990-2017	1990-2017	1960-2014	1989-2017
Level of Analysis	National	National	Capitals & major cities	National
Event Captured	Conflicts, not other political occurrences	Protests, riots, strikes, and other social disturbances	"Urban social disorder", actions against a political target	Fighting resulting in the death of at least one person
Conflict Type	Battle: No change of territory Battle: Rebels gain territory Battle: government gains territory Rebel HQ established Rebel activity w/o fighting Rebels gain territory (date unknown) One-sided violence	Organized demonstrations Spontaneous demonstration Organized violent riot Spontaneous violent riot General strike Limited strike Progovernment violence (repression) Antigovernment violence Extra-government violence Intra-government violence	General warfare Intercommunal warfare Armed battle/clash Armed attack Progovernment terrorism (repression) Antigovernment terrorism Communal terrorism Organized violent riot Spontaneous violent riot Organized demonstration Progovernment demonstration Spontaneous demonstration Other	State-based conflict Non-state conflict One-sided violence

Table 5. Continued

Database	ACLED	SCAD	USD	UCDP-GED
Search Query	X	HLEAD(country name) AND (protest OR strike OR riot OR violence OR attack).	terroris* or riot* or war* or armed* or death* or dead* or protest* or communal* or demonstra* or insurgen* or conflict* or clash* or violen* or hostage* or assassin* or strike* or bomb* or kill* or suicid* and [cityname]* or [cityname]*	kill* or die* or injur* or dead or death* or wounded or massacre*
Coding Criteria	Rebel-government battles	Whereas conflict data is generally available for large-scale events such as civil and international war, the purpose of this dataset is to compile information on other types of social and political disorder.	1. city specific events 2. fall under umbrella of "urban social disorder", actions against a political target	An incident where armed force was by an organized actor against another organized actor, or against civilians, resulting in at least 1 direct death at a specific location and a specific date
Variables	Actor, start- and end date, location, event, event type	Start- and end date, type of event, escalation, actors, targets, number of participants, deaths, repression, location, issue/event motivator,	location, type of event, start- and end date, actor(s) and target(s), reported number of participants, and reported number of deaths	location, type of events, start- and end date, actors/sides, deaths, source info

Table 5. Continued

Database	ACLED	SCAD	USD	UCDP-GED
News Source	X	Associated Press and Agence France Presse newswires	Keesings World News Archive	Reuters News, Agence France Presse (in English), Associated Press, Xinhua (in English) as well as BBC Monitoring. Secondary sources: local and specialized news sources
Search Engine	Keesings World News Archive	Lexis Nexis	Keesings World News Archive	Factiva

Only two of the four datasets I investigated analyze social conflict: SCAD and USD. The other two datasets—ACLED and UCDP-GED—focus on violent armed conflicts. Because of this, SCAD or USD were better suited for my research since they analyze the same type of conflict that I am interested in, social conflict. USD only analyzes capitals and major cities (metropolitan areas). Since I intend to look at the entire region of the Western Cape, this dataset may not be the best option for me because it would exclude rural areas and smaller cities that are under a certain population level. From the four conflict datasets I observed, the SCAD dataset best fits my research interests because it is a social conflict specific database that includes forms of social conflict that are not tracked in other conflict databases. I used these tried and tested methods for coding articles to consider what these research projects had prioritized and how they structured a systematic approach to coding. From these models, I developed a unique framework for coding sub-national social conflict that I consider a contribution to the field of international relations and the study of social conflict.

CONSTRUCTION OF A SUB-NATIONAL MEDIA CODING FRAMEWORK

There are certain variables that the SCAD dataset includes that I exclude because they are not relevant to my specific research interests: subnational analysis of social conflict generated from climate change pressures/stressors. My decisions for including/excluding each variable are in Table 6, but could be considered for a similar subnational study that has a different focus.

Table 6. Exclusion Variables

Variable	Explanation	Justification (for exclusion)
Female Events	Indicates if women played a significant role in the event.	Not relevant for this particular study. Actors will be captured in one single variable called "Actors."
LGBTQ Issue	Indicates if members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer/ Questioning community played a significant role in the event.	Not relevant for this particular study. Actors will be captured in one single variable called "Actors."
Ndeath	Records the number of deaths related to a specific event.	The SCAD codebook has said that these numbers are very inaccurate.
Cgovtarget	Indicates if the central, regional, or local governments were the target of the event	Captured in an all-encompassing "Target" variable that will tell us who is the target of any event.
Rgovtarget	Indicates if the central, regional, or local governments were the target of the event	Captured in an all-encompassing "Target" variable that will tell us who is the target of any event.

NOVEL VARIABLES

I have also identified three new variables and three new sub-variables that were not included in the SCAD dataset that will be included in my dataset. These are my contributions to a unique coding framework. The first variable I included is the number of articles that talk about

a specific event. SCAD and UCDP-GED exclude multiple articles talking about the same event and use the most recent data to include in the dataset (Croicu & Sundberg, 2018; Salehyan & Hendrix, 2017). I similarly use the most recent date to include in the dataset; however, I also include a column noting the number of articles that mention the same event. This variable acts as an indicator of how important the specific event was due to the amount of coverage it received in the newspaper. The specific event is counted in the dataset once and for every article following the first mention of the event, I increased the variable "Article #" by one. If there were identical duplicate articles covering the same event, the duplicate article was not counted or added to the variable "Article #", which would have artificially increased the variable.

The second variable that I added is a "path to violence." This reflects the three pathways to social conflict derived from environmental stress: (1) direct, (2) indirect, and (3) threat multiplying (Koren et al., 2021). I have added a value of zero for protest events that have no relation to water scarcity/security. The categorization of each article's pathway to social conflict is based on my qualitative assessment and understanding of the literature and context. I have created an additional column named "Relation to Water" to determine if the event had no relation to water scarcity/security (0), was directly related to water scarcity/security (1), indirectly related to water scarcity/security (2), or was a threat multiplier (3). This allowed me to gauge how water influenced social conflict events.

My third variable that I added is "Solidarity." This variable includes a collection of words, phrases, and quotes that express sentiments of solidarity and reflect evocations of human rights within the articles that are related to one specific event. This is a purely qualitative column that allowed me to capture how concepts, feelings, and emotions relating to human rights and solidarity were relevant within the social conflict events included in my dataset.

Finally, while not a new variable, I added three new topics to the "Issue" variable which was already created by SCAD. These topics are (1) anti-government, (2) infrastructure, and (3) services. I added these topics after I began coding and realized that the established SCAD framework I was using ignored these important components. "Anti-government" reflects events where protesters were directly speaking out against the government. "Infrastructure" relates to protests where protesters were expressing grievances about infrastructure and "Services" is related to service delivery. These two topics (infrastructure and services) are easy to confuse but are very different. While "services" is always related to "infrastructure," "infrastructure" is not always related to "services." "Infrastructure" may be related to schools, parks, tolls, and other public projects, whereas "Services" is related to water, sanitation, electricity, and housing. My comprehensive list of variables is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Study Variables

Variable	Source	Explanation
Start date	SCAD	Day/Month/Year
End date	SCAD	Day/Month/Year
Duration	SCAD	Number of days the event lasted

Table 7. Continued

Variable	Source	Explanation
Event type	SCAD	1= Organized demonstration: Event had clear leadership or organization. 2= Spontaneous demonstration: No identified leadership or organization. 3= Organized violent riot: Event intended to cause injury or damage with clear leadership or organization. 4= Spontaneous violent riot: Event intended to cause injury or damage with no clear leadership or organization. 5= General strike: Members of an organization or union abandon workplace or public facilities. 6= Limited strike: Limited industries abandon work or public facilities. 7= Pro-government violence: Event initiated by government or pro-government actors 8= Anti-government violence: Event against government authorities
Escalation	SCAD	Did the nature of the event change during its duration? 0= no escalation 1= organized demonstration 2= spontaneous demonstration 3= organized violent demonstration 4= spontaneous violent demonstration 5= general strike 6= limited strike 7= pro-government violence 8= anti-government violence
Actor	SCAD	Who were the main participants?
Target	SCAD	Who/what was the target of the event?
Number of participants	SCAD	Number of people participating in the event if mentioned in the article.

Table 7. Continued

Variable	Source	Explanation
Issue (primary, secondary, and tertiary)	SCAD	What was the issue mentioned in the article as the source of tension or disorder? 1= Elections 2= Economy/jobs 3= Food, water, subsistence 4= Environmental degradation 5= Ethnic discrimination, ethnic issues 6= Religious discrimination, religious issues 7= Education 8= Foreign affairs/relations 9= Domestic war, violence, terrorism 10= Human rights/democracy 11= Pro-government 13= Economic resources/assets 15= Other 16= Unknown
Issue (primary, secondary, and tertiary) additions	Original	12= Anti-government 14= Infrastructure 17= Services
Issue notes	SCAD	Brief description of event.
Repress	SCAD	Was there governmental/police repression? Yes No
Latitude	SCAD	Location of event
Longitude	SCAD	Location of event
Article count	Original	The number of articles that mention or talk about the specific event.
Path to conflict	Original	Conflict relation to water scarcity/security: 0= None 1= Direct 2= Indirect 3= Multiplier
Solidarity	Original	A qualitative collection of direct quotes/phrases from within articles that express sentiments relating to solidarity and human rights

CLEANING THE DATA

My data cleaning process followed the general practices of Salehyan and Hendrix (2017). I coded articles beginning with the oldest to the most recent in chronological order. For each article, I determined if the information was relevant to the topic of my research: social unrest events shaped by extreme climate events at the subnational level. If not, the article was discarded. Some articles that were discarded reported on the history of protests in South Africa and court cases regarding previous conflict events. These articles were not coded in the dataset; however, I filed them separately to develop further context on the situation of social conflict in South Africa. Any duplicate articles were discarded, keeping only one copy of the article.

Sometimes various articles covered the same event. These articles were grouped together as a single event using the most recent date; however, a column for article count keeps track of the frequency of this event occurring in the news cycle. For each of these articles found, I increased the counter ("Article #") by one to allow me to quantify how prevalent an event was in widespread coverage. Additionally, sometimes a single article covered multiple events. I determined if the actors, targets, and issues were different and, if so, coded them as different events.

