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THE POWER TO REFORM:
WATER AND THE POVERTY OF DEMOCRACY AND RIGHTS IN THE ERA OF
“GOOD” GOVERNANCE

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by
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Abstract

Since the early 1990s the achievement of 'good governance' has been the dominant discourse and the determined path to social and economic development. This discourse and its ensuing policy reform prescriptions promise that with the right alignment of actors and the right governance institutions, capitalist economic growth, human rights, and democracy will flourish. Indeed, in the discourse all three are regarded as complimentary and necessary for sustainable economic and social development. Such promises make the discourse very seductive and it has been embraced by international development agencies and many NGOs, citizens and private sector actors.

But there is reason to suspect that below this veneer the dynamics of development may not be as progressive as they appear - especially for the deepening of democracy and the expansion of rights for the poor. Based on a year and half of ethnographic fieldwork on governance reforms in the urban water sector in the south Indian state of Karnataka, this thesis presents a critical challenge to the contemporary development paradigm of good governance. The study focuses on two specific propositions that underlie current policies of urban water governance. The first refers to a claim that good governance is both democratic and pro-market. This proposition appears to embody an inherently undemocratic assumption that in order for governance to be 'good' a democratic consensus would necessarily, and essentially, have to favour capitalism as a mode of economic organisation and the commercialisation and marketisation of basic services. The second proposition refers to a claim that commercially oriented water services, whether private or public, are good for poor and marginalised citizens and are compatible with the expansion and realisation of human rights. Through the use of detailed critical ethnography these propositions are examined as they intersect at three levels: policy, practice (process), and outcome. In examining the connections and intersections of these three levels of reform I argue that a number of contradictions and tensions exist within, and between what the discourse promises, the everyday practices of how they are implemented, and in the outcomes of such.

As the title suggests, this thesis is about the power to reform in the contemporary development era of good governance. But it is also about the power to resist such reforms and the contestations and struggles over the meanings and material realms of development that take place at the site of governance reforms. The ambition of these contestations and struggles is the hope for manifesting more just and humane development in the present and within possible futures.

Thanks

I have had the opportunity of meeting, discussing, debating and simply being with many people throughout the course of this study. I have shared water with many. Throughout the course of this work I have been in the offices of international NGOs and development agencies crowded with development “experts”. But more often, I have spent time in the company, homes and diverse workplaces of Indian bureaucrats, engineers, NGO employees and political activists. I have also had the privilege to meet just some of the hundreds of millions of people who live in poverty in our world. They are the ones who profoundly remind me of their disempowerment, yet also reinforce in me a belief in the potential of their own power and of their will and demands for the right to a better life. It is them, who against all odds continue at great cost, to live with a dignity that I find hard to imagine I would be able to sustain if I was in their same situation. I have been astounded, appalled, and inspired by what I have heard, learnt and experienced.

I want to say thank you to all the people who have contributed to this study or supported me in some way. There are too many people and organisations to mention them all by name, but there are some who I want to give specific thanks.

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An Acknowledgement

It is 4 am in the morning
 The city is silent
 A lady wakes
 Reaches over
 And rocks her young daughter out of her sleep
 It is that time again.

They don't get changed out of their nightwear
 They slept in what they wore the day before
 And they will wear the same clothes today
 They each pick up two empty water pots
 Rest them on their hips
 And set off...

Every night as Bangalore sleeps, hundreds if not thousands of homeless people walk the city's streets collecting water from public taps. Too poor to even live in a slum, these people make their homes on pavements, in bus stands, beside railway tracks, under bridges, and on vacant private and public land. Despite their destitution, marginalisation, and victimisation, the homeless are largely ignored by those who claim to be concerned with urban poverty – the government, the NGOs, the activists, the researchers. Our lack of attention to the homeless is often blamed on a lack of information, which in turn is blamed on homeless people's physical mobility and the practical difficulties of defining, studying and enumerating them. But disregard for the needs and rights of the homeless cannot be explained away so simply. The construction and perpetuation of their life condition is consequential of an apathetic state and a development industry that cares, but just not quite enough if it doesn't fit into their funding and output requirements. Although we seldom talk of it, for the majority of us, the homeless are simply part of development's 'too hard' basket: too hard to count; too hard to mobilise; and, far too hard to help. They are the most starkly visible of the urban poor, yet they are also the most invisible.

In the first half of 2008, through a small study I initiated and with the support of a number of local NGOs in Bangalore, I had the privilege of meeting dozens of people who live a homeless life. They were some of the most hospitable, endearing, and warm people I have ever met. They were not naïve, or unconscious of their life condition. In their experience, and in what became my understanding through conversations with them, is that they do not require, as some development professionals will insist, that *their* consciousness be raised. Rather, they insisted that when and where appropriate I support them in raising the consciousness of others about how and why they live as they do. This acknowledgment is just a small token to their request.

Because the homeless study I started has not yet been finalised, I have not written the findings of it into this thesis. However, I want to acknowledge the urban homeless people

who live in the city of Bangalore, and all those who live in places beyond. I want to acknowledge the individuals, families and communities whom I met and to explicitly identify and recognise their exclusion in this thesis, as well as in the work of development professionals and the policies and programs of the Government of Karnataka, the Government of India, and the wider international development community. I want to acknowledge their destitution and their invisibility and invite, and demand, a greater concern amongst everyone to pay closer attention to those we ignore, avoid, or overlook, and especially those of us who claim to be working in the ambition of development, social justice and emancipation.

The image that follows is a photograph that was taken of a young girl who lives on the streets of Bangalore. Her family took the picture with a camera I lent to them and they asked that I share her image with others in order to *raise other people's consciousness* of how they live as non-citizens and what the condition of living homeless does to the well-being of their children.



“No account of citizenship can evade the fact that that it was originally constructed in order to exclude and subordinate people” (Delanty, 1999, p.11).

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Government Overseas Aid Program
BATF	Bangalore Agenda Task Force
BCC	Beneficiary Capital Contribution
BSF	Bond Service Fund
BWSSB	The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board
CBO	Community based organization
CMC	City Municipal Corporation
GBWASP	The Greater Bangalore Water and Sanitation Project
HUDCO	Housing & Urban Development Corporation Ltd
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IFC	International Finance Corporation
JBIC	The Japan Bank for International Cooperation
JNNURM	Jawaharal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
KUIDFC	Karnataka Urban Infrastructure & Development Finance Corporation
KMRP	Karnataka Municipal Reforms Project
KUWASIP	Karnataka Urban Water Supply Improvement Project
MDG's	Millennium Development Goals
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-government organisation
PDR	Project Development Report
PLACE	Participatory Local Area Capital Expenditure document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSP	Private Sector Participation
SDO	Social Development Officer
UGD	Underground Drainage
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID-FIRE	United States Agency for International Development Financial Institutions Reform and Expansion Project
WSP-SA	Water and Sanitation Program – South Asia
WSPFT	Water and Sanitation Pooled Fund Trust
WSUP	Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor
24/7	Twenty four hours, seven days a week water supply

Imagination is more important than knowledge. For while knowledge defines all we currently know and understand, imagination points to all we might yet discover and create.

Albert Einstein

Introduction

There is a water crisis today. But the crisis is not about having too little water to satisfy our needs. It is a crisis of managing water so badly that billions of people – and the environment – suffer badly.... We have threatened our water resources with bad institutions, bad governance, bad incentives, and bad allocations of resources. In all this, we have a choice. We can continue with business as usual, and widen and deepen the crisis tomorrow. Or we can launch a movement to move from Vision to action – by making water everybody's business. (World Water Council, 2000, p. xix & xxvii)

And so it was. By the beginning of the twenty-first century it had become apparent, and a consensus had emerged, that the world was in a state of a water crisis. Talk of an impending crisis had begun back in the late 1970s. Yet despite a variety of efforts over the following two decades, as we entered the new millennium more than one fifth of the world's population were without access to enough clean water to live a healthy, dignified life. In tune with mainstream development thinking of the time, early analyses on the cause of the crisis pointed to a looming Malthusian catastrophe of resource scarcity, population pressures, and limits to growth. Two decades later, however, another analysis on the cause of the crisis had taken centre stage. While it was still largely agreed that some areas of the globe were certainly water stressed, it had come to be believed that the water crisis was a consequence of politics, poverty, and the way water is managed and allocated (UNDP, 2006). In short, it had been determined, and decided, that the crisis of water was an outcome of a crisis of governance (UN/WWAP, 2003).

As with earlier analyses, this diagnosis took its wisdom from the dominant development thinking of the day. Led by international and bi-lateral development agencies, in the early 1990s it began to be asserted that the failure and crisis of development throughout the

second half of the last century was a consequence of bad policies and governance practices within developing countries (World Bank 1989; World Bank 1991*a*; World Bank 1991*b*). In what can be termed the ‘good governance’ discourse, it is now insisted that if international development ambitions and aspirations of the early part of the twenty-first century are to be achieved, such as the Millennium Development Goal of reducing by half the number of people without access to water by 2015, then the institutions of governance, and in particular the institutions of the state, need to be transformed and re-formed. Critical to the policy prescriptions and technical solutions on offer for this reformation is the ideological belief within international and national policy circuits that capitalist economic growth, liberal representative democracy, and civil society participation, are mutually reinforcing and complimentary, as well as fundamental for sustainable development, poverty reduction and securing basic rights for the poor.

This thesis is about the policies and practices of reforming governance in the contemporary development era of good governance. It is concerned with what the policy reforms prescribe, as well as the practices through which they are implemented. It takes as its contextual focus the crisis and reform of water governance: a crisis and reform agenda that has been internationally recognised as one of the largest development challenges of our time. The water crisis that we are experiencing today has many facets and it would be impossible to consider them all in this study. Therefore, I focus on just one critical aspect of it: the governance reform measures that are proposed and currently being implemented with the objective of achieving participatory, equitable, and commercially efficient water services in the growing cities in the global South.

Quite specifically, this research is concerned with two propositions that underlie current policies aimed at reforming urban water governance. First, the claim that a good governance environment is one which is both democratic and pro-market, for this appears to embody the inherently undemocratic assumption that in order for governance to be ‘good’ a democratic consensus would necessarily, and essentially, have to favour capitalism and the commercialisation and marketisation of basic services. It is perhaps ironic that such claims come at a time when increasingly the quality and substance of democracy is being

questioned and demands for deepening democracy are growing and becoming more widespread (Luckham, Goetz & Kaldor, 2000; Goetz & Jenkins, 2001; Fung & Wright, 2001; Gaventa, 2002; Ackerman, 2004; de Sousa Santos, 2005). The second concern is with the claim that commercially oriented water services, whether private or public, are good for poor and marginalised citizens and are compatible with the realisation of human rights. Through a critical ethnography of commercially oriented water reforms in the south Indian state of Karnataka over the years 1999-2008, I examine these propositions as they intersect at three interconnected levels of reform: policy; practice (process); and, outcome. In examining the connections and intersections of these three levels of reform I argue that a number of contradictions and tensions exist within, and between, what the *discourse and policies* of good governance promises, the *everyday practices* of how they are implemented, and in the *outcomes* of such. I further argue that these tensions and contradictions inhibit the deepening of democracy and securing access and rights to basic services and resources for poor and marginalised peoples.

As the title of the thesis suggests, this thesis is about the power to reform in the contemporary development era of good governance. But it is also about the power to resist such reforms and the contestations and struggles over the meanings and material realms of development that take place at the site of governance reforms. By way of introduction, I begin by presenting a loosely chronological history of the shifting ideologies and frameworks that have informed the character of urban water governance spanning the period from the mid nineteenth century to the early years of the new millennium. This is important for understanding where we have been, where we are heading, and what we have learnt and forgotten in the process. This is followed by a discussion on the significance of deeper democracy to human rights and development. Finally, I locate the thesis within the literature on urban water reforms, as well as the Indian state of Karnataka, and present a brief roadmap of the story, and stories, that are told in the subsequent chapters.

Shifting Frameworks of Urban Water Governance

My entry point into this opening chapter was a quote from the World Water Council: an international body of water specialists and international organisations that was established in 1996 with the aim of reaching “a common strategic vision on water resources and water services management amongst all stakeholders in the water community” (World Water Council, 2009, para. 3). The report from which this quote comes, proposes that governing water “business as usual”, that is, state controlled, managed, and subsidised, will only widen and deepen the water crisis. It also proposes that the transformation from a crisis of water governance to good water governance requires, both in principle and in practice, “making water everybody’s business” (World Water Council, 2000).

What was meant by this? One definition and conventional use of the word ‘business’ is that it is the engagement in activities, by persons or corporations, for the purpose of profit-seeking. A second meaning associated with the term refers to something with which a person, organisation or institution should be seriously and rightfully concerned. Thus, on the one hand, the World Water Council’s quote could be interpreted to mean that water should be treated as a commercial, tradable resource for the purpose of profit seeking. On the other hand, that governance of water is something that everybody should be meaningfully concerned with and actively involved in: international development agencies, governments, NGOs, the private sector, and the common citizen. I propose that it suggested both and that by the new millennium the combination of these dual meanings, legitimated and sheltered under the umbrella of the good governance discourse and reform prescriptions, had come to be regarded by many as essential for establishing and sustaining a new modality of water governance where water would be managed as a commercial enterprise and everyone have the opportunity to participate.

However, if by the new millennium a high-level understanding and consensus had been reached that urban water services needed to be managed as commercial enterprises, and that sustainable and effective water governance required that everyone participate, this was certainly not a consensus reached by all. Indeed, in the preceding decade, the question of

whose business water was, in both interpretations of its meaning were issues of significant debate and controversy. This was particularly so with respect to urban water services in the South, which throughout the 1990s were fiercely and rather haphazardly targeted by international development agencies for privatisation under the policy prescriptions of neo-liberal reform. I suggest ‘fiercely’ because the privatisation of water services became forced prescriptions and conditionalities for international development agencies lending or development assistance grants (Hall, Bayliss & Lobina, 2002; Hall & Lobina 2002; Bayliss, 2002; Bakker, 2003; Alexander, 2005; Hilary 2005, Joy and Hardstaff, 2005). I suggest ‘haphazard’ because there was no historical precedent that determined that water services in the hands of private actors provided more efficient or equitable service provision than the public sector. In fact, there was evidence to suggest the opposite.

During the first half of the nineteenth century it was common for water supply networks in the cities of industrialised countries to be in the control of the private sector. In a number of cities, however, private actors were failing to provide the capital investment needed to extend and maintain quality water services (Gleick, Wolff, Chalecki & Reyes, 2002), and many also neglected to supply water to low-income citizens (ibid; Budds & McGranahan, 2003). Writing with respect to investment and equity under private service provision in North America during the mid-1800s, it is not a small point that Blake (1991) has pinpointed such market failures directly to the profiteering character of private enterprise (as cited in Gleick et al., 2002).

Given the problems of investment and equity, as well as the importance of water supply to economic growth and public health, there was growing concern at the time that private actors could exploit their monopoly status over water services by overcharging and under-supplying (UN Habitat, 2004). One remedy for curbing such abuse of monopoly power, and the one that came to dominate policy circles at that time, was for water networks to be controlled and managed by the public sector (ibid). It was further accepted that “[g]overnments making political commitments on universal coverage [would be] obliged to display this commitment in their plans and to set water prices at levels considered affordable to all” (ibid, p. 3). Thus, after a period of heated debate on the importance of

water to the public good and the appropriate (or inappropriate) role of private actors, by the beginning of the twentieth century the pendulum swung in favor of urban water services being state-owned and state-managed (Seppala, Hukka & Katko, 2001; Budds & McGranahan, 2003). Re-enforced by the welfare state in the North and the development state in the newly independent countries of the South the prevailing view for most of the last century was that water should be under public provision¹. In contrast to the earlier period when water services were under the control of private actors and water provision could be defined as a private good, accessible to those who could afford to pay market prices, under this governance arrangement urban water networks were managed as a public good. That is, access to a water supply was regarded as necessary for the individual and collective public good and water services were provided by the public sector.

By the late 1970s concern was growing that the world was facing an impending global water crisis (Biswas, 2003). One aspect of this was that was the estimation that some two thirds of the world's population did not have access to an adequate supply of safe water (Kibaroğlu, 2002, p. 66). In an attempt to raise awareness and promote action, in 1977 the United Nations held the first ever intergovernmental conference dedicated to water: The *United Nations Water Conference*, held in Mar Del Plata, Argentina. One of the four major themes that were addressed at the conference was the need to provide an adequate water supply to the world's population (ibid). In commitment to this, the conference delegates defined water as a "common good" and acknowledged every person's right to a supply of drinking water, sufficient in quality and quantity to meet their basic needs, whatever their development stage or socio-economic condition (World Water Council, 2009). This was quite progressive for the time. While the right to water was referred to, directly or indirectly, in a number of United Nations human rights declarations it was not until 2002 that water would be defined as an independent human right in the United Nations General Comment No. 15 on the Right to Water². A summary of the General Comment is provided in Appendix 1.

¹ There were exceptions to this, such as urban water provision in France. Throughout the nineteenth century, water services in France's municipalities were publicly provided and while other governments in the West began shifting from private to public provision, in France began moving from public to private provision. Thus, by the end of the last century, French water corporations became some the biggest private actors on the international stage (Gleick et al., 2002).

² For a detailed list of the right to water in earlier United Nations declarations refer to Scanlon, Cassar & Nemes (2004).

A significant outcome of the Mar Del Plata conference was the launch of an International Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1980-1990) that had as its principle goal to provide “every person with access to water of safe quality and adequate quantity, along with basic sanitary facilities, by 1990” (ibid, para. 2). Over the course of the decade large investments were made to extend water supply into un-serviced areas and while “hundreds of millions” of the world’s poorest people gained access to water and sanitation, the desired aim of universal access was not achieved (The New Delhi Statement, 1990, p. 1). In 1990, an estimated one third of the world’s population was still without sufficient water (ibid). The failure to achieve universal access was attributed, at least in part, to natural resource scarcity and because rapid population growth in the South was putting a strain on social services and public infrastructure (United Nations General Assembly, 1990). By this time, however, an alternative diagnosis was already emerging.

Over the same period that water management and universal access to water began receiving international attention, the role of the interventionist state was also beginning to be seriously challenged. By the 1980s neo-liberalism and the belief that state intervention in the economy was hindering economic growth and that the free market was the most effective and efficient way to organise a society’s resources had become the dominant political-economy ideology amongst Western governments and international development agencies. Over the course of the 1980s, in many Western countries, such as the United Kingdom and my own country of New Zealand, national governments embarked on major programs of economic liberalisation. In the so-called ‘developing world’, international development agencies such as the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation began enforcing extensive economic structural adjustment conditionalities to their development lending. Amongst the range of measures to liberalise national economies and minimise the state, was closing down or privatising state owned enterprises and basic public services (Kelsey, 1997). Such rationales were supported by the New Public Management school of thought, that as Kessler (2004) has critically pointed out, asserts in theory that privatisation of basic services and limiting the role of the state to protecting property rights, regulating firms and enabling market competition, is both economically sound and socially just.

Perhaps surprisingly, urban water services were not widely targeted for privatisation as part of the 1980s structural adjustment packages. However, given the condition of water services in the South and the ideological climate and dominant thinking on the role of the state, by the early 1990s, the marketisation of water networks was placed firmly on the international reform agenda. The rationale for pursuing the liberalisation and privatisation of urban water services in the 1990s was not, however, based purely on a theory of economics, but also a radical critique of the state and public utilities. The UN Habitat (2004) provides a succinct and clear account of this:

Especially in low-income settings, it was argued, public utilities were inclined to be inefficient, overstaffed, susceptible to corruption, open to manipulation by politicians pursuing short term political ends, and unresponsive to consumer demands. Low water tariffs, far from ensuring that low-income households could afford piped water, turned water distribution into patronage and contributed to utilities' financial difficulties, often inhibiting investment, and preventing water and sanitation networks from being extended to low-income settlements (even when residents were willing to pay). (p. 3-4)

In light of such critiques, the only solution offered by the critics was to privatise state-run water utilities. UN Habitat continues:

Privately run utilities, according to their supporters, would be cost-conscious, apolitical and demand-responsive. Independent regulation, along with competition for concessions or other contracts, would prevent the abuse of monopoly powers. At least for water, cost recovery could be achieved through tariff reform. These privately operated utilities, regulated in the public interest, would achieve what the public utilities had so manifestly failed to do. (ibid)

This was a radical shift. But the extent to which this view took hold within international policy circuits was intense. An indication of this acceptance was when water was re-defined from a public good and a common good, to that of an economic good at the *International Conference on Water and the Environment* which was held in Dublin in 1992. The conference participants were a collection of five hundred "experts" and at the end of the conference a statement was made outlining four guiding principles for the improved and sustainable management of water (The Dublin Statement, 1992, para. 2). These principles were indicative of some of the major themes in development thinking of the time. The first

principle recognised ecological sustainability and the critical link between the environment and development. The second principle reflected the growing salience and acceptance of participation within development discourse and practice, stating that effective water management required a “participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy makers at all levels” (ibid, para. 8). The third principle was informed by the growing concern with ‘gender in development’ and acknowledged the unique needs and role for women in water management. The fourth and most controversial principle addressed the economics of water management, but it also had something to say about the right to water. It reads:

Principle No. 4 - Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good

Within this principle, it is vital to recognize first the basic right of all human beings to have access to clean water and sanitation at an affordable price. Past failure to recognize the economic value of water has led to wasteful and environmentally damaging uses of the resource. Managing water as an economic good is an important way of achieving efficient and equitable use, and of encouraging conservation and protection of water resources (para. 10).

This last principle acknowledged that water was a basic human right (albeit at an affordable price), but it abandoned the conceptualisation of water as a public good and a common good. Replacing it with the radical re-definition of water as an economic good reading this principle in its entirety, it implies that treating water as an economic good is necessary, and perhaps the only way, in which the universal right to water could be achieved.

In the years following the Dublin Statement, although certainly not simply because of it, a powerful movement of international development agencies, multi-national water corporations, national governments and others, turned their attention to transforming water into an economic good. Contrary to the larger ambitions of the Dublin Statement, notably participation and human rights, this movement focused almost exclusively on privatising service delivery with little, or no due consideration or safeguards for ensuring the human right to water. This may appear to be a rather harsh claim. However, experiences from around the world have shown that in many situations privatising water services, removing public subsidies and charging water at full cost resulted in some of the poorest citizens

suffering (Hardoy & Schusterman, 2000; Grusky, 2001; Loftus & McDonald, 2001; Marsden, 2003; Public Citizen, 2003; Robbins, 2003; Shultz, 2003). On the Dolphin Coast in South Africa for instance, there was a major outbreak of cholera when many poor people in slums had their water disconnected after they were unable to pay commercial rates. Over a quarter of a million people were infected during the outbreak and hundreds died (Marsden, 2003). According to the UK Government (2004) consumption charges should not exceed three percent of household income, yet in the city of Cochabamba in Bolivia water tariffs rose by two hundred percent after the Bechtel Corporation was granted a forty year concession contract. For many working households this amounted to twenty-five percent of their income (Shultz, 2003; Public Citizen, 2003).

If it is possible for me to call the fierce promotion and implementation of turning water networks into a profitable business a movement, and to propose that this movement was definitely in motion during the 1990s, I also suggest that by the latter part of the decade, two further, yet distinctly interconnected, reactionary movements had also begun to take shape. The first movement took the form of people's resistance. In cities around the world where the privatisation of water services was being proposed, implemented or already in place, sharp political and social opposition emerged (Barlow & Clarke, 2002; Hall et al., 2002; McKinley, 2003; Amorebieta, 2005; Ardhanie, 2005; Flynn, & Boudouris, 2005; Hall, Lobina & de la Motte, 2005; Maltz, 2005; McKinley, 2005; Santos, C. & Villarreal, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2005). Northern NGOs and activist organisations also joined the resistance. Many developed alliances with Southern movements and in solidarity formed international networks aimed at re-asserting the 'public' back into water services, for instance the Reclaiming Public Water network. Based in the North, many of these NGOs actively pressured their own governments, as well as international development agencies such as the World Bank to stop making water privatisation conditional to development grants and lending (for example the World Development Movement, Public Citizen, and the Transnational Institute).

The concerns of those opposing the privatisation of water services, in both the North and the South, was not simply ideological of whether water should be publicly or privately

managed, although this was a significant aspect. From interviews I conducted with NGOs in the North and my own fieldwork in Karnataka, the concerns of these groups were also about the power of international agencies to undermine national sovereignty and democratic processes through conditionalities, the global monopolisation of water services by a handful of multi-national water corporations, the conceptualisation of water as an economic good rather than a cultural and social good, and the implications of the reform process and outcomes on the already poor and marginalised. Rather than de-politicising the provision of water, as was claimed privatisation would do, the global and local movement of people's resistance *further* politicised water management and governance, as citizens, politicians, and civil society organisations the world over challenged the process and outcomes of privatisation.

The second movement took the form of capital retreat. After a peak of private investment in 1997, by the late 1990s international water corporations began to seriously question the viability of their operations in the South and many began seeking renegotiation of their existing contracts or attempting to exit from Southern water markets all together (Hall, 2003; Hall & Lobina, 2004; World Bank, 2005). Arguably this was partly in response to the local and global movement of people's resistance, but there were also other factors, as Prasad (2007) has pointed out:

Some of the major water companies started to withdraw from developing countries following a series of economic and financial crises, natural disasters, incidents of corruption, risky operating environments, miscalculation by the multinationals or non-compliance with contractual obligations. (p. 11)

In sum, Southern water markets were high risk and far from as commercially attractive as had been perceived. It has since been acknowledged within the World Bank – one of the major actors in the neo-liberalisation of urban water services – that the promotion of privatisation was “due to irrational exuberance” (World Bank, 2004, as cited in Hall & Lobina, 2004, p. 268), and that it is hard to get private actors to “design tariffs in a way that does not discriminate against the poor” (World Bank, 2003, as cited in Prasad, 2007, p. 11). Yet despite such acknowledgements, as well as the two reactionary movements that surfaced in the late 1990s, in the new millennium a commitment to commercially-oriented

reforms in the water sector has persisted, unabated, within international policy circuits. It continues to be argued that private actors possess the necessary skills and capabilities to deliver water efficiently and equitably, and that although the public sector will be the largest investor in urban water networks, private investment is necessary to meet the financing challenges of extending, improving and sustaining water networks (see for example the (World Water Council, 2000; Winpenny, 2003). However, I suggest that the dual movements of people's resistance and capital retreat have presented two critical challenges to reformers intent on pursuing commercially-oriented water services.

The first challenge is to establish more risk-free and attractive governance environments for private investors and operators. In tune with the good governance discourse, which posits that a small but capable state is necessary for creating an enabling environment for the market, the remedy to this challenge is to reform the governance institutions and frameworks of the state so that they serve the needs of private capital. I will discuss this in more depth in the following chapter but in brief, this includes putting in place market-friendly policies and legal frameworks, opening up public utilities and services to greater competition and private sector participation, introducing independent regulators, and increasing tariffs to full cost recovery. The links between attracting private investment, the market-friendly reform of water governance and full-cost pricing of water is made clear by the World Water Council (2000):

Great hopes have been expressed for major investments by the international private sector: a recent stockbroker report suggested that an increase to \$100-165 billion is achievable. If governments accept the World Water Commission's recommendation of full-cost pricing for water services, this will be a great incentive not only for local investors but also for international private investment. Attracting this investment will also require good water governance – strong regulations, sound policies, and up-to-date laws. (p. 61)

Given this historical account of urban water governance over the last two centuries, it is hard not to question if the current policies and reform measures which continue to emphasise full-cost pricing and the role of profit-motivated private actors in service provision will differ from earlier, and arguably failed attempts, at universal access to water services especially for the poor. Furthermore, while such technocratic solutions to

governance reforms are presented as first rate and universally applicable, it is known by reform-minded institutions that such solutions are not only technical but also highly political and prone to failure unless the right configuration and alignment of supportive actors is in place. To exemplify this point, take for instance a brief for policy makers put out by the World Bank (n.d.), following a book that they published in 2008. The book is titled: *Governance Reform Under Real-World Conditions: Citizens, Stakeholders and Voice* and the policy brief reads:

Although necessary and often first rate, technocratic solutions alone have been ineffective in delivering real change or lasting results in governance reforms. This is primarily because reform programs are delivered not in controlled environments, but under complex, diverse, sociopolitical, and economic conditions. Real-world conditions.

In political societies ownership of reform programs by the entire country cannot be assumed, public opinion will not necessarily be benign, and coalitions of support may be scarce or nonexistent, even when intended reforms really will benefit those who need them most... In the real world, reforms will not succeed and they will certainly not be sustained without the correct alignment of citizens, stakeholders, and voice. (p. 1)

This quote leads into the second challenge reformers currently face, which is to transform social and political opposition to market oriented reforms into a broad-based support and consensus on the need for reform, within both the state and the citizenry. According to the World Bank (n.d.) building consensus and support for reform involves a number sub-challenges, including:

- Securing political will and the best methods for reaching out to political leaders, policy makers and legislators;
- Gaining support of public sector middle managers, often the strongest opponents of change;
- Building broad coalitions of pro-change influentials and dealing with powerful vested interests;
- Transforming indifferent or hostile public opinion into support for reform objectives; (p. 1)

These quotes from the World Bank's policy brief raise a number of critical questions about the strategies and methods that may be employed by those, who the World Bank refers to as

“reform managers”, when governance reforms are being implemented. If governance reforms, in order to be successfully implemented, require the right alignment of actors then what is this alignment, who would the alignment include and exclude, and how would it be established at the time of doing governance reforms “under real-world conditions”? How is consensus and support for reform created and sustained when confronted with opposition and alternative views? Furthermore, if the technical solutions are already pre-supposed, then what space, if any, do current reforms present for genuine consultation and democratic participation?

Development & the Deepening of Democracy

It has been suggested that the intense debates on water service provision in the 1990s were principally concerned with whether water services should be publicly or privately owned and managed, and that this has detracted discussions from more important issues on financing and water quality (Biswas, 2005a), or how to make private actors responsive to the poor (UN Habitat, 2004). However, what these observers have either failed, or chosen not to acknowledge, is that for many people opposing this shift their resistance fed into deeper concerns on issues of inclusive citizenship and democracy. These are not concerns unique to reforms in the water sector but rather to the broader historical and contemporary character of the power and politics of development. Indeed, in the last decades of the twentieth century, concerns, controversies and contests over the meaning and material realms of development were often experienced, and theoretically framed, as struggles for inclusive citizenship and the deepening of democracy. My concern with the intersections and implications of contemporary reforms with democratic possibilities and limitations follows a growing body of work that sees the prospect of deepening democracy as an expanding frontier of politics and a means to the expansion of citizenship rights and social justice (Fung & Wright, 2001; Avritzer, 2002; Wong, 2003; Ackerman, 2004; de Sousa Santos & Avritzer, 2007).

Despite Francis Fukuyama’s (1989) now famous thesis that with the expansion and universalisation of Western liberal democracy we have witnessed the “end of history”, there

is an ever growing concern that liberal democracy is in crisis. It is, as Gaventa (2005) has articulated, something of paradox that while liberal democracy has spread, with more electoral democracies in place now than ever before, increasingly the substance and quality of such democracy is being brought into question. By liberal democracy, I refer to low-intensity representative democracy and the accompanying techno-bureaucratic administrative institutions which emerged in the industrialised nations of the North during the period of capitalist expansion. Such liberal democracies, in both the North and the South, have come to be regarded by many as diminished democracies: where citizens experience a dislocation from the state; where not all citizens benefit from a nation's wealth; where the majority of citizens are excluded from actively participating in political decision making; where inadequate mechanisms are in place to hold the powerful to account; and, particularly for countries in the South, where national sovereignty is compromised by globalisation and the policies and practices of international development agencies such as the Bretton Woods Institutions (Fung & Wright, 2001; Wong, 2003; Ackerman, 2004; Gaventa, 2005; de Sousa Santos & Avritzer, 2007).

The crisis of diminishing democracy is often presented in terms of democratic deficits. Luckham et al. (2000, p. 22-23) have categorised such deficits into four broad groups: "hollow citizenship" – where citizens lack equal rights and entitlements; "lack of vertical accountability" – where citizens are unable to hold political elites and governments accountable; "weak horizontal accountability" – where the executive arm of the state can circumvent checks and balances through patronage, corruption or stifling of dissent; and, "international accountability dilemmas" – where governments are limited in their policy choices and decisions due to the power of international actors, which in turn further limits the capacity of citizens to hold state actors to account. These democratic deficits have led some to question whether the institutions of liberal democracy are capable of resolving the complexity of twenty-first century problems (Fung & Wright, 2001). While such deficits exist in Northern liberal democracies they are experienced with more ferocity in liberal democracies in the South (Luckham et al., 2000; Gaventa, 2005), where extreme poverty and widening inequality is most severe. This has led others to challenge the appropriateness of liberal democracy for Southern countries, to question whose interests the promotion of such

democratic forms by international development agencies and Western governments benefit, and to problematise liberal democracy as hegemonic in the way it undermines alternative epistemologies, knowledge and democratic diversity (Abrahamsen, 2000; de Sousa Santos & Avritzer, 2005). Contemporary innovations and aspirations for deepening democracy have emerged in response to these democratic deficits and the fracture between citizens and the institutions that affect their lives.

Deepening democracy has both “procedural and substantive” aspects (Roberts, 1998 p. 3 as cited in Wong, 2003, p. 236). That is, it is about the institutions and form of democracy, as well as what manifests from democratic processes, whether it be practical solutions to local problems (Fung & Wright, 2001), greater institutional accountability and responsiveness (Goetz & Jenkins, 2001; Gaventa, 2002; Ackerman, 2004) or larger ambitions of social justice and emancipation (de Sousa Santos, 2005). As a broad approach, it aims to extend opportunities for citizens to *participate* in processes of governance and have greater control over resources. There are a small but growing number of innovations from around the world where greater citizen participation in political matters and the re-design of local governance institutions is taking shape. These include participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, policing and school reforms in Chicago, societal participation in auditing of government expenditures in Mumbai and Rajasthan in India, and also in India the strengthening of village level governance through the devolution of state funds in Kerala. Such innovations have been given various names such as “empowered deliberative democracy” (Fung & Wright, 2001), the “The New Accountability Agenda” (Goetz & Jenkins, 2001), “participatory publics” (Avritzer, 2002), “participatory democracy” (de Sousa Santos & Avritzer, 2005) and “co-governance” (Ackerman, 2004). While these innovations deal with different issues and take place in diverse settings, their similarity with each other is that they blur the boundaries between the state and society where social actors “participate directly in the core functions of governance” (Ackerman, 2004, p. 451).

These innovations in deepening democracy signify a radical break from the more politically neutral notions of participation that have become increasingly common-place amongst mainstream development agencies, whether it be NGOs, international development

institutions or Northern governments. This is an important point given that since the 1970s participation has increasingly become regarded as an important strategy for implementing top-down development (Rahmena, 1992). As Cornwall (2002) explains:

A judicious dose of participation can assure quiescence, cut costs to government by devolving burdens of provision, shore up moral and political legitimacy of those who will use it, as well as enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the planned intervention. Its value for these purposes has been recognised by organisations like the World Bank, and by national governments, as well as foreign donors. (p. 49)

Where deepening democracy differs from these more functional approaches to participation in development is in the way it is used to conceptualise participation as a political process and a political right where social actors actively engage in visioning, defining, and shaping their own development destinies. That is, it goes beyond invitations to participate that may be offered because it is thought of as useful, and maybe even necessary, for accommodating the visions and plans of others. By framing participation in the context of a democratic project it seeks to overturn what Cooke & Kothari (2001) have referred to as the “tyranny of participation” in development. In this way, deepening democracy can be considered as involving two interconnected processes. First, increasing and strengthening opportunities for citizens, especially the poor, to influence institutions and policies through deeper and more diverse forms of citizen participation. Second, the re-design of the institutions of governance so they are more inclusive, and accountable and responsive to citizen’s needs (Goetz & Jenkins, 2001; Fung & Wright, 2001; Gaventa, 2002; Ackerman, 2004; de Sousa Santos, 2005).

Unlike the institutions of liberal democracy where decision-making power is bestowed on a handful of elected representatives, bureaucrats, and experts, new forms of genuine participation by citizens on matters that affect their lives presents “a new architecture of democratic practice” (Cornwall, 2002, p. 49). However, while greater societal participation in political life and political affairs through new democratic forms seeks to remedy the deficits of liberal democracy it does not necessarily aim to do away with it. Rather, deepening democracy is thought of as a process where the institutions of representative democracy are accompanied by new modes and structures of citizen involvement

(Cornwall, 2002; de Sousa Santos & Avritzer, 2005; Gaventa, 2005). This requires, not that forms of local-level participatory democracy simply co-exist with national-level representative democracy, but, as de Sousa Santos and Avritzer (2005) have explained, greater complementarities between them:

... complementarity, implies a more profound articulation between representative democracy and participatory democracy. It presupposes the recognition by the government that participatory proceduralism, the public forms of monitoring governments and the processes of public deliberation can substitute part of the process of representation and deliberation as conceived of in the hegemonic model of democracy. Contrary to what this model seeks to achieve, the objective is to associate with the process of strengthening local democracy forms of cultural renovation related to a new political institutionality that re-introduces the questions of cultural plurality and the necessity of social inclusion into the democratic agenda. (p. 1xvii)

Such democratic ambitions are, however, no small task. And even amongst those who advocate for the institutionalisation of greater citizen participation, there is recognition that within these new institutional forms democratic limitation remains a possibility. For instance, in a review of five innovations in participatory democracy from around the world, Fung & Wright (2001) have developed an abstract model of “radical democracy” which they refer to as Empowered Deliberative Democracy. They argue that the innovations they have examined, which range from neighbourhood governance councils in Chicago to Panchayat (local government) reforms in the Indian states of Kerala and West Bengal, “aspire to deepen the ways in which ordinary people can effectively participate in and influence policies that directly affect their lives” through processes of reasoned deliberation, devolution of decision-making and implementation power to local units, and the in the way they “colonize and transform existing state and corporate institutions” (ibid, p. 7 & 25). Drawing on criticisms that have been raised against what is commonly regarded as deliberative democracy they caution that such institutional innovations may be vulnerable to unequal power relationship within the deliberative arenas, may only be accepted by powerful external actors when it suits them, could be “captured” by powerful parties with vested interests, and may be too demanding on ordinary citizens in terms of time and knowledge. All of which, they note, point to the possibility that such innovations may not be sustainable in the long term.

I would also add that there is a need to consider and appreciate that any given model or experiment in participatory democracy may not be replicable in settings that may or may not share similar cultural, political, economic conditions and histories. What may be possible in the Indian state of Kerala at any given point in time for example, may not be so in the neighbouring state of Karnataka for a variety of reasons. It is also important to acknowledge that while there is growing demand by citizens for re-forming the institutions of governance in ways that guarantee more genuine societal participation and social equity, the institutions in greatest need of reforming may not be willing or wanting of such reforms: particularly those who already hold the power to reform. Therefore, it is also necessary to look beyond the forms and procedures of already existing cases of institutionalised deeper democracy to the ways in which social actors attempt to obtain greater control and authority over their lives. There are two arenas which I feel are of significance here. The first is the overt and direct political pressure that social movements, political and social activists, communities and individuals exert on powerful institutions. The second arena is also political but is less visible and confrontational. It takes the form of the everyday, mundane practices of resistance that vulnerable and marginalised citizens engage in to counter-act anti-poor governance practices, institutions, or interventions that are done by those with the power to reform in the name of helping them. These practices are what James C. Scott (1985), in his study of peasant resistance has termed the “weapons of the weak”. He explains how revolutionary acts by peasants to confront exploitation are rare and that it is...

important to understand that what we might call the everyday forms of peasant resistance – the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents, and interest from them. Most of the forms of this struggle stop well short of collective outright defiance... They require little or no coordination or planning; they often represent a form of individual self-help; and they typically avoid any direct symbolic confrontation with authority or elite norms. To understand these commonplace forms of resistance is to understand what much of the peasantry does “between revolts” to defend its interest as best it can. (p. 29)

While overtly political confrontations and the everyday practices of resistance may not constitute deeper democracy they both represent struggles that citizens engage in to obtain greater control over their lives. In this way they can, albeit in different ways, be considered as important arenas for understanding the local articulations of citizen’s ambitions for

deepening democracy and more just and equitable societies. This suggestion is strengthened by the recognition that even among those advocating for deeper democracy there is no consensus on exactly what form it should or could take, and no single way through which it can be achieved. It is, as Wong (2003) has suggested, a “vague” concept. From an academic standpoint it might be thought appropriate or desirable for me to attempt a definition or to nominate a preference for a model or approach to deeper democracy at this point. I will, however, do neither. My choice to not define deeper democracy stems from theoretical, epistemological and methodological concerns which I believe are critical to a research project about deeper democracy, as well as the political project of deepening democracy.

I take the position that struggles and innovations in deepening democracy are a situated practice and that they are coloured by the unique historical, political, cultural, social and economic character of the local. Thus, while I appreciate that theoretical work in deepening democracy, as well as experiments and experiences in one place can provide important lessons and insights for people in other locations, in my view, the lack of clarity and consensus on the form and path to deeper democracy is perhaps where its current strength lies. That is, in its “vagueness” it remains open to democratic alternatives and possibilities. The essential quality of keeping the concept of deepening democracy open to multiple interpretations, forms and possibilities is perhaps explained by Gaventa (2005) when he suggests that deepening democracy “is a process through which citizens exercise ever-deepening control over decisions which affect their lives, and as such it is constantly under construction” (p. 4). I interpret this to mean that deepening democracy is an ongoing process and that it is in the continual struggles for deepening democracy that leads to the constant re-visioning and renewal of the meaning, composition and substance of democracy. Taking from this, I would suggest that absolute definitions or perceived ‘best models’ of democracy place conceptual boundaries which may limit what we see, or imagine as being, pathways, forms and possibilities to the deepening of democracy.

Locating & Mapping the Thesis

So far in this introductory chapter I have traced the shifting frameworks of urban water governance from the mid nineteenth century to the present era of good governance. This was followed by a discussion on recent innovations and theoretical work on the importance of the deepening of democracy for inclusive development and governance. In this final section I locate the thesis within the contemporary literature of urban water reforms and the Indian state of Karnataka, and map out how the stories and analysis of the study will unravel in the chapters that follow.

In the midst of growing interest and concern with urban water services and the shifting frameworks of water governance to a marketised and commercialised approach to service delivery since the early 1990s, a large body of literature has emerged covering a diverse range of issues related to water reforms, and often with conflicting perspectives and findings. A number of studies have explored the role, influence and networks of international actors that are party to the construction of a global consensus on water policy (Bond, n.d.; Goldman, 2005; Finger, 2005; Moore & Sklar, 1998; Hall & Hoedmann, 2006; Mehta & La Cour Madsen, 2003). In different ways these studies reveal the power of global actors in the construction of what Mosse (2007) refers to as developments “regimes of truth”. To varying degrees they also challenge such construction, and highlight the existing and possible potential of an increasingly globalised and mobilised civil society as a counter-balance to such power. These case studies are vital for interpreting and understanding the construction of global policy consensus and the political dynamics and contestations at play in international settings, but through their global focus are unable to shed light on the power dynamics of how such policy is implemented locally, nor are they able to critically assess the outcomes of such reforms on local communities.

In addition to analysis on the global environment of water reforms, a number of analysts have, however, focused their attention on local or regional case studies where market oriented water reforms are being implemented, or opt for more theoretical discussions on various elements of institutional reform. These studies have a variety of foci but many tend to examine various technical aspects of reform such as financing (Hall, 2003; Lee & Floris,

2003; Winpenny, 2003; Rodriguez, 2004; Mehta, Fugelsnes & Virjee, 2005; Kehew, Matsukawa & Petersen, 2005; Van Hofwegen, 2006), pricing and subsidies (Gomez-Lobo & Contreras, 2003; Biswas, 2005; De Azevedo & Baltar, 2005; Garcia, 2005), regulation (Jones, 2000; Nickson and Vargas, 2002; Robinson, 2004), and the pros and cons of different private contract models (Seppala, Hukka & Katko, 2001; Hukka & Katko, 2003; Rothenberger & Truferr, 2003). While the focus and analytical approach of these studies is varied, many of them attempt to determine the appropriate or inappropriate role for public and private actors based on criteria such as efficiency, transaction costs and improved services for the poor. Within this literature the findings are mixed and there is no consensus.

Some analysts conclude that while water services are principally the responsibility of the public sector and also that investment comes predominantly from the public sector, that the private sector must participate on the basis of introducing competition, service delivery capacity and efficiency, and financing potential (Lee & Floris, 2003; Rodriguez, 2004; Biswas, 2005a). A general tendency within these works is to suggest that we need to move beyond the public-private debate and instead focus attention on the best alignment and configuration of responsibilities and roles for public and private actors. Many of these authors, in what appears to be an attempt to de-politicise debates on market reforms, opt for the more inclusive terms of “private sector participation” and “public-private partnerships” rather than the more contentious terms “water privatisation” or the “privatisation of water services”. Some of these studies have attempted to make private sector participation more palatable by exploring how to make private actors or informal service providers work for the poor (UN-Habitat, 2004; Kjellen & McGranahan, 2006; McGranahan & Owen, 2006; McGranahan & Satterwaite, 2006), how to raise corporate social responsibility within the private water industry (Tsogas, Komives & Fuller, n.d.; Water UK, 2003), or how to build the capacity of consumer organisations to engage in sector reform (Consumer International & WSP, 2004).

However, a few economic analyses of private sector efficiency have explained how private sector actors do not necessarily perform better than public utilities, and that private sector involvement does not necessarily lead to improvements in service provider performance

(Estache & Rossi, 2002; Renzetti and Dupont, 2003; Kirkpatrick, Parker & Zhang, 2006). Despite this, and taking the “superiority” of private provision of water over public schemes as a “fact”, Al-Hmoud and Edwards (2004) have concerned themselves with what attracts private sector actors to enter into service contracts in developing countries. Their quantitative study on 39 developing countries, which investigates 29 political, social, and demographic variables concludes that it is largely unexplainable what attracts private actors and attribute the closure of a contract to “hidden and across-the-table negotiations that may take place between the government and private companies” (p. 520). Taking a different stance on the superiority of private water providers, scholars from the Public Services International Research Unit of the University of Greenwich have provided a comprehensive critique on corporate interests in the water sector. Drawing on case-studies from around the developing world, these authors have exposed various corporate strategies in the dynamics of market entry, the extension and renegotiation of contracts, and the exiting of corporate actors when profit levels falter (Hall & Lobina, 2004; Hall, Corral, Lobina & de la Motte, 2004; Lobina, 2005). As such, and alongside others, they call for greater emphasis on building strong public institutions and exploring public alternatives to privatisation (Lobina & Hall, 2000. See also the Reclaiming Public Water Network).

Regardless of which side of the debate these numerous studies fall, most fail to supply in-depth and detailed accounts that capture the political nuances of reforms locally. There are some exceptions to this such as Nickson and Vargas’ (2002) study on the Cochabamba concession contract but much more work is needed on understanding the complexities of local reform processes beyond technical frameworks. As I stated in my opening remarks of this chapter, a critical aspect of this study is my concern not only with what the policy reforms prescribe but also the everyday practices through which they are implemented by those with the power to reform, and how these limit or create possibilities for the deepening of democracy and the realisation of the right to water for every person.

In Chapter Two: *Getting In(to) Good Governance*, I locate urban water reforms within the context of the broader good governance discourse that has dominated development thinking since the early 1990s. This chapter has a dual purpose. The first is to trace the emergence of good governance within the policy frameworks and programs of international

development institutions and to outline its historical and contemporary origins, rationalities, assumptions and aims. The discussion explains how within the good governance discourse capitalist economic growth and liberal democratic politics are conceptualised and theorised as being mutually reinforcing and complimentary, as well as fundamental for poverty reduction and securing the basic needs and rights of the poor. It further explains how the policy prescriptions of good governance aim to transform the governance institutions of the state so that they provide a supporting environment for the market, albeit with the 'right' forms of participation by civil society. The second purpose of the chapter is to take a critical look at these claims and policy prescriptions and I take two general lines of inquiry. First, I consider to what extent the contemporary construction of good governance reforms, in both policy and practice differ from earlier, and arguably failed, development intentions and interventions. Second, I question whether good governance reforms are likely to lead to deeper democratic politics and a development trajectory that supports the extension and realisation of human rights for the poor. The chapter is framed around five fields related to good governance policy and practice:

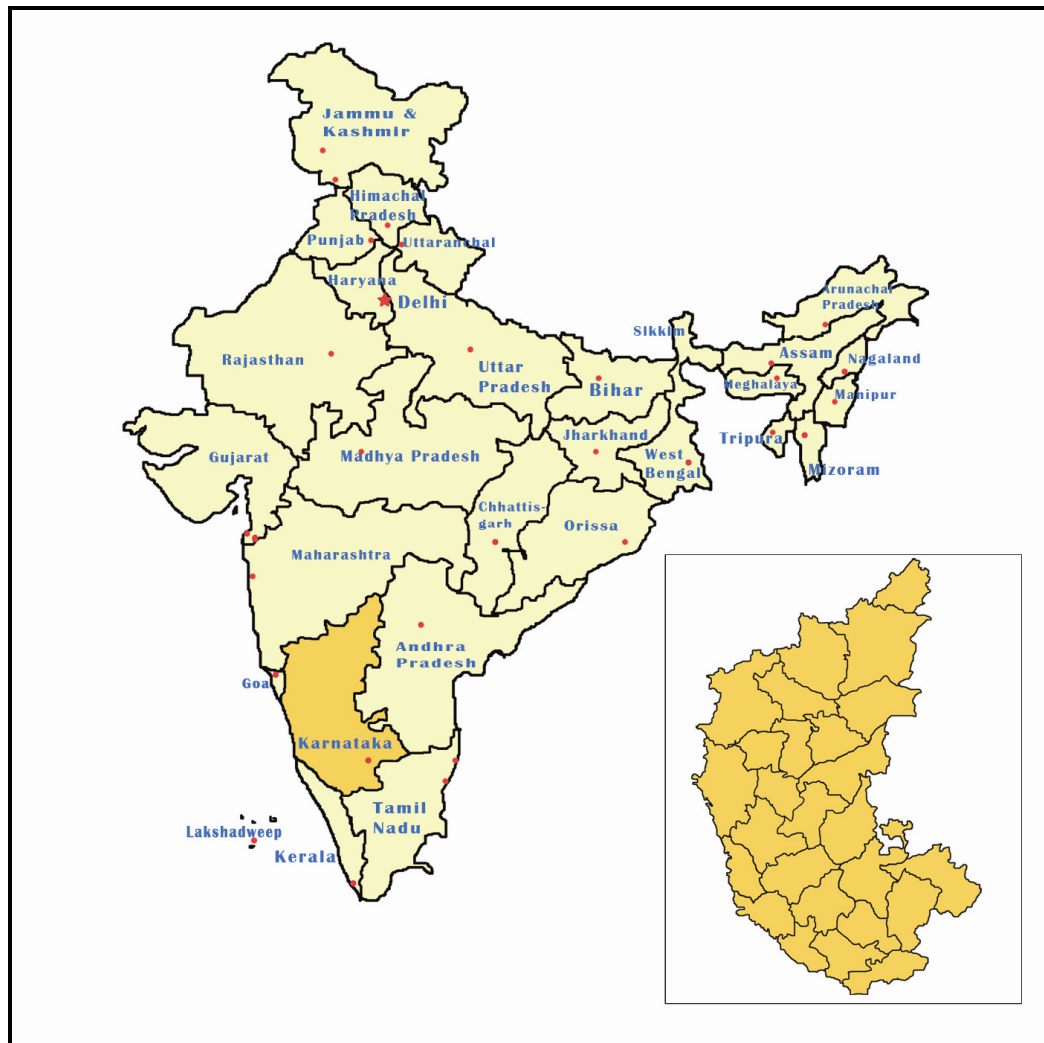
- the conditions of re-forming the state as a trustee for the capitalist market;
- the constructed role for liberal democracy and civil society participation;
- the implications of striving for a political consensus on pluralism and inclusion;
- the role of technical 'expertise' in the manufacturing of development knowledge; and
- the commercialisation and privatisation of basic services as the means for securing rights for the poor.

Through my discussion of these fields I suggest that despite the policies, premises and promises of the good governance discourse a number of tensions and contradictions may play out within these five fields and exist and manifest in the intersections between policy, practice, and outcomes which limit the realisation of deepening democracy and rights.

In the remaining chapters I explore these fields and the possible tensions and contradictions that arise through the everyday practices of urban water governance reforms in one setting: the south Indian state of Karnataka (refer to Image 1.1 on the following page for Karnataka's

geographical location in the state). Karnataka came into being as a state in 1956 when five territories of Kannada speaking people were merged (Government of Karnataka, 2006). At this time, Karnataka was primarily agrarian but since the early 1980s the contribution of the primary sector to Gross Domestic Product has reduced, while the secondary and tertiary sectors have grown (ibid). Particularly startling has been the rise of the information technology sector in the state's capital of Bangalore which contributes some forty percent to India's software export industry (ibid).

Figure 1.1 Location of the state of Karnataka in India



Source: Author

Natural increases in population combined with migration from rural areas saw Karnataka's urban centres experiencing a 28.85 percent population growth over the years 1994-2004, and with a total population of over fifty million, and an estimated thirty-four percent of the population living in urban areas, Karnataka is ranked as the fourth most urbanised state in India (KUIDFC, 2004). Despite that Karnataka's head count for rural poverty is well below the national average (19.1 percent in the state compared to 28.8 percent for the country), and urban poverty is above the India average (27.1 percent and 25.1 percent respectively (Government of Karnataka, 2006), urban growth continues to characterise Karnataka's development trajectory³. Furthermore, while Karnataka boasted the highest growth rate of Gross State Domestic Product over the years 1990-2001, it only ranked seventh in the country in terms of human development with the Southern part of the state faring significantly better than the North (ibid).

Such trends in economic diversification, modernisation and urbanisation have been taking place throughout the country since the Government of India embarked on a major neo-liberal reform package in 1991 (Government of India, n.d.a). However, urbanisation in Karnataka, as in other states, has placed growing pressure on urban infrastructure such as housing, transport, sanitation and water supply, as well as on state and local government budgets as they struggle with growing populations and deteriorating infrastructure (Government of India, n.d.a; KUIDFC, 2004). With a growing emphasis on urban areas as the power house of India's industrialising and modernising economy (Government of India, n.d.a), combined with the global emphasis since the mid 1990s on getting the institutions of governance 'right', increasing attention is now being paid by state and central governments in India to the development of urban infrastructure and governance reform. The renewal and reformation of urban water services and governance is high on this dual agenda.

As the second most arid state in India after Rajasthan (Government of Karnataka, 2006), it has been reported that 92 percent of towns in the Northern part of the state and some 84 percent of towns in South Karnataka have an inadequate supply of water (Report by the

³ In addition to disproportionate levels of poverty between rural and urban Karnataka, there are also large regional disparities among districts in the state which prompted the Government of Karnataka to establish a High Powered Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances in the year 2000.

High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances, 2002 cited in KUIDFC, 2004, p. 19). In most cities, people rely on both surface water and ground water to meet their daily water needs and this is particularly so for those in peri-urban areas and low income settlements (ibid). However, the quality and quantity of ground water sources is fast deteriorating (ibid), and there is a growing emphasis on extending piped surface water to the rapidly growing urban populace, which is notable by the number of piped infrastructure projects underway in the state (I will discuss this more in Chapter Four). The challenge of securing water supply to urban citizens is not simply a challenge of water availability, and these projects are not simply about the construction of physical infrastructure. Rather, the challenge of urban water in Karnataka is attributed in large part to the character and crisis of water governance and as such, these projects, some of which I discuss in detail in the following chapters, are about reforming the institutional, political, social and economic environments of urban water. A private consultant's report prepared for one such project explains the defined crisis of water governance in Karnataka, and the proposed solutions. These problems and solutions match lucidly with mainstream thinking and the consensus that emerged within international policy circles throughout the 1990s. The Report reads:

...the quality of water services in most urban areas is very poor; an unsatisfactory, discontinuous supply regime is the operational norm; there is extensive lack of piped supplies to a significant proportion of the population in many cities and an even worse situation in respect to sanitation. This unacceptably low level of service is the result of a number of interrelated factors – diffused sector responsibility; lack of accountability; user charges that do not cover operational costs, stemming from a prevalent view that water should be a free good; consequent chronic lack of sector investment; a non-transparent and complicated system of subsidies; lack of a regulatory framework...

Sector reform will therefore require the creation of a suitable institutional and legal environment, including a credible, effective regulatory framework, a transparent and simple system of fiscal flows and devolutions, a gradual approach to financial sufficiency with declining and well-targeted subsidies, better access for the poor, and a gradually increasing involvement of the private sector to bring much-needed management expertise, technology and financial resources to the sector (Bristol Water Service, 2003, p. 9).

However, the reform of urban water governance is not merely a set of technical solutions to a defined set of technical problems. Rather, it is a highly political, and politicised, process.

Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that governance is essentially about politics and power, and that so too is the project of development. In recognition of this, in this thesis I explicitly examine the political dimensions, realities and practices through which water governance reforms are taking place in Karnataka. In this way it is a study about the politics of development and governance. It is, however, a political study in another sense, that of my own perspective, positionality, and subjectivity as a researcher.

In Chapter Three, *In the Site of Reform* I elaborate on how and why my overarching methodological approach was one of politically motivated critical ethnography. The chapter details my analytical strategy and the methods of my data collection. It explains how I chose the intersections between good governance reforms in policy, and the practice and politics of their implementation through specific local project interventions as my focal point. This strategy, as I will elucidate, required me to engage with a wide and diverse group of actors: those designing and implementing reforms; those actively engaged in political resistance to such; and the poor who were either the intended, or at times excluded beneficiaries of reforms. This chapter also discusses a number of ethical questions that I faced, both during fieldwork and in the writing of this thesis, and in doing so challenges some conventional views on what is, and what is not, ethical in doing research in “real world conditions”.

While I was in India I was asked many times why I chose to explore urban water reforms in Karnataka: why not New Zealand, Africa, Delhi or Latin America? My response to such a question usually took the form of a wordy and incoherent explanation about how I had stumbled on Karnataka as a site of reform. But the more I was asked this question, and the longer I was there, the more I questioned “Yes, why Karnataka?” My meaning in this question was not about why I had chosen Karnataka but rather, what it was about this state that had catalysed it and enabled it to travel so swiftly down the ‘determined path’ of neo-liberal water governance reform when many other Indian states were not or at least had not, yet begun.

For the close reader, answers to this will have began to appear in Chapter Three, but it is in Chapter Four: *The State of A Determined Path* that I begin to unravel this more explicitly. My

discussion on the *The State of A Determined Path* provides a functional purpose which is to introduce Karnataka's governance institutions, the agents involved in urban water reforms and some of the major projects currently underway in the state. The larger analytical purpose, however, is to elucidate the convergence of events and actors that have enabled market oriented water reforms to take hold in Karnataka. Rather than present a top-down, linear explanation on the politics of development by ascribing the implementation of local reforms to powerful international agencies, central governments or both, this chapter begins to disentangle the range of local, national and global actors that are involved in the political construction and implementation of local-level reforms. An important theme that begins to emerge in Chapter Four is the way in which governance reforms operate through, and within, what I consider to be an anti-democratic 'politics of consensus'.

In Chapters Five through to Seven, I explore the operation of this politics of consensus in more detail. Each of these chapters tells a story about a water reform and infrastructure project currently underway in Karnataka. They present a close examination of the every-day practices of reform and the politics and analytics of power through which policy formulation, implementation, and resistance to such occurs. In their narrative they reveal the limitations contemporary good governance reforms, both in policy and practice, present for the deepening of democracy and water security for the poor.

The focus of Chapter Five: *Demonstrating Development*, is a World Bank funded pilot project that is taking place in the Northern region of Karnataka. It is just one component of a larger World Bank funded project to reform urban water governance in the state. The pilot entails improving water network infrastructure through public investments, increasing user tariffs toward full cost recovery, and handing over operations and management to a private international water corporation. As the first externally assisted project of its kind in India, its successful implementation is of considerable 'demonstration' value to the World Bank and other like-minded reform actors for rolling out similar service models both in Karnataka and India. The chapter explains how a number of 'expert' private consultants were recruited by senior state bureaucrats and the World Bank in the preparation phase of the pilot to strategically re-engineer the legal, institutional, physical, technical, social and political

environments to minimise risk and manufacture success for the pilot and the private operator. It also elaborates on the strategies and tactics that were employed by local politicians, public and private bureaucrats, and NGOs to contain and manage social and political opposition to the project. In sum, the chapter explains how a variety of reform agents engaged in a systematic, intentional, and strategic undermining of local democratic process and aspiration and that rather than improving local water governance has compounded challenges of transparency, accountability and equity in service provision.

Pilot projects are an important mechanism employed by international development agencies for establishing best practice, generating support within the state and citizenry on the need and path of reform, and scaling up such initiatives both locally and regionally. In Chapter Six: *Can We Have A Civil-Consumer Slum, Please...*, I examine another pilot project and explain how it was up-scaled. This chapter traces the evolution and outcomes of an initiative to connect slums in Karnataka's capital city of Bangalore to the legal, user-pays water distribution network⁴. Beginning as a pilot project that financially and technically assisted by the Australian government's bi-lateral development assistance it was subsequently up-scaled by the public utility at a time that it was being impelled to perform commercially. Through a vivid account of the motivations behind the program, the forms and modes of participation that it engendered, and the social, economic and political consequences it had on slum households and communities, this discussion provides a serious challenge to the suggestion within good governance discourse that there is a mutually beneficial relationship between commercially-oriented reforms and pro-poor development.

The subject matter of Chapter Seven: *Of Operational Significance*, is the Greater Bangalore Water and Sanitation Project (GBWASP). According to the good governance discourse, to which many international development agencies, NGOs and state actors subscribe, citizen participation and improving access to basic services for the poor are core development and reform goals. It is a curious fact then, that the GBWASP, which was designed and developed by senior government bureaucrats and international development agencies, had made no

⁴ In 2006 the Bangalore Municipal Government passed a resolution to the change the name of the city to Bengaluru (Sharma, 2008). However, given that Bangalore is a more internationally recognised name for the city, throughout this thesis I will use Bangalore.

provision for servicing the poor or facilitating citizen consultation and participation. What is perhaps more curious, however, is that a few years into the project efforts to incorporate the poor and to institutionalise citizen participation were factored into the project. Through an examination of the rationales of those in charge of the project, this chapter explains why this shift occurred and describes how, when the privatisation of service delivery was thwarted due to public opposition (from both within and outside the public water utility), ambitions to institutionalise citizen participation and the approval of a pro-poor policy were abandoned.

In this contemporary development era of good governance, the achievement of development, and possibly even development itself, has come to be defined as the process and successful outcome of reforming governance so that it is accountable, transparent, participatory, democratic, equitable, efficient, pro-poor and market-friendly. In the final chapter: *Good Governance and the Poverty of Democracy and Rights*, I elaborate on the operation of development as a 'politics of consensus' and conclude that despite the promises of good governance, both in the policies and everyday practices of how good governance projects and reforms are implemented, critical limitations exist for the deepening of democracy and rights.

