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Embodied Intersectionalities of Urban Citizenship: Water, Infrastructure, and Gender in the Global South

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Scholars have demonstrated that citizenship is tied to water provision in megacities of the Global South where water crises are extensive and the urban poor often do not have access to public water supplies. Drawing from critical feminist scholarship, this article argues for the importance of analyzing the connections between embodied intersectionalities of sociospatial differences (in this instance, gender, class, and migrant status) and materialities (of water and water infrastructure) and their relational effects on urban citizenship. Empirical research from the largest informal settlement in Dhaka, Bangladesh, as well as surrounding affluent neighborhoods, demonstrates that differences in water insecurity and precarity not only reinforce heightened senses of exclusion among the urban poor but affect their lived citizenship practices, community mobilizations, and intersectional claims-making to urban citizenship, recognition, and belonging through water. Spatial and temporal dimensions of materialities of water and infrastructure intersect with embodiments of gender, class, and migrant status unevenly in the urban waterscape to create differentiated urban citizens in spaces of abjection and dispossession. The article argues that an everyday embodied perspective on intersectionalities of urban citizenship enriches the scholarship on the water–citizenship nexus. *Key Words:* citizenship, embodied, infrastructure, intersectionality, urban, water.

学者的研究已经证明，在南半球的大城市中，公民身份与供水状况息息相关。这些城市中普遍存在水危机，城市中的穷人往往无法获得公共供水。本文借鉴了批判女权主义的观点，论证分析以下主题的重要性：社会空间差异所体现的交集性（在本研究案例中为性别、阶级和移民身份差异）与物质性（即水和水基础设施）之间的联系，以及它们对城市公民身份的相关影响。本文对孟加拉国达卡最大的临时棚屋区和周围的富裕社区进行了实证研究，显示出水的不安全性和不稳定性方面的差距，这些因素不仅让城市穷人感受到了更强烈的被排斥感，还影响了他们生活中的公民行为、社区动员能力，以及通过水对相交集的公民权、认可和归属感的要求。在城市水环境中，水和基础设施物质性的时空维度与具体的性别、阶级和移民身份不均匀地交织在一起，导致居住在落后和缺乏水资源的区域的城市公民被分化。本文认为，从具体化的视角观察城市公民的交际性，可以进一步丰富水资源与公民关系的科学研究。 *关键词：* 公民身份，具体化，基础设施，交叉性，城市，水。

Los académicos han demostrado que la ciudadanía está ligada al suministro de agua en las megaciudades del Sur Global, donde las crisis hídricas suelen tener dimensiones mayores y donde los pobres urbanos carecen de acceso a la oferta pública de agua. Apoyándose en la erudición feminista crítica, este artículo reivindica la importancia de analizar las conexiones que existen entre las interseccionalidades personalizadas de diferencias socioespaciales (en este caso, género, clase y estatus migratorio) y las materialidades (del agua y de la infraestructura hidrológica), y sus efectos relacionales sobre la ciudadanía urbana. La investigación empírica en los asentamientos informales más grandes de Dhaka, Bangladesh, lo mismo que en los vecindarios pudientes de los alrededores, demuestra que las diferencias en inseguridad y precariedad hídricas no solamente refuerzan entre los urbanitas pobres el sentido aguzado de exclusión, sino que afectan sus prácticas de vivencia ciudadana, movilizaciones comunitarias y los reclamos interseccionales por la reivindicación de la ciudadanía urbana, reconocimiento y pertenencia, en el contexto de los problemas del agua. Las dimensiones espaciales y temporales de las materialidades del agua y de la infraestructura se interceptan de modo desigual con las encarnaciones de género, clase y estatus migratorio en el paisaje hídrico de la ciudad, para crear ciudadanos urbanos diferenciados en espacios de mezquindad y desposeimiento. El artículo sostiene que una perspectiva cotidiana personificada en las interseccionalidades de la ciudadanía urbana enriquece la erudición sobre el nexo agua–ciudadanía. *Palabras clave:* agua, ciudadanía, encarnado, infraestructura, interseccionalidad, urbano.

Who has clean safe water, and who does not, reveals the workings of power around the world. Geographers and other social scientists have argued that citizenship is tied to water provision in the cities of the Global South where water crises are often extensive (Castro 2004, 2007, 2008; Gandy 2004; Bakker 2010; Anand 2011; Ranganathan 2014; von Schnitzler 2016). Water access separates subjects from citizens, in that those who are considered to be proper urban citizens are provided water by the state, whereas others are not. Understanding the messy realities and complexities of the water–citizenship nexus involves clarifying the inequities around water access to reveal the power relations and practices of citizenship in each context. To better understand the water–citizenship nexus, I argue, it is helpful to consider how urban citizenship is shaped by the embodied intersections of sociospatial differences (in this instance, gender, class, and migrant status) and materialities (of water and water infrastructure). In developing the argument, I draw from ethnographic research from the largest informal settlement or slum¹ in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, as well as surrounding affluent neighborhoods, to demonstrate that those without adequate clean, safe water often invoke claims to urban citizenship to demand public water services that they are otherwise denied and, in the process, negotiate and enact urban citizenship rights in spaces of abjection and dispossession. I trace the embodied intersectionalities of these realities before and after public water services started to become available in this slum to demonstrate the complexity of the unevenness at a variety of scales. After a brief introduction to the topic, I bring together scholarly literatures on urban citizenship, feminist theories, and water infrastructure to expand the water–citizen nexus. I then weave in empirical evidence to support my argument and conclude by showcasing the importance of applying an embodied intersectional framework to critically analyze urban water problems.

Water distribution is almost always contested in the megacities of the Global South, because access to formal water service and infrastructure is determined through a range of issues that are historical, political, economic, social, and legal (Bakker 2010). Water access reflects power, voice, authority, and legitimacy. Although secure public water access is shaped by multiple social relations in postcolonial cities, class status tends to dominate (Swyngedouw

2004; Kooy and Bakker 2008a; Ahlers et al. 2014; Furlong and Kooy 2017). With complex social classes inhabiting the same place, different water management practices can coexist even among households in close proximity (O’Leary 2016). In rapidly expanding megacities such as Dhaka, there are growing numbers of slums with ever-increasing numbers of urban residents who do not have access to formal water services and infrastructures, because they do not have tenure or property rights to the land on which they live. Land ownership or legal tenancy is directly tied to urban citizenship because such identities ensure being connected to the formal governance structures of the city, including the water infrastructure. Property status often becomes a mediator through which a human right to water is manifested through access to the public water system: Those with recognized property or tenancy rights have entitlements to municipal water, whereas illegal squatters (slum residents) do not have formal standing to be part of the networked water system. Dawson (2010) argued that citizenship is complicated by class relations even when all citizens have some form of water access, but in cities where proximal populations do and do not have water, such as Dhaka, water comes to symbolize social power as well as recognition and belonging to the city and the nation-state. Infrastructures that provide safe, clean water and the absence of such infrastructure thus mark spaces of difference and abjection (Lemanski 2019). Because no one can live without water, the daily struggle to source and obtain potable water becomes a signifier of poor urban residents’ precarious status in the city. Water thus plays a critical role in the urban poor’s relationship to the state and thus the daily lived experiences of urban citizenship (Rodina 2016; Rodina and Harris 2016; von Schnitzler 2016).