PROCESS

I downloaded all 1,066 articles from Factiva per my tailored search query. I then began opening each article as a PDF and recorded the information in a spreadsheet. If I determined an article was not relevant, I moved the PDF into a separate file to keep for context but did not record it in the spreadsheet. There were 47 identical articles in my corpus, reducing the total data collection to 1,019 articles. Once I coded the data in my spreadsheet, I analyzed the article frequency to see if social conflict events increased during the drought period or not. I then

analyzed the primary, secondary, and tertiary issues that motivated the conflict events ("Issue") to understand which motives for conflict were most prominent. Finally, I qualitatively free-coded articles using NVivo to generate conceptual themes. The qualitative free-coding process helped me distinguish the main differences between protest events and ultimately shaped my following data chapters. The main differences I established were (1) protests that expressed cries for human rights protection by the solidaric disaffiliated zones, and (2) environmental protests. Because I coded all of the news articles by myself and did not have another coder to cross-validate coding outcomes, I used *Leximancer*, an automated content analysis software program, to validate my coding and identified themes. Figure 8 and Figure 9 below show the Leximancer outcomes for major themes that were connected, and concepts that existed within those major themes. The first themes network (Figure 8) operates like a heat map where themes that appeared the most are in a deeper red color and themes that appear less frequently but still considered important are in blue. Theme bubble proximity shows the relationships between themes based on how frequently they appear next to each other in the text. The corresponding concepts cloud map (Figure 9) reflects the colors used in Figure 8 where concepts are the same color as their theme bubble.
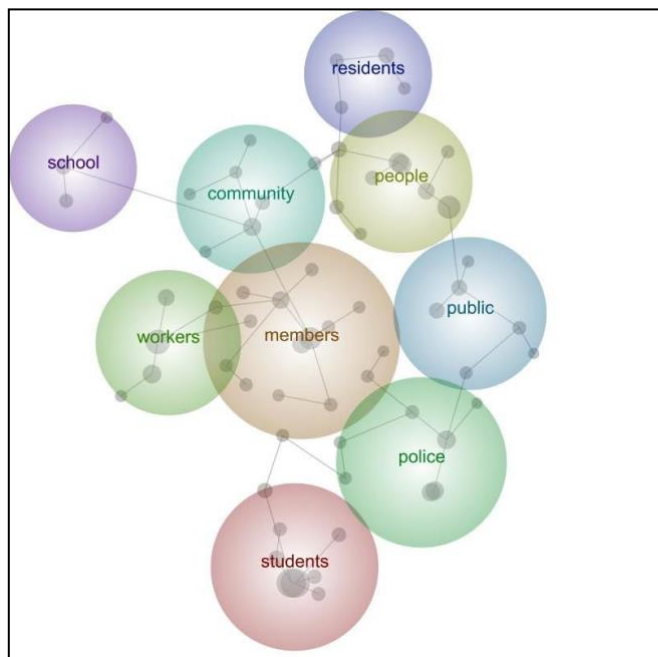
Figure 8. Leximancer Themes Heat Map
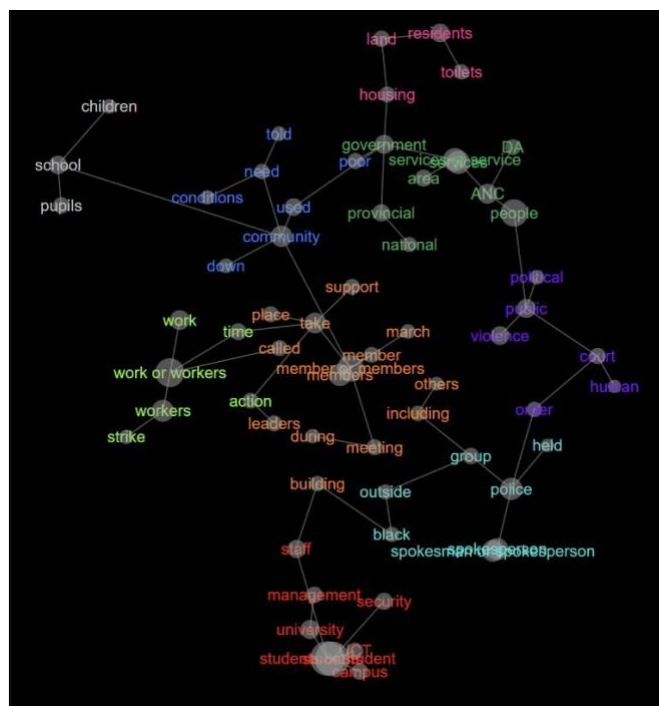
Figure 9. Leximancer Concepts Cloud Map

The theme "Students" appears the most frequently (in red), which likely reflects the two-year long "Fees Must Fall" and "Rhodes Must Fall" protests that took place demanding that university fees be reduced and also demanding the decolonization of higher education. In the context of my study, however, the themes "Members," "Community," "People," "Residents," and "Public" appear to be the most important. These thematic bubbles capture the dynamics of protests by the solidaric disaffiliated which are reliant upon *community members and leaders* for protest action. Protests are often about poor *community conditions* and unmet *needs* such as *land, housing, and toilets.* Protest action is generally directed at the *government* and frequently turn *violent* in nature. This validates the coding findings that I have generated through free coding.

Furthermore, I used interview data from 26 organizations in the Western Cape to supplement and support my newspaper analysis. Interview data represents various viewpoints within the Western Cape as I interviewed individuals that worked within informal settlements, city departments, provincial levels of leadership, and universities. These interviews were conducted virtually as the Covid-19 pandemic limited travel and thus, impacting the possibility for in-person interviews. Interviews were coordinated through an in-country expert who helped facilitate interviews and answer any questions that may have arisen after the interview process. While these interviews were conducted as part of a larger project for which I am a research assistant on, they provided additional content and support for my newspaper analysis.

I coded both violent and nonviolent events, as peaceful demonstrations sometimes escalated to become violent in nature. Using the human security framework, I find that human rights violations are a significant motivator for not only social conflict events, but for uniting populations through their shared struggle. Despite the role that solidarity plays in social conflict

events, this phenomenon is often overlooked. Looking to the Western Cape during the Day Zero drought, we can see how solidarity unified populations to achieve their shared goal.

Some limitations of my approach are that there is room for human error, particularly since I coded alone and could not compare coding consistency with another coder. I did, however, attempt to overcome this limitation by using *Leximancer* to validate my research findings. Some articles did not directly mention some of the variables that are in my spreadsheet, which left it open to my interpretation. Indeed, much of the decisions about how to code articles is qualitative, and thus subject to my interpretation and my second-hand knowledge of the context since I have never been to South Africa and am not local to the situation. Furthermore, because I used a local news source, they may have specific motives to report more (or less) on social conflict events. Despite this, communication with an in-country expert has helped me become aware of potential biases. Being an outsider to the situation helped reduce certain biases about who and what is important, and I believe my qualitative interpretations are well-grounded in established human security and social conflict theory. Finally, I had to keep in mind that media documents are social artifacts that represent the perspective of the author (Saldana, 2013). With this, articles are likely to report on social conflict events differently dependent upon who the reporter is. One potential limitation for my data collection process is that I did not capture who the reporter was for each article to act as an indicator of whose voices are being captured. This variable was considered but ultimately not included in the dataset because very few articles had reporter names attached to them. While some did, it proved to be difficult to find information on some of the reporters to get a demographic understanding of the reporter's voice would be representing. Despite this limitation, conversations with an in-country expert have made me aware of potential biases *Cape Times* reporting may have. The following data chapters will

reveal the unique characteristics of water-related protests and how the nature of discomfort as a tool and a motivator is further applicable to other situations.

THE DESPERATE CRIES OF COMMUNITIES FORGOTTEN

"The poor and marginalised are at the heart of these protests, seemingly unheard and

voiceless."

("Zuma's speech will need to strike a chord with those on the burning streets," 2014)

UN Resolution 64/292 recognizes that water is not a luxury, but a right (United Nations General Assembly, 2010); it is a vital resource to sustain all human and nonhuman life. The human right to water entitles everyone to have access to safe, sufficient, and accessible water supplies for personal and domestic use and further calls on states to ensure access to adequate sanitation for their populous (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010, p. 3). Despite widespread international recognition and acceptance of the human right to water and sanitation—122 countries formally recognize UN Resolution 64/292—more than 2 billion people around the world do not have sufficient access to water and sanitation (United Nations General Assembly, 2010). In this chapter, I will show how the phenomenon of mass public protest manifests from a denial of basic human rights, illustrated through excerpts from my corpus of newspaper articles. While this work is centered on the Western Cape in South Africa, the phenomenon of poor access to water and sanitation is widely extensible to the rapidly increasing number of informal settlements around the world (United Nations Statistics Division, 2019). By focusing on the Western Cape, I am able to show how state failure to ensure that the entirety of its population has access to adequate and equitable water and sanitation leads to social conflict (sometimes violent) which results social division.

EMPTY PROMISES PROLONG SUFFERING

All levels of government, both locally and nationally, have continuously failed impoverished populations in South Africa. Specifically in the Western Cape, Urban Settlement Development Grants meant to upgrade informal settlements have consistently gone unutilized ("ANC brass, premier hold talks with residents," 2018); the slow nature of change causes anger to manifest into violence ("Zuma's pointed silence undermines the spirit of democracy once again," 2013); and "uninterested elected officials" show their inability and unwillingness to change the populous' living conditions ("Zuma's pointed silence undermines the spirit of democracy once again," 2013). Residents have taken matters into their own hands the only way they see fit: violent protest. The persistence of these situations and events has caused the construction of a social identity where "service delivery" protests are considered a "proudly South African phenomenon" (Ncedani, 2012). This is not only a national identity but a provincially engrained identity as well, born out of the fact that the government has and continues to give its attention to the wealthy, making inequality and suffering a prominent feature in South African society.

After decades of neglect and unfulfilled promises, the accumulated suffering has caused residents to reach their tipping point. When they protested their poor living conditions peacefully, no one listened. Communities ultimately feel that they have no voice or say in what is going on around them and have no control in governing their own lives. My data collection shows that because of this, despite starting peaceful in nature, protests frequently turn violent. This evolution of events is something the literature already predicts, where government failures act as an indirect motive for water-related protests (Koren et al., 2021; Martin-Shields & Stojetz, 2019). Other scholars as well have found that the inequitable distribution of water resources

raises sentiments of relative deprivation (Hendrix & Salehyan, 2012; Van Stekelenburg &

Klandermans, 2013). My data serves as evidence strengthening these theoretical arguments as

protesters express:

> We are ready to take action if our demands are not met. It is sinful to see how white people live in luxury while blacks and coloureds [*sic*] have to suffer without basic needs. (Petersen, 2014)

Another article condemns the government:

> (Zille) has divided the rich and the poor, he told the crowd. By providing sub-standard services such as the porta-potties toilets to poor communities, Zille and the DA-led government were racist. (Koyana, 2014)

Clearly residents are very aware of the fact that they receive an inequitable share of services as

compared to other parts of the population, reinforcing the argument that governmental distribution

of resources leads to sentiments of relative deprivation. As demonstrated by my data and existing

literature (Koren et al., 2021; Martin-Shields & Stojetz, 2019), where water availability is low and

inequitable, there is a higher likelihood for social conflict events.

Following the thread that the government plays a role in influencing protests, I turn to the

argument of Barry and Rüther (2001) which explains that residents in informal settlements exhibit

in-group solidarity and out-group schism. This means that residents are likely to cooperate with

each other to maximize their interests and will potentially act violently toward external actors. In

the South African case, protests generally turn violent toward government actors that have

continuously failed them. While protests do often turn violent in nature, they are seldomly violent

toward their fellow community members because of resulting competition for limited resources.