Chapter Two: Getting (in)To Good Governance

'Good governance' has been en-vogue within international donor and aid agencies as the determined path to social and economic development since the early 1990s. With the promise that through the right mix of technical solutions and alignment of state, market and civil society actors (Odugbemi & Jacobson, 2008), a governance environment can be created where markets flourish, governments are efficient and accountable, and all people benefit, even the most marginalised, the discourse is certainly seductive: after all, who wouldn't want governance to be good, or in the words of the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) "at least 'good enough'"? (DFID, 2007, p. 2). Adding to its appeal is the way it has merged alternative discourses of development such as participation and human rights with views of development as neo-liberal economic growth. It is a discourse of inclusion where both the attainment and continuation of good governance requires that everyone "can, indeed must be included" (Craig & Porter, 2006, p. 2). As UNDP (2007) has stressed "(e)ach domain of governance - the state, the private sector and civil society - has a unique role" to play (p. 16).

In the last fifteen years there has been a flurry of writing from across a diverse and broad range of disciplines and actors addressing the question and challenge of governance. Much of this writing attempts to identify, decipher and recommend how governance can be made better: how state accountability can be improved, how corruption can be reduced, how national and human security can be achieved, how democracy can be extended or deepened, how markets can be strengthened, and how citizenship can be made more inclusive.

From within this expansive literature, two dominant and overlapping perspectives have emerged. The first perspective is associated with international donor agencies such as the World Bank, USAID and the International Monetary Fund. It emphasises the centrality of

economic growth as the means to development and poverty reduction and frames governance problems and solutions in a fundamentally techno-managerial approach. A major thrust of this perspective is getting states in the South to take ownership for reforming their institutions of governance so they are favourable for market oriented development (World Bank, 1991*b*). This approach is a reaction to the interventionist state of the mid-twentieth century and an extension of the neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s. It stresses the importance of state-supported, state-facilitated market oriented reforms as a means for reducing state corruption and in turn making governance work for markets and poor people alike. The second perspective supports the view that economic growth is necessary for development but attempts to add a “human face” to the debate. Advocates for this approach such as the United Nations and DFID draw heavily on the work of theorists such as Amartya Sen and Mahbub Ul Haq (the leading figures of the human development paradigm) and call attention to the need for democratic governance, human rights and the expansion of human freedoms as a means to human security and poverty reduction (UNDP, 1997; DFID, 2006).

While these two perspectives emphasise different aspects of good governance, when taken in combination they define a hegemonic view from which three central pillars can be discerned: capitalist economic growth; democratic politics; and poverty reduction. These three pillars have come to be regarded as complimentary and necessary for each other and taking a quick sojourn onto the websites or policy documents of many leading international agencies one can see these three pillars standing side by side as development objectives (see for instance the websites of the ADB, DFID, USAID, and the World Bank). For those advocating for good governance from within these perspectives, the discourse is presented as a significant shift away from the top-down blueprint approach to development and neo-liberal policies of the 1980s to a more inclusive, effective, pro-poor development trajectory. However, the achievement of these pillars requires a re-visioning and reformation of the relationships between the state, market and (civil) society, and there is reason to suspect that

below the veneer of this good governance discourse things may not be as rosy for deepening democracy and improving the lot of the poor as at first appears⁵.

In this chapter I explore the origins, propositions and policies of good governance. The discussion is framed around a thematic scaffolding of five fields, developed from the academic literatures related to democracy, development and good governance reforms in policy and practice:

- the conditions of reforming the failing state as a trustee for the market;
- the constructed role for liberal democracy and civil society participation;
- the implications of striving for a political consensus on pluralism and inclusion;
- the role of technical 'expertise' in the manufacturing of development knowledge; and
- the commercialisation and privatisation of basic services as the means for securing rights for the poor.

My discussion on these fields is not specific to urban water reforms or India but rather, to the larger development hegemony of good governance from which these reforms stem and are embedded. Critical to my description of these fields is the proposition that despite the policies, premises and promises of the good governance discourse a number of contradictions and tensions may exist within, and between what the discourse promises, the everyday practices of how reforms are implemented, and in the outcomes of such on the possibility for the deepening of democracy and the expansion of human rights. In combination, I hope the discussions provide a support structure for an interpretive reading of the empirical chapters that follow where I examine in detail the ways these tensions and contradictions play out in the local, every-day practices and experiences of urban water governance reforms in Karnataka.

⁵ A third body of literature, some of which I introduced in Chapter One when I discussed deepening of democracy, takes a more critical, progressive and citizen-centred approach to governance in the way it explicitly raises questions of power and politics (see for example Luckham et al., 2000; Goetz & Jenkins, 2001; Fung & Wright, 2001; Gaventa, 2002; Ackerman, 2004; de Sousa Santos & Avrtizer, 2005; Gaventa, 2005). Writers in this vein challenge, to varying degrees, the assumptions of neo-liberalism and the hegemonic view of good governance and bring to the fore issues of inclusive citizenship, the challenge and opportunities for deepening democracy, the politics of accountability, participation, the struggles and contestations over resources, the meaning of development, and the expansion and realisation of human rights.

The Conditions of Reforming the Failing State as a Trustee for the Market

A central issue in development is the interaction between governments and markets. This is not a choice between intervention and laissez-faire - a popular dichotomy, but a false one. It is, instead, a matter of defining the appropriate roles of government and market. Competitive markets are the best way civilization has found for efficiently organizing the production and distribution of goods and services. But markets require a legal and regulatory framework that only governments can provide. And at many other tasks, such as investing in infrastructure and providing essential services to the poor, markets sometimes prove inadequate or fail altogether and the government must step in. There is thus no simple choice between state or market: each has an important and irreplaceable role. (World Bank, 1991*b*, p. 1)

If there is one thing that has remained consistent within hegemonic development theory over the course of the last century it is the importance placed on economic growth as a necessary condition for development. So central a position has the goal of economic growth assumed, it can be regarded as the primary, and perhaps only constant pillar of 20th century development thinking, and this is equally true for development as it is framed within the good governance discourse. Indeed, for some, such as Leftwich (1996) development is *defined* as economic growth, and many policy makers and academics have concerned themselves with identifying the variables, factors and conditions that enable sustained economic growth to occur. Amidst this constant drive for economic growth, what has changed however, are the theoretical frameworks and policy prescriptions that define the appropriate role for the state in the economy. In the last sixty years governments the world over have undergone radical changes in their scope and size: from the interventionist development states in the mid twentieth century informed by Keynesian economics and modernization theorists, to minimal states in the 1980s under neo-liberal doctrine, and since the 1990s and the development era of good governance, the state has been re-imagined as one that works in favour of a 'market-friendly' approach to development where "governments support but do not supplant competitive markets" (World Bank, 1991*b*, p. 1). The contemporary interest and concern with good governance and the renewed interest and re-evaluation of the role of the state in the economy was borne from a number of economic and political changes: the end of the Cold War; the escalation of social movements in the South and the North; and the ascent of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism in the West

(Leftwich, 1996; Abrahamsen, 2000; Craig & Porter, 2006; Hout, 2007). However, for international development agencies such as the World Bank, their interest in governance took a very functional and specific focus. For instance, the World Bank's original concern with governance was two-fold. First was the realization that the hard-and-fast neo-liberal structural adjustment packages which had been the focus of the Bank's lending throughout the 1980s had not delivered as expected (Miller-Adams, 1999, as cited in Hout, 2007). In fact, by the late 1980s many countries in the South were worse off than they were at the end of the 1970s, and so much so that the 1980s came to be termed the "lost decade" for development. The second concern for the World Bank related to the way their development assistance was being managed within the countries they were lending to, and what needed to take place to make their interventions more effective (World Bank, 1991). In the World Bank's 1989 report, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* the failure of development throughout the 1980s was attributed to a "crisis of governance", not within their own governance frameworks, but in the Southern countries they were lending to.

Over the next couple of years the consensus that began to emerge within the World Bank and other international agencies was not that the policies and prescriptions of the Washington Consensus had been misguided, or that markets were inherently flawed in delivering sustained and equitable economic and social development, but that governments in the South were failing to provide the right institutions for markets, and the right enabling environment for market-friendly reforms (World Bank, 1989; World Bank, 1991a; World Bank, 1991b). Of particular concern was how powerful coalitions that had emerged during the era of the development state could, and were, preventing structural adjustment from taking place (Toye, 1992, as cited in Leftwich, 1996, p. 12). Breaking up the coalitions of vested interests that were hindering structural adjustment from taking place and making governance "good" came to be regarded by the World Bank as an "essential complement to [their] sound economic policies" (World Bank, 1991a, p. ii). Thus, commitment amongst donors to neo-liberal economic policies remained intact but from the 1990s and still today it has been deemed necessary for the techno-economic structural adjustment prescriptions to be extended, and complemented with techno-political reforms aimed at re-engineering the very nature of governance throughout the 'developing world'.

This line of thought was carried forward into the 1991 World Development Report (WDR), wherein the World Bank described the vested interests of political and social elites in the South as a “formidable obstacle to liberalization” and the linking of the interventionist state to bad governance was made explicit. The WDR (1991) reads:

...government intervention creates vested interests...In many developing countries, it is common to find tariffs, tax incentives, or special regulations designed to protect special-interest groups. In some cases, "predatory" states have designed policies and programs to transfer resources to very narrowly defined interest groups, and they have resorted to coercion when the legitimacy of such policies was questioned...

Excessive intervention breeds corruption.... Corruption weakens a government's ability to carry out its functions efficiently. Bribery, nepotism, and venality can cripple administration and dilute equity from the provision of government services and thus also undermine social cohesiveness. (p. 130-131)

Blaming the nature of the development state for the failure of development was not new for the World Bank. A decade earlier in the World Bank's *Accelerated Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa* report, the size and scope of the interventionist state had been identified as the principle reason for Africa's economic and social crises (World Bank, 1981). This report, which became the manifesto for the World Bank's development program in Africa throughout the 1980s, recommended amongst other neo-liberal structural adjustment measures, the downsizing of the state through various measures of liberalization and privatization (Mihevc, 1995), including state services and functions.

In the first half of the 1990s, it was the World Bank's comprehensive discussion paper *Managing Development: The Governance Dimension* (a follow up to *From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*), that identified and mapped out where the Bank would focus their efforts. The reforms they proposed aimed to continue with the liberalization of the economy, but to add to this the concurrent transformation of state governance. The four areas the World Bank was interested in were: public sector management; predictability and the rule of law; information and transparency; and, finally accountability. It was envisaged that reforms across all these areas would liberalise and decentralise the power of the state, create

opportunities for capitalist economic growth, and contribute to poverty reduction (World Bank, 1991a).

The Bank's main concern with public sector management (PSM) was the improvement of state efficiency and the allocation of public resources. The proposed reforms involved a continuation of the structural reforms of the 1980s; creating a competitive environment through privatisation of public monopolies; restructuring or liquidating public companies; downsizing and improving the quality and predictability of the civil service; and improving financial management through decentralization and tax reforms. It was accepted however, that because the market often fails in the provision of essential public services such as health and education, and especially for the poor where commercial incentives are low, that the state still had a role to play in the provision of basic services if the private sector was not forthcoming. A part of the PSM reforms was improving the public sector's economic and financial accountability. The World Bank noted that, in its simplest meaning, accountability was about holding public officials responsible for their actions, and it was prescribed that this could be achieved by creating opportunities for 'exit' and 'voice' through a bundle of privatisation and decentralisation reforms. Overall, the proposed PSM reforms were intended to reduce the role of the state in the economy and provide a space for private actors. However, private actors would have to want to enter and this would require making the Southern countries not just open, but also 'market-friendly'.

The next two areas of reforms that the World Bank was interested in were aimed at doing just that. First was predictability and the rule of law and it was made clear that markets needed a predictable and stable environment where the rules and regulations of the game were known in advance to private actors so that they could assess business risk rationally. This would involve legal reforms to reduce barriers to market entry. It would also require that legal frameworks were market-friendly, enforced and not changed arbitrarily. The final area was information and transparency, which again was regarded as necessary to the proper functioning of the market. As stated by the World Bank: "the availability of accurate information critically affects the efficiency and competitiveness of the private sector: information about the economy, in general, about conditions in particular and about the

intentions and actions of government itself are crucial to private sector's calculation of risk and potential reward" (ibid, p.12).

During the first half of the 1990s, under the leadership of James Wolfensohn and the intellectual guidance of Joseph Stiglitz a new consensus (in what Stiglitz himself came to term the post-Washington Consensus), began to crystalise within the World Bank on the role of the state in the economy and the management of development⁶. In 1997 the World Bank dedicated the World Development Report to *The State in a Changing World*. The WDR, which took as major reference point a survey that had been commissioned by the World Bank of 3600 firms in 69 countries (Mander, 2004), asked, and answered, the questions "what the state should do, how it should do it, and how it can do it better in a rapidly changing world" (World Bank, 1997, p. iii). Principally these questions were directed at how the state could support market growth and the WDR contained three overarching messages. First, sustainable economic and social development requires an effective (not a minimal) state that supports, facilitates, and complements markets rather than replaces them. Second, sustainable growth and poverty reduction requires economic policies which support macroeconomic stability, integration into the world economy and the enlargement of human capital. And third, the state's role should match (but not exceed) its capability, and that building on the relative strengths of the market, the state and civil society was necessary for creating a capable and effective state (World Bank, 1997).

So far this discussion has highlighted how during the 1990s the state was re-imagined as one that was smaller, leaner, more efficient, and most importantly, market-friendly. The reforms which were devised, and are since being rolled-out at both national, sub-national and sector levels throughout countries in the South, were designed to weaken and dismantle the role of the interventionist state in the economy through the continuation of earlier reforms such as privatisation, but to couple this with strengthening the institutional capacity of the state to support and facilitate capitalist economic growth. Was this a departure from earlier thinking on the role of the state? The answer is both yes and no. The vision for this new and improved state is a combination of both the development state and the minimal state. On

⁶ See for instance Stiglitz (2005).

the one hand, the good governance state is responsible for the development and extension of industry and the capitalist economy, but not to control or crowd it out as it did during the era of the development state. On the other hand, the neo-liberal policies remained intact, although now with the state not being a 'hands-off' minimal state but one designed and developed to facilitate and complement the market. The overarching thrust was to transform the state into a facilitator, supporter and arguably, a trustee for the functioning and expansion of the capitalist market economy: prior, during and post the implementation of reforms. As I will explain in the following section, in many ways this harks back to the liberal state of the Western world between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries and during the birth and expansion of the capitalist market economy.

Within the hegemonic good governance discourse market growth is deemed good for the poor, and the state is assumed to be capable of acting in the interests of both the market and the poor simultaneously. The prevailing logic is that there is no inherent contradiction between pro-poor development and pro-capitalist development, but rather that the state can and must facilitate both. The lack of any tension between the two appears to rest on two lines of reasoning. First, the poor are worse off for state intervention and that in a capitalist economic system jobs and wealth are generated, both of which are reasoned as necessary for aggregate improvements in poverty reduction. And second, if, and when, the market has little commercial incentive to provide basic services the state can and should step in. However, as I will explain before the end of this chapter, by 2004 the reasoning that the state could, or should, provide basic services was rendered unsound by the World Bank. Again, this was attributed to the potential for political patronage and corruption (World Bank, 2004a).

If the 1997 WDR theorised what the state should do and how it should do it better, getting governments to reform would be quite a different thing, and in the latter half of the 1990s a new modality of aid assistance began to emerge, not just within the World Bank but also within other major international development agencies. Throughout the latter quarter of the twentieth century tying reform conditions to lending was the principle tool used by international development agencies to get Southern governments to align their development

path to those of their lenders. However, in many situations conditionality proved ineffective for ensuring reforms were implemented (World Bank, 1998). In the World Bank's 1998 report *Assessing Aid: What Works, What Doesn't and Why*, the authors stressed that even if donors apply strong conditionality to their financing, when countries suffer from weak domestic leadership and political support for reform, lasting change is seldom achieved. Given that development loans and aid grants to governments who only "pay only lip service to reform" had been identified as a major problem for donors (ibid, p. 4), the report went on to recommend that:

Policy-based financing should go only to countries with a strong track record or where there is a demonstrable basis for optimism (to support, for example, the concrete actions of domestically initiated reform efforts or a government newly chosen on a reform platform)... In countries with poor policies and no credible reform movement, assistance should assume the more modest and patient role of disseminating ideas, transmitting experiences of other countries, training future policymakers and leaders, and stimulating capacity for informed policy debate within civil society. These measures are relatively inexpensive and do not conflict with the proposal that the bulk of finance should go to countries with sound economic management. (p. 4-5)

The logic was that countries who already had sound economic management and an already existing momentum for reform should be the ones supported with money to further improve their management and institutional capacity for market reforms. For those countries without capacity and without reform momentum, donors and lenders should focus on embedding the idea and capacity for reform within local leaders and policymakers. This would come, in large part, in the form of Technical Assistance from the North to the South. In this reasoning, international development agencies would get more reform for their money in willing nations, and with little financial cost, sow the seeds for market-friendly reforms in other countries. This new modality of development assistance is one based on aid selectivity where recipient countries are eligible for assistance based on their existing policies and character of governance (Hout, 2007), rather than absolute need. The language of conditionality, which has been heavily criticised for undermining state sovereignty, was replaced with the vernacular of country "ownership" and "partnership". For instance in 2006, the Asian Development Bank's Country Assistance Plans (CAPs) were replaced by the Country Strategy and Program in 2001 and effective August 2006, these

programs were renamed as “Country Partnership Strategy” (ADB, 2009). However, concealed under these new terms the practice of externally imposed conditionality remained as international development agencies began to apply “ex post conditionality” - where eligibility for aid would be based on past performance, rather than traditional “ex ante conditionality” - which required a commitment to implement certain policies in a following period (Hout, 2007). In this new line of thinking and modality of aid, governments in the South were held responsible for their failing economies and the poor outcomes of reforms (Howell & Pearce, 2001), but they also had to take responsibility for change.

Critical researchers have recently observed that the emphasis on ‘partnerships’ and ‘ownership’ can obscure the power inequalities between donors and recipients, act to deepen international agendas into national policies, and turn external conditionalities into forms of domestic self-discipline and international governmentality (see for example Abrahamsen, 2000; Mosse, 2005). This brings another critical question to the surface. If Southern states are positioned as trustee for the market and international development assistance is provided on condition that governments take ownership for market-friendly reforms, what might this mean for democratic politics, and in particular deeper and plural democracy? If, hypothetically speaking, a nation’s constituents voted for a left-leaning political party which had campaigned that they were not in favour of market-friendly reforms such as those espoused by the World Bank and others, this government, if they were to adhere to their party promises and the expectations of the voting public may not be eligible for international development assistance. It is possible in such a scenario that governments would either break their election promises or, even more problematic in the longer-term that the majority of political parties will converge around the ideals set out by leading international agencies. This is equally possible in the relationships between different tiers of government where higher level governments could use financial carrot-and-stick strategies to influence and induce lower levels of government to adopt market-friendly reforms.

The exclusion of governments which are not willing to take ownership of market-friendly reforms arguably influences or incentivises governments to accept and adopt certain

governance reforms and ideals, often in exchange for infrastructure funding. The willing and rational government, being the one that adheres to a market oriented development approach gets rewarded: the unwilling irrational government, being the one that does not, gets excluded. Whether intentional or not, and whether “ownership” is applied by international development agencies to national governments and sub-national governments, or by national governments to lower levels of the state, this has the potential to undermine and limit democratic aspiration and plurality as the overarching agenda for national and local development has already been pre-set. However, pinpointing “ownership” conditionality as a threat to state sovereignty may be too simplistic a reading on the power, or lack thereof, of the state. As Randeria (2003) has argued in her study on the dynamics between the World Bank, the state and NGOs in India:

[T]he state is not merely a victim of neoliberal economic globalization, since it remains an active agent in transposing it nationally and locally...[I]n contrast to the widespread diagnosis of the consequent decline of the state and dismantling of its sovereignty...it would be a mistake to take this self-representation of states at its value. We are not faced by weak, or weakening, states but by cunning states, which capitalize on their perceived weakness in order to render themselves unaccountable both to their citizens and to international institutions. (p. 306)

Such a conclusion is quite ironic given that the reforms are (at in least in principle), intended to raise state accountability, particularly to the poor. Equally important, she notes that the Indian state picks and chooses which reforms they implement – usually favouring those geared toward neo-liberal globalization and international capital at the expense of environmental justice for indigenous and marginalised peoples. This in turn creates a dilemma for democracy and civil society actors for whom the state is the principle interlocutor for demanding rights and thus is an important ally, and yet may also be an adversary when reforms favour capital and the interests of national political and social elites over the rights of marginalised groups. This is quite paradoxical given that state accountability, human rights, and the strengthening of civil society and democracy are core to the good governance discourse. It is to the construction of democratic politics and the participation of civil society within the good governance discourse that I now turn.

The Constructed Role for Liberal Democracy and Civil Society Participation

As I have explained, by the end of the twentieth century the state had been re-imagined, and efforts were underway to re-configure so-called failing, corrupt states in the South into efficient and effective trustees of the capitalist market. Over the same period that re-thinking on state-market relationships was taking place and the rapid shift from the development state, to the minimal state, to the good governance state, was underway, thinking on the connections between democracy and development was also being re-visited and revised. The hegemonic view which emerged in the latter decades of last century, and which is deeply ingrained within the good governance discourse, is that the extension of democratic politics and a greater role for civil society in social and economic affairs was both necessary and complimentary for the expansion of the capitalist market economy and for making governance 'good'. This was something of a radical shift. While liberal democracy was regarded as the desirable form of government during from the first half of twentieth century, during the early period of capitalist expansion in the West democracy had been thought of as being bad for the market economy and for business profitability (Macpherson, 1966; Crozier, Huntington, & Watanuki, 1975; Dryzek, 1996). However, during the second half of the last century the relationship between democracy, development and capitalism was a topic of fierce debate, with no certain evidence either way (Leftwich, 1997; World Bank, 1997; DFID, 2007). As the World Bank (1997) has pointed out, "researchers have yet to reach a consensus on the precise relationship between growth and democracy: about one-fifth of the studies find a positive relationship, one-fifth a negative relationship, and the rest are inconclusive" (p. 149).

In this section I consider the role attributed to liberal democratic politics and the participation of civil society within the good governance discourse. My purpose is to raise the question of whether the construction of democracy and civil society participation within the good governance discourse, when considered in light of the state being positioned as trustee for the capitalist market economy, is likely to generate deeper, more inclusive democratic politics. This is a critical point for discussion given that many of those writing on the deepening of democracy question and challenge the quality of liberal democracy, and

advocate for more participatory constructions of democratic politics (Abrahamsen, 2000; Luckham et al., 2000; Fung & Wright; 2001; de Sousa Santos and Avritzer, 2005)

In the West the liberal state emerged throughout the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries alongside a period of rapid capitalist development and societal change from tradition and custom to one based on freedom of choice. Over this period a new form of government was deemed necessary. It would have to be one that provided the laws, regulations and tax structures, as well as basic infrastructure like sanitation and education that were needed to make, or at least allow, the capitalist market society to work in an efficient and profitable manner (Macpherson, 1966). This would require a system that would make government responsive to capitalist class interests and the way to do this was to make the men in government subject to periodic elections, and the possibility of not being re-elected would ensure that government decisions and interventions were favourable to those in control of the means of production. This would require freedom of association to form political parties or pressure groups and freedom of speech and press (*ibid*).

Originally this liberal state was not a democratic one and nor was it intended to be (*ibid*). Rather, it was a state developed and designed to uphold the new liberal individualist society and the interests of those running the capitalist economic system. The right to vote was limited and universal suffrage and democracy was regarded as a danger to the existing order of things (Macpherson, 1966; Dryzek, 1996). In other words, democracy in the hands of the masses was a threat to the social and economic elites who controlled and dictated the terms of governance. However, universal suffrage in Western capitalist societies did eventually occur as those excluded from the political market increasingly pressured the state for the right to political voice. As political franchise of lower classes and women increased, so too did demands on the state for counterbalancing some of the inequities of the capitalist system. In the post-war depression the liberal state morphed into an interventionist welfare state. However, according to Macpherson (1996), the interventionist welfare state would have emerged irrespective of the extension of democratic franchise, and for two reasons. First, it became increasingly obvious, particularly in the post-war period, that the smooth running of the capitalist system needed the state to plan and control certain

aspects of the economy. Second, working class discontent needed to be managed in order to maintain the stability of the liberal state. As Dryzek (1996) has stated “(a)side from maintaining the structure of capitalism and curbing its anarchy, the welfare state also helps legitimate the prevailing economic and political order in the eyes of those who would otherwise suffer even more from its vicissitudes” (p. 30). Thus, the extension of democracy to those previously excluded and the provision of some welfare rights, while possibly unavoidable, was regarded as necessary “*to maintain public order and avoid revolution*” and in doing so, the liberal state in the decades pre and post the war period, “neither destroyed nor weakened itself; it strengthened both itself and the market society” (Macpherson, 1966, p. 11 emphasis added).

However, the post-war welfare state in Britain did provide an opportunity to extend the conceptual margins of citizenship and T.H. Marshall was a leading figure in this. Challenging the liberal boundaries of citizenship as civil and political rights he argued that citizens also had the right to a minimum level of social and economic security. Rather than accept the classical liberal notion that a basic social and economic minimum could be universally realised through the capacities of an individual in the market place, Marshall maintained a “faith in the capacities of the state to protect individuals from social and economic uncertainties through welfare provision” (Ellison, 1997, p. 699 as cited in Jones & Gaventa, 2002, p. 3). He also promoted the idea of the interdependence of civil, political and social rights as necessary for social justice and full citizenship claiming that “the right to freedom of speech has little real substance if, from lack of education, you have nothing to say that is worth saying, and no means of making yourself heard if you say it” (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992 p. 22 as cited in Heater, 1999 p. 14). By extending the conceptual boundaries of rights, and putting the responsibility of securing these rights with the state, Marshall effectively expanded the potential for a more inclusive citizenry as the poorest citizens would not be excluded from a minimum level of social and economic needs. He did not envisage however, that social welfare rights would fully ameliorate the economic inequalities of the class system and contended that “the inequality of the social class system may be acceptable provided the equality of citizenship is recognised” (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992, pg. 6 as cited in Heater, 1999, p. 13). Thus, in the Marshallian view the state

could extend rights and act to counteract some of the most negative consequences of capitalism without needing to dismantle the economic system from which they had arisen.

For most of the twentieth century it was anticipated that given the right enabling environment, the same evolutionary process of state-democracy relations would occur in the newly independent nations of the South. A liberal state would need to emerge, that is, a state that supported the development of a capitalist market economy. This need not (and indeed should not) be a liberal-democratic state. The prevailing wisdom of the time, informed by the historical political-economic development in the West was that structural change and capitalist development would come first, democracy would come later. This view is starkly apparent in the work of modernisation and structural change theorists of the mid twentieth century who envisaged that the transition from a traditional economy and society to an individualised market economy was regarded as a prerequisite to democracy (Rostow, 1960; Moore, 1966, as cited in de Sousa Santos & Avritzer, 2005). Such views were reinforced by the experience of South East Asian nations like Singapore that experienced high levels of economic transformation and growth under decades of one-party control. However, by the 1970s, many countries had either adopted liberal democratic politics or had begun a process of democratisation making structural change theory on the relationship between democracy and economic development outdated (de Sousa Santos & Avritzer, 2005).

While many countries in the South were moving toward democracy, a perception was emerging during the 1970s that political systems in the West were being burdened by a “democratic overload” (Crozier et al., 1975). Such democratic overload was making these liberal societies ungovernable and this was attributed to three reasons: the ability of more individuals to associate on political matters as a result of social and economic development; the “information explosion” and a subsequent breakdown in the distance between those governing and those governed; and, the inability of governments to restrict political access and access to political information due to the existence of a “democratic ethos” (ibid p. 13). According to these authors, greater demands from the masses had caused the state to grow bulky and expensive. Furthermore, greater regulation and constraints on private enterprise,

combined with higher business tax to support the allocative and distributive functions of the welfare state, was bad for business and economic growth (Dryzek, 1996). In part, the economic slowdown of the 1970s was attributed to the interventionist welfare state which had crowded out or dis-incentivised private investment. This was of course, a liberal state burdened by the democratic overload.

While it was not thought of as desirable to do away with democracy altogether, it was deemed possible to cut back the functions and size of the state, and to limit political participation and the demands of the non-capitalist classes. During the well-known, and to some, notorious decade of neo-liberalism and rolling back of the state in the 1980s, political participation in the West took a rather bad hit. According to Dryzek (1996):

In the wake of the 1970s slowdown in economic growth, the political constraint imposed by market capitalism came into play... The full force of governmental restriction on the ability to organize and exercise political influence was felt by the trade unions... But a wider range of groups such as local governments, environmentalists, ethnics minorities and poor peoples' organizations also had their access to government restricted – and their politics repressed. Too much (liberal) democracy had proved to be bad for the economy and the state's economic prerogatives, and so it had to be cut back. (p. 28)

Under neo-liberal doctrine and externally enforced structural adjustment packages, the functions and assets of states in the South were also being downsized, out-sourced and sold-off in order to reduce burgeoning budget deficits, streamline bulky, inflexible bureaucracies and to make room for private capital. The twist in this story however, is that for these countries, the growing consensus amongst international development agencies was that there was a need for more, not less, democracy. In contrast to earlier periods of capitalist development in the West, democratic reforms in the South came to be regarded by international development agencies as *complimentary and necessary* for the development and extension of the capitalist economy. This is an overarching logic in international good governance policy and therefore requires some explanation.

The shift in thinking in the role of the state in the economy that emerged in the 1970s and through into the good governance era was not based purely on a theory of neo-liberal or

new institutional economics. As Leftwich (1996) has noted, it was part of a larger theory of politics and the political ascendancy of liberal neo-conservatism in the West that advocated for, and combined the ideas of neo-liberalism with liberal democratic politics and greater participation of civil society in social and economic affairs. In this school of thought, the extension of liberal democratic politics in the South was regarded as necessary for achieving the normative characteristics of liberalism such as personal freedoms and responsibilities which are necessary for a liberal capitalist society, but it also had a functional dimension (ibid).

As I mentioned earlier, the neo-liberal structural adjustment reforms aimed to dismantle the interventionist role of the development state in the economy but in the view of international development agencies this been held back by coalitions of vested interests that had emerged during the era of the development state. While making governments in the South take ownership of market-friendly reforms in order to be eligible for international development assistance was one way of compelling an internal breakdown of these powerful political-economic interests, the extension of liberal democracy would add another pressure. Political decentralisation through democratic reforms (which has become part of the ownership criteria for aid which I will discuss later), would not only multiply the centres of social and economic decision-making of the state (Abrahamsen, 2000), but also contribute to making the state more accountable, less corrupt, more efficient, and more market-friendly (Leftwich, 1996). As Brinkerhoff (2000), writing with the support from the USAID Centre for Democracy and Governance explains:

[D]emocratic governance, which does not necessarily imply a smaller state but a more effective one, provides the most promising environment for broad-based economic growth... Democratic governance creates a broad institutional framework that enables market-led economic growth to occur, for example, by creating a legal environment conducive to protection of property rights, enforcement of contracts, and predictability and stability of policies. (p. 602-603)

This view is held by many leading development agencies (for instance the World Bank, DFID, USAID, UNDP), and holds the assumption that democratic politics is not just *normatively desirable*, but also *functionally necessary* for the effective functioning of the

capitalist economic market (Leftwich, 1996). Not only would democracy contribute to catalysing the generation and construction of a liberal state, it would also stabilise it and ensure that it adhered to the principles of liberal capitalism. For these reasons democracy was deemed desirable. However, the democratic model on prescription by Southern nations was liberal representative democracy, of the kind that had developed in the West. As de Sousa Santos and Avritzer (2005) have recently argued, not only does the extension of liberal democracy as *the model of democracy* limit democratic heterogeneity and models of indigenous democracy, it also relies on an elitist model of representational politics rather than deeper, more participatory forms of political participation. Thus, democracy is good for the South, but just not too much. Arguably this is particularly so in the era of good governance where liberal democratic reforms are coupled with neo-liberal economic reforms, and too much democracy could see Southern states pressured by the citizenry for welfare provision (the democratic overload), which as I have already explained are regarded as bad for state stability and private profitability.

The good governance discourse does not only promote the extension of liberal democracy but also *greater* participation by civil society actors and the poor in development projects and political affairs, including policy making. As Howell and Pearce (2002) have pointed out, during the 1990s donors began to support programs and projects aimed specifically at strengthening civil society, which for the most was defined as NGOs. Within the good governance discourse there are two dominant ways in which NGOs are believed to contribute to the policy agenda of good governance. The first role is as a cost effective alternative to governments in the provision of basic services, particularly to the poor, and the second is in the process of democracy building and in making governance 'good' (Edwards and Hulme 1996). These two dimensions of governance prescribed to NGOs result from them being perceived as part of the solution to welfare provision, democratization, and development (Fisher, 1997), and as "an integral part of a thriving civil society and an essential counterweight to state power" (ibid, p. 962; also see Fisher, 1997; Howell and Pearce, 2002; Ward, 2005).

In the last fifteen years, as the number of NGOs has mushroomed and the funds available to them for development work has increased, there has been growing interest and concern with their legitimacy and accountability (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Najam, 1996; Whaites, 2002; Ebrahim, 2003; Lee, 2004; Bendell, 2006). Drawing on the work of NGO scholars such as Najam (1996) and Edwards and Hulme (1996), Ebrahim (2003) has summarised the multiple accountabilities of NGOs as: “upward accountability” to their patrons such as donors, foundations and governments who provide funds for NGO activities; “downward accountability” to groups NGOs provide services to or more broadly the communities impacted by the work of NGOs; and last, internal accountability to their own mission and staff (p. 814-815). Despite the recent surge in interest in NGO accountability, some scholars have stated that the “really serious problems of organizational accountability exist elsewhere, in business and government (Bendell, 2006. p. 75). Others have suggested that it is hypocritical to pose “questions of legitimacy and accountability to NGOs without a comparative analysis of bodies such as the World Bank and IMF” (Whaites, 2002, p. 3).

I do not wish to elevate the importance of NGO accountability over that of others in the development process, nor do I want to fall into the trap of presenting what Fisher (1997) has referred to as a reductionist view of NGOs: they are a heterogeneous group of actors with a wide range of working practices, motivations and interests. However, as Cornwall (2002) has suggested, it is necessary to examine who gets invited to participate, when, by whom, for what reasons, and to what effect. Therefore, later in the thesis I critically examine the “participation” of NGOs that are invited by international development agencies and/or the state in governance reform projects. I question whether NGO invitation and involvement is motivated more by functional concerns for the effectiveness of top-down development interventions such as improving the efficiency of the state by transferring state responsibilities and costs onto civil society organisations and citizens, or for the larger and more challenging ambitions of empowerment and social justice of the poor and marginalised.

The Implications of Striving for a Political Consensus on Pluralism and Inclusion

There clearly exists a consensus among international and bi-lateral development agencies that within countries in the South there is, at worst, a crisis of governance, and at best, that governance is not yet good enough. There also exists a consensus that democracy alongside certain technical interventions, can and will contribute to the attainment and continuation of good governance. But in addition to a consensus on the lack of and need for good governance, the good governance discourse also posits that in order for governance to be 'good' a broad based consensus needs to be reached amongst all members of society on what the characteristics of good governance are, and how a society's resources should be managed and allocated. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, n.d.), one of the eight characteristics of good governance is that it is "consensus" oriented⁷. In their brief on *What is Good Governance?*, they state:

Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. (para. 13)

Such a statement contains two important points. First, there needs to be consensus reached on what is in the best interest of *the whole*, and second, this consensus needs to be broad-based and therefore reached *by the whole*. In a similar vein, DFID's recent paper *Governance, Development and Democratic Politics; DFID's work in building more effective states* (2007), reads:

Improving governance is at the heart of building an effective, developmental state because it strengthens consensus among different groups in society about how the country's affairs are managed. This helps to consolidate security and the rule of law. It enables the state to become more stable, with broad legitimacy and capability across all regions and parts of society. (p.11)

⁷ The remaining seven characteristics are: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability.

The benefits of achieving a consensus on what is in the best interests of a community or society as whole, such as reducing conflict and creating a stable and legitimate development state, is arguably justifiable and desirable. However, the dependence on the achievement of political consensus in order for governance to be good raises two critical questions. First, what is the consensus? And second, is it possible for a broad-based consensus to be reached with the inclusion of all? My concern here is not with the debates on the form and functional aspects of democracy such as the ones discussed earlier, but on the normative ideals of what are in the best interest of the whole that can emerge through a democratic process. According to the political philosopher Chantelle Mouffe, the achievement of a political consensus is, “by necessity, based on acts of exclusion... [for] there can never be a fully inclusive ‘rational’ consensus” (Mouffe, 1997, p. 141). Indeed, she argues that the desire for rational consensual decision-making can act to justify certain exclusions. In this section I draw attention to the possibility that aiming for a broad based political consensus, when set within an already existing hegemonic view of what good governance is, has the potential to undermine the plurality of democratic aspirations and result in acts of democratic exclusion.

As I have elaborated earlier, central to the good governance discourse is that economic growth is necessary for social and economic development and that this requires the state, market and civil society actors to be aligned in such a way that governance is “market-friendly”. Essentially, the discourse posits that governance, in order to be pro-development and pro-poor, must be pro-capitalism since it is only from within the capitalist system that economic growth and wealth creation can be generated. The implicit assumption therefore, is that at different tiers of a democratic system, as well as across the wide and diverse range of actors that can influence governance and democratic decision-making, there must be a broad-based consensus in favour of the capitalist economy. I can imagine there are people from within the United Nations and other agencies who advocate for consensus politics who would argue this is not what they meant. However, given that all these agencies conform to the view that economic growth is necessary for development, I find it difficult to reach an alternative analysis so I continue with this line of thought.

Within a hegemonic discourse where “market-friendly” governance is “good governance”, whether democracy comes in the form of liberal representation, more participatory forms or a combination of both, it implies that both governments and citizens, if they want governance to be good and development targets and goals to be achieved, must be in favour of capitalist economic growth as the way to organize a society’s resources. As Abrahamsen (2000) argues in her critical study on the imposition of good governance reforms in Africa, it is assumed that “democracy will lead to good governance only if the electorate chooses governments that adhere to a free market ideology” (p. 52). She further adds that this is “an inherently undemocratic stipulation, in that it attempts to restrict the scope of political choice. It entails, in short, an *a priori* determination of economic model and a relegation of constituents’ preferences to second-order importance” (ibid). Abrahamsen’s analysis points to the limitation of democratic choice, but it also highlights how within the good governance discourse the only rational preference, of both political parties and citizens, would be one that is in favour of capitalism.

This logic can be seen to extend beyond the realm of national politics and the democratic aspirations of political parties and citizens, to the relationship between national and sub-national governments and supra-state agencies who demand (at least in principle), that governments take ownership for market-friendly reforms. As I have mentioned earlier, country ‘ownership’ as a modality of aid selectivity can act to exclude countries from development assistance if they do not conform to the ideals of good governance as set out by donor agencies. Furthermore, while political plurality and fair and frequent elections have become cornerstones of the good governance discourse, there is also the expectation (and arguably requirement) that even with political plurality there will be (or should be) a convergence on the need and desirability of neo-liberal reform. The United States’ Millennium Challenge Account is just one example. According to the Millennium Challenge Act, a country will be eligible for development assistance from the United States based on a demonstrated commitment in three areas; just and democratic governance, economic freedom, and investment in people (Hout, 2007). According to the Act the criteria for just and democratic governance includes a demonstrated commitment to:

- A. *promote political pluralism, equality, and the rule of law;*
- B. *respect human and civil rights, including the rights of people with disabilities;*
- C. *protect private property rights;*
- D. *encourage transparency and accountability of government; and*
- E. *combat corruption.*

The criteria for economic freedom includes:

- A. *encourage citizens and firms to participate in global trade and international capital markets;*
- B. *promote private sector growth and the sustainable management of natural resources;*
- C. *strengthen market forces in the economy; and*
- D. *respect workers' rights, including the right to form labor unions...*

(US Congress, 2004, p. 214-215 as cited in Hout, 2007, p. 77-78 emphasis added)

A critical point, however, is other than multi-party elections how much political plurality is really allowed or desired, either among political parties or citizens? Arguably, the promotion of political plurality when considered within the context that good governance is that which is market-friendly, assumes that governments are only deemed rationale and just if their political perspectives concur, or at least consent, to market-friendly reforms. The potential for exclusion from international development assistance is intended to incentivise governments of developing countries to accept and adopt market-friendly reforms. However, another possible level of exclusion lies in the dynamics between reforming governments and citizens. My principle concern here is how political exclusion of social actors may occur during the process of implementing market-friendly reforms by reform minded state actors. If the rational democratic choice is one which adheres and concurs with the free market ideology, one needs to think critically about what happens during the process of market oriented reforms to the democratic voices of citizens who oppose, or are likely to oppose free market ideology. What happens to the democratic voices that are deemed irrational, unreasonable or perceived as being a critical challenge to the pre-determined consensus of what is good governance? Is it possible that in the drive for a consensus these voices are excluded or coerced to consent, and if so what form does such exclusion or coercion take? What also happens to the aspirations of the marginalised whose voices too frequently go unheard? Exploring such questions is vital for understanding the political limitations to, and struggles for, a deeper democracy.

The Role of Technical 'Expertise' in the Manufacturing of Development Knowledge

Just over two decades ago the Italian political theorist Noberto Bobbio (1986) wrote: “[t]echnocracy and democracy are antithetical: if the protagonist of industrial society is the specialist, it is impossible that it could be the common citizen” (p. 33-34 as cited in de Sousa Santos and Avritzer, 2007, p. x1). Bobbio was not writing about the global development industry, or the good governance discourse, but his words are a useful starting point for considering the relationship between the techno-politics of development and the good governance discourse with the possibility of deepening democracy. Governance is about politics and power, this is widely accepted. However, as Unsworth (2009) has noted, amongst donor agencies and development practitioners, the prescription and attainment of good governance as a development goal and intervention is largely subsumed and framed in technical, managerial and financial terms with only cursory analytical attention given to the issues of power and politics. Indeed, some international agencies have explicitly stated that they cannot concern themselves with the political nature of reforms. For instance, despite the World Bank being clearly aware of the political nature of governance, defining it as “the exercise of political power to manage a nation’s affair” they have cautiously framed the governance problem in technical terms (World Bank, 1990, as cited in Craig & Porter, 2006). The World Bank’s “rendering technical” of political issues was justified because of the restrictions imposed in their operational mandate⁸. They have explicitly stated that their interest in governance cannot extend to the political character of a country and that they have to restrict their interventions to the techno-managerial solutions they regard as relevant to economic and social development (World Bank, 1991a).

Rendering development technical, even that which is overtly political, such as governance reforms, inevitably requires technical experts who are skilled and trained in diagnosing technical problems and devising technical solutions. In this discussion I elaborate on the technocracy/democracy relationship and attempt to illuminate that the framing of development and governance in technical terms not only disguises the politics of

⁸ The term “rendering technical” is used by Tania Murray Li (2007) in reference to the practices and conceptual boundaries of experts when identifying “problems” and defining solutions.

development but also has the potential to undermine a project of deeper democracy. The larger point that I wish to make, and which will be fleshed out in the following chapters, is that the emphasis on the technical aspects of governance leaves the reform process prone to either intentional or unintentional acts of exclusion of the “common citizen”, and especially the poor and marginalised. And furthermore, this can lead to coercive strategies and tactics by implementing bodies to solicit support or consent among citizens for reforms they had no part in designing or deciding such that many may also believe may make them worse off.

The exclusion of politics and power from development discourse and practice, and the act of identifying, defining and prescribing development policy and interventions in technical terms is not new. Rather, it is reminiscent of a western techno-science approach to development, that since the beginning of the twentieth century “claimed to bring the expertise of modern engineering, technology, and social science to improve the defects of nature, to transform peasant agriculture, to repair the ills of society, and to fix the economy” (Mitchell, 2002, p. 15). Since the 1940s, such expertise came in the form of “hard” Technical Assistance funded from the government budgets of developed countries (Morgan, 2002) and relied largely on expatriate specialists and experts who were entrusted to act as consultants in guiding capital intensive infrastructure and agriculture projects, and later sectors such as education and health (Wallace, 1990, as cited in Walker, Roberts, Jones, & Frohling, 2008, p. 530). With the re-focusing of development interventions to structural adjustment programs in the 1980s and then good governance in the 1990s, the repertoire of “hard” Technical Assistance has been added to with the “soft” variety where expert services are now required for advising on neo-liberal reform and institutional and human development and capacity building (ibid).

With the shift in development focus there has also been a shift in the type of experts that are needed and recruited. The engineering and economics specialists are still there, but increasingly, funding for Technical Assistance contracts and responsibilities are given to NGOs who act as community development professionals (Walker et al., 2008), anthropologists who are cultural specialists (Escobar, 1995; Stiratt, 2000), and almost anyone

who can claim to be a “governance” expert⁹. Not only has the range of experts expanded, but the functions that they perform have increased. As the following chapters will illuminate, whether it be individuals with the right contacts, a small local consultancy group or a multi-national firm such as Pricewaterhouse Coopers, private consultants are contracted as experts and specialists to prepare government vision documents, public policies, and legal and regulatory frameworks, to name just a few areas. Some of these are part of externally funded reform and infrastructure projects but many are instigated by governments themselves who tend toward private consultants rather than genuine public consultation¹⁰. Indeed, it appears that the scope and breadth of Technical Assistance and technical experts are on the rise – from policy-making to cultural or community consultants. This is despite that for the most part, Technical Assistance has failed to achieve its stated objectives (Morgan, 2002). Such trends lead to the question which I explore in the following chapters: are we witnessing the ‘publicisation of governance’ or the ‘privatisation of governance’?

Framing development in technical terms has received a fair share of criticism. Ferguson’s (1990) well-known study on the Thaba Thsaka project in rural Lesetho and more recently Li’s (2007) examination of development interventions in Indonesia have also challenged the framing of development as a set of technical problems with technical solutions. Both these studies reveal how development interventions that are designed by private and public technocrats and bureaucrats inevitably fail to capture and include questions about how local political and economic structures maintain and sustain inequality (Li, 2007). These studies have also illuminated how the development apparatus acts as an “anti-politics” machine in the way it de-politicises development but at the same time has the unintended consequence of extending the power and reach of the bureaucracy (Ferguson, 1990). The deployment of technical knowledge through (often) foreign development experts has also been challenged. Some have criticised it for its resonance with colonial and missionary practices (Arndt, 1981;

⁹ During an interview I conducted with the Water and Sanitation Program-South Asia as part of this research, I was advised that the staff was primarily made up of “governance specialists” rather than experts in the water sector.

¹⁰ The proceeding chapters will also show how the reliance and importance placed on private consultants as experts frequently surpasses genuine public consultation, deliberation and democratic process.

Escobar, 1991; Stiratt, 2000). Others criticise it for the way it attempts to shape developing countries in the image of the West. For example, in Mitchell's (2002) analysis on the making of modern Egypt illustrated, such practices were part and parcel of the modernisation blueprint for development that promised to bring 'Western' knowledge and the transfer of technology to developing nations. Many of these writers have highlighted how development knowledge and interventions designed and constructed by 'expat experts' or domestic urban development professionals acts to undermine the value of local knowledge. As Robert Chambers noted back in 1983, because of the professional biases of outside experts, seldom do they appreciate or take time to recognise and integrate local knowledge into their work.

Arguably, the emphasis on technical solutions and the role of the 'expert' in development interventions and good governance reforms, versus the ascent of democracy and poor peoples' participation in the good governance policy and discourse, are at odds with one another¹¹. If, as Bobbio (1986) asserted "technocracy and democracy are antithetical" what does this mean in practice for the ordinary citizen being included in defining and deciding their development needs, aspirations and solutions? While "rendering technical" development may avoid political questions, and therefore be regarded as politically neutral or even anti-political, the process through which the "rendering technical" of development takes place *is* political. It is based on acts of inclusion and exclusion. The act of identifying and defining who is a development 'expert' simultaneously defines who is not, and arguably may in turn be regarded by those responsible for devising and constructing reforms, as legitimate grounds for the inclusion of some individuals and groups and the exclusion of others. Those with the right training, the right perspective, and the right resume get defined as experts with the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute to the meaning and construction of development policy and practice. Furthermore, these experts are most likely to be those who have a proven track record in conforming to whatever the prevailing hegemonic view of development is as they compete, in their role as private consultants, for an endless stream of contracts. This has particular implications for the poor

¹¹ It is of course possible that democracy and technocracy are not always conflicting and there is scope for complementarity between the two. However, water reforms in Karnataka did not reflect such possibilities thus, I have not integrated such a discussion into the thesis.

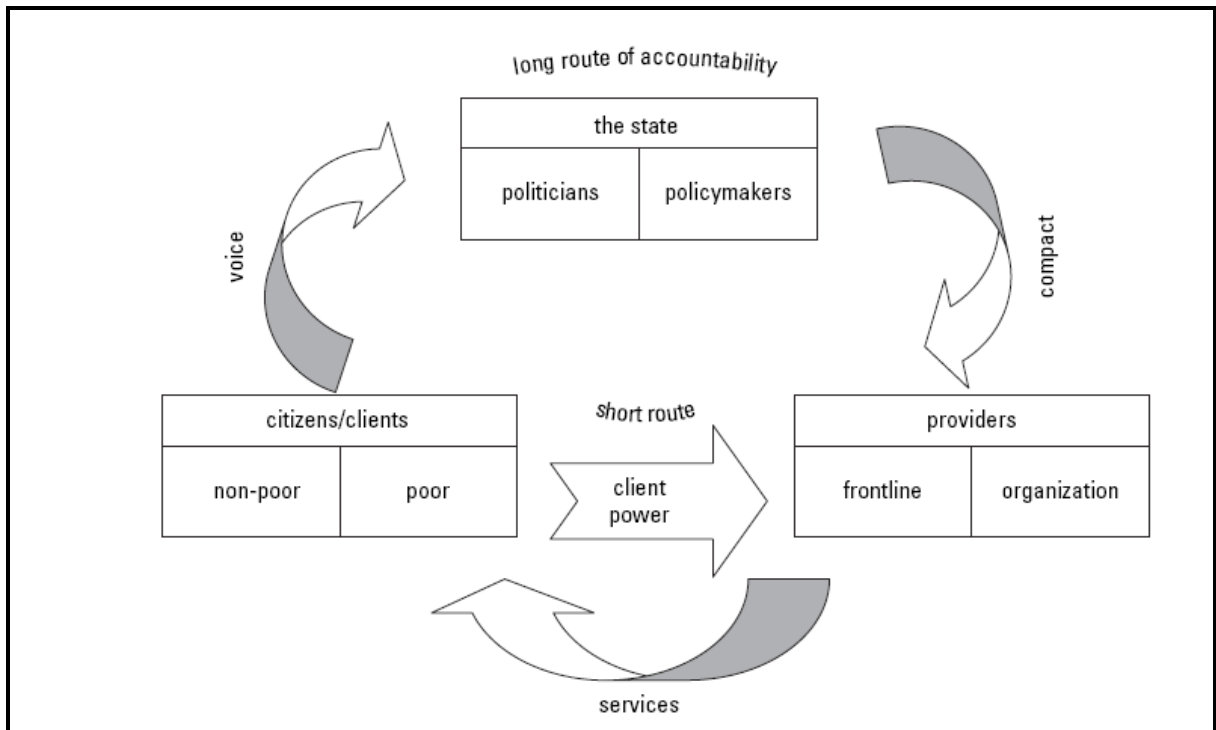
and marginalised peoples who are less likely, due to the structural dimensions of poverty, to become the trained experts of technocratic development. It also raises the question of how the common citizen, the non-expert, is then managed and controlled to comply with, and consent to, the development trajectory envisaged.

The Commercialisation and Privatisation of Basic Services as the Means for Securing Rights for the Poor

As I have already elaborated, in the latter half of the 20th century the extension of liberal democratic politics became a core development objective among international donor agencies because of its contribution to market development and improving the accountability of the state – both of which were regarded as necessary for poverty reduction and improving the well-being of the poor. The final discussion in this chapter is on the relationship between democracy, the commercialisation of basic services, and poverty and I take as the focal point the 2004 WDR *Making Services Work for Poor People*. The WDR took a radical stand on liberal democratic politics by claiming that parliamentary democracy in the South was no guarantee for ensuring that public services are provided to the poor. In fact, liberal democracy and elected representatives were positioned as being a large part of the reason why basic services often fail to reach the poor. Instead of advocating for the deepening of democracy, however, the WDR argued that the best way to make services work for poor people was to de-politicize basic services through a combination of *decentralization, privatisation and charging the poor user tariffs*. It was claimed that these solutions were an approach to service delivery that would improve accountability, and therefore, be pro-poor. In this section I explain the Bank's logic for recommending the de-politicisation and marketisation of basic services as it was presented in the 2004 WDR. Rather than launch a challenge to this logic here, I will reserve this for the empirical chapters on Karnataka's water reforms which illustrate that there is reason to be deeply pessimistic and critical of such a reform path, that is, if the rights and needs of the poor and marginalised are genuinely a desired goal of development.

According to the World Bank, whether services are delivered, or delivered well to the poor, rests on the extent to which the poor can demand accountability. The 2004 WDR identified two paths to accountability: the long route and the short route as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 The World Bank's short and long routes to accountability



Source: Adapted from the World Bank (2004a, p.49)

In the long route to accountability the poor influence the quality of service delivery through the exercise of “political voice” to policy-makers and politicians. In the short route, accountability rests on the direct relationship between the poor as clients of the service providers, and the ability of the poor to exert “client power” and engage in “exit” strategies (World Bank, 2004a). In the short route democratic politics is largely absent from the accountability equation and is replaced by a marketised notion of consumer democracy where poor people, as clients of service providers, can be empowered by “voting with their feet” (ibid, p. 9).

In the long route to accountability (for which it was assumed that services are delivered by the government rather than through market transactions), there is no direct accountability from the service provider to the customer. Accountability, if achieved at all, comes through citizens influencing policy makers and politicians, who in turn influence public service providers. However, the World Bank is quick to point out that the long-route to accountability inevitably fails the poor. This is premised on two reasons. The first is political poverty of the poor which occurs when the poor are politically weak, ill-informed or make-short sighted voting choices. According to the World Bank (2004a):

[P]oor citizens have little clout with politicians. In some countries the citizenry has only a weak hold on politicians. Even if there is a well-functioning electoral system, poor people may not be able to influence politicians about public services: they may not be well informed about the quality of public services (and politicians know this); they may vote along ethnic or ideological lines, placing less weight on public services when evaluating politicians; or they may not believe the candidates who promise better public services— because their term in office is too short to deliver on the promise— and they may vote instead for candidates who provide ready cash and jobs. (p.7)

The second reason is the practice of political patronage which occurs when there is no clear separation between policy makers and politicians, and public service providers. The logic follows that when there is no clear separation between the service provider and the policy maker, there is no clarity to whom the provider is accountable - the policy maker or the client (ibid). In such a situation opportunities for rent seeking and patronage politics are created. Talking specifically about urban water services, the WDR identifies political patronage as the principle reason why public providers fail the poor. The explanation for this is that because politicians are reluctant to increase water tariffs to full cost recovery, either for reasons of short-term political gain or social equity, service providers are left dependent on politically motivated government budgets. This lack of financial independence, in turn, reduces the autonomy of a service provider and “fuses” the policy maker and provider into one role. According to the World Bank (2004a) this creates a deeply vicious cycle for the poor because:

...when this happens, policymakers can no longer hold providers accountable for delivering to all citizens, services deteriorate... With deteriorating service levels,

policy makers and providers ration access... [and] citizens or their groups respond to rationed access by supporting politicians who favor them as their clients over politicians who push for universal access. This strengthens the ability of politicians to use patronage. The accountability linking clients, politicians, policy-makers, and providers is displaced by patron-client relationships – clientalism – on both legs of the long route of accountability. In such settings the breakdown in voice for poor citizens is reinforced by their loss of client power. (p. 163)

Taking political poverty of the poor and political patronage in combination, the message contained in the WDR is that even in a “well-functioning” democracy (which I can only assume means one where elections are held fairly and regularly), when basic services are controlled and managed by the state there is no guarantee that poor people’s access to services will be secured through the force of political ‘voice’ and the long route to accountability. The overarching conclusion is that democracy, at least of the liberal kind, fails the poor if basic services are public sector undertakings. Given this conclusion there appears to be two possible avenues for addressing this dilemma: a) seek ways to deepen and improve democracy or, b) limit the role of the state in public services. Rather than exploring avenues for improving the quality of democracy and strengthening the political voice of the poor, perhaps by addressing some of those political questions such as the structural dimensions of poverty, the WDR recommended the latter, focusing their attention on reform measures to separate policy makers and politicians from service providers.

For urban water services four strategies for making services work for poor people were proposed. The first was to decentralise service delivery functions to lower tiers of government (such as a municipal government) in order to improve the ‘political voice’ of the poor. This however, would need to be coupled with benchmarking systems to generate competition amongst public service providers for fiscal devolutions. In this scenario regulatory oversight and policy making would be maintained by a higher, centralised tier of government who could then use fiscal devolutions as rewards and incentives for well-performing, willing to reform, public providers. Such control was presented as an effective way to influence local tiers of government to restructure local services and one example of such that the WDR as cited was the *Jawaharal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)* a national level program of the Government of India. At the time the WDR was published the mission was still under development. However, it was formally announced

by the Government of India in late 2005 (the first time many citizens would have heard of it even though it had already been as cited by the World Bank), and essentially it ties central government funding for infrastructure development to mandatory market-friendly reforms. I will explain how this program works and what it aims to do in Chapter Four.

A second strategy, and one which was offered as a more direct route to separating out the relationship between policy makers and service providers, was to privatise service delivery. It was argued that this would “drive a wedge” into patronage practices, and while this would make privatisation “intensely political” it was also “potentially powerful for increasing accountability” (World Bank, 2004a, p. 167). The WDR recognised that there could be resistance to such reforms. However, it was envisaged that resistance would come from those benefiting from political patronage or from social actors who were unknowledgeable about the “why and how of private sector contracting” (ibid, p. 169). At no point did the WDR acknowledge that political or social resistance to such reforms may occur as struggles for sovereignty, democracy and human rights. Like decentralisation, privatisation of service delivery would need to be coupled with benchmarking. Here it was necessary for assessing the relative performance of public and private actors and to weed out “non-performers”, which when taken in the larger context of the WDR, *are*, public providers. Privatisation would also require regulation, which could come in the form of an independent (non-government) regulator or through self-regulation by a collective of service providers. This would not only remove government control from service delivery but also from critical governance functions.

While the strategy of decentralisation was presented as a way to raise the “political voice” of the poor, the reasoning of these latter two strategies (privatisation and independent service providers), was to generate competition which the poor could leverage off because they would be able to switch between service providers if performance was bad. In other words, the poor could exert client power by engaging in “exit” strategies. Here, the value and potential for political democracy is replaced by the power of consumer democracy with poor citizens, now defined and classified as clients, empowered through their ability to “vote with their feet”. However, for financially autonomous service providers to care

whether the poor are part of their customer base it first requires that the poor are paying customers, which brings me to the final strategy that was proposed for making services work for poor people.

The last reform measure proposed in the WDR was to raise user tariffs. This is a highly political and socially sensitive proposition, but was presented as a technical strategy that would again improve service provider accountability and empower the poor. There were three interconnected points to this logic. First, by charging users (including the poor) for water it would create financial autonomy for a service provider and thus reduce dependence on state budgets and the opportunity for political patronage. Second, by turning the poor into paying customers it would create a supply-side incentive for a provider to service the poor. And third, on the demand-side, if the poor were required to pay for services they would have a financial incentive to monitor, discipline and hold service providers to account. Apparently, being charged for water as a strategy for improving service provider accountability is what people in India want, at least, according to an example presented by the World Bank in the WDR (2004a):

[F]or water, electricity, and other services whose benefits are enjoyed mainly by the user, *charging for them* has the added benefit of increasing the consumer's incentive to monitor the provider. Farmers in Andhra Pradesh, India, are finding that, when they pay for their water, the irrigation department becomes more accountable to them. In the words of one farmer, "*We will never allow the government to again give us free water*". (p. 10 emphasis added)

It is perhaps worth noting that the World Bank is a major actor in market oriented irrigation reforms in Andhra Pradesh and while I do not wish to challenge the World Bank that one farmer stated they would not allow the government to provide free water, other (more independent) studies have shown that irrigation reforms, financially backed by the World Bank "have led to a capture by the rural elite of the reform process (and that) the problem of equity continues to haunt the sector" (Madhav, 2007, p. 18). But then, in addition to dismissing the potential of democratic process, it is also worth noting that the World Bank's *Making Services work for Poor People* discarded the importance of equity. In another example from India, this time in the power sector, it was argued that while it may not be equitable,

privatisation and raising user tariffs may be the only way to improve service delivery to the poor:

India's power sector was nationally owned and run because it was a network (and therefore not amenable to head-to-head competition). But the huge rents from providing subsidized electricity have been diverted to people who are not poor – *all within a parliamentary democracy. Reducing those rents by raising power tariffs or having the private sector provide electricity, even if it violates the principles of equity* – they are already violated in the existing system – may be the only way of improving electricity services to the poor. (p. 12 emphasis added)

The logic of the World Bank in the 2004 WDR has been embraced by many international development agencies who are promoting similar reforms. In Karnataka alone such reform measures are currently taking place with the funding and support of the World Bank, AusAID, USAID, JBIC, DFID, the IMF, the WSP-SA, and the ADB, as well as the Government of India which is doing its part to take ownership of market friendly reforms. It seems a major assumption is that the poor can afford to pay commercial user tariffs for water services, however, given that a lack of financial resources is a significant aspect of poverty this assumption is arguably ill-founded. As I explained in the previous chapter, during the push for the privatisation of water services in the 1990s there were numerous examples and studies from around the world that highlighted that privatizing water services and increasing tariff levels were detrimental to achieving water security of the poor, and in many situations critically undermined poor peoples' basic human right to water. Thus, it is questionable if good governance reforms, which continue to emphasise the privatisation of service delivery and full cost recovery tariffs, will indeed benefit the poor.

Conclusion

This chapter traced the rise of 'good governance' as the latest hegemonic development discourse within which contemporary urban water reforms are embedded, and examined the discourse's main propositions, assumptions and aims. In essence, the good governance discourse proposes that capitalist economic growth, democratic politics and human rights can not only co-exist, but are mutually compatible and reinforcing. In order for this to be

realised, the good governance discourse proposes that the institutions of the state must be reformed so they are small *but* effective, and that everyone can, and must participate. The chapter was framed around five fields related to the policies of good governance and the practices of development in action. Critical to my description of these fields was my own proposition that despite the policies, premises and promises of the good governance discourse a number of tensions and contradictions play out within these five fields and exist and are manifested in the intersections between policy, practice, and outcomes.