There are often contradictions between policy and practice in water provision. In recent years, given that the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been promoting a human right to water (Sultana and Loftus 2012, 2020; Mehta et al. 2014), it becomes imperative to investigate how such policy discourses are lived on the ground. The urban poor navigate various strategies to access water and make claims to their rights and recognition through water (Castro 2008; Bakker 2010; López 2016; Rodina 2016). For instance, in a study from South Africa, von Schnitzler (2016) argued that citizenship is performed through claims

to human dignity and humanity that water enables. In a study from India, it was found that not having access to water rendered people abject with the daily negotiations and struggles over water defining the urban poor's everyday lives and sense of place (Anand 2012). The urban poor experience the state through both its abjection (e.g., inattention to the precarity of their lives) and presence (e.g., violence through slum demolition). Suffering thus becomes a political claim in constructing citizenship and belonging (Das 2011). Through an analysis of inequitable water availability and provisions, I explore how the urban poor advance claims-making to urban citizenship, recognition, and belonging through their claims to both public legal water as well as to clean safe water as a human right.

I respond to Ahlers et al.'s (2014) call to address the "gap in the exploration of agency, gender, and embodiment" (8) in urban water scholarship. I argue that an everyday embodied perspective on the intersectional gendered and classed nature of urban citizenship in relation to materialities of water and infrastructure contributes to existing scholarship on the importance of water services to experiences of inclusion and belonging, citizenship, and state-society negotiations. Existing literatures have advanced scholarly understandings of the relationship between water and citizenship, but there is little from an intersectional feminist perspective, yet gender-water relations are important given how gender mediates access, use, control, and management of water (Cleaver and Elson 1995; O'Reilly et al. 2009). I engage with insights from feminist scholarship to nuance existing water-citizenship conceptualizations to underscore the different ways in which water access comes to inflect everyday embodied experiences of urban citizenship.

Intersectionality, as conceptualized by black and postcolonial feminist scholars, involves investigating the interlocking systems of oppression and difference in context to explain lived and embodied experiences (Mohanty 1984; Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991; Collins and Bilge 2016). In most societies, gender and class are dominant social intersectional axes, whereas in others, race, religion, caste, and other axes of difference can play important intersectional roles. In the context of Dhaka, gender, class, and migrant status are the most pressing axes of social difference and oppression.² Thus, this article adds to the work of scholars who have focused on related

issues (Truelove 2011, 2019; López 2016; Sultana, Mohanty, and Miraglia 2016; Thompson 2016; Harris et al. 2018) but further reveals how the constructions and lived experiences of urban citizenship in relation to water access are complicated by connections between intersectional sociospatial differences (e.g., gender, class, and migrant status) and materiality (e.g., the specificities of water's materiality, spatiality, temporality, and types of water infrastructure). An everyday embodied perspective on intersectionalities of urban citizenship thus enriches the scholarship on the water-citizenship nexus. I demonstrate how demands for public water become intersectional gendered claims to urban citizenship and how this is constructed and mediated. Lived experiences of water's materiality (quality, quantity, availability), spatiality (location, type of access), temporality (reliability, timing), and sourcing (legal and public or illegal source, type of infrastructure) are imbricated in this process. Thus, access to affordable, reliable, and safe public water is just not material and symbolic gain by the disenfranchised but is also a signifier of urban citizenship and belonging that is tenuous, contested, and constructed.

Enriching the Water-Citizenship Nexus

To advance the water-citizenship nexus, teasing out the differences between citizenship, urban citizenship, and gendered urban citizenship becomes necessary. Citizenship, as a concept, is lived and experienced through spaces of inclusion and exclusion and in their rights and privileges (Yuval-Davis 1997, 2011). Citizenship is performed and enacted, it is disrupted and reformulated and lived (Lister 1997; Miraftab 2006; Holston 2009; Sassen 2009; Kallio, Häkli, and Bäcklund 2015). The exclusions of citizenship reveal sites of negotiations (Sassen 2009). Citizenship is thus a contested terrain within and across states and subjects, where people contest various understandings of citizenship in their daily lives. Becoming citizens is a continual process, fraught with difficulties and tensions, and not a fixed end state. Local practices affect citizenship rights and can help form new kinds of solidarities as well as exclusions. Citizenship is thus also about claiming and belonging, rather than a status (Ho 2009; Das 2011). Citizenship claims are often central to the ways in which the poor of the Global South engage in politics that affect their lives through the claims

they make in urban spaces (Baubock 2003; Roy 2011; Peake 2016). The urban poor are often “citizens without a city” (Appadurai 2001, 27). Because notions of justice are foundational to citizenship, the urban poor are able to claim their urban citizenship, more specifically, through arguments of fairness and justice and their right to the city (Staeheli et al. 2012). They struggle over, contest, and claim urban citizenship through ordinary and everyday acts of belonging in cities (Holston and Appadurai 2008; Das 2011). This is evident in spaces of water scarcity where legal public water access becomes a signifier of recognition as a citizen and belonging to a city (Anand 2017; Lemanski 2019).

Feminist scholars have sharpened debates on citizenship by pointing out the gendered nature of citizenship, inclusion, exclusion, and belonging (Yuval-Davis 1997; McEwan 2000, 2005; Mukhopadhyay and Singh 2007; Lister 2012). Citizenship, as a set of rights and responsibilities as well as opportunities, has historically been framed as masculine, overlooking the complex and intersectional ways in which citizenship and belonging are highly gendered and embodied (Yuval-Davis 2011). In patriarchal societies, these historical practices are more evident. Gendered differences in civil, political, and social citizenship stem from differentiated access to power, voice, representation, and legitimacy (Walby 1994; Lister 1997, 2012; Yuval-Davis 1997). Exclusion of women from decision making, political power, access to resources, having a voice, and being valued is a common way in which gendered norms influence how citizenship is experienced and lived (Lister 2012).