My data supports that protesters frequently find that they must resort to violence to receive any

type of response from government officials:

> It appears that these communities are intensely frustrated by lack of service delivery and regard violent action as the only way to communicate with the relevant political

> authorities about their pitiful plight of homelessness and extreme poverty. ("Service delivery protests could be prevented by competent governance," 2018)

This is a commonly occurring theme in my data where protesters claim that they are not taken seriously unless they turn to violence. Violence then is born out of government neglect toward vulnerable groups, and distrust from the populous that the government will actually address their concerns. Decades of government officials failing to uphold their previous electoral promises to these communities has further instilled sentiments of neglect and distrust where surveys find that:

> Questions on the survey included whether members believed South Africa had a leadership crisis and whether they supported the call for Zuma to resign. Myburgh said 99.21% of their members responded with a resounding yes. (Adriaanse, 2017)

This resounding response shows that residents have been disillusioned by their government and do not trust them enough to do anything at all to improve their living conditions. While this survey included opinions from the white population, the disparate experiences of living conditions manifest through everyday lives—inequality in housing, water, sanitation, and electricity (Small, 2017)—indicates that the black and colored communities in South Africa have been left behind in terms of development. Government trust is further eroded by police violence and repression in response to citizen protests. Articles reflect on this level of repression in comparison to the apartheid era, making statements like:

> To act like that towards people who were peaceful felt like apartheid. It seems people can't to raise [*sic*] their voices to try to get the attention of officials. As soon as they do so, they are met with the barrel of the gun. ("Stun grenade to clear protesters 'like apartheid'," 2019)

Not only is the government unwilling to fix the issues that these communities are facing, but they are willing to put an end to public displays of dissatisfaction in any way that is deemed necessary, including violence against citizens. From this collection of excerpts, we see that

government inaction and neglect of informal communities plays a major role in influencing violent and nonviolent protests, and furthermore, plays a role in reinforcing a divide between already fragmented communities.

POO PROTESTS AND TOILET WARS

Water has long been a driving force behind protests for citizens in South Africa, with the role of water for sanitary purposes, or lack thereof, generally acting as a major trigger driving water-related protest. The role of water appears within the top ten issues that motivate social conflict (Figure 10) as captured by the "Issues" variable in my dataset in various ways. Water motivates protest primarily through the "Infrastructure" and "Services" issues—the top two motives for conflict, mainly with regard to toilets and communal water taps.
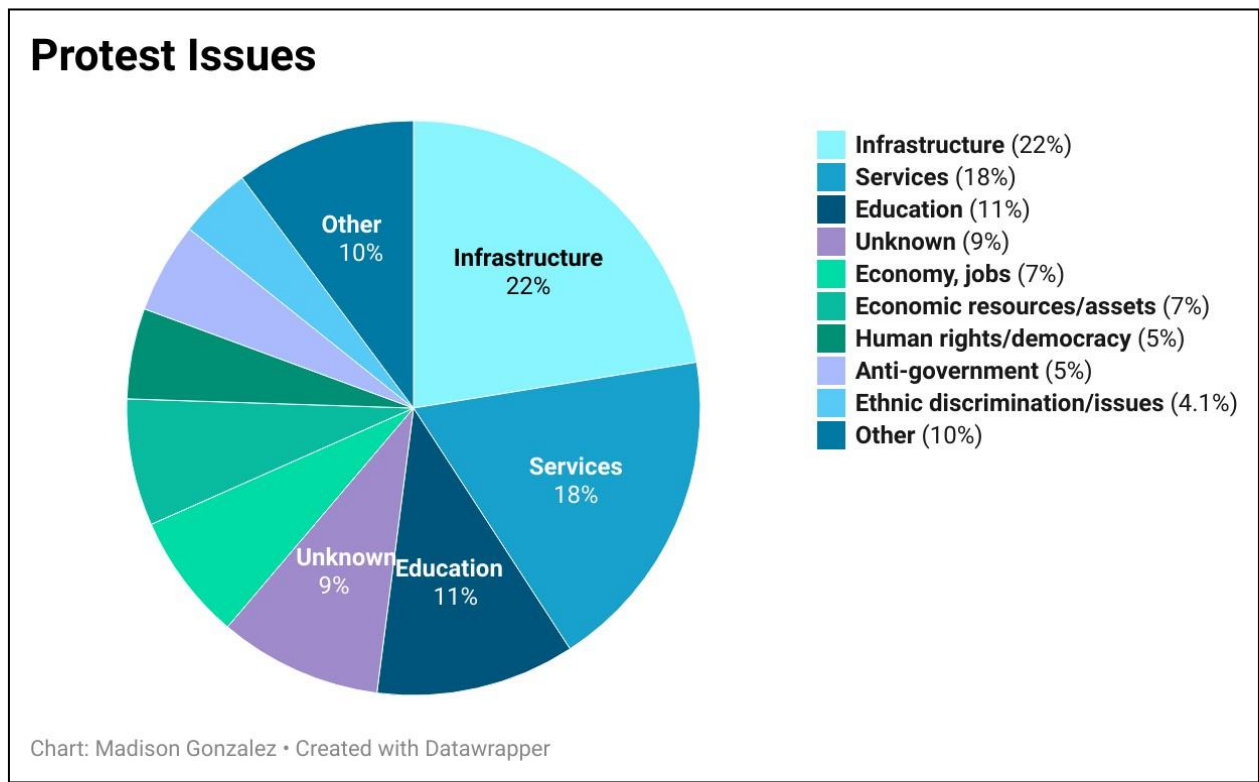
Figure 10. Issues Motivating Protest

Solidaric disaffiliated[1] residents feel degraded by using communal porta-potties and bucket toilets which frequently overflow into their homes in the winter when there is heavy rain. Furthermore, city officials poorly maintain the toilets which are supposed to undergo monthly cleaning. Despite government promises to abolish the much-hated apartheid era bucket system, thousands of homes still use this unhygienic system and many more have no system to rely on at all (Legassick, 2012). This flawed system contributes to feelings of inferiority and anger from those who must use it, primarily the solidaric disaffiliated. Residents describe the bucket system as "degrading" and "dehumanizing," and express that their "dignity has been eroded" (Koyana, 2013) by being forced to live in these conditions. My data provides evidence that this is true in the South African case with articles highlighting the desperation that citizens feel in demanding access to their fundamental human right of water and sanitation. Context shows the lengths protesters are willing to go to:

> We are prepared to die. We will not stop protesting until our demands are met. We were promised formal houses, flush toilets, tarred roads, electricity and running water and we want these promises fulfilled. ("Protest brings N1 to standstill," 2012)

The protester goes on to explain that in their shacks, they have no services at all and that the people in the community are "fed up with having nothing" ("Protest brings N1 to standstill," 2012). Protesters name water as a direct reason to take action and provide first-hand context for the water situation within their informal settlement:

> I felt it was time to stand up and demand houses and services that we deserve. I want a decent home with running water and electricity. I have to make fire to cook my food, and there are only a few taps to get water for all of us living here. (Felix, 2013)

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[1] In this thesis, I refer to residents in informal settlements and townships as the "solidaric disaffiliated" based on my adaptations from Castel's (2000) four zones model.

This protester also explains that they were willing to protest until their demands were met. In both cases, this type of language highlights the desperation and sense of urgency communities have in addressing their water and sanitation needs. Proclaiming that they are willing to die in the name of water and sanitation protests is no hyperbole, as articles report that protesters are frequently met with violence by external forces (primarily police), sometimes resulting in death and/or serious injury. And yet, despite this, the fulfillment of these human rights is something that communities regard as being worth the risk.

This is not confined just to particular locations. In South Africa, many solidaric disaffiliated populations lack adequate access to water and sanitation which acts as a driver for both violent and nonviolent public protests. For instance, a newspaper article in 2013, prior to the most recent water crisis, reported that:

> The mayor reiterated yesterday that 97 percent of people in Cape Town have access to sanitation. But there are parts of the city where this figure is much lower. For instance, the city's current water services development plan notes that only 60 percent of households in informal settlements have access to toilets – nearly 77,800 households don't. And the true number may be even lower, since, as the recent social audit by Khayelitsha residents showed, in some cases chemical sanitation services which are paid for by the city are not in fact provided by the contractor. ("Gutter politics," 2013)

The article goes on to explain that this is an issue that township residents have brought up to city authorities before, and yet, the local government has continued to ignore the problem. To gain attention about this particular issue, protesters emptied toilets on the steps of the provincial legislature in a public display of their anger and discontent not only over indecent sanitary conditions in their area, but also over a lack of access to sufficient water and sanitary resources. This was just one of many protests captured in my dataset related to water and sanitation which the media nicknamed "poo protests" and "the toilet wars," where protesters dumped feces in public areas to gain visibility for the poor conditions they are living in and the disregard they

perceive the government to have for their dignity. In my dataset, between 2012-2014 (Figure 1), many protests were frequently related to what the articles referred to as a "sanitary crisis" in the townships, with nearly half of the reported protests occurring in informal settlements (Ndenz & Hartley, 2012). Based on my coding structure, Figure 10 shows the prevalence of water and sanitation protests as compared to other protests that occurred within each coding year.
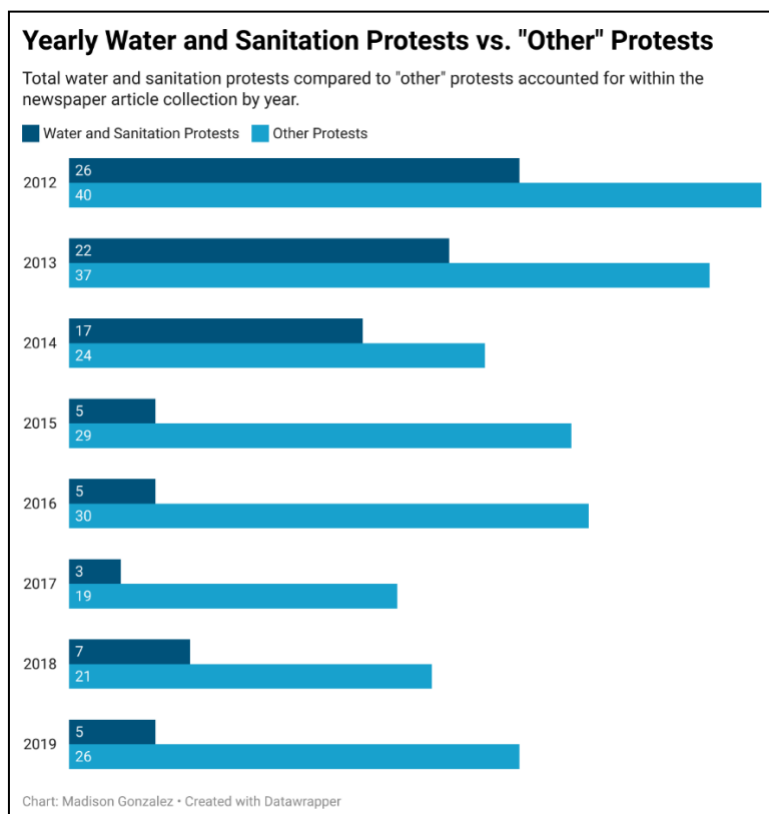
Figure 11. Water and Sanitation Protests Compared to "Other" Protests

During the sanitary crisis, we can see that water and sanitation protests made up over one-third of total protests during those years. In these cases, access to water and sanitation has a direct appeal to human dignity and governmental respect for human rights.

WATER SECURITY OPENS THE DOOR TO A LIFE OF DIGNITY

While current literature does recognize water as a motive for different forms of conflict, it largely neglects the role that demands for the protection of human rights have in motivating social conflict. Instead, the literature tends to emphasize other motives such as economics (Miguel, 2007), and competition over limited resources (Döring, 2020; Fjelde & Von Uexkull, 2012). Yet in the South African context, my data suggests that demands for the protection of human rights plays a greater role in motivating social conflict events than economics or competition. In my dataset, the "Solidarity" variable captured the language that reporters and protesters used to describe solidaric action and demands for human rights protection. Figure 11 provides a visual representation of sentiments and language used surrounding feelings of solidarity and an expression of human rights during protest action.