The first field was the conditions of re-forming the state as a trustee for the capitalist market. This discussion detailed how the good governance discourse stemmed from the view that corrupt and nepotistic states in developing countries were hindering capitalist development, and therefore the institutions of government needed to be reformed in order that they “support but do not supplant competitive markets” (World Bank, 1991*b*, p. 1). I questioned what positioning of the state as a trustee for a states potential to genuinely engage in democratic process and a development trajectory that is pro-poor. I also highlighted, however, that the Indian state has been an active agent in bringing about neo-liberal globalisation and therefore cannot be considered a passive victim of international development agencies (Randeria, 2003).

The second and interconnected field, related to the constructed role for democracy and civil society participation within the good governance discourse. This discussion highlighted how the good governance discourse advocates for liberal democracy, and how historically, liberal democracy has been promoted and pursued over deeper forms of democracy in order to support a capitalist market and to limit the channels available for citizens to demand social and economic rights from the state (MacPherson, 1966; Crozier et al., 1975; Dryzek, 1996; Leftwich, 1996; de Sousa Santos and Avrtizer, 2005). I further explained how while the good governance discourse promotes a greater role for civil society in the activities of governance, in practice, this may be limited to functional and instrumental modes of participation that are deemed useful for successfully implementing market oriented reforms and pre-defined development projects.

The third field considered was the good governance ambition of achieving a broad based political consensus on how a society's resources should be allocated. Here, I concurred with Abrahamsen (2000), that this is an inherently undemocratic assumption. Because the good governance discourse strongly advocates capitalist growth, then it is implied that such a consensus must be in favour of the market and the commercialisation of basic services. Given that a "full inclusive 'rational' consensus" is unobtainable (Mouffe, 1997), I questioned what this may mean for the inclusion and exclusion of political participation and democratic aspirations of citizens with alternative development visions. The fourth field of good governance reforms I looked at was the emphasis within the good governance discourse on technical assistance and the role of technical experts in the construction of development knowledge. Taking into account critical work on the work of outside experts in development, and the technification of development over its political dimensions (Arndt, 1981; Chambers, 1983; Ferguson, 1990; Escobar, 1991; Mitchell, 2002; Li, 2007), I raised the concern that technical experts may be employed as a preferential option to democratic process and poor people's genuine participation.

The final field I examined was the rationale for the commercialisation and privatisation of basic services as the means for securing access for the poor. This discussion elaborated on the World Bank's 2004 World Development Report: *Making Services Work for Poor People*. In short, the World Bank proposed that political interference was the principle reason poor people are not adequately serviced and that liberal democracy was no guarantee of such. Instead of promoting deeper forms of democracy or advancing the agenda for basic services to be recognised as rights entitlements, the World Bank advocated that decentralising and privatising service delivery, and charging the poor user tariffs was the best way to ensure that poor people could demand accountability from service providers, which in turn result in them being bettered serviced. However, as I explained in Chapter One when I discussed experiences on the privatisation of water services since 1990s, privatisation and the full cost of water had detrimental and disastrous impacts on many poor citizens (Hardoy & Schusterman, 2000; Grusky, 2001; Loftus & McDonald, 2001; Marsden, 2003; Public Citizen, 2003; Robbins, 2003; Shultz, 2003).

In the following chapter I outline my methodological approach and analytical strategy for examining the policies and practices of good governance. This is followed by an in-depth exploration of three reform projects in the area of urban water services in Karnataka. Through these project level case-studies, I illustrate that there are indeed, a number of tensions and contradictions that exist and manifest, within, and between, the policy of the good governance, the practices of implementing reforms, and in the outcomes of such which limit the deepening of democracy and the expansion of human rights for the poor.

Chapter Three: In the Site of Reform

Since the mid-1990s, the south Indian state of Karnataka has been moving forward on an agenda to radically restructure urban water governance. This transformation is both physical and political. On the physical side it includes large public capital investments to upgrade and extend piped infrastructure for water distribution. Politically, it entails institutional reforms to fundamentally transform urban water governance and services from publicly controlled undertakings to financially sustainable, privately managed and privately regulated markets. Such a sweeping turn in Karnataka's urban water governance follows the international policy 'consensus' on what the characteristics and nature of urban water governance should be. However, wherever and whenever reforms and development projects such as these occur they are met with the democratic voices and aspirations of civil society organisations and citizens, many of whom challenge the principles, processes and outcomes of such reforms on the basis of sovereignty, democracy and human rights. As a site of reform, Karnataka is a contested territory.

In the year and a half I was in India from February 2007 to August 2008 I explored the contested nature of Karnataka's urban water governance reforms, but it was also something I found myself compelled to actively engage with, and in. This chapter is about what I did over the course of this research, how I did it, and why. It is about how I situated myself and how I was situated by others, and how I have chosen to represent the events and people, effecting or affected by contemporary water reforms in Karnataka. I explain why and how my methodological approach was one of politically motivated critical ethnography and how I took the process, implementation and local experiences of development policy and water reform projects as my focal point. As the discussion will outline, this led me to engage with a wide and diverse range of individuals, organisations and institutions. Before I began fieldwork, I did what most PhD students are required to do; I obtained ethics approval from

my University¹². However, studying across such diverse groups raised a number of ethical challenges that could not be foreseen prior to being in the site of reform. Therefore, in the last section of this chapter I reflect on some of the unanticipated and unpredicted ethical issues I encountered such as how I used information I was able to obtain while I was still in India and how I have represented the multiplicity of actors and local experiences in this thesis.

Approaching the Site of Reform

An ethnographic approach of the critical kind – the overarching methodology

Development, as a study and a practice by ‘development professionals’, has something of a troubled history. Chambers (2007) refers to development professionals as all those:

...working on development especially in or in connection with non-OECD countries. This includes academics, NGO aid agency staff, consultants, government personnel, managers and people in the private sector, politicians and researchers, whatever their discipline, profession or training. (p. 11)

A common criticism of development professionals is the way they can “remain pent [up] in their professional prisons” (ibid). Often this means approaching development quantitatively and technocratically, and where development wisdom and knowledge is created in the core (the West) and dispersed to the periphery (the South). A number of concerns have been raised in response to such an approach. Three such concerns which have particular relevance to this study are: the failure to encapsulate the political and power dynamics in analyses of development problems (Unsworth, 2009); the failure to incorporate local knowledge and poor people in diagnosing problems and devising solutions (Chambers, 1983; Chambers, 2007); and, the failure to recognise local specificities and to apply blueprint analyses and solutions to diverse and unique settings. To some extent, the academic

¹² Approval was received from the Massey University Human Research Ethics Committee on 30/10/06, application number: 06/071. Given the political character of urban water reforms and the possible implications of this research on participating individuals, organisations and communities I chose to attend a meeting with the Massey University Human Research Ethics Committee to present my research plans and to discuss, what at the time, I considered some of the more complex ethical issues that I might encounter throughout the project.

discipline of anthropology and development professionals who hail from it may be able to counter-act these concerns. This is because the anthropologist's primary research tool of long term ethnography can allow for a rich, qualitative and contextual analysis of development as it is experienced locally by local actors.

However, anthropologists and conventional ethnography are not without their share of critics. It has been suggested that conventional ethnography is a "discursive relic of a colonial era" (Brown, 2004, p. 300), where the lone ethnographer ventured to foreign lands to study the 'exotic Other', only to return to produce a 'so-called' truthful and objective account of what lay beyond (Horner, 2004). Others, such as Escobar (1991) have pointed out that anthropology as a discipline, as well as traditional ethnographers have a historical relationship with colonial administrations and that the nature of this relationship has flowed into the work of contemporary 'applied' anthropologists, who in response to the cultural turn in development are increasingly employed by powerful development agencies to perform a supporting role in the implementation of development interventions. Such relationships may mean that anthropologists overlook or avoid the power inequalities of development and through their actions and work even support and maintain them. One methodological approach to overcoming such criticisms of anthropology and ethnography is for students of anthropology and development studies (such as myself), to take an explicitly critical perspective in our work. Within anthropology, as in other disciplines which have employed an ethnographic approach such as sociology, geography and feminist studies, there has been a move in recent decades toward critical ethnography.

Critical ethnography differs from *conventional ethnography* in that it has an overtly political purpose and bias. As Thomas (1993) explains:

Conventional ethnographers recognize the impossibility, even undesirability, of research free of normative and other biases, but believe that these biases are to be repressed. Critical ethnographers instead celebrate their normative and political position as a means of invoking social consciousness and societal change. (p. 4)

The political perspective of critical ethnographic researchers and the political purpose ascribed to critical ethnography requires a high degree of self-reflexivity. According to

Horner (2004), such “reflexivity is intended as a professional safeguard against taking one’s own perspective as universal rather than local and personal, and against rewriting the experiences of those researched in one’s own terms” (p. 27). Engaging in critical ethnographic inquiry can also entail intentional collaborations between researchers and research participants. Like reflexivity, collaboration, which can take many forms, is intended to breakdown the hierarchy and power imbalances between researchers and “informants” (Horner, 2004). Critical ethnography may also involve engaging in ‘applied’ or ‘advocacy’ anthropology. However, it is important to note here that such ‘practical’ anthropology is not always of a critical nature. And furthermore, as I have explained earlier in this chapter, as well as in Chapter Two, anthropologists collaborating with powerful development agencies as cultural ‘experts’ may also contribute, perhaps unwittingly, to the construction and maintenance of destructive politics and power relationships. Rather than refuting the potential of practical anthropology, I would suggest that for anthropologists who want to engage in applied or advocacy related work, what becomes vital is for them to raise their own consciousness by questioning who they are collaborating with, why and for whose benefit. This is of course, part of a reflexive process.

Practical anthropology has a close relationship with public policy. According to Ervin (2005), in the field of practical anthropology:

[I]t is important to pay attention to policy analysis. It is crucial for anthropologists aspiring to improve institutions, communities, and peoples’ lives to understand all the formal and informal ways that decisions are made. They need to know how they are made, on the basis of what kinds of information and values, through what kinds of culturally based filters, and through what kinds of power relationships of influence or authority. (p. 1)

In recognition of the many flaws and failures of conventional development research and ethnographic research, in this study my overarching methodological approach is that of critical ethnography. The analytical strategy through which I apply this is through an ‘anthropology of public policy’ because of the possibilities it presents in unraveling and revealing the power dynamics of development as an idea and a practice.

An anthropology of public policy – the analytic strategy

What ‘policy’ is exactly is unclear. The term has no universal or authoritative definition. Wedel et al. (2005) suggest that rather than trying to answer the question of “what is policy?” and attempting to develop an abstract definition, an anthropology of public policy is more concerned with what people do in the name policy: be it foreign policy; economic policy; a general program of action; or a “desired state of affairs” (p. 35). In this thesis I take the position that development ideals and goals which may not appear in any one policy document but that are pursued in the ambition of development are ‘development policy’, and that these policies are in constant flux and revision as past attempts at developing the ‘un-developed’ or the ‘under-developed’ have failed¹³. The development policy focus of this study is that of ‘good governance’ and quite specifically urban water governance as it is applied to countries in the South.

Some advocates for an anthropology of public policy have proposed that the object of analysis is public policy itself (for example Wedel et al., 2005). However, according to these same authors an *anthropology of public policy* attempts to “uncover the constellations of actors, activities, and influences that shape policy decisions, their implementation and their results” (p. 30). Thus, an anthropology of public policy also attempts to unravel the interactions between multiple subjects as they shape and are shaped by the culture of policy making and its content and implementation. For this reason I take the position that the focus of an anthropology of public policy is not *policy as object*, but *subjects in their relations with (development) policy and each other*. As others have noted, this can require ‘studying-up’ and examining the discourses and actions of the powerful institutions, organisations and agents that shape, make, and implement public policy, as well as “how the state (or to be more exact, those policy-makers and professionals who are authorized to act in the state’s name) relate to local populations” (ibid, p. 34). It may also require ‘studying-down’ and exploring

¹³ Thus, as I stated in the previous chapter during the 1980s the dominant international policy agenda for “development” was the Washington Consensus and its practical application structural adjustment programs and neo-liberal reform imposed by institutions such as the IMF and World Bank. From this, national policies were constructed to institutionalise and legitimise neo-liberal reform. In the 1990s the international policy focus shifted, although not abandoning neo-liberal reform and economic growth, to that of good governance and institutional reform. This in turn has been constructed and reconstructed in national and local policies, programmes and projects.

the way policy is implemented, experienced, and contested locally. The duality of studying-up and studying-down simultaneously in the same policy context and setting means that the dynamics between the networks and constellations of agents that effect, and those that are affected by policy can be explored.

The term 'studying-up' was first coined by the North American anthropologist Laura Nader almost four decades ago. Nader (1972) questioned the way anthropologists focus their studies on the poor and marginalised and challenged anthropologists to ask ourselves "whether the entirety of fieldwork does not depend upon a certain power relationship in favor of the anthropologist, and indeed whether such dominant-subordinate relationships may not be affecting the kinds of theories that we weave" (p. 5). She called on anthropologists in North America to re-focus their ethnographic inquiry on the powerful and elite actors within their own society and proposes that such a change in focus also alters the types of questions we ask and the theories that are formulated. For instance, she suggested that in studying-up "instead of asking why some people are so poor we would ask why are other people so affluent" (1972, p. 5-6). She further suggested that studying-up not only challenges the types of questions we ask and the theories we build, but that is also has democratising potential. For example, if one was to study the bureaucratic institutions that govern people's lives then this could be used to enhance citizens understanding of how their society works, and how they can engage beyond simply voting.

In the decades following Nader's call to study-up anthropologists and critical ethnographers have ventured into this area of inquiry. There have been critical development ethnographies written about powerful development institutions, such as Goldman's (2006) study on the World Bank. In this study he exposes how the World Bank works with and through international networks to construct the formation of global policy. A number of scholars, particularly within the area of post-development, inspired by Foucault's theory of governmentality, have examined in detail the way that development discourse has been constructed and deployed by Western development 'experts' and governments. These studies have also highlighted how such discourses position countries and people in the Third World as being under-developed and in need of development as historically

experienced and conceptually defined by those in the West (for example Escobar, 1995). However, while examining the internal structures and policy making cultures of powerful institutions, or the way that development discourse is constructed by such actors have provided many valuable insights, what these studies are unable to shed light on is how such policy and discourse is adopted and implemented by local elites and powerful interest groups. Indeed, Everett (1997) has suggested that these local actors are the “ghost in the machine” in that they often get overlooked in post-structural critiques of development. On this point she writes of Escobar’s (1995) study on the World Bank in Colombia’s development process:

To the extent that local and national actors are visible in Escobar’s account, they are depicted as totally constrained by the World Bank, unable to maneuver within the “development regime”. One of the most notable oversights of Escobar’s analysis... is that he completely ignores the role of local and national elite groups, as well as the state, in importing and implementing foreign development strategies. (p. 139)

In recognising the pivotal role that local actors can perform in the deployment of development policy nationally and locally, and the way they are often overlooked in critical ethnographies that focus on institutions such as the World Bank, in this study one focus of my attention is the actors and agencies that support and implement international development policy locally. In doing so, rather than positioning local development professionals as the passive or helpless pawns of powerful international development institutions and Western governments, attention is given to agency of local actors and how international development policy finds its way into national and local contexts through such agents. This focus does not ignore the discourse and the role of powerful international development institutions. Rather, it allows for the possibility of exploring and uncovering the dynamics and intersections between global policy and the processes and the practices of their implementation locally. There are two sub-analytic strategies that I have adopted to do this. The first strategy is examining the link between policy ideals and specific project interventions. The second strategy is exploring the local and everyday concrete practices of reform.

Studying policy through project interventions and everyday practices

While studying policy can allow for understanding who formulates policy and how, and for unveiling the politics and power of policy making and interventions, for many local people it is only at the point in time when policy ideals are implemented in the form of specific programs and projects that it directly intersects with their lives in a way they can tangibly respond to. It is also at the point of policy through project implementation when many citizens first become aware of the intention of development policy and when policy makers, implementing agents, and citizens are brought into dynamic relations with each other. For this reason, in this thesis I explore how development policy is infused locally through specific project interventions.

In Chapters Five, Six and Seven I present a detailed examination on how development policy is implemented locally through specific projects. As will become clear in the chapters that follow, these projects are interconnected with each other in that they all follow a larger policy directive toward market oriented water reforms, but also in terms of the global and local networks of actors that have been involved in their construction and implementation. The way I have approached these projects is to consider them as what Yin (1994) describes as embedded case-studies, or sub-units of analysis, within a larger holistic case-study. A diagrammatic representation of my case-study framework is presented in Figure 3.1.

Examining the intersections and influences between policy and project can illuminate the critical role local agents in putting into play international development policy, but to understand the politics of development in depth, this also requires examining and understanding the everyday practices through which reforms are constructed and implemented¹⁴. Exploring these concrete practices is quite compatible with a critical ethnographic approach. As Thomas (1993) points out:

Critical ethnography takes seemingly mundane events, even repulsive ones, and reproduces them in a way that exposes broader social processes of control, taming,

¹⁴ There are a number of studies which have taken a similar route such as Ferguson's (1990) well-known study on the Thaba Thsaka project in rural Lesetho and more recently Tania Murray Li's (2007) examination on development interventions in Indonesia.

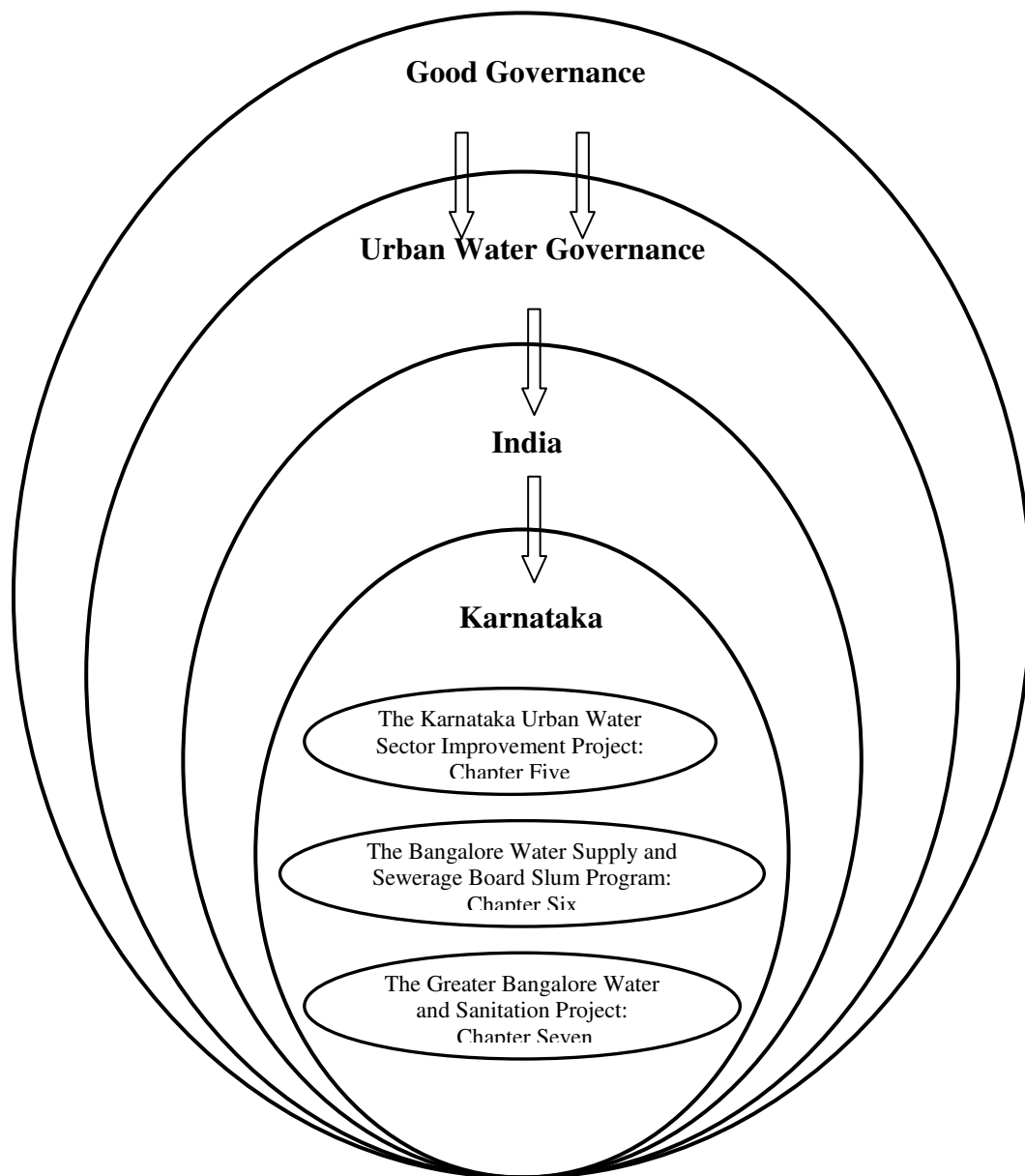
power imbalance, and the symbolic mechanisms that impose one set of preferred meanings or behaviors over others. (p. 9)

Examining everyday practices of reform provides a lens through which to view the tensions between good governance in policy and good governance and practice and the democratic tensions between control and resistance that occur in the name of development in the site of reform. It can also serve as a political tool in the way it exposes the strategies and tactics that are employed and deployed by reformers to build consent or compliance for reforms. It is my hope that such exposure may provide insights that are valuable for citizens to make demands for greater transparency, accountability and democracy. Indeed, in this study I not only examine the everyday ways in which reforms and projects are constructed and implemented, but also the everyday practices of resistance to such by local citizens and communities. The local power dynamics and interplays between the practices of those with the power to reform and those with the power to resist is where I see limitations and possibilities to deepening democracy and realising rights being most profoundly experienced and exposed.

In quick summary, with explicit intent to conduct research that contributes to the political goal of social justice, as well as to counteract some of the flaws and failures in development studies and conventional anthropology, my overarching methodological approach to this study has been one of critical ethnography. As an analytic strategy I have drawn from the ideas of an anthropology of public policy. Critical to my strategy has been simultaneously 'studying-up' and 'studying-down', examining the materialisation of development policy through specific project interventions, and exploring the everyday practices through which institutional reforms and development projects are constructed, implemented, contested and resisted. A critical ethnographic approach to development policy and project interventions that incorporates the practices and experiences of the makers, implementers and subjects of development, provides a possibility for exploring core questions related to the political project of deepening democracy, such as: who is involved in the construction and implementation of development policy and projects and who is not; in what ways does the inclusion and exclusion of different actors in the policy network affect the content of policy and projects; in what ways do policies and projects privilege some over others; and,

who accepts and contests these locally and why? In essence, the combination of my methodological approach and analytical strategy has enabled me to unravel and reveal some the 'politics of development' where the actions of those with the power to reform cannot be separated from the experiences of those who are the subjects of development. It is to my engagement with those with the power to reform, those subjects (and non-subjects) of development, and those with the power to resist, that I now turn.

Figure 3.1 A case-study approach: combining holistic and embedded case studies



Researching in the Site of Reform

Getting to know those with the power to reform

There are many individuals, organisations and institutions that possess and share in the power to reform: international development agencies; NGOs; governments; politicians and public sector employees; the private sector; private consultants; researchers; and, academics. An important part of this research was getting to know those with the power to reform urban water governance in Karnataka, and here I briefly outline how I got to know them.

One of the first tasks I attempted when I arrived in Bangalore was to get a grip on all the water reform projects that were underway in the state and to map out the networks of agents who were involved in implementing reform projects, as well as the institutions that were targeted for reform. I gathered much of this data during initial or one-off interviews with government bureaucrats, public sector engineers, politicians, managers of private water corporations, private consultants and employees of NGOs located in Bangalore. These interviews provided an opportunity for me to introduce myself and the purpose of the study and were generally quite formal in nature. I learnt quite quickly, however, that there would be no hard and fast rule on how to contact people, how to obtain informed consent and what were or were not locally appropriate conventions on how to conduct interviews: some people wanted a written description of the study before an interview time was fixed; others wanted approval from the head of their organisation or department before they agreed to speak to me; others were happy to fix a time to meet and content with a verbal description of the project and their rights as participants before the official interview began. If people were emailed they were provided with informed consent forms, or they were advised verbally of their rights as participants before the interview began. I accepted that people's willingness to speak and have interviews recorded or notes taken, was an indication of informed consent and therefore did not push the issue of obtaining informed consent in writing. The content of these first interviews was of a scoping nature and seldom did they dig into sensitive issues on the politics, motivations and practices of reform. This was partly due to my own shyness, nervousness, and naivety about what to ask. Sometimes

it was because it simply did not feel appropriate and right to ask probing questions when I had only just met someone and this was often reinforced when people appeared more interested in talking about cultural practices and life-styles in New Zealand. Some people I only interviewed once because it seemed sufficient given their role or place in reforms. With others the first interview was just the beginning of our interactions.

Over the course of my fieldwork a number of government agencies and the insights and knowledge of certain individuals became critical to helping me unravel and understand the practices and power of reform agents. While many of these individuals were the reformers themselves, an equal number were also those who worked in agencies that were intended and targeted for reform. Over the months I kept visiting the same old offices and the same individuals and as time went on our interactions became less formal and more friendly and conversational. I am convinced that over time people became more honest with me and started sharing more, often quite casually, about things that I would never have expected such people to share. If I met someone more than once I didn't continue asking for informed consent each time we met. These people were aware of my purpose there and I understood this to be a given in our ongoing encounters. Most often I met people in their offices and while this was frequently arranged as time went on I felt more comfortable to just turn up unexpectedly. I cannot recall a time that I was turned away unless I wanted to see a specific person and they were unavoidably unavailable. Over the months there were times when I was invited to share people's home-brought lunch with them at their place of work, or to visit their homes to meet and eat with their family. As I got to know people better and as they got to know me better, these interactions also became times to share our viewpoints on the character, potentials, limitations, and politics surrounding reforms. These conversations could become demanding and confrontational when we clashed in our opinions, but in my view, regardless if sometimes our ideologies and perspectives differed, these interactions were beneficial to both parties in terms of our insights, and demonstrated, and required a certain degree of respect between both parties.

During my time in Karnataka I also attended many conferences, public seminars and public consultations on local governance issues and reforms. Sometimes these were organised by

civil society organisations while others were arranged by government departments or international development agencies. Attending these events was an important aspect of the larger ethnographic approach to the study and helped me to develop a broader understanding on the character and politics of local reforms. Being at these organised platforms for participation was valuable for seeing the intersections between those reforming and those seeking answers or alternatives to the proposed reforms.

In addition to interviewing and getting to know people in Karnataka I also conducted formal interviews with public sector bureaucrats and employees of international development agencies based in India's capital of New Delhi. Like my experience in Karnataka people were contacted by phone or email and invited to participate. People were emailed informed consent forms or they were advised verbally of their rights before the interview began. Again I accepted that informed consent was given when people agreed to be interviewed. Most often these interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed, although a few people preferred that I take hand-written notes. I had the same experience with informed consent when I spent two months in Europe conducting formal interviews with Northern NGOs, private consultancy organisations, bi-lateral development agencies, specialist interest groups. A list of organisations interviewed in Europe is presented in Appendix 2. While I have not explicitly referred to these interviews and experiences in this thesis they have contributed to my overall impression and understanding of the global development industry and apparatus and the international networks involved in reforming urban water governance.

Being amongst activists & mis-placed citizens

If studying the institutions, agencies and actors who were involved in constructing, developing and implementing water governance reforms in Karnataka was one aspect of my research strategy, the other was examining how the reforms were accepted, contested and experienced by citizens. Some scholars, especially those working in the tradition of Paulo Freire and academic feminism have suggested that critical ethnography holds empowering and emancipatory potential for marginalised individuals and groups (Brown

& Dobrin, 2004; Sprague, 2005). This potential rests, in part, in reforming the power relationships between the researcher and the researched by moving from analysis-to-action. This often comes in the form of recommendations for greater collaboration between researcher and informants in the research design and implementation (Horner, 2004). I appreciate the potential for such an approach and that it genuinely attempts to acknowledge the knowledge and ambitions of others. However, it is important that this is not built on the paternalistic assumption that we, the researchers, outside experts and development professionals, hold some sort of key for emancipating others. During my time in Karnataka, I did move from analysis to action and did collaborate and work with individuals and groups. This was not a pre-supposed research method, rather, it was something that took shape organically and over time as my relationships with those who shared a commitment to social justice developed. In the following discussion I outline how this research took me into Bangalore's slums and drew me into a close relationships with social and political activists involved in the Campaign Against Water Privatisation – Karnataka (Campaign).

The Campaign is a network of approximately forty individuals and local grass roots NGOs who came together in late 2005 in response to a major water and sanitation infrastructure project. After a few short email correspondences, my first face-to-face encounter with the Campaign came when I visited Bangalore for a six week scoping trip in late 2006 to ascertain if Karnataka would be a viable and suitable setting for this study. At this time the members of the Campaign were holding regular weekly meetings and I was invited to attend. At the first meeting I introduced myself and the study, explained what I hoped to do and why, and answered any questions that people had. Based on this first meeting I was invited to attend future meetings and over time to participate in the activities of the Campaign.

Over the course of my fieldwork, the Campaign generally, and some members of the campaign specifically, were the people that I formed the closest relationships with while I was in Karnataka and it is difficult to find a research terminology that best describes what they were to me and this study and what I was to them. They were, in a way and at varying times, the 'participants', 'informants' and 'subjects' of my research, but none of these terms truly captures the dynamics of my interactions with the Campaign or the depth of

friendship and amity that I developed with some its members. They were my ‘participants’ in that I wanted to learn about and understand the perceptions and experiences of social activists and the operations of social activism. There were also specific individuals who were my ‘informants’, in that they talked and shared with me what they did, how they did and why. But the nature of their ‘informancy’ was not restricted to what they did. They also shared with me government documents that they had acquired, as well as their personal and professional insights, analysis and knowledge of the larger political and policy environment. In many ways, some individuals on the Campaign were more like my teachers than research participants or informants and if I had possessed a paternal outlook where I thought me and my research was going to contribute to “empowering them” I think they would have shown me the door. In fact, on one occasion when I was hanging out with the coordinator of the Campaign, a man who lives in one of Bangalore’s slums and who established and publishes a small not-for-profit magazine for slum-dwellers about issues that affect their lives, I jokingly said in the context of the conversation we were having “I am an expert on Karnataka water”. To which he responded with a chuckle “*You* are not an expert on Karnataka water”. This was at the tail end of my fieldwork and I thought I knew quite a lot by then but I didn’t mind his comment. By the end of my time in India he was also telling me that he was like my big brother. For me, it was a nice way for him to remind me that they didn’t need ‘outsiders’ to claim expertise on or about their lives, and that I still had a lot to learn.

While the members of the Campaign shared a great deal of their information and knowledge with me, as time went on this sharing began to go both ways. The more I interacted and formed relationships with those shaping and implementing reforms, the more I was able to access information that many citizens were not. After much consideration, which I will elaborate on later in this chapter, I made the decision that this information needed to be shared and made public. Sharing such information with those on the Campaign was one way of doing this. Thus, while I may not have possessed the power or the desire to ‘emancipate others’ I was able to access government documents, that at times, others found difficult to obtain and sharing such information with the Campaign was one way I could support them in their work. In addition to sharing documentation with

members of the Campaign I also worked with them writing newspaper articles and memorandums to the government, conducting in-depth policy analysis, and contributing to state or regional meetings they arranged to disseminate information and extend their network of support.

Being with the Campaign was a major part of my activities in Karnataka but because I wanted to explore and understand the relationship between reform projects on the life experiences of the urban poor I had to go beyond being with activists to interacting more directly with the poor themselves. To do this I selected fourteen slums across Bangalore¹⁵. Nine of the slums are located in central Bangalore and had been part of a program conducted by the public sector utility responsible for water and sewerage services in the city to connect over forty-six of the city's slums to the user pays water distribution network. I selected these slums based on the administrative records of the utility, as well as verbal information that I was given on the slums by a government employee who had worked as the Social Development Officer on the program. I tried to capture a diversity of communities in terms of location in the city, population, and whether an NGO or Community Based Organisation (CBO) had been involved. The five slums remaining slums that I selected are located in peri-urban Bangalore where the slum program had not been implemented. However, as part of a major infrastructure development project to extend piped water supply in the periphery of the city, plans are underway to extend the slum program to these outer areas. I chose to include this second set of slums for two reasons: first, so I could assess how shifting from free water supply to user-pays services might affect people's water security; second, I wanted to see whether people in slums were aware of the infrastructure project and if infrastructure was being extended into their communities. I considered each of these fourteen communities to be a distinct micro case-study, which when they were taken together would present a more holistic picture on individual and collective experiences at the community level.

While the cornerstone of anthropological inquiry is participant observation, I was neither a participant nor a long-term observer in the slums. My approach was, however, still

¹⁵ Estimates of the number of slums in Bangalore differ greatly. Official figures put the number of slums at slightly under 400, while some NGOs working with slum people in Bangalore put the figure at closer to 1000.

qualitative and in-depth. For each of the fourteen slums I spent between four to six days conducting informal qualitative interviews and having informal conversations with community members, men and women, either individually or in groups depending on how people were most comfortable participating. I hoped that by examining the living realities of the people in Bangalore's slums through their own interpretations and stories, I would gain a richer understanding of the local specificities and unique experiences of individuals, households and communities. When and where relevant, I also conducted more formal interviews with CBOs, NGOs, community leaders, politicians, government engineers, valve-men, and private water operators. I anticipated interviewing actors outside the community would shed some light on why water services in any particular slum were the way they were - good or bad. Appendix 3 provides an overview of the number and range of people who I interviewed for each of the fourteen slums.

In each slum I also conducted water quality testing with the support of a Bangalore based NGO who funds community water projects throughout India. This was not part of my initial research plan but rather, was a reaction and a response to the fact that over the course of the interviews, particularly in peri-urban Bangalore, a number of people raised serious concerns about the quality of their drinking water. The results of the water quality testing are presented in Appendix 4. These results show the quality of water available in the slums with respect to ten indicators from the hardness of the water to the presence of nitrate and ammonia. These indicators were set against both Indian drinking water standards and those of the World Health Organisation, and reveal how only five of the fourteen slums' primary water supply met these standards.

Because of my inability to speak the many languages that people in Bangalore's slums speak, I was bound to working with local translators. Not only were my translators important for bridging the verbal divide and explaining why I was there, what the study was about, and gaining verbal informed consent from community members, they were also critical for representing me in the way that I wanted to be represented. I was soon to learn the manner in which I was represented and the manner of the translator could make or break the way people responded and engaged with me. The first translator I worked with

was an elderly Brahmin man who someone, who knew someone, who knew the man, had put me in touch with. Most people who live in slums are Muslim or low caste Hindus and Indian caste and religious dynamics are relevant. After about a week working together I started to get the sense from his tone and body language that he was scolding some of the people we were speaking to, and that he was telling me what *he thought* people meant rather than what they were actually saying. I asked him about this and he confirmed what I had thought. I decided to end my working relationship with him and ended up working with two excellent translators. A few people chose not to speak to me. A few people walked away, others stated that they were too busy to talk or that they would have to get approval from some other person, such as a husband or community leader. However, most people did speak to me. Many people insisted that they give me a chair; I would insist that I sat on the ground. People insisted that they provide me with soft-drinks; I would insist that I drank water. I appreciated their efforts to make us comfortable but actually it made me very uncomfortable and it often came down to a battle of wills. Perhaps I was being ungracious but I was genuinely more comfortable on the ground and drinking water and I think most people appreciated it, as more than one person remarked “ha, she is just like us!”¹⁶

Despite the commitment of the translators who I worked with, I know there were times when the nuances and details of what people were saying were lost in translation or not always passed on to me. People didn’t always want to stop speaking so my translator could recite to me what was being said, and there were times when the translators didn’t think what we were being told related to my topic or was necessary for the study. I explained – continuously – that everything is important: “If we ask one question and get an answer that appears completely un-related, there will be a reason – we need to take time to understand what that reason is”. If people wanted to talk about things not seemingly related to water I wanted to hear. If people invited me to stay for food, I wanted to stay. Often I wanted to stay longer, talk to more people, relax into conversations that might drag into the evening or

¹⁶ Whether people used the exact phrasing as others I do not know definitively. However, it is possible that such everyday speak and phrases were the same, or it is also possible that minor differences in sentences were expressed generically to me by the translators. I make this point here because on one or two occasions in the later chapters I cite a single phrase and attribute it to a number of individuals.

even the night but even though my translators developed a passion for the topic by the end of the day, they were tired, had other places to be and other things to do.

I have read in at least one PhD thesis by a foreign researcher explaining how they were careful to not go into Bangalore's slums alone or at night out of concern for their personal safety. Such a perception never entered my mind. Poor people may be without much of what others of us take for granted, but they are not, and should not, be generically stereotyped as violent, or of criminal intent. I did, however, develop ethical concerns about going into the slums. These concerns arose from the nature of the conversations I was having with people and an awareness that I was raising topics and issues for discussion which were often unpleasant and frustrating aspects of their lives and for which I could offer them no solution or any real substantial support. In some communities where the water situation was very bad people asked me how this research was going to improve their situation. I explained, though my explanation was a feeble one, that the things they were sharing with me I would discuss with state agencies when I spoke with them and that their experiences would be written in a research report that would be made available to the relevant government agencies. Many people shared their experiences of mis-placed citizenship with me, in terms of the denial or apathy of the state regarding their basic political, social and economic rights and a few people asked me to speak to officials on their behalf believing that as a foreigner and as a researcher I would have more power to influence the state than they did as citizens. However, many people also explained how it was up to them to organise, mobilise, and make demands on the state, although quite naturally, they also stated that they hoped this study would be used to improve their life conditions. In addition to studying poverty and water in the slums I also undertook a study, in collaboration with a network of local NGOs, on people who live as urban homeless in Bangalore. The study is not yet complete and therefore I have not included the findings of it in this thesis. However, it was an important contribution to my overall understanding of political-economic character of water reforms and poverty in Karnataka as well as my personal and professional development as researcher and therefore I include details of this experience in Appendix 5.

Breaking or Building Ethical Research Practices – Whose Right to Information?

Not long after I arrived in Bangalore to begin fieldwork I attended a public seminar on urban governance. The seminar was held in an upper-middle class suburb and was hosted by a middle class research NGO. The panel of experts comprised of four middle aged men. Three were highly positioned public bureaucrats and the other was a USAID representative who also has a private consultancy business based in Bangalore¹⁷. A common set of ‘bad’ governance themes ran through their presentations: urban infrastructure was under-developed, public services were in disarray, and greater private sector participation was not only possible but a necessary solution to the development woes of urban spaces and governance in Karnataka. When challenged by some people in the audience on the extensive role proposed for the private sector, and particularly as it related to the needs of the urban poor, the USAID representative responded, in what appeared to be an attempt to settle the crowd, by suggesting that there was no need for concern, as after all “governance can’t be privatised”.

Just over a year later I was speaking with a friend from the Campaign. He told me how the Planning Commission of the Government of Karnataka had hired the services of the international private consultancy firm Pricewaterhouse Coopers to prepare the Vision Document for the Twelfth Five Year Plan for the state. For many local activists it was a disturbing event that echoed and further exposed what they analysed to be the increasing shift away from public governance and popular democracy, to the privatisation of governance and the diminishing of democratic space. What made it all the more troubling was that the Vision Document was being prepared at a time in Karnataka’s contemporary history when the state government had collapsed, and with no elected body was under the Governor’s rule – an appointment made by the Prime Minister of India. In their assessment *governance could be privatised* and this was an example of such. My friends in the Campaign took up the issue swiftly and passionately. They contacted the Planning Commission

¹⁷ The public bureaucrats that were on the panel included the Commissioner of the Greater Bangalore City Corporation, the Commissioner of the Bangalore Development Authority, and a retired bureaucrat who had held numerous posts in Karnataka including the Chief Secretary to the GoK and Vice-Chairman of the Karnataka Planning Commission.

requesting a copy of the Vision Document only to be told it was still with Pricewaterhouse Coopers. They contacted Pricewaterhouse Coopers demanding a copy and were told that they were only a consultant and that they should contact the government. Frustrated and angry at the blatant denial of their right to public information they held a public protest on a busy central city street. Reporters came to the protest – quite a number of them – and the activists were interviewed, but neither their actions nor their concerns received any significant attention in the press. On the same day of the protest half a dozen of the activists were taken by police escort to the Governor's office so that they could voice their concerns. The Governor's secretary told them that the Governor was un-well and that they would be contacted for a meeting the following week. They were never contacted. There has been no meeting.

Just a few days before the protest, I visited one of the bureaucrats who is responsible for urban reforms in Karnataka and with whom I had formed a good relationship. As we were sitting chatting, drinking tea and catching up I caught a glimpse of the Executive Summary of the Vision Document on his desk. I asked if I could take a look. He happily gave me a copy.

Transparency and citizens' right to information are core prescriptions in international good governance policy yet after spending months in Karnataka learning about the everyday practices of those implementing good governance reforms, I had come to the uncomfortable conclusion that the disclosure of public information was a good governance ideal, rather than something that was good practice during the process of good governance reforms. I had come to the conclusion that for many reform managers it was perceived as easier, perhaps even necessary, to keep certain information far from the public gaze and that water reforms in Karnataka that were being undertaken in the name of good governance, were very often coming about through a process of bad governance.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks to this chapter, before I began fieldwork I went through a process of obtaining formal ethics approval from my academic institution. This was a valuable and necessary process but could only partly prepare for me for how I would

deal with some of the ethical issues that arose over the course of my fieldwork, as well as in the preparation and writing of this thesis. The following discussion reflects on some of these ethical issues. In particular I focus on the issue of right to information: something that is a policy ideal in the good governance discourse, but which in Karnataka was often lacking in the everyday practices of implementing reforms.

On sharing public documents about public matters

Finishing my cup of tea I left the office of my bureaucrat friend with the Executive Summary of the Vision Document securely in my bag. I was excited that I had the document and eager to get home and read it. But I was also quite shaken up. Why was it that I had been able to access the document so easily when I knew citizens of Karnataka had been trying to get a copy for weeks but with no success? As I was making my way to the bus stand my mobile phone rang. It was my friend from the Campaign, the one who had told me about the Pricewaterhouse Coopers consultancy. He was just around the corner at a small Human Rights Resource Centre where the Campaign meetings were held. They were planning for the protest and he wanted to know “would I meet him there?”

I changed direction and went and met him and as soon as I arrived I told him I had a copy of the Executive Summary. He was glad because he had been attempting to acquire a copy for weeks and now we had one. I was nervous because I was pretty sure I had been given the document on a ‘your eyes only’ basis and I felt concerned I was breaking some kind of research ethics on confidentiality. It was clear that I was not breaking informant confidentiality, in terms of disclosing details from an interview and naming the person, but I still had the uneasy feeling that sharing government documents that I knew had been intentionally kept out of the public domain was breaking some kind of prescribed and expected research ethics. Maybe I should not have felt so uneasy. This was well over twelve months into my fieldwork and by this time I had already decided that sharing public documents about public matters was more ethical than not sharing them. The decision that I had come to had not come easily, but over the course of my fieldwork I had seen a pattern emerging where what is promoted in the name of good governance reforms and what takes

place at the time of their construction and implementation, are two quite different things. Overall, my impression was that genuine citizen participation was anemic or non-existent, transparency was weak with critical public information often kept tightly guarded and out of the public realm, and the accountability of individuals, organisations and institutions conceptualising or implementing reforms was insubstantial or totally inadequate. Furthermore, because I had been able to access information such as draft public policies and private consultants' reports that citizens were frequently denied or were often kept unaware of, I felt complicit in the bad governance of good governance reforms. I had come to learn that almost everything is a draft which provides a handy, albeit invalid excuse for not disclosing public documents¹⁸. In the larger context of the character of reforms, my research topic, and my political commitment to social justice, I decided that sharing such documents was in fact building more ethical research practices. As I have already mentioned, I had made this decision some months earlier but only after I had approached the bureaucracy with my concerns.

During my first year in Karnataka I had been able to acquire copies of a number of consultants' reports that had been prepared as part of World Bank project which included a Technical Assistance component to support the reform of Karnataka's urban water governance. I knew that members of the Campaign (as well as others) would be interested in the content of the reports but I had been hesitant to share them. On the one hand, it was not clear if I had been given them in confidence and I was aware that members of the

¹⁸ Over the year and a half that I spent in Karnataka I was able to access copies of many documents that had (at times intentionally) not been made available to the public, including draft public policies and reports that had been prepared by private consultants that mapped out major reform agendas. One such policy was a guideline on how to provide water and sanitation services to Karnataka's slums which I found quite by accident in an enormous pile of dusty files at the Bangalore Water Board. The policy had been instigated in anticipation of privatizing water services in the Greater Bangalore region and had been researched by a number of bureaucrats and consultants. I came to learn that there had been no public consultation on the policy in Karnataka and that the final version had been written by an American PhD student. Not only was there no public consultation but when a copy of the policy had been requested by a member of the Campaign through a Right to Information request under the Right to Information Act 2005, their application had been denied on the grounds that the policy was only a draft. Another was a National Policy on Sanitation which had been prepared for the Government of India's Ministry of Urban Development by staff at the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program in Delhi. Across the top of every page it was stamped "SECRET". It was given to me in confidence, or you might say in "Secret" and although I hadn't known it existed and hadn't sought it out – it was offered and so I accepted it – gratefully.

Campaign, despite knowing that I had copies, had verbally asked the bureaucracy for copies but had been denied – after all, they were only drafts. On the other hand, I was also aware that these documents had been paid for out of public funds and they mapped out the reformation of water service delivery in the state. In my mind these were public documents and my instincts and my reasoning were telling me these reports contained important information that citizens of Karnataka had a right to know about, and if they chose to, to act upon.

After weeks of trying to weigh what my ethical responsibility as a researcher was to the bureaucrat who had given me the reports and the government agency responsible for the managing the reforms, early one morning I called up a high level bureaucrat from the same government agency. I asked if I could see him urgently. He agreed and I met with him later that day. He was not the person who had given me the reports and at that point I am pretty sure that he was unaware that I had them, but he was very high up in the agency and over the months I had spent many hours in his office. I approached him because of his position but also always because he had always been willing to meet with me and we had developed what I consider to be an amicable relationship and a good rapport. Often when I would visit he would carry on with his day-to-day business as we talked. People would come and go and he always introduced them to me whether they were colleagues, private consultants, local managers of international water corporations, newspaper reporters or even old school friends of his. Often we all chatted together about this or that - sometimes work related, sometimes not. On one occasion when I popped in to visit him he was just about to begin a meeting and he offered that I sit at his desk and check my emails on his computer while he conducted his meeting in the lounge room chairs in his office. In this meeting numerous projects were discussed and although I respected that it was a private meeting and did not intentionally eavesdrop, occasionally I would hear the conversation switch from English to Kannada - the language of Karnataka which everyone accurately assumed, I didn't speak and couldn't understand. The change in language would lead me to glance over, only to see at least someone in the meeting cautiously glancing back at me. Whatever they were discussing, they thought it better that I did not hear.

So I went and visited this senior bureaucrat to ask his approval to let me share the Technical Assistance reports I had with several local NGOs who had an interest in their content. For almost two hours we discussed and negotiated the handover of the documents. He explained to me that he didn't want me to share the documents – they were only “drafts” and what did the NGOs want with them anyway? I explained to him that I believed citizens had a right to reports that were paid for out of public funds and that were about public affairs. I also explained to him that my research was about democracy and that keeping the reports out of the public realm, seemed to me, to be deeply undemocratic. We didn't always see eye to eye on the politics and technical solutions of water governance reforms but he thought my commitment to democracy, transparency, and human rights “admirable”, even if naive and unrealistically idealistic. Finally he agreed that the NGOs could look over the documents in my company but that I could not give them a copy. His decision was not because I had convinced him that citizens should have the information, rather, and even though I explained that this wouldn't happen, he didn't want the NGOs to treat me disdainfully if I didn't let them see the documents. He wanted to protect my well-being but he didn't want the reports to be circulated in the wrong circles: namely amongst local activists who are regarded as being troublesome to the process of reform. For him it was a balanced compromise, while for me it exemplified what I had already come to think: putting too much information in the public realm, and especially about the heated topic of commodifying or privatising water services, is perceived by reformers as just too risky.

By meeting with this bureaucrat I thought I was giving him an opportunity to do what I thought was the ‘right thing’ and I was disappointed that he refused me to provide copies to the NGOs. I was also disturbed that as a foreign researcher I had been given public documents that citizens were not permitted to have and that I found myself in a position of negotiating with the state bureaucracy about citizens' access to information. By being given access to such information it was as though I was being treated as more of a citizen than most people in Karnataka. My conscious weighed heavy and the next day I photocopied the documents and gave a copy to the Campaign. Having ‘secret’ (public) documents that were not available to many Indian citizens raised serious ethical issues for me. It made me fully confront the reality that I was not an objective researcher and that, in the larger picture, my

larger ethical responsibility was not to the bureaucrats and state agencies entrusted with reform but to my political commitment to social justice and the citizens of Karnataka.

On confidentiality of private conversations about public matters

My decision to share public documents also flowed into the realm of ‘information’ that I was given, in private conversations about public matters. As researchers we are taught that the general rule of thumb is confidentiality (even anonymity) unless otherwise stipulated. In a long-term study involving participant observation where much of what you learn (or discover) eventually comes about by just being there, hanging out or becoming part of the furniture, the lines between what is a formal interview and what is just a natural part of conversation become blurred. With that blurring confusion can also arise for a researcher on the issue of confidentiality, not so much about disclosing the names of people who shared certain information with me, but about the information that they share. At least this was my experience. In an environment where information was seldom forthcoming to citizens, but that as a foreign researcher I was, for whatever reason, given access, I had to make some tough decisions about what information to share while researching in the site of reform.

Given that I was getting to know the bureaucracy, and was among activists and mis-placed citizens at the same time, I had to give serious consideration to the issue of how I used and shared information while I was in India. Again, conflicts between professional ethical responsibility as a researcher and personal and political commitment to social justice came to the fore. I know there was an enormous amount that people involved in reforms chose not to tell me, but I was consistently amazed at just how much they did tell me. Albeit with some people this was only after they had become familiar with me, but by no means always. There were occasions when individuals I interviewed – sometimes only once – told me things that I knew some people in Karnataka had wanted to know the answer to, or have confirmation about for months, sometimes years, such as the details on the construction of particular public policies. There were other times when people informed me about reforms and projects that were under discussion within the reform network but were definitely in the pipeline, or about reform plans and contracts that citizens thought had been abandoned

but were very still very much on the table. There were also times when people talked blatantly and openly about how they had been involved in intentionally excluding citizens and sometimes even lying to them. I find it hard to know, and to give any definitive reason as to why people were as open as they were and I think there are multiple answers to this puzzle.

I think some people told me certain things because they genuinely believed that the reforms or the projects that they were involved in were the only (or at least the best) solution to the perceived and defined problems, and that this justified their actions in bringing them about. I think others were very confident in their positions and maybe even proud of what they had achieved: they seemed un-concerned about the 'true' character of the bureaucracy being discussed, analysed and even critiqued. In some situations when people were 'exposing' others, especially within their own hierarchy, it played out as a bit of a blame-game. Sometimes it seemed to me to that this was just an honest and unashamed recollection of events while at other times it appeared to be in order to diminish their own responsibility and accountability. With one or two people I came to believe that these individuals were sincerely concerned with the way reforms were being implemented and maybe even upset about their complicity in the process. There was also the occasional time when it seemed people were 'tipping' me off, by quietly suggesting that something was in the pipeline and even giving me the business cards of the people who were involved and who they thought I should to talk to. At such times I asked myself if maybe, given their professional position, they felt that there was little that they could do or say and that they wanted me to investigate and expose certain things. I never asked them outright and so I do not know the answer to this but I did follow their leads, which did, on at least on one occasion take me to Delhi and the offices of bi-lateral and multi-lateral development agencies such as the International Finance Corporation and the Water and Sanitation Program – South Asia, both of which are arms of the World Bank, and both of which are involved in Karnataka's urban water reforms.

I have assumed that when I was told things during interviews and conversations, with people being fully informed and aware that I was a researcher, that they were also aware

that what they were telling may appear in this thesis, which would then be made available to themselves and to others including local citizens. Given this, one thing I had to consider while I was in India was whether I wait until I write and circulate this document for such details to be made public or should I share such information while still in Karnataka. Because some of the information was related to things that were currently underway or soon to take place, such as the privatisation of water services in Karnataka's cities of Mysore and Kundapura and the proposed formation of a state-level water council, it seemed to me quite necessary to share the information sooner than later: to share it while I was still in the site of reform rather than wait for this thesis to be written. And so this is what I did. I didn't share the names of people who shared information with me, but I did share information that was given to me in confidential interviews and private conversations about public matters. I shared such information with activists and social action groups who had like-minded networks throughout the state. I also shared it with journalists who worked with the mainstream media. Sometimes things would get into the press, sometimes they would not, and sometimes they would but not always telling the 'story' the way I wanted the story to be told. Of course, in this thesis I have far more control over how the events and experiences of Karnataka's urban water reforms are constructed and expressed in the written form, and it is to the constructed text of this document that I now turn.

On representation: quotes, narrative, and multivocality

If some of the characteristics of critical ethnography are reflexivity, political perspectivity, collaboration and action-oriented research, another strategy often promoted by researchers of this ilk to break down inequalities of power between the researcher and the researched is that of multivocality in the written text, whereby the 'other' speaks, rather than is spoken about (Horner, 2004). Despite the potential of multivocality, in the analysis, construction and writing of this thesis I have not sought the input from those whom I studied and learnt from and there are a number of reasons for this.

First, while I did collaborate with individuals and groups in Karnataka on small writing projects, and as discussed earlier in the design and implementation of the urban homeless

study, I did not collaborate with people on *this* research project: people in Karnataka were neither asked to co-design nor partake in the process of data collection. I think, although I have only assumed this, that it would seem strange to people in Karnataka for me to request that they co-analyse and co-write the findings especially given that it would be me, and me alone who, if all goes well will receive the academic qualification. Beyond this point there would also be the question of *who would*, or *would not* be included in this process - the bureaucrats, the activists, the homeless? Selecting one or more groups over the other would be biased and restrictive - though an argument for such could be developed. Multivocality, as a methodology of critical ethnography is generally not applied to those already powerful actors whose voices dominate and have no problem being heard, but to those social actors who are perceived or categorised by the researcher as being voiceless or without the power to have their voices heard. Furthermore, if all groups were invited to share in such a process I could imagine that given their diversity and often polar positions on the issue of urban water reforms, no mutually agreed upon written text could be achieved.

Third, I am not sure how such co-analysis and acknowledgement of co-authorship would be received within the boundaries of a PhD project, which is by and large, an initiation into academia and a test of an individual student's own capabilities. Finally, since I have returned to New Zealand from India I have invited friends in Karnataka to write with me on journal or magazine articles in the belief that what is said about Karnataka's reforms and how it is said, is probably best said by those living and experiencing it. In principle people have agreed and indeed we have intended to do so, but the reality is these people are busy and have other obligations and time commitments. As Horner (2004) has argued, demands for collaboration and multivocality often fail to take into account the material realities of the labour involved in such efforts. With these things in mind I have not attempted multivocality in this text through a process of collaboration. However, I do take seriously the criticisms of constructed knowledge by outsiders such as myself and the value of multivocality, and have attempted in the writing of this document to present the 'voices' of those effecting and affected by water reforms in Karnataka.

One way I have attempted to do this is to present the projects that I analyse as narratives which trace the conception of each project, through to their implementation and the outcomes for local communities. Through these narratives the variety of actors and agents involved or affected by the projects are introduced as they enter the project cycle. This provides a clear description of who is involved and who is not involved in what, when and why. Within these project level narratives that I constructed, which are based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, conversations, and project documentation, the most prominent way I have included and incorporated the voices of 'others' is to weave a significant number of verbal or written quotes into the discussions. These quotes illustrate and provide substance and insight into the motivations, emotions and perspectives of many different actors.

My citation and referencing of quotes from interviews and conversations does not, however, follow a single standard technique and there are important rationales for this. When I quote key government personnel who held, or hold, high level positions and have been critical and influential in the reform process I have provided their name. The good governance discourse strongly asserts the importance of government accountability and yet in the Karnataka case it is not uncommon for individuals who play a prominent role in ushering in reforms to be largely anonymous to the public. In the case of bureaucrats these individuals are frequently moved from position to position and so while they may leave reform legacies behind them seldom are they held accountable for consequences that manifest from these legacies. For this reason, in some situations I have provided people's names with the goal of contributing to the capacity of local citizens to demand accountability from reform managers, if that is something that they choose to do. In cases where an individual has been an important player but do not hold a public position I have not provided a name but rather their institution and position.

For quotes that I include from lower level government personnel including bureaucrats and engineers I also identify the individuals institution and position but not necessarily their specific place of work such as what service station or office they may be located in. When I quote NGO employees or people in slums I do not identify the name of the NGO or the

slum that they live in. In both cases this is to avoid the possibility that these individuals will be reprimanded or penalised for what they have shared with me. For lower level government personnel and NGO employees this may come from those higher in their hierarchy or organisation and for community members from those with the power to supply or not supply water, for example. Similarly, I do not provide the names of social and political activists but I do identify them with certain political campaigns such as the Campaign.

A final point that I wish to make is that all quotes come from interviews and conversations that took place over the period from February 2007 to August 2008. In referencing the quotes I have only noted the year of the quote rather than the month or day. Given that people may move positions, this is also to avoid the possibility that anyone familiar with the local context will be able to identify individuals from their position on a specifically given date.

Conclusion: *"Hogi barthini"*

Since beginning this PhD process I have traveled to Karnataka three times and my intention is to return again shortly after it is completed. There is a saying in Kannada, *"hogi barthini"*. Translated into English it means *"I'll just go and come back"*. This single phrase characterises my relationship with Karnataka. The purpose and my intention for my next visit is to continue to work with local citizens, citizen groups and communities in their struggles and ambitions for social justice. What form this may take I do not yet know, it will depend to a large extent on the possibilities that present themselves to me when I am next in the site of reform. There is, however, a second purpose for this visit.

When I return to Karnataka I will share and circulate this document with people who have participated in the study, and also those who may not have but are interested in its content. I have talked in this chapter, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, about issues of accountability and I will continue to discuss such things in the following chapters. In this chapter I have also revealed what I did over the course of my fieldwork period and with

whom, and have attempted to explain how and why I have reconstructed and represented certain events, institutions, organisations and individuals in this thesis in the way that I have. Returning to Karnataka and sharing this document, including this reflexive account of my fieldwork approach and experiences, as well as the representation of the Karnataka reform process that is presented in the following chapters, is important, and in my mind necessary, for providing others with the opportunity to hold me to account, as a researcher and a development professional, for what I have done, for what I have said, and for the consequences, if any, that may arise from this work. Indeed, writing such an honest account of my processes has been an intentional step toward this, albeit sometimes scary for the consequences it could invoke. Yet, I felt it was necessary. It is relatively easy for researchers, academics and commentators to talk and write of the need for greater accountability within governance institutions and the development industry. In my view, for all researchers it is critical that we expose ourselves and create opportunities to ensure that the standards and expectations we apply to others, we also apply to ourselves and the work that we do.

Chapter Four: Karnataka - The State of a Determined Path

It was sometime into my fieldwork before I came to realise that when it comes to urban water reforms, Karnataka is not an ordinary Indian state. That is, if one could say there is such a thing in a country so diverse. For the purpose of this study, Karnataka's uniqueness was because it had been a fore-running state in implementing market oriented economic and institutional reforms. I came to learn that Karnataka was quick to adopt neo-liberal reforms after the Government of India introduced a major program of structural adjustment in 1991. In 1996 it was the first state to be given a loan from an international development bank for a large urban infrastructure development project, and was one of the first states to experiment with turning people in slums into paying customers of public water services with the support of various international and bi-lateral development agencies. Further, it embarked on many urban 'good governance' reforms before they became part of a national-level urban renewal and institutional reform program which was launched in 2005. The Government of Karnataka has been rewarded by international development banks for its commitment to reforms. For instance, the World Bank has provided the state government with a number of sub-national loans for state-level structural adjustment and governance reforms, including a loan for a major project to radically transform and reform urban water governance. According to the World Bank, such 'progress' in the area of reform has positioned Karnataka as a "reform leader" in the Indian sub-continent (World Bank, 2001, p. 2). It is a state that other sub-national governments are expected to learn from, model themselves on, and follow. But why was it that Karnataka became a fore-runner in accepting and adopting market oriented reforms?

Karnataka's reform process cannot be attributed simply to external conditions and forces such as neo-liberal globalisation, powerful international development agencies and market oriented policy networks, or interventionist central governments, although they have played an important and influential role. If that were the case, then it would seem logical

that all other Indian states would be equally far down the path of reform. In this chapter I attempt to link these powerful non-local forces and influences to the nodes and networks of power that exist locally. These local actors have been critical in facilitating and accommodating market oriented water governance reforms to take hold in the state: from politicians to public sector bureaucrats, corporate leaders to civil society organisations and private consultants.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the national reform agenda for urban development and explains how this is attempting to re-create urban spaces by merging the goals of capitalist development with the provision of basic services for the urban poor. The discussion then moves to Karnataka and explains how the combination of political will and corporate influence in the state supported the infusion of market oriented reform goals locally, and at times even before they became part of national policy. Indeed, it is possible that reform experiments undertaken in Bangalore have even influenced the specificities of the national urban reform agenda. The focus of the chapter is then narrowed down to state level urban water governance reforms. In this section I present a background to the main state institutions and agencies responsible for urban water governance and service delivery and their relationships with each other. I then explore the first comprehensive set of efforts to introduce neo-liberal reform in urban water governance and services over the years 1999-2002. Here I explain how despite an international policy agenda geared toward market oriented reforms, involvement of international development agencies and water corporations, and political will existing at the highest level of the state, for a number of reasons these efforts faltered.

These efforts did not falter for long, however. Over the years 2002-2005, when a team of bureaucrats who were cohesive and committed to market reforms were placed in charge of the key state-level urban departments, reforms in the urban water sector started being introduced and implemented at a rapid pace. The remainder of the chapter explores how these bureaucrats worked with international development agencies in developing reform projects and how they strategised and worked together in ensuring that both higher and lower actors within the political and bureaucratic state hierarchy accepted and adopted the

reform agenda. Following on from this is a brief introduction to the major urban water reform projects that were signed off over this period. These discussions set the scene for the following chapters which provide a more detailed examination of how water reform projects and the everyday practices of their implementation are playing out in different locations and settings within the state. To commence this analysis and against the backdrop of the previous chapters, we begin in Delhi almost two decades ago.

The National Urban Reform Agenda

It was 1991 when the Congress Prime Minister of India, Narasimha Rao and his Finance Minister, Manmohan Singh launched India on a path of major economic restructuring. Guided by the International Monetary Fund, Rao and Singh introduced comprehensive and far-reaching reforms such as liberalising trade, deregulating local markets, encouraging private sector participation, slashing public subsidies, and reforming the financial sector (Panagariya, 2001). In combination the package aimed to liberalise, privatise and globalise India's economy: it was classic neo-liberal structural adjustment. The 1990s was also the decade that political attention swung from the pre-dominantly rural focus that had framed the 1970s and 1980s with the ascent of the rural local government, to India's rapidly expanding urban areas that had risen in status as the emerging growth engines and the hope of the country's new modern and liberal economy. The launching of the Government of India's structural adjustment program was followed shortly after by the 74th constitutional amendment. This amendment aimed to improve democracy by establishing local governments as "vibrant democratic units of self-government" through the devolution of powers and responsibilities from national and state-level tiers of government (Government of India, 2002*b*, para. 2). In practice, however, decentralisation combined with structural adjustment and fiscal austerity have served more as justification for financial decentralisation and a greater role for private actors in urban development, rather than the devolution of any genuine, autonomous political authority for local governments to define their future. These three shifts in the country's political economy – liberalisation, fiscal decentralisation, and, a new political interest in urbanisation – made the 1990s a radically transformative decade for India.