I draw from such scholarship to bring a feminist intersectional lens to existing debates on water and citizenship in this article. Everyday embodied gendered practices of water bring the vagaries of urban citizenship (or lack thereof) into the homes and lives of slum residents. My analysis is informed by the work of feminist geographers who investigate how gender influences the way urbanization and urban spaces are experienced and lived in cities of the Global South (Peake 2016; Chant and McIlwaine 2016; Doshi 2017). Multiple interlocking factors affect urban poor women’s everyday lives, survival, health, well-being, and advancement. Such insights assist me in interrogating the intersectional ways that gender, class, and migrant status come to complicate notions and practices of urban citizenship

through people’s relationship to the materialities of water and water infrastructure. The extensive literature on gender–water relations (O’Reilly 2006; Ahlers and Zwartveen 2009; Harris 2009; O’Reilly et al. 2009; Sultana 2009, 2011; Harris et al. 2017) helps me address the gap in the broader water and citizenship literature by showcasing differentiated ways in which claims to water by the urban poor, especially poor and disenfranchised women, are tied to claims to citizenship and recognition from both the state and the city’s powerful elite.

To further enrich the water–citizenship nexus, I engage the scholarship on water infrastructure that demonstrates how technologies and infrastructures of water impact social life and processes of urbanization (Kaika and Swyngedouw 2000; Swyngedouw, Kaika, and Castro 2002; Gandy 2004, 2008; Keil 2005; Loftus 2006; Swyngedouw 2006, 2007; Kooy and Bakker 2008b; von Schnitzler 2008; Bakker 2010, 2013, 2003). Urban infrastructures are power constellations; thus, water infrastructure confers power (Kaika and Swyngedouw 2000; McFarlane and Rutherford 2008; Cornwall, Robins, and von Lieres 2011; Larkin 2013; Ranganathan 2014; Radonic and Kelly-Richards 2015; Anand 2017; Anand, Gupta, and Appel 2018). State–citizen relations are increasingly being mediated through technology and infrastructure that are part of water services delivery (Björkman 2015). Anand (2011) thus proposed the concept of *hydraulic citizenship*, defined as

a form of belonging to the city enabled by social and material claims made to the city’s water infrastructure. Produced in a field that is social and physical, hydraulic citizenship is born out of diverse articulations between the technologies of politics (enabled by laws, politicians, and patrons) and the politics of technology (enabled by plumbing, pipes, and pumps). (545)

Similarly, Shelton (2017) and Lemanski proposed the concept of *infrastructural citizenship* as citizenship is “frequently mediated through the materiality of public infrastructure” (Lemanski 2019, 8). Indeed, the vital materialities of both water and water infrastructure and their roles in urban citizenship claims are teased out in my analysis (cf. de Laet and Mol 2000; Bennett 2010). The urban poor in the many slums of rapidly expanding megacities of the Global South often argue that formal water services and the physical infrastructures that enable water flow confer a semblance of recognition from the state of their

rights as citizens. Claims to public water provision are thus both about citizenship as a form of recognition as well as claims to the material benefits that flow to citizens (Dawson 2010; Ranganathan 2014; López 2016; Lemanski 2019). Water infrastructure can also have other impacts, though. For instance, some scholars have argued that with the adoption of prepaid water meters, citizens become consumers and thus their status as rights-bearing subjects becomes precluded (Allen, Dávila, and Hofmann 2006; Loftus 2006; von Schnitzler 2008; Furlong 2011, 2013; Anand 2017). Ranganathan (2014) argued, however, that when the urban poor pay for piped water it is not simply an expression of consumeristic subjectivity but a claim for symbolic recognition, fostering political subjectivity to negotiate for other rights, such as to land.

As Kabeer (2006) argued, perspectives of people themselves in what citizenship means to them can offer insights into how they make claims and why. Taking such an approach, a more complex understanding of the lived experiences and constructions of urban citizenship becomes possible. Heeding the multifaceted intersections of social differences and the materialities of water and infrastructure reveals more clearly the constructions and enactments of urban citizenship and thereby offers an intersectionally embodied conceptualization of the water–citizenship nexus, which I undertake in the remainder of the article.

The Context

Empirical research that informs this article comes from Korail slum, the largest informal settlement in the heart of Dhaka, as well as from the affluent formal neighborhoods that encircle it, namely, Banani and Gulshan. Among Dhaka's approximately 19 million inhabitants, up to 40 percent live in slums spread throughout the city (United Nations 2018). Dhaka is the most densely populated city in the world and one of the most rapidly growing megacities (Human Development Centre 2014). Korail slum sits on ninety acres of public land adjacent to Gulshan Lake, right in the middle of the most upscale residential neighborhoods of Gulshan and Banani. The slum grew over the last few decades first on the public land but more recently onto the lake through illegal landfilling, as more rural migrants moved to Dhaka in search of livelihoods.

The physical location of Korail is an important signifier: The largest concentration of poverty in the city sits squarely in the middle of the largest concentration of wealth and power. An estimated 200,000 people inhabit Korail, living densely packed in rows of small tin sheds and straw huts. Most residents work in low-income jobs as maids, cleaners, drivers, day laborers, rickshaw pullers, shopkeepers, hawkers, factory workers, trash pickers, and beggars.

The relative location of Korail plays a significant role in both its desirability and undesirability: It is desirable by the urban poor because they can access their places of work more readily from this central location, but it is undesirable among the wealthy, who see it as an eyesore (literally and figuratively) in the middle of bourgeois urbanity. Such tensions are worsening as the slum has been taking over and shrinking Gulshan Lake, a small but important water body that replenishes the aquifer from which the city's water is largely derived. Korail is also undesired by the state, which would like to recover the public land for commercial development, and by land speculators, who seek lucrative real estate development opportunities. Given such tensions, many residents of Korail are vocal about their contributions to urban society, noting the importance of their labor to the city's and nation's development, their political citizenship in voting during elections, and their formal and informal roles in keeping urban society functioning. Yet the lack of recognition by those around them (the wealthy and powerful) as well as the state, lack of land tenure security, and the regular eviction drives and frequent cases of arson have created a state of constant threat where their lives are precarious (S. Hossain 2011; Hackenbroch and Hossain 2012). With no public water system available for decades, the failure to access a basic human right such as water furthered their claims that they were not seen as proper citizens by both city and state. Korail residents had a keen awareness that water governance was not being driven by equality goals (despite policy discourses to such effect) but rather by historical access, land ownership, political connections, and economic might (S. Hossain 2012). Water access thus became a symbolic and material marker of urban citizenship in Korail: Surrounding wealthy neighborhoods had piped water into homes and businesses, but the absence of such facilities in Korail in the center of wealth became a stark daily reminder of abjection.