Figure 12. "Solidarity" Variable Word Cloud

Many of the news articles document protesters using language that appeals to the human rights and human security literature, such as protesters exclaiming that, "We are not criminals, we're only fighting for *our rights* [emphasis added]*"* ("Poo protest sees N2 closed again," 2013). In another article, the journalist explains that the conditions informal settlement residents must live in infringes upon their "*universal right to dignity* [emphasis added]*"* (Arendse, 2013). Another journalist puts this image in more drastic terms by stating that "Cape Town sits on a *humanitarian crisis* time bomb [emphasis added]" where:

> [Informal settlement] living circumstances are hardly those expected of a city (or province, or state) that respects, protects, promotes and fulfils the *human rights guaranteed to all* [emphasis added] in our constitutional democracy under the rule of law. (Hoffman, 2014a)

Where large segments of the population are continuously neglected in terms of accessibility to water and sanitation, informal communities often come together rather than fight one another, to demand that the government rectify these wrongdoings. Furthermore, we see that human rights

and the desire to be treated with respect and dignity play a large role in motivating these instances of social conflict. This discussion illustrates how a lack of water security—potable water, toilets, sanitation infrastructure—has caused a large portion of the population to feel subhuman and deprived of basic rights, leading to social mobilization and social conflict in movements like the "poo protests" or "toilet wars." The Ses'khona Peoples' Rights Movement was also born out of a collective demand for houses, jobs, water, and sanitation where the Ses'khona Peoples' Rights Movement frequently appeared as a prominent actor in my dataset as they mobilized communities (Hoffman, 2014a). My data shows that social unity and solidarity is an explicit motive for protest where community members explain:

> That is why there was so much protest in the area. We never back down on anything. We stand together with each other no matter what. I love this community for standing up for me and my family. (Felix, 2014)

Community members unite in pursuit of their shared struggle and against their shared vulnerability. But, this is not a feeling or situation that everyone can relate to.

The prosperous core[2] in South Africa does not need to rally group solidarity in pursuit of basic human rights as guaranteed in the constitution, because the provision of services in the province favors the economic elite (mostly along racial lines) while marginalizing the masses (Ndawonde, 2012). A 2016 community survey shows that 98.7% of white households had toilets within their homes as compared to 49.7% of black households having toilets within their homes (Small, 2017). Further still, the same survey finds that only 54.1% of black households have piped water within their houses as compared to 98.6% of white households (Small, 2017). Despite the frequency with which these protests occur in the geographic periphery of wealthy

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[2] In this thesis, I refer to the majority white, well off, middle-class population as the "prosperous core" based on an adaptation of Castel's (2000) four zones model.

cities, there is little improvement to be seen in the informal settlements. The protests are troubling because they create and reinforce a larger divide between the haves and have-nots in society, as the prosperous core does not empathize with the cries to improve precarious conditions for the solidaric disaffiliated. We see the friction between divided communities occur where, following a sanitation protest, in an opinion piece, a prosperous core resident in the suburb of Constantia comments:

> I have ceased to be surprised, though, by the lack of recognition of the unending contribution made by the more affluent ratepayers that pays for the provision of infrastructure and free services to those not in a position to make any contribution themselves. (Reitz, 2014)

His comment comes off as condescending and portrays a sense of irritability from the prosperous core that the solidaric disaffiliated are not behaving properly as their actions do not show gratitude for the fact that the "affluent" taxpayers are providing them with services that they themselves do not contribute to. However, this does not stop protests from happening and continuing to be brought to the forefront of the public arena as protesters from geographically segregated areas are aware that the only way to achieve fulfillment of their human rights is through their own "political action" (Arendt, 2019). Sympathy and solidarity from the prosperous core aren't necessary to generate social mobilization and protest for rights. However, the lack of solidarity for basic human rights, such as water and sanitation, aggravates a feeling of voicelessness and being unheard. The data suggests that this, in turn, causes certain types of protests to be more violent than others. In this chapter, I focus on these more rowdy or even violent protests to explain the divide between the haves and the have-nots in South Africa as a one instance of the larger socio-economic and spatial divides that occur at regional, state, and international levels.

THE WESTERN CAPE AS A NORTH-SOUTH MICROCOSM

For critics, such as followers of Michel Foucault, human security is just a way to normalize states in the global South to behave in a way that is seen as acceptable and not threatening to the "dominant classes" and justifying humanitarian intervention if norms are broken (Owens, 2011, p. 3). In the international realm, the dominant class entails states in the global North whereas in the Western Cape, the dominant class consists of the mostly white, the socio-politically and economically privileged of society (prosperous core). The Western Cape very clearly plays out this North-South microcosm where the "superfluous" (Baumen, 2004) of society (informal and township dwellers/solidaric disaffiliated) must be disciplined to act in ways that do not threaten the upper-classes (i.e., voting instead of protesting). The achievement of human rights for the "superfluous" of society is secondary to the comfort of the wealthy. This North-South microcosm is something that creates a bigger divide between already fractured wealthy and impoverished communities. Following protests, the prosperous core takes advantage of the opportunity to condemn and delegitimize these protests for their violence. They refer to their comfortable means of resolving issues through their ethnocentric lens of bureaucratic access and political practices, as if these are equally accessible to all who live under the same democratic system. This is flatly out of touch with the very different lived experiences in the solidaric disaffiliated zones. One article counters this faulty assumption by explaining that the local government has shut down all other avenues for social dialogue so then:

> How else are people to communicate their desperate needs? How many marches against apartheid had violent elements to it? …Nobody allows that to detract from the importance of the Mandela event and the legitimacy of the people gathered. Don't criminalise [*sic*] poor people for raising their desperate circumstances and pleas for help for very basic needs. (Ehrenreich, 2013)

The Western Cape as a case site demonstrates how this criticism of the human security framework comes to life where the human security framework is criticized as being a tool to impose Northern interests and norms onto the South (Owens, 2011). The microcosm reveals a means of social control where those in the solidaric disaffiliated zone are allowed to demand their rights and dignity be respected, but only in a way that doesn't provide discomfort to the prosperous core. They must be put in a box and understand how to "properly" protest for their rights.

TRANSCENDING BARRIERS, CAUSING DISCOMFORT

The way the solidaric disaffiliated protest draws criticism from the prosperous core as the barriers created by geographic segregation limit the ability for the people from the core to empathize with and see the reality of what it is like to live without access to basic human rights. This was exemplified through the "poo protests" and other such protests during the sanitary crisis where issues brought to the forefront during public protests only impacted the impoverished in society. In this sense, the Western Cape portrays a North-South microcosm where the inequitable distribution of wealth and services in society creates invisible divides where the "South" are seen as a threat to the "North;" a threat that must be controlled. These types of protest are typically brought to public areas in an attempt to force more visibility and break these invisible divides. In that sense, the shift of protest location is an additional act of human agency and performance of human security norms/values where protesters transcend these spaces. Protest actions are therefore breaking physical and social barriers in their pursuit of human rights. Just like in other cases of human action (i.e., migration across borders) this makes people uncomfortable. This discomfort, however, is what protesters want to be able to achieve their desired outcomes—a true expression of human agency driven by frustration of socio-political voicelessness.

Arendt (2019) describes the "space of appearance" as the area in which people come together in the manner of speech and action. She regards speech and action as "the highest activities in the political realm" (Arendt, 2019, p. 236). This is important in her context for understanding the "where" and "why" of political action for which people seek to be seen and heard by others. We can see this dynamic in the case of water and sanitation related protests in the Western Cape as people take protests to public spaces within the urban center and transcend barriers to create a "space of appearance" and use that to optimize their "political action" in hopes of forming a new solidarity by making their plight public. These, Arendt (2019) suggests, are the only way for margainlized peoples to achieve human rights and dignity and be heard. She meant by this that the only way to achieve change is by doing something about it, but the theory serves to understand how resource deprivation in geographically segregated areas manifests as social conflict and protest in plain, uncomfortable view of the prosperous core.

Yet, it is not enough to just act, but to act in a shared public space (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013; Isaac, 1996; Lorey, 2015). Therefore, protests are often taken to public spheres such as the parliamentary steps, the side of the highway, or in the city center. These protests would not be effective in the far away, hard-to-reach, and isolated informal settlements and townships; however, when protests are taken to public areas, they gain attention from a more diverse, possibly influential, audience. This is something protesters are very aware of as one article explains:

> It is easy to understand why they would take their [housing] protest to the city centre, right into the heart of a "Mother City" which must seem like anything but a mother to them. This is one way to bring their plight to the attention of the more fortunate residents of Cape Town - and, of course, to that of the authorities. ("City mayhem," 2013)

In acknowledging that solidaric disaffiliated residents may not, themselves in their spatially marginalized neighborhoods, have the ability to influence policy, they also demonstrate human

agency and their ability to relocate that struggle into the view of "more fortunate residents" and "the authorities." This is a critical enactment of their human security in mobilizing communities to demand respect for their dignity and human rights (Edwards & Ferstman, 2010; O'Brien & Barnett, 2013). The intentional public display through the geographic relocation of protests is a performance that brings both discomfort to those from whom they are often hidden in the margins, as well as voice to their injustices in the public arena. Butler and Athanasiou (2013) as feminist scholars here would emphasize that this performance enacts "the personal is political" but also, the importance of "body politic" where collective individuals present themselves despite their attempted erasure with one single message. Arendt (2019) would say that this is the only way of achieving social change.

However, these actions are often not well-received by the prosperous core in the Western Cape. In my data, coverage of protests are followed by reactions of discomfort and disdain from the prosperous core, condemning the actions protesters have taken. These sentiments come to the surface in editorial pieces where locals express that:

> The protesters do have better avenues available to them such as the ballot box, petitions or by lodging complaints with our chapter nine institutions. Resort to violent protest ought not to be necessary in a responsive and accountable constitutional democracy in which participative norms apply and political decision-making is directed towards achieving that elusive better life for all. (Hoffman, 2014b)

The fact that the author believes that "lodging complaints" is something that residents have not tried, and that these matters can be settled politically, illustrates the disparate and deeply inequitable ways that different communities experience the same democratic system. The author fails to recognize that solidaric disaffiliated populations have lost all faith in any political action other than public protest. Protesters have explained repeatedly that, "when we protest in a quieter way, we are ignored" ("Anger over hospital jobs turns violent," 2012). Unsurprisingly, protest

events are much more numerous around election time, in an attempt to highlight promises that have gone unfulfilled since the previous election ("Lessons must be learnt," 2019). What shines through in this narrative is that those in informal settlements—predominantly black and colored communities—do not protest for their rights in the way that the prosperous core sees best fit, reflective of the common criticism that the human security perspective reinforces Northern norms and agendas, further instilling the North-South divide.