By this point in time, however, the rural bias of earlier decades coupled with rapid urbanisation meant that by the new millennium many urban areas were under-resourced and buckling under the strain of rising populations and resource gaps. Urban water services that require substantial investments had been particularly hard hit with large numbers of city dwellers, especially the marginalised or those in peripheral areas with either poor or non-existent services. In order to stimulate, as well as support economic development and growth in India's major cities, of the kind compatible with a global, modern and liberal economy, in December of 2005 Manmohan Singh, who by this time had advanced his political position from Finance Minister to Prime Minister of India, launched the controversial *Jawaharal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission* (JNNURM).

The official rationale for the JNNURM is fairly simple. As a result of the Government of India's structural adjustment program in the 1990s the country's population and economy had been rapidly urbanising. The story the statistics were telling, was that by 2011 India's cities could be contributing up to sixty five percent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (Government of India, n.d.a). But there was a problem. Urban areas were not equipped for such growth: they did not have the quality and quantity of infrastructure that is necessary for such high levels of productivity, nor did they have the right governance environment for enabling market oriented growth. If India's cities were going to deliver the economic productivity that the statistics were promising, then urban spaces needed to undergo significant renewal, both physically and institutionally.

In light of this, the aim of the mission is “to *encourage* cities to initiate steps to bring about improvement in the existing service levels in a financially sustainable manner” and “to create economically productive, efficient, equitable and responsive cities” (KUIDFC, n.d.c para. 1, emphasis added)¹⁹. Rather than being a departure from the neo-liberal structural adjustment focus of the 1990s, the emphasis of the mission is getting sub-national governments and their institutions ‘right’ and ‘ready’ for capitalist economic growth (see for instance the Government of India's JNNURM Overview, n.d.a). India's evolution from

¹⁹ The JNNURM covers 63 cities. Two of these, Mysore and Bangalore, are in Karnataka. In addition to the JNNURM the Government of India also launched the Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns. The overarching goal of this scheme is the same as the JNNURM.

structural adjustment in the 1990s to institutional governance reform in the new millennium follows, quite distinctly, the international policy shift from neo-liberalism to good governance that was described in Chapter Two.

Encouraging sub-national governments to participate in the mission comes in the form of the Government of India offering grants for part of the cost of infrastructure development on the condition that state and city level governments adopt a set of governance reforms set out by the central government. This requires, in the new language of international development assistance, that sub-national governments must demonstrate commitment and ‘ownership’ of reforms before they are eligible for grants. As I alluded to in Chapter Two, not only do international development agencies demand compliance with externally defined reform and development goals through conditional lending, so too can national governments use similar strategies with sub-national governments. At least in part these reforms are meant to facilitate devolving responsibility to lower tiers of government. However, because the Government of India has made these conditional rather than optional reforms the JNNURM undermines the 74th Constitutional Amendment of creating local governments as “institutions of self-governance”. In doing so, it also weakens local democracy in that it undercuts the capacity for citizens to contribute in defining and deciding the goals and path of development in their cities. Under the JNNURM state and local governments are required to be self-governing, but only in so far as it conforms and complies with the governance agenda of the Central government. While the World Bank and other international development agencies are not funding the JNNURM they have provided significant technical assistance and guidance to the Government of India on what the mission should do and how it should be implemented. As I noted earlier in Chapter Two, the World Bank wrote about the JNNURM (although not by name), in the 2004 World Development Report. This was one year before the mission was announced publicly by Prime Minister Singh to the citizens of India.

The specific reforms imposed through the JNNURM are contained within two interconnected sub-missions. The first sub-mission focuses on the reform of sub-national governments with the aim of improving the investment climate and encouraging public-

private partnerships in infrastructure development and service delivery of core services. At the level of city governance, the reforms include techno-managerial solutions such as accrual based accounting systems, e-governance, increasing and monitoring property tax through Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping, and raising user charges for public services such as water to full cost recovery within seven years (Government of India, n.d.a). State-level governance reforms, which cover all urban areas including those not eligible for JNNURM funds, include enacting Public Disclosure Laws to improve transparency, introducing Community Participation Laws to institutionalise citizen participation, and the repealing of state-level Urban Land Ceiling Acts (ibid). The original purpose of the National Urban Land Ceiling Act (1976) was to limit the acquisition and construction of buildings on vacant land in urban areas “with a view to preventing the concentration of urban land in the hands of a few persons and speculation and profiteering therein and with a view to bringing about an equitable distribution of land in urban agglomerations to subserve the common good” (Government of India, 1976, para. 1). In quite a radical turn, the rationale for repealing Urban Land Ceiling Acts is to release “vast tracts of land in cities” for development, and to “improve transparency and efficiency in land acquisition [in order to] encourage domestic and foreign investment in the real estate sector” (Government of India, n.d.b, p. 1). It is anticipated that by increasing the supply of urban land available for development the housing sector will “receive a big boost... and improve [housing] accessibility and affordability for the urban poor” (Government of India, n.d.b p. 2).

The conditional reform of repealing Urban Land Ceiling Acts for the purpose of encouraging private investment and creating housing for the poor brings me to the second sub-mission of the JNNURM: *Basic Services for the Urban Poor* (BSUP). According to the Government of India, the BSUP is aimed at improving the social development of the urban poor who reside in slums through the provision of affordable housing and basic services such as water and sanitation (Government of India, n.d.a). To illustrate how it works I will take the example of a slum in Mumbai, the capital of the state of Maharashtra²⁰.

²⁰ Mumbai was formerly named Bombay

Shortly after the announcement of the JNNURM, over one hundred private companies put in tenders amounting to approximately US \$2 billion to develop five hundred acres of land that is currently occupied by a slum²¹. Under the rules of the sub-mission, private companies negotiate directly with the government for access and ownership to slum land, which if approved they are then required to develop for commercial purposes. In the case of this Mumbai slum it was agreed between the government and the companies that the private parties would get four hundred acres of the land for commercial developments and the families in the slum would get the remaining one hundred acres. However, at the choice of the property developer the one hundred acres can be located anywhere in the city, including on less valuable peripheral land where livelihood opportunities are scarce. Wherever the land allocated to the people is, the government provides the money for basic infrastructure services like water and underground drainage, and the property developers are required to construct *affordable* social housing²².

Once the houses are constructed, they are then bought by the government from the developer with profit included and then on-sold to eligible slum households at market prices²³. Assuming a family is eligible they have to contribute approximately fifteen percent to the cost of the house which they are expected to pay for by taking out a long-term mortgage with a private bank. This is in addition to having to pay full-cost tariffs for basic services such as water within seven years of the mission. Because the government is subsidising the remaining eighty-five percent the Government of India wants to ensure that slum people do not sell the house in an attempt to capitalise off rising property values (in the same way a private property developer might, or is expected to do). To safeguard this and to enable the state to unambiguously identify occupants, those eligible to reside in the

²¹ The figure I was quoted for tenders to purchase and develop the land was 10,000 Indian crore.

²² Because the land that is left available for the people in the slum after the property developers get their share is significantly reduced there is not enough space for single level dwellings and so the JNNURM prescribes that housing complexes should be four levels high. This is regarded as the most efficient use of land taking into account both social and economic objectives, but besides which, if housing was any higher it would mean the property developers would, by law, have to put in lifts. This would of course be more expensive for the property developer and appears to be a convenience not regarded as necessary for the poor. What is more, housing is now classified as “infrastructure” in order that developers can claim tax breaks on their investments (Asian Development Bank, 2000). To legitimise this housing model, in 2007 the Government of India approved a new National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy (Government of India, 2007).

²³ In Karnataka, in order to be eligible they must be able to prove that they have lived in the slum for an extended period of time. Selling the houses at market prices to the poor, of course, ensures that the property developer loses no profit from the arrangement.

premises, including children and the elderly, are required to provide the state with their personal bio-metric data, such as finger prints and retina scans. Only those whose bio-metric data match the housing documents are legitimate occupants. The property developers are not required to provide such personal proof of identity and I was advised by the Commissioner of the Karnataka Slum Clearance Board in 2007, the state-level agency responsible for the development of slums in the state, that there are no laws governing how such data can be used. A number of government bureaucrats that I discussed the housing development model with politely referred to it as “land sharing”. It is a model that is being promoted as a public-private partnership for pro-poor urban development. However, as this example from Mumbai has illustrated it is highly questionable if such reforms are good for the poor. Indeed, the institutional and governance reforms appear to be, first and foremost, in favour of the capitalist and the capitalist economy.

The Government of India’s Ministry of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation is administering the sub-mission and I had the opportunity to interview the bureaucrat in charge. I asked him if he thought “land-sharing”, selective biometric identification and commercial mortgages for the poor was fair. He replied “It is not fair and it is not unfair. Slum people say they have no land and facilities so this is better. Beggars can’t be choosers...”²⁴

Since the late 1990s, international development assistance requires country leaders to demonstrate political will and take ownership for reforms and the Government of India is doing just that. While international agencies are not providing any significant funding for the JNNURM reforms, which match the overarching prescriptions of good governance, they are providing a host of technical assistance services aimed at shaping the missions character and construction. For example, the World Bank’s Water and Sanitation Program – South Asia (WSP-SA) was invited by the Ministry of Urban Development (the Ministry responsible for the first sub-mission), to prepare a document providing state-level governments with guidance on how to introduce private sector participation into urban water services. The document included a model contract for a concession contract, the kind

²⁴ The Mumbai example I have presented here was described to me, rather optimistically, by this same bureaucrat.

of which was promoted, and tarnished, during the water privatisation experiments of the mid 1990s. What is more, the Government of India have domesticated international development agencies ex-ante “ownership” conditionalities by tying finance for infrastructure to mandatory market-friendly good governance reforms by sub-national governments. This funding strategy is intended to “encourage” sub-national governments that have been lagging in adopting and implementing market-friendly policies to get going down the determined path of reform.

Karnataka: A Model State?

Arguably, the JNNURM has been designed to encourage and to ensure that sub-national governments embark on market oriented good governance reforms. However, not all sub-national governments require such encouragement. There are some Indian states that were willing to adopt structural adjustment after the national level reform program was initiated in 1991, and to instigate and put into place a number of the JNNURM reform *prior* to the announcement of the mission. The state of Karnataka has been one such state and while the the international and national reform agendas have influenced and supported Karnataka’s reform path, it has not been a state in need of much persuasion. Indeed, since the 1990s consecutive governments of Karnataka have powered ahead on neo-liberal structural adjustment and ‘good governance’ urban reformation. In the remainder of this chapter I introduce the reform climate in Karnataka and how it has intersected with the international and national reform agendas. The temporal focus of the discussion is the decade from 1999-2008, as it was during this period that the intensity of reforms, in speed, depth and breadth, increased dramatically. Rather than attribute this solely to external conditions and forces (international development agencies and the national reform agenda for example), the discussion illustrates the significance and influence of local agents and institutions, local networks of market oriented reformers, and their connections with national and international actors.

Political will & corporate influence in the state capital

Karnataka's journey down the path of neo-liberal reform began during the early 1990s, however, it was not until S.M. Krishna came to power as the Congress Chief Minister of Karnataka in the 1999 state elections that things really began to speed up. Under his leadership the Government of Karnataka embarked on the Karnataka Economic Restructuring Program (KERP) - a far reaching package of structural adjustment reforms that followed suit with the Government of India's program of neo-liberal reform that had been initiated in the early 1990s. The KERP reforms were geared toward creating an enabling environment for private sector development and improving government efficiency and amongst other reforms included selling-off, closing down and restructuring public enterprises (World Bank, 2001*b*). According to the World Bank, the package of reforms, which were developed by the Government of Karnataka in partnership with the private sector and other, un-specified "stakeholders", were designed as a program for the "eradication of poverty through economic growth tempered with equity" (World Bank, 2001*a*, p. 2)²⁵.

It is likely that some of these unspecified stakeholders were the members of thirteen special task forces that S.M. Krishna established during his time in power. These task forces were entrusted by the Chief Minister to re-imagine and re-work a wide range of sectors such as health, education and Information Technology. One task force, the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF), was dedicated specifically to turning Karnataka's capital city Bangalore into South Asia's version of Singapore - an urban planning ideal that had been imagined for the capital city three decades earlier in 1970, by the then Chief Minister Veerendra Patil (Nair, 2005). The members of the BATF were a small but powerful group of corporate leaders, public bureaucrats and elite citizens who were sanctioned by Government Order to prepare a report with recommendations for up-grading infrastructure, raising local government revenues and improving stakeholder involvement in the development of the city. However,

²⁵ Deregulation was expected to improve the investment climate for small and medium enterprises and help generate non-farm employment for the poor. Governance reforms sought to improve the delivery of public services and reduce corruption. Fiscal reforms were claimed to be necessary for enabling a larger percentage of state resources to be allocated to poverty-related sectors such as health and education, and improving basic social services for the poor.

the BATF had the unfettered support of S.M. Krishna and they took it upon themselves to extend their mandate, embarking instead on a wide-range of reforms and interventions across a number of carefully selected government agencies (Ghosh, 2005). According to Ghosh (2005), the members of the BATF had “decided [that] they would not write any “more” reports, and would rather focus on implementation of projects, since this is where the gap seemed to appear in government initiatives” (p. 4916). The government agencies they chose to work with were responsible for core services and infrastructure in the city and notably excluded any social welfare departments including the Karnataka Slum Clearance Board, which was described by one member of the BATF as a “political cesspool” (as cited in Ghosh, 2005, p. 4916).

In addition to working with state agencies some members of the task force established philanthropic ‘civil’ organisations which enabled them to work even further beyond their original mandate. One BATF member, an ex-Citibank banker who had returned to India from the United States to embark on a philanthropic mission to strengthen participatory democracy in the country, established the NGO, *Janaagraha* (Outlook Money, n.d.). Janaagraha was established with the cited objective of providing a platform for improving citizen participation in the initiatives under-taken by the task force, and in partnership with three other NGOs launched the PROOF campaign, an initiative geared to increasing the transparency of municipal finances through the publication of quarterly budgets and public meetings between the Bangalore municipal government and citizens. Janaagraha also developed a model of structured citizen participation through ward level citizen committees where resident welfare associations evaluated local development projects in consultation with local elected representatives, municipal administrators and grassroots communities. However, there were significant flaws with these initiatives, as well as with the BATF more generally in that they frequently excluded local elected representatives and failed to take into account the development needs and aspirations of Bangalore’s poor (Ghosh, 2005)²⁶.

²⁶ For instance, neither the PROOF campaign nor the committees actively pursued the participation of local councilors who openly expressed concerns about the models and how they were undermining the existing democratic infrastructure and further marginalising the poor. This is because, as Benjamin (2000) highlights in a study on urban poverty and governance in Bangalore, many of the city’s poor gain access to municipal resources through city level councilors, whereas local elites and members of the corporate economy access

The BATF was a controversial initiative in Bangalore's development. Speaking to local activists over the course of my fieldwork, in their view the task force exemplified how Bangalore was a city divided between the growing corporate economy and the city's poor. It also exposed the extent of power and influence the corporate sector had in shaping Bangalore's governance and development trajectory. In 2004, S.M. Krishna lost the state elections and his position as Chief Minister of Karnataka. That same year the BATF ceased operations but many members of the task force, or their spouses and friends continue to be handed privileged governance positions, and not only in Karnataka. For instance, the BATF member who founded Janaagraha in order to institutionalise citizen participation sits on a Special Technical Advisory board for the JNNURM and was party to drafting model legislation for a Community Participation Bill. Indeed, the influence of the BATF experiments and members has extended far beyond Bangalore. Perhaps most significant is how many of the BATF's initiatives have appeared as mandatory reforms in the JNNURM. Just how much influence the BATF experiments and its members have had in the construction of the JNNURM is unclear, but there certainly has been such influence, as one BATF member explains:

The combined experience of e-Governments, BATF and Janaagraha is being unified into a national level program, the National Urban Renewal Mission (NURM). Our meeting with the prime minister, Planning Commission, and urban development ministry went off very well and it is likely that the mission will take-off shortly. We also met the major multi-lateral funding agencies – World Bank, ADB, Department for International Development and USAID they are all quite excited about our approach and mission (as cited in Ghosh, 2005, p. 4921).

For some, the speed and determination of Krishna's government in bringing about reform, including the BATF experiment, has positioned Karnataka as a leading state and a 'model' on how to do sub-national structural adjustment and governance reform in India. According to the World Bank (2001*b*), for example:

[Karnataka has] quickly established itself as one of the leaders in these areas in India with pioneering and wide-ranging measures. [The] Government has established a credible track-record in reforms... [and given] its already-established position as a

government resources through their influence and networks with parastatals, state-level bureaucracy and higher level political leaders.

reform leader in these areas, Karnataka has the potential to set precedents in many difficult areas, and thereby to generate competition and reform momentum across states in India. (p. 2)

The Government of Karnataka's demonstrated track-record in taking "ownership" for reforms was rewarded by World Bank in 2001 when they approved the Karnataka Economic Restructuring Loan which would provide the finance needed to carry forward the reform agenda. The World Bank then gave them a loan for more reforms a year later, and then yet another in 2004. These were some of the first loans given by the World Bank to sub-national governments for programs of state-level structural adjustment (World Bank, 2001a).

Given the state's willingness to reform, it is perhaps not surprising that it was also in Karnataka that the World Bank would provide a loan for a major overhaul of urban water governance. This project, which includes a pilot to privatise water services in three demonstration zones, was the first of its kind in the country to be funded by an external development agency. But in addition to reforming Karnataka's water governance, it is intended to demonstrate that market oriented reforms are not only necessary but also politically and socially possible in India. Again, Karnataka is proving to be a leading state and a model of reform for others to follow. I will come to this World Bank project before the end of this chapter but first, to an introduction to the institutions of urban governance in the state.

The Path of Urban Water Governance Reform in Karnataka

Karnataka's institutions of state governance

The Government of India's Ministry of Water Resources sets the overarching policy directive for the governance of water resources and services in the country. In 1987 the first National Water Policy was adopted but given changing approaches to governance, combined with the poor quality of resource management and service delivery, this was reviewed and revised in the new millennium with a new policy formulated and approved in 2002. The 2002 policy follows in close tandem with the principles of the international

consensus on water governance as described in Chapter One. Despite existence of the National Water Policy, under the Indian Constitution water is a state subject and water management and services are the responsibility of local governments. In line with this, in Karnataka, local governments are obligated to ensure the provision of water services within their jurisdiction and this is mandated within the two state legislations that govern urban local governments: the Karnataka Municipalities Act 1964 and the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act 1976. In Karnataka most municipal governments share this responsibility with one of two public water utilities, which are also legally mandated: the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board and the Karnataka Urban Water Supply & Drainage Board (hereafter the BWSSB and the Karnataka Water Board respectively). Both these public utilities report directly to the Government of Karnataka's Urban Development Department. An institutional map of Karnataka's urban water governance is provided in Figure 4.1 on page 120.

The BWSSB was established in the early 1960s to provide water and sewerage services to Bangalore and the surrounding areas on a no profit, no loss basis. The main water supply utilised by the BWSSB is the Kaveri River which is located 100 kilometres from the city ²⁷. Since the mid 1970s the utility has undertaken a number of large infrastructure projects to augment additional bulk water from the Kaveri River in order to keep up with growing demand in the city. Given the distance of the Kaveri River from the city these are expensive undertakings and since the mid 1990s have been funded through heavy borrowing from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. While the loans are principally for infrastructure, the more recent loans have also included some institutional reform measures to raise the efficiency and commercial sustainability of the utility, such as changes in internal management practices and reductions in non revenue water through pipe repair and the closure of public taps. Included in every loan is finance to appoint an external (foreign) Project Management Consultant to oversee the project. Under the current loan the leader of

²⁷ The distance between the Kaveri River and Bangalore, as well as the altitude of the city make the cost of supplying bulk water expensive in terms of the construction of infrastructure to transport it and the power required to pump it. The BWSSB also source water from other rivers in the state, however, since the bulk of their water is from the Kaveri River, and it is common for people in Bangalore to refer to BWSSB's piped water supply as being "Kaveri water", for the remainder of this thesis I will simply refer to BWSSB piped water supply as Kaveri water. There are also two spellings for Kaveri, the one I am using here and Cauvery. My choice to use Kaveri over Cauvery is of no significance, it is purely an aesthetic choice.

the Project Management team is receiving a monthly salary of around US \$20,000. This salary will continue for the project duration of approximately seven to eight years. While the Government of Karnataka currently assists the BWSSB with their loan repayments, ultimately, in a climate geared toward financial self-sufficiency it will eventually be required that the cost of such consultants be borne by the utility's customers: the citizens of Bangalore. An ex-chief engineer at the BWSSB informed me that the appointment of high cost external consultants is justified on the grounds of expertise, however, he also explained that the utility was more than capable of managing the project themselves and could do it for a significantly lower cost.

The BWSSB provide a number of water services. Their main service supply are individual, user pays service connections which are provided with Kaveri water that is treated to national drinking standards before distribution. Despite a legal mandate to supply water to Bangalore and its surrounds, since the establishment of the utility these services have been restricted to Bangalore city although there are some pockets beyond the city's limits that are also supplied with the BWSSB's Kaveri water services. These are primarily areas where the land is under the jurisdiction of the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), or where large private property developments and the gated communities of the well-off have been constructed²⁸. Most households in these out-lying areas, however, rely on groundwater that is provided either by the local governments through public borewells or household connections. Many middle class households and commercial establishments also have private borewells on their property. In 1999, a private consultancy group was contracted to prepare a financial analysis for extending the BWSSB's water and underground drainage services to these outer Bangalore areas in line with the Utility's mandate (FIRE-D, 2003). However, due to funding constraints the project was never taken up at that point in time. It may also be important for the reader to know that in late 2006 the jurisdiction of Bangalore was changed to incorporate these outlying areas and as a result eight urban local

²⁸ The purpose of the BDA is to "Plan, regulate, control, monitor and facilitate urban development in Bangalore Metropolitan Area, to ensure sustainable and orderly growth" (BDA Website, 2008). In terms of private property development a case in point is the Brigade Millennium apartment complex in South Bangalore that house expansive grounds and a large swimming pool. It was provided with piped Kaveri water before any surrounding household and establishments were. When I spoke to a BWSSB engineer I was advised that there was nothing corrupt about this but that at the time the lines were provided there was a surplus of water in the city and the Brigade Group were prepared to pay for the distribution lines.

governments were subsumed into one Greater Bangalore Region, with one urban local government²⁹. In the eighteen months I was in India conducting fieldwork there were no local elections and elected representatives in Bangalore while the details of the new administration was being worked out. While this is not usual, it highlights yet another limitation to liberal democracy. This is also why looking at democratic forms beyond representative democracy are critical.

Even within Bangalore city not everyone has a BWSSB house service connection. It is estimated that approximately one quarter of Bangalore's population live in slums (CIVIC & Jana Sahayog, n.d.), and that a further one hundred thousand people live as homeless persons on Bangalore's streets (Shekhar, 2006). These individuals, households and communities have to rely on the good will of better off households, informal water supplies such as street vendors and open wells, or the thousands of public taps which are scattered throughout the city. Public taps in Bangalore are either supplied with Kaveri water or underground water and are a critical, and sometimes the only accessible and affordable water source for the city's urban poor. Despite this, the future existence of public taps in the city (and the state), are under threat due to pressure for the BWSSB to be financially self-sufficient and achieve commercial sustainability.

Since the inception of the BWSSB the Bangalore Municipal Government has paid the utility for public taps that are supplied with Kaveri water. However, with a growing population the number of public taps in Bangalore (both approved and unapproved) increased rapidly. By the late 1990s the Bangalore Municipal Government started to default on their payments to the BWSSB and in 2002 a formal decision was taken by the Municipality to stop paying for these taps because it was regarded as a drain on their budget (TCE Consulting Engineers Ltd, 2004). Because the BWSSB is no longer receiving payment for these taps any water that flows through them is now classified as non-revenue water. In a climate geared toward financial sustainability of water service providers this has placed a huge pressure on the utility to remove these taps and ensure that everyone who is using Kaveri water is paying. Since the new millennium, all international donor lending and technical assistance to the

²⁹ For the purpose of this study I will refer simply the Bangalore Municipal Corporation.

BWSSB has involved some form of scheme to reduce non-revenue water including the controversial step of removing public taps. The impact of this in the poor will be discussed in Chapter Six.

In addition to public taps with Kaveri water, the BWSSB also manages and operates a number of public taps that are supplied by borewell water. While these are accessible to all, like Kaveri public taps, it is the poor who rely on these public access points the most. However, with rapid growth rates in the city many of these borewells are drying up due to excessive ground water extraction from both domestic and commercial users, and in many locations throughout the city the ground water is un-potable. During my conversations with a number of BWSSB service engineers I was advised that given that there is a pressure on the utility to perform commercially, that borewell water is inferior in quality to Kaveri water, and because public taps supplied with borewell water are un-metered, their maintenance receives little attention from engineers³⁰. Consequently, they are frequently out of order.

For urban areas in Karnataka outside the Bangalore region, bulk water supply and water distribution is split between the state-wide Karnataka Water Board and urban local governments. The Karnataka Water Board was established in 1974 and is the agent responsible for assessing, designing, constructing and managing urban water projects in the state. These projects are paid for through a mix of government loans and grants, loans from International Development Banks, and local governments³¹. While the Karnataka Water Board is responsible for the supply of bulk water, at various times in their history they have also taken on the job of operating and managing water distribution within Karnataka's towns and cities. In theory, the loans for infrastructure, as well as the cost of operations and maintenance of water distribution if it is managed by the Karnataka Water Board, is meant to be paid by local governments to the Board. However, many local governments do not have sufficient revenue and funds to cover these costs which frequently end up defaulting

³⁰ This was something that people in slums confirmed with me and in communities where there was also public Kaveri taps, they advised me that community members give more attention to the functioning of Kaveri taps. This is because borewell water is only used as a secondary source for non-potable purposes or in cases of extreme water shortages.

³¹ The contribution from local governments is a percentage of the total costs based on the size of its population.

to the Government of Karnataka. Much of the contemporary governance reform agenda, such as property tax reforms and increases in user tariffs are geared to reducing this dependence on state budgets and to make service providers and local governments financially self-sufficient.

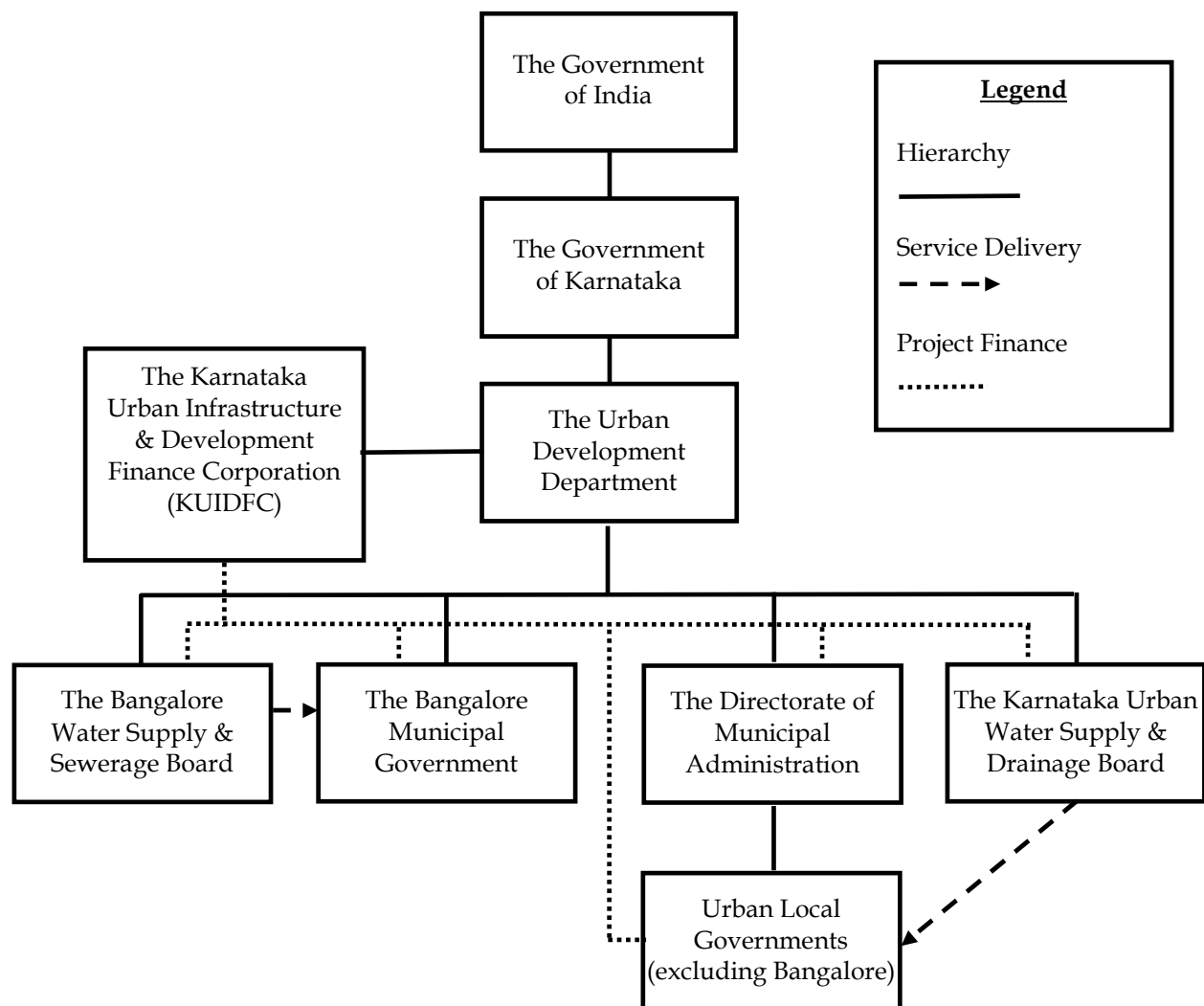
In line with the 74th amendment of establishing local governments as “institutions of self-governance” (but arguably more so for reasons of fiscal decentralisation), in July of 1995 the Government of Karnataka instructed the Karnataka Water Board to hand over any operations of water distribution they were undertaking to the respective local governments³². Shortly after this instruction, in 1996, as part of a bundle of reforms attached to an Asian Development Bank loan, the Government of Karnataka passed a Government Order sanctioning a state-wide (excluding Bangalore) increase in the urban water tariff to a flat fee of forty five rupees per month. This was the first measure taken by the state toward passing debt servicing and maintenance costs for water schemes directly onto local governments and citizens. This marked the beginning of water services in the state being reformed from publicly subsidised services into commercially self-sufficient undertakings. This Asian Development Bank project was managed by the Karnataka Urban Infrastructure and Development Finance Corporation (KUIDFC), a parastatal corporation that is a pivotal and controversial actor in Karnataka’s urban water governance. The KUIDFC feature highly in many of the chapters that follow and therefore they require some introduction.

In November of 1993 the Government of Karnataka established the KUIDFC under the Karnataka Companies Act 1956. This came in response to political attention in the development of urban areas growing during the 1980s and the desire of the Government of Karnataka to have an agent to assess infrastructure needs, formulate projects, and to act as an intermediary for routing new finance streams into the state. The KUIDFC is part of the state apparatus but it is largely a financially and politically autonomous body. This independence has afforded it much larger scope for self-rule. It also means that their channels of answerability and accountability are very opaque. The KUIDFC assesses and proposes urban development projects, manages and allocates vast amounts of project

³² While this was been done for many towns, there are still some where the Karnataka Water Board is managing the water distribution network at the request of the local governments.

finance, and has to work with other state departments and local governments, yet they are not answerable to the local governments that the projects are intended for, nor do they have any direct channels of accountability to the public. This is a critical point because many of the projects that they manage are funded by international development agencies (namely the World Bank and Asian Development Bank) who tie their lending to pre-defined and pre-determined reform agendas. They are also the state-level nodal agency managing the Government of India's JNNURM funding, which as I have mentioned earlier is also conditional to mandatory reforms.

Figure 4.1 Institutional map of Karnataka's urban water governance



Although established in 1993, the KUIDFC did not become fully operational until the mid 1990s with two projects aimed specifically at positioning Bangalore as India's shining Information Technology hub and an image of the sub-continent's emerging urban modernity and globalising corporate economy. The first project was funded by the Government of India (the Megacity Project), the second by the Asian Development Bank (the Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development Project)³³. This latter loan was the first to be given by an international development bank to a state government in India for a large urban infrastructure project. It was an early indication that Karnataka was a state willing to work with international development agencies and to conform to their reform goals and conditionalities. Since these first projects the KUIDFC's portfolio has increased steadily and by 2008 they had nine major infrastructure development and reform projects under their management and control (see Table 4.1 for details). All of these projects have some water component and quite early on in my fieldwork I was advised by a senior bureaucrat at the KUIDFC that approximately ninety percent of the funds currently managed by them are going toward infrastructure development and institutional reform in the urban water sector. This makes the KUIDFC of particular significance to urban water governance in the state.

There are a few things worth noting about the projects that KUIDFC manage. First, in addition to involving the construction of infrastructure they all include institutional reforms. Hence, the KUIDFC is not just a finance manager but also a state-level agent for initiating and implementing governance reforms. Because their role is to find, secure and manage funding this makes them particularly vulnerable to accepting reform conditionalities, which upon implementation local governments, public service providers and citizens are expected to accept. In mentioning their vulnerability, however, it is also worth noting that not one of the many KUIDFC bureaucrats that I spoke with disagreed

³³ The first project was the centrally sponsored Megacity project in 1995 that intended through a capital injection for modernised infrastructure, that Bangalore city – regarded by many as India's Silicon Valley given the exceptional growth and concentration of Information Technology corporations in the 1990s – would be elevated in status to other major cities in the world. While the Megacity project was pumping funds into Bangalore, the second project the KUIDP was supporting the development of infrastructure in six much smaller cities throughout the Bangalore sub-region. The KUIDP was an attempt to divert economic growth away from rapidly expanding Bangalore in order to relieve pressure on its strained and overloaded infrastructure. However, as noted by Benjamin (2005 pg. 38), the KUIDP “funds do not necessarily go towards improving conditions within the towns but, rather, towards acquiring land to promote large corporate residential and work environments and related infrastructure such as multi-lane highways and dedicated water supply and electrical power systems”.

with the idea of lending conditionalities, or what the conditionalities imposed³⁴. A second point is that while all the projects under the management of the KUIDFC include both infrastructure and institutional reform components, infrastructure funding under any given project is only given to a select number of local governments, whereas many of the institutional reforms undertaken as part of the project are applicable to the whole state and therefore all urban local governments. This means that while some local governments get infrastructure funding in exchange for reforms others get no funding, for reforms which they are required to adopt anyway³⁵.

Another thing that is characteristic of all these projects is that whether it is for 'hard development' such as the construction of infrastructure, or 'soft development' for institutional reform, there is a heavy reliance on private consultants as development 'experts' and a very sparse process of public consultation, especially in the conceptual stages of any given project and package of reforms. On one occasion I asked one of the longest standing and highly placed bureaucrats at KUIDFC why there was so little public consultation on the projects that they manage and he informed me that it was because "the instruments for participation don't exist". By this point in time I had spent many hours in at KUIDFC and feeling bold I suggested to him that there were instruments that existed or that maybe they could create some new ones. He thought it was a nice idea but "not really possible". He also told me that he seldom reads the reports that are submitted by private consultants because "they are too long and boring". During an informal conversation with another high ranking bureaucrat at KUIDFC I was advised that participation of citizens can

³⁴ As a number of discussions throughout this thesis will illustrate, over the years bureaucrats within KUIDFC who have been ideologically and pragmatically committed to such reform measures have taken the liberty of writing public policies and getting legislation passed in order to satisfy the lending conditionalities of International Development Agencies.

³⁵ For instance, the first ADB funded project only provided infrastructure funding for six cities but the increase in water tariffs was applicable for all urban local governments. Similarly, under the second ADB funded project, the KUDCEMP funds provided finance for infrastructure development in eight of Karnataka's coastal towns. These towns were required to undertake some specific reforms. For example, to increase average water tariffs by one hundred and fifty percent for all user groups within five year of the project commencement. However, the project also involved property tax reforms and the legislative changes to the Karnataka Municipalities Act 1964 that were required for the property tax reforms are state wide. The World Bank funded KMRP is structured in the same way, although it differs in that local governments throughout Karnataka have to compete with each other by introducing certain reform measures in order to be eligible to apply for project funding.

be a “nuisance” and that it is better that they stick with their known and preferred private consultants if they are to get the “right” set of recommendations.

Table 4.1 Projects managed by the KUIDFC 1993 – 2009

Project	Year Started	Funding	Project Status as of 2009
Megacity Project	1995	Government of India	Completed
Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development Project (KUIDP)	1996	Asian Development Bank	Completed
Karnataka Urban Development Coastal & Environment Management Project (KUDCEMP)	2000	Asian Development Bank	Ongoing
Greater Bangalore Water and Sanitation Project (GBWASP)	2003	Japan Bank for International Cooperation, World Bank, Market Bonds, State grants & Beneficiary Capital Contributions	Ongoing
Karnataka Urban Water Sector Improvement Project (KUWASIP)	2005	World Bank	Ongoing
Jawaharal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)	2005	Government of India, Government of Karnataka, Urban Local Governments	Ongoing
Karnataka Municipal Reforms Project (KMRP)	2006	World Bank	Ongoing
North Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development Project (NKUIDP)	2008	Asian Development Bank	Ongoing

Source: Compiled by Author from the KUIDFC website

Technical assistance given by international development agencies for institutional reform via the KUIDFC does not only come attached to projects with an infrastructure component. In more recent years, as soft development assistance has increased amongst international donor agencies, the KUIDFC has also become an important entry point for non-project based technical assistance. As a case in point, in 2007 the WSP-SA provided the KUIDFC with technical assistance to develop a long-term vision strategy for water and sanitation

services. It was called the Karnataka Urban Water Sector Development Program (KUWSDP) and it included updating the state's water and sanitation policies, and sector development goals (Karnataka Urban Water Sector Development Program, n.d.a; b; c; & d)³⁶. According to one staff member at the KUIDFC they did not request the services of WSP-SA, rather they had been approached, and given that it was being provided for free they felt they may as well accept it. The staff at WSP-SA did not conduct the technical assistance, instead they outsourced it to three private consultants. Two of these consultants are affiliated with USAID and one of whom used to work for the French water corporation Suez and has been very active in promoting and facilitating the privatisation of water services in Karnataka. In the consultants' Terms of Reference it was explicitly stated that the policy directive was the World Bank's 2006 "Bridging the Gap between Infrastructure and Service" document (ibid). In line with the 2004 WDR *Making Basic Services Work for Poor People*, which I discussed in Chapter Two, the Bridging the Gap document openly proposes transforming Indian citizens into paying customers and actively promotes a greater role for the private sector in service delivery (World Bank, 2004a; World Bank, 2006c).

The KUWSDP Implementation Plan was submitted by the consultants to the KUIDFC in 2008 and followed through with the policy prescriptions set out in the Bridging the Gap document. But it also cited Karnataka's up-coming Five Year Plan as another policy directive (Karnataka Urban Water Sector Development Program, n.d.e). When I read this in the Implementation Plan I was rather surprised. The Five Year Plan was to be based on a Vision Document. As I explained in the previous chapter, the preparation of this document had been out-sourced by the Government of Karnataka to the international private consultancy corporation Pricewaterhouse Coopers. At the time the KUWSDP Implementation Plan was submitted the Vision Document had not yet been discussed or

³⁶ According to staff at WSP-SA this was funded, at least in part by the Department for International Development. However, when I met with the Department for International Development personnel in India in early 2008, despite having documentation suggesting their financial support and being told as such by WSP-SA, I was advised that Department for International Development (DFID) had provided no such funding support. The more I looked into this it seemed that DFID was funding WSP-SA but WSP-SA, despite their assertion of double entry book-keeping for those they provide technical assistance to, do not in fact keep such records themselves. Hence, WSP-SA was adamant that DFID was a major funder of this but DFID was completely (on the record) unaware of such. It is possible that DFID did not want to confirm they were funding WSP-SA work in Karnataka given that there had been a significant amount of social unrest on the role of international development agencies in the attempted privatisation of water services in Bangalore in 2005. This will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

shared with the citizens of Karnataka and the Five Year Plan (to my knowledge) had not been approved. I asked one of the KUIDFC's top bureaucrats how the Implementation Plan could cite the Five Year Plan as a policy directive and I was advised "Well, we all know what the policy directives in it will be".

Early efforts to reform (1999-2002)

The involvement of international development agencies in the structural reform of Karnataka began in the early to mid 1990s but it was during S.M. Krishna's term as Chief Minister that things really started to take off. As I explained earlier in this chapter, S.M. Krishna was a keen supporter of neo-liberal reform and more than willing to work with international financial institutions such as the World Bank. It was also during his term that the reform of urban water services along market oriented principles took a real foothold in the state. In 1999, the first year of S.M. Krishna's term as Chief Minister, Vidyashankar, a bureaucrat who had recently completed a course of study on water privatisation at Harvard, was appointed to the position of the BWSSB Chairman (Connors, 2007). It has been suggested that his appointment was because of his amenability to the idea of commodifying and privatizing water services (ibid), and within the first year of his tenure a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the BWSSB and two French water corporations, Suez Lyonnaise Des Eaux (Suez) and Vivendi Environment (Veolia). The MoU was an agreement for these French water corporates to plan out the complete privatisation of the utility (Northumbrian Water Group PLC, Vivendi Water UK PLC & Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board, 2000). It was anticipated that this would take place over more than three decades in three consecutive phases and it was noted in the MoU that this course of action was *necessary* for the "long-term benefit of improved water supply and sewerage services in Bangalore" (ibid, p. 3). The first stage in this was a six month preparatory phase wherein each of the water corporates would be assigned a pilot area covering approximately 100,000 population. The purpose of the pilot was to establish the "economic viability and financial sustainability of (a) delegated management contract" (ibid, 2000, p. 2). During the second phase, after the pilot had been completed, private corporations would then take over the management of the services in the pilot areas under a five year

management contract. In the final phase a long-term concession arrangement spanning some 20-30 years would be put into operation.

As in other parts of the world, the planned privatisation of the BWSSB came up against resistance from both outside and inside the utility³⁷. In 2002, a public protest was organised by a state level slum dwellers federation. The demands were directed to the Chief Minister and included steps toward privatisation be stopped and slum dwellers be provided free access to water. From inside the utility, the BWSSB Employees' Association prepared a comprehensive petition which was submitted to the High Court of Karnataka. The petition highlighted that the BWSSB has a social obligation to city residents (including the poor) and that under the BWSSB Act (1964) the privatisation of service delivery is not legally permissible (Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board Employees' Association & M.N. Nagaraja S/o Ningegowda, 2001). The High Court concurred with the evidence put forward and subsequently the MOU was cancelled. However, plans to privatise the BWSSB were never far from the table and would be picked up again in 2003 as part of the Greater Bangalore Water and Sanitation Project (GBWASP).

It was also during Vidyashankar's time as Chairman of the BWSSB that a major master plan was prepared for the utility as part of Technical Assistance from the Australian government's bi-lateral development agency, AusAID. The Master Plan aimed to improve the long-term efficiency and sustainability of service provision and was designed to dovetail with the privatisation process (Ramakrishna, 2001). Part of this involved planning for the reduction of non-revenue water and as a contribution to this the AusAID team instigated a pilot project in three of Bangalore slums. As I have already mentioned, people in Bangalore's slums rely heavily on public taps and the pilot aimed to demonstrate that this group of the urban poor could be transferred from users of free public water to paying

³⁷ Some examples where such resistance occurred include Argentina (Morgan, 2006), Peru (Isarra & Donner, 2004/2005), Delhi, India (Shiva, 2006), Ghana (Grusky, 2001; Cooper, 2002; Amenga-Etego, 2004; Joy and Hardstaff, 2005), Cochabamba, Bolivia (Shultz, 2000; Grusky, 2001; Albro, 2005; Morgan 2006), South Africa (Morgan, 2004 & 2006), New Zealand (Morgan, 2004 & 2006), and Indonesia (Nababan, 2005). In addition to city or country level resistances, there has also been advocacy against the privatisation of water services in developing countries by a number of Northern NGOs, some of which I interviewed as part of this study (for example the World Development Movement, Tearfund, One World Action, Progressio, War on Want, Corporate Europe Observatory and Both ENDS).

customers of the BWSSB. On the one hand, this was expected to improve the water security of the poor and make the BWSSB more willing to service people in slums. On the other hand, it intended to break the slum households' dependence on public taps, reduce non-revenue water and provide increased revenue for the utility. In combination, this would make the BWSSB more commercially viable, and arguably, more attractive to private service providers, who at that point in time were expected to be bidding for a contract to take over the utility in the near future. In the years following the AusAID pilot the BWSSB up-scaled this initiative. The pilot, the politics of its scaling-up, and the affects of the program on the slum households that were targeted is the subject of Chapter Six.

While efforts were underway to reform and privatise water services in Bangalore, in 1999 the Government of Karnataka (or more precisely the KUIDFC), began negotiating with the World Bank for a loan to finance a radical restructuring of urban governance in the state, including urban water governance. The project was called the Karnataka Urban Water and Management Project and had two overarching aims. The first objective was to turn urban local governments into efficient, accountable, and financially self-sufficient enterprises, while the second objective was to reform urban water governance along market-principles (Bristol Water Services, 2003).

During early negotiations for the project the World Bank was talking about reform on a grand scale. In terms of urban water, the World Bank wanted a major re-structuring of the sector which required stripping governance back to its core and starting from the drawing board, including establishing independent regulators, privatising service delivery and introducing steep and rapid tariff hikes to full cost recovery (K.P. Krishnan, personal communication, 2007). The Karnataka bureaucracy agreed with the World Bank that these measures were necessary but they also knew this would be politically unpopular and would not be well received by the elected body or the engineering hierarchy within the two public sector water utilities (ibid). Furthermore, attempts at commercialising and privatising water services around the world in the 1990s had been met with wide spread opposition, including in Bangalore. These resistances had sent a strong and firm message to reformers that handing public water services to private companies was a highly contentious and

sensitive issue and would not be well received by the public. Water reforms were not simply technical, they were deeply political and this was well understood by the Indian bureaucracy.

Given political constraints it was the assessment of the bureaucracy that the World Bank was demanding too much reform for too little money, whereas the Bank was of the opinion that there was too little concrete commitment to general reforms for too much Bank lending (ibid). Although the bureaucrats were in consensus with the World Bank that market oriented reforms were needed, their main concern was just how far the reforms could go at that point in time, and after three years of discussions no agreement could be reached on exactly how to move forward. Thus, despite the World Bank wanting to lend for water reforms, a national climate geared toward neo-liberal reform, political will existing at the highest level of the state with S.M Krishna in charge, and KUIDFC - a parastatal corporation set up to facilitate and manage the process - negotiations faulted and the project never came to fruition, at least not in its original form.

Negotiations for the project got a major boost over the years 2002-2005 when a team of like minded bureaucrats were appointed to the top positions of the main state-level urban agencies in Karnataka. These bureaucrats were able to convince the World Bank that the bureaucratic and political hierarchy in the state was ready and willing, to reform.

A champion bureaucrat

An important figure in negotiations over the years 2002-2005 was K.P. Krishnan, a charismatic and institutionally well-connected bureaucrat, who was appointed to the position of Managing Director of the KUIDFC in late 2002. K.P. Krishnan brought into his new post two key advantages for moving forward on externally funded reform and infrastructure projects. First, prior to his role at the KUIDFC he had been the Secretary of the Urban Development Department and preceding that he was Secretary of the Government of Karnataka's Finance Department. Second, over the years 1994-1997 he had been on deputation from bureaucratic service in India when he had served as an advisor to the

World Bank's Executive Director, in Washington D.C. Because of these earlier postings he had insights on the internal workings of the World Bank and the personal contacts in the Finance Department and the Urban Development Department that he would need to cut through much of the red tape that constrains the speed at which reform projects can get signed off.

Under K.P. Krishnan's leadership at the KUIDFC a fresh round of negotiations for the KUWMP were set in motion. Early on in these discussions it was decided that project should be split into two to make it a more manageable task both bureaucratically and operationally (ibid). From these negotiations two sister projects began being developed: the Karnataka Municipal Reforms Project (KMRP); and, the Karnataka Urban Water Sector Improvement Project (KUWASIP)³⁸. The KMRP would address urban governance reforms generally and under the KUWASIP the transformation of urban water would be picked up. Because the projects share the same genesis the two cannot really be separated and it was envisaged, and intended, that they would "proceed in parallel, with close co-ordination between them to minimize overlaps and ensure mutual compatibility" (Bristol Water Services, 2003, p. 1).

A policy of ownership and consensus

Splitting the KUWMP into two parallel projects provided a more manageable task. However, it was the drafting of a State Urban Drinking Water and Sanitation Policy Statement in 2002 (hereafter the "Policy"), that really speed up the negotiations. According to K.P. Krishnan, the Policy was:

...the major turning point. It was essentially a piece of fiction. Perhaps that is the wrong word; it was a bureaucratic tool that I [Krishnan] came up with to move forward. That policy was done by me. It was a 2-3 page document and it says a lot of things and yet it doesn't say a lot of things. A tremendous amount of lobbying

³⁸ Originally the project was to be the Karnataka Urban Water and Sanitation Sector Improvement Project (KUWASSIP), however it was decided that water, which is more commercially attractive and easier to charge for in comparison to sanitation, should be the first priority. Thus the sanitation component was dropped from the project.

went on with the Bank in explaining to them that you need to front load your reform conditions but also back it with sufficient money. And you need to understand the political reality.

So we agree to a water Policy on tariffs, we agree to a greater role for PSP [private sector participation], we formally commit before the project begins. Now the Bank wanted some of these in legally enforceable documents and we said *“That is not possible, but we will get a water Policy approved by the cabinet. There is no higher executive authority in the state of Karnataka than this... Are you convinced that I am reforming? If you are convinced that I am reforming let’s work together in writing documents which will satisfy our respective hierarchies. Let’s find a compromise.”* So in that sense it is frontloaded before the project began. (K.P. Krishnan, personal communication, 2007)

While K.P. Krishnan referred to the Policy as a “bureaucratic tool” it was a highly political act and a show of confidence that the bureaucracy was capable of getting the political hierarchy to conform to the reform agenda. His confidence did not go amiss. As assured to the World Bank the Government of Karnataka approved the Policy in 2003, serving as proof that Karnataka was a state that was willing and capable of taking ownership for reform. The Policy (a copy of which is provided in Appendix 6), is a policy of consensus and of consent. It is a policy of consensus in that it conforms to the market oriented reform principles laid out by World Bank, and it is a policy of consent because it effectively removed the need for the World Bank to place explicit conditionalities in the loan document because these had already been agreed to, in policy, by the “high[est] executive authority in the state of Karnataka” (ibid).

In the Policy the Government of Karnataka commits to progressively moving forward on the privatisation of water services, to introducing an independent regulator to facilitate private sector participation, and to gradually increase tariffs to full cost recovery as a measure for improving the financial self-sufficiency and sustainability of service providers and to encourage private investment. The Policy does not recognise access to water as a human right, but rather defines it as a human need. With a Policy approved by the Government of Karnataka in the following year, and again in preparation for the signing off of the KUWASIP loan, the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act (1964) was amended to

allow for the privatisation of water services. But there will be more on that in the following Chapter.

During my time in Karnataka I was surprised few people talked about the Policy. Most people, other than government bureaucrats and activists, were unaware it existed. Even individuals who are regarded by some as ‘experts’ in water issues in Karnataka did not consider it to be a “real” policy, in that they did not believe it had been approved by the Government of Karnataka. Perhaps their lack of belief was because there were no public consultations or discussions on the Policy, or that there were no debates on the Policy documented in the legislature. Perhaps it was because the Policy is not available on the website of Karnataka’s Water Resources Department where the State Water Policy of 2002 is available for the public to view. Maybe it was that few people would expect a public policy on water to be authored by a finance parastatal such as the KUIDFC. Furthermore, there is nothing explicit in any official documentation that I have come across that identifies the KUIDFC, or more specifically K.P. Krishnan, as the author. Quite simply, there is no publicly available history or rationale as to why it was created. Until late 2007, even the Campaign Against Water Privatisation - Karnataka who are aware of the Policy and have been actively campaigning against the privatisation of water services in the state since late 2005, were unaware how it was prepared, or by whom, although a small handful of people suspected it had something to do with the World Bank and the imminent KUWASIP. The Policy may have been the “major turning point” in negotiations with the World Bank, but as Krishnan humbly shared with me, he was not alone in “doing Karnataka water”.

A team of committed bureaucrats

Karnataka’s urban water sector is a fairly complex affair with a number of actors at different levels of the state having different functions and responsibilities (refer again to Figure 4.1). The assortment and diversity of players, both departmentally and in terms of the individuals in charge can lead to a lack of cohesion and bureaucratic bottle-necks, both of which can create delays in getting infrastructure projects which involve institutional reforms off the ground. In addition to K.P. Krishnan championing the reforms what also

contributed to launching the KUWASIP, and other major water reform and infrastructure projects over the years 2002-2005, was the team of bureaucrats that were heading the state-level urban agencies in Karnataka: the Urban Development Department; the Directorate of Municipal Administration; the BWSSB; the Karnataka Water Board; and, the Bangalore Municipal Government. These bureaucrats were personal interlocutors who got along very well and were in agreement that urban water needed to be reformed and what the technical specificities of such reforms should be. Their view was, however, conventionally conformist. As Krishnan informed me:

One guy alone could not have done anything. And it was not the technical brilliance of the team, the basics of correct pricing of water, [and the] correct institutional arrangements are available on the internet and in every textbook. It didn't require Einstein's knowledge of physics or me to discover what is needed in [Karnataka] Urban.

The commitment of the team to the "basics" of good water governance and their unity both personally and ideologically was critical in moving forward on urban water reforms, and in a number of ways. First, having a team of state-level bureaucrats committed to reform was a critical negotiating card in appeasing a cautious, but over-zealous reform-oriented World Bank. While the bureaucrats could not move as far, as fast, or with the depth the World Bank wanted because of political constraints, they were able to convince them that such solidarity, personally and departmentally, was unlikely to arise again and that they should make the most of it. They were also able to assure the Bank that not only were they faithful to Bank-style 'good' governance reforms but that they were also committed to convincing others on the absolute need of such reforms. As Krishnan further explained:

The efficiencies of the public system were apparent to anybody who was willing to look at it, but there was an ideological issue. The idea of these projects was pushing the private sector idea and actually convincing the hierarchy within the government that it is actually good for the system. The Bank was absolutely certain the only way forward was greater private sector participation.

In addition to convincing the World Bank that they were committed to reform *and* committed to convincing the government hierarchy on the need for reform, with the team of bureaucrats running "Karnataka Urban" all working together pushing KUWASIP through

the state apparatus at a rapid pace was no problem. Again, Krishnan shared an example of this me:

Ordinarily I would write a letter, which someone in the Secretariat would comment on and send back. But none of this happened when the steam was in place. I would write a note and take it to the Principle Secretary [of the] Urban Development Department who would sign my note, and then I would take it to the Finance Secretary and I would come back and the letter to World Bank would be gone in less than 18 hours...To get approvals for what we have done for KUWASIP under the usual government setup would have taken us ten years.

The concentration of power and influence within the team also meant they were able to wield a significant degree of power over bureaucrats within the local governments. There is already a government department hierarchy: local governments report to the Directorate of Municipal Administration, who in turn reports to the Urban Development Department. The Bangalore Municipal Government, as well as the two public water utilities, report directly to the Urban Development Department. There is, however, also a bureaucratic hierarchy. Top positioned bureaucrats in state-level departments are Indian Administration Service (IAS) officers, whereas many commissioners of urban local governments (but by no means all) are Karnataka Administration Service (KAS) officers. An IAS officer can be the head of a state-level department, a commissioner of a local government, serve in any state throughout India, and hold a position at national level within the Government of India. On the other hand, a KAS officer cannot hold the highest position in a state-level department and is restricted to service within Karnataka. The combination of these two hierarchies means that bureaucrats positioned as commissioners of local governments are largely powerless to reject the reforms that are proposed through the combined will of higher level state agencies and senior bureaucrats. This has significant implications for local democratic process which I explain in Chapters Five and Seven. The bureaucrats were well aware of the concentration of their power and influence and leveraged off it quite strategically. Another example from K.P. Krishnan illuminates this point:

It came together very well as a team. If we travelled for instance on the ADB [Asian Development Bank] project, we all went together to review projects because it is a very complex arrangement: I fund, Water Board executes, tariff is decided by Government, Municipality collects it, so it is a nightmare in terms of

pinning down a guy who has failed in this chain. The only way you can pin down a guy is when all of us turn up and speak to the Municipal Commissioner. He can't pass the buck, number one, and number two, if I turned up [the commissioner] could tell me, he wouldn't, but he could tell me, "*You are not government you are a funding agent and I will only answer my government*". Now, we could land in Mangalore city for the [ADB funded] urban coastal project, six of us in one Tata Sierra, so the Municipal setup knew that this team worked together, so at least for a while they couldn't bullshit us individually. It worked very well.

It would be a mistake to imply that local government commissioners do not want to reform especially if it is tied to much-needed finance for the construction of infrastructure. However, one cannot dismiss that the concentrated power of the state-level bureaucrats *was* very important for ensuring commissioners of local governments accept certain reforms³⁹.

A bundle of projects get the go ahead

With K.P. Krishnan championing reforms, a team of bureaucrats likeminded in their view that urban water needed transforming, a Policy approved by the Government of Karnataka that conformed to World Bank reform prescriptions, and legislative changes to legalise the privatisation of water services in the state, in May of 2005, some six years after negotiations began, a loan agreement for the KUWASIP was eventually signed. According to the World Bank's Project Appraisal Document the long-term vision for Karnataka's urban water sector is to take "incremental steps towards full service coverage and high quality service provision in an efficient and financially sustainable fashion", and to develop "service provision models that would be provided by autonomous, customer responsive, and commercially-oriented utilities, including effective public-private partnerships" (World Bank, 2004b, p. 3). The contribution of the KUWASIP to this long-term vision is contained within two interconnected project components.

The first component is to "launch the reform process" based on the Urban Drinking Water and Sanitation Policy Statement that K.P. Krishnan had prepared as a front-loaded

³⁹ For example, more local governments in Karnataka have applied for infrastructure funding under the KMRP than there is funding available for. As I have already mentioned, under the KMRP local governments are required to have already implemented certain reforms to be eligible to apply for funding.

conditionality for the project. This component is exclusively made up of Technical Assistance studies by private consultants on numerous aspects of Karnataka's urban water governance and service delivery: tariff designs; investment plans; institutional arrangements; legal and regulatory structures; benchmarking systems; and, a model for a State Urban Water Supply Council. The job of the Council would be to facilitate private sector participation and would eventually evolve into an independent regulator of the private urban water market. These reform measures are intended to establish a governance environment that can attract and maintain private sector interest and investment.

The second component of the KUWASIP is a pilot project in four pre-selected cities in North Karnataka. The objective of the pilot is to demonstrate that “sustainable, efficient, and commercially-oriented service provision can be achieved” in urban India (*ibid*, p. 3). Physically, it involves large public investments for capital works to improve bulk water and for constructing new water distribution lines in the pilot areas. In terms of institutional reforms it includes the introduction of a private operator for a two-year operation and maintenance period and a revision of the current tariff toward full cost-recovery. This pilot is the first externally funded water privatisation project in the country and its successful implementation is of significant demonstration value for rolling out similar reforms in both Karnataka and India. Again, Karnataka is proving that it is a “reform leader” and a model state. However, many citizens of Karnataka are concerned with the reform agenda and implementing the pilot has not been a smooth or easy process. In the following chapter I examine the networks of agents who have been involved in the construction and implementation of the pilot project and the local politics of contestation and consensus building.

In addition to the KUWASIP, the team of state-level bureaucrats also re-invigorated the plans that were commenced in 1999 to extend the BWSSB's water and sanitation services to the areas surrounding Bangalore city, which at the time was made up of eight urban local governments. To kick-start the process, in 2002 the KUIDFC invited North America's bi-lateral development agency USAID, to prepare an up-dated budget and financing plan for project. While a principle objective of the project was to extend underground drainage and

Kaveri water services into the eight local governments surrounding Bangalore city, the project is not only about the construction of infrastructure. A second objective of the project was to reform the financial management and governance of the participating local governments and the BWSSB. In line with the Policy that was prepared by K.P. Krishnan this involved plans to privatise the operations and maintenance of the new water services once the infrastructure was in place. In combination, the financing arrangements for the project and the privatisation of water services was intended to cut the government costs associated with constructing, operating, and managing essential public infrastructure and to raise efficiency in service delivery.

The financing plan, however, was only designed to cover the infrastructure for the water distribution network and the KUIDFC still had to find the finance for the construction of the underground drainage. They explored the possibility of borrowing from a Government of India finance corporation, but the lending term was too short and the interest rate too high for it to be financially viable. Eventually, after more negotiations with the World Bank, finance was secured as part of the KMRP (the sister project of the KUWASIP). While the bulk of this finance is going toward the construction of pipes and road restoration in the project area, in keeping with the World Bank's current emphasis on governance reform this lending was conditional on the BWSSB taking steps to improve their commercial viability including reducing their operating ratio to below ninety percent over a period of five years and carrying out "*appropriate measures* for the purpose of operating and maintaining the water and sewerage systems in Greater Bangalore area" (World Bank, 2006, p. 14 emphasis added). Originally the loan agreement included the condition that the BWSSB enter into a management contract with a private operator but the final wording was relaxed, perhaps to avoid contention, to "*appropriate measures*". The intent was still apparent, however, and not only did the loan agreement acknowledge K.P. Krishnan's Policy (which is policy directive to privatisation), in a consultant's report that was prepared as part of the KMRP after the loan agreement was signed it states that the World Bank's institutional support would:

...aim to enhance BWSSB capacity in operations and maintenance of the UGD [underground drainage] system and put in place effective arrangements for a

potential management contract with a private operator. This operator will be hired by BWSSB for operation and maintenance of the water and sewerage systems...and the costs will be met through the user charges. (Samaj Vikas Development Support Organisation, 2006, p. 2-14)⁴⁰.

If this project and the reforms that it entailed were intended to improve service provider and local government efficiency, as well as equity in services between central and peripheral Bangalore, the project was not designed to reduce inequity between the poor and the better off. The financing model and the Project Development Report that was prepared by the USAID made no provision for servicing the poor, yet irrespective of this the Government of Karnataka gave the project plan the go ahead in 2003. For reasons that I will explain in Chapter Seven, slum communities were eventually incorporated into the project. There has, however, been no mention or consideration of the needs and rights of homeless people.