Slums like Korail throughout large megacities of the Global South end up being islands of nonservice (Bakker 2003), with the urban poor experiencing “hydrological apartheid” (Graham, Desai, and McFarlane 2013, 123). Although proximate to public water infrastructure, slum residents often do not have access. This enables informal providers to exploit the nonserved urban poor (Bakker 2010; Bontianti et al. 2014). Such has been the case in Korail. The historical lack of legal public water services in Korail had given rise to several dozen informal water providers who met the needs of the slum residents. In general, informal and illegal water providers can be highly heterogeneous (Ahlers et al. 2014), and it is often impossible to separate out the interdependency and entanglements between formal and informal water providers in a locality (Schwartz et al. 2015). The informal water economy in Korail, or the “water mafias” (whose members prefer to be euphemistically called water businessmen), illegally tap into the municipal water system with rudimentary rubber hoses or pipes to siphon out water that is then sold in the slum at a steep price. Life-giving water then becomes more readily available to the urban poor but at an exorbitant cost. Illegal water systems are precarious and unreliable and often provide water that is of poor quality and of insufficient quantity. The siphoning of water by the water mafias creates greater pressures on the municipal water system, whereby leakages and the many illegal attachments both introduce contamination into the water network and deny revenue to the public water utility, the Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (DWASA). Regular drives to excavate illegal water pipes were thus carried out by DWASA, which worsened water insecurity in Korail (Sultana, Mohanty, and Miraglia 2016).

With lack of legal public water access prior to 2013, Korail residents deployed various methods to procure water for survival on a daily basis, such as paying high rates to water mafia, purchasing small quantities of water from nearby legal suppliers (e.g., shops), queuing up at public water sources (e.g., schools or religious institutions) for extensive periods of time, and bartering to obtain water from their employers.³ The majority of Korail households use some combination of these mentioned methods as needed. They rely on various sources of water even if they have recent public water access, because the water supply is not always reliable or clean (as

further detailed later). Formal and informal strategies thus continue to shape the daily lived experiences of water scarcity. A note on different costs is important here. The cost of 1,000 liters of water from the water mafia is generally 100 taka (US\$1.25) compared to only 9 taka (US\$0.11) from DWASA. On average, the urban poor pay over ten times more per liter of water than the middle and wealthier classes for their household water. This substantial price differential starkly reveals the ways in which water access affects household expenditure, with those accessing illegal water supplies spending between 20 and 25 percent of monthly income on water alone. Those with meager incomes were thus continually exploited, because water is a daily necessity for survival.

Ethnographic field research in Korail and surrounding areas in 2010, 2012, and 2017 involved participant observation, key informant interviews, semistructured questionnaires with Korail residents (thirty men and thirty women), two focus group discussions (FGDs) with male and female members of Korail community-based organizations (CBOs), an additional FGD with women residents of Korail only, and open-ended interviews with numerous Korail residents and community leaders. Interviews were also conducted with government and donor officials and NGO staff who work inside and outside of Korail. Open-ended interviews were also carried out with wealthier households of Gulshan and Banani. Additional information was obtained through analyses of government and NGO documents and reports, newspaper articles, and policy papers. Key informant interviews were carried out with senior and field-level staff of DWASA and the NGO Dushtha Shasthya Kendra (DSK), both of whom played critical roles in how water was mediated in Korail. The fieldwork spanned time before and after public water supplies started to slowly become available in Korail in late 2013.

Water–Citizenship Nexus in Korail

Analyzing how the urban poor act out citizenship vis-à-vis water elucidates the water–citizenship nexus. Emotional distress from water insecurity can both reduce citizen engagement in water governance (Goldin 2010; Bulled 2017) and galvanize action (Anand 2011; Wutich 2011). Although these contrasting outcomes can coexist in the same place, outcomes are complex and context specific. In Korail,

residents came to claim urban citizenship through dialogue, collaboration, action, and collectivity over water. This was facilitated through active engagement in citizenship-building efforts of various NGOs, but it was largely accomplished through a close working relationship specifically with DSK, which advocated for public water and sanitation in urban slums (Akash and Singha 2004). Although fraught, the process of claiming public legal water through collective action was citizenship building among Korail residents and instrumental for public water supply to be brought to Korail. In general, people organizing from below to access resources in urban life can demonstrate rootedness and “deep democracy” (Appadurai 2001). Having to fight for collective water ended up engendering something more profound in the process: a collective struggle for urban citizenship and a common goal of acceptance. Engaged Korail residents thus were active in articulating their rights and obligations, where urban citizenship claims were performed through claims to public water supply. “*Shobar jonno pani chai*” (“We want water for all”) became a common clarion call of Korail residents advocating for public water infrastructure at various meetings, public discussions, and media engagement. Enacting an embodied notion of urban citizenship was thus tied up with legality of water provision and water infrastructure: Korail residents did not want the continuation of the haphazard and precarious illegal water provision, because their view was that a formal legal public water system conferred recognition and urban citizenship and that it was more equitable for all.

Yet the abilities, opportunities, or desires to participate in democratic water institutions varied throughout the city of Dhaka. In the affluent and middle-class neighborhoods with legal piped water, the availability of continuously supplied affordable water reduces the desires of such wealthy citizens to engage actively with institutions that provide water. By being connected to the urban water grid, their understandings and experiences of themselves in relation to the state or municipality are quite different and water did not affect their sense of urban citizenship or belonging. Wealthier urbanites can also access emergency water supplies via water tankers during times of disruption to the water grid, but the urban poor cannot. Such differences and marginalizations are experienced bodily and emotionally, in more-than-material ecologies of water, where water

deprivation is a daily reminder to the urban poor of their abjection and undesired status in the city. Water thus became a powerful signifier of their right to the city as well as to urban citizenship. Critical infrastructures like legal water pipes, pumps, and taps thereby became materially symbolic and meaningful. Failure to secure public water access in Korail galvanized citizenship acts, raising political awareness of the state’s actions and inequities in water access, which made the urban poor more politically sensitized, albeit less powerful, than their wealthier counterparts in the city.

Multiple meanings and connotations were generally attached to the illegal water pipes servicing the many slums throughout Dhaka. Such systems were emblematic of the incapacity of the state to service all of its residents, underscoring governance failures at multiple scales and levels, across time and space, intensified by more migrants coming to the city to eke out survival in a postcolonial developing country. The rudimentary illegal water pipes, generally traveling through open drains or the contaminated lake, had formed spaghetti-like structures that traversed visibly through Korail. Actions to provide water through informal systems might be considered acts of insurgent citizenship by the poor (Holston 2009), but they are considered illegal by the state and the elite in Dhaka. The presence of these pipes was unwanted and unsightly for planners and urban citizens, representing a symbol of failure—a failure to manage water securely, of controlling the water mafia, and of the expulsion of the slum. To slum residents in and outside Korail, however, the materiality of pipes meant that the slum has the potential to have water, to not have extreme levels of water insecurity and suffering, and some semblance of social organization (in comparison to other slums). Nonetheless, the illegal water pipes were a daily visible reminder that Korail residents were not deemed worthy of public water provision the way wealthier neighborhoods around them were. Thus, the illegal pipes became symbolic of many things—illegality, informality, abjection, poverty, and denial—simultaneously symbolizing resilience, creativity, cleverness, survival. Although the coexistence of formal and informal water provision can allow people to organize their daily household water needs (Furlong 2013; Meehan 2014), this system can also be precarious and exploitative (Jones 2011; Jepson and Vandewalle 2016). This has certainly been the case

in Korail, where lives and livelihoods were affected daily with the uncertain timing and amounts of water provided, the dirtiness of the water, the (in)ability to afford the water, and living with the constant threat of erasure by the state through both pipe excavation and destruction (to eradicate illegal water mafia) as well as through slum demotion efforts. Regular drives by the state and municipality to disconnect and excavate illegal pipes further compounded the precarity of water access by the urban poor. These were also constant reminders of the denial of their urban citizenship, of signifiers of not being valuable, of not belonging. They also highlighted the friction between slum residents and the state and the urban elite and became sites of conflict as well as galvanizing mobilization.