Protests are enacted with the intentions of influencing the government to rectify the wrongdoings left behind by the apartheid-era regime and spatial planning. Public and community action through protest is used as a tool to bring an issue to the public in hopes of building a stronger solidarity base, and/or to grab the attention of public officials. A protest does not have to be organized in nature to be accepted as legitimate. Rather, their collective nature illustrates the community's refusal to become disposable (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013). This strongly follows the argument of many established scholars (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013; Isaac, 1996; Lorey, 2015) where precariousness is seen as a tool that ignites social change. While governments are able to create precarious situations by expelling the "outcasts" of society to the fringes (Baumen, 2004; Sassen, 2014), they do so failing to realize the potential for societies to unite under the single factor of shared preciousness: an innate human condition that exposes vulnerability (Lorey, 2015). To properly understand what pits communities against each other in these instances, we have to begin to understand the political structures that must ultimately be held accountable for creating these social dynamics.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I drew upon evidence provided by my data from the *Cape Times* newspaper that illustrates the ways in which communities use their extreme desire to have their

human rights respected as a motive for public protests. Solidaric disaffiliated communities have time and time again come together in solidarity to defend their human rights and demand that the government officials provide adequate access to services in recognition of these rights. In my scholarly opinion, Arendt's ideas of political action and the necessity for a public display of action legitimatize these community protests, regardless of whether they are violent or nonviolent. The repetitive public display of action is important because it brings issues to the forefront that would otherwise go unnoticed by other communities. Theoretically, discomfort is a necessary process for bringing to light issues from the periphery of expulsion to the center of society—the center that has a privileged access to voice, to government, to change. The most notable instance of discomfort being brought to the forefront in my data collection happened on June 25, 2013, when "poo-protesters" dumped feces at the international airport. The protesters' motive was to "send out a message to the UN" ("ANC members arrested for dumping human waste at Cape Town airport," 2013) about the health risks caused by unsanitary conditions in geographically segregated areas. The importance of location here is not just bringing sanitation issues to the prosperous core within your own province, or to the local/national government within your state, but to the *international* community at an *international* place of transport. This particular event is what would spark the "poo protests" and "toilet wars" movement. This protest event shows how the public display of action uses the creation of discomfort as a means to shape public perception and hopefully ultimately result in social and political change.

If people in informal settlements protested inside of their informal settlements, hardly anyone would see besides their fellow community members—who already understand their cause and complaints—because they are situated in out-of-sight places, purposefully spatially removed from the eyes of the urban dominant class. I argue that this public display of action and

the social ruptures that stem from it—detaching groups and social division—recreates the dynamics observed in global inequities of the North vs. South, Developed vs. Underdeveloped microcosm created inside the Western Cape. This is to say that the Western Cape reflects global North and global South relationships where the prosperous core tries to force the solidaric disaffiliated into a box and make them behave in a way that is perceived to be appropriate by the upper classes. Social schism as seen through stark inequality and social divisions is ultimately produced by government failures and neglect which have caused unnecessary continued suffering for the geographically, socially, and economically segregated.

While this provides context on how water acts as a motivator for social conflict events, particularly in relation to human rights, this does not explain how environmental stressors such as drought influence protests about water. To understand the entire story of how water scarcity motivates social conflict events, the next chapter describes an analysis of protests specifically in relation to the Day Zero drought and other situations where there is an environmental threat to natural water resources that impact the entire population of the Western Cape, regardless of socio-economic difference. This additional analysis provides another lens to understand the link between water scarcity and social conflict with the common link being solidarity and the obligation to uphold human rights.

FORCED EMPATHY IN TIMES OF ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

"On a much larger scale, this exceptional combination of empathy and tolerance has

helped Capetonians in finding their way out of the water crisis."

("What sets Cape Town apart is the people," 2018)

Environmental crises and climate change are indiscriminate forces. They cross borders
and terrains, impacting anyone and anything in their path regardless of race, age, sex, or social
class. The Day Zero drought in the Western Cape is no exception to this phenomenon, where a
prolonged period of lower-than-average rainfall led to extreme water shortages across the
province (Archer et al., 2019). Whereas the ongoing water and sanitation crisis only affects the
solidaric disaffiliated,[3] the three-year drought impacted the entire population of the Western
Cape, irrespective of their social status or identity. The climate-induced water crisis caused the
government to call upon the population as whole to reduce water usage through various
conservation methods, such as social pressure, increased water tariffs, and other residential water
use restrictions (Robins, 2019). Restrictions were more impactful on the prosperous core[4] since
the solidaric disaffiliated were already living at or below 50 liters of water per person per day
(United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010). During the water crisis, the
government attempted to limit the entire population to this level of water usage under Level 6B
water restrictions (Robins, 2019)—the level of restriction right before the taps would be cut off
(Level 7). In this chapter, I will describe how the Day Zero drought in Cape Town increased
visibility about the poor water conditions and infrastructure for the solidaric disaffiliated by

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[3] In this thesis, I refer to residents in informal settlements and townships as the "solidaric disaffiliated."
[4] In this thesis, I refer to the majority white, well off, middle-class as the "prosperous core."

forcing the prosperous core down to a water consumption level they were not comfortable with: township levels. I will use my data to illustrate how this discomfort would go on to cause the prosperous core to act "in solidarity" with their impoverished Capetonian neighbors, transforming the "space of appearance" (Arendt, 2019), in an effort to make their way out of the Day Zero water crisis. While I narrowly focus on the Western Cape during the Day Zero water crisis, in a world of intensifying environmental instability, natural disasters, and extreme weather, the phenomenon of collective action in the face of the water crisis is further extensible to the increasing number of climate-induced crises around the world that threaten collective natural resources.

THE HYPOCRITICAL NATURE OF PROTEST

The only obvious difference between the protests in the previous chapter and the protests discussed in this chapter is the composition of those involved, where one group is seen as being easily disposable and easily silenced (informal settlement and township residents), while the other has a greater political influence and voice (affluent middle- and upper-class communities). This narrative reflects the dynamics that Castel (2000) describes as the four zones of social life: integrated, vulnerable, assisted, and disaffiliated. The affluent majority white population represents the "integrated" zone or what I refer to as the "prosperous core," being socially and economically integrated into society, and the informal settlements and townships represent the "disaffiliated" zone or what I refer to as the "solidaric disaffiliated," not economically or socially integrated into society. In the previous chapter, the protests I analyzed were mainly comprised of those in the fourth zone—disaffiliated—lacking employment and social networks to provide stability and support. Yet, the latter part of this statement is not completely true because informal communities *do* have social connections and support systems within their communities where

they rely on their fellow community members to show up to protests and join in the collective action to demand human rights be upheld. An interview with a local stakeholder in the Khayelitsha township in Cape Town expressed this dependence on solidarity during an interview I facilitated by asking, "How do we survive? We survive as a community" (interview, Khayelitsha Peacebuilding Team, 16 December 2020). Through this statement, we see that the solidaric disaffiliated are reliant upon their existing social networks within their community to maintain their livelihoods and protect precarious resources, like water and sanitation. What makes these social networks different from those of the prosperous core is that they are comprised of fellow "disaffiliated" people that are largely voiceless and generally ignored by those in charge. Environmental protests show a different social dynamic where solidaric disaffiliated voices are strengthened by the participation of prosperous core voices that have a greater influence in shaping political outcomes.

The protests for water and sanitation described in the previous chapter differ from the drought protests in a number of significant ways. First, as described previously, the prosperous core perceived the water and sanitation protests to be rowdy and unnecessarily violent. They characterized protesters as not following societal and political norms, and as being unlawful, ungrateful, and illegitimate. Second, these protests moved from the periphery into shared spaces, leading to discomfort by the unaffected population who had difficulty understanding and empathizing with the living conditions of the solidaric disaffiliated. During the drought, these same spaces were occupied by a more diverse collective, who inherently viewed this process as more "valid" and a legitimate complaint against government. This signifies a transformation of the "space of appearance" where issues are seen and heard by others to represent a collaborative rather than divisive space (Arendt, 2019). I will compare these two phenomena to emphasize the

hypocrisy of this topic of protest (drought) as being more valid than water and sanitation protests carried out by the solidaric disaffiliated.

"MANAGEMENT MUST GO, FOR THE WATER TO FLOW!"

Governmental restrictions of residential water usage during the drought forced the prosperous core down to informal settlement and township levels of water consumption (around 50 liters per person per day), making them realize their vulnerability to what Lorey (2015) describes as their "innate human precariousness." While affluent residents could still afford to drill boreholes in their yards and purchase water in bulk, water restrictions cased discomfort to their daily standard of life; at times, even the affluent would find themselves standing in line at communal taps to collect water (Robins, 2019). During the protests discussed in the previous chapter, the prosperous core was unable to relate to the solidaric disaffiliated and their plight of insufficient access to water and sanitation services. Further, the prosperous core was unable to understand that the government had failed and neglected these communities, as illustrated in editorials where affluent members of society made comments such as:

> Cape Town however has a different problem - not an oversupply of horses, but an influx and overpopulation of relatively destitute people looking for work/ housing/ services. What miracle might come to relieve Cape Town's plight is difficult to foresee. Given the difficulties associated with servicing the influx of opportunity-seekers coming here, I think that it is highly commendable what the City of Cape Town is doing under the governance of the DA, despite the onslaught of criticism by those who believe that those without the luxury of flushing toilets should just be entitled to them. (Wale, 2014)

The Constantia resident (a rich coastal suburb) here defends the government saying that their work with regard to toilets and sanitation services for these communities is "commendable." Comparing this statement to the experiences of the solidaric disaffiliated described in the last chapter, we observe a clear disconnect between what the prosperous core perceives to be transpiring in these communities and reality. "Commendable," I believe, would be one of the last

words someone would use to describe the government neglect of water and sanitation access for

the solidaric disaffiliated, as described in the previous chapter. Furthermore, the Constantia

resident refers to the people in informal settlements as "destitute," raising sentiments of

inferiority. However, not all people who live in geographically segregated areas are poor. They

all suffer from poor infrastructure and governance, but are not all "destitute," so this statement

also represents an overgeneralization of the experience of the distant "other."