Conclusion

In 2004, Chief Minister S.M. Krishna lost the state elections and before long the team of bureaucrats running Karnataka Urban were transferred into new posts. K.P. Krishnan for one, was transferred from the KUIDFC to the Ministry of Finance in Delhi where he was appointed as the Joint Secretary responsible for developing 'Capital Markets' - perhaps a reward for his work in bringing forward the reform agenda in Karnataka. Despite new political leadership and state government, and a new team of bureaucrats running Karnataka Urban, there has been no change in the general direction of reform. With an international policy agenda geared to market oriented water reforms, a national-level program imposing conditional governance reforms of sub-national governments, a strong foothold by international development agencies in the state, and a Policy that legitimises

⁴⁰ In addition to water distribution lines and the underground drainage, in order to service the project area finance also had to be found for augmenting additional water from the Kaveri River in order to meet the new demand. Locating this finance was fairly straight forward. As I mentioned earlier the BWSSB has a borrowing history with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. At the time the project was under development the BWSSB was already negotiating with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for finance to cover this. After some delays, due to suspicions that the Project Management Consultants who were running first in the tendering process were receiving un-due favoritism, the loan was subsequently signed off in late 2006.

neo-liberal water reform approved by the Government of Karnataka, the state of Karnataka is a state firmly grounded on a determined path of reform.

In the context of this thesis there are two meanings that I ascribe to the term a 'determined path'. The first refers to the hegemonic discourse and policies of development, whatever they may at whatever time. In contemporary times, it is 'good governance' reforms, as described in Chapter Two that has become the decided and determined path to economic and social development. The second meaning relates to the actions, practices and processes through which hegemonic discourse and policies are constructed and implemented. As this chapter has illustrated, executing development and good governance reforms requires a firm determination amongst those who possess and share in the power to reform.

In my introductory remarks to this chapter I asked the question: why is it that the state of Karnataka has become a fore-runner in accepting and adopting market oriented reforms? The discussion traced the national reform agenda from structural adjustment in the 1990s to good governance and urban renewal in the new millennium. The discussion went on to illustrate how Karnataka had been quick to adopt neo-liberal structural adjustment and had even experimented and implemented many of the JNNURM reforms before they were announced as part of the central government reform agenda. While external forces such as the international and national reform agenda have a high degree of influence and power over sub-national governments, the discussion explained how the speed and depth of reform in Karnataka has also been contingent on the agency and power of local actors.

For water reforms to move as quickly as they have in Karnataka it has required the ideological alignment of powerful local actors with the national and international reform agenda, but it has also required the alignment of local actors with each other including politicians, corporate leaders and public-sector bureaucrats. S.M. Krishna provided the political will and authority at the highest level of the state, the establishment of BATF formalised the already existing power of corporate interests to define the development and governance environment of Bangalore, and the team of bureaucrats running Karnataka Urban over the years 2002-2005 transpired into an authoritative administration that was able

to get projects and reforms through the state apparatus at a rapid pace. Thus, the discussion brought to the fore, quite explicitly, how the power and influence of international development agencies and policy discourses in local-level reforms is, to some degree, dependent on the power and agency of local actors who perform critical roles in constructing and creating an enabling environment for reform locally. In this way, the power to reform does not belong to one actor, or one type of actor, such as the World Bank or a central government. Rather, the power to reform manifests and is dependent on the convergence of interests and ideologies, both within and between the power networks of global, national and state-level agents.

What also started to emerge throughout this chapter was the way these international, national and local actors operate *within* their networks of reform agents through a ‘politics of consensus’. The idea of a ‘politics of consensus’ has three dimensions:

- **ideology** – a set of ideas that form a general consensus on what the character and problems of water governance are, a normative vision of what it should be, and the technical and other solutions required to achieve this;
- **agents** – the interconnected and intersecting networks and constellations of individuals, organisations and institutions who accede to the consensus; and,
- **actions** – the strategies and tactics that these constellations and networks of agents employ and deploy in order to extend and embed political and social support or consent for such ideological reforms.

In this chapter, embedding or affirming ideology through specific strategies and tactics by networks and constellations of reform agents related quite specifically to processes and relations *within* networks of reforming bodies, be it supra-state agencies, state agencies including politicians and bureaucrats at different levels of the government hierarchy, or the private sector. The strategies and tactics were multiple.

I explained how the funding pattern of the central government’s JNNURM has been designed to coerce sub-national governments to consent to adopting neo-liberal urban reformation. Such a strategy has remarkable similarities to the new modality of aid that international development agencies have been employing since the 1990s wherein in order

for national or sub-national governments to be eligible for development assistance and grants they first demonstrate a willingness to adopt and take ownership for prescribed reform measures. I further explained how, when S.M. Krishna, a political leader also committed to such reforms was Chief Minister of Karnataka, those with a like-minded reform ideology were given important and powerful governance positions.

The BATF, whose membership was made up of corporate leaders and elite citizens, was established with the aim of introducing corporate-style techno-managerial governance reforms in Bangalore. Many of the BATF's experiments have since gone on to form some of the conditional reforms of the JNNURM. A team of committed and market-leaning bureaucrats were appointed to the top positions of government departments in Karnataka. These bureaucrats shared in the consensus that reforms were necessary, as well as what the reform agenda should be. Working as a team, they were able to convince the World Bank and other external agencies that Karnataka was a state ready, and willing, to reform. This required ensuring that lower and higher levels of the state hierarchy accept (or consent) to the proposed reforms. They worked with the World Bank in writing a policy as a front-loaded conditionality for the KUWASIP. This policy was subsequently approved by the Government of Karnataka Cabinet and served as consent by the political hierarchy for the acceleration of market oriented water reforms in the state. Indeed, when I was one of the highest bureaucrats why private sector participation was a reform goal of all their projects, I was informed "It is in the Policy". So I asked him, "Who wrote the Policy?" He casually replied "We did".

This team of bureaucrats also leveraged of their combined power to make certain that Commissioners of local governments consented to, and followed through, with reforms. A third strategy used to build consensus on the need and possibility of reform and that began to come through in this chapter, was the importance of local experiments and pilot projects that can then be showcased to other cities or regions. The BATF, although not necessarily intended as such was one, and the KUWASIP pilot project is another.

For those with the desire to see market oriented reforms introduced more quickly and more extensively in India and around the World, the enabling conditions of Karnataka's reform environment that I have discussed in this chapter, as well as the strategies and tactics employed by those with the power to reform may be seen as useful tips. However, I want to make explicit that these are not democratic and therefore undermine the good governance discourse that argues for the importance of democratic politics as both a means, and partly an ends, to development. Indeed, while the JNNURM has been introduced partly in the name of, the 74th Constitutional Amendment and the creation of "vibrant democratic units of self-government", tying infrastructure grants to conditional reforms present limited, if any possibility, for local governments to accommodate the democratic aspirations of citizens unless these aspirations are in consensus with the pre-determined reform agenda. The same can be said when state-level bureaucrats impose their combined power on local governments. The question that needs to be raised here, and which I will aim to answer in the following chapters, is whether democratic politics threatens the possibility of introducing market oriented reforms, and therefore, if democratic politics are intentionally underscored in the aim, and in the name, of development and good governance reforms?

In sum, this chapter explained how and why Karnataka was a state on a determined path of reform and began to unravel how a 'politics of consensus' operates *within* the network of reformers (and potential reformers). The power and practices of a 'politics of consensus' is not, however, restricted to the intersections and interactions that take place *within* and *between* reform networks. It also operates in the connections and relations between those with the power to reform and those institutions, communities and individuals who are the subjects or intended beneficiaries of reform, and also those who may not be but have the potential to disrupt the reform process. In the following three chapters I continue to explore how such a 'politics of consensus' and the power to reform has been manifested in Karnataka's urban water governance reforms. These chapters examine three specific projects and focus more explicitly on the everyday practices of reform, the relations and interactions *between* reform agents and local communities, and the implications of such for deepening democracy and the realisation of rights for the poor.

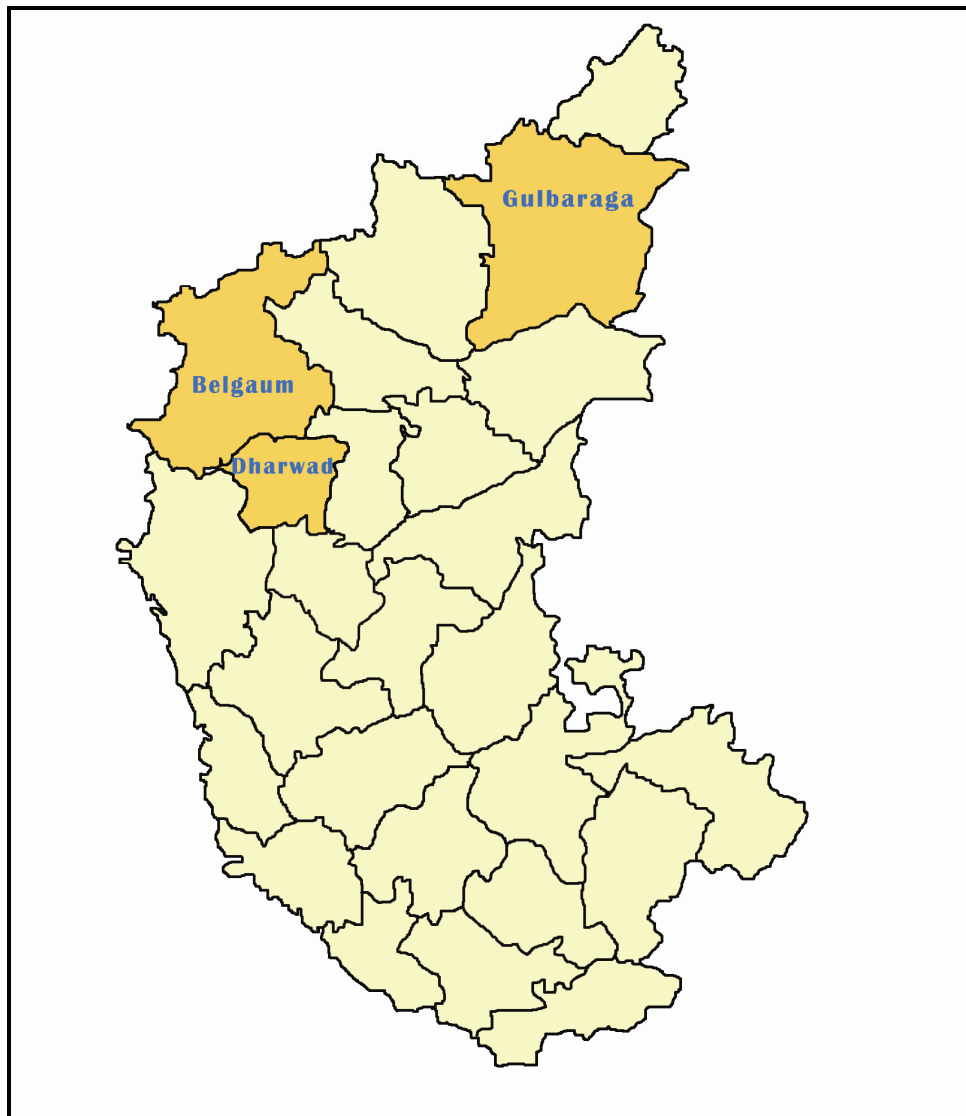
Chapter Five: Demonstrating Development

In the previous chapter I described the encounter between two bureaucracies, one Indian the other within the World Bank, and explained how their negotiations for a major program of urban water governance reform stumbled and was recovered when a team of committed bureaucrats were in charge of Karnataka Urban over the years 2002-2005. Some six years after discussions began, these negotiations culminated in the signing of a loan agreement for the KUWASIP. Early diagnostic work had painted a clear picture on the need of reform. Identifying a number of economic and techno-managerial problems with water governance in the state, a number of equally economic and techno-managerial solutions were envisaged and proposed. The solutions, as well as the identified problems matched lucidly with the mainstream consensus that had emerged within international policy circles throughout the 1990s on what the characteristics of 'good' water governance should be. But while the 'problem' and 'solution' were tidily and neatly bound within a technocratic framework of what was wrong and what was needed to fix it, putting Karnataka on the pre-determined path of reform would prove far more political.

This chapter analyses the politics behind the preparation and implementation of the second component of the KUWASIP; a pilot project that is being carried out in five demonstration zones across three districts and four cities in North Karnataka (see Figure 5.1 on the following page). The objective of the pilot is to improve service quality both physically and institutionally. It involves large public investments to support the achievement of continuous water supply (24/7), out-sourcing operations and maintenance to an international private water corporation for the cited purpose of capacity building the public sector, and incrementally increasing user tariffs to full cost recovery in a bid to achieve financial sustainability of water services. The demonstration zones cover approximately ten percent of the population in the four cities and it is envisaged that once the pilot is successfully implemented the same model will be up-scaled to the remaining parts of the

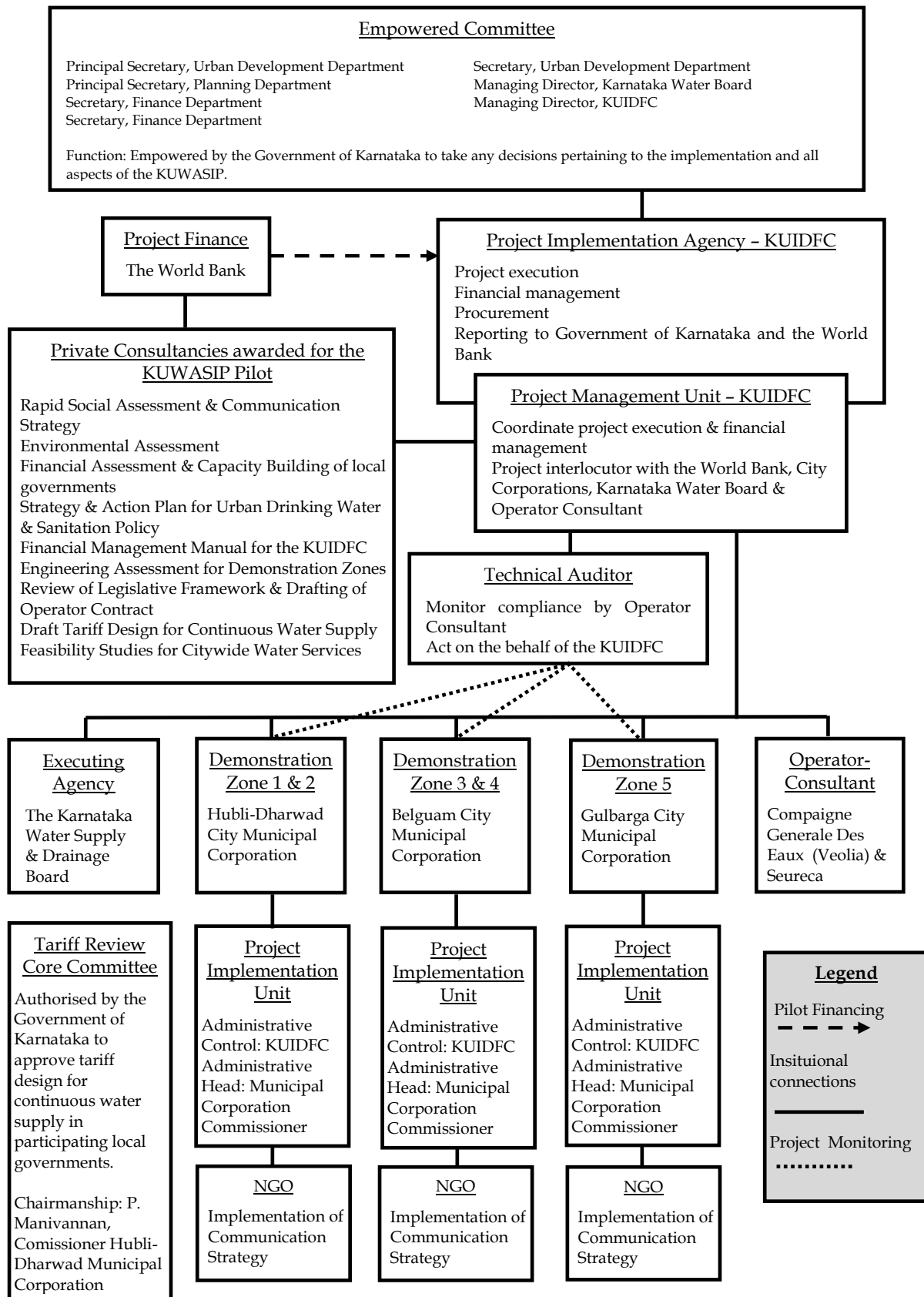
cities, then to all urban areas in the state, and ultimately throughout the Indian sub-continent. Indeed, this is the larger objective of the pilot. As the first externally funded water privatisation project in the country it is fair to say that its successful implementation is of *significant* 'demonstration value' for generating demand for similar service models and rolling out comparable reforms.

Figure 5.1 District location of the KUWASIP pilot projects in Karnataka



Source: Author

The analysis begins with an exploration of the preparatory phase of the project and of the work undertaken by three private consultancy groups that were entrusted and directed by the KUIDFC and the World Bank to design the conditions necessary to minimise risk and manufacture success of the demonstration zones. This discussion takes a critical look at the role of ‘expert’ consultants in the construction of development interventions. It explores how the consultants drew on their various technical ‘expertise’ to diagnose threats to the pilot: physical and technical threats; institutional and legal threats; social and political threats. It examines in detail the plans, strategies and tactics that were developed by the consultants to overcome such threats and illustrates how these undermined local knowledge, capacity, and democratic aspirations. The discussion then moves into the implementation phase of the pilot in the twin-cities of Hubli-Dharwad. This section explores how another group of actors, this time ones who live and work locally, took on the responsibility for managing risks to the pilot. It reveals how a network of city-level bureaucrats, politicians, NGOs and private consultants contained and managed social and political opposition to the pilot and how the ‘common citizen’ was convinced and coerced to ‘participate’. To help the reader navigate through the institutional arrangements and the network of reform actors involved in the pilot, an institutional map is provided in Figure 5.2. To end this chapter, I consider the power and politics involved in the preparation and implementation of the pilot and explain how and why local democracy has been damaged and diluted in the process, as well as how accountability and poor people’s secure access to basic services has not been achieved.

Figure 5.2 Institutional map of the KUWASIP demonstration zones

The Work of Experts: Minimising Risk, Manufacturing Success

As mentioned in the introduction, the KUWASIP pilot project is the first externally funded water privatisation project in India and its successful implementation is of significant ‘demonstration value’ for rolling out similar reforms. In this section I examine the preparation phase of the pilot project and the activities of three private consultancy groups who were working under the guidance, frameworks and instructions set by the World Bank and the KUIDFC. The discussion focuses on how the consultants diagnosed threats to the demonstration zones and complied with their contractors in developing tactics to overcome these threats. It highlights that while the private consultants may not have been the main architects of the pilot, the employment and deployment of their ‘expert’ skills perform a critical role in legitimating reforms and is a clear illustration of the ‘politics of consensus’ in practice. This section also illustrates how in a bid to make the project a success, the process of diagnosing threats, as well as strategies devised to overcome them, has undermined the autonomy of local governance and public service providers, as well as the democratic will and aspirations of many citizens.

The first ‘expert’ consultant: legal & institutional engineering

K.P. Krishnan was determined to get the KUWASIP off the ground and was tough and savvy in his negotiations with the World Bank. In Indian caste/class hierarchy Krishnan is elite. Not only is he an IAS officer, he is also a Brahmin with a PhD. So while he was committed to raising Indian water services to ‘world standards’, which meant throwing the Indian public sector out and replacing it with the corporate private sector, he was not prepared to let the World Bank impose the view that ‘professional’ India was not of international calibre. On the procurement of private consultants he was very particular, as he recalled when I met with him in his new office at the Ministry of Finance in Delhi:

There was a very famous meeting in Delhi. It was one of these eyeball meetings. The [World] Bank had the cheek to tell us that Indian lawyers cannot write the [legal] documents, [that they are] far too complex and necessarily it has to be an

international lawyer. My brown skin was offended by this statement and I said *"The project is off. Thank-you but we don't want it"*. So we walked away.

Now we were fairly [far] down the road of the project for any of us to actually walk out. The Principle Secretary of UDD [Urban Development Department] was very worried that the project wouldn't go through because we have expended a hell of a lot of money on this project. And I said *"I know the Bank, trust me"*. Finally the Bank blinked and they came back to us in the evening and said *"We found out there is a way..."* (personal communication, 2007)

As a result of Krishnan's hard negotiation tactics in October of 2003, and Indian law firm, Trilegal, was contracted by the World Bank to undertake two interconnected tasks. The first task was to review the legislative frameworks governing urban water services in Karnataka and to ensure they were compatible with an increased role for private sector participation. Upon Trilegal's review of the legislative frameworks, in January of 2005 two important amendments were made to the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act 1976, the legislation that governs all four cities participating in the pilot. The first was the Karnataka Municipal Corporations (Water Supply) Rules, 2004. This legislative amendment allows a greater discharge of water supply functions from state agencies to private parties including construction, maintenance, management, billing, and the closure of public and private water connections (Government of Karnataka, 2004c). The second amendment was the Karnataka Municipal Corporations (Deputation of Employees) Rules, 2004. This amendment permits the deputation of public officers and other employees to assist private operators in the "management, operation and maintenance of all or any municipal water works" (Government of Karnataka, 2004d, p. 2). Under this piece of legislation the deputed employees are required to report directly to the private party while the government remains responsible for wages, remuneration and other public employee benefits.

As required by law the legislative changes were publicly gazetted in October of 2004 but receiving no public objections were quickly and quietly shepherded through parliament. The lack of objections is not surprising given that there had been no public discussions and consultations on the amendments and on water reforms in the state more generally. In fact, in a survey that was conducted in North Karnataka in preparation for the demonstration zones it was found that more than half the people surveyed were completely unaware of the

proposed and ongoing reforms in the water sector even though they were destined to be trialled in their cities (Samaj Vikas Development Support Organisation, 2004, p. 67). Given earlier opposition to commercialisation and privatisation of water services in Bangalore and the wave of resistances that would take place throughout Karnataka in the following years, it was also not an indication that there was widespread support for such reforms.

The second task assigned to Trilegal was to draft an 'Operator-consultant' contract for a private operator in the demonstration zones. Within just a few months of the legislative amendments coming into effect, in April of 2005, the KUIDFC, the Karnataka Water Board and the Commissioners of the pilot cities signed a contract (hereafter the Contract), with the French water corporations M/s Compagnie Generale Des aux and Seureca (hereafter Veolia). Under the Contract Veolia was required to design a distribution network for continuous water supply within the demonstration zones, develop a computerised billing system and to take over the operations and maintenance of the new system for a period of two years (Urban Development Department & Karnataka Urban Infrastructure and Development Finance Corporation, 2005).

From a close reading of both the legislative amendments and the Contract they are somewhat disturbing pieces of work in the way they dis-empower the Karnataka Water Board and the local governments from any significant decision-making about the pilot, whilst simultaneously obligating them to facilitate and support its implementation. With respect to dis-empowerment, under Schedule 11 of the Contract the local governments are *obligated* to "adopt the Project concept [and] tariff principles" (ibid, Section (b), para. 1). Arguably this contractual obligation is in stark contradiction to the 74th amendment of the Indian Constitution which states that local governments should act as "vibrant democratic units of self-government" (Government of India, 2002b, para. 2). As I explained in the previous chapter, the project concept and the principles of full cost recovery for tariffs was decided by state level bureaucrats and the World Bank, and was written into Policy without any public discussion, consultation or local government input. Furthermore, by being obligated to adopt the tariff principles it provides little if any scope for the local governments to engage in any genuine democratic consultation with the citizens of their

cities. Given that irrespective of what the citizens may have desired, the decision had already been made that full cost recovery was necessary and the local governments were obligated under the Contract to adopt such. In addition, according to the Contract the local governments and the Karnataka Water Board are required to transfer power and decision-making authority for the project to the KUIDFC. This is clear in the Contract (2005) which reads:

The Board and the Corporations hereby appoint [the] KUIDFC as their authorized representative entitled to take all decisions on behalf of the Board and Corporations concerning this Contract, to the maximum extent permitted under Applicable Laws. Any such decision taken by the KUIDFC as authorized representative of the Board and the Corporations shall be valid and binding on the Board and the Corporations as the case may be. The Board and the Corporations hereby authorise KUIDFC to act as a point of contact between the OC [Operator-consultant] and the Board and Corporations concerning their rights and obligations under this contract... (Section 2.1.1, para. 1)

This clause does three things which undermine the autonomy of the Karnataka Water Board and the local governments, and which arguably weakens local democracy. First, it passes decision-making authority relating to the project from the public service providers – the Karnataka Water Board and the local governments to the KUIDFC, a parastatal with no direct channels of accountability to the public. Second, it obligates the Karnataka Water Board and the local governments to accept any decisions that are taken by the KUIDFC and this is arguably, whether citizens in the cities and the demonstration zones support these decisions or not. And third, it disables the local governments and the Karnataka Water Board from engaging directly with Veolia regarding the Contract. Given that the local governments and the Karnataka Water Board are the main government interlocutors for citizens regarding water governance and service delivery within the demonstration cities these conditions effectively diminish already existing channels of answerability and accountability without, as I will elaborate when I discuss the implementation phase of the pilot, putting in place any effective alternative. While some or all of the Commissioners may have been willing to sign such the Contract because they were in consensus that such reforms were needed or because the participating local governments receive grants for infrastructure, there is also another possibility. As discussed in the previous chapter, the

state-level bureaucracy at the time the Contract was signed were working as a cohesive and powerful team and were able to leverage this concentration of power over local government Commissioners to get them to conform and consent to reforms.

The power vested to the KUIDFC does not stop there, however. In the Contract it is also apparent in the appointment of an “independent” Technical Auditor that is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the pilots progress and to facilitate its “smooth implementation and operation” (ibid, Schedule 16, Section 2, para. 1). This Technical Auditor is a private consultant and their independence can be challenged. They are appointed by the KUIDFC, paid by the KUIDFC, and according to the Contract are obligated to “[a]ct on the KUIDFC’s behalf as the KUIDFC’s representative regarding all contact with the OC [Operator-Consultant]” (ibid, Schedule 16, Section 3.1 (b), para. 1). There is an obvious conflict between the Technical Auditor’s “independence” as a private consultant and their responsibility to the KUIDFC as their employer. As I have already discussed, the KUIDFC awards large amounts of money for an ever growing number of private consultancies and therefore they are a valuable and important business opportunity for consultants specialising in urban reforms and infrastructure projects. Given that private consultancy is a business in a competitive market, there are strong commercial incentives for their reports and their work to conform to the reform ideals set forth by their employers if they hope to get future contracts. In terms of conformity, the work of Trilegal which I am describing here is one example of this, and as it happens, the consultancy firm that was awarded the Technical Auditor’s job, Fichnter Consultancy, was also awarded the contract to design the 24/7 water supply tariff for the demonstration zones.

In addition to the Karnataka Water Board and the local governments having to forfeit control over the project, the Contract simultaneously requires them to take on many of the operational risks *and* act as local collaborators in implementing the pilot. In the preparation phase of the demonstration zones the institutional arrangements and legal obligations set out in the Contract require the Karnataka Water Board and the local governments to co-ordinate with the private operator in achieving 100 percent metering. This includes the contentious activities of disconnecting or regularising illegal or unregistered water

connections. This collaboration continues into the implementation phase. During the operations and maintenance period Veolia is required to issue bills as per the meter, the tariff is then collected by Karnataka Water Board and in turn, it is passed on to the respective local government as local government revenue. If households do not pay their water bills for any reason such as poor service, incorrect billing, or affordability, it is the responsibility of the Karnataka Water Board to disconnect their water services. At the time I was speaking with people in North Karnataka it was too early in the pilot to ascertain how such an arrangement might play out, but it is possible (and perhaps intended), that such a set-up will make the Karnataka Water Board appear to be the 'bad guy' in the system and un-popular with the citizenry thus, providing all the more justification for privatising service delivery. Furthermore, Veolia is paid a fixed remuneration fee plus performance bonuses for their services thus, any non-payment of tariffs affects the revenue of the local government not the profit of the private company. This remuneration is paid part in Indian rupees and part in Euros to minimise any profit loss that could arise from currency fluctuations. While such arrangements radically diminish risk for the private operator as is prescribed in good governance reforms they do not eliminate the risks altogether, but rather, pass them onto state agencies.

The support of the Karnataka Water Board and the local governments to the pilot and the private operator also comes in the form of the deputation of public sector employees. The salaries and other expenses of these employees continue to be borne by the applicable government agency and this was made legally permissible in the Karnataka Municipal Corporation's (Deputation of Employees) Rules, 2004 that was passed in preparation for the pilot. The rationale and justification for the deputation of 'free' staff, and one which is in line with the good governance discourse, is so that the private operator can impart knowledge and skills and in doing so 'capacity build' government employees to be more competent in operating and managing the services. However, such rationale can be challenged.

First, many local government and Karnataka Water Board staff already have technical knowledge and skills. While I was in Hubli-Dharwad I had the opportunity to discuss the demonstration zones with a highly placed engineer of the Karnataka Water Board. He

advised me that Karnataka Water Board engineers are already trained in continuous water supply and that if they had adequate funding and resources for improving infrastructure they would be capable of providing this level of service. Of course, these funds and resources were not made available until such time as it was necessary to demonstrate that a private operator could, and would, be able to provide better services. What is more, the competence of the Karnataka Water Board is something that has in the past been recognised by local governments and the Government of Karnataka. For example, in 2003 at the request of the Hubli-Dharwad Municipal Corporation, a Government Order was issued approving the Karnataka Water Board to take over the maintenance of water services from the local government. The purpose for this was to “ensure effective provision of water supply to all citizens including the urban poor and disadvantaged sections of the population” (Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board, n.d., p. 1)⁴¹. In the years since the Government Order, the Karnataka Water Board has embarked on a number of activities to improve the efficiency of water services in the municipality such as repair works, regularising and metering connections, and increasing the flat-rate tariff to improve the financial health of operations⁴². To a large extent these measures are the same as those proposed under the KUWASIP – bar the outsourcing of the distribution network⁴³. However, whether the public sector is prepared to reform, or willing to improve, does not appear to be the point. An unambiguous assumption of the KUWASIP project documents is that there are inherent and insurmountable flaws in the public sector which makes government agencies incapable of designing and executing high-quality and efficient service delivery systems.

A second point is that many public sector staff have established relationships with the communities that they service and understand the local conditions in ways a foreign operator cannot. The point that I want to make here is that it is possible that deputed public sector employees impart their own locally-specific skills and knowledge to foreign or

⁴¹ It was felt that Karnataka Water Board had the necessary expertise to run the system and that there were advantages, at least in the interim, for the management of bulk water and distribution to be with a single agency (ibid, n.d.).

⁴² According to citizens in Dharwad that I spoke to in January of 2008 there was, however, local opposition to the Karnataka Water Board increasing user tariffs at the time.

⁴³ It should be noted however, that the Karnataka Water Board has out-sourced the operations and maintenance of bulk water supply distribution to the private corporation Larsen and Tuobro. This was justified on two counts. First, to enhance efficiency and second, due to a shortage of staff at the Karnataka Water Board.

inexperienced local private operators, and through their existing relationships with communities are better positioned to maintain amicability between the service provider and the public. This is something I will shed more light on in the later section on the implementation of the pilot in Hubli-Dharwad. Finally, there are examples in Karnataka where private companies have been brought in to ‘capacity build’ the public sector through pilot projects, but when it has come to the point of up-scaling these pilots the intention and the practice remains outsourcing⁴⁴. The disjuncture between ‘capacity building’ the public sector through pilot projects which utilise the skills and knowledge of the private sector and then outsourcing their assets and services when it comes to up-scaling appears to be a common feature of Karnataka’s water projects. The Policy K.P. Krishnan wrote clearly indicates that the goal of reform is to create an enabling environment for privatisation (refer to Appendix 6), and there appears to be little reason to assume the KUWASIP is any different. It is easy to become sceptical that the deputation of public sector staff for the purpose of ‘capacity building’ is a something of a ‘good governance’ façade, and at least in the Karnataka case, could be better understood as a way to capacity build the private sector for future market engagement, reduce operator costs and provide the appearance that service provision continues to be a public-sector undertaking and the responsibility of state actors.

In a country inexperienced with water privatisation, it was quite a remarkable event to have a local law firm prepare the legal documents for a World Bank financed project. The emphasis of international development agencies on providing Technical Assistance for governance reforms implies that those on the receiving end of global aid are meant to be in need of international expertise, not already have it located domestically. Trilegal came up to the mark, however, and given the effective way they performed their tasks, are

⁴⁴ As one example of this, as part of a JBIC loan to the BWSSB, Thames Water was brought in to run a pilot project for reducing unaccounted for water in a central part of Bangalore. In turn this was to be extended to the remaining area of the city by the public utility, the BWSSB. However, in 2008, under the latest JBIC loan to the BWSSB which is providing the funds for up-scaling the pilot, international tender documents were developed to outsource the leak reduction program to a private company and then handover the operations and maintenance of the improved piped-lines to the same private actor for a period of 5-7 years.

subsequently being hired by the World Bank for similar projects outside of India (K.P. Krishnan, personal communication, 2007)⁴⁵.

The second 'expert' consultant: physical & technical engineering

In addition to the careful engineering of the legal framework and institutional arrangements, what was also important for improving the odds of the pilot's success was ensuring the physical and technical conditions within the demonstration zones would be able to support a continuous water supply. To carry out this task in May of 2003, Bristol Water Services, was contracted by the KUIDFC to assess the existing conditions of water works in the four cities and to identify *technically feasible* sites for 24/7 water supply.

Bristol Water Services' Final Report (2003) gave a damning account of the existing services: bad workmanship among local labourers and the inadequate supervisory skills within the local government, meant that infrastructure was degraded and poorly maintained; services were financially unsustainable due to the high number of illegal and un-metered connections and the local governments unwillingness to charge for water anywhere near the cost of production; data management was lacking. Their Final Report even went so far as to accuse the municipal administration of lying about leakages, repair-work and the number of existing connections. On the whole, the picture that was painted confirmed what had already been assumed by the World Bank and the Government of Karnataka bureaucracy. That is, that the inefficiency, incapacity and even negligence was so great within the public water sector that there was no way they could be competent and capable of constructing and managing a 'world class', customer-responsive and financially sustainable water system such as the one proposed under the project.

While I do not want to challenge the findings of the consultants – I am not an engineer and nor was I there at the time they conducted their assessment - it is worth highlighting that the diagnosis of the consultants was not entirely objective. Throughout their Final Report they

⁴⁵ Though Krishnan refused to accept a foreign lawyer for a World Bank financed project in India, when I met him he appeared quite proud that an Indian law firm is now acting as a foreign lawyer for World Bank projects in other parts of the world. I cannot help but wonder if the bureaucrats implementing reforms in Africa and China, who maybe are being told by the Bank they have to have an Indian lawyer draft their legal documents, are having the colour of their skin insulted. I cannot help but wonder if Krishnan would see the paradox.

consistently compared service levels in the four cities with what they would expect in well-functioning water utilities in Western Europe, without an equal acknowledgement of the different historical, financial and environmental conditions. The explanation given about pipe leakage was a good example of this:

One would normally expect in a *well managed utility in Western Europe* around 25 leaks per year on 100 km mains, but in Dharwad the burst frequency was as high as 982 per year on 100km mains...figures might be overestimated...[but] it has to be mentioned that *the bad condition of the network is mostly due to very poor workmanship*. (ibid, p. 23 emphasis added)

Whether intentional or not, the consultants' assessment of the existing water services contained a distinctive perspective on what good water services should be and a bias against service providers outside of Western Europe. In their Final Report this bias was transformed into a set of pro-private, pro-international recommendations where skills and 'expertise' were situated in the world of private, western water professionals. As it happened, the recommendations also provided an opportunity for Bristol Water Services to advance their own commercial interests. In the budget estimations for the two year operations and maintenance period, the consultants included a role for two "expatriate" engineers, one of whom would act as a project manager and be responsible for training a local private operator (ibid, p. 72). Similarly, on the issue of information management the report unashamedly promoted one of their new products:

Bristol Water Services has developed a new, innovative water balance software (Aqualibre), which is an ideal tool for utility managers, regulators and consultants...to accurately and comfortably establish utilities' water balances and calculate the recommended performance indicators for real losses. Aqualibre was used for this study.

This new water balance software is the latest software [and] offers many new features which are not available on other existing software... (p. 41)

The second task entrusted to the consultants was to identify suitable demonstration zones for proving the technical feasibility of continuous water supply. Bristol Water Services were instructed to locate sites where 24/7 supply was technically possible, and among the necessary attributes this included that they be fed from a sufficiently large reservoir (to

ensure adequate storage), and that they have a minimal number of pump stages between the overhead tanks and the demonstration zones (to reduce the risk of power supply problems). It was anticipated, and indeed strategically devised, that these attributes would reduce water supply shortages and the risk of power failure – two problems that plague many water distribution networks in India.

In addition to the careful and strategic selection of the demonstration zones, the management of water supply risk was also being tackled through the public investments for improving bulk water supply and the construction of a new distribution network within the demonstration zones. This would ensure that not only were the lines compatible with continuous water supply but that there would also be minimal leakage. Furthermore, under the Contract, the Karnataka Water Board as the agent responsible for bulk water is obligated to supply the overhead tanks that feed the demonstration zones with a *guaranteed* amount of water sufficient to maintain a 24/7 supply. The implication of this last point on equity between the demonstration zones and the remaining ninety percent of the cities, particularly during times of shortages in bulk water supply, is yet to be seen. However, such an arrangement has the potential to create a discord between households inside and those outside the demonstration zones. This was a calculated move.

In a conversation with one of the team members of the Project Implementation Unit (Project Implementation Unit) in Hubli-Dharwad, I was informed that splitting the demonstration across five small zones rather than conducting the experiment in one large area was important for locating sites that were technically feasible, as well as for spreading the investment grants between the local governments to encourage local governments to participate. However, I was also informed it was because it meant that the cities would be divided between those with a continuous water supply and those without. This tactic was expected to create a scenario where people outside the demonstration zones would begin to demand similar service levels, which in turn could be used to justify extending the pilot to the remaining parts of the cities. This point was not lost on the public who raised the issue in the original round of public consultations of a 'divided city', and questioned what the implications of this would be for water equity and social cohesion (Samaj Vikas

Development Support Organisation, 2004). During the construction phase and when the various demonstration zones became operational during 2007-2008, although importantly *before volumetric billing began*, this dynamic came into play as people outside the demonstration zones began requesting that they also be provided with a continuous supply of water. In the short term at least, the 'divided city' was a useful strategy for generating demand and advancing the reform agenda. The final selection of the five demonstration zones was also based on the suitability of the political and social make-up in the areas. The end decision, which was taken jointly by Bristol Water Services, the KUIDFC, and the Mayors and Commissioners of the cities involved no public consultation or discussion. As the Commissioner of Hubli-Dharwad would later reveal, it was the only decision the local government participated in.

On the whole, rather than the sites being truly reflective of the prevailing conditions in other urban locations, they were strategically selected by the consultants at the instruction of the World Bank and the KUIDFC to ensure the technical success of the pilot. This was regarded as necessary for generating support for 24/7 supply amongst the public, politicians, engineers and public sector administration. However, technical accomplishment was not considered to be sufficient for guaranteeing the success of the pilot and for creating a broad-based consensus on the need for reform.

The third 'expert' consultant: social & political engineering

The Samaj Vikas Development Support Organisation were contracted to conduct a Participatory Social Assessment and develop a Social Intermediation and Communication Strategy. While the name of this organisation may sound like that of a charitable NGO, they are in fact a private consultancy company. The overarching task given to these consultants was to develop a strategy that would create a positive perception amongst the political, social and administrative body for water and sanitation reforms. According to consultant's Final Report (2004), some of the specific objectives included:

- Building credibility for sector reform in [the] public mind by establishing a link between reform and long term benefits.
- Building reasonable following for reform by identifying and canvassing stakeholders who benefit, thus creating a demand for the reform.
- Creating allies for reforms among decision makers and opinion makers.
- Creating a shared concern and values for change.
- Inducing behaviour change in stakeholders and win over the fence sitters and opponents to reform.
- Facilitating articulation and expression of stakeholder support for reform. (p. 9)

The consultants conducted a survey, held focus groups and stakeholder workshops. These were designed to gather a wide range of data such as demographics, the level of demand for the 24/7 supply and people's willingness to pay. It even involved collecting information on people's preferred radio and television stations. Such things would be useful to know for promoting the project in the subsequent months. They arranged public meetings where key officials from the local governments, the World Bank and KUIDFC gave presentations explaining and promoting the importance of the project. The public meetings were often fiery events and confirmed what the findings of the surveys and focus groups had highlighted, which was that there was a lot of social and political scepticism about the project. The promise of improved services and continuous water supply was the major selling point but these early interactions illuminated that this was not a significant aspiration or desire of the local populace. For instance, 87.71 percent of people in Hubli and 86.47 percent of people Dharwad had stated that they did not want continuous water supply (Samaj Vikas Development Support Organisation, 2004, p. 65). Citizens were concerned about the implications of 24/7 on source sustainability and expressed doubt that even if continuous water supply could be achieved that it would last for more than a few months. The consultants attributed this scepticism to a history of poor performance by public service providers. However, there was also suspicion among some people that the provision of 24/7 supply was a political manoeuvre to validate tariff increases which many people asserted would be unaffordable for poorer citizens and those rearing livestock. This was combined with a concern that public taps would be removed, creating hardship for the

many people and especially the poor, who rely on these water sources to meet their basic needs.

The issue was also raised, as I mentioned earlier, that dividing the city between those with continuous supply and those without could cause social rifts, and there was a significant amount of unease over where the funds would come from to extend the new system to the remaining parts of the cities. Elected representatives and opposition party members were particularly concerned about the issue of future financing. As one leader of the opposition party in Hubli commented during a public consultation “We don’t need a loan. [The] Karnataka Water Board and Hubli-Dharwad Municipal Corporation (HDMC) are already working on this problem” (ibid, p. 66).⁴⁶ This same person also queried why the head of the Karnataka Water Board (one of the bureaucratic interlocutors who had been involved in the World Bank negotiations and was Karnataka Water Board’s signatory to the Contract), was being publicly silent about the project and not attending any of the public meetings (ibid, p.66). While scepticism to the project was being expressed by citizens and government officials alike, the consultants noted that despite a climate of “disbelief” in 24/7, people were *willing to participate* and to *willing to pay* for an improved service level. However, it is important to note that this disbelief, but willingness to participate, largely comprised of people in the middle and upper-middle classes. The consultants concluded that given the concern of affordability and access for the poor, future investments and a divided city, the general feeling was that the project was not needed and mostly people wanted assured water supply with specific timings and adequate pressure. These apprehensions made the need for an *effective* Social Intermediation and Communication Strategy all the more necessary.

From the survey and the various interactions that formed the Participatory Social Assessment, the consultants crafted a detailed and extensive strategy for promoting the project and building a following for reform. The strategy was descriptively entitled “*From Cynicism to Hope: Project Credibility*” and the overarching aim, as per the task set out for the

⁴⁶ The money for the pilot is a grant, however, any extension of the services will most likely require the local governments having to take on a market debt or investment from the private sector. In the latter case, in order to re-coup the costs of such an investment and make a return any private investor (operator) would necessarily require a long-term contract as was the case in the 1990s.

consultants, was to convert scepticism, suspicion and opposition to the project into broad based popular support from a wide range of stakeholders, including local politicians and policy makers, water officials and engineers, administrative staff within the local governments, consumers (especially women and youth), the media, and environmental and civil society groups. Surprisingly, there was no specific mention on the needs of the poor, despite this being a key concern raised by many citizens. The consultants did note, however, perhaps as a word of warning to those they were under contract to, that there would be some “fundamental, hardcore Government and World Bank bashing organisations” for whom no communication strategy was likely to be effective (ibid, p. 70).

There was little in the consultants’ Final Report about how the people responded to the issue of out-sourcing the services to a private operator and I can only speculate as to why that was. Given the contention that the introduction of private operators tends to create wherever, and whenever this takes place, this point may have been significantly down played during the surveys, focus groups and consultations. The consultants did note, however, that there was a desire for citizens to have a more accountable system of local urban water governance and the suggestion was even made by citizens that it would be better and more appropriate to have a partnership between the Karnataka Water Board, the local government and the citizens. The consultants took note of this and recommended establishing Water User Associations as a way to monitor the new services and expand the ‘watch-dog’ role of citizens. However, this was either overlooked, or ignored, or not felt to be necessary by the bureaucracy in charge of the project. Participation of citizens remained conceptually contained to being individual customers of a private service provider.

Critical to the development of the strategy was the recognition that the impressions, actions and political positions of the various stakeholders do not exist in isolation but can be influenced and affected by each other. Accordingly, it would be important to get “buy-in” from all of them. Creating “consumer” support was vital given that they are the ones who have to be willing to *participate* and *pay* for the new services. But it was noted, that “consumers not only pay for water – they vote!” and local politicians and policy makers who influence water policy are “influenced by voter opinion” (ibid, p. 69). Therefore, it was

regarded essential to generate cooperation from the media and local NGOs. For each stakeholder group specialised messages were developed and it was proposed that these would be disseminated through a range of methods: one-on-one meetings, discussion forums, flyers, press releases, billboards and various radio and television promotions. The targeted groups, the messages designed to convince them of the *need* and *worth* of the project and the method of communication are presented in Appendix 7.

In the Final Report that was submitted by the consultants to the KUIDFC it was stated that the surveys, focus groups and public meetings were opportunities for people to have their concerns heard and their inputs incorporated into the project design. But despite the concerns that were raised by citizens and politicians no changes were ever made to the project design or the reform goals. Tariff increases, 24/7 water supply, the removal of public taps, a private operator, and the intention to extend the model to all of Karnataka's urban areas remained the prescription of the day. Furthermore, in complete disregard to what many local people wanted (or did not want), based on what these interactions revealed the consultants developed a comprehensive Social Intermediation and Communication Strategy that was devised to turn public opinion in favour of the pilot.

Managing Democracy

The private consultants who had been brought in by the World Bank and the KUIDFC to 'prepare' the pilot for success had been very systematic and very calculated. A wide range of risks were identified and a host of strategies and tactics devised to address them. Despite these efforts, however, they could not account for the messy political realities and challenges that would confront the pilot during the implementation phase. In this section I examine the implementation phase of demonstration zones in the twin-cities of Hubli-Dharwad. There is one demonstration zone in Hubli and one in Dharwad and these cities are governed by the same urban local government, the Hubli-Dharwad Municipal Corporation. The discussion tracks the political maneuvering of a network of local actors and the tactics they employed when confronted with a non-consenting, un-willing to conform public.

Resistance & deception

The Social Intermediation and Communication Strategy Cell for the Hubli-Dharwad demonstration zones is located in the KUDIFC's Regional Office in Dharwad where the Project Implementation Unit is also located. A local NGO, the *Rural and Urban Development Association* (RUDA) was recruited to act as a liaison between the public, the Project Implementation Unit and the Communication Cell. The principle objective of RUDA's work was to present a positive image of the project to the public and persuade people in the demonstration zones to take metered connections for the new distribution lines. Indeed, unlike governments and international development agencies NGOs are regarded as closer, more in tune with, and trusted by, the 'people' and it has become wide spread and common practice for them to be recruited to act as intermediaries between reformers project beneficiaries. However, like the work of the private consultants that I just discussed, such NGOs are not independent, autonomous actors. The objectives of their work are pre-defined and they have similar financial incentives (and contractual obligations) to conform to such. Thus, while NGOs may be thought of as being 'closer to the people', that their work and their involvement in any given project is good for citizens, project beneficiaries or the poor, should not be taken at face value.

RUDA's work involved producing and disseminating promotional material, holding street level meetings, organising street plays and providing an office where people could get information pertaining to the pilot. In the early stages, however, people were reluctant and some refused to sign up to the new system. These people were largely, but not exclusively, from low-income households and slums. From my conversations with activists and members of the Project Implementation Unit in Hubli-Dharwad there were three prominent reasons why this was so. First, there was the belief that the 24/7 supply would be subject to a higher tariff rate. Second, that when the new pipeline was commissioned public taps would be removed. These concerns were not inaccurate, but they were an indication of how the work of the Samaj Vikas consultants had not resulted in concerns raised by citizens being incorporated into the pilot objectives. The third reason related to connection costs. According to the project plans households must take legal connections. That is, connections

which are registered and metered. In terms of existing services and connection costs there are three different categories of households:

- Those with already existing legal connections to the old network. These households are required to pay 50 percent of the connection cost to the new distribution line (Rs 1000),
- those with existing connections but that are illegal (unregistered and also therefore unmetered). In order to become 'legal' these households are required to pay the full cost of connection (Rs 2000) and,
- those with no connection. Likewise, these households are required to pay the full connection cost (Rs 2000)

(Fichnter Consultancy Engineers India Private Limited, 2007 June).

Most slum households would fall into these last two categories and any household that does not connect to the new line faces disconnection once the 24/7 system is commissioned.

Faced with public apprehension for the project and unwillingness among many households to take new connections, RUDA had to step up their game. They began advising people within the demonstration zone that the new system would become operational only once *all* households had legal connections. This message was intended to present the possibility of hostility from households who were willing to give the new system a go toward households who were choosing to not 'participate'. Despite this tactic, resistance to the project remained strong, and in late 2006 a group of women from a slum in the Dharwad demonstration zone took to their streets in protest with the intention of stopping the new pipeline from being laid. Their political actions resonated with a number of left-leaning social and political groups and it was not long before a larger network of actors including community members, NGOs, politicians, and engineers from the Karnataka Water Board were aligned in a local campaign opposing the project.

The campaign focused on a number of interconnected issues: the privatisation of public services; the impact of public taps being removed and volumetric billing on access to water

for the poor; and, project ownership and accountability. The campaign engaged in numerous activities. They disseminated flyers and information sheets detailing their understanding of the nature and intention of the project, and organised large street level protests which sometimes numbered more than one thousand citizens. The Karnataka Water Board staff held their own protest in Bangalore opposing the project (Karnataka Water Board flays government's move, 2006). In contrast to what the consultants who had prepared the Social Intermediation and Communication Strategy had suggested, these individuals and groups were not "fundamental, hard-core Government and World Bank bashing organisations" (Samaj Vikas Development Support Organisation, 2004, p. 70). On the contrary, many of them were part of the government system and were not interested in engaging with the World Bank, let alone "bashing" them. Their position was that water governance, and local governance more generally, was the responsibility of the local government and that it was the local government who must be answerable and accountable for the project. As such, the campaign did not direct their activities toward the World Bank, the KUIDFC or Veolia, but to the local government and local elected representatives. When the campaign was at its height RUDA was ill-equipped to contain and manage the resistance, or move forward on convincing people in the demonstration zones to take connections, and two prominent local figures, both allies of the reforms, stepped up their already existing efforts in endorsing the project.

The first was the Dharwad Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), S.R. Morey. In addition to being the local MLA, Morey was also the Minister for Municipal Administration and in September of 2005 had been given the additional posting as the Chairman and political representative on the KUIDFC Board. The other members of the KUIDFC's Board were important actors for bringing about urban reforms and included the highest bureaucrats from the Finance Department, the Urban Development Department and the KUIDFC. The numerous postings that S.R. Morey held at the time firmly placed him within the state-level reform network and the government agencies that were instrumental in pushing urban reforms through the state apparatus. Morey played a very active role in convincing other elected representatives, government officers and community leaders of the benefits of the project. I was advised by some members of the Project Implementation Unit that when

people queried Morey about the role of a private operator his standard response was that the pilot was a project of the local government, Veolia's involvement was necessary for the transfer of technology and skills, and that after the two year operations and maintenance period the management of the water services would be handed back to the Karnataka Water Board. While this was in accord with the official documentation, given Morey's government postings it seems unlikely that he would not have been aware that one of the main objectives of the KUWASIP, including the demonstration zones, was to create an enabling environment for more private sector participation in the future.

The second figure to play a prominent role was IAS officer P. Manivannan, the Commissioner of the Hubli-Dharwad Municipal Corporation. Manivannan had been moved to Hubli-Dharwad in May of 2004 from his previous posting as Private Secretary to the Chief Minister, who at that time was S.M. Krishna (Posted as HDMC Commissioner, 2004)⁴⁷. To improve the image of the project and garner public support at the instruction of Manivannan the local government held a number of public meetings to convince citizens of the benefits of the pilot. These meetings were all the more necessary given that a large number of households had not yet signed up to the new network and that public opposition to the pilot was on the rise. However, these meetings also provided another avenue for the campaign to demand answers and it was Manivannan, as the Commissioner of Hubli-Dharwad, who was directly confronted to be accountable for the project. During these meetings Manivannan attempted to settle discontent by guaranteeing complete transparency and inviting people to come and view the project documents. This was somewhat disingenuous. It is worth noting that many citizens, and especially lower socio-economic citizens, have not conducted their formal education in English medium schools. ALL significant documents prepared for World Bank and other externally funded projects in India are written in a highly technocratic language and always in English, rather than local languages⁴⁸. One only needs to view the World Bank website to validate this. As it happens, many of the activists were professionals and were competent in English. They had

⁴⁷ Manivannan was also the ex-officio Deputy Secretary to the Urban Development Department (ibid).

⁴⁸ Some World Bank documents are produced in Hindi but for many people in the South this is no more accessible than documents in English.

already read many of the project documents and as they shared with me, were running a well-informed campaign.

Outside the public meetings a different mode of transparency and disclosure prevailed. As the Technical Auditor informed me:

The Commissioner said to the activists *"Don't stop the laying of the pipeline – you don't have to take the new line if you don't want to."* We told a lie to be frank with you. [On the instruction of the Commissioner] we said that both lines would be running and that if they didn't want a house service connection they didn't have to take it. We told them that public taps would remain with surface water, as well as borewell water. The Commissioner agreed publicly that we will not take out public stand-posts [taps]. He said he would put it in writing and that there would be no tariff increases for ten years. People challenged him and said you won't be here for long because you will be moved, and he just laughed... RUDA was advised by [the] KUIDFC and the Commissioner to stop telling people it was a World Bank project. (personal communication, 2008)

The Director of RUDA also shared his experience with me:

There was a conception amongst the people [in Dharwad] that the water system was being sold to a private water company and that they would be charged a higher tariff. We had to communicate that the water system would still be controlled by the local government; that it is not privatisation but PPP [public-private partnership]. We told them that it would not be a burden for the customer or the citizen and that it would be the same tariff for the demonstration zone and the non-demonstration zone. We told them that it is a corporation [local government] project and the money is a grant so there is no financial burden to the community. In the beginning it was horrible. People said they did not want it but it went ahead because it was the Policy of the government. (personal communication, 2008)

The claim that the pilot was a local government project was somewhat unconvincing. In each of the demonstration zones a billboard had been erected with some of the basic details of the project: where it was being implemented; how much it cost; and who was involved. Nowhere on the bill-board is the HDMC mentioned, as Image 5.1 reveals.

After continued pressure from the community Manivannan soon changed his story. Not long after the meetings he made a public statement to the press declaring that the demonstration zones were not a local government initiative and that they were being

managed and monitored by KUIDFC with the financial assistance of the World Bank. He also stated that the local government had “no way except [to] implement the scheme” and no role in the pilot design “except choosing the ward” where the demonstration zones were being trialed. Despite this, Manivannan’s testimony to the press continued with the promise that the project would “be implemented in the most transparent way” and *that it would go ahead* “purely in the interest of the citizens” (HDMC to go ahead with 24/7 project, n.d.).

Image 5.3 KUWASIP demonstration zone billboard: Dharwad, North Karnataka



Source: Author

Manivannan's role in the demonstration zones raises some interesting questions. Was he transferred to Hubli-Dharwad just before the pilot was being implemented because of his amenability to market oriented urban reforms and his willingness to do, or say, whatever was needed to get the project off the ground? Was he merely caught up in a governmental process where the power of the state-level bureaucracy and the Contract the local government had signed that legally bound the local government to facilitate and support the implementation of the demonstration zones, put him in a position where he felt he had no other option but to lie to the public and direct others to do the same?

I cannot answer these questions definitively but it is worth mentioning that it was not long, as predicted by the citizens, before he was transferred from Hubli-Dharwad. His new posting was in Karnataka's city of Mysore where under the JNNURM, plans had been underway since 2005 to bring in a private operator for implementing a 24/7 water supply scheme. For various reasons implementing JNNURM projects in Mysore, including the privatisation of water services had been delayed and in 2008, Manivannan was given the additional appointment of "Special Officer" for implementing these projects. His appointment was opposed by many local elected representatives across a number of political parties (Manivannan's appointment as Special Officer opposed, 2008), and within just months an agreement was signed between the Mysore local government and a private operator for introducing 24/7 water supply. Following this, many local elected representatives stated that they were unaware of the project and around 35,000 citizens signed a petition opposing the contract and demanding it be cancelled.

Many of the deceptive statements made by Manivannan in Dharwad would be revealed when the new lines were commissioned and billing began. However, by this time Manivannan would be located hundreds of miles away from Hubli-Dharwad making it very difficult for citizens in the twin-cities to hold him to account for intentionally misleading them.

Truth & equity

In 2006 a pro-poor policy for the demonstration zones was approved by the committee empowered by the Government of Karnataka to take decisions regarding the KUWASIP. Having a policy for the poor was not part of the original project design and because it was sanctioned after the activities of the campaign, according to some it was a response, at least in part, to the concerns raised by community members and activists in Hubli-Dharwad (Sangameswaran, Madhav & D'Rozario, 2008). The KUWASIP pro-poor policy addresses issues such as tariffs, life-line water supply, connection charges, and public taps for those who were classified by the project team as 'urban poor'. A copy of the policy is provided in Box 5.1. The policy was based on an initiative that took place in Bangalore to remove public taps and connect the city's slums to the user pays water network. This initiative and is discussed in the following chapter.

In the same year that the pro-poor policy was approved Fichtner India (a private consultancy company) was awarded a contract by the KUIDFC to design the 24/7 tariff structure in line with the project objective of long-run financial sustainability. After conducting a study on willingness and ability to pay, as well as the costs for service provision and future capital investments, the consultants prepared a preliminary tariff design for incrementally moving the cost of water use to full cost recovery. Later that same year, the KUWASIP empowered committee sanctioned a core committee to review and finalise the recommendations made by the consultants. The members of the core committee were the Executive Engineers of the Karnataka Water Board and the Commissioners of three local governments, representatives from the KUIDFC from both the Head Office in Bangalore and the Dharwad Regional Office, and Veolia, the private operator for the demonstration zones. The Chairman of the committee was P. Manivannan. The committee approved the tariff structure as it was proposed. However, as I have already explained, under the Contract the local governments are obligated to accept and adopt the tariff principles and therefore it is questionable how much scope and authority they had to reject it, or if the committee served more as simply a stamping body.

In late 2007 the new distribution network was commissioned for the Hubli demonstration zone and in early 2008 Veolia's two year operations and maintenance period officially started⁴⁹. Around the time this was taking place I had the opportunity to attend a half-day meeting with Hubli-Dharwad Project Implementation Unit. My attendance at this meeting was an opportunity that few, if any citizens of Hubli-Dharwad had extended to them. By this time, however, I had got to know the KUIDFC bureaucracy in Bangalore quite well and they had put me in touch with their team in Hubli-Dharwad.

Box 5.1 Pro- Poor policy for the KUWASIP

- To provide concessions to urban poor in the matter of water supply.
- To identify the urban poor as those residing in houses measuring up to 600 square feet [in a] built-up area regardless of whether they live in or outside the slums.
- To waive the normal one time connection deposit for such urban poor and to collect only the cost of providing meters (to be fixed by the municipal corporations themselves), to inculcate the sense of ownership;
- To fix a life line supply of 8,000 liters per house hold per month for urban poor, at a concessional rate (to be fixed by the municipal corporations themselves).
- To simplify procedures for new connections. Any proof of residence such as ration cards and ID cards to be considered sufficient to provide a connection.
- To provide water free of charge through public kiosks/cisterns/borewells fitted with hand pumps to vulnerable sections such as nomads, destitute, homeless poor, coolies, beggars etc. who cannot afford to pay anything
- To promote structured participation of NGOs and CBOs in organizing the vulnerable sections for managing free water supply through public kiosks.

Source: Karnataka Urban Infrastructure and Development Finance Corporation (n.d.b)

Based on Fichnter's Tariff Design Study (2007, June), it had been decided that during the first six months of the operations and maintenance period households within the

⁴⁹ Due to physical works being completed at different times in the various demonstration zones the two year operations and maintenance period began at different times, although it was originally planned that they would commence at the same time.

demonstration zones would be issued with two bills, one for the old flat-rate tariff and one for the new volumetric billing. The real bill, the one which they would have to pay, would be the one with the existing tariff and the volumetric bill would be a “dummy bill”. The rationale for this was to provide households with time to understand the new tariff structure and how the quantity of water being consumed would affect people’s water bill (Fichnter Consultancy Engineers India Private Limited, 2007 June). However, I was informed by a member of the Project Implementation Unit that delaying payment for volumetric bills was also felt necessary to give households time to become attached to 24/7 supply before they had to start paying for it. By this time Manivannan was in Mysore and the new Commissioner of Hubli-Dharwad had decided that in the Hubli demonstration zone volumetric billing should begin at the same time as Veolia’s operation and maintenance period started. Sixty percent of the properties had been receiving continuous water supply since the new pipe-lines were complete some six months earlier, and the local government was losing revenue.

The new pipelines in the Dharwad demonstration zone were also operational but the decision to issue bills only in Hubli was strategic. People in Hubli had been far more compliant with the project and issuing the new tariff structure to these households presented a good opportunity to experiment with the new billing system with less likelihood of social opposition⁵⁰. During the meeting I attended the North Karnataka Manager of the KUIDFC informed Veolia that bills *must* be issued for the Hubli demonstration zone in the first month of the operations and maintenance period, as per the instructions of the new Commissioner. Veolia’s Regional Manager was very apprehensive. He was concerned that issuing bills within the first month would create a negative impression of a private operator, but the KUIDFC Manager was adamant.

Six months later I was back in Hubli-Dharwad to find out how the project was progressing, and how members of the communities were experiencing the new services and the new tariff regime. Despite the efforts of Morey, Manivannan, RUDA and others to convince

⁵⁰ When I was in Hubli-Dharwad many of the team were concerned that if I spoke to the activists or the community in Dharwad that this could spark up the campaign again – something that the project team definitely did not want.

citizens within the demonstration zones to participate in the pilot, by the time the construction work for the demonstration zones was complete a large number of households had still not legalised their services. This was partly to do with connection charges and was particularly so among urban poor. For instance, by the middle of 2007, in a slum within the Hubli demonstration zone only 70 households out of 450 had taken new connections (Sangameswaran, Madhav & D'Rozario, 2008). To encourage households to sign up, rather than continuing to demand connection costs up-front, it was decided to ask such households for a nominal connection charge of Rs 30. People were not informed, however, that in early 2007 it had already been decided based on the Tariff Design Study, that households would still be required to pay the remainder of the connection costs and that these charges would be recovered at Rs 50 per month once the operations and maintenance period officially started and billing began (Fichnter Consultancy Engineers India Private Limited, 2007 June).