Indeed, some of the most common terms that were used by residents of Korail to articulate their claims to water and urban citizenship were *nagorik* (citizen), *nagorikota* or *nagorik odhikar* (citizenship), and *bashinda* (resident) of the city. They also constantly stated their *odhikar* (right) and *dabi* (claim) for *nyajjo* (just or fair) water services and for greater urban *nyajjota* (justice). Such language of citizenship was used to mobilize their claims on the basis of their contributions to the city and country but also the fact that they voted, participated in local governance, and were both *nagorik* (civic citizen) and *nogorbashi* (urban resident). Local people thus defined their identities and struggles to gain legal public water through their constructions of urban citizenship, articulated separately from national citizenship: Although everyone is a Bangladeshi citizen (formalized more recently through mandatory national ID cards), the claim to be a citizen of the city is fraught and thus their urban citizenship status is questioned by the elite and the state. Feelings of being unwanted, disrespected, and viewed as less than are common among slum residents, leading to frustration, anger, and sadness. Everyone held out hope in Korail, however, demonstrating tenacity in the face of great odds. They hoped that the state and wealthier urban residents, such as the antagonistic and affluent adjacent neighborhoods of Gulshan and Banani, would see them as citizens who have legitimate claims to life-giving water and the material infrastructures that provided it (see also von Schnitzler 2016). Citizenship claims by Korail residents were made through repeated statements such as “*Amrao ei shohorer nagorik*” (“We too are citizens

of this city”) and “*Amadero panir odhikar achhe*” (“We too have a right to water”).

A nuanced understanding of their lives meant that although Korail residents acknowledged that they were the *bostibashi* (slum residents), signifying a critical understanding of their less than equitable status in the urban landscape, they were nonetheless *nogorbashi* (residents of Dhaka city) and also *nagorik* (citizens). They also tied dignity to citizenship, desiring dignified legal access to safe public water, thus not being treated inequitably and ignored (see also von Schnitzler 2014). The centrality of water to cleanliness and hygiene, to well-being and flourishing, to the ability to attend school and jobs, and to reduce sufferings was wrapped up in a clear claim to public water supplies being tied to their place in the urban fabric. They lived precarious lives, and this precarity and suffering became a galvanizing political claim for Korail residents over water. The discursive and material aspects of citizenship through water and infrastructure were entangled with notions of urban citizenship and belonging in Dhaka. This highlights the disjuncture between national and urban citizenship and how public and formal water access and water infrastructure mediated the lived experience of that difference.

Korail residents had been demanding legal water supply for decades, especially women, because this would reduce their burdens and costs in a patriarchal society where domestic water management is a highly gendered responsibility. With the help of DSK, Korail residents were successful in lobbying DWASA to agree to a trial basis of public legal water connections whereby DSK acted as the guarantor of payments. This came about after nearly fifteen years of sustained effort by several dedicated Korail community leaders and DSK officers together in concerted negotiations and dialogue with DWASA and local politicians. External support, pressure, organizational skills, collectivizing, and continued activism enabled the different stakeholders to come together, despite stiff resistance from both within (the water mafia) and outside (wealthy neighborhoods, low-level DWASA staff who colluded with the water mafia, and land speculators). Several rationalities, though, guided the state in finally agreeing to public water supplies in Korail: It wanted to recoup its lost revenue that was being captured by the illegal water mafia and it also wanted to reduce cross-contamination into the water system from the hundreds of illegal connection points.

Furthermore, there was the pressure to implement the human right to water and sanitation that the Bangladesh government adopted at the United Nations in 2010. The conjunctural alignment of global policy and local activism is thus not insignificant. The policy's discursive framework then helped DWASA's Low Income Community (LIC) program (which provides water to slums) gain broader attention and support from higher-up state officials as well as within DWASA.

Although DWASA started to install communal water connections and lay infrastructure under the LIC program in Korail formally in 2010, water was not provided until late 2013. Korail residents were deeply frustrated with this delay, despite the hard-won and lengthy struggle to have infrastructure be physically put into place. The resistance by neighboring wealthier communities (especially Banani, which is directly adjacent to Korail, whereas Gulshan is across the lake) resulted in years of stalling over water pumps being built and tactics such as not giving right of way for construction, thereby preventing water from flowing to the slum. The concerns of the wealthier neighborhoods were that providing water to Korail would decrease their water supply in quantity as well as reduce supply pressure. In an interview, one female Banani resident said, "*Amader pani kome jabe bostite pani dile*" ("We will face water scarcity if the slum is given water"). A male Gulshan property owner expressed this concern: "*Aajke pani, kalke gas, bosti ar uthano jabe na*" ("Today they want water, tomorrow they will want gas—the slum will become impossible to get rid of"). Such sentiments led to the water infrastructure in Korail remaining incomplete for years. The counter-argument from Korail residents, that water provision would encourage expansion and permanency of the slum, was that the subsurface and above-ground water infrastructures would remain even if the poor were evicted and the land was reappropriated by the state in the future. The significant class-based politics and obstacles that stalled water provision led Korail residents to file complaints with DWASA repeatedly, as well as political lobbying and agitations, but it provoked further awareness of their less-than or abject status. A sense of injustice galvanized Korail residents into community mobilizations to write letters to their local politicians, give interviews to the media, petition DWASA more vigorously, carry out (limited) demonstrations on the streets,

mobilize patron–client networks, as well as work with various NGOs operating in the area to stress the importance of formalized public legal water supply. These were all enactments of citizenship.

It is important to note that only by the concerted efforts by DSK and a small group of dedicated Korail residents did public water infrastructure and water supply come to Korail at all. This was made possible due to actions first undertaken within the slum to create local water management systems: Households were first collectivized to form into CBOs, with elected officials, who worked with DSK to get legal water provisions in the name of the CBO (Ahmed and Terry 2003). The CBOs were responsible for ensuring timely bill payment to DWASA, because DWASA did not have a systemic or standardized method of bill collection from slums. CBOs also oversaw the operation and maintenance of the communal standposts (shared water taps) that would be used by members of a CBO. About fifteen to twenty neighboring households would cluster to form one CBO. The first legal water standpost (and related supporting infrastructure) from DWASA that the Korail CBO negotiated cost the community 112,000 taka (US\$1,400) in total, part of which was through a loan from DSK at a 10 percent interest rate (Rojas-Ortuste and Mahmud 2015). This was paid back by the CBO over twenty-four installments, and the remainder was paid by the landlord on whose land the water standpost was located (landlord is a loose term, because these are earlier occupiers of the public land who built huts to rent out and thus claim ownership of the plots of land they control). CBO members paid in cash and in kind (e.g., construction labor to lay underground and above-ground water infrastructure) and the CBO had the legal title to the water standpost. These efforts were also enactments of citizenship claims.