While disparities and misunderstandings exist between the solidaric disaffiliated and the

prosperous core, the water crisis forced a level of discomfort that broke down these geographical,

socio-political, and economic divides. Evidence from my newspaper corpus supports this

argument. As an instance of Day Zero bridging some of the community divides, a Water Crisis

Coalition (WCC) formed in response to unilateral government failures to address the drought and

its impacts. In a statement from a committee member for the WCC, the *Cape Times* describes

their complaints:

> The city failed to upgrade old infrastructure in areas like Langa and Bonteheuwel. There
> are 3,200 pipes burst every year. The City and other levels of government neglected the
> canals feeding Voelvlei Dam. The 2016 blockages resulted in a loss of 7.5 billion litres
> [*sic*] of water, three weeks' supply to the City. They are drilling the aquifers without a
> recharge plan. ("Water Crisis Coalition protest against clueless City's Day Zero plans,"
> 2018)

Comprised of members from rich suburbs, geographically segregated areas, and various NGOs

(Robins, 2019; "Water Crisis Coalition protest against clueless City's Day Zero plans," 2018), the

protest was orchestrated in a visible place—the Cape Town Civic Center (municipal

headquarters)—and directly addressed government neglect of water infrastructure as a cause for

the critical shortages experienced during the drought. The article goes on to explain other failures

at the hands of the government such as that "100 million liters" of water per day are lost through

leaks and that the water management devices the government has installed to "fix" leaks also

leak and drain already limited water supplies. As critical water shortages impacted everyone,

various communities stood together in solidarity against governmental mismanagement which

poses a threat to their water rights and causes precariousness. The WCC also represents an

organized resistance led by diverse communities in response to water scarcity and insecurity:

> The installation of these devices does not fix any leaks. Many of the so-called water management devices (WMD) are themselves leaking. When the WMD is installed the water is not turned off so there is further wastage. Many of the devices tend to pop the pipe leading to it, causing even more water loss. The contractor delays fixing, from a few hours to several days. So many of these devices are defective that several hundred thousand of them have had to be replaced, multiple times. Thus, aggressive installation of devices is not saving water; they are bleeding our water supplies dry as well as emptying our financial coffers. ("Water Crisis Coalition protest against clueless City's Day Zero plans," 2018)

In this particular instance, failed government planning has resulted in a universal discomfort

across Cape Town's geography, social classes, political parties, and economic strata as protesters

criticize the government for "targeting the masses" ("Water Crisis Coalition protest against

clueless City's Day Zero plans," 2018) through their implementation of residential water

restrictions. The entire article and protest was an open critique of government (mis)management

of the water crisis as protesters took to the streets chanting, "Management must go, for the water

to flow" ("Water Crisis Coalition protest against clueless City's Day Zero plans," 2018)! Failed

government planning and crisis mismanagement caused feelings of distrust as protesters believed

that the water crisis was being used as "a cover for the privatisation [*sic*] of water resources"

("Water Crisis Coalition protest against clueless City's Day Zero plans," 2018). Governmental

failures to upgrade valuable water infrastructure has transcended preexisting invisible boundaries

where the prosperous core was forced to feel the discomfort of living with inadequate water and

sanitation supplies as residential water restrictions forced families across the province to go

without water to clean, drink, or flush the toilet throughout the day. We can see through both

types of protest that the government is the primary target of protest action because of their failure to address community needs. Figure 12 shows that majority of protests in the Western Cape are directed toward government officials both during drought and non-drought years. From this, it can be understood that the population is disillusioned by their government and unimpressed by government solutions to the population's problems.

Percent of Protests Directed Toward Government Entities

Percent of protests for pre-, during, and post-drought years directed toward government entities as determined by the "Target" variable in the dataset.

Pre-Drought	69
Drought	71
Post-Drought	74

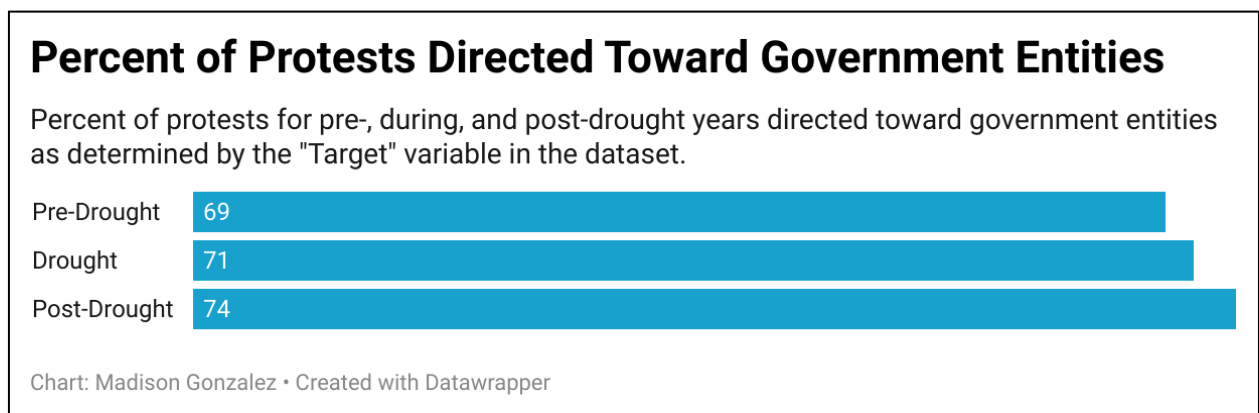Chart: Madison Gonzalez • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 13. Protest Target

The WCC exposes two hypocrisies that play out through complaints about (1) not being able to flush the toilet and (2) chants that the government "management must go" ("Water Crisis Coalition protest against clueless City's Day Zero plans," 2018). The most obvious is my first point: sanitary conditions as a trigger for protests. It is remarkable that simply being encouraged not to flush the toilet in an "if it's yellow let it mellow, if it's brown flush it down" fashion motivated the prosperous core to protest. Just a few years earlier during the "poo wars," they could not relate with the plight of the solidaric disaffiliated protesting against the sanitary crisis in their communities. During the sanitary crisis, protesters expressed grievances that bucket

toilets were in deplorable condition (Koyana, 2013), toilets were not properly cleaned by city management as they were supposed to (Legassick, 2012), and toilets frequently overflowed into houses causing serious health risks (Cronje, 2013). One would think that the conditions during the sanitary crisis are worse than not flushing your toilet every once in a while, deeming them more legitimate. However, this was not the case.

To add to this, community protests in the informal settlements over water and sanitation did not stop during the water crisis. What is different is that those protests, even when peaceful, were still met with police violence and repression ("Stun grenade to clear protesters 'like apartheid'," 2019). Despite knowing that their protests would potentially be met with repression and violence, communities found strength in their solidarity, utilizing it as a tool to demand water security (Gervais & Estevez, 2011). And still, despite many years of protesting water and sanitation in geographically segregated areas, there has been little change in the living conditions for those communities. The water crisis protests observed, on the other hand, were never met with repression or extreme force. Instead, government and political figures engaged in public debates to discuss what strategies were needed to put an end to the water crisis (Robins, 2019). Rather than completely shutting down protesters and deeming them illegitimate, they participated in open conversation with their critics.

And to my second point: chants to dispose of current government management by the prosperous core contradicts their delegitimization of protests by the solidaric disaffiliated which they described as an attempt at "ungovernability." In informal settlement protests, protesters demanded that the government respect their right to adequate access to water and sanitation and provide them with these services. Through the human security perspective, the human is the ultimate referent object of security and the state is the provider of security (Kaldor, 2007). In the

case of South Africa, where the state is an *unreliable* provider of security, individuals use their human agency through protest in an attempt to hold governmental agencies accountable. And yet, these protests were described as ploys to make the province "ungovernable" and were constantly delegitimized by both politicians and the general public. The open critiques and complaints to the government were not well-received by the prosperous core as they saw these actions as disrespectful and that the residents should have been grateful for the services the government did provide, made possible by affluent taxpayers' money (Reitz, 2014). However, now we see in this example of the WCC protest participants chanting that the only way out of the water crisis is to change city management (government). In the first instance (informal settlement protests over sanitation), government officials and the prosperous core openly accused these protests of being attempts at an ungovernability campaign. This is in contrast to government officials engaging in public debate following water crisis protests, opening the floor for public political discourse.

DISCOMFORT UNITES: SHARED PRECARIOUSNESS

As I argued in the previous chapter, water *does* influence the onset of social conflict events. But, during the water crisis, protests took on a different shape and nature compared to the social conflict events in the previous chapter. The very first article in my dataset mentioning the water crisis expressed concerns that the "water supply will become critical early in the new year. One can only begin to imagine the looming civil unrest and disruption to business and everyday life" (Hillyard, 2017). This article went on to condemn those who continued to misuse scarce water resources for gardening, using the dishwasher, and for pools. This is very clearly directed at the wealthier in society considering that impoverished communities cannot afford luxuries such as dishwashers, pools, and gardening. This article and existing literature have predicted

impending violence due to water scarcity, but I will explain here how, in Cape Town, civil unrest was not the inevitable outcome of the crisis.

In the instances where protests were directly related to the water crisis, my data showed that these protests were more structured and organized in nature and did not turn violent. The only difference I noted in my data was that, in these drought-related water crisis protests, there was representation from all walks of life in Cape Town. For example, the WCC protest touted that they had representation from over 60 organizations and residents "from Tafelsig to Table View, Khayelitsha to Hout Bay" ("Water Crisis Coalition protest against clueless City's Day Zero plans," 2018). That is to say, representation from two solidaric disaffiliated areas (Tafelsig and Khayelitsha), and from two prosperous core areas (Table View and Hout Bay). This diversity of representation in protest stands in stark contrast to those of the water and sanitation protests from the previous chapter. The evolution of representation and the space of appearance signifies why it is so important that people who actually have a say in how their communities are governed (the prosperous core) are finally taking a stand. Public participation from affluent communities in protests makes a difference because, in the South African case, they do not feel the need to turn to violence because their voices have always been heard when it comes to governmental and political decision making. They do not feel the need to take extreme measures.

What is even more interesting about these protests is that affluent communities have finally shown empathy for the poor conditions that solidaric disaffiliated residents have been living in, shown through their solidarity in protest. We see this in the WCC protest where a member describes that: "Families are compelled to get up at 4am to wash and try to finish their basic activities. This has been going on for years. Now the suffering is more widespread" ("Water Crisis Coalition protest against clueless City's Day Zero plans," 2018). This discomfort

to the point of suffering has indeed been going on for years, decades, even centuries in solidaric disaffiliated zones, but this discomfort has never touched the prosperous core until the onset of the water crisis. Community suffering did not matter to them during the sanitation crisis because it did not impact their comfortable lifestyle. But now that suffering and precariousness has touched and caused discomfort in their community, they feel the need to protest. This shows what makes environmentally related protests so different and important to study as they cause universal discomfort and a universal experience of precariousness leading to experiences of universal solidarity.

Human (in)security in solidaric disaffiliated zones was not enough to draw other communities in to join and support their plight because it was community specific. Geographical segregation has caused these issues to be largely ignored, undeserving of broader support from those with a political voice and reinforcing aspects of a functional segregation. The solidaric disaffiliated have no voice because they are marginalized, leaving them reliant upon the voices of others, as is the case in drought protests. The water crisis would (temporarily) change community dynamics and level the playing field, impacting all members of society and igniting solidarity against a shared threat. The "space of appearance" (Arendt, 2019) transformed to represent a diverse collective of people speaking in one unified voice, communicating and expressing shared, common demands in a shared space. The "space of appearance" (Arendt, 2019) and the discomfort it creates in this instance no longer divides and pits societies against each other but unites them. The temporariness of this "universal solidarity" conveys to temporariness of the newly created space of appearance. This leaves the solidaric disaffiliated in a vulnerable position where, following the end of the Day Zero drought, water and sanitation protests in the solidaric disaffiliated zones persist without recognition and appropriate

infrastructure investment. Their reliance on prosperous core voices further entrenches marginalization and human insecurity.