The pro-poor policy stipulates that one-off connection charges are to be waived for the poor and while this was approved by the KUWASIP empowered committee, I was advised by a member of the Project Implementation Unit that as of mid 2008 the Hubli-Dharwad Municipal Corporation had not taken a decision as to whether the connection cost would indeed be waived for the poor. Later I spoke with a highly placed bureaucrat at the KUIDFC Head Office in Bangalore and he advised me that the pro-poor policy was a directive from state-level government and that the local government had to adopt it. There was, however, no enforcement of such happening. The Tariff Design Study (2007, June) made reference to the pro-poor policy regarding public taps and user tariffs, but had nothing to say about connection charges to the poor, even though the policy stipulates that connection costs be waived. When I visited a slum in the Hubli demonstration zone in the first half of 2008, volumetric water bills were being issued and they included an extra Rs 30 for connection costs. Slum households were exempt in policy, but when it compromised the revenue of the local government they were not in practice. Furthermore, in households which were required to legalise existing connections their bills also included a charge for estimated water use over the period that they had un-metered connections to the old distribution

network. Again this back-charge was not something people had been informed about when they agreed to take the new connections.

In addition to connection costs there was also the issue of the volumetric tariff. People were told there would be no tariff increases for ten years. However, according to the Tariff Design Study, water tariffs were designed to increase by twenty-five percent every two years for the following eight years in order to recover both operating and capital costs (Fichtner Consultancy Engineers India Private Limited, 2007 June). This was accepted by the core committee assigned to approve the new tariff structure. People were also told there would be the same tariff for the demonstration zones and the remainder of the city. The Tariff Design Study recommended that metered connections both inside and outside the demonstration zones be billed with the same tariff structure and while this did mean that all households would be charged the same this was not how it had been presented to the public. Citizens in Dharwad I spoke with informed me that they understood the flat rate tariff of Rs 90 per month would continue to be applicable. Whether this was a situation of genuine miscommunication or not, it certainly raises issues of equity given that households outside the demonstration zones would continue to be serviced by the old, non 24/7 supply distribution network.

People were also told that the new system would not be a financial burden for the poor and that they would have their water costs subsidised. The Tariff Design Study recommended an increasing block tariff and in line with the pro-poor policy set a base tariff of Rs 48 for 8000 kilolitres per month. This accommodates water use of approximately 55 litres per capita per day for a family of five. While this lowest slab is less than the existing flat-rate tariff of Rs 90 whether this is a genuinely pro-poor tariff is debatable. First, the tariff is applicable to every household connection and therefore it also subsidises non-poor households. Second, as I have already mentioned the tariff is set to increase by 25 percent every two years for the next eight years to bring revenue collection closer to full cost recovery. Although it is not stated within the Tariff Design Study one can assume this will also apply to the lowest tariff slab. This is an important point. As the coordinator of the Campaign Against Water Privatisation in Bangalore frequently expressed to me, while there

is a move to raise the cost of basic services to full cost recovery there is no corresponding drive to enforce payment, or to increase the minimum wage. Third, while 55 lpcd is in line with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) suggested basic minimum for meeting the human right to water, it assumes that a) that poor households can afford it, b) that poor households can and will be able to meet all their water requirements with 55 lpcd, and c), that there are no more than five members in a household. For poor households with more than five members the 8000 kilolitres per month would not cover the minimum water quantity required to meet even basic needs. Bangalore has the same base tariff and as the following chapter will illustrate, that for many people in Bangalore's slums who have been connected to the user pays system their monthly water usage seldom fell within this tariff slab. These households were facing financial problems and in order to reduce water costs many people would use borewell water for their non-potable water needs. This brings me to the issue of public taps.

As I will explain in the following chapter, public taps are regarded by reformers as the "bane of the water supply system" because service providers lose revenue which affects their financial sustainability (USAID Representative, personal communication, 2007). The intention to close public taps was always part of the KUWASIP project design, as the consultants entrusted to design the 24/7 tariff noted "As per the KUWASIP policy for 24/7 water supply, public stand posts in the demo zones [are] to be disconnected /closed completely; only individual house service connections to be encouraged" (Fichnter Consultancy Engineers India Private Limited, 2007, p. 78). One of the main concerns raised by citizens was the removal of public taps and despite the official intention they were told emphatically that both ground water and surface water taps would remain.

Contrary to what the public were told, when the new lines were commissioned public taps with treated surface water were disconnected, while public taps supplied with borewell water were not. According to the pro-poor policy however, water has to be provided "free of charge through public kiosks/cisterns/borewells fitted with hand pumps to vulnerable sections such as nomads, destitute, homeless poor, coolies, beggars etc. who cannot afford to pay anything". While borewell public taps have not been disconnected, they may not

supply potable water. As part of the Tariff Design Study the consultants conducted water quality testing. They concluded that “[s]ome of the samples taken from cisterns which are supplied from the local borewell or open well sources *are not potable*... and in these places necessary display boards should be kept stating that the water supplied is not for drinking” (Fichnter Consultancy Engineers India Private Limited, 2007 June). For those too poor to take a metered connection, or if households are forced to use borewell water to reduce minimum charges, as well as those who are the most destitute are likely to suffer from serious water-related health problems. Again, whether the pro-poor policy and the pilot project is good for the poor is highly questionable⁵¹.

The tariff in the demonstration zone prior to the pilot was a flat rate of Rs 90 per month. When volumetric tariffing began in Hubli some households started to receive bills for amounts between one thousand and ten thousand rupees. These charges were a combination of connection costs and arrears but for some households it was also due to extremely high water usage, and for others because there were a number of technical problems with the new distribution network.⁵² Out of 5,346 households in the Hubli

⁵¹ In early 2008 the local governments, the KUIDFC and the Project Implementation Unit were taking steps to re-instate and maintain at least some public taps within the 24/7 water supply network as per the pro-poor policy. In the Hubli demonstration zone there were 73 public taps before the pilot project and the number to be retained is 13. In Dharwad of 134 only 15 are to remain (Fichnter, 2008, April). Until such time as these taps are re-commissioned, citizens who have not been able or willing to sign up to the network will be dependent, at least in part on borewell water. By April 2008, of 6849 households in the Hubli demonstration zone 1503 still hadn't connected to the new line, and in Dharwad of 5478 households 1366 were still without 24/7 services (ibid).

⁵² In addition to connection costs and arrears there were multiple reasons for such high water bills. First, under the project only one water connection per property is permitted. However, it is not uncommon among low income households for a number of families to reside on one land plot. In some situations, households had taken multiple connections inside the property with a single meter on the outside so that each family would have its own internal water point. Ultimately this pushed water usage into the higher tariff slabs. Second, due to historically irregular water timings households who have the space and the money have water storage sumps connected to internal plumbing and taps. In the demonstration zone Veolia and the Karnataka Water Board were only dealing with pipes up to the point of the external water meter. However, a number of households had not disconnected the internal plumbing to their sump which was also still connected to the old distribution lines. In these houses when the new lines were commissioned, and water was continuously flowing through the pipes, it was going directly into the household sump and in turn was pouring back into the de-commissioned pipeline. The meter was turning over the entire time. Whether the internal plumbing was not adjusted because people did not trust that continuous water would be a long-term reality, or because they were not adequately advised, is unclear. Third, many households were simply using large amounts of water for things like watering gardens, washing cars or for the care of livestock. The engineer consultants, Bristol Water Services, had estimated domestic water use based on their “new innovative water balance software” – the same product they had been marketing in their final report. If the software had made an accurate estimate this was not something that has been used to educate and inform households so they could make an enlightened decision on whether they wanted the new system and the new volumetric tariffs. In fact, I was advised by a member of the Project

demonstration zone approximately 1,200 made official complaints about the billing and over 500 of these were made directly to Veolia. At the height of the billing debacle in early 2008 I was in Hubli-Dharwad and the Regional Manager of Veolia shared with me how a member of the Karnataka Water Board who had been deputed to the project had recently passed away. He told with me how this man had been an enormous support for him during the implementation of the project and how without the engineer's presence in the community the task of dealing with bill-related complaints had fallen on his shoulders. He described how having to be the public face of the project and engage directly with the community was a "terrible experience". He was dealing with some of the complaints, although this was with reluctance and something he would have preferred remained with the public sector employees and agencies.

One objective of the pilot and having a private operator was to improve service provider accountability and responsiveness. Under the Contract, Veolia is responsible for designing the billing software and issuing bills and I asked Veolia's Regional Manager if the private operator had any responsibility for the problems that had arisen with the billing and the new tariff. He told me "I haven't studied the tariff. I don't give a damn about that. The tariff is not my issue. People should approach the local government". So I asked him if there was a particular person or department within the local government to deal with complaints. He explained "I don't know if there is unit set up to take complaints. God knows who they should approach". He did know about the structure of the tariff, however, which is not surprising given the private operator was a member of the Tariff Core Committee. Despite claiming that he had not studied it the tariff and that it was not his issue, he did have an opinion on the tariff:

The minimum tariff of 48 rupees per 5000 [kilolitres] is a socially responsible tariff because it allows 50 [litres per person per day] for a household of five people. If this is unaffordable then something has to be done about that. Veolia is managing complaints even though it is not in our contract to do this. We are only responsible up to the point of the meter.

Implementation Unit that they had no accurate record of water usage within the demonstration zones prior to the project being implemented.

Everything is extremely good except the billing. The tariff is the issue. We need a realistic workable tariff. How can you bring consumption down? We can't ask them to pay [for livestock consumption], if we do that they will say we don't want 24/7 [and a private operator]. (personal communication, 2008)

Despite the problems that came to the fore when the billing began, Veolia's Regional Manager remained convinced that "if service levels are to an international standard then people will be willing to pay a higher price". According to more than one member of the Project Implementation Unit service levels are not, however, to an international standard. As one team member shared with me:

Veolia is not doing an international job. They have only done half the job. The meters and customer service connections are not good and the community are feeling fed up. They talk at a high level beautifully and the billing software is good but household customer service is bad. They have poor management and insufficient staff because they are trying to save costs. (personal communication, 2008)

To deal with the insufficient staffing and in a bid to continue to save costs, in mid 2007 Veolia requested more public sector employees be deputed to the pilot. It was stated that this was for "on the job training" (Fichnter India, 2008, p. 12). Their request was approved, which is somewhat disturbing given there are over 1,000 job vacancies within the Karnataka Water Board throughout the state that the Board has been urging the government to fill since 2006 (KUWSDB flays government's move privatise water supply, 2006, para. 6).

The commissioning of the new lines and the issuing of bills in the Hubli demonstration zone exposed how many of the statements that were made to the public in order to convince them to participate in the project were at best false, and at worst deceptive. It also highlighted how despite there being a policy for the poor under the project, this has not been implemented as envisaged as the quest for financially sustainable water services takes trumps over ensuring affordable access to safe water for all citizens. Driven by commercial rather than humanitarian objectives, poor citizens are being charged connections costs, are subject to increasing tariffs, and have lost access to potable water from public taps. The billing also raised issues regarding Veolia's efficiency and accountability and highlighted that rather than being an "autonomous" service provider, which was a stated objective of

the pilot, their operations have been very dependent on public sector staff and the Project Implementation Unit.

Despite the deceptive tactics that were used to get people to sign up to the new system, as well as the multiple problems that arose during the implementation period, by 2007 the pilot was being showcased as a success by the KUIDFC, the local governments and the Project Implementation Unit. A number of delegations from international development agencies and reform-oriented bureaucrats and engineers around India have visited the demonstration zones to see how to do a 24/7 supply project (Fichtner India, 2007). KUIDFC has prepared a new consultancy for exploring the technical feasibility of extending the project to the remaining parts of the cities. The local governments where the demonstration zones are located have passed resolutions in support of extending the pilot model city-wide. Veolia has expressed interest in taking over more services. And in December of 2008, the Indian website *projectsmonitor.com* reported that:

Karnataka has privatised water supply distribution in Mysore city, making it India's biggest city water supply scheme to be handed over to the private sector, for operations and maintenance... For Karnataka, the Mysore project is an important milestone in its endeavor to improve city water supply in PPP [public private partnership] mode. Officials said that the state had a *very encouraging experience* when pilot projects of this type were taken up in Hubli-Dharwad, Gulbarga and Belgaum cities. (Pillai, 2008, para. 1 & 6)

Conclusion

Development and development interventions are often framed in technical terms (World Bank, 1990, 1991a, 2004). Drawing on earlier ethnographic work (Ferguson, 1990; Li, 2007), in Chapter Two I suggested that while this may appear to be politically neutral the process through which “rendering technical” of development takes place *is* political. I also proposed that the act of identifying and defining who is a technical development ‘expert’ simultaneously defines who is not and that it is based on acts of inclusion and exclusion. I further proposed that it is necessary to think critically about how those regarded by reformers as ‘non-experts’ are managed to comply, and what happens during the process of

market oriented reforms to the democratic voices of citizens who oppose, or are likely to oppose, free market ideology. I raised the question of whether, in the ambition for a consensus on reforms, these people and groups are excluded or coerced to consent, and if so, what form such exclusion or coercion may take. Through an examination of the KUWASIP pilot project this chapter has shed light on such issues.

Let me first consider the role of 'experts', and in particular the role of private consultants. My interest in the employment of private consultants and the deployment of their expert knowledge in development is how this intersects with, and effects, democratic process and possibility. Private consultants present themselves and are presented by their contractors as 'independent' from the politics of reform and neutral in their expert advice. However, as this narrative on the KUWASIP pilot has illuminated, rather than private consultants being independent they work in an interdependent market relationship with those who contract their services. This interdependence emerges because their contractors, in this case the World Bank and the KUIDFC, rely on private consultants to develop the detailed plans and strategies for putting policy and projects, while the consultants rely on the World Bank and others for contracting their services. Despite such interdependence the power in this relationship is not balanced. There are far more private consultants than there are contracting agencies and if consultancy firms hope to stay in the business, arguably they have to meet their contractors' expectations.

In the case of the KUWASIP pilot this entailed selecting demonstration zones, drafting changes to legislation and preparing a Contract for the privatising of water services. All of this took place without public consultation and without citizens being aware that such reforms were in the pipeline. The Contract, as I have stipulated, placed decision making power over the pilot in the hands of the KUIDFC, an agency with no direct channels of accountability to the citizens, rather than the Karnataka Water Board and the local governments. Indeed, under the Contract, the local governments and the Karnataka Water Board were obligated to facilitate and support the pilot and to accept any decisions taken by non-local state agencies. Under the Contract, also, these agencies were firmly under the

control of the KUIDFC, the contractor of the private consultant that drafted the Contract and the principle state interlocutor with the World Bank.

When and where consultation and interactions with citizens and elected representatives did take place, whether by the consultants entrusted to develop a Communication and Social Intermediation Strategy, a local NGO employed to implement the Strategy, the local Commissioner, and members of the Project Implementation Unit, this was with the objective of building demand for the reforms and to build credibility for a project that early consultations had highlighted many citizens did not want. Given the importance of the pilot for rolling out similar reforms this is perhaps not surprising but it illuminates a complete disregard for the articulated desires of local citizens and in turn their democratic aspirations and voices. This disregard was most pronounced in the way in which networks of local reform agents dealt with direct expressions of social and political opposition that stood as a threat to the pilot. A summary of the concerns which people had about the pilot, what they were told in a bid to get them to sign up or to settle opposition, and what was revealed when the new system was commissioned in the Hubli-Dhaward demonstration zones is provided in Table 5.2.

In Chapter Two I also explained how the World Bank's construction of the good governance discourse improving access to basic services for the poor rests on the extent to which the poor can demand accountability from service providers. According to the World Development Report (2004), the path to enhancing accountability necessitates decentralisation so as to raise the "political voice" of the poor, the commercialisation and privatisation of service delivery to elevate poor people's "client power", and increases in user tariffs to motivate service providers to service the poor and be accountable to their demands. The opposite has taken place in the KUWASIP pilot which was funded by the World Bank and designed in collaboration with state bureaucrats.

Rather than the pilot decentralising governance power and service delivery two counter processes took place. First, power over the pilot (and in turn governance) was centralised first in the hands of the bureaucrats within the KUIDFC and then ultimately with the state-

level committee sanctioned by the Government of Karnataka. All these state-level agents had a proven track record of working in compliance with, and commitment to, World Bank reforms. As I have already explained, under such an arrangement the roles and responsibilities of other government agencies, and the consultants and NGOs employed under the project, were defined by the World Bank and the KUIDFC, as well as being answerable and accountable to them rather than first and foremost to the citizens in the participating cities. Second, rather than devolving service delivery functions to lower tiers of government, the value of decentralisation was undermined through the out-sourcing of service delivery to a private operator that worked outside of democratic channels. What is more, although the private operator was attempting to deal with citizen complaints, the institutional arrangements of the pilot, as set out in Contract, shielded the private operator from any responsibility to have direct contact with the public.

This brings me to the question of whether the commercialisation and privatisation of service delivery and increasing user charges enhanced “client power” for the poor and improved service provider accountability. The answer would appear to be that it did not. Despite the fact that Veolia designed the billing system and issued the bills, Veolia’s Regional Manager did not believe the private operator was responsible for taking bill-related complaints and was not even aware of who households should contact if they had problem with the billing. Furthermore, poor citizens, and indeed all citizens in the demonstration zones, were hardly empowered to “vote with their feet” – a turn of phrase used by the World Bank in their 2004 World Development Report – if they were unhappy with the services, given that there were no alternative water supplies available since the old distribution network and public taps with potable water had been closed down. These were outcomes citizens were told would not occur with the commissioning of the new pipeline, as part of an apparent bid to ensure their participation in the pilot.

At the time I was doing fieldwork it was too early in the pilot to ascertain what the on-going effects the removal of public taps and tariff increases would have on the poor in Hubli-Dharwad. However, a program that had been underway in Bangalore since the year 2000 and which also required the removal of public taps and the bringing slum households in the

user pays water market sheds significant light on what the likely effects will be. The pro-poor policy that was devised for the KUWASIP pilot was based on the this program and in the following chapter I examine in detail the social, economic and political impacts of this program on the poor in Bangalore's slums.

Table 5.2 Summary of demonstration zone deception in Hubli-Dharwad

Community Concern	Official Response	The Emergent Official Practice
Public taps with surface water will be removed	Public taps will not be removed	Public taps with water stopped with commissioning of the new lines
Tariffs will increase	Tariffs will not increase	A volumetric tariff rate was approved by the Government of Karnataka in late 2007
People should have a choice between the old and new system	People will have a choice	At the time the new lines were commissioned the old lines were stopped. There was no choice and people without the new system are feeling forced to take a metered connection
People will have to pay a second connection charge	People will not have to pay an additional connection charge	People are being charged in installments through their billing. This is being done automatically without their prior consent.
Water services are being handed over to a private operator	The private operator is for a two year period after this time service will be handed back to the local government/Karnataka Water Board	The KUIDFC has issued consultancy for exploring feasibility of up scaling, Veolia has expressed an interest and the participating local governments have passed resolutions to extend services.
The project will have adverse effects on the poor who cannot afford the new service.	The project will benefit the poor and they will not have to pay more.	The KUWASIP pro-poor policy has not been adopted at local government level. The poor are subject to the same tariff structure as other classes

Chapter Six: Can We Have a Civil Consumer Slum, please...

Over the same years negotiations were underway with the World Bank to reform Karnataka's state level urban water governance and the demonstration zones in North Karnataka were being designed and implemented, efforts were also taking place to reform and privatise the public sector water utility responsible for service provision in Bangalore, the BWSSB. In this chapter I explore a small program that was undertaken by the BWSSB over the years 2000-2007 that attempted to connect nearly fifty of Bangalore's slums to user pays water services. This was the first attempt of its kind in the utility's history and the motivation for the program was primarily commercial: to reduce non-revenue water from public taps and illegal connections and to increase revenue from an expanded customer base. In some slum communities this required extending the piped network into locations previously un-serviced. In others it involved removing public taps and 'legalising' un-metered and unregistered connections. The efforts of the BWSSB have been applauded as a success, where the drive for commercial efficiency is regarded as compatible and beneficial with the needs of the poor⁵³ (ADB, 2007). On the one hand, the BWSSB gets to reduce non-revenue water from public taps and illegal connections, and in turn increase income and improve their commercial efficiency and viability. On the other hand, by being classified as 'legal' customers people in slums secure greater customer rights and the capacity to demand accountability from their service provider. Theoretically, it is a win-win situation.

This view follows one of the most striking and controversial propositions of contemporary thinking on good governance, which is that the institutional arrangements and incentives that are good for the market or the commercial efficiency of a service provider are also good for the poor. However, people in Bangalore's slums were not regarded as 'ordinary'

⁵³ The perceived accomplishment of the program can be traced largely, though not exclusively, to a study that narrowly defined "success" as the ability of the SDU to work with and through BWSSB engineers, NGOs, community groups and plumbers and the extent to which they could mobilise households in slums to sign-up to legal, user-pays water connections (Connors, 2007).

customers and transforming them into paying customers was not simply a technical matter of disconnecting public taps, installing meters, issuing bills and receipting payments. It also required conceptualising and transforming what were perceived as being highly politicised, unruly communities into de-politicised, well-behaved collectives of legal paying customers. In this chapter I argue that creating customers in the slums also entailed attempts to create 'civil-consumer' relationships between slum communities and the BWSSB, and that this was regarded as being in the best interests of the slum communities, the utility and the general community.

In Chapter Two I explained how the good governance discourse suggests that the commercialisation and de-politicisation of basic services is positively related to improving service provider accountability and securing rights for the poor (World Bank, 2004). Through a detailed exploration of the BWSSB slum program I take a critical look at this proposition. By examining the governing logic and everyday practices of crafting 'civil-consumerism' in the slums that were targeted, the discussion illustrates a number of tensions and contradictions between what the discourse promises and the outcomes of such. The chapter describes how the slum program was implemented, how communities were convinced and coerced to accept the new service model, the local contestations and resistances that arose in the process and impact of the program on poor people's water security and rights.

I commence with a brief consideration of Bangalore's contemporary political economy of water and some of the catalysts and motivations that sparked the BWSSB slum program. Some aspects of this have been discussed by Connors (2007). However, I include it here because it situates the program squarely within the shifting governance frameworks from water as a public good to water as an economic good, as well as provides an essential backdrop to the subsequent discussions. The second section explores the implementation of the slum program. It starts with a pilot project that connected three slums to the user pays distribution network over the years 2000–2002, through to the work of a new Social Development Unit (SDU) that was housed within the BWSSB from 2003–2007. The focus of this discussion is how 'civil-consumerism' was conceptualised and constructed within the

slums with the ambition of achieving financial efficiency and sustainability. This section pays particular attention to the democratic dynamics at play throughout the project's implementation. In the third section I continue to consider the political and democratic (or anti-democratic) character of the program, as well as the social, economic and political impacts of the program on individuals, households and communities. By exploring a wide range of service problems that slum households experienced after becoming legal customers and the mundane and political ways various actors attempted to resolve them, this discussion illustrates that when service providers are driven or impelled to place commercial efficiency at the top of their agenda, mainstreaming poor households into legal, paying customers does little to assure their water security and access to basic services.

Matters of Motivation

...Let's go back into history. As I said, I worked for the French [water] company Suez earlier and we developed a project for Bangalore, but that didn't happen. It was privatisation. We had suggested a whole project proposal [including an] entire strategy for how [to] service the poor when the private sector take over. Basically you disband all the public taps, the public taps are the bane of the water supply. One, you don't get proper water, women spend more time fetching water and also the Water Board loses money because nobody pays for it. Because there is no ownership of the taps the water just keeps on pissing out. So what we said was we will disband the taps, provide free connection service to all slum households and then let them start paying for it. This was taken up by the BWSSB when the Australians did a [pilot] project... (USAID representative, personal communication, 2007)

The historical period that this USAID representative is referring to are the years surrounding the new millennium: years which were both turbulent and dynamic for the BWSSB and which catapulted the utility onto a path of connecting the city's slums to the user pays network. This section briefly introduces these catalysts and how the slum was embedded within a commercially-oriented reform agenda, which, as I will argue in later sections, has worked to the detriment of many urban poor.

Commercial incentives, a master plan and a project for the poor

Over the last decades of the 20th century Bangalore experienced rapid population growth which put increasing pressure on the city's physical infrastructure and in the case of BWSSB also on water supply. Service levels steadily deteriorated and the public subsidies the utility provided to their customers declined⁵⁴. Notwithstanding population pressure, the BWSSB attempted to keep up with demand through large infrastructure projects to source additional water from the Kaveri River. They also continued to provide connections to the increasing number of domestic properties and commercial establishments, although not to citizens who reside in the city's slums. These citizens are dependent on accessing water from open wells, private vendors, better-off households, borewells and the thousands of public taps which are scattered throughout the city. By the late 1990s with an international and national water reform agenda geared toward commercial self-sufficiency of service providers, as well as an increasingly vocal middle class and corporate constituency in Bangalore, the performance of the utility was beginning to be questioned and the BWSSB was coming under increasing pressure to reform and perform. Within the political and bureaucratic hierarchy governing the state at the time the only option to be pursued was the full privatisation of the utility.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, in 2000 an MoU was signed between the BWSSB and two French water corporations for the privatisation of the utility. A small part of the MoU was for the water corporations to develop a strategy for connecting the city's slums to the formal distribution network. The USAID representative quoted above, who was working for Suez at the time of the MoU explained to me how they proposed that this would involve removing public taps in the slums and replacing them with individual, user-pays connections. Disconnecting public taps and connecting slum households to the user pays network would not only reduce non-revenue water, it would also increase revenue by expanding the paying customer base. While the commercial objectives were clear, there

⁵⁴ According to one BWSSB engineer, three decades ago people in Bangalore were supplied water 24/7, then this was reduced to the morning and evening, then once a day, and by 2007 supply was only once every 2nd or 3rd day. Furthermore, twenty years back there was a free slab of 10,000 litres per connection per month but because of the growing population, industry and apartments, water demand increased dramatically and this slab was removed.

were other incentives for connecting the city's slums. First, public taps that are located in slums have often been installed with the support of local NGOs or politicians. The willingness of politicians to support the construction of public taps takes place outside of the formal rules and regulations of the utility and is viewed in a very negative light. Hence, installing legal house service connections would reduce opportunities for 'political interference' by elected representatives. As explained in Chapter Two, in addition to arguments of efficiency, a further justification for privatising water services is to separate water services from politics and the influence of elected representatives (World Bank, 2004). Second, mainstreaming the poor into the formal network had a reputational purpose. A core concern that was raised during the water privatisation attempts of the mid 1990s was water corporations were not servicing the poor either adequately, or at all. Doing something for the poor, and more importantly, *being seen* to be doing something for the poor (whether it is in their best interests or not), is regarded as a useful strategy for diffusing public opposition to market oriented reforms. This is something I will elaborate on in the following chapter.

When I met with Karnataka's USAID representative he explained how public taps are the "bane of the water supply" because nobody pays for water that is drawn from them. In the case of Bangalore this is not entirely accurate, at least not until quite recently. For many years the Bangalore Municipal Government paid the BWSSB a fixed fee for water use from public taps. By 1997, the number of approved public taps in Bangalore was approximately 7000, but the actual number has been estimated to be anywhere between 15,000 and 21,000 (BWSSB as cited in Connors, 2007). However, as the city's population grew so did the number of public taps. By the late 1990s the local government began to default on their payments and in 2002 an official decision was taken by the local council to officially stop making payments to the BWSSB (TCE Consulting Engineers Ltd, 2004)⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ Around the same time the Bangalore Municipal Government also decided to fund the extension of the BWSSB pipe network to a number of areas that had been incorporated into the city's jurisdiction in 1995. While the extended network would provide new opportunities for the BWSSB to increase revenue, it also had the potential to create more non-revenue water if people (and particularly people in the slums) made illegal connections (Connors, 2007). In 2002, the Chairman of BWSSB and the Commissioner of the Bangalore City Corporation were both enterprising individuals who were committed to market reform. They were able to reach an agreement that they would extend services into the new wards all in one go rather than bit by bit, which would ultimately be more expensive due to doubling up on things such as road works (BWSSB Social Development Officer, personal communication, 2007).

It is questionable whether this decision would stand up to legal scrutiny. Under existing state law local governments have an obligation to ensure water for the city residents. Nevertheless, the Bangalore Municipal Government made the decision and the Urban Development Department that they report to have not objected to it, nor has not been legally challenged by citizens or citizen groups in Bangalore who politically oppose the decision. Another misnomer on public taps in Bangalore is that people in slums are their principle users. During many conversations I had with BWSSB engineers and those within the reform network over the course of fieldwork it was frequently expressed that people in slums are the primary users of public taps. However, while people in slums rely on public taps, they are certainly not the only users. Many non-slum households, as well as private businesses and the mounting number of private property developers and construction companies that have been advancing on Bangalore in the last decades also draw heavily from the thousands of public taps in the city. This is something that was duly noted during a Master planning exercise conducted by AusAID over the years 2000-2002 (AusAID, n.d.e., p. 3) but it has been quietly swept under the carpet. Indeed, in a survey that was conducted as part of the Master plan it was found that only 23% of functional public taps were located in slums (AusAID, n.d.d, p. 3). Nevertheless, in Bangalore it is principally public taps located in slum areas that are being targeted for disconnection.

The Master plan that was prepared by AusAID was for a twenty-five year period and was intended to raise the commercial efficiency of the utility and to coincide with the privatisation process. In keeping with current practice in bilateral and multilateral development assistance a small part of the master-planning exercise was focused on the poor and took the form of a two year pilot project in three of Bangalore slums. The pilot had a humanitarian dimension: to improve services for the poor in line with international development targets and through a participatory process. But it also had a commercial dimension compatible with the commercialisation and privatisation of the utility: to prove that the poor were capable, and could be made willing, to pay for water services. This was made explicit in the Master plan which states that “[f]ull cost recovery towards user charges and part or full connection charges for individual facilities are the cornerstones of the pilot design” (AusAID, n.d.e, p. v). The rationale for charging capital contributions was that if the

poor were required to make a payment toward the infrastructure costs then it would generate a “real demand” for the new services and would “build community stakes in the infrastructure created” (ibid, p. v). This in turn, was expected to establish a sense of community ownership in the assets and motivate community members to contribute to their up-keep. Transferring the cost of infrastructure onto households also meant the communities could be connected with minimal financial outlay by the utility. If the service provider did not have to outlay the full capital costs but could extend their customer base, then there would be more incentive for connecting the remainder of the city’s slums to the network, which in turn would further contribute to the commercial viability and sustainability of the BWSSB.

The justification for charging slum households user charges toward full cost recovery is based on the premise that the poor already pay a high cost for the water. These costs are both financial and non-financial such as payments to informal service providers, time spent waiting at public taps and loss of education opportunities. Because the poor are already paying it is presumed they can afford to pay. It is rationalised that being a paying customer of a formal public or private operator, the poor will be entitled to any public subsidies attached to tariff pricing, be able to demand greater accountability and that other non-financial costs will be eliminated. Thus it is good for the poor but also good for the revenue of the formal service provider. This assumed win-win situation was explicit in the Master-plan (n.d.e) which reads: “conversion of this stream of resources into formal payments to the utilities for service provision would ensure better quality of services to the poor, which will be cheaper in the long term and would also widen the tariff base for the utilities” (p. v).

The AusAID pilot achieved some of what it set out to do. The majority of households in the three slums participated in the project and agreed to pay up-front capital costs and on-going user charges. As I will outline a little later, however, the pilot did not achieve a sustainable improvement in people’s services or their relationships with the BWSSB. As explained in Chapter Four, in 2002 the privatisation process was stalled due to resistance both inside and outside the utility and the MoU was subsequently cancelled but the agenda to disconnect public taps and integrate the city’s slums to the formal network was carried forward by the

BWSSB by a newly established SDU. While this was partly due to decision of the Bangalore Municipal Government to stop paying for paying taps it was also because the AusAID pilot had proven, at least momentarily, that people in slums could be transformed into civil-consumers of the utility.

The motivation for connecting the city's slums to the user pays network was principally commercial: to reduce non-revenue water and to increase revenue by expanding the customer base. However, slum households were not perceived as your ordinary 'customer' and in the AusAID pilot and the BWSSB slum program the process was not simply technical. Transforming illegal, non-paying slums households into legal, paying customers was also about imagining and attempting to construct slums as spaces of 'civil-consumerism'. In the next section, I examine how this took shape from the AusAID pilot through to the BWSSB slum program.

Crafting a Civil-Consumer Slum

The terms 'civil-consumer' and 'civil-consumerism' will not be found in the AusAID documentation, the BWSSB files or the good governance literature. Yet the combined ideas and applications of 'civil' and 'consumer' encapsulate two prominent aspects of the good governance paradigm and the BWSSB slum program. Civil society participation in various aspects of service delivery and governance has been promoted by a variety of actors on diverse grounds such as citizen empowerment, service provider accountability, project success and cost-effectiveness (AusAID, n.d.b; Brinkerhoff, 2000; World Water Council, 2000; Winpenny, 2003; UNESCAP, n.d.). However, the virtues of constructed participation have been heavily examined and critiqued (Rahmena, 1992; Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Cornwall, 2002; Howell & Pearce, 2002; Ackerman, 2004). In this discussion I extend this critique. The discussion illustrates how because of the perceived nature of the slum various modes of 'civil' social participation were envisaged, constructed and used during the AusAID pilot and the subsequent BWSSB slum program in order to increase 'participation' rates in the legal water market. It also demonstrates how they had the effect of becoming means for governing and de-politicising water services. This is particularly apparent in the

desired and attempted exclusion of elected representatives and the suppression of direct forms of democracy by the poor who opposed the program.

Piloting civil-consumerism

A principle objective of the AusAID pilot was to demonstrate that people in slums could be made paying customers but it also had a strong emphasis on participation, or more precisely, institutionalised 'civil' participation. This took two forms. The first was soliciting (and paying) local NGOs to help mobilise the community to participate, and the second was the formation of community level user groups. Both of these were regarded as beneficial and necessary for the successful implementation of the pilot and on-going service delivery.

The project team felt that communities who were "mobilised" were relatively more capable of accessing and sustaining water services⁵⁶. However, given the timeframe for the pilot was quite short and there was no time for community mobilisation activities by the team themselves, it was deemed necessary to select slums where mobilisation efforts by local NGOs were already taking place, although not necessarily in the area of water services (AusAID, n.d.e, p. 19). In keeping with the humanitarian dimension of the pilot the selection criteria for the slums included a lack of water and sanitation services, as well as there being an already established NGO presence in the community (ibid, p. iii). There was one NGO for each community and their role was to instil a sense of ownership for the program in the minds of the community members and to help the community form and develop a Water and Sanitation Committee (WATSAN). The members of the WATSAN committees were selected by the communities themselves, however, it was stipulated by the project team that each committee must have gender balance and caste diversity.

The first prescribed task of the WATSAN committee was to act as the representative body of the community and an intermediary between the households in the slum and the project team. The committee members were required to attend meetings with the project team,

⁵⁶ The project team included a BWSSB engineer, NGO representatives, an Urban Poverty Specialist, a Social Development Specialist, a Community Development Specialist and engineers from the AusAID team (AusAID, n.d.b).

disseminate information to the community and were encouraged to take responsibility for community level decision-making. The decisions that the communities and WATSAN committees were 'empowered' to make were, however, limited to the type and quality of services such as individual or metered connections, community toilets or a waste management system (AusAID, n.d.b). These options were provided to them by the project team and their choices were constrained by a household contribution budget, which had also been pre-set by the project team (ibid). While these were somewhat important decisions they were also quite menial decisions. In the AusAID pilot, participatory decision making was fine so long as it fitted within the already defined scope and larger commercial objectives of the program: that there would be institutionalised citizen participation through WATSAN committees was a given; that there would be a financial contribution from the community was a given; and, that there would be user-pays services was a given. These were not choices available to communities. They were, as Cornwall and Gaventa (2001) have described in their work on participation in social policy, very shallow conceptions and practices of decision-making and societal participation that only permitted people to make choices from the pre-designed and pre-defined "frames of reference".

In addition to facilitating (restricted) decision-making the WATSAN committees were entrusted to convince community members that services *could not* be provided for free and that if people wanted facilities they *had to be willing to pay* for them, both in terms of capital costs and on-going service charges. This first required the project team convincing the WATSAN committees of the same. When I met with the members of one WATSAN committee in late 2007 they explained they had been taken on a site visit to a water treatment plant in a neighbouring state where they were shown the process of how river water is treated to drinking water standards. They were informed that the costs associated with this procedure was why service providers *must* charge for water. When they returned to Bangalore, they held a community meeting to share what they had learnt and to "explain to the community why they can't be given free water and why they have to pay" (WATSAN Committee, personal communication, 2007).

The third role of the WATSAN committee was to take on various management and maintenance functions of the new services within the community. During the 1980s and 1990s societal participation through strategies of co-production (either financial or in kind) came to be regarded as contributing to a virtuous cycle in state-society relationships. Not only would it reduce the financial burden on the state but also raise the efficiency and effectiveness of projects and services through the mobilisation of under-utilised resources such as money, labour and management capacity (Brinkerhoff, 2000). However, as Ackerman (2004) has stated, such co-production models of participation are principally functional and de-politicised. Seldom do they genuinely address issues of structural power between providers and users of services (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001). This is something I elaborate on later in the chapter when I explore the interactions between WATSAN committees and the BWSSB in the post-implementation phase of the program.

The AusAID pilot, both conceptually and in practice, adopted an idea of 'civil-consumerism'. NGOs were solicited to mobilise communities and WATSAN committees were established to institutionalise conforming participation amongst people in the slums. According to the WSP-SA (2006), approximately seventy percent of households across the three slums participated and became legal, paying customers of the BWSSB. However, the pilot did not achieve a sustainable outcome, institutionally or financially⁵⁷. By the time the un-sustainability of the pilot was apparent, however, the BWSSB was already up-scaling the initiative through their new Social Development Unit (SDU), which is where the discussion now turns.

Scaling-up connections, scaling-down democracy

To administer the ongoing removal of public taps in the slums the utility established a SDU made up of just one individual, a government bureaucrat who had worked as the Social Development Officer (SDO) on the AusAID pilot. Over the following four years the SDU

⁵⁷ I visited two of the communities in late 2007. In one community people had broken the meters on their shared connections because they could not afford the monthly charges and the WATSAN committee had disintegrated. In the second community water was only being supplied every few weeks and their bills were being issued months apart making it near on impossible for the households to pay.

targeted an additional forty three slums for connection. However, there were legal barriers to removal of public taps. Under the BWSSB Act (1964) the utility has a social obligation to provide the citizens of Bangalore public water and so to overcome this barrier the BWSSB Act (1964) was amended. As noted by Connors (2007):

[T]he Board amended Sections 62(c) and 85(c) making illegal connections punishable by fine and imprisonment. Public leaflets announcing this decision were distributed in slums as a way to turn heads, and in a way, to announce the coming of the SDU... the Board deleted Section 38 of the BWSSB Act, which specified how the utility could provide water through public taps subject to payment by the City Corporation. Since the city had stopped paying for public taps, the Board chose to *delete any mention at all of a public water obligation*. These amendments to the BWSSB Act gave the utility the legal platform it needed to go into communities and actually disconnect public taps. (p. 151 emphasis added)

There is no documentation that I have come across to suggest there was any public consultation on the matter. Furthermore, while the amendments to the BWSSB Act made the work of the SDU legally permissible, given the contentious nature of the program the utility has been clear to point out that *not removing public taps and illegal connections* and *not connecting the slums* to the legal user-pays network poses a threat not just to the utility's commercial sustainability but also the health of society at large⁵⁸.

The principle aim of the BWSSB slum program was to remove public taps and get metered connections into the slums and to speed up this process two things that were pivotal in the AusAID pilot were dropped during the work of the SDU. First, to encourage more households to participate, up-front investment costs and connection charges were waived so households were only required to pay the cost of the meter and plumbing. Second, the time-

⁵⁸ On the BWSSB website, where the public can access a bare-bones account of the program, it reads:

...slums are posing a major challenge to sustainable water supply and sanitation systems in the city. Inadequate or poor services to urban poor has adverse impact on both BWSSB and the general community –

- Unauthorised/illegal tap connections, which lead to loss of revenue;
- Damage the water supply system, as poorly made connections lead to leaks and contamination of water;
- Run-off of Sewage in open places, sewage discharged directly into storm-water drains, all of which lead to serious public health concerns, pose environmental hazards and portray a poor public image of the Board. (n.d.)

consuming efforts to establish WATSAN committees were discarded. The SDO did continue working with local NGOs, however, whose contribution to the program was two-fold. First, they had an important role to play in convincing households to sign up to the program because, NGOs “commanded respect from the community” (WSP-SA, 2006 p. 12). Their second purpose was more functional and included such things as compiling application forms and collecting payment for meters. According to the BWSSB website eight local NGOs were involved in the program (BWSSB, n.d.), but the extent and duration of NGO involvement was less than has been suggested. For a variety of reasons after the first couple of years many NGOs pulled out or became apathetic to the program⁵⁹. While NGOs were useful for mobilising communities to participate in the program, the SDO also expanded her facilitative base to include BWSSB service station engineers, community groups, individuals within communities, as well as local plumbers (Connors, 2007).

Unlike the AusAID pilot that had been largely insulated from the politics of water services and implemented without any major glitches (SDO, personal communication, 2007), the BWSSB slum program was contentious and political. From conversations I had with over two hundred and fifty people living in nine of the slums, including two that had been part of the AusAID project, the majority of people stated that individual connections were an improvement on public taps, however, many people were unhappy with the program on the basis of affordability. Many people also expressed to me that the state has a responsibility to provide water, and if necessary, public taps as a basic service to the poor. People in the slums wanted improvements in their water services but most were opposed, and at times vehemently so, to having their public taps removed and being subjected to a

⁵⁹ During my interviews with these NGOs in 2007 there were a number of reasons why the NGOs’ involvement in the program faltered. First, unlike the AusAID pilot, the SDU didn’t have any funds to pay the NGOs for their efforts which meant that they were not being reimbursed for their work. Second, some NGOs put up the money for connections and meters but the BWSSB did not deliver. For instance, the Bangalore branch of the international Christian NGO World Vision paid Rs 1.8 lakh for over 2,000 connections but by late 2007 these households were still without BWSSB services. In other slums individual connections had been installed with the support of NGOs but households were having serious problems with their services, such as receiving no water. Finally, at least one NGO refused to participate because they were opposed to replacing free public water in the slums with services premised on the principle of full cost recovery. This NGO went on to play a significant role in the Campaign Against Water Privatisation – Karnataka which was launched by citizen groups in late 2005 in response to the next round of efforts to privatise the BWSSB under the GBWASP. By 2006/2007 only three allied organisations were working on the program in any systematic way although a number of others, including World Vision, said that they would consider continuing to provide support – in cash or kind.

user-pays system for basic services. Slum peoples' resistance to the program was not, however, wanted by those implementing the project and getting communities to forfeit free public water in exchange for user-pays services had the potential to result in conflict, coercion and force. One BWSSB service station engineer explained to me how he dealt with community opposition:

Some communities fight against having public taps removed and they often come out in large numbers to fight against it. The people say "*We are slum people. We are poor, so why are you disconnecting government taps*". So we run away and have to come back with the Police... Sometimes we can't convince people and we have to go with the Police and disconnect public taps and regularise connections... (personal communication, 2007)

The BWSSB engineers were being rewarded for their advances in disconnecting public taps and increasing revenue collection and so there were incentives to take a hard line. This same engineer went on to explain that for a period of months his service station had the highest revenue collection in the city and how he had been given a personal note from the Chairman congratulating him on his work⁶⁰.

In another slum on the other side of town the SDO and the BWSSB service station engineers arranged with the community Sangha (community based organisation) to hold a meeting between themselves and the community so they could introduce the program. When I met with the Sangha in 2007 they told me how some community members were in favour of the program but also how many people were opposed (Sangha, personal communication, 2007). Despite the lack of community support shortly after the meeting the BWSSB went ahead removing the public taps (ibid). The members of the Sangha explained in detail what had occurred:

They [the BWSSB] removed the public taps before they gave individual connections. We fought with them. We went and met with higher authorities and Ministers regarding it but nothing happened. So the Sangha made three public taps per road but then the Water Board came and disconnected them because they need to make a profit. They removed the public taps and threw them away. After that we told people to take individual connections. We told the people whoever could pay

⁶⁰ Although Chairperson would be a more gender neutral term, the norm is to refer to the Head of the BWSSB as the Chairman, although at the time this 'note' was given a female was heading the utility.

the money, pay and for those who cannot, we told them to take an [unregistered] connection and pay later. (ibid)⁶¹

When the public taps were removed by the BWSSB, then reinstated by the Sangha, and then removed again, the members of the Sangha felt compelled to advise households to take connections. They were acutely aware that the many people did not want public taps removed and that many people in their community could not afford the cost of plumbing, meters and user tariffs. But they also knew that members of the community expected and relied on them to play an active role in ensuring services were available in the community and that their efforts at securing free public water had failed. The frustrations and struggles faced by the Sangha are telling in the experience one member shared with me:

There were Kaveri public taps but these have been removed by the BWSSB. I told them not to remove them. For six months I tried. I tried my level best to stop them from being removed but later they came and removed them anyway. That was almost one year ago now...

We knew that if we took individual connections the public taps would be removed and both the Sangha and community members fought when they were removing them. Many people here are coolies [mobile street vendors]. They are very poor. Now the public taps are not there the community people are facing problems. It is especially hard for renters who have to pay rent and electricity, now they also have to pay a water bill. This is very difficult for many people. It is the responsibility of the government to provide them with free water. (personal communication, 2007)

Such narratives bring the issue of the place of democracy in the BWSSB program to the fore. If democracy is conceptualised and understood as something more than that of liberal representation where citizens can and do engage directly and authoritatively with the state and public service providers to voice their concerns and demands (such as not having

⁶¹ In this community the Sangha had been involved in getting water services for the slum, a process that had begun long before the BWSSB slum program. They explained to me how for years their slum had public taps but in the summer months they would often receive no water and the community of approximately 2000 households had to rely on two borewell mini-tankers. When the community was facing these problems the Sangha went to the BWSSB and told them that they needed water to be supplied through the public taps. They were informed that nobody in Bangalore was receiving free water and that each household would have to pay Rs 3000-4000 for individual service connections. Households could not afford to pay this and so nothing progressed. A couple of years later the Sangha was approached by the BWSSB service station engineers and the SDU. They were again advised that people could not receive water for free, but that there was a scheme available where slum households could pay Rs 550 (the cost of a meter) and be provided with a legal connection.

public taps removed), then the experience of these two communities illustrate how at times the BWSSB slum program was deeply undemocratic⁶². Members of these communities expressed in a variety of ways that they did not want public taps to be removed and were unable to pay the financial costs associated with the program and the new services. These democratic expressions were, however, blatantly ignored. The reform agenda and the BWSSB program powered ahead regardless.

If the individual and collective democratic voices of the citizens in the slums were at times ignored and muted, when slum households engaged directly with the BWSSB a whole new set of anti-democratic tensions arose when elected representatives got involved. According to the SDO many elected representatives resisted the program, although not for the same reasons as people in slums (personal communication, 2007). In her view elected representatives opposed the program because they might lose control over a slum's water needs, which in turn could compromise the possibly of the community as a political vote-bank. On this point she informed me:

Corporators [local elected representatives] thought they had a monopoly over the poor and that they were the main benefactors [to people in slums]. Around elections they would be able to gain votes from the community [because] the poor will always say they want water and sanitation first. AusAID was not a threat but when it got scaled up it was a threat to the corporator because the people started to approach [the] BWSSB directly or go through an NGO. (personal communication, 2007)

Even when elected representatives supported the program the SDO still had an unfavourable impression of them. She explained to me how politicians only supported the program out of self-interest and the hope it would get them re-elected and how she regarded them as a disruption to the program. The SDO and her network of agents often spent long periods convincing communities to participate and pay and there were times when shortly after households had agreed to pay the corporators would "barge" in and offer to provide households with meter costs out of their allocated budgets. She believed that paying for poor people's connections out of government budgets sets a bad precedent. That is, if households receive meters for free it would contribute to a mentality amongst

⁶² These are just two examples and although it has been acknowledged that resistance to the program existed, from other accounts the process was not always as dynamic and as conflict ridden (Connors, 2007).

people in slums that they have some legitimate right to demand free water, and the provision of free water was something she strongly disagreed with. Only if households paid connection charges, meter costs and user-charges, would they appreciate the worth of their new services, acquire a sense of ownership, and therefore act as responsible consumers and customers. Her interpretation and position on elected representatives' involvement in water services has a remarkable similarity to that of the World Bank's 2004 World Development Report. There is, however, one key difference. The World Bank claims that the "poor citizens have little clout... [and] may not be able to influence politicians" (World Bank, 2004, p. 7). Alternatively, the SDO recognised (although she regarded it in a negative light), that politicians can support the poor in gaining access to water services, albeit in her view out of self-interest.

Financial support from elected representatives happened mainly in the slums where there was a weak NGO presence. This is interesting because some of the NGOs who had continued to work with the SDO on the program had a similarly negative impression of elected representatives. An employee of one NGO explained to me that "MLAs and corporators are all useless. Some of them promise land and they don't deliver so people get annoyed. Why continue voting for them? The problem is they are all the same: they all treat people in slums as vote-banks" (personal communication, 2007). I met this NGO employee in a slum that had been a part of the program and she went on to explain how "in this slum if the NGO was not here there would be no water. We were instrumental" (ibid). In this slum the NGO had installed public taps prior to the slum program and without the permission of the BWSSB but when they started working with the SDO they went back to the community and convinced them to allow the removal of public taps and to take shared metered connections instead. At the time I met this lady the slum had not been supplied with water for almost a month and while the NGO may have been "instrumental" in getting water connections into the community, there was no assurance that water actually flowed into those connections and out of people's taps. NGOs can be influential and exert pressure on service providers but their influence over state departments is less than elected representatives.

The negative comments made by this NGO employee were most likely premised on experiences where promises were made to slum communities and these promises never materialised. However, her comments give the impression that some NGO employees may think there is some competition between them and elected representatives for being a slum's "main benefactor", or possibly that NGOs can replace elected representatives in their interactions with the state and public service providers. I do not suggest this is a view held by all NGOs or all NGO employees who worked on the program. Although one thing that is common in all the projects I examine in this thesis is that local elected representatives have either been excluded or played a minimal role in their conception and implementation. On the other hand, there are always some (conforming) NGOs who are invited (and sometimes paid) to be the link between society and state and development bureaucracies.

Of the six BWSSB service station engineers I interviewed all of them stated, either explicitly or implicitly, they were not concerned who was involved in the program so long as the outcome of removing public taps and legalising connections was achieved. This sits in contrast to the findings of Connors (2007) who suggested in her study of the program that there was an antagonistic relationship between the BWSSB engineers and local politicians. While antagonism did exist in some cases, some engineers identified the antagonistic relationship as being between NGOs and politicians, with the engineers stuck in the middle. For example, one engineer told me:

When NGOs are there it is useful and when corporators are there it is useful, but when they come together they can clash. If there is cooperation between them it is good but it is hard because people want to take credit for the work. [One NGO] is making complaints against me because I work with the corporator and they say I don't cooperate with them. [The NGO] want to take the meters in and distribute them to the people but the corporator has arranged this and the finances for it. He is the elected representative. Sometimes NGOs are very smart and want to take credit. As engineers we have to study their psychology. (personal communication, 2007)

Other engineers expressed to me that elected representatives had a logical and legitimate role to perform when it came to water services to the poor. Another engineer explained:

The majority of corporators don't give illegal connections and the corporator in my area is cooperating in getting people to take meters. In a democratic system people

go to the corporator or the MLA and then they come to the BWSSB if there are problems... Of course we listen to politicians more, they are V.I.P. (personal communication, 2007)

While the desire of the SDO and some NGOs was to keep elected representatives at arm's length from water services, this went against the desire of many urban poor. Speaking to people in slums it was clear that assistance by elected representatives was appreciated by community members. Most people stated that they *wanted* their elected representatives to take responsibility for improvements in their communities, including water services. While the gesture of politicians paying connection charges and meter costs may have been to secure votes from slum dwellers, it is important to acknowledge that in a representative democracy elected representatives have a duty to support slum communities and too often government budget allocations do not reach the people they are intended or available for. Furthermore, while people were aware they were frequently treated by elected representatives as vote-banks and that many politicians only visited their slums around the time of elections, elected representatives remained important interlocutors for these communities in getting services installed, emergency water supplied, and for pressuring the BWSSB to be responsive and accountable. In contrast, other than in the AusAID slums where NGOs had been heavily immersed in the process, few people expected NGOs to take on this responsibility. Thus, although it is widely acknowledged that politicians use slums as vote-banks and this is an inherently problematic practice, it is also important to recognise many NGOs who work on issues of urban poverty they need slums to stay in business. As the manager of one NGO involved in getting water and sanitation services into the slums in Bangalore told me "I have built my whole career on the poor" (personal communication, 2007).

The dynamics of removing public taps, connecting slum households to use pays water network and crafting de-politicised civil-consumers was a dynamic political process, but far from democratic. 'Participation' from people in the slums was sought, although only in so far as it aimed to cut costs for the utility and facilitate the construction of civil, paying customers. It was regarded as functional and no more. This explains why, when WATSAN committees failed to achieve the desired result, they were abandoned. It also helps to

explain why citizen protests and direct forms of democratic engagement with service providers was dealt with harshly by BWSSB service engineers. Furthermore, while many of the NGOs involved in the program explained to me how they were working on the program in the best interests of the poor, their participation also did little to democratise the program and empower the poor. Rather, their participation was intended, and indeed played out as assisting the commodification of water services in the slums and limiting the engagement of elected representatives, even though this being something many people in slums desired.

Not only was the process of implementing the program undemocratic and disempowering for the poor, it failed to achieve the desired results, both in terms of crafting civil-consumers and raising service levels. As such, two years into the BWSSB slum program the SDO wrote a memorandum to the BWSSB management proposing an alternative model for ‘civilising’ customer relationships. I will briefly discuss this proposal before elaborating on the effects of the program on the communities and individuals that were targeted.

Streamlining service delivery – a civilising proposal

In early 2004, the SDO wrote a memorandum to the BWSSB management explaining that water supply connections were being provided in slum areas with the support of NGOs and when it was not possible to identify “suitable NGOs” she was mobilising connections with the support of BWSSB engineers and their staff (BWSSB Social Development Unit, 2004, para. 1). There was no mention of the often coercive, at times forceful, and arguably anti-democratic process of removing public taps and legalising connections. In fact, the memorandum stated “it is [comparatively] easy to mobilise connections... [but] the difficult part is to streamline service delivery and make the slum dwellers regular paying consumers of the Board” (ibid, para. 1).

The SDO was aware that households were facing a number of problems with their new services. Meters were not being supplied and installed in a timely fashion, first bills were being received months after connections were given and at times for completely wrong amounts, and water supply was irregular (ibid, para. 3). The purpose of the memorandum

was to propose a way to “streamline service delivery”. The SDO had “observed” that people in slums were “incapable of individually getting these problems solved” and that the BWSSB staff were not “adequately equipped to deal with the large slum communities directly” (ibid, para. 3). She was concerned that if these problems were left unresolved people in the slums “may become indifferent which will result in them discontinuing payment” (ibid, para. 3, emphasis in original) ⁶³. After all, the principle purpose of connecting the slums had been to improve the commercial efficiency of the utility and to raise revenue.

The memorandum did not explain why the BWSSB staff were ill-equipped to deal with slum communities directly. It only stated that people in slums are “different” from other groups of customers (ibid, para. 2). I suggest that such “difference” did not refer to the obvious, such as income and lack of land tenure, but to the politicised ways in which some people in slums were attempting to resolve the service delivery problems. People in slums would often solicit the support of elected representatives and although this was often an effective strategy for the communities, as I have already explained, the SDO regarded political “interference” as undesirable. Households also approached the local BWSSB service stations directly and often collectively and if this failed to achieve results some communities resorted to public street protests. Direct democracy in the form of public protest was not, however, always well received by the BWSSB engineers. In one community people were receiving bills but not receiving water and because they did not have the support of an elected representative felt forced to protest publicly. The BWSSB engineers reacted by (unofficially) withdrawing services from the community. A lady from this community explained to me:

We went for a strike [protest] to the BWSSB as a group. They told us that the more we strike the more they won’t give us facilities, and that the bills have to be paid. The government only blames poor people. We have been told that the Engineer has sent a letter to the [BWSSB] Chairman saying people haven’t paid the bills so don’t give new connections to this slum. (personal communication, 2007)

⁶³ The underlining in this quote, as well as others throughout this section were made by the BWSSB management after they had considered the memorandum, perhaps indicating that this comment was of particular significance to them.

To be 'civil' conveys a sense of politeness and of being well-mannered, rather than confrontational and unruly which is how people in slums can be perceived. If they make demands on the state for their rights through methods such as street protests, they can be interpreted and depicted as being over-demanding, an embarrassment on state actors. Their power is regarded as emerging from their 'mass' not by the substance of their demands. Comparable comments have been made by Coelho (2005) in her study of how engineers in Chennai's water utility perceive slum communities. She argues when slum dwellers in Chennai engaged in similar methods of collective action to secure water services they were regarded as "uncivil" by public sector engineers. In Bangalore, the SDO proposed one way to resolve the service problems, and arguably to bring some 'civility' into the dynamic relationships between the BWSSB staff and slum communities, was to solicit the support of volunteers from within the slums to act as liaisons and intermediaries between community members and the BWSSB. She offered to identify such volunteers herself and recommended that their responsibilities and duties would include:

- (a) To ensure that all households under their purview are covered either by an individual or group/shared connection.
- (b) To enable co-ordination in order that meters are received and installed on time.
- (c) To bring to the notice of and settle with the BWSSB engineers any complaints of water supply, billing errors, non receipt of bills etc.
- (d) To ensure that every household under his/her purview pays the monthly water bill regularly.
- (e) To assist the BWSSB staff in recovery of arrears, identifying and disconnecting illegal consumers. (BWSSB Social Development Unit, 2004, para. 4)

It was anticipated community volunteers would strengthen the voice of slum households *and* improve the capacity of the BWSSB staff to address service delivery problems. However, from the tasks listed it would appear the volunteers' role would be primarily aiding the BWSSB and ensuring that households were paying customers. To legitimise this contentious role, in order that "slum residents do not question [the volunteers] authority", it was recommended that they should be "officially recognised... by the Board" and that badges be issued to them to confirm this authority (ibid, para. 7, emphasis in original). The BWSSB management was supportive of the idea but did not want the BWSSB or the SDO to be responsible for identifying and supervising the volunteers. Instead, management suggested this task be given to NGOs, despite the SDO having stated that it was often not possible to

identify “suitable NGOs” and that in many of the slums there had been no active or effective involvement by NGOs in the process of mobilising communities.

The SDO’s proposal focused on establishing ‘civil’ networks between the community and the BWSSB outside formal democratic institutions and processes. Given the unenthusiastic stand of the SDO toward elected representatives it is not surprising that her suggestion for resolving service problems by-passed elected representatives. It is, however, disturbing since many communities and especially those who do not have strong community groups rely on elected representatives for strengthening their capacity to make demands on the BWSSB. Nothing came of the idea to have “badged volunteers” although as I explain in the next section, when I discuss the post-implementation effects of the program on the communities, in some slums something of its kind did take place informally.

Proud Customers with Rights?

In May of 2007, two and a half years after the Social Development Officer had written her memorandum about the service delivery problems an assessment of the BWSSB slum program was published on the ADB’s website. The assessment, which could be mistaken for a rather wordy advertisement, reads:

PROUD CUSTOMERS WITH RIGHTS

About 10,000 households in Bangalore’s slums have bought some bragging rights over the majority of the city’s urban poor. They now have water meters installed in their homes and clean, safe water flowing from their faucets. They also have become the proudest customers of the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), whose slum connection program improved their access to piped water supply and brought about a marked change in their lives.

Conceived and nurtured by the BWSSB’s Social Development Unit (SDU), a new unit established to address the social challenges of connecting the urban poor, the program offers affordable connection fees and other perks that attract even the poorest of Bangalore’s poor.

With water in their homes, slum dwellers no longer line up on the streets to get water from the public tap stands. Women and men have more time to pursue economic activities. Children, especially girls, do not have to skip school just to fulfill their daily duty of fetching water for the household. Families’ health and hygiene habits have improved. More importantly, they no longer pay water vendors’ absurd prices.

Bangalore's urban poor had only hoped, but never thought possible, that they can become legal BWSSB customers. As one satisfied resident put it, "We can claim our right and voice our concerns now that we are paying customers."

What had happened? Had the problems somehow been resolved, even without the proposed community volunteers? Two months after this appeared on the ADB website I visited a slum that had been part of the program. As I was arriving a group of around forty women were setting off to the BWSSB service station to meet the MLA and the engineer. At their invitation I accompanied them. During the meeting they explained to the officials how they had not received water for months but how households were still receiving bills. These bills were being issued months apart and for some households the amount was more than 18 months of their household income. The meeting did not resolve the billing problem but the women received assurances from the MLA and the engineer that water would be provided. Back in the community I spent some time with a lady who had been part to the meeting. She was frustrated and angry. She took me into her home and shared her experience with me...

We used to get water and bills monthly. Now we are not getting water but they tell us to pay 20,000 rupees. We are poor how will we pay if we get the bills together? We are not getting water at all. Even for food we have to pay a lot so how can we pay the water bill? When we get bills like that how can we pay? We can't pay 20,000 rupees!

We don't even have a single drop of water in our house. We are going for work and if we need to fetch water [from afar] we have to take the whole day off work. I am going for garment work, if I can't go for work I lose 100 rupees.

Wherever water goes we run there. Now this girl [she points to a young lady of about 18], she has given birth to child just 20 days ago, how will she go for water? When we go other places for water, they ask us for Rs 50 every month. In some households they don't give water. Today you and I are friends so you give water. If tomorrow we become enemies then you don't give water. In this area we go to each and every household. Like beggars we go for water.

If we go and ask [the BWSSB service station], they are asking "*have you paid the bill*". But we tell them "*if we don't get water how can we pay the bill*". Everybody has their conscience, so if we get the water we will pay the bill. You tell them to give us monthly bills! You tell them to give us water! You tell them to give the minimum charge every month! Then we will pay the bill properly.

She then leads me out of her small house so she can show me the evidence of taps that are dry.

See there [she points to a tap], it got rusty because it hasn't been used for so long. We have dug down to our hip [to improve water pressure] and still we are not getting water. We have dug so deep. See everywhere is dry. There is no water. Nobody from this land should go and cast their vote. Everybody shut down your door and go for sleeping...

At the top of the lane the MLA had come.

See, they are getting water now. (personal communication, 2007)

There is a stark contradiction between the assessment of the slum program that was presented on the ADB website and the experience of the people in this community, and the people from many other communities whom I met. Being physically connected to the piped network did not necessarily mean people were being well serviced and most were far from "proud customers with rights". In this section I dig deep into the service delivery problems and the mundane and political ways households and the BWSSB attempted to solve them. This section demonstrates that while these problems may have appeared, and at times explained away as being technical or due to resource constraints, this was often not the case. Being "legal" customers in a climate geared toward full cost recovery of services had done little to ensure water security for people in slums who are financially and politically weak.