The success of such functioning arrangements led DWASA to slowly start providing public water supply in Korail through the LIC program (Rojas-Ortuste and Mahmud 2015). By 2016, Korail had approximately 2,000 shared standposts (Sharma and Alipalo 2017). Korail has bulk water delivery into a reservoir with water meters that supply to the shared standposts. Each CBO collects money for the water supply and appoints the caretaker of the water point from the users, who is responsible for cleaning, maintenance, repairs, meter reading, bill collection, and payment; the caretaker cost is included in the

monthly water bill of each household. CBOs meet monthly to ensure participation of involved households in local water and sanitation management. All CBOs were trained by DSK and DWASA on financial, operational, and maintenance issues. Because each household's bill is generally part of the monthly rent, this also ensures that the total bill for each CBO is paid somewhat regularly and timely. Such activities are meant to enhance ownership, bill payment, maintenance, and smooth operation of each water point. They also reduce the problem of gangs taking control over water standposts, which used to be a significant problem, because the standposts are registered under a legal customer (usually the CBO's elected president).

When water did start to flow through the public pipes and standposts in Korail in late 2013, it was deemed a great victory. Even though it initially serviced a small percentage of Korail households, it represented the possibilities of the future. It did create some friction within the community, however, between those who were organized into CBOs and connected to DSK, and thereby had public water access, and those who still had to rely on expensive, irregular, polluted water from the water mafias. Despite the removal of many water mafias as formalized water coverage steadily spread across Korail, there are still twenty powerful syndicates that operate in the area, providing water to a large number of households in the ever-expanding Korail slum and the smaller surrounding slums (Hassan and Mollah 2017). Thus, the official figures on how many people are provided public water are contested and data on water coverage remain controversial and disputed. A coexistence of infrastructures and services that are legal and illegal, formal and informal are common throughout cities of the Global South (Roy 2014). Furthermore, DSK's success in assisting with mobilizing Korail residents is a unique case of sustained engagement by one NGO with willing community members. As a result, DWASA's success story in supplying water to the slum poor would largely be impossible without the initial facilitation and engagement of DSK as the go-between (K. Z. Hossain and Ahmed 2015).

Ensuring continuity of this hard-won water security requires more time and labor (physical and emotional) from the urban poor, which is not something that the rich need to do (Sultana 2011; Bulled 2017). Articulating their humanity and their rights

through citizenship claims to water is a process of claiming justice and equity. Often treated as subjects instead of citizens, political mobilization becomes necessary to gain citizenship-based rights (Chatterjee 2004). However, such processes and claims to citizenship are intersectionally gendered and classed (Desai and Sanyal 2012; Beebeejaun 2017), and this complicates the water-citizenship nexus, as I discuss next.

Intersections of Class, Gender, Water, and Infrastructure

Although access to water has to be understood to be spatialized and embodied in spaces of insecure water systems, this embodiment is highly gendered, because women and girls labor daily to fetch water for their homes under patriarchal social norms and the gendered division of labor in the Global South (Cleaver and Elson 1995; Crow and Sultana 2002). Water insecurity affects women more than men in the slums, and their daily lives are constantly open to disruption and distress with the vagaries of water supplies. Gender becomes a marker of inequity and varied suffering and thus gendered citizenship claims are tied to lived realities vis-à-vis water. The network of illegal water pipes had marked the easing of gendered hardship, because without such illegal or informal water sources, women and girls suffered even more to obtain daily water from the few publicly accessible water sources further afield. As one female respondent put it, "*Panir koshto shob shomoy*" ("Struggling for water has been a constant"), encapsulating the daily and continual ways in which water inflects their lives vis-à-vis time, distance, physical and emotional labor, effort, worry, verbal confrontations and friction with others, monetary costs, missed opportunities, and overall suffering (see also Sultana 2011). Lack of water was a continual reminder of their lack of recognition and citizenship, their liminal status, and their embodied abjection. These degrees of water insecurity and precarity reinforced heightened senses of exclusion and belonging daily.

This is also intersected by class. Wealthier women in formalized neighborhoods do not have to donate time or effort to claim their citizenship or right to water in that they do not have to engage in collective endeavors for water security the way slum women do. The state validates wealthier women in formal neighborhoods compared to poorer women in

slums through public water provision—wealthier women are always already viewed as citizens, whereas slum women are designated as subjects who must labor to gain both urban citizenship status as well as life-sustaining water. As one young mother in Korail articulated in an interview, “*Amra amader chhelemeyeder jonno bhalo pani chai karon amrao ei shohorer manush, kintu gorib bole amader kono daam nai*” (“We want clean water for our children as we too are people of this city, but since we are poor, we aren’t valued”). This denial of poor women’s roles as mothers who provide safe, clean water on a daily basis was an unambiguous reminder to them of their devalued status as urban citizens in Dhaka due to their poverty and patriarchal power relations. The emotional burden of making impossible choices between using contaminated water or paying a steep cost for slightly better quality water posed challenges that affected the everyday lived experiences of slum residents. Claims of belonging were displayed in the ways people tied water availability to their urban status as well as their abilities to fulfill gendered subjectivities (good mother, wife, daughter; see also Sultana 2009). These entanglements are pronounced in the slums and show the ways in which citizenship is contested and lived out in embodied ways every day.

Even those in Korail with recent legal access to public water do not have it as easy as their wealthier neighbors in the surrounding affluent neighborhoods, because water was generally supplied once or twice a day, when everyone had to collect and haul from the shared standposts to their homes all of the water for their household’s various needs (drinking, cooking, washing, sanitation, hygiene, bathing, laundry, etc.). This demonstrates the intersectionality of class and gender in differentiated water access at two scales: within the slum between those with legal water access versus those still without (mostly recent migrants with less social capital and greater water insecurity) and between the slum and formal city. Water piped into homes in formal neighborhoods reduces gendered suffering for the middle and upper classes, but suffering continues in Korail, albeit improved from before. Such discrepancies are not lost on the Korail residents, as one woman ruefully said: “*Tara gario dhoy pani diye, othochho amra beche thakar jonno poriman pani pai na*” (“They [the wealthy neighborhoods] even have enough water to wash their cars, but we don’t always get enough water for our basic survival”). This indicates that the wealthy

can afford to waste water even as the urban poor’s basic human right to water continued to be unfulfilled. Such consciousness was widespread throughout the slum. When there is insufficient water supplied to the bulk water point, Korail residents do not have sufficient quantities of water at the shared standposts. This is common during the dry season when there is less water available city-wide. Korail CBOs requested DWASA to install another pump so that water can be provided regularly year-round without the hardship faced during the dry season, but this remains a contentious issue. Nonetheless, Korail residents see their water supply from DWASA, however erratic or noncontinuous, and the material infrastructures that function to provide it as signifying acknowledgments of their urban citizenship.