COMMUNITY: FOR ALL CAPETONIANS

Protests about the water crisis evolved to be representative of all parts of society: wealthy, impoverished, NGOs, and intellectuals alike (Daniels, 2018; Robins, 2019; "Water Crisis Coalition protest against clueless City's Day Zero plans," 2018). The flattening across race and class caused by universal discomfort led to a sense of unity and solidarity. In a time where the social conflict and climate conflict literature would have predicted violent conflict (Döring, 2020; Fjelde & Von Uexkull, 2012), Cape Town showed the opposite where their "exceptional combination of empathy and tolerance [has] helped Capetonians in finding their way out of the water crisis" ("What sets Cape Town apart is the people," 2018). This sense of community and shared struggle in an effort to get out of the water crisis is also reflected in an interview conducted with a legal NGO that works on a number of cases regarding discrimination and human rights in South Africa. The director shared reflections about Capetonians' solidarity in the face of massive crises,

> In the Western Cape, fortunately enough, maybe it's not the right word, but even when we were at a crisis level, even now with this Corona crisis, when you're in a crisis level, you know, people tend to forget the politics and then band together to make sure number one that, you know, that everybody's on the same page in conserving the limited water resources that you have. So that was I think that's the positive around it was there wasn't any competition for water resources amongst different class groups or different nationalities. (Interview, Legal Resources Center, 12 March 2020)

These narratives suggest that the water crisis had no influence in fueling tensions between different racial or even class groups. In contrast to protest events described in the first data chapter that created a social divide across economic strata, these protests instead represent a transformation of the "space of appearance" (Arendt, 2019) by unifying social classes as they

begin to come together as a collective to demand a response to their shared precariousness. Scientists and farming communities even came together to demand more visibility about the risks of city plans to utilize desalination techniques stating that, "We have to ensure the effluent does not have an irreversible impact on the environment and is not in contradiction to the community" (Daniels, 2018).

This protest was an effort to "create public awareness" (Daniels, 2018), reinforcing community solidarity through their demands for equitable access to knowledge and information. The protesters demanded what they regarded as their "constitutional right to information" be respected in the better interest of *all* Capetonians, acting as another example of how governmental mismanagement of the water crisis has united Capetonians through exposure to their shared precariousness. Because water is a common good, it unites populations as it impacts all. Water scarcity as explored through the lens of the Day Zero drought is but one way of understanding the potential for solidarity stemming from environmental instability.

ENVIRONMENTALLY MOTIVATED PROTESTS

Environmentally motivated protests more broadly (outside of the Day Zero drought) in Cape Town tended to use language that evokes a sense of community and was less divisive in its rhetoric. In my data, protesters explained that they are protesting because environmental issues are an issue "for *all* [emphasis added] Capetonians" (Maregele, 2012). In another protest highlighting the negative impact fracking has on the environment and community, protesters stated, "We're bringing poor people into traditionally white areas to show that *we all stand together* [emphasis added] in the fight against fracking" (Samodien, 2012). And in another instance where protesters marched against the negative impact mining has on the environment, humans, and animals, protesters stated that their objective was to "ensure that natural resources

work for *all* [emphasis added] the people" (Adriaanse, 2016). In these three separate incidents, the language protesters used evokes a sense of community across all segments of society in an effort to protect their collective right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being, as guaranteed in the constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Part of this unity is found in the fact that South Africans are generally proud of their environment and want it to be protected. Capetonians are especially proud of their environment which draws in large amounts of tourists, stimulating their economy. There is evidence in my data showing this relationship where protesters state that they, "stand to protect all the beautiful things in nature given to us" and further state that, "we can't allow our mountain to be defaced" (Maregele, 2012). This is further supported in an interview with a project manager in the city of Cape Town who worked to manage the water crisis where he explained,

> The City of Cape Town is one of the very few cities within the world that's got blue drop status, and which means that the water that we drink from our taps is much cleaner than the water that is normally getting bottled across some of our industries and something that we are very proud of and that we don't want to lose. *(Interview, City of Cape Town Water Crisis Management, 29 January 2021)*

His notion that water quality is something residents of Cape Town are "very proud of" reiterates the social identity tied to the area's natural resources. This is a collective identity just as it is a collective good, and therefore worth fighting for together. This further helps explain why citizens were so skeptical of using desalination techniques during the water crisis and protested against those proposed methods to increase the water supply. Desalination was regarded as "untrustworthy" as the population understood it to have potential health threats as compared to their "blue drop" standard tap water (Daniels, 2018; Robins, 2019).

Despite their differences, we can see that the government was the common enemy in both types of protest. Government development projects have drawn criticism as they have threatened one of the largest aquifers in Cape Town where protesters described that:

> The consequences, the opponents say, will threaten the livelihoods of emerging farmers and their workers, as well as local food security, and seriously damage an aquifer which stretches for about 630km^2 and provides water to local farms. (Isaacs, 2016)

With participation from over 25 organizations, protesters demanded a resolution to what they perceived as a "violation of national legislation and a blatant violation of [our] rights as the community affected" (Isaacs, 2016). This is only one of many protests where the government was accused of putting business interests before that of the greater society. In another environmental protest, the government was accused of being in collusion with corporate greed which was described as "raping our environment and impoverishing our people" (Lankers-Byrne, 2012). These accusations come as no surprise as the South African government is frequently accused of corruption, resulting in citizen distrust. Despite the stark differences that are easy to point out amongst the two different protests discussed, we can see that they are united in their fight against a common enemy: the government. Unity is embodied in the fight against government failures to uphold rights directly guaranteed within the state's constitution: water, sanitation, and environmental protection. My novel variable "Path to Conflict" captures this relationship where 91.5% of protests have an indirect path to conflict in relation to water (Figure 13). The indirect path is most frequently understood to occur as a result of government failures the sudden insecurities felt by citizens because of water insecurity (Koren et al., 2021).
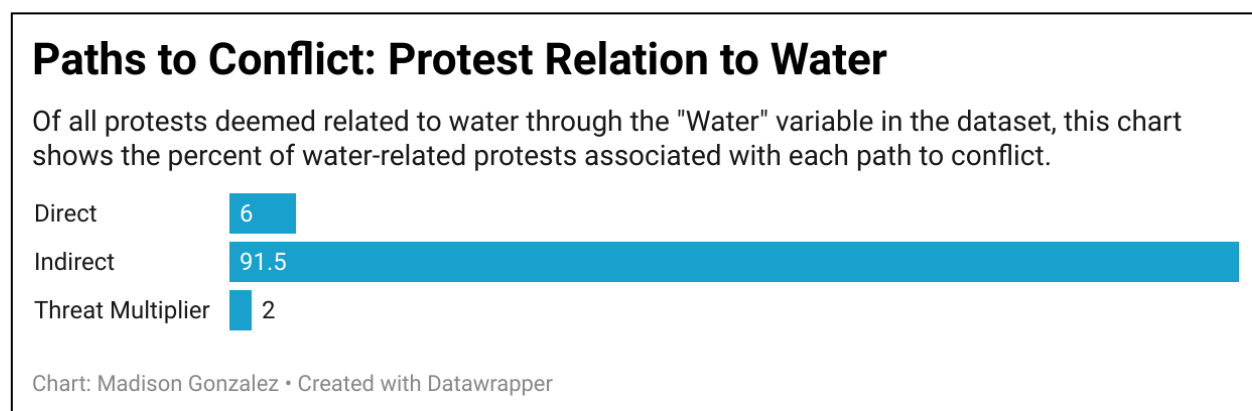
Paths to Conflict: Protest Relation to Water

Of all protests deemed related to water through the "Water" variable in the dataset, this chart shows the percent of water-related protests associated with each path to conflict.

Direct	6
Indirect	91.5
Threat Multiplier	2

Chart: Madison Gonzalez • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 14. Path to Conflict Variable

However, this is not to overshadow the phenomenon of solidarity in situations of water insecurity. The water crisis acted as a threat to a global collective good that generated solidarity of a region, as compared to a local collective goods crisis that was geographically, socio-politically, and economically limited and therefore only gathered a small number of people into solidarity and even empathy. Before the water crisis, water and sanitary issues only acted as a uniting factor for poor and vulnerable communities, further distancing them from the prosperous core through perceived violations of social and political norms; but the water crisis revealed the vulnerabilities existing within all communities and individuals across the Western Cape. These differences in who is affected reflects how divisive or unifying a similar situation can be. This is extensible to regional or even international situations where increasingly hostile climate events act as threat to social, political, and state stability.

The water crisis exposed the prosperous core to their shared precariousness (Lorey, 2015), igniting protests that reflected a more expansive subset of society. The phenomenon of solidarity was enough to pull Cape Town out of the worst drought they had ever experienced and has changed how water continues to be used in the city today (interview, Water Crisis

Management, 29 January 2021). As the human security literature suggests (Gervais & Estevez, 2011; Inter Pares, 2009), solidarity has proven to be an important component for both types of protests analyzed where communities unite to protect their human rights and to navigate their way out of an environmental crisis.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I used evidence from the *Cape Times* newspaper to show how environmental protests caused the structure and nature of protests to transform and become more representative of society as a whole. During the water crisis, the prosperous core was forced to realize their own precariousness and use their active political voices to call on the government's responsibility to rectify the resulting conditions. This caused water-related protests to evolve to a new collective level, representative of all Capetonians which symbolized a new "body politic" (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013)—where people take action as a group instead of as individuals. This body politic is representative of so much more than just a protest, but rather the (temporary) transformation of a society to speak in one unified voice and overcome barriers that once separated them. The significance of this political unity goes to show the bonds of solidarity that have the potential to be formed in the face of environmental crisis when the literature predicted conflict and competition.

Water serves to highlight the aspects of human (in)security that permeate diverse lives and experiences, exposing a universality of human precarity, and inspiring collective political action. Where water-related protests were once specific to certain geographic areas, the Day Zero drought erased the invisible lines dividing communities and subjected them to a shared suffering. In that way, then, discomfort has multiple threads and evidence in the South African context. The water crisis made rich people uncomfortable, so they acted on it "in solidarity" with poor people

to avoid the day that all taps would be turned off in the city. But also, when the world is not listening (sanitation protests), the poor residents bring their protest to visible areas to *cause* discomfort and use this discomfort as a mechanism for being heard and enacting agency for change. Ultimately, discomfort is the only thing that seems to move people to action, whether it is a natural occurrence (water crisis) or a constructed one (bringing the protest to you).

While this chapter is specific to solidarity in the face of environmental crisis, there are much broader situations to which the human security framework can be applied. My analysis sheds light on how human behavior is dramatically changed during crisis situations where diverse communities seek to eliminate their exposed precariousness that has arisen from water insecurity and posed a threat to their livelihoods. The social conflict literature is insufficient to explain the role the constitutional guarantees to human rights like water and sanitation play in motivating social conflict. I have demonstrated that, in certain cases, where there are calls for the protection of human rights, solidarity and collective action happens. Solidarity has manifested not just in the form of people joining in collective protest, but in collective action and a sense of responsibility to act appropriately in their water usage to bring an end to the water crisis. However, in the case of the Day Zero drought, "solidarity" was time specific. After the water crisis and once water accessibility was no longer a prominent threat to the prosperous core, water and sanitation protests have continued in the solidaric disaffiliated zone without signs of increased empathy or participation from the politically influential prosperous core. Solidarity was fleeting, igniting a short-lived response to the global threat of climate change and ignoring the ongoing threats to geographically, socio-economically, and politically segregated communities.

CONCLUSIONS

The Western Cape of South Africa has been a hotspot for community protests for decades, resulting in a social identity shaped around citizens' propensities for protest. In a land where the government has geographically segregated and ignored the basic needs of large, marginalized populations, citizen-solidarity is a mechanism to achieve community and individual security. Water and sanitation in the Western Cape, and in the country more broadly, provides a sense of dignity to populations. Without it, people feel dehumanized, disrespected, and degraded. Anger then often boils over into a public display of protest. The solidaric disaffiliated,[5] arguably the ones most impacted by governmental neglect and the discomfort that stems from it, have been the most prominent actors in public protests where access to water and sanitation act as drivers for political action (Arendt, 2019). The Day Zero drought, however, would show that discomfort and precarity are not unique conditions to just one segment of society as water insecurity threatened the daily lives of all, irrespective of race, social class, or identity.