The cost of water

The most significant objective of the slum program was to reduce non-revenue water from public taps and to expand the paying customer base. To speed up the process, after the AusAID pilot the BWSSB decided to waive connection charges as a strategy to increase connection numbers in the slums. Households would, however, still be required to pay plumbing and meter costs, which range from Rs 750 to Rs 1500. Despite this not all households have been able to afford these expenses. It has been estimated that only sixty percent of households have taken connections (Connors, 2007), yet despite forty percent of people in slums being without house service connections, public taps have been

systematically removed. People without house service connections have become dependent on borrowing, buying or begging for water from other households, or using borewell water which is often un-potable. These households are confronted with shame, monetary cost, loss of time and in some cases health risks. Even when people paid and took 'legal' connections, for a variety of reasons they have continued to face water insecurity.

In many communities there were long delays in the installation of meters due to a shortage of supply. A large number of households did not receive meters until two to three years after connections were given and once the meters were installed they received accounts for an estimated amount of water usage from the commencement date of the connection. Many of these households have been pressured to make full payment or face disconnection. I met some people who had still not received a meter some five years after they took connections. I met others who had taken a connection without authorisation and with the intention of making it legal when they were able to afford the meter and plumbing costs. Both these groups of people explained to me how because their connections were not metered or not legal they attempted to "hide" them from the BWSSB for fear they would be disconnected and they would be left without a water supply. While they feared disconnection they also felt that the BWSSB would only respond to "legal" metered customers. Their un-metered, illegal status prevented them from engaging with the BWSSB if there were problems with the services.

In the early stages of the program a number of communities also experienced major errors in the billing. In one community over a hundred households received water bills for amounts in the tens of thousands of rupees. Many were not receiving water. A copy of one of these bills is presented in Image 6.1 below. This bill shows a total amount owing of Rs 41,655. Of this Rs 34,983 is interest on arrears.

Image 6.1 Three years salary for a water bill: affordable water services?

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನೀರು ಪರಿಸ್ಕರಣಾ ಮತ್ತು ಒಳಚರಂಡಿ ಮಂಡಳಿ
BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

Sub Division Name: W-2
 Consumer I.D. and Type: 23930 Domestic
 Meter Reading Date: 18/04/2007
 Consumer Name & Address: GIRIGOWDA, 871, 7TH CROSSKANTERAVANAGAR, SLUM, Bangalore

Bill No.: W-201107040
 R.R. No.: 1107 / N122
 Last Date of Payment: 03/05/2007

DEMAND NOTICE

Present Reading: 968000
 Previous Reading: 959000
 Consumption Lts.: 9000

Particulars	Amount in Rs.
Water Charges	57.00
Meter Charges	10.00
Sanitary Charges	15.00
B.C for borewell	0.00
Other Charges	0.00
Arrears	34,983.00
Interest on Arrears	6,590.00
Total Amount	41,655.00

Pay on time and help BWSSB to serve you better.

Previous Month Payment: Rupees Forty One Thousand Six Hundred And Fifty Five Only
 Receipt No. Pay Date Amount Mode Paid at

2

Source: Author

In this slum a lady in the community had worked closely with the SDO organising metered connections after the elected representative (who had since passed away) had arranged for the distribution lines to be laid. While she was not an 'official' volunteer of the BWSSB she worked with the SDO in getting the problem resolved. Numerous meetings were held between herself, the SDO, BWSSB engineers and even with the utility Chairman. The BWSSB solution was if households paid Rs 5000 then the remainder of the account would be waived and people would be assured of water supply. Some paid, some did not but it has not mattered either way. The remaining amounts were not cleared and households continue

to be charged interest on the outstanding accounts. In the years following these meetings the BWSSB has periodically given this lady a print-out on the status of all connections in the community, including details on outstanding accounts. Having worked closely with the SDO this lady is committed to the program and with the details she is provided takes it upon herself to convince people to pay, as she explained to me:

Many of us are paying, and for those that are not paying I will get a computer copy and I will discuss the arrears list of the people who haven't paid in the local sangha. If someone doesn't pay there is a mosque here and I request them to announce that if you don't pay *all the lines* will be disconnected. To keep a little fear I will announce it in the mosque over loud speaker. (personal communication, 2007, emphasis added)

Why this lady would want to take an active role in getting households to pay and why she would lead other households in the slum to believe that services to the *whole* community would be disconnected if some people did not pay are curious questions. She explained to me how she was the person responsible for water services in the community because of her earlier interactions with the SDO and the BWSSB. Community members confirmed that she is the person they approach if they have problems with their services. Perhaps she feels that she has more influence with the BWSSB to get other problems resolved if she supports them in ensuring people pay their accounts. Interestingly though, the BWSSB service station engineer advised me that while her support is welcome, it is not required and he felt she took on this role for status and power that it gave her within the community. Furthermore, the majority of people I spoke to in the slum stated that although she works hard for the community what they really wanted was another “good” elected representative.

Ongoing user charges also posed a significant problem for many households. Like the 24/7 water supply tariff for the KUWASIP demonstration zones, the BWSSB charges on an increasing block tariff to encourage people to use water frugally and to financially penalise high water users. The virtues of such demand side management are well accepted but whether it is a major deterrent for excessive water use by well-off households is questionable. Traveling around “posh” suburbs in Bangalore one frequently sees cars being washed with hoses, and in the growing number of private apartment blocks and gated

communities around the city, large swimming pools filled with Kaveri water are not uncommon. The lowest tariff slab is a subsidised rate of Rs 73 per month for 8000 kilolitres of water and sanitary charges. I was often told by officials this was a “tariff for the poor” because it accommodates water usage of 50 lpcd for a family of five, yet all households enjoy this subsidised rate even the richest residents in Bangalore. Furthermore, as I mentioned in the previous chapter there are a number of assumptions underlying the tariff. These assumptions are:

- poor households can afford the tariff,
- poor households will be able to meet all their water requirements with 50 lpcd, and
- poor households have no more than five members.

These assumptions, however, do not always hold true. People’s water bills ranged from Rs 73 to Rs 300 per month, indicating many households were using more than the 8000 kl per month allocated under the lowest tariff slab. This was not due to excessive water use. Many households had more than five members, some were sharing water with their neighbours, and some households needed more than 50 lpcd for all their basic water requirements (drinking, cooking, bathing, domestic chores and livelihood). More than half of the people I spoke to stated that the water charges were unaffordable and created some degree of financial hardship. For many this was compounded because bills were being months apart. Households, communities and the BWSSB service stations engineers attempted to deal with issue of (un)affordability in a variety of ways.

A number of people explained to me how they borrow from money lenders and family members or having to mortgage household assets (usually a women’s jewelry) to pay their water bill. This was often an effect of the combined pressure of total household expenses such as food, water, power, education, and travel expenses and highlights how affordability of water charges cannot be seen in isolation from the combined basket of expenses that households incur, expenses which are steadily increasing as basic services and goods are increasingly subject to removal of state subsidies and market pricing. Borrowing from money lenders is a vicious cycle for the poor but some people felt forced to take on debt and

pay their water account for fear that services would be disconnected. Some people stated that their reputation as 'good customers' would be damaged if they did not pay and they were concerned this could lead to inferior service levels or not having complaints managed in a timely, effective and professional way. Not all people borrowed to pay their bills and out of necessity many households delayed making payment even though late payments accrue interest. In some of the slums the BWSSB service stations were sensitive to the financial situation of the poor and had a good rapport with the community. In these communities households could negotiate to pay the arrears and accumulating interest at agreed installments without disconnection, however, not all BWSSB service station engineers were so considerate and a variety of different routes were taken to induce people to pay.

In one very poor community in the busy centre of Bangalore shared connections had been installed during the AusAID pilot but when I spoke to community members in late 2007 I was informed that they could not afford to pay for water. People had broken the water meters in defiance and frustration with water charges that were simply unmanageable. At the time I was visiting this slum people had been experiencing a variety of health problems due to contaminated water from damaged sewerage lines. Members of the community had sought the assistance of the NGO who had been involved in the pilot to pressure officials to fix the pipes but after three months no repairs had been done. The community had not been officially punished for the destruction of the water meters but nor were officials taking any steps to fix the broken pipes. Perhaps there is a disturbing truth that in the climate of cost-recovery 'good customers', defined as those that are able to pay their service charges, get better treatment from service providers.

In another slum where the community Sangha had been compelled to support the BWSSB, a number of households were finding it too difficult to pay the accounts and this was compounded because bills were being issued months apart. Disconnection notices had been issued but some households had been unable to raise the funds and a number of the bills went unpaid. When the disconnection notices had failed to induce households to pay, the BWSSB turned to the Sangha for assistance in getting people to pay. When I met with the Sangha in late 2007 they explained:

[The BWSSB] put a notice up on the door of the Sangha saying this is the name, door number and this is how much has to be paid and that if you don't pay you will be disconnected. So we brought the people whose names had been displayed and we took them to the BWSSB and explained to the BWSSB that *"this is not **our** problem, it is **your** problem because you are giving bills 3 or 6 monthly and the amount is too much."* (personal communication, 2007, emphasis added)

Because people were receiving water intermittently and households were under threat of disconnection the Sangha negotiated with the BWSSB that the arrears and accumulating interest would be paid in installments and they would not be disconnected in the interim. In this community, like the one with the community "volunteer" threats of disconnection and non-service were coupled with embarrassment tactics to coerce people to pay. While I do not know for sure, I doubt that in apartment blocks or middle-class areas people's names and confidential details of their accounts would be posted publicly or given to the local resident welfare association to sort out. Furthermore, the community Sangha and the BWSSB community "volunteer" are trusted by the communities to act in their interests, yet were compelled or willingly complied with being the go-between the community and the BWSSB, and in transforming and maintaining slum households as 'civil-consumers' of the utility. Affordability was a major problem for many households, but it was not the only problem with the new services.

Connected but not serviced

In three quarters of the slums I studied the problem of affordability was intensified because the water pressure was very weak, or water was being supplied irregularly or not at all. Weak water pressure is a technical issue and is something that slum and non-slum households experience, however, it impacts the poor disproportionately. Unlike better-off households people in slums cannot afford electric pumps to draw more water out of the pipes. Only in one slum I visited had any households installed a power pump because of the up-front investment costs and this was a cause of community friction because it reduced how much water other households could access. Furthermore, few slum households have underground storage sumps: they require both space and money to construct. Poor water pressure, infrequent supply and no sumps means slowly and laboriously collecting water,

whenever it comes, and in whatever storage vessels are available including old bottles, pots, small drums and paint tins. These are often insufficient in volume, take up what little domestic space people have and risk water contamination. In order to stimulate water pressure many people manually, and without authorisation from the BWSSB, lower the pipe and tap so water flows quicker. However, people expressed fears that there would be consequences if the BWSSB discovered they had tampered with the pipes. These fears prevented many from contacting the BWSSB about the problem in case they might come and inspect the pipes and penalise households. Image 6.2 shows two ways people dealt with weak water pressure without contacting the BWSSB. The first image shows a man who has lowered the tap in order to stimulate water pressure, while a young lady is slowly filling up water bottles from a house that has been attached to a lower point in the pipe.

Image 6.2 Dealing with water pressure



Source: Author

In some communities people explained that they only received water once every fifteen to thirty days. I asked the service station engineers for an explanation and they advised that due to urban growth and high population densities and a shortage of water during the

summer months it was not possible to supply more regularly. The BWSSB service stations have authorisation to supply tanker water free of charge to slums, however, this usually happens only after sustained pressure from the community or at the demand of an elected representative.

In other communities people described that when they first took connections water came regularly but this only lasted for a couple of years and in one case for less than a year. In this latter slum connections had been provided with the support of a local NGO and despite not receiving water, accounts were still being issued. The BWSSB service station engineer explained to me that the slum was situated at the end of the distribution line and that rapid residential growth between the slum and the water tank had led to a large number of new water connections. Because of weak water pressure and that these new connections were located closer to the water tank they were fed by the distribution line first, leaving no water in the pipe for the slum. He also explained how he had requested that the BWSSB management waive the bills and how he had applied for funds to lay another distribution line into the slum. Waiving of the bills had not (yet) been approved and his request for infrastructure funds had been denied because the additional revenue from the slum was felt to be too small to justify the investment. Put simply, in a climate geared toward full cost recovery and financial self-sufficiency of service providers slums are not regarded as a viable investment. Images of the taps that have run dry in this community are presented in Image 6.3.

Whether targeted but not connected, or connected but not adequately serviced, one thing that many households did in the face of water insecurity was to search out alternative water sources. Often the most convenient and lowest cost alternative is water from borewells, however, this water source is not without its share of problems. Throughout Bangalore there are thousands of public taps supplied with borewell water. However, borewell water is a free source and there are no user tariffs there is little, if any, commercial incentive for the Bangalore Municipal Government or the BWSSB to ensure their upkeep and respond to complaints. As such, they are frequently out of order. In addition to maintenance issues, much of the borewell water in the city is not potable. For the poor who cannot afford to

purify borewell water through filtering or boiling, health problems are a serious risk. As I discussed in Chapter Three many people from Bangalore's slums shared with me experiences or concerns they had with using borewell water and this prompted me to conduct water quality testing of both the BWSSB water supply and the borewell sources they used when Kaveri was unavailable. The results are presented in Appendix 4 and clearly verified that while BWSSB Kaveri water met Indian National Drinking Water Standards in eight of the nine communities, borewell water failed across all. In some communities there were no borewell water taps available and people were forced to travel outside the slum if the BWSSB service was insufficient or unaffordable. These households relied on up at half a dozen alternative water sources, including public taps located outside the community, bottled water, private or public tankers, informal street vendors and better-off households. Often these water sources were of poorer quality, came with high additional costs in money and time, or were not guaranteed due to water shortages or the unwillingness of others to share private supplies or give access to public facilities.

Image 6.3 Dry Kaveri connections find new uses in some of Bangalore's slums...



Source: Author

I want to end this discussion on the BWSSB slum program where it began, with one of the AusAID pilot slums. As part of the pilot a distribution line was laid between the water tank and the slum. When households in an adjacent slum which is located closer to the water

tank became aware of the water line they began requesting services directly from the BWSSB office or through their local MLA. Given that these households could make 'illegal' connections the BWSSB obliged, however, the pipeline was too small in diameter to service both communities adequately. Over-demand resulted in under-supply and both communities suffered from an insufficient and infrequent supply.

When households in the AusAID slum started to experience a severely insufficient water supply but continued to receive bills with interest accrued, many of them stopped paying. They were not receiving water and therefore felt that they should not have to pay. Community members had approached the BWSSB individually and in groups but despite being legal customers and having paid their connection charges and monthly bills until such time as they stopped receiving a regular and sufficient supply of water, this achieved no results. Then with the assistance of the NGO who had been involved in the AusAID pilot and the WATSAN committee (the only one that was still functioning), the community held a protest on the road outside the BWSSB office. The BWSSB responded by informing them that they had to pay the outstanding bills and if they continued to protest then water would not be supplied. Under the existing BWSSB tariff structure households are required to pay the minimum monthly charge irrespective of whether they receive water once a day, once a month or not at all. It could be likened to a situation where you are waiting at the bus stop but the bus never comes yet you are still required to pay for the journey.

Customer complaints had failed, public protests had failed, but the WATSAN committee continued trying BWSSB water for their community. They had three requests for the BWSSB. First, they wanted arrears and interest for services and water not received to be waived. Second, they demanded that water be supplied every two to three days at regular timing as it had been in the two years following the AusAID pilot. Their third request was that the BWSSB lay a wider diameter water line into their community to ensure a sufficient supply of water could be provided to both communities. The service station engineers told the WATSAN committee that the minimum charges were applicable - water supply or no water supply - and only if *every* household paid their outstanding arrears then there would be guarantee of a regular water supply. They were also informed that unless *everyone* paid

the outstanding arrears that the BWSSB would not be able to afford the financial outlay for the additional infrastructure. While this was not a direct demand for the community to pay the up-front investment cost, it served as an inducement to get the WATSAN committee to support the BWSSB in getting people to pay for services they had not received. The WATSAN committee explained their frustration and the difficulty of their position with me, as well as the steps they were taking to establish regular water services for the community:

We are going and telling them (the BWSSB) to give us water properly but they say we are not paying the bill. They give us the bills months apart and whether we get water or not. The Water Board say that if you get water or not you still have to pay the minimum bill. How can we tell this to the people? We can't tell this to the people.

We have said to the Water Board that if they give us a new water line we will take the responsibility to make sure that everybody pays the bill. So that's why now, what we are doing is telling people to pay so we get a new line and then we will get water. We have told them to come and give us a copy of the receipt once they have paid so we will have a record of it. That's what the committee members are doing now... (personal communication, 2007)

Individual connections had not been disconnected for non-payment but services had more or less been stopped to the *entire* community, even those who had paid. With people desperate for water, the promise of services being re-instated was then used to induce people to pay for earlier periods when services had not been provided. In this slum, as well as the ones discussed earlier people that I spoke to felt they had more chance of having their water problems resolved through collective action or through community groups, than if they dealt with the BWSSB as individual customers. While collective action could achieve results, at least in the short term, and community organisations were able make collective negotiations with the BWSSB, they sometimes resulted in unintended and undesirable consequences as the power and authority to provide water remained firmly with the service provider.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the motivations, conceptualisation, and implementation of a program that took place in Bangalore over the years 2000-2007, which aimed to connect nearly fifty of Bangalore's slums to the user pays water network. I described how although the program had a humanitarian dimension, the principle motivation was commercial: to reduce non-revenue water through the removal of un-metered public taps and to raise revenue by introducing metered connections to households in slums. It was also explained how this was not simply technical, but rather, was imbued in local politics as those conceptualising and implementing the program attempted to transform people in slums into 'civil-consumers' of a commercial water market. The discussions in the chapter have presented a critical challenge to the claim within the good governance discourse that there is a compatible and mutually beneficial relationship between commercially-oriented reforms and the de-politicisation of water services, with greater service provider accountability and the expansion of access and rights to basic services for the poor (for example as presented in the World Bank's 2004 World Development Report).

General Comment No. 15 on the right to water, stipulates that the realisation of the right to water requires that *a person has access to a sufficient quantity of safe, affordable and acceptable water to meet their both their personal and domestic needs*. Two principles of the right to water are non-discrimination and equity and it is the responsibility and obligation of the state and their parties to respect, protect and fulfill the right (refer to Appendix 1 for details). This requires that the state refrains from any "practice or activity that denies or limits equal access to adequate water" and that the state is obliged to fulfill the right when individuals or groups are unable to "realize [the] right by the means at their disposal" (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2003, Section III. (a) 21 & (c) 25). Rather than the BWSSB slum program expanding the right to water the commercial objectives behind the program have continued, and at times intensified, water insecurity for the households and communities that were targeted.

This water insecurity manifested from a number of factors and in a variety of ways. The blanket removal of public taps in the slums left many households, and particularly the

poorest who were unable to raise the funds for meter and plumbing costs, with no easily accessible water source. Many people were unable to afford the on-going user charges, and this was compounded when bills were issued for wrong amounts or months apart. To cope with this some people attempted to reduce their water usage, others borrowed money so they could pay the bill. Some households were forced to go into arrears and face disconnection because of their poverty. Several of the slums received a fairly regular water service (every two to three days), but due to weak water pressure or the duration of supply, the quantity of water available to households was insufficient for their needs. A number of other communities only received water intermittently, sometimes weeks or months apart. Despite poor or non-service, households continued to receive water accounts with accumulated interest, while simultaneously having to find other water sources, which came with their set of financial, economic, social, health and political costs and consequences. Considering the experiences on individuals and communities, alongside the elements of the right to water (adequate, available, safe and accessible), the BWSSB slum program that aimed to mainstream poor households into the user-pays water market was regressive rather than progressive, and discriminatory rather than equitable.

Furthermore, while an objective of commercialising basic services, as well as the BWSSB slum program was to de-politicise the delivery and governance of water provision, the implementation of the program introduced a whole new set of political dynamics, which arguably were instilled with anti-democratic characteristics. My inquiry into the BWSSB slum program illuminated a number of democratic tensions and limitations that manifested over the course of the program's conceptualisation, implementation and post-implementation. First, from the AusAID pilot through to work of the SDU there were efforts by those implementing the program to establish 'civil' rather than 'political' forms of engagement by slum dwellers in their relationships with the BWSSB, whether through WATSAN committees, community groups and "badged" volunteers. While these institutionalised forms of 'civil' participation went a small way in resolving service problems, on deeper inspection they served more as localised tools of control and coercion by those implementing the program, rather than community and citizen empowerment. These individuals and community groups were generally respected by community

members and were trusted to act in the best interests of the community during their interactions with the BWSSB. For those working on the program, however, these local actors were important mediators and interlocutors for implementing and maintaining the program, and for making households well behaved customers. By “well behaved” I mean paying, as well as apolitical customers. The discussions throughout this chapter suggest that ‘civil’ participation was regarded as more desirable, and at times strategically devised by implementing agents, to weaken, limit or replace political participation.

There were two main forms of political participation and democracy that were weakened or intentionally limited during the course of the program. The first was the involvement of elected representatives in the program. There were no elected representatives on the AusAID pilot team, and while it was not possible for the SDO or some the NGOs to deny local politicians any engagement in water services, it was felt to be undesirable. Indeed, when elected representatives assisted communities to improve their water security, it was interpreted as being out of self-interest rather than responsibility or care. The reform goal of removing political interference that is nepotistic and involves bribery and corruption from delivery and governance of basic services (World Bank, 2004), is a worthy ambition. However, the poverty of this approach is that not all political interference is bad for the poor, and many communities expressed that they wanted more and not less involvement by elected representatives who had the power to pressure the BWSSB to provide services.

While the engineers that I spoke with understood the role and legitimate place for politicians and representative democracy in service delivery, they were far less tolerant and accepting of direct forms of public political participation by the community members themselves. Public protests made a spectacle of the local service stations, were unpleasant to deal with and were regarded by some engineers as power by mass and in need of controlling. While working through local agents was one way to prevent such protests, if they did occur, service station engineers had a repertoire of responses from requesting police assistance to informally stopping or suspending services. That is not to say that direct forms of democracy were not sometimes effective, but more often only resulted in short rather than long term improvements. Struggles by the poor for access to basic services,

resources and rights, *are* political struggles and democratic politics, in a variety of forms, is central to these struggles. But democracy is not always welcome, or regarded as desirable, by those with the power to reform, and for whom market relations are thought of as the most optimal way to decide how a society's resources are allocated.

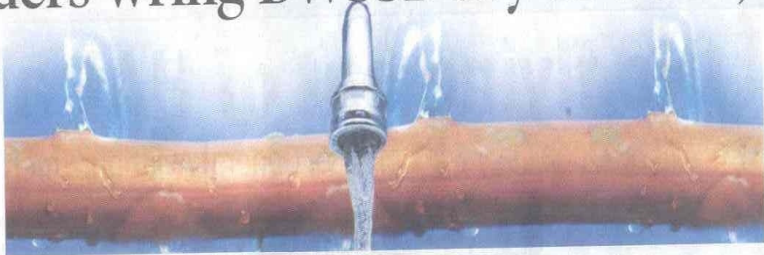
I finish this chapter with a newspaper article that was published in the Times of India, in March of 2008. In the article, which is presented in Image 6.4, people in slums were labeled as “freeloaders” and targeted as being responsible for Bangalore’s seasonal water shortages. Slum households are being threatened with jail imprisonment and hefty fines if they do not transfer from public standposts or unmetered connections to user pays services, which they have to pay a ‘regularisation’ charge for, as well as connection costs.

Box 6.4 Times of India blames slum dwellers for Bangalore’s ‘impending’ water crisis

Times of India dt. 13-3-08

Freeloaders wring BWSSB dry of water, revenue

Ashwini Y S | TNN



Bangalore: The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) does not have a clue about what happens to 315 million litres of water per day pumped from a distance of 98 km. For, 35% of the 900 MLD water being brought in to Bangalore is unaccounted for.

What's worse, unauthorized water connections are increasing by the day and the board loses a minimum of Rs 42 lakh every month as a result.

With summer round the bend, the city is likely to grapple with a shortage of drinking water as pilferage and water leaks continue unabated. But BWSSB seems to be oblivious to these problems.

BWSSB supplies 900 MLD water to 5.2 lakh households in Bangalore, which earns it a revenue of nearly Rs 35 crore every month. However, 35% of the water supplied is unaccounted for, with over 35,000 households enjoying free water.

BWSSB officials said slums in the city have unauthorized water connections — there are 400 notified slums where 20% of the population resides. The main offenders are slums at Pillanna Garden, DJ Halli, Ejipura and Neelasandra.

The minimum slab of water bill is Rs 120 per month in the domestic sector, while the maximum slab is Rs 800. Thus, the loss incurred could be anywhere between Rs 42 lakh and Rs 2.8 crore per month.

“Of the 35% of unaccounted for water, 8-12% is due to unauthorized connections. The board has been trying to regularize water connections for many years, but with little success,” said officials. Since 1993 till date, around 50,000 connections have been regularized.

Slums
Now, slum-dwellers cannot get away with unauthorized water connections. From March 1, BWSSB has been sending circulars to all slum in Bangalore, which have metered water supply. “We’re giving consumers time till April 30 to regularize their connections. If they don’t do the same within the stipulated time, a penalty of Rs 10,000 will be levied, apart from a six-month jail term,” officials added.

As per the Board Act, pilferage can lead to both penalty and imprisonment or just penalty or imprisonment depending on the nature of the case.

How to pay?
Connection charges can be paid in two instalments. You can apply for connections by enclosing hakku patras issued by the BDA, slum clearance board and BBMP, along with any proof of residence, like ration card, election identity card, identity card issued by the Karnataka Slum Clearance Board along with the application.

Gear up for water shortage
Like every year, this summer too won’t be different, for BWSSB will face trouble in getting water pumped up to Bangalore from three stations — T K Halli, Harohalli and Tatguni. 910 MLD water is supplied every alternate day. But, come April, BWSSB too will be affected if there is a power problem. About 50 cycles of power is required every second, for water to be pumped properly. “Even if it comes down by a couple of cycles, then water will not get lifted. As a result, only about 700 MLD or 800 MLD water will reach Bangalore,” said another official.

Despite BWSSB having requested KPTC to rectify this problem during summer, it hasn’t been taken into consideration. Bangalore will also face double the shortage, if Bescom fails to supply power. Lack of power supply in the city will hinder easy transfer of water from a ground-level reservoir to the other. It will become difficult to lift water during power crisis,” added the official.

However, severely affected areas will be supplied with water through tankers. This problem persists till mid-May.

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Area	Amount
Up to 600 sqft	Rs 550
600 sqft to 1,200 sqft	Rs 2,000
1,200 sqft to 2,400 sqft	Rs 2,500

The poor experience political, cultural, economic and social discrimination at many levels and such media attention further embeds into society a culture and acceptance of marginalising the poor from public resources and services. The irony is that the things that the poor are popularly blamed for - land encroachment, dirty physical environments and

now water shortages - are the very kinds of things others are responsible for and which adversely impact the poor the most. Wealthy individuals and corporates encroach on vast areas of land and under the JNNURM are being handed slum land in the name of development, slums are dirty and unhygienic because they are outside the route of public (or private) garbage collections and effective underground drainage which service the rich and middleclass areas, and if there are water 'shortages' it is people in slums who get serviced last, if at all. But blaming the poor has a purpose: it strategically facilitates and justifies removing public taps and 'mainstreaming' the poor into user-pays essential services, even if they cannot afford it or services will not be forthcoming. In Bangalore, the reality of who gets infrastructure for water services, and who gets water supplied through that infrastructure, was summed up by a BWSSB Chief Engineer who told me:

When there is a shortage of water, engineers will prefer to connect middle class and sophisticated areas. When there is a shortage of quality water, services are given to the richer areas because of the power of elected representatives there. Few engineers are motivated by the idea of the right to water for the urban poor. Forty-three slums have been connected but there is no water [supplied] because slum dwellers have limited capacity to pay. (personal communication, 2007)

Despite the adverse impacts of the slum program and in the incapacity of the poor to pay user charges, plans are underway to extend the program to a further 372 slums in the Bangalore region. These plans are dove-tailing with the Greater Bangalore Water and Sanitation Project (GBWASP), which is the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter Seven: Of Operational Significance

In December of 2007 I met Nagaveni, a young girl who lives in a small slum on the outskirts of Bangalore city. I asked about her water situation and she shared this with me:

My name is Nagaveni and I am ten years old. I have one brother and one sister. My brother is eleven and my sister is seven. We get water from borewell taps. My house is a little far from the tap and five houses catch water from there. Sometimes it is hard to get water. If water doesn't come I have to ask my neighbours for water. If they say I can take I take, if they ask for rupees I tell them "no, I can't pay please, please, please". We cannot afford to pay rupees for water. Every week I have to ask [well-off] houses for water. I have to go from that side to that side and keep asking until someone will give. It is hot and the pot is heavy and from that I get headaches. Walk, walk, walk, it takes so many hours. Sometimes the whole village [slum] doesn't get water. When water doesn't come our mouth is like pepper and we want water, water.

So many children here are getting fevers but the government does not see our village. We should not be in the world like this, why should we struggle like this? Even in the next village children are getting sick and there are problems with the water. The government sees if they have time but if they do not have time they don't see. So vicious a struggle we have for water. Without water we cannot live.

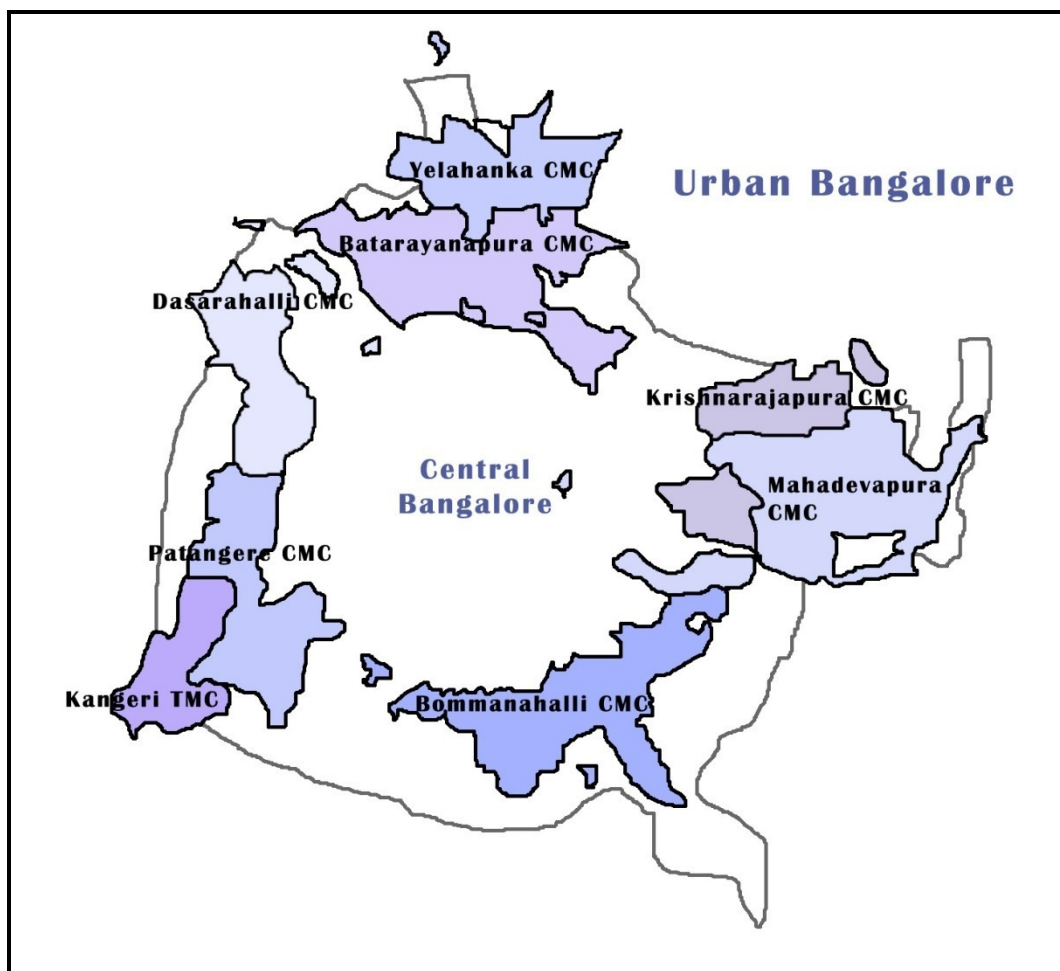
They put Kaveri [water] pipes in our village two months back. They were very big pipes. They will put taps into the house and then I won't have to go and ask for water. All the houses will get taps. Yes, we will get taps soon and then we won't have so much [of a] struggle for water⁶⁴. (personal communication, 2007)

The pipes that were laid in Nagaveni's slum were constructed as part of the Greater Bangalore Water and Sanitation Project (GBWASP), a major infrastructure project to extend underground drainage (UGD) and Kaveri water services from Bangalore into the eight surrounding local governments. Once the networks are completed significant improvements should be seen in waste management, environmental health and access to treated water.

⁶⁴ On the day I met Nagaveni and her family, her brother was very sick. He had been admitted to hospital where he stayed for almost a week but after returning home had improved little. He had not been able to eat or sit up for days and was terribly weak. It took me the remainder of the day to find a hospital that was prepared to admit the boy for treatment and further tests, which amongst other things showed severe malnutrition.

However, like the other projects I have described, the GBWASP is not simply an engineering project and about the construction of pipes for getting potable water in, and waste-water out, of the Greater Bangalore region. It is also about re-engineering and re-reforming public institutions in line with the market oriented good governance paradigm. A map of the GBWASP location is provided in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1 Location of the eight local governments where the GBWASP is being implemented



Source: Adapted from Meinhardt Consultants (n.d.)

When I met Nagaveni I was visiting slum communities in the GBWASP area to learn about their personal and shared experiences with access to water and to ascertain if the GBWASP

infrastructure was being constructed in areas occupied by the urban poor. My motivation for visiting these communities was because the original project plans had made no provision for providing services to the poor. Homeless people, as well as those living in slums, citizens like Nagaveni and her family, had been ignored and therefore excluded. Despite this, government agencies were telling me, assuring me, that the poor would be included although I was finding it difficult to get a definitive official answer about exactly how and when.

In addition to the omission of the poor in the planning of the GBWASP, in the formative period of the project citizen participation and democratic process was also absent. Citizens and many elected representatives were not consulted or informed about the reform intentions and details of the project until such time as all major decisions had been taken. Indeed, the infrastructure and reform details, as well as the process of their construction and implementation, had been designed and decided by an assemblage of state, supra-state and non-state actors who were resourcefully, cleverly and willingly coordinated by the government bureaucracy appointed to the Project Steering Committee (PSC)⁶⁵. K.P Krishnan was one of the bureaucrats leading the project and I asked him his opinion on citizen participation within the GBWASP. He told me:

A lot of the decisions were of an engineering kind and my take on this is that how you get water into Bangalore is not a matter I am going to discuss in a public audience. It is about the construction of pipes [and] a good engineer decides this... Where we were coming from with GBWASP was zero people's participation. (personal communication, 2007)

But then almost two years after the project was given government approval in 2003, the PSC took what appeared to be a radical turn. Changes were made to the funding pattern to include poor and low-income groups, a pro-poor policy was drafted, and a platform for institutionalised citizen participation was initiated.

⁶⁵ The members of the PSC are the Commissioners of the eight local governments, the Principal Secretary Urban Development Department, the Managing Director KUIDFC, the Chairman BWSSB, the Director of Municipal Administration.

This chapter explores the governance of the GBWASP and the discussion focuses on why and how citizen participation and inclusion of the poor, two things that were invisible in the original plans for the GBWASP, eventually became incorporated into the project. The chapter describes in detail the motivations and shifts from exclusion to inclusion and critically questions whether this has contributed to a more pro-poor, democratic project than was initially designed or intended. It explains how efforts to include the poor and involve citizens were not instigated from a commitment to pro-poor development and local democracy but rather, were devised as tactics for building acceptance of the project in the public domain.

The chapter begins by outlining the nature of the GBWASP reforms; what they were, what they aimed to do, who was involved and how they were designed. In the second part I describe three specific initiatives (changes to the funding pattern, a pro-poor policy and a platform for citizens' participation) that were undertaken by the PSC, in collaboration with international development agencies and a local NGO, to encourage financial participation from citizens and to build consent for the project and the pre-determined institutional reforms. This discussion explains how the pro-poor policy dovetailed and intersected with three projects that were under development by external agencies and NGOs for servicing people in slums. The GBWASP has, however, been a contested project and in the third section I explain how the reform goals were opposed from both inside and outside the BWSSB. In the concluding section I consider the GBWASP in relation to rights and democracy and sum up by pointing to a distortion in the project-level governance, where rather than citizen participation and the inclusion of the poor being regarded as necessary aspects of good governance and urban development, they were only deemed valuable and useful when they became "of operational significance" for completing the project and ushering in neo-liberal governance reforms. As Nagaveni had insightfully explained to me, "the government does not see our village... the government sees if they have time but if they do not have time, they don't see."

The Nature of the Project

The GBWASP has two primary objectives. The first objective is to extend infrastructure for UGD and water distribution into what was at the time, the eight local governments surrounding Bangalore city. The second objective is to reform the financial management and institutional governance of local governments and the BWSSB. The reform objective has two specific goals: to improve the credit worthiness and financial self-sufficiency of local governments so they are more capable of independently funding the development of essential infrastructure; and, to create efficient and sustainable water and sanitation services by making them commercially oriented, financially viable, privately managed systems. In combination, these dual goals are intended to raise efficiency in service delivery and cut public-sector costs associated with constructing, operating and managing essential public infrastructure. However, while the intention was to decentralise fiscal responsibility there was been no corresponding aim to devolve decision-making.

In Chapter Four, I briefly explained how in 2003, the KUIDFC which at the time K.P.Krishnan was the Manager of, invited USAID to prepare a Project Development Report (PDR) for the GBWASP. This PDR became the blueprint for the project. It outlined the funding pattern, possible models for service delivery and even the institutional arrangements for governing and monitoring the projects implementation. On the advice of USAID a government steering committee (the PSC) was set-up. The PSC was comprised of the Commissioners of the participating local governments and a small handful of high ranking bureaucrats in key government positions – K.P Krishnan’s team of ‘like minded’ interlocutors who were running Karnataka Urban over the years 2002-2005, and who, as I have explained could wield significant power and influence over lower ranking bureaucrats⁶⁶. The influence of USAID in promoting a mode of market-orientated governance reforms for the GBWASP in the PDR is clear, it was the Indian bureaucracy who cleverly and strategically coordinated the agents, and their money, and their “technical

⁶⁶ The extension of services into the eight local governments had been planned for some time. In 1999 the consultancy group WAPCO prepared a financial costing for the project. However, it was not carried forward at that time due to financial constraints.

expertise” that was needed brought the project to life. Indeed, the number of external agents involved in the GBWASP is quite staggering, as K.P Krishnan explained to me:

Every external agent operating in India chipped in and contributed its bit. USAID helped me with credit rating, WSP-SA funded my demand curve analysis, ADB funded my property tax reforms; and property tax reforms and water tariff reforms are indivisible. World Bank proper is funding a large part of the sanitation infrastructure. [The International Finance Corporation] did advisory on structuring the [private sector participation]. So every agency that had a presence in [Karnataka] Urban came into this project. It was a classic case of aid coordination. (personal communication, 2007)

In the following sections I describe what the financial and institutional reforms aimed to do, and how the various external agencies were coordinated in the process.

Renovating funding

The funding structure that USAID proposed in the PDR was designed to carry forward the governance reform goal of fiscal responsibility at all levels of the state. One of the USAID team members was the same individual who had worked for Suez a few years earlier and had been involved in the attempted, but failed effort to privatise the BWSSB. The financing model was based on USAID’s work in the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu and involved a complicated and still fairly experimental funding structure. Some money would be available from government grants and loans but the bulk of the finance would come from pooled market bonds and “beneficiary capital contributions” (BCC).

Immediately after the Government of Karnataka approved the project and the finance model, Krishnan held informal meetings with Commercial Banks to discuss the bond structure, including such things as interest rate, duration and financing risk. Subsequently, through a government debt fund called the “Water and Sanitation Pooled Fund Trust”, which was set up specifically for the project and is managed by KUIDFC, market bonds were borrowed from the capital market and then on-lent to the local governments. To service the debt each local government was required to transfer from their general revenues 1.5 percent times the annual debt service payments into a special Water Project Account

(Indo-USAID, 2003). According to project documents, the local governments were required to service the Water Project Account before any other local government expenses were incurred (*ibid*), and there has been criticism from citizen's groups that this could result in the local governments having to cut back routine works such as lighting and roads. There have also been concerns that local governments may have to mortgage assets in order to service the debt (CASSUM, 2006). This is something local governments have not historically had to do and raises issues of geographical and time-wise equity in terms of access to state funding for infrastructure development. Because local governments have little or no experience with market borrowing a number of "credit enhancement measures" were put in place to "increase the comfort level of investors" (Indo-USAID, 2003, p. 25). In case of default on payment, a Bond Service Fund was established to hold one year's value of debt repayment, which was financed from government funds. Furthermore, the Government of Karnataka was required to provide a commitment letter agreeing to divert state level financial support for the local governments directly to the Water and Sanitation Pooled Fund Trust in the event of any default on debt servicing. USAID also provided a guarantee of up to 50percent on the principle amount of the market borrowing under their Development Credit Authority Program although, if this was to be utilised then USAID would be compensated via the state funded Bond Service Fund (*ibid*, p. 25-26). In combination, these measures aimed to ensure that any associated risk would ultimately rest with the Government of Karnataka and not USAID or the private banks and financial institutions who issued the market bonds.

If the market bonds were to get local governments to access debt from the financial market, the BCC was about accessing finance directly from the public, and passing the cost of constructing the infrastructure immediately onto the citizens. The BCC requires those who hope to be end-users of the services to make an up-front payment toward the capital cost of the infrastructure. This was set at a rate of Rs 8,500 for domestic and Rs 17,000 for non-domestic properties. USAID estimated that over the following three years approximately 50 percent of properties (residential and non-residential, authorised and unauthorised), would make this payment and that it would amount to over a third of the total cost for the water supply infrastructure (*ibid*, p. xiii). Again, however, there were issues of equity. Like the

market bonds there were equity issues between the local governments and the core area of Bangalore where infrastructure has been constructed through government funding and people have not been required to make up-front capital contributions. Second, the simple breakdown of payments between domestic and non-domestic failed to take into account the full range of different kinds of users i.e. domestic, small businesses, corporate and institutions. Lastly, and most concerning, there was no consideration given to different levels of wealth and there was no provision in the overall financing structure for servicing low income groups and the urban poor. The omission of the poor in the PDR was later described by the PSC as an “anomaly” in the project design and while these last two inequities would eventually be addressed there is still little assurance that the poor will benefit from the project. The financing structure that was proposed and subsequently accepted by the Government of Karnataka was calculated - economically, financially and motivationally - to decentralise fiscal responsibility and debt for infrastructure development onto local governments and end-users. It did not, however, take into consideration issues of equity either between cities or citizens.

As I also explained in Chapter Four, the funding model only covered the construction of the water distribution network and finance still had to be secured for the construction of the UGD and the pipes to transport an additional 500mld of water from the Kaveri River to the GBWASP area. Locating the finances for the additional water supply was fairly straight forward. The BWSSB has a borrowing history with the JBIC and at the time GBWASP was under development negotiations were under way for a third JBIC loan to the BWSSB which included finance for the augmentation of bulk water from the Kaveri River⁶⁷. Finance for the UGD was not so simple but was eventually secured under the World Bank funded KMRP, the sister project of the KUWASIP. The KMRP loan document contained two specific loan covenants (conditions) aimed specifically at reforming the BWSSB. The first was that the BWSSB must reduce their operating ratio of the BWSSB to below 90 percent over a period of five years and the second was that the BWSSB carry out the “*appropriate measures* for the purpose of operating and maintaining the water and sewerage systems in the Greater Bangalore”(World Bank, 2006a, p. 7 emphasis added). The overarching goal of these loan

⁶⁷ The loan was effective from 31/3/2006 (JBIC, 2006)

covenants was to improve the commercial viability of BWSSB services, so that they could ultimately be handed over to a private operator.

Greater Bangalore bound to privatisation

Under existing legislation in Karnataka there is a dual mandate for the provision of water services in the GBWASP area. Under the Karnataka Municipalities Act 1964, local governments have an obligation to supply services but likewise, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board Act 1964 stipulates that the BWSSB has a responsibility to provide services to the Bangalore Metropolitan Area, which includes the eight cities covered under GBWASP. Because of this dual mandate, USAID (2003) proposed that either the BWSSB or the local governments could manage the new services. However, on the grounds that the local governments had limited technical capacity to manage and operate the new services, USAID recommended the BWSSB was the best option but given that the new services would require more staff and the utility had a government restriction on recruitment of new employees, they also suggested that rather than the BWSSB provide the services, the government might want to consider out-sourcing the management and operations to a private operator. USAID also suggested taking the opportunity of experimenting with the provision of 24/7 water supply in one of the city areas, or integrating the service delivery of the new assets with the existing infrastructure in Bangalore and then dividing the entire area into two regions so that either one or both, could be out-sourced. This suggestion called for privatising water services in the GBWASP area *and* in central Bangalore. It was the same management model that was underway in North Karnataka and that had been proposed, by the same man, in the earlier efforts to privatise the BWSSB.

The Government of Karnataka and the PSC were already thinking along similar lines and while previous attempts at privatising BWSSB had been stifled due to strong resistance from inside the utility, the GBWASP provided fertile ground to re-invigorate these efforts. This was particularly so with a government restriction on BWSSB for employing new staff, a Chief Minister determined to see neo-liberal structural adjustment take hold in the state,

and a team of bureaucrats committed to pro-market reforms⁶⁸. From the very early stages of the GBWASP, in fact even prior to the first PSC meeting, the BWSSB Chairman Vidyashankar and K.P Krishnan had already set in motion the privatisation of the new services when they made an email request to the Regional Team Leader and Lead Economist of the World Bank's WSP-SA to provide guidance on putting in place a Delegated Management Contract (PSC 2004, January). The WSP-SA was quick to respond and within just days of the request had provided Vidyashankar with a draft Terms of Reference for a privatisation transaction advisor (WSP-SA, 2004 January).

Over the next couple of months Vidyashankar entered into discussions with another arm of the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), about the possibility of them acting as a privatisation consultant. The IFC were keen to participate but were demanding a weighty fee of US \$450,000, which included a success fee of US \$250,000. Vidyashankar was committed to the reforms but was of the view that the fees were too steep and was reluctant to accept the offer (PSC 2004 March). After further negotiations however, the IFC agreed to a reduction and change in the fee structure and eventually in December of 2004 a Transaction Advisor Agreement was signed. The final total cost of the service, assuming all went as planned and a contract was put in place with a private operator, was a much lower US \$150,000, but the new fee structure came with a clause. If the BWSSB terminated the agreement and did not follow through with privatisation heavy termination fees would apply (PSC, 2005 November). As I will explain later, this penalty clause would ensure that the contract remained live for years to come, even in the face of strong public resistance and opposition from the highest level within the BWSSB. Greater Bangalore was bound to privatisation⁶⁹.

⁶⁸ The details of this I have described in chapter three but to briefly re-cap. In 1999 the Chief Minister of Karnataka, S.M. Krishna appointed bureaucrat Vidya Shanker to the position of BWSSB Chairman because of his amenability to the idea of privatising water services.

⁶⁹ The final fees to be paid to the IFC, which were to be paid from public resources for a privatisation project that citizens at this point time were not even aware of, were set as follows:

i)	On signing of the agreement	US \$25,000
ii)	On delivery of strategy report	US \$50,000
iii)	On signing of transaction documents by the Operator	US \$75,000

Termination fess to be paid to the IFC if BWSSB terminates the agreement:

i)	Termination before delivery of Strategy Report	US \$50,000
ii)	Termination after delivery of Strategy Report	US \$100,000

The IFC got straight to work, initiating a number of typical water privatisation consultancy contracts. The BWSSB Act 1964 does not permit out-sourcing management and operations so lawyers were recruited to rewrite the legislation and prepare privatisation transaction documents⁷⁰. A public relations company was recruited to prepare a convincing information and communications campaign (ibid). The IFC also dovetailed their work with the WSP-SA (ibid), who at the request of the KUIDFC, were conducting a demand assessment and willingness to pay study to determine the commercial and financial sustainability of the project. “The issue of cost recovery”, it was noted in the study Report submitted by the WSP-SA team “is closely associated with financial sustainability of the project and a study on this aspect would provide useful pointers to the nature of arrangements to enter into with the private operations and maintenance contractor” (World Bank & Org Pvt. Ltd., 2004, para. 2)⁷¹.

A willingness to pay study

The GBWASP was not a project designed or intended to service the poor. This was clear in the omission of the poor in USAID’s PDR (2003) and the subsequent Government Order that approved the project financing model (Government of Karnataka, 2003 December). When I interviewed K.P. Krishnan he explained to me how the engineering hierarchy, (but not the political hierarchy) had an ideological issue with privatising services and how “socialist India” had breed a way of thinking where continuous water supply is regarded as a luxury. In his view, the burgeoning urban areas around Bangalore were home to India’s booming Information Technology (IT) call-centres, and that up-front capital contributions, privatisation and continuous water supply made, “tremendous sense, tremendous business sense” (personal communication, 2007). His line of reasoning was that “IT types” could afford to pay the up-front capital contribution, had little faith in public service providers,

iii) Termination after signature of the transaction document US \$100,000
(PSC, 2005 November, Item No. 8)

⁷⁰ The law firm that the IFC contracted (Trilegal) was the same as one who had been the legal consultants for the KUWASIP demonstration zones.

⁷¹ According to the PSC minutes, interview records from K.P. Krishnan and the IFC, the demand assessment and willingness to pay study was conducted by WSP-SA. However, the report submitted to the KUIDFC in November 2004 was authored by the World Bank and ORD Pvt. Ltd., hence the difference between the study being referred to as a WSP-SA study while the actual in-text reference is World Bank & Org Pvt. Ltd.

and had lifestyles and work commitments where having water supplied by private operators 24/7 water supply fitted neatly into their middle-class aspirations and consumer values. The WSP-SA study showed some different results, however. It also highlighted that finding a way to incorporate the poor could go some way in making the project more palatable for the better-off classes for whom the project had originally been designed, as well as for raising the collection levels of the beneficiary capital contribution, something that was critical for the construction of the infrastructure.

As part of the WSP-SA study the research team questioned people on their feelings toward privatising the GBWASP water services. Surveys and interviews revealed that industrial enterprises, most of which have access to alternative water supplies such as rainwater harvesting, lakes and ground water, were favorable to a private operator and had little or no concern for the needs of the poor. The study also showed, and in contrast to Krishnan's view, that a large percentage of people had a strong apprehension about services being outsourced to a private operator (World Bank & Org Pvt. Ltd., 2004). This apprehension was based on two principle concerns. First, that poor households and small firms would not be treated well by a private operator. The second concern was that under private arrangements the cost of water would increase to levels higher than if the services were provided by a public sector agency. Given the choice, the majority of citizens wanted the services to remain in public hands and indicated a preference for the BWSSB over the local governments. However, privatisation was not given as a matter of public choice and rather than WSP-SA concluding that privatisation should be stopped, at least until such time as there was genuine consultation and deliberation, they predicted a "strong resistance" to the project and suggested to the committee that the necessary steps be taken to address this (ibid, 186).

WSP-SA also assessed people's willingness to pay the up-front capital contribution. Among slum households more than 70percent of people were unwilling to pay *and* that it was well beyond their capacity to pay. While it was noted in the Report that the inverse relationship between poverty and willingness to pay was predictable and to be expected, it did not recommend that the capital contribution be waived for the poor. Instead the research team

did quite a remarkable thing. Pooling together whoever they could, NGOs, representatives from CBOs, corporators and local government officials, the research team held meetings in twelve slums throughout Greater Bangalore. The purpose of the meetings was to get a signed agreement of commitment from people on various issues relating to the project, including the possibility of shared connections and payment of the up-front capital contribution. The Report that was submitted explains their process:

A slum agreement form was designed...and *printed on plain paper*. The form was designed to include willingness to pay agreements on both capital costs and monthly tariff. The agreement was also to specify the issues facing the slum dwellers in taking the decision and possible water-bill sharing arrangements that were most practicable.

A series of meetings were held in slums. Over several discussions, the [research team] explained the features of the proposed new project and the fact that the provision [was] for individual, priced and metered connections. The possibility of planning for shared, priced and metered connections for slum areas was the purpose of pursuing these meetings and [willingness to pay] agreements.

In all cases, the slum dwellers mentioned up-front that they would not sign any paper without resolving the issues of acceptability and basis of sharing, varying affordability situations, and past issues of non-performance of [local governments]. Thus, they have signed agreements with clearly stated conditions, which if agreeable with the supply agency and the operations and maintenance contractor, would *ensure that slums dwellers pay* and benefit from the project. (World Bank & ORG Pvt. Ltd., 2004, p. 187-188 emphasis added)

Nothing came of these agreements but it was a highly dubious and discriminatory process. The study had also showed that approximately 50 percent of non-slum households would not pay the BCC or had not made a decision about whether they would pay, yet the research team did not go to these people to try and get them to form an agreement signing them up to the project. I can only assume that those conducting the study considered that getting people in slums to pay the BCC and accept privatised, user-pays services would prove to be a more difficult and troublesome task than it would for other socio-economic groups *and* that people in slums, unlike other groups perhaps, would be naïve enough to sign a “plain” piece of paper.

The WSP-SA Report concluded that while a majority of households were not willing to pay the BCC, a finding that was supported by the low levels of contributions that had actually been paid by that point in time, it should not be taken as a lack of demand for the new services. On the contrary, it was suggested that this:

[M]ay have more to do with a lack of faith of the people on the government agencies. People *may* not be confident that the project will be implemented soon and the promised substantial improvement in service will actually take place. The implication is that as the project progresses and some parts of the local governments start getting the improved services, there *would* be willingness among households to pay up the capital cost contribution. (ibid, p. 150 emphasis added).

The use of the term “may” suggests this conclusion was an assumption rather than a finding based on the data collected by WSP-SA. Furthermore, if households were apprehensive that the project would not be implemented quickly then their concerns have proven to be sound. At the time I was conducting research in the GBWASP area most areas were not expected to be provided with services until sometime after 2012 and for some this will be almost a decade after they paid their up-front capital contribution⁷².

The WSP-SA Report that I read and have described contradicts many of Krishnan’s interpretations of the same study. More than half the households in the GBWASP area (including the middle class and “IT types”) were against making an up-front payment toward the capital costs of the project and the majority of people were opposed to privatisation of the new infrastructure. Instead their preference was for services to remain publicly managed and where appropriate, publicly subsidised. “Socialist India” it would seem, was regarded by many as more desirable than a minimal state, at least in relation to essential public services. The study had provided the PSC with a lot of useful data, although

⁷² The lengthy duration of the project was already known to the team though this hasn’t been publicized by the PSC, the local governments or the BWSSB. In the PDR it was noted that the project would not be complete until 2011. The main reason for this is because the GBWASP services are dependent on the construction of infrastructure for bulk water under the JBIC loan. Originally this was due for completion in 2011, however due to delays in signing the loan agreement because of concerns that the Project Management Consultant had been awarded the contract unfairly, the bulk water supply is not expected to be ready until 2012-2013. As a more immediate measure the BWSSB has conducted a small project (funded under the JNNURM) to boost the existing pumping facilities to support the augmentation of an additional 100mld. This was completed in early 2008 and as a result approximately 70 wards in the GBWASP area, selected based on the progress of the infrastructure works and location to the pumping stations, have been supplied with Kaveri water.

they would use the information selectively, taking what was useful to achieve their reform goals and leaving behind the rest.

Constructing Consent

People's perception of privatisation, the financial (in)capacity of the poor, and the problem of the non-payment of the BCC, presented some quite major challenges for the PSC and prompted them to embark on three specific strategies geared toward improving the image of the project in the public mind and in constructing consent for the proposed reforms. In this section I outline these three strategies: a change in the beneficiary capital contribution structure; a platform for citizen participation; and, a pro-policy. The discussion illustrates how these initiatives could have appeared to contribute to a more inclusive project, but that because of the motivational intent behind them and the way though which they have been developed, framed and structured, they have done little to democratise the project or make it genuinely more pro-poor.

A change in funding structure

The original beneficiary capital contribution was set at Rs 8500 for domestic properties and Rs 17,000 for commercial properties (Government of Karnataka, 2003 December). However, in response to feedback from the local governments this was adjusted shortly to take into account different categories of consumers. Rather than lowering the contribution amount, however, the amendment increased it for all types of user category, including raising the domestic contribution from Rs 8500 to Rs 10,000. It also introduced a cutoff date with significant penalty charges for late payment to encourage people to pay (Government of Karnataka, 2004 February). The penalty charge, as well as the differentiation of user categories did little to motivate people to pay and after more than a year of the change, less than one third of the desired BCC had been received. The lack of payment was something of a dilemma for the PSC given that the construction of the infrastructure depended on these payments and so based on the WSP-SA study, in February of 2005 a further, more

comprehensive re-structuring of the BCC, was approved (Government of Karnataka, 2005 February). Amongst other changes it modified the structure of the late penalty fee and reduced the capital contribution for low income groups, categorised as those households occupying properties up to 600 sq ft, from Rs 10,000 to Rs 2500. This reduced amount was, however, still well above what the WSP-SA Report had shown the urban poor were *willing* and *able* to pay.

According to the WSP-SA Report, 53 percent of households in the “Low Income Group” category were not prepared to pay a capital contribution of Rs 2500 and for slum households this was a much higher 75.7 percent. Details of such are provided in Table 7.1. Based on the minutes from the PSC meetings there are two possible reasons I can suggest for the incongruity between the WSP-SA findings and the resultant amendment to the BCC. First, there was concern amongst the PSC that because a considerable number of households fell into the lower two payment contribution slabs, a payment level any lower could have a seriously negative impact on the overall amount received (PSC, May 2005). Thus, while reducing the payment was designed to motivate more households to pay, and particularly low income households, from the perspective of project finances it was still regarded as necessary by the PSC to keep the BCC at a level that would ensure a sufficient amount of funds were received. Second, a number of the members on the PSC were of the impression that the poor were willing to pay for luxury items such as cable television, and therefore there was no reason why they would not, or could not, be capable of making a contribution toward the capital costs (*ibid*). The committee was so sure that there was a discrepancy between what poor people could genuinely afford *and* what they thought people were willing to spend their money on, the PSC requested that the Directorate of Municipal Administration immediately conduct a further study to ascertain amongst other things, the relationship between property size and cable television connections. During the course of my fieldwork I was unable to acquire a copy of this study to comment on the results.

Despite this amendment to the BCC, by the middle of 2005 many people were still not coming forward to pay the up-front capital contribution. While the lack of payment was applicable to all class and groups of people, it was particularly noted by some of the

Commissioners from the local governments, that the poor had been especially slow and reluctant. The lack of payment was proving to be very “disappointing” for the committee and in line with the assumptions made by the WSP-SA team the PSC attributed this to the public having a lack of trust in government agencies.

Table 7.1 Willingness to pay capital cost of the GBWASP among low income groups and slums

Willingness to Pay Capital Cost Contribution	Percentage of Low Income Groups (house size below 150sq feet)	Percentage of Slums
Private Connection		
Already paid	4.8	1.6
Will pay shortly	37.0	17.9
Willing to pay up to Rs 500	6.3	6.7
Willing to pay up to Rs 501-1000	8.4	5.1
Willing to pay up to Rs 1001-2000	6.3	3.2
Willing to pay up to Rs 2001-5000	4.3	4.6
Willing to pay up more than Rs 5000 but not 10,000	0.7	0.2
Shared Connection		
Willing to pay up to Rs 500	3.8	8.5
Willing to pay up to Rs 501-1999	6.6	12.4
Willing to pay Rs 2000	10.5	20.9
Not willing to pay	11.1	18.9
Total	100	100

Source: World Bank & ORG Pvt. Ltd., 2004, p. 152

The reduction in the BCC structure had been initiated to encourage more people to pay. In addition to this, and in order to rally public support for the project, the PSC embarked on two additional initiatives designed to get people’s ‘buy in’ and improve the image of the project in the public mind. These initiatives related quite specifically to payment of the BCC and the impending privatisation. The first initiative was the formation of an

institutionalised platform for citizen participation and the second, the drafting of a policy on how to service the poor. The external agencies involved in the project and who were clearly supportive of the reforms under process had so far been willing to prop up the local efforts by providing finance or technical guidance, and they were also keen to provide a financial and expert hand for these further activities. Neither of which would, however, lead to pro-poor outcomes and greater democratisation of the project, or local governance more generally.

A people's platform

The original PDR had stressed that a critical issue for implementing the proposed urban management and finance reforms would be running an “[i]ntensive and sustained public campaign for collection of one-time charges” (Indo-USAID, 2003, p. 27). On the issue of privatisation, the IFC had made similar observations. During a presentation on their Strategic Report they gave special section to the issue of “consensus building” and emphasised that a “successful and sustainable project must be based on political consensus amongst ALL of the stakeholders”. They further advised that consensus building is a lengthy process and requires an “early start” (IFC, 2005 January, emphasis in original). In the first year of the GBWASP there had been discussion within the PSC about running an Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign. This was to include setting up a help desk and producing publicity films and material to be distributed by local government staff in order to motivate people to pay the BCC, but the PSC had been slow getting it off the ground. However, with the collection of the BCC far below target, the path to privatisation well underway, and a study that had proven people’s reluctance to pay the up-front contributions as well as opposition to outsourcing the services, the PSC stepped up their efforts to convince people to financially ‘participate’ and support the project.

In May of 2005, the PSC team entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bangalore based NGO, *Janaagraha*, whose task it was to coordinate and manage an extensive IEC campaign (the MoU was titled the Participatory Local Area Capital

Expenditure, hereafter the PLACE Document)⁷³. The IEC campaign was devised by Janaagraha and the PSC and involved a number of activities including setting up a help desk, running media advertisements and holding public consultations. But the most elaborate pursuit was the intention to form an institutionalised platform for public participation through a core network of volunteers and a three-tiered structure of citizen committees. There would be a project committee in each local electoral division, another committee for each local government and at the top of the pyramid a Citizen Steering Committee. Janaagraha proposed that the committees would to be made up of elected representatives, citizens, specialists, and one urban poor. It was not stipulated how the individuals in the committees would be selected or elected, or what the specialists would be specialists in (Janaagraha, 2005b).

The PLACE Document (2005) laid out the strategy for the IEC campaign and the role of Janaagraha in bringing it to life, but also stressed that democratic decision-making and the formal participation of “user groups” is vital for the successful functioning of public services (p. 1-2). By their own definition, Janaagraha is a “citizen’s movement committed to the practice of participatory democracy” and “a platform for citizens to partner and interact effectively with government” (ibid, p. 2). Their working concept for participatory democracy is “Practical Patriotism” where instead of “electing and forgetting” citizens will “elect and engage” by holding themselves and their elected representatives accountable by volunteering a few hours a month to the improvement of their neighbourhoods and city (ibid, p. 2). The structured committees and the network of volunteers would provide the architecture for this, and it was suggested that they would provide platforms for participatory decision-making on issues such as the BCC, privatisation, service levels, and services for the poor (Janaagraha, 2005a). All the major decisions had, however, already been taken and when I spoke to Krishnan he explained to me how if the platform would have provided a mechanism for people to see and believe that the infrastructure was being constructed, and from this were motivated to pay the BCC, then institutionalised citizen participation in the project was valuable and useful. In his words, it was “of operational significance”.