The intersections of gender, class, and political and civic agency (i.e., membership in a CBO) influence lived citizenship vis-à-vis water access. Differential gender roles and responsibilities of patriarchal norms disrupt the notion that all of the urban poor suffer for water in the same ways. Despite the increasing number of standposts in slums (both legal and illegal), women still have to ensure the daily collection and proper storage of water for the home and its management thereafter. A response expressed by one woman in Korail captured the general sentiment among the other women: “*Amar shongshar chalanor kaj, tai panir chinta shobshomoy amar*” (“My responsibility is to run the household, so the worrying over water is always mine”). The precarious nature of water can result in long queues at the shared standposts or waiting for water at night, because water supply was never fully guaranteed. The gendered experience of water insecurity in households is an important factor in how the water standposts are used, when, among how many people, and with what outcomes. Conflicts and collaborations have to be mediated at shared water infrastructure. Without reliable water flows year-round in Korail overall, water access remains precarious, even when relatively secure infrastructures are in place. For those not part of a CBO or those who continue to rely on water mafias, the gendered precarities around water are more heightened, as noted by one woman whose family had recently migrated to Korail: “*Amra chora pani kine khai, karon ar upai nai. Shorkarer amago pani debar babosthya kora uchit taratari*” (“We have to purchase the stolen water [from the water mafia], because we have no other choice. The government should

provide water to us soon, too”). Her awareness of the illegality of the water mafias was linked with her desire to be included in urban water citizenship like others in Korail.

There are also gendered differences in how people relate to water, even if everyone desires access. Men and women in interviews and FGDs demonstrated differences in their prioritizations of different aspects of water such as quantity, quality, reliability, timing, source, and cost. Men in general tended to focus on costs, whereas women focused more explicitly on equity of access, improved services, and water quality. For instance, a man who worked in a factory expressed the following: “*Ja rojkar kori ta beshir bhaghor bharate jay, pani kinar jonno beshi taka thake na*” (“Most of my earnings go toward rent and not much is left for purchasing water”); another man reliant on illegal water sources at the time noted, “*Amra pani kine khai tai shorkarer pani babosthya kore deya uchit shiggiri*” (“We have to buy our water from the water businessmen, so the government needs to solve our water problems soon”). Several women in conversations and FGDs articulated the embodied emotional aspects of water: “*Panir jonno onek koshto korte hoy, eita protidiner jontrona*” (“Our sufferings over water are great and it is a daily struggle”); “*Amrao amader polapan manush korte chai, kintu bhalo pani chhara kibhabe ta hobe*” (“We also want to raise our children properly but how can we do that without reliable clean safe water”); “*Amar shorile kulay na dur theke pani ante, tai koshto hoileo olpo pani kine khaite hoy*” (“I can’t haul water from far away due to poor health, so even if it’s a burden I have to purchase small amounts of water locally”); and “*Shorkari kol theke pani tante koshto hoileo ami amar poribarar jonno pain ani*” (“Even if it’s difficult for me to carry the water from the public water standpost, I do it for my family”). The externalization of costs (physical, social, emotional) onto women results in men focusing more on the monetary costs of water over the more complex actualities of water precarity and water provision. This sociocultural tax transferred to women through gender division of labor and norms thus does not fully address the overall costs of accessing water. The intersectional and embodied gendered nature of the financial, physical, and emotional burdens is rarely captured in policy discussions (Wutich and Ragsdale 2008; Sultana 2011). The embodied emotional geographies of water are thus important in how urban citizenship is

intersectionally constructed, claimed, and experienced.

Gendered power relations also play a role in local water management inside Korail. The CBO committees usually consist of fifteen volunteer members from the member households, with usually thirteen members being women (Rojas-Ortuste and Mahmud 2015). Of the twenty-one CBOs created by 2015, seventeen were headed by women.⁴ These are voluntary positions but are important in cultivating political and civic agency among slum residents. When a household is unable to pay, defaults, or leaves the slum, the CBO has to resolve the full payment of the water bill. To avoid situations of default, the CBO members motivate other households to keep up with regular payments. If a household is unable to pay at a certain time, they are covered by other households, who are then reimbursed. For costs related to standpost repairs, all households split the cost. The gendered composition of the CBO committee places an extra burden on women of Korail to do community labor in local water management and to provide peer pressure to ensure each household’s water bill is paid. Because this reduces the women’s burden from paying higher costs for poorer quality water from illegal sources or having to rely on more insecure and dirty water sources or from distant water sources, however, the trade-off was deemed worth it by all the female respondents. It reduced their household costs as well as materially reduced the gendered suffering over water. More notable, though, the legal public water system signified many things to them: being seen as citizens by the state, being responsible urban residents who paid their bills and managed their water source, being part of the broader urban fabric of valued residents of Dhaka, and belonging to the city in some small measure. Thus, all of the women involved in a CBO were in full support of the expansion of legal public water systems throughout the slum, and the recent migrant women who did not have legal water access were keen to benefit from this. The gendered relationship to water due to the gendered division of labor and social norms and the relationship of water to citizenship resulted in greater numbers of women and girls desiring state intervention in resolving the water crises that plagued their daily lives. For the men who worked in the illegal water businesses (or were water mafia bosses themselves), the availability of municipal water infrastructure and supplies

threatened their livelihoods, and thus some men resisted legal water for many years. The threat of the loss of livelihood, as well as not suffering the gendered burden of procuring daily water, appears to reinforce their position and thereby explain the gendered disparity in desiring public water systems.

What is unfortunate is that poor women, whose time is extremely limited due to both productive and reproductive labor demands, are the ones who are expected to participate in local water governance through CBOs and to enact their urban citizenship, unlike wealthier women in formal neighborhoods who have piped water in their homes. The necessity to enact and live out their citizenship claims places additional burdens on poor urban women in slums, whereas wealthier urban women generally experience water crises less frequently, do not need to collectivize, and do not need to do much more than pay their bills or minimally interact with the state. As a Banani housewife commented, "*Pani na thakle amra DWASA ke phone kore complaint dei, othoba pani tanker anar babostha kori*" ("If we face water shortages, we call DWASA to lodge our complaints to fix the problem or arrange to have water tankers deliver water to us"). Although wealthier women also manage their household water, they do not have the same relationships to water infrastructures or the state in the way that poorer women in the slums do. Thus, the constructions of and claims to urban citizenship are intersectionally gendered and classed through the availability of publicly provided water, but poor women do more labor at both the household level and the community level.