Being a collective common good, water is an impetus for social change as it impacts all of society. Water is a useful lens for looking at resource scarcity more broadly and other environmental challenges that create additional obstacles for individuals, communities, and nations attempting to achieve security and stability in a world of more frequent and hostile environmental crises. The Day Zero drought is but one instance that helps us understand how sudden unexpected events influence human behavior and political action. This study has made two important contributions: (1) a methodological contribution through the creation of a unique coding framework at the sub-national level to analyze social conflict events; and (2) a

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[5] In this thesis, I refer to residents in informal settlements and townships as the "solidaric disaffiliated."

contribution to the state of the art to extend theories of human agency within the human security framework to capture the complex dynamics of discomfort and the role it plays in social conflict and the political sphere. Together, I consider these a contribution to the field of international relations and the study of social conflict in an evolving world of compounded crises.

Using a qualitative analysis of local newspaper articles from the *Cape Times* newspaper over the span of nine years—before, during, and after the Day Zero drought (2012-2019)—this study examined how differing experiences of water insecurity influence instances of solidarity to motivate social change as seen through the onset of social conflict events. This thesis began by setting the stage for the reader to understand the complex social dynamics in South Africa as a whole and the Western Cape more specifically. The background chapter laid the framework for understanding the history of inequality in South Africa and other external factors (climate change) that exacerbate experiences of inequality. I then situated my research within the existing literature. I began with an overview of the climate-conflict literature, both armed violent and social conflict. While this research is focused on social conflict, an analysis of the armed violent conflict literature provided an explanation for why this type of conflict was not the subject of study. Through this review of both armed violent and social climate-conflict related literature, I filled the gaps by turning to the human security framework. Rather than focusing on conflict as a result of competition, migration, or economics, the human security framework prioritizes human rights and individual human agency, both prominent factors in the South African case. Chapter 3 then provided a methodological account for how I would capture social conflict events related to water in my dataset. The following two chapters then used an analysis of news article excerpts and interview data to compare and contrast the experiences of two types of protests with

participation from two distinctly separate segments of society that were motivated by water insecurity. I found that discomfort was a common thread between the two.

This chapter will begin by summarizing my methodological contributions and potential limitations of my unique coding framework. It will then summarize the findings of the two categories of protests discussed in the previous chapters and address how these conclusions have contributed to existing theories on human agency and action, and how they have contributed to the field of international studies in relation to social conflict. This chapter will conclude with considerations for future research directions that could add depth and support to the conclusions made in this study. My findings together contribute to an understanding of human agency, driven by solidarity. Discomfort sometimes occurs as a result of protest events and often influences the onset of protest events. I proposed that during the water crisis, discomfort was universal, which led to a universal experience of precarity and therefore universal solidarity. This process led to the inclusion of voices that actually had political weight. Because of this pathway, there was an experience far different from other protests.

METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Rather than reinventing the wheel, I have built on existing and well-established data coding methodologies for social conflict and armed-violent conflict events. By conducting a thorough review of four existing conflict databases—SCAD, ACLED, USD, and UCDP-GED—I found that the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD) structure was most closely aligned with my research interests. Despite this close alignment, there were still gaps I needed to fill to meet my unique research interests, which was to understand social conflict events on the subnational level as related to water (in)security. My methodological process had its own limitations; however, it was successful in capturing how diverse experiences of water insecurity

influenced the onset of social conflict events. My contribution is two-fold: (1) the creation of a unique search query for social conflict events, and (2) establishing a codebook for capturing social conflict events related to water.

GENERATING A SEARCH QUERY

My search query was created by combining components of a search query established by Barrett et al. (2020) in their IMF research on creating a social unrest index using media reports, and components of the *Factiva Expert Search* on civil unrest which is a pre-established search query to capture news about collective action in response to police brutality. While these established queries provided a good foundational framework for my search query, there were still adaptations I needed to make to allow the query to properly capture the data. My search query is different from those which I have built from in that I aim to capture social unrest events within a specific subnational region. This query is not only unique in the level of analysis that I utilize, but in the text string that makes up the query. I used a trial-and-error process to continuously shape and refine my search query. This process led me to include various additional "inclusive" and "exclusive" requirements and more search restrictions to limit the articles that were included in my dataset so as to not falsely increase the article count within the data collection.

I do recognize that this search query does have its own limitations. Despite my best efforts to limit duplicate articles from being included, some duplicates inevitably still showed up in my data collection. When this happened, duplicate articles were discarded, keeping only one copy of each article. Also, using this search query, some articles were included that talked about protest events in the past such as reflecting on apartheid era protests or court cases about protest events. While this provided me with useful context information, it was not necessarily useful in the data analysis process. This is a potential area of improvement for future research to limit

unnecessary articles from being collected in the corpus. Upon establishing my search criteria and creating my own search query logic, the articles that were then collected would go on to be coded in my subnational level data collection framework.

DATA COLLECTION FRAMEWORK

Through my review of four existing databases, I adapted and created a novel framework for coding social conflict events in relation to water insecurity at a subnational level of analysis. I consider this to be my contribution to the field of international relations and the study of social conflict. Figure 11 shows my direct original contributions to the existing SCAD dataset.

Table 8. Original Variables

Variable	Explanation
Issue (primary, secondary, and tertiary additions)	12= Anti-government 14= Infrastructure 17= Services
Article count	The number of articles that mention or talk about the specific event.
Path to conflict	Conflict relation to water scarcity/security: 0= None 1= Direct 2= Indirect 3= Multiplier
Solidarity	A qualitative collection of direct quotes from within articles that express sentiments relating to solidarity

My first contribution was to the variable "Issues"—primary, secondary, and tertiary. While the variable "Issues" already existed in the SCAD dataset, certain issues that I consider to be important motivators for social conflict in the South African case were not included in the dataset. These included anti-government protests, infrastructure protests, and protests related to public services. My second contribution to the SCAD dataset was the creation of an "Article Count" variable. This variable acts as a proxy to understand how important a specific protest event was as determined by the amount of media coverage it received. My third contribution was the creation of a "Path to conflict" variable, adapted from Koren et al. (2021); Martin-Shields and Stojetz (2019). This "Path to conflict" variable is the one unique variable I have that measures the relationship between social conflict and water (in)security/scarcity. Finally, I created the variable "Solidarity" which is a qualitative collection of quotes directly from the articles relating to topics of solidarity, human rights, and the human security framework that captures components of human agency. These unique additions have contributed to the creation of a dataset which captures social conflict's relation to water and human security.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Human security is conceptually powerful for individuals, particularly marginalized groups, as it turns away from traditional paradigms of security to instead focus on the individual and communities as the ultimate referent object. This framework elevates the importance of human rights, recognizing populations' shared humanity and further offering a new lens to re-think security threats. Scholars in the fields of human security (Arendt, 2019), feminist studies (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013), and international precarity studies (Castel, 2000; Lorey, 2015) have been highly influential on this research where I find that my theoretical contribution is an extension of accepted conceptualizations of human agency and the role of precarity in motivating

social change. The aforementioned theorists and scholars have found that human agency and action is the only way of achieving social change.

Arendt (2019) laid the groundwork asserting that speech and action are "the highest activities in the political realm (p. 236)" where the space of appearance is created through the public display of speech and action. Butler and Athanasiou (2013) add to this argument through their understanding of *performativity* where the assembly of various bodies in the space of appearance is more powerful than acting as an individual. This collective performance of protest represents an assembly of diverse individuals together challenging threats to their innate human precariousness. Lorey (2015) then finally adds that precariousness is the common thread which ignites social change. I then turned to Castel's (2000) four zones model to situate my actors within a simplified geographic layout of precariousness. I adapted his "disaffiliated" zone to become my "solidaric disaffiliated" zone, representing those living in townships and informal settlements. I then adapted his "integrated" zone to become my "prosperous core" zone comprised of the generally majority white, economic and political elites in society. Using the lens of performative action and precariousness created by scholars before me has allowed me to identify the role that discomfort plays in social conflict.

VARIATIONS OF DISCOMFORT

Discomfort has multiple threads and evidence as I showed through newspaper article excerpts. First, in the instance of protests by the solidaric disaffiliated as related to water and sanitation, when no one was listening to them, residents brought their protests to "rich people" in a public space of appearance to *cause* discomfort. Discomfort came from the dumping of feces on the highways, on statues, on parliamentary steps, and in the international airport. Residents had hit their breaking point, tired of being unheard, and forced the rest of society to experience

the discomfort that they are forced to live in on a daily basis as poorly maintained toilets frequently overflow into their homes. Discomfort was used as a mechanism to force others to listen and to enact agency for change. This discomfort, however, caused a greater divide to be formed between the solidaric disaffiliated and the prosperous core as the latter saw their actions as being unruly and violating social and political norms.

In the second instance of protests I discussed, the water crisis forced the prosperous core down to an *uncomfortable* level of water usage. This discomfort of water precarity motivated them to act in "solidarity" with the solidaric disaffiliated by participating in protests. The evolution of discomfort to solidarity in this instance caused the space of appearance to shift to be representative of voices that were politically influential, allowing the protesters to avoid violence as a necessary tool to be heard. Discomfort then, served to motivate previously unaffected populations to react; discomfort in both examples connected societies and encouraged them to engage in political action.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

These findings are extensible to other fields of research such as forced migration and encampment where human action causes discomfort and precarious living situations are prominent. Forced migration across borders generally causes a sense of discomfort for those in the host population; but, the discomfort of living in an underserviced refugee camp is arguably far worse. In the case of the Moria camp in Lesvos, Greece, discomfort due to precarious living conditions in camps often did boil over into a public display of protest which caused discomfort and fear for the host community. Eventually, in September 2020, residents of the Moria RIC (the prior refugee camp and detention center) would hit their breaking point of discomfort when the entire camp was burnt to the ground. However, it is hard to gauge how successful these extreme

measures of human agency are for marginalized populations in terms of policy-making or improved living situations.

Areas for future research should investigate why these mechanisms of public protests by the solidaric disaffiliated zones are not successful and if they are to become successful, when that happens. Arguably, protests become more successful when there is participation from the prosperous core. But, from this research, I have found that solidarity is quick, fleeting, and fragile, where the solidaric disaffiliated are only able to generate temporary support from the prosperous core. There is yet much to be learned about whether there is a way of generating an experience of solidarity that is not a temporary phenomenon to spur real and meaningful change, which this thesis points to but cannot answer. After the Day Zero drought, there was little continued solidarity with the solidaric disaffiliated who continue to experience those drought-era water access levels. Further, at what point are elite ideologies able to shift to support a life beyond mere subsistence for over 1 billion people around the world? Community building and integration may be a possible solution; however, decades of geographical barriers may prove to be difficult to break down. While it may prove to be difficult, this is not to suggest that this intervention would not be worthwhile to improve the lives of the disenfranchised.

Solidarity does not wholly mean being a part of a struggle that exclusively relates to you and your lifestyle. The point of solidarity is to dismantle the structures that exclude populations from processes of development and allow inequality and injustices to become a permanent feature of life for the solidaric disaffiliated, a never-ending cycle of neglected crisis. Solidaric political action will become increasingly necessary to alter political agendas as climate change indiscriminately impacts the rich and poor, even if disproportionately, across the world.

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