For the Korail residents who did not yet have access to the public legal water system, reliance on illegal water meant incurring higher costs and also a sense of not being included in the urban development plans and continual denial of their citizenship claims. Within the same slum, there was some differentiation across those who have legal water versus those who do not, often delineated along migration status (newer arrivals often have less class status than long-standing residents within a slum and have less secure water access). The differences are also marked by disparate costs incurred by these different types of households: They have to pay both to connect and to reconnect when the illegal pipes are cut or removed by officials. This constant cycle of water insecurity, exploitation, costs, and daily struggle to obtain water (as supply is not always guaranteed)

influences their lives considerably. As a result, even within the space of the slum, there are those with some semblance of citizenship rights (those with legal access to water), whereas some are still without, thereby increasing their sense of abjection and exacerbating gendered burdens and costs of these residents. The fractured nature of citizenship demonstrates how it can be tenuously enjoyed by some even as many are left out within the same space, one that is largely marked by not just their lack of urban citizenship rights but also a lack of state capacity and political will (Kooy and Bakker 2008b; Ranganathan 2014; McFarlane and Desai 2015). Thus, there is sociospatial differentiation in who has what type of water access, from what type of infrastructure, of what quality and quantity, at what location, and at what costs within and across slums, as well as between slums and formal neighborhoods. These scalar class differences are generally mapped onto the landscape between slums and formal neighborhoods but are still fragmented internally inside slums. Although the publicly stated goal of DWASA has been to ensure legal water access to all slum residents, the haphazard growth of slums and the increasing number of migrants pose continual challenges.

The sociospatial intersectional experiences of urban citizenship continue to be entangled with the vital materialities of water and infrastructure for those with public water supply, too. When water is dirty, unsafe, or smelly, the provision of water is viewed to be a failure by DWASA and thereby the state. Women in Korail voiced the concern that the quality of water is as important as quantity because purifying water incurs additional costs such as having to use fuel to boil the water or treat it with chemicals. This simultaneously involves extra costs of finances, labor, time, and emotions. Similarly, water infrastructure breaking down and remaining unrepaired by DWASA, resulting in water not being supplied or becoming more erratic for prolonged periods of time, are reminders to slum residents that they continue to remain unequal despite their recent sense of belonging to the city and recognition through public water access. As a woman in Korail noted, "*Amrao bill porishod kori, kintu amader pani prai nongra thake karon amra bostibashi*" ("We too pay our water bills [to DWASA], but our water is frequently dirty because we live in a slum"). Thus, whether the water is materially safe or unsafe, clean

or dirty, potable or unpotable, reliable or erratic, or even available is entangled with the ways in which water and infrastructure imbricate notions of tenuous urban citizenship. The intersectionally embodied gendered nature of such lived citizenship is entwined with water's materiality, infrastructures, and modes of access, thereby complicating the water–citizenship nexus in urban waterscapes.

Conclusion

This article posits that embodied intersectionalities of difference that produce urban citizenship are simultaneously social, spatial, and material, and understanding these intersections advances existing scholarship on the water–citizenship nexus. In Dhaka, Bangladesh, the spatial and temporal dimensions of materialities of water and of infrastructure intersect unevenly with sociospatial relations of gender, class, migrant status, and political power in the urban waterscape to create differentiated urban citizens. These intersections produce different embodied subjectivities vis-à-vis the state, planners, and urban elite. For residents of Korail slum, claims to water are not just about water but also entail claims-making for inclusive urban citizenship, recognition, and belonging. Legal supplies of sufficient clean water from the public utility foster a sense of democracy and realization of the potential to be treated as full citizens in the city and benefit from the human right to water. The complex ways in which urban citizenship is lived, enacted, and negotiated demonstrate that this idea involves notions of justice, recognition, self-determination, and solidarity (Kabeer 2005).

Although having water is important for all slum residents and is articulated with being recognized and treated as urban citizens, the ways in which this citizenship is lived are fluid. Gendered and classed inequities in water access, control, and responsibility highlight the ways in which this lived citizenship differs between slum and formal city, and also within the slums, thereby underscoring that granular and scalar analyses are necessary to better explain lived realities and understanding how urban citizenship operates. The everyday experiences of the unwanted, poor, and neglected residents of the city reveal that urban citizenship construction and enactment through public water access is an embodied, emotive, gendered process. Thus, the hydraulic citizen or infrastructural citizen has to be conceptualized as an

intersectionally embodied gendered and classed citizen who is entangled with materialities and spatialities of water and infrastructure in the urban landscape.

In Dhaka, a lack of cross-class alliances leads the wealthy to fear a reduction in their water supplies as well as the permanency of slums, thereby further compounding intersectional sufferings of the very poor women living in slums. Constant threats of slum demolition, erasure, expulsion, and dispossession result in exacerbating precarity and sufferings in everyday life in Korail, with slum residents living under constant threat of removal and disconnections and also open to new politics of exploitation by the water mafia and their colluders as well as land opportunists (who keep filling the lake and rent to the urban poor). Such crises are expanding daily as urban planning in Dhaka fails to sufficiently address the exponential but haphazard expansion of slums as more migrants come to the city in search of livelihoods as economic and climate refugees displaced from other parts of the country. The number of people desiring urban citizenship thus grows annually.

The conjunctural alignment of global policy discourses of the human right to water and the existing local struggles over water resulted in enabling public legal water infrastructure and water supply to be brought into the Korail slum in Dhaka. This has symbolic and material impacts on the lived citizenship and realities of the urban poor. This is not a static outcome but has to be continually mediated. The water–citizenship nexus can thus be understood in more nuanced ways when embodied intersectionalities of sociospatial differences and materialities are accounted for in any context. The daily struggles over water are thus sites where theorization can be advanced, from the ground up, in the context of cities of the Global South.

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Notes

1. I use the term *slum* with care, acknowledging its historical baggage as a pejorative or negative term (Gilbert 2007) but aligning with its usage by the well-known global movement by residents of slums, the Shack/Slum Dwellers International.
2. Dhaka is largely homogeneous in race or ethnicity (Bengalis) and religious composition (Muslim) due to the spatioreligious partitioning of South Asia during British colonial rule and postcolonial nationalism. A small percentage of Hindu Bengalis and Christian Bengalis do exist in the country (where religion and caste differences can play intersectional roles) but were not part of this study.
3. Other informal methods such as capturing rainfall in pots and buckets during the monsoon season are common throughout Bangladesh, but generally these entail small amounts of water; no additional infrastructure for rainwater harvesting was observed in Korail.
4. Women are often found to lead community groups created by NGOs for domestic water projects in the Global South due to a mix of international development discourses of gender empowerment (where a woman leading a group is assumed to be empowered) and patriarchal norms of the gender division of labor that make women responsible for domestic water management.

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