⁷³ The signatories to the PLACE Document were Janaagraha, the DMA, KUIDFC, BWSSB and the Commissioners of the eight local governments.

Based on the PLACE Document, the PSC minutes, as well as Krishnan's explanation of the platform for citizen's participation, Janaagraha's job was clearly not to democratise the project. The PSC minutes which were not written for a public audience but which were accessed by the Campaign Against Water Privatisation – Karnataka (Campaign), stated that the task of the NGO was to develop a platform for “orderly and meaningful” participation *“in order to achieve the reform objectives”* (PSC Minutes, 2005, May p. 6 emphasis added). Furthermore, the PLACE Document, which also only became public through Right to Information, listed the reform objectives and even stated that the MoU would not be served until the project was complete, including extensive payment of the BCC and an operations and maintenance contract being in place. It was envisaged by the PSC and Janaagraha that the volunteers and committees, through specifically assigned tasks, would play an instrumental role in achieving this. One function of the committees was to collaborate with the state on the pre-defined reform objectives by providing “assistance to ensure efficient and timely completion of the project” (Janaagraha, 2005b). This included encouraging citizens to pay the capital contribution (PLACE Document, 2005).

The poor were not forgotten in Janaagraha's plans. It was also noted that “special discussions need to be held with the urban poor residents, and special mechanisms have to be created to facilitate their full participation in this project and to *motivate them to take connections*” (ibid p .3 emphasis added). This of course, would require motivating them to pay. On the one hand, this could be interpreted to mean that the PSC were trying to improve services for the poor. On the other hand, however, given that the poor had originally been excluded from the project, the WSP-SA study had shown the majority of the poor were unwilling or unable to pay the capital contribution it seems unlikely. Furthermore, based on the motivations of the BWSSB slum program, which was to reduce non-revenue from public taps and to increase revenue through user-pays connections, the PSC's ambition to connect the poor was more likely largely to do with concerns that the poor would take un-metered water from the new pipeline which would damage the commercial viability of the operations. For a private operator this would be a very undesirable occurrence.

In addition to collaboration with the state on advancing the reform agenda, the committees also had a responsibility to police the project and the subsequent services by monitoring illegal connections and possible pilferage of water (*ibid*, p. 3). This latter point was confirmed to me when I was speaking to an ex-corporator in the GBWASP area. He explained how he had been lead to understand that the role of Janaagraha was to provide volunteers to stand on street corners while the infrastructure works were being constructed to ensure that there was no vandalism or unlawful tapping into the pipelines.

Janaagraha offered to provide their services and “intellectual capital” to the GBWASP for free, but such an elaborate public relations exercise would not be cheap (*ibid*, p. 10-12). Given that the purpose of the IEC campaign was to contribute to the completion of the reform objectives the international development agencies who were already involved in the project were more than willing to provide the necessary financial support. One-by-one they stepped up. WSP-SA came forward to fund the communication material and street theatres that would be needed to “enroll” citizens into the committees. The production of training manuals and workshops would be paid for by the IFC and WSP-SA. The IFC also offered to provide the money for Janaagraha to develop logo designs, banners and pamphlets, and for an ‘outreach plan’ designed to market the project through advertisements and radio coverage. USAID agreed to lend their support for setting up a Help Desk (PLACE Document, 2005., Janaagraha, 2005*b*). The demonstrated commitment of Karnataka’s political and bureaucratic hierarchy to market oriented reforms was a major incentive for this additional support, as is clear from USAID’s letter of acceptance:

We take this opportunity to congratulate and appreciate the efforts of Government of Karnataka (GoK) in reforming the water and sanitation services in the state, including the proposed pilot initiatives in GBWASP.

We also appreciate your plans to facilitate information and interaction with the residents of the City Municipal Councils (urban local governments]. As part of USAID FIRE (D)’s program of technical support, we are pleased to inform you that FIRE (D) agrees in-principle to [financial] support the launch of awareness and training initiatives... to KUIDFC. (Indo-USAID, 2005, para. 1-2)

The Terms of Reference attached to USAID's congratulatory letter of acceptance offered to "support KUIDFC in meeting the objectives of the Help Desk" (USAID, 2005). The objective of the Help Desk, was not, however, specifically intended to help citizens. As noted in the PSC minutes of January 2006, and in almost the exact words as USAID's PDR, the purpose of the Help Desk was to facilitate "an intense and sustained public campaign for mobilization of public contributions" (p. 15).

In addition to creating a platform for "participatory democracy", the PLACE Document also stated that Janaagraha's involvement was to improve transparency and accountability in the implementation of the project and the subsequent services. However, it is evident from project documentation that the task assigned to Janaagraha was not to create a genuine place for democratic decision-making or make the implementation of the project more transparent and the actors involved more accountable. Even Janaagraha's own appointment as the coordinator of the IEC campaign was highly un-transparent. In a response to a Right to Information request made by the Campaign on details of the tendering process for the NGO, the official response came back stating:

[I]t is essential that an intense and sustained campaign is launched for collection of one-time contributions. Janaagraha volunteered to set up this campaign and provide help through their volunteers at no cost. Hence, there was no expenditure that was required to be incurred. Therefore, no tender notification inviting NGOs was issued. (KUIDFC, December 2005 para. 5)

Janaagraha's appointment was not simply because of their offer of free services, however. If you recall from Chapter Four, the founder of Janaagraha was one of the members of the Bangalore Agenda Task Force which introduced into Bangalore, with the blessing and sanctioning of Chief Minister S.M. Krishna, a host of public-private partnerships that aimed to make the city more efficient and corporatised. According to some bureaucrats involved in the GBWASP, Janaagraha got the job because of this man's historical involvement in the governance of Bangalore. For others, both in favour and in contention of the BATF and the role of Janaagraha within the GBWASP, it was because they were able to wield an enormous amount of power with high ranking politicians and bureaucrats. Unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to meet with the Janaagraha founder while I was in Karnataka to ask

his side of the story. After months of phoning and visiting the Janaagraha office requesting an appointment the receptionist finally informed me “we have been instructed not to discuss water with anybody or make appointments about GBWASP” (personal communication, 2007). For whatever reason Janaagraha was able to enter into a MoU with the PSC without public tendering, or whether they genuinely believed they could democratise the project, the PSC and the donors clearly saw the role of the NGO as a strategy for creating consensus and conformity for reform. This was in stark contradiction to the people’s platform being an opportunity for participatory democracy and was an incongruity that would result in Janaagraha walking out of the project. Without an NGO championing the initiative the IEC campaign came to a grinding halt. I will come to that episode of the GBWASP later in the chapter, but first to the third initiative that was devised to generate social and political contentment and consensus for reform.

A pro-poor policy

It was managing the project objective of privatising service delivery that led the PSC to initiate the drafting of a policy on how to service the poor. As I have mentioned elsewhere, the water privatisation experiments of the 1990s had led to two major challenges for reformers; creating an enabling and conducive environment for private actors and gaining either passive or active consent from the public and local elected representatives for commodifying or privatising water services. It was envisaged by the PSC that having such a policy in place would go some way in resolving these two challenges. On the one hand, having a government policy on how to service the poor was regarded as necessary for providing an operational framework that was suitable for a private operator. On the other, the WSP-SA study had highlighted that one reason for public apprehension toward PSP was concern for how the poor would be treated if the services were in the control of a private operator and thus, the policy was intended to dissuade any negative public perception toward privatisation. As the May of 2005 PSC minutes state:

In order to have a focused ‘pro poor policy’ under GBWASP, [the] BWSSB has been requested to pronounce its policy. This is all the more necessary in view of the fact that privatisation of [operations and maintenance] is envisaged under the

project and any private sector operator would seek a clear cut policy in this regard and secondly citizens would also have to be educated regarding the policy so that a positive impact is created in the minds of citizens in order to ensure that their perception towards privatisation does not get distorted. (p. 9)

It was also noted that providing services to the poor would contribute to the Government of India's commitment to the MDGs, although as I will highlight later, the commitment of the Karnataka bureaucracy to the MDGs was only to the extent of coordinating and facilitating donors and foreign NGOs to conduct projects in the slums.

With facilitating privatisation as the motivational backdrop, at the request of the PSC the Government of Karnataka swiftly issued a Government Order sanctioning a special working group to research and prepare a policy on how to service the poor, and an evaluation committee to accord its approval (Government of Karnataka, 2005 June). The working group was made up of five bureaucrats including the SDO who had worked on the AusAID pilot and the BWSSB slum program, as well as the USAID representative who had prepared the PDR which had made no provision for the poor⁷⁴. The evaluation committee was made up of market-leaning, reform-oriented bureaucrats in control of Karnataka Urban, most of who sat on the GBWASP steering committee. There were no elected representatives in the working group or the evaluation committee, and there were no spokespersons from NGOs, CBOs, or the citizenry more generally. Those entrusted with drafting and approving a pro-poor policy were part of a network of like-minded individuals who were actively involved in commodifying water in slums or privatising water services in Karnataka. Not only were the people assigned to the policy of a particular ideological leaning, the process of researching, consulting and drafting of the policy was stringently controlled by both the bureaucracy in charge and the team assigned to prepare the policy. In an interview with the USAID representative, who described himself to me as the "organiser of the policy", he shared his experience of the preparation and politics of the policy:

OK, what happened when I started was that I prepared a strategy. Part of the strategy was that we prepare a draft with due consultation with everybody; civil

⁷⁴ The remaining members were KUIDFC's Social Development Officer, a Project Officer and the Joint Director of the Department of Municipal Administration Bangalore, and a Project Officer from one of the local governments where GBWASP was being implemented.

society, utilities, municipalities. We will do a base draft, hold a workshop and call everybody in Bangalore, put it to them and let them discuss the draft. And once they say yes we will send it to the government. This is what I proposed. (personal communication, 2007)

The PSC were not enthusiastic about his idea, however. He goes on to explain:

...but when I put this forward [to the committee] as a strategy, they said “that’s all fine but if you put it to a workshop it will be a no starter, it will go on forever. There will always be somebody who isn’t happy, so what you do is you first send it to us because there will be very sensitive statements in it. Saying we will provide water for all is a very bold statement which is also going to be a very expensive statement and once you make that in the public the government won’t be able to go back on it. So first you give us the draft and we should agree if we are capable enough to implement the policy. Once we agree then you put it to the public”. They don’t approve it, they just initially agree. This is the way. That was a fair judgment. (ibid)

If the desire of the PSC to have no public discussion was so that the government could shirk their responsibility of committing to providing water for every citizen, especially those who cannot afford to pay, it was one that arguably would not stand up to legal scrutiny⁷⁵. What is more, if the USAID representative had genuinely seen value in public consultation, at the advice and instruction of the PSC he was quick to change his view on its importance. Given the depth of involvement by USAID in the project, and the PSC’s willingness to support a platform for citizen participation, albeit with democratically corrupt intentions, it is tough to accept that if the USAID representative had been committed to public consultation that he would not have been able to convince the PSC to accept the strategy he proposed. He did not give up entirely on consultation though. He continues...

I never involved people. I only talked to people who did it, who had experience in it, and I talked to people who were doing it elsewhere in the country and the world. I did have great access to Suez – Africa and the poorest of the poor cities. In the case of Bangalore, the problem in Bangalore was we only spoke to people involved not all the people... So I did consult with people, me and the [BWSSB] SDO. We went around and she knew all the people who worked with her earlier on the AusAID project and we called all those people and had interactions. We didn’t go for a big consultation, we did it on a one-to-one basis...

⁷⁵ In Article 21 under fundamental rights in the Constitution of India people are entitled to “right to life”, the GoI has committed to the MDGs, and legislation in Karnataka clearly stipulates that the local governments (or in the case of Bangalore also BWSSB), have an obligation and responsibility to provide water to the citizens (Constitution of India, KMC Act, KM Act, BWSSB Act)

So that's how it was done, you can ask and somebody might blame that it was not democratically done. That was not possible. There is no end for consultation. (ibid)

The directive of the PSC not to hold a public workshop and the working group's selective process of consultation guaranteed that alternative and potentially contradictory viewpoints were kept at arm's length. The result was that the final draft was a 'policy of consensus' in that it conformed to the market oriented water governance practices and principles already under construction in the state. This was particularly apparent in its replication of the Urban Drinking Water and Sanitation Policy that K.P. Krishnan had written three years earlier as a front-loaded conditionality for the World Bank funded KUWASIP. The following reading of the draft pro-poor policy alongside the Krishnan's Policy illustrates this point clearly.

The introduction of the pro-poor policy begins:

*Good quality reliable drinking water supply and sanitation are essential basic needs of every citizen. It has been the endeavor of successive governments of Karnataka to satisfy this need for all its citizens.*⁷⁶ (para. 2)

And Krishnan's Policy:

Good quality reliable drinking water supply and sanitation are essential basic needs of every citizen. It has been the endeavor of successive governments of Karnataka to satisfy this need for all its citizens. (para. 1)

The pro-poor policy continues...

The Karnataka Urban Drinking Water and Sanitation Policy, framed in 2002 clearly states that the objective of the State-Govt is *to provide all residents of urban areas of the State piped water supply and sanitation services at or near their dwellings. The efforts of the Government of Karnataka and its partner agencies will be to ensure universal coverage of water and sanitation services that people want and are willing to pay for and ensure a minimum level of service to all citizens.* (para. 2)

And again the Policy that Krishnan prepared:

⁷⁶ Emphasis has been added to these quotations to highlight where the wording of the draft pro-poor policy (2006) is an exact copy of the Karnataka State Urban Drinking Water and Sanitation Policy (2003).

The Government of Karnataka... will continue and strengthen its efforts *to provide all residents of urban areas of the State, piped water supply and sanitation services at or near their dwellings...*

The efforts of the Government of Karnataka and its partner agencies will be to

- *Ensure universal coverage of water and sanitation services that people want and are willing to pay for and*
- *To do so in a manner that preserves the sustainability of the precious water resources of the State, protects and enhances the commercial and economical sustainability of the operations at the same time.*
- *Ensure a minimum level of service to all citizens. (para.3)*

If the introduction of the pro-poor policy was an almost mirror reflection of Krishnan's Policy, the recommendations closely replicated the AusAID pilot and the BWSSB slum program. Amongst other things this included using NGOs and CBOs as social intermediaries to convince slum dwellers to accept the reforms, charging a minimum fee irrespective of whether water is supplied, training engineers on how to be responsive and sensitive to slum communities rather than instituting enforceable accountability mechanisms, and being lenient of land tenure to ensure more slum households could be brought into the user-pays system (Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board, 2006, June). The resemblance to Krishnan's Policy and the AusAID project is not surprising given that the PSC had guided the working group on the final content of the policy, both Krishnan and the BWSSB Chairman were appointed to the evaluation committee, and that it was the SDO of the BWSSB who had identified the people to consult with.

The Government Order that sanctioned the working group had listed by name the individuals approved by the Government of Karnataka to be part of the working group (Government of Karnataka, 2005, June). However, the final writing of the policy was not done by any member of the working group but by an American PhD student who had been requested by USAID to lend her support. The name of the researcher is not present in any documentation relating to the policy and therefore her involvement is largely anonymous, despite it being a public policy of particular social importance⁷⁷. I asked the USAID representative why he brought this person in to write the final draft of the policy and he

⁷⁷ My purpose for including reference to this researcher is because it exemplifies the point I made in Chapter 2 about how it is possible for foreign researchers to gain more political rights (such as the construction of public policy) than many Indian citizens.

replied “Well, I am USAID and she is American”. Of course there are hundreds of millions of Americans so this was not the only reason. As part of her doctoral research this person had been working closely with the SDO documenting the experience of the utilities activities in the slums and had made some fairly positive conclusions both about the personnel involved and the pro-poor nature of the program. In fact, in the same month that the BWSSB submitted to the KUIDFC the cabinet note of the draft policy, WSP-SA put out a field note, co-authored by this same researcher that described the “pro-poor” and “participatory” approach of AusAID and the BWSSB. The field note, which poignantly was (un-independently) peer-reviewed by the SDO states:

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board began experimenting with service delivery in slums in 2000. Over the next five years, its newly created in-house Social Development Unit mobilized 46 poor communities, approximately 10 percent of the city’s slums, of which more than half have successfully connected to the BWSSB network and continue to be served with water, receive bills, and make payments.

BWSSB managed to significantly increase access for the poor to piped water supply while committing to good management and cost recovery. Its slum program is slowly but surely being scaled up and provides an important model for pro-poor utility reform in other cities. (WSP-SA, 2006 p. 1-2)

The positive coverage of the program and the duplication of the principles and practices of the AusAID pilot and the work of the BWSSB Social Development Unit in the final draft of the policy is somewhat disturbing. First, because as the previous chapter has shown, from my own time spent talking with slum communities, it is apparent that the program has many negative impacts on the water security of households, that were targeted, many of whom continue to face serious financial, social and political crises with their water supply. Second, it was known to many of the actors in the working group and the evaluation committee that there no official evaluation of the program had been conducted and therefore, there was no sound reason to assume that the model was effective, at least from a pro-poor perspective. As a private consultant’s report that was submitted to KUIDFC in 2005, more than a year before the pro-policy was completed noted:

There is no documentation of the experiences of these programmes with regard to implementation evaluation and impact assessment. During a meeting with the

Additional Chief Engineer and Sociologist (Social Development Officer) of BWSSB it was reported that the AusAid programme has neither been evaluated or assessed for its impact at the end of its completion. There were no internal or external evaluations done. The only documentation available is about the design of the AusAid pilot proposal (Samaj Vikas Development Support Organisation, 2005, January p. 27).

The parallels between the policy for servicing the poor, the BWSSB slum program, and Krishnan's Policy are arresting. But given the individuals involved, the selective method of consultation, and the process through which the policy was written this is not surprising. It illustrates, however, how the control of policy making space by networks of individuals who work within a 'politics of consensus' and have the power to deny democratic process can result in what are arguably flawed projects being reflected in future policy, and the principles of what are arguably un-poor policy's being replicated in another. Given the coherence between the pro-poor policy and the reform efforts already underway in Karnataka, the evaluation committee was pleased with the final outcome and gave it their seal of approval, although for reasons that I will explain shortly, to this day it has never been approved by the Government of Karnataka.

In addition to the BWSSB's unevaluated efforts of commercialising water in the slums progressing from practice to policy, as the WSP-SA field note stated these endeavors were indeed being up scaled, which in addition to privatisation provided the final impetus and motivation for the policy.

Three projects for the poor: working on common ground

In the first couple of years of the GBWASP, three separate projects for putting user-pays water and sanitation services into Bangalore's slums were being developed. These initiatives involved a wide array of organisations which led the PSC to consider that a policy that defined the roles and responsibilities of the various actors could go some way in coordinating such efforts. In this section I describe these three initiatives and how they overlapped with each other and the GBWASP. It illustrates how despite the wide range of actors involved, the overlapping of actors, as well as the general thrust of reform the

initiatives share similar principles to each other, the AusAID pilot and the pro-poor policy. Thus, the GBWASP steering committee and the actors involved in these initiatives were already working on common ground, with or without a pro-poor policy.

The first initiative is the Cauvery Agamana project, an ambitious and direct follow-on from the BWSSB slum upgrading program which aims to put metered, user-pays water services into 362 Bangalore slums⁷⁸. The 'hardware component' of the program is being funded through the latest JBIC loan to the BWSSB, which in addition to providing the finance for the augmentation of additional bulk water includes improvements in management practices and minimising non-revenue water to improve the efficiency of BWSSB⁷⁹. The latter of these is to be achieved through *reducing* pipe leakage, *removing* public taps and *regularizing* unauthorised connections. The last two are regarded primarily as a slum problem, hence the purpose of JBIC funding the expansion of the slum program⁸⁰. Discussions for the loan began in 2003/2004 and by late 2004 special meetings were being held to discuss the slum program. The BWSSB and JBIC were accompanied in these discussions by representatives the Cities Alliance (ibid), a global coalition of major international development bodies that work with local governments to reform urban governance, create 'cities without slums' and develop sustainable financing strategies, such as those under implementation in the GBWASP (Cities Alliance, n.d. [webpage]). That Cities Alliance was party to these discussions was not unexpected. In the PDR prepared by USAID for the GBWASP it has been suggested that there could be a role for Cities Alliance if there was a program for the poor. The JBIC and USAID are two of Cities Alliance's largest members, and in 2002 the United States and Japanese Governments launched a joint initiative to provide clean water on a sustainable basis to the world's poor. The governmental and institutional connections are clear.

⁷⁸ Originally all the slums were located in Bangalore City but in final list of the slums, communities located within the Greater Bangalore, GBWASP area were also included.

⁷⁹ The 'hardware component' of the program includes the repair and installation of pipes up-to and into the slums.

⁸⁰ Though, it was also so JBIC could demonstrate to the international community and their donor partners a commitment to the MDG's.

During the meetings Cities Alliance agreed to consider a grant proposal to fund the ‘software’ component of the project. In other words, the activities required to convince slum communities to forfeit public taps in exchange for metered connections and they proposed that the project should be implemented through a third party, an Apex Agency (a lead NGO), that would be responsible for coordinating the various actors including the BWSSB, JBIC, a social development officer and local NGOs for mobilising people in slums⁸¹. The position of Apex Agency was not put out for public tendering. Rather, Cities Alliance provided the BWSSB with a list of five NGOs they thought would be suitable for the task (BWSSB, 2004). One of the NGOs had been part to the AusAID project and had continued to work with the BWSSB Social Development Officer. Another was Wateraid, a UK NGO that is partly funded by Thames Water. Janaagraha, the NGO that went on to become the public relations face of the GBWASP, was also on the list. By invitation only, the NGOs were encouraged to put in an expression of interest and only after a second round of requests did Wateraid put their hand up for the job (BWSSB, August 2005). Aware that motivating households in slums to accept user-pays water services was a long and arduous task and wanting to get the program underway, BWSSB hastily accepted Wateraid’s application (BWSSB, September 2005). With an Apex Agency approved by the BWSSB, Cities Alliance (via the World Bank - the secretariat for Cities Alliance) confirmed that they would provide US \$500 000 for activities to mobilise the communities (World Bank, 2006b). This confirmation only came, however, after the BWSSB had provided a satisfactory, albeit vague response, as to how the program was going to contribute to the MDGs *and* be financially sustainable (Cities Alliance, 2005b).

The World Bank is also involved in the second initiative to service the slums. As mentioned earlier, the World Bank funded KMRP is providing the finance for the UGD for the GBWASP and for “institutional support” to prepare the BWSSB for privatisation. A further component of the KMRP is a scheme to provide access to sanitation facilities (flush toilets) and UGD in 72 slums covering approximately 34,000 households (Samaj Vikas Development Support Organisation, January 2005). To get this scheme underway the KUIDFC contracted one of their trusted consultancy groups (the same one that prepared the Social

⁸¹ Working through an APEX agency rather than directly with the BWSSB was a condition that Cities Alliance put on their willingness to accept a grant proposal.

Intermediation and Communication Strategy for the KUWASIP demonstration zones), to prepare an Urban Poor Strategy and a Project Implementation Plan for the KMRP pro-poor sanitation scheme. A significant aspect of developing the Urban Poor Strategy was to ascertain the 'willingness' of the poor to pay for infrastructure and on-going service costs. The consultants held focus group discussions with people in the slums but the response was not compatible with the financial objectives of the project. Communities asserted their right to essential services claiming that due to their socio-economic position the local government had a responsibility to supply them with water and UGD facilities free from financial cost (ibid). While the consultant's noted this in the Urban Poor Strategy they also stressed how they had attempted to counter this claim by conveying to the people that the government does not have the funds to provide such facilities for free and that if people in slums hope to have services then they *must be willing to pay and willing to co-operate* (ibid, p. 13 emphasis added). In the Project Implementation Plan that followed up the Urban Poor Strategy, it proposed that the program should be administered through a Project Management Consultant, and in a similar vein to the Cauvery Agamana project, suggested using the aid of local NGOs to mobilise the communities to participate (Samaj Vikas Development Support Organisation, 2006).

The final initiative for the poor was instigated by the water corporation Thames Water. Over the same years the GBWASP plans were being developed Thames Water was conducting a small leak reduction pilot in the central part of Bangalore as part of an earlier JBIC loan to the BWSSB⁸². Around the same time of the leak reduction pilot and five thousand miles away from Bangalore in the United Kingdom, Thames was dreaming up a most extravagant corporate social responsibility scheme. The idea was to form a multi-sector partnership where the best know-how and experience from the business world, non-profit organisations

⁸² The as cited purpose of having an international water corporation such as Thames conduct the pilot was to 'capacity build' the BWSSB through sharing experience and technology. The story goes, that once BWSSB had been 'capacity built' by an efficient, effective and knowledgeable corporation they could then go to reduce leakages in the remaining part of the city themselves, without the need for a foreign, private company. However, in 2008, under the latest JBIC loan, international tender documents were developed to outsource the leak reduction program for the entire city to a private company who would then take on the operations and maintenance of the improved piped-lines. The disjuncture between 'capacity building' the public sector and then outsourcing their assets anyway, appears to be a common feature of Karnataka's water projects (such as the KUWASIP demonstration zones), which makes one easily sceptical that 'capacity building' is this is not the genuine intention of such programs and pilots. I have made similar observations regarding this previously.

and academic institutions could be brought together to work towards improving the poor's access to water and sanitation facilities. It was envisaged that such a partnership could make a significant contribution to the MDGs by developing sustainable service models, 'capacity building' local service providers (public or private), as well as provide a platform for the various partners to achieve their different organisational goals and ambitions. For Thames, this was boosting their corporate image in the wake of the South's collapsing private water market. To launch the initiative Thames arranged a meeting with handfuls of UK based companies, NGOs, and institutions. From this initial meeting a multi-sector partnership, the legally independent entity *Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor* (WSUP), was eventually formed⁸³

With a new corporate social responsibility initiative under their wing and a government project underway to extend water and sanitation services that had made no provision made for the poor (the GBWASP), Thames Water ran with the idea of conducting an inaugural WSUP pilot project in the slums of Greater Bangalore. The Thames Water staff based in Bangalore for the leak reduction pilot began by talking with the BWSSB and local NGOs who had been involved in the AusAID pilot but it was through their conversations with the IFC, who by this time were acting as the privatisation transaction advisor for the GBWASP, that they became known by the PSC.

WSUP proposed identifying three slums wherein they could "design effective pro poor approaches and suggest best practices and technologies to ensure provision of water and wastewater services on a sustainable basis" (PSC November, 2005). In due course, and after designing and demonstrating 'best practice' and 'sustainable services' it was envisaged that they could then extend the model into a much larger number of slums. The three-slum pilot would be fully paid for by WSUP through their own funding sources (which in the case of Bangalore was the UK governments DFID) and given that they had been in dialogue with

⁸³ The partners of WSUP are Care International UK, World Wildlife Fund, WaterAid, Water for People, Thames Water, Halcrow Group, Unilever, Borealis & Borouge & Cranfield University. The UNDP and the International Water Association are observers. Because the partners have are from various sectors and have different core business during interviews with the WSUP partners in 2007 a range of motivations for joining were as cited. These were diverse and included such things as environmental sustainability and enhancing employee opportunities.

the IFC, and that there would be no financial burden for the BWSSB or the Government of Karnataka, the PSC agreed that the pilot could offer some useful insights on how to service the poor and were prepared, in principle, to extend their support. While the PSC thought an informal acceptance would be sufficient, in April 2006, after what some have described as rather pushy behaviour from the Thames employees leading the pilot, a Government Order was issued approving WSUP's proposal and securing the NGOs position to run a pilot project in Bangalore's slums (PSC, 2006; Government of Karnataka, 2006).

The Cauvery Agamana project, the World Bank's "pro-poor" sanitation project and the WSUP pilot, share a lot in common with each other, the BWSSB slum program, the GBWASP reform goals and the pro-poor policy. The first level of commonality is geographical since all the projects are intended to be implemented, at least in part, within the GBWASP area. The second is demographic. All the projects focus on slums and there has been no effort or intent to extend the programs to other groups of urban poor including those living in residential areas outside of slums and the homeless. They also intersected in some form or another in ideology and practice, in terms of what they aimed to do and how: replacing existing free public water supplies with user pays water services; a heavy reliance of private consultants and outside experts; the employment of social development experts; using local NGOs and CBOs to mobilise the poor to participate; and, the creation of institutionalised participation through WATSAN committees like the ones I described in Chapter Six. Such ideological and practical convergence is not extraordinary given that there are also strong overlaps at the level of the individuals, organisations and institutions involved. For example, the man from USAID who prepared the PDR and the pro-poor policy is also the Cities Alliance representative in Karnataka. Wateraid, the Apex Agency for the Cities Alliance/JBIC financed Cauvery Agamana is partly funded by Thames Water and is also one of the WSUP partners. The Urban Poverty Specialist who had worked on the AusAID pilot went on to become a consultant and subsequently the project manager for the WSUP pilot. While the similarities in the initiatives may not be extraordinary, it is, however, somewhat concerning for the potential form and meaning of democracy in development interventions. Indeed, the issue of democracy within the GBWASP has been one of many

concerns that catalysed a number of individuals and citizens' groups in Bangalore to launch the Campaign Against Water Privatisation – Karnataka (hereafter the Campaign).

Oppositional politics and the persistence of reform

Despite the efforts of the PSC to generate consensus and support for the GBWASP, in late 2005 two separate yet interconnected resistances to the GBWASP emerged. The first came from an alliance of citizens and grassroots organisations, the other from within the BWSSB.

The Campaign was launched in November of 2005 in direct response to plans to privatise the operations and maintenance of the GBWASP infrastructure. The membership of the Campaign comprises of social movements, left organisations, dalit movements and CBOs and NGOs. In various ways the individuals and organisations of the Campaign were already mobilising against neo-liberal development and marginalisation of the poor, and actively pursuing a more rights-based, equitable development trajectory and as such the activities and concerns of the Campaign fed into a much larger and longer engagement with social and political activism in the state (Urs and Whittell, 2009). Before the organised Campaign was formed, a small human rights NGO that was working on slum water issues in peri-urban Bangalore accessed a copy of the PLACE Document through Right to Information. Given what the PLACE Document revealed about the reform intentions of the GBWASP this information was the catalyst for the formation of the Campaign. The short term goal of the Campaign was to prevent the impending privatisation contract and to get the state to act progressively on the right to water for the poor, including the formation of a pro-poor policy. Core to the work and activities of the Campaign, and which reflected their larger claim to inclusive, sovereign, and democratic governance and development, was raising awareness of the issues amongst the public but particularly the urban poor and elected representatives.

Shortly after the Campaign was formed they held a public consultation which the founder of Janaagraha was invited to attend and to explain the role of the NGO in the project. Just days after the consultation Janaagraha wrote to the PSC stating they were concerned with

the criticism that was emerging in the press and in public events regarding the role of the NGO in the GBWASP and they were requesting the government give “immediate attention” to the issue of how the poor would be serviced and that citizens and elected representatives be consulted in decisions about the service delivery model of the new infrastructure. Their letter of October 31, 2005 reads:

Criticism is part of the democratic process and needs to be encouraged. For our part, Janaagraha had explicitly recognised the potential criticism even during the early stages of discussion about our role in coordinating citizen participation in the project..., and we were even prepared that some of this criticism could be unwarranted and misplaced...

There is a misplaced perception that Janaagraha is supporting issues like privatisation of water which will result in poor coverage for the poor, and price hikes. We are already seeing unwarranted and substantial public criticism due to these misconceptions...

A note from the State Government providing comfort on the above topics within the next week would go a long way in allaying public sentiments. We also believe it would clear some of the misplaced public perception about Janaagraha’s position on these issues – this last fact is an important consideration for us as well look to begin our work [on the citizen participation] programme.

Despite Janaagraha’s intent to continue working on the project, within three months the NGO had withdrawn their involvement from the GBWASP completely. The withdrawal of the NGO was noted, quite simply, in the PSC minutes that Janaagraha had “disassociated themselves” from the project (PSC, May 2006). According to a press release made by Janaagraha this was because the NGO had been requesting from the government over the past year policy on how the urban poor would be covered under the GBWASP, as well as citizen consultation in decision-making about the project, but neither had been addressed (Times of India, 2006, February 2nd cited in Urs and Whittell, 2009). However, during my conversation with some bureaucrats at the KUIDFC, Janaagraha’s disassociation was attributed to the negative public exposure that was being generated through the activities of the Campaign. Other bureaucrats attributed it to the fact that the founder of Janaagraha had secured a much more prestigious and influential role on a Technical Advisory Group for the JNNURM. One task of this special advisory group was drafting model legislation for a Community Participation Bill as a required reform under the JNNURM.

Given that the first noted mention of Janaagraha addressing in any detail the issue of genuine citizen participation and services for the poor within the PSC came just days after the NGO had been confronted by the Campaign in a public consultation it seems fair to suggest that the Campaign was a significant factor. Given Janaagraha's role in facilitating the privatisation of water services, this was a success for the Campaign. However, it has not prompted the state, or more specifically the PSC, to initiate any genuine citizen participation beyond payment of the BCC.

Around the same time the Campaign was launched, a new Chairman, Ashok Kumar Manoli, was appointed to Chairman of the BWSSB. This had come after Chief Minister S.M. Krishna lost the state elections in late 2004 and the new government was re-arranging and re-posting the team of bureaucrats running Karnataka Urban, including K.P. Krishnan and Vidyashankar. By this time the IFC had provided the BWSSB and the PSC with their proposal for the privatisation of the operations and maintenance of the new services. Upon the BWSSB's internal review of the IFC proposal, Manoli wrote a formal memorandum to the Principal Secretary of the Urban Development Department. The memorandum stated:

Private Sector Participation in GBWASP is not recommended as the financial feasibility of this approach has not been demonstrated nor has it been indicated how the Board or the people of Bangalore would benefit from this model... It is suggested to take up the [operations and maintenance] of GBWASP under the regular functions of the Board after necessary institutional strengthening and capacity building... The Offer of the IFC analysed... may therefore be cancelled... [The] Government is requested to accord approval for the same.

These recommendations were based on a number of key points. Some related to issues of governance, while others specifically addressed the preliminary report provided by the IFC. In terms of governance, it was noted that through the BWSSB Act the utility had the responsibility and authority to provide safe drinking water at an affordable cost to the citizens and that handing responsibility and authority to a private operator was not in fact legally permissible under the Act. It also commented on how water had been recognised by the Supreme Court of India as a fundamental right and that nowhere in the world had the full privatisation of operations and maintenance been successful. In respect to the preliminary report of the IFC, it was noted that under the IFC privatisation proposal there

would be no transfer of new technologies or management concepts and practices in operations and maintenance.

Furthermore, the IFC only provided a single option (a Delegated Management Contract), which meant no comparisons could be made on the risks and benefits of different forms of private sector participation such as service contracts or lease. The BWSSB also analysed the financial indicators and projections presented by the IFC and concluded that the BWSSB could provide services for a significantly lower cost, and therefore customer tariff. Indeed, under the IFC contract it was possible that the tariff would have to be increased by some 87 percent above the existing base tariff level. This, it was noted, had “been a matter of concern to NGOs, citizens organizations, slum dwellers etc., who [had] been opposing the private sector participation model at various seminars, through processions and by issuing written statements” (Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board, 2006, p. 5). On this last point Manoli was referring to the Campaign and their rather public activities. The BWSSB’s review of the IFC proposal and Manoli’s memorandum to the PSC were not directly connected to the activities of the Campaign in that there was no organised alliance between the two. However, under certain leadership the BWSSB recognised and was receptive to the democratic demands and actions of the Campaign as a citizens group. Manoli’s term as the BWSSB Chairman was short lived. Within just weeks of his memorandum to the Urban Development Department, the Government of Karnataka removed him from the position of the BWSSB Chairman. His views did not fit, and were not compatible with, the determined path of development and therefore unwelcome amongst those with the power to determine and implement market oriented reform.

Despite Manoli’s memorandum a few months later privatisation was still firmly on the agenda and so the Campaign organised a six day long “Jana Jagruthi Jatha” (People’s Awareness March) through the eight local governments. In each local government the Campaign distributed documentation on the project to citizens, held public discussions on street corners and in the slums, and the theatre groups Gangamma Vokkalu Kala Thanda

and Inchara Nataka Thanda (both member organisations of the Campaign)⁸⁴, conducted street performances raising concerns on issues such as national sovereignty and on the consequences of privatising water services (refer to Appendix 8 for a full account of these demands). The interactions the Campaign had with local citizens illuminated how little the general public knew about the politics of the project including plans to privatise the new services. Unlike the Hubli-Dharwad demonstration zones where a billboard had been erected with the GBWASP area people were unaware of the role of external agencies (WSP-SA, the World Bank, the IFC and USAID), in facilitating and supporting the project and its reform goals. The meetings in the slums also revealed that community members were unaware that they payment of the BCC had been waived for slum households and that there was a pro-poor policy in the making.

In addition to raising awareness among citizens, over the course of the Jatha the Campaign also met with local elected representatives and protested outside the local government officers where memorandums were presented the local government Commissioners or senior officials. Like the citizens, many of the government officials stated they were uninformed about the role of USAID and the IFC in the privatisation process. In two of the local governments the Commissioners informed the Campaign and the public that privatising the water services was necessary to raise efficiency in service provision but they were unable to cite an example of where similar measures had been successful and were also unaware of the BWSSB's evaluation of the IFC proposal and Manoli's official memorandum. For the most part the local government officials had insufficient knowledge about the reform process of the project and the possible outcomes of privatising service delivery. On the last day of the Jatha citizens congregated outside the BWSSB head office in central Bangalore for a mass public march to the Chief Minister's house where it was intended to present him with a memorandum with concerns regarding the nature of the GBWASP. The march was stopped, however, shortly before the Chief Ministers residents by large numbers of police officers and people were informed that the Chief Minister was not in Bangalore. The Minister of Social Welfare met with the citizens instead, and after

⁸⁴ Gangamma Vokkalu Kala Thanda is a group of young people from the town of Doddaballapur (near Bangalore) while Inchara Nataka Thanda is a cultural group based on the concept of the people's theatre consisting of rehabilitated street and working children.

assurances that the Chief Minister would seriously consider the concerns and demands presented in the memorandum that the Jatha was concluded. The demands of the Campaign, as presented in the memorandum to the Chief Minister are listed in Appendix 8, and images from the Jatha are provided in Images 7.2 to 7.5.

Image 7.2 Raising citizen awareness through street performance



Source: Campaign Against Water Privatisation - Karnataka

Image 7.3 People's Awareness march (Jatha) organised by the Campaign



Image 7.4 Presentation of memorandum to CMC Commissioner



Image 7.5 Culmination of the Jatha opposite Chief Minister's house



Source: Campaign Against Water Privatisation - Karnataka

The activities of the Campaign, in combination with the memorandum of the BWSSB, did halt the privatisation process and by the end of 2006 it was widely accepted amongst many activists and engineers within the BWSSB that plans to privatise the GBWASP services had been effectively thwarted. However, privatisation of the new services was by no means off the agenda. In mid 2007 I was talking with a Chief Engineer of the BWSSB and he advised me that the IFC and the WSP-SA had recently had a meeting with the BWSSB Board. The meeting was about reinvigorating the privatisation efforts and following forward on the transaction advisory. On his subtle suggestion I visited the IFC and the WSP-SA in Delhi. The IFC confirmed that the transaction advisory was very much still “live”.

There are a number of reasons I can put forward for why the contract was never terminated, despite public opposition from both inside and outside the utility. First, the contract contained hefty fees for the BWSSB if they terminated. The IFC had already delivered a Strategy Report and the fees for terminating at that point would have cost the utility US \$100,000. A second reason relates to the progress of the infrastructure work for the GBWASP. While steady advances had been made on the water distribution network within the GBWASP area, the construction of pipes for augmenting additional water from the Kaveri River under the JBIC loan was well behind schedule. It was not anticipated that the water would be available until sometime in 2011/2012. Given this it was unlikely that any private water corporation would be willing to enter into a Delegated Management Contract six or so years before they could actually begin operations.

Finally, cancelling the contract was not attuned to the long term reform goals within the state, the country or the international agencies and networks directing the international policy agenda. When I interviewed personnel at WSP-SA I was informed they were currently preparing a Technical Advisory for the KUIDFC, paid for in part with DFID funds. In Chapter Four I explained that the purpose of the Technical Advisory, of which the USAID representative was appointed as a private consultant, was to prepare a water and sanitation policies and sector development goals for the state. In the consultants’ Terms of Reference, their policy directive was the World Bank’s 2006 “Bridging the Gap between Infrastructure and Services” Report, which in a similar vein to their 2004 World

Development Report, states that making the poor paying customers of private service providers is in the poor peoples' best interest. Furthermore, it was predicted, and expected, that the KUWASIP demonstration zones in North Karnataka, would validate the necessity and viability of commercially oriented, privately managed water services. Privatisation in the GBWASP may have been halted, but Greater Bangalore, and possibly all of Bangalore and urban Karnataka remained bound for privatisation.

Partly in response to the activities of the Campaign payment of the BCC was waived for households in slums. However, this decision also has to be considered in light of the BWSSB slum program and the motivation to connect slum households in order to reduce non-revenue water that may result from illegal or unregularised public taps or house service connections. The monthly minimum tariff, something that many slum households in central Bangalore that were part of the slum program have found beyond their capacity to pay, is not being reduced. During conversations with well over one hundred people across five slums in the local government of Krishnarajapuram where the GBWASP is being implemented, the majority of people expressed that they could not afford the minimum monthly charge of Rs 73. Nagaveni, the young girl whose water experience I quoted at the beginning of the chapter, is from one of these households.

Furthermore, when privatisation of the new services was temporarily abandoned, so too was the pro-poor policy. If there was not going to be privatisation at that point, it was deemed unnecessary for there to be a policy on how to service the poor, as a high ranking bureaucrat at the KUIDFC explained to me:

You see, we thought in case we do privatisation we should also adopt a pro-poor policy to tell people that everything is OK, to reassure people that nothing will get damaged. So we thought we would launch this pro-poor policy so that nobody feels threatened but that has taken the backset because we have not been able to put this privatisation movement into place. We have not taken it up because of this but nevertheless several initiatives for the poor are already there. (personal communication, 2007)

These initiatives were of course, the WSUP pilot, the World Bank sanitation project, and the Cities Alliance/JBIC funded up-scaling of the BWSSB slum program that followed in clear

consensus with the principles of commercially oriented reforms and the BWSSB slum program.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed how a daunting and wide range of actors were involved in the conceptualisation and implementation of the GBWASP: international development agencies; state parties; private consultants; and NGOs. These actors were closely aligned in their vision and ambition for marketising basic services and through their collective and coordinated efforts developed strategies for building acceptance for the reform goals of the project. It explained how in the original plans for the project, which required decentralising finance for the cost of the new infrastructure onto local governments and project “beneficiaries” no safeguards or consideration was given to how the poor would be able gain access to the new services. While this was later explained away as an “anomaly” in the project plans, arguably the poor, with limited ability to pay capital contributions, simply did not fit into such a decentralised finance structure.

It also explained how other than making a financial contribution to the project, there were no plans to incorporate citizen involvement. All project plans, decision making and policy formation, it was believed, was best left to expert bureaucrats, international development agencies, private consultants and engineers. When inclusion the poor and institutionalised citizen participation were eventually factored into the project, this was not because of any benevolence from those in charge, rather, it was thought they would have “operational significance” for building consent among the public for the reform objectives and ushering in market oriented reforms. This included requiring people to pay up front capital contributions and privatisation of service delivery. The latter of which, early studies by private consultants had clearly shown, citizens of greater Bangalore did not want. It further described, however, how when the privatisation of service delivery was thwarted due to public opposition (from both within and outside the public water utility), ambitions to institutionalise citizen participation and the pro-poor policy were abandoned because they were no longer regarded as effective strategies for consensus-building in the public domain.

Chapter Eight: Good Governance Reforms and the Poverty of Democracy and Rights

There are rumblings all over as we are a democratic society. There will be rumblings today and there will be rumblings tomorrow but this will not deter us from carrying forward the structural reforms in the economy...

S.M. Krishna, Chief Minister of Karnataka, May 2003⁸⁵

And so it was. Despite democratic “rumblings”, since the 1990s the state of Karnataka has been moving forward on an agenda to reform the character and institutions of urban water governance along a market oriented development trajectory. Some of those who are conceptualising, designing and implementing the reforms are aware that they go against the democratic will of many citizens, but they are not deterred. Some of those with the power to reform firmly believe such measures are necessary for the improvement and sustainability of the environment, the society, the economy, and the living conditions of the poor. They are motivated by what Li (2007) would refer to as the “will to improve”. Others, however, actively pursue a role in such activities because of the personal, professional and political benefits and rewards that can, and are, made available to them. And there are others again, who are simply doing their job. Whether believers, private maximisers, or followers, those with the power to reform act as trustees of other people’s development. It is these trustees in all their guises, not the common citizens, who shape and make what I have referred to throughout this thesis as the ‘determined path’ to, and of, development.

⁸⁵ S.M. Krishna, Congress Chief Minister of Karnataka 1999-2004. Inauguration speech of the World Bank's Annual Conference on Development Economics, May 2003

In current times, the determined path to development goes by the name, and with the ambition of, achieving 'good governance'. While governance is a broader term than governments, central to the good governance policy prescriptions is reforming the institutions of the state and in doing so the relationships between state, society and market. In contrast to previous approaches to development when the state was expected to perform a heavy-handed role in the economy and society (1940s – 1970s), or perform a minimal role by removing itself from social and economic affairs (1980s), in the era of good governance (1990s – to present), it is asserted that the 'good' state is one that is small *but* effective. The small but effective state is defined in the good governance discourse as one that is transparent, accountable, efficient, democratic, responsive, consensus-oriented, pro-poor, and market-friendly (UNESCAP, n.d; UNDP, 1997; DFID, 2007). It is a state that respects human rights, holds fair and regular elections, and provides the right institutional environment and conditions for capitalism to flourish (DFID, 2007; US Congress, 2004 as cited in Hout, 2007). Indeed, the good governance discourse seamlessly merges the goals of human rights, liberal democratic politics, civil society participation and capitalist economic growth in a string of propositions about their compatibilities and complementarities. This thesis has illustrated, however, that such compatibilities and complementarities can fall far short of what is promised.

Objectives, Theoretical Focus and Analytical Strategy the Study

The objective of this thesis was to explore two proposed compatibilities and complementarities within the good governance discourse. First, is the proposition that a good governance environment is necessarily both democratic and pro-market. My interest and concern with this proposition is how it implies there can be no rationale or legitimate democratic vision beyond that which supports a capitalist mode of production. The second proposition is that commercially oriented water services, whether private or public, are compatible with the expansion and realisation of human rights for those in poverty. This proposition rests on the assumption that if poor citizens are paying customers of basic services they will be able to exert voice and client power over service providers (World Bank, 2004a). While there may be no definitive definition of poverty and it is a complex and

comprehensive phenomenon (Mander, 2004; Spicker, Leguizamon & Gordon, 2007), my concern with this proposition is that it appears to overlook the fact that poverty and marginalisation are consequential, at least in part, on a lack of economic and monetary resources and power. Of all the propositions within the good governance discourse, I focused on these two in recognition of the historical and contemporary struggles of citizens, and especially the poor and marginalised, for their political, social and economic rights to be recognised, respected and realised. Their struggles are ones for social inclusion and social justice and bring to the fore contestations over both the meanings and material realms of development. Such struggles are political, and in my solidarity with those who live this struggle on a day to day basis this thesis has also been political, albeit in a different shape and form.

In the introductory chapter I provided a brief background on the shifting frameworks of urban water governance, as well as contemporary discussions on the deepening of democracy. This was followed in Chapter Two with a theoretical discussion and critique on the origins, policies and propositions of good governance within which, contemporary water reforms are embedded. This chapter was framed around five fields related to the policies and practices of good governance and encompassed a number of important development themes, including trusteeship, democracy, participation, expertise, technocracy, political-economic rationality, exclusion and inclusion, consensus and coercion, neo-liberalism, and rights. The five fields were:

- the conditions of re-forming the state as a trustee for the capitalist market;
- the constructed role for liberal democracy and civil society participation;
- the implications of striving for a political consensus on pluralism and inclusion;
- the role of technical 'expertise' in the manufacturing of development knowledge; and
- the commercialisation and privatisation of basic services as the means for securing rights for the poor.

By drawing on a wide range of literature from that advocating for the contemporary construction of good governance (World Bank, 1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1997, 2004a; UNDP, 1997;

Brinkerhoff, 2000; DFID, 2007; Odugbemi & Jackson, 2008; ADB, 2009), to theorists of democracy, and critics of development, I considered the good governance discourse in light of its historical lineage with earlier development practices and policy. The discussion explained how there are practices of development in action that have persisted from earlier development periods. These include things such as trustee-led development, externally imposed conditionalities, the exclusion (or avoidance) of the politics and power dynamics of development in the analysis of development problems, the de-politicisation of civil society participation, and the reliance on technical 'experts' rather than local people in the formation and creation of development knowledge, policies and projects.

In this chapter I also explained how many of the ideas embedded in the good governance discourse have a profound historical lineage and similarity to both political-economic liberalism of the nineteenth century and neo-liberalism of the 1980s. While political-economic liberalism of the nineteenth century was characterised by a state that was closely aligned to the capitalist classes, and neo-liberalism attempted to enforce market anarchy over any form of state management or control, a common feature of both these periods was the value placed on preserving and extending the interests of the capitalist class. A second, and interconnected commonality of nineteenth century liberalism and 1980s neo-liberalism was how shallow forms of representative liberal democracy, rather than deeper forms of participatory democracy, were deemed desirable and necessary for supporting the expansion and functioning of the capitalist market and for limiting the channels through which citizens could make demands on the state for social and economic rights. As with these earlier periods, the good governance discourse continues to insist that development requires economic growth through the extension of capitalism.

What the reproduction of such policies and practices would mean for democracy and rights in the development era of good governance and the contemporary operation of the development apparatus was core to this thesis. However, by considering good governance in light of its linkages with earlier development policy and practice, I suggested that despite the policies, premises and promises of the good governance discourse a number of tensions and contradictions may exist and manifest within, and between, what the discourse

promises, the practices of how reforms are implemented, and in the outcomes of such for the deepening of democracy and the realisation of the right to water for the urban poor.

My methodological approach and analytical strategy for examining this was outlined in Chapter Three. Here I explained how I was drawn to a methodological approach of critical ethnography as a way to counter-act some of the problems with development studies and conventional ethnography. For me, critical ethnography provided a means to explicitly locate the study within the political, rather than technical, realm of development theory and practice. This approach was supported by my analytical strategy which drew on the field of an anthropology of public policy. This field of anthropology provided me with a broad framework for exploring the connections and intersections within, and between, three intersecting levels good governance reforms: the development *discourse and policy* of good governance; the *everyday practices* of how urban water reforms are implemented through specific *programs and projects*; and the *outcomes* of such on human rights and processes and practices of democracy.

Through the combination of my theoretical focus, methodological approach and analytical strategy enabled I was able to examine the practices and experiences of the makers, implementers and subjects of development, and to explore political questions related to governance reforms, such as: who is involved in the construction and implementation of development policy and projects and who is not; in what ways does the inclusion and exclusion of different actors in the policy network affect the content of policy and projects; in what ways do policies and projects privilege some over others; and, who accepts and contests these locally and why? In this way, this thesis moved away from technocratic or generalised theoretical accounts on governance reforms in the urban water sector, such as those I introduced in Chapter's One and Two, and in doing so has been able to contribute to our understanding of the often hidden or un-discussed, local political and power dynamics embedded in the process of reform. These political and power dimensions of good governance reforms were then unraveled and revealed in Chapter's Four to Seven, when I examined the policies, practices and outcomes of good governance reforms through a detailed ethnographic account of a number of water reform projects currently underway in

Karnataka. These chapters examined the dynamics between those with the power to reform and those with the power to resist, even if the full power and potential of the latter was yet unrealised.

Drawing on the findings and evidence presented in the earlier chapters, in the remainder of this thesis I return to the two proposals of good governance that I have been principally concerned: the compatibility and complementarity of good governance reforms to the substantive right to water for the poor, and to the deepening of democratic politics. The following discussions summarise how despite the promises of good governance, there are critical limitations to the deepening of democracy and the expansion of human rights under the existing discourse and practices of good governance reforms. They also suggest that such limitations are not unique to development in the era of good governance, but are more deeply embedded in the political economy, power structures and political character of the development apparatus, through which such reforms are constructed and implemented.

Good Governance Reforms and the Poverty of Rights

The challenge of achieving the right to water has provoked interest and concern the world over, and from a diverse set of commentators, the achievement of good governance offers a necessary part of the solution. However, as I have explained, the hegemonic construction of good governance weaves together the goals of human rights and commercially oriented water services, and in doing so suggests they are complimentary and compatible ambitions.

In Chapter Two, I presented an exposition of this claim through an examination of the World Bank's 2004 World Development Report (WDR): *Making Services Work for Poor People*. While the World Bank does not talk explicitly about the right to water in the WDR, it is suggested that water security (which could be defined as the substantive right to water being realised), is achievable through decentralising, commercialising, and privatising service delivery, as well as raising user tariffs for the poor. The rationale for such reform prescriptions rests on the assumptions that these measures will remove vested political interests from water services and provide poor people with the opportunity to exert

consumer voice, which in turn will raise service provider accountability and the quality of services (ibid). The approach of the World Bank to servicing the poor is not the only one within the good governance discourse, yet it provided a useful backdrop for exploring water projects in Karnataka. This is because the World Bank is a key international player in many of these projects and a similar, if not identical, reform agenda as that proposed in the WDR was being implemented by state agencies. The overarching aim of these projects was to transform urban water services into commercially efficient and sustainable systems. This involved a variety of measures, including the removal of state subsidised public taps and the introduction of user pays water services in slums, commercialising public utilities, privatising service delivery, and decentralising the cost of infrastructure or house connections onto project “beneficiaries”. However, my exploration into these projects exposed that in practice the assumptions of the World Bank did not hold true. Furthermore, they revealed how the commercial motivations of the reforms often had the opposite effect on water security for the poor and did little to raise the accountability of service providers, whether public or private.

Commercial reforms and the perpetuation of water insecurity for the poor

In Chapter Seven I discussed a large infrastructure and reform project taking place in the peri-urban area of Bangalore, the GBWASP. In addition to extending the central Bangalore infrastructure network the project had two principle reform goals: to decentralise financial responsibility for infrastructure development to local governments and future “beneficiaries”, and to out-source service delivery to an international private operator. The chapter explained how the financing plan for the project, which was developed by the USAID and approved by the Government of Karnataka, required that “beneficiaries” of the future services make an up-front capital contribution toward the new infrastructure. It also explained, however, how this financing plan made no differentiation between income groups. As such, it essentially excluded the poor from benefiting from the project and having access to future services due to their incapacity to pay such capital costs.

This exclusion was later described by the state project team as an “anomaly” and while the capital contribution was subsequently reduced and eventually waived for people in slums, on closer inspection of the GBWASP, it was apparent that the project and the financing plan was not originally designed with all citizens in mind. Rather, the construction of new infrastructure was conceptualised to meet the development aspirations of the middle and upper classes, who, it was thought, could afford to pay the up front capital contributions, full cost recovery tariffs for services, and would appreciate private over public service provision. Under regimes of decentralised financing mechanisms where citizens are expected (and required) to pay directly for the infrastructure of basic services, which is then to be outsourced to private actors, citizenship is far from equal. Within the governing logic of the GBWASP reforms, and the expected service provision arrangements post-project, the poor simply did not fit given that they did not possess the income and purchasing power such reforms demand of citizens.

By examining the motivations behind the eventual inclusion of the poor in the project, my examination revealed how waiving of the capital contribution for people in slums was not motivated by a concern for the poor but rather, for the successful implementation of the project and the financial sustainability of the future services. In terms of the successful implementation of the project, it was only when capital contributions were far below target and a consultant’s report revealed how middle class citizens were concerned how the poor would be serviced by a private operator, was the project team motivated to facilitate subsidised connections for people in slums and to prepare a policy on how the poor would be serviced when a private operator was introduced. Thus, the eventual incorporation of poor citizens was not driven by a concern for equal citizenship and the realisation of rights for the poor, but largely out of concern for achieving the project’s financial and institutional goals, which required making the project acceptable and respectable to middle and upper class citizens – the defined group of (able to pay) future customers. With respect to future services, by considering the GBWASP in light of the AusAID pilot and the BWSSB slum program, which I discussed in Chapter Six another motivation that may have contributed to the incorporation of the poor in the GBWASP was revealed. Communities or households not serviced with house connections will ultimately seek ways to access water, such as buying

water from informal vendors, making illegal connections, or relying on legal and illegal public taps. All three of these, however, can reduce profitability and therefore make the water market less attractive to a private operator. Thus, finding a way to mainstream the poor into user pays services is necessary for the improving commercial viability and attractiveness of the new infrastructure for out-sourcing.

The link between mainstreaming the poor and commercial reforms was made explicit in Chapter Six when I explored efforts undertaken by the BWSSB to introduce user pays house service connections into a number of slums in central Bangalore. While this expected to improve the quality of water services in the slums, my discussion on the program explained how the core motivation for the program was financial: to reduce non-revenue water from public taps and to raise revenue by enlarging the paying customer base in order to make the utility more commercially sustainable (and for some, more attractive to private water companies). The BWSSB program has been heralded as a successful demonstration of how commercialising water services and charging the poor for water is good for both the provider and the poor (WSP-SA, 2006; Connors, 2007; ADB, 2007), and similar models are being rolled out throughout the state.

There is reason to caution against this, however. Through a detailed account of poor people's experience of the program, this chapter explained how the policy and practice of removing public taps and introducing user pays house service connections had detrimental impacts on the water security for many of the communities and households that were targeted for user-pays connection. In the wake of the removal of state-subsidised public taps, households who were unable to mobilise the funds required to take house service connections were left with no clear point to access water. Due to their poverty, they were essentially priced out of the formal water market and with no local public water source, found themselves in a position of having to depend on the good will of neighbours, travel to collect water from a public tap outside their community, or use inferior groundwater.

My conversations with some members of these households showed how they maintained a belief in their right to water as citizens, and the responsibility of the state to guaranteeing

the realisation of this right. However, they were also starkly aware that in practice, as non-customers of the water board they were also treated and regarded as non-citizens with little, if any, recourse to demand rights from the public service provider. For slum households who did take house connections, many of them experienced serious difficulties with the on-going user tariffs and becoming legal customers was also no guarantee of an acceptable water service. Indeed, after becoming “legal” customers, many households experienced service problems such as poor or inadequate of water, billing errors, and weak water pressure. Whether targeted but not connected, or connected but not adequately serviced, in many communities, the BWSSB program which removed state-subsidised public taps profoundly compromised the lived experience of their right to water for the poor. The potential, or actual risks, for poor people’s water security when a private operator is introduced and tariffs are increased, has been illuminated by many (Hardoy & Schusterman, 2000; Grusky, 2001; Loftus & McDonald, 2001; Marsden, 2003; Morris & Cabrera, 2003; Public Citizen, 2003; Robbins, 2003; Shultz, 2003). Even the World Bank has acknowledged that it is hard to get private actors to “design tariffs in a way that does not discriminate against the poor” (World Bank, 2003, as cited in Prasad, 2007, p. 11). While this study supports such findings, my exploration into the BWSSB slum program has also highlighted, how such risk is not only associated with the privatisation of water services, but also the commercialisation of public utilities as they are pushed to perform within the logic of the market.

Thus, and in contrast to the theoretical proposition that what is good for a commercial utility (private or public) is also good for the poor, from the experience of the poor who have been the subjects of, and subjected to, such rationale, it is without question that there is reason to be deeply skeptical of such an approach when the rights and water security of the poor are placed centre stage as genuine development ambitions.

Poor customers and the politics and non-accountability of service providers

My discussions on the BWSSB program also traced how its commercial motivations led those involved in its conceptualisation and implementation to seek ways to de-politicise

water services and transform people in slums into civil-consumers. These civil-consumers were not expected (or desired) to invoke the politics of citizen rights, but rather, to act as well behaved customers. Such an outcome was far from achieved as the commercial agenda of the program, combined with the persistence of water insecurity many households faced in the post-implementation phase of the project, fueled the politicisation of water services and resulted in tense and often conflicting relations between service station engineers and people in slums. Furthermore, and contrary to the assumptions in the WDR, mainstreaming the poor into the commercial water market did little to raise the accountability of service provider. The politicisation of water services and a lack of service provider accountability were also consequences of reforms undertaken in the KUWASIP demonstration zones which I discussed in Chapter Five.

As in other parts of the world, the commercial agendas of both the BWSSB slum program and the KUWASIP demonstration zones sparked heated social resistance. Some examples where such resistance has occurred include Argentina (Morgan, 2006), Peru (Isarra & Donner, 2004/2005), Delhi, India (Shiva, 2006), Ghana (Grusky, 2001; Cooper, 2002; Amenga-Etego, 2004; Joy and Hardstaff, 2005), Cochabamba, Bolivia (Shultz, 2000; Grusky, 2001; Albro, 2005; Morgan 2006), South Africa (Morgan, 2004 & 2006), New Zealand (Morgan, 2004 & 2006), and Indonesia (Nababan, 2005). In the early phases of the BWSSB slum program, many communities opposed the removal of state provided public taps on the grounds that the state had an obligation to ensuring poor citizens had access to water. Similarly, so did citizens and citizen groups in the KUWASIP demonstration zones. However, given that the provision of public taps is deemed incompatible by reforming bodies with the goal of commercial efficiency, these demands went unheeded by those implementing reforms, and a variety of strategies were employed to quiet down opposition and move forward on the determined path of reform, such as the use of police escort, the utilisation of NGOs to build compliance, and the supplying of misinformation about project goals. In neither the BWSSB slum program, nor the KUWASIP pilot were the development aspirations of the citizens taken into account, nor were there any effective channels for the poor to hold the individuals and agencies implementing the projects to account. As I will elaborate a little later, when talking about accountability in the water sector it is necessary to

also look beyond (and before), that of a service provider to the accountability of those designing and implementing reforms. In the post-implementation of the BWSSB slum program and the KUWASIP, that is once public taps had been removed and the poor had been connected to the user pays services, the service providers (a commercially motivated public utility and a private water corporation respectively), displayed little accountable to these poor communities.

In the KUWASIP pilot in Hubli-Dharwad there was a lack of service provider accountability around the contentious issues of tariffs when volumetric billing began. Even though the private operator was responsible for designing the billing system, issuing bills and had been party to discussions on the user-pays tariff design, when I spoke to Regional Manager of Veolia, he informed me that he knew nothing of the tariff, it was not Veolia's issue and that he was unaware who citizens should approach with billing and tariff complaints. In the case of the BWSSB slum program, the multitude and indivisible problems with service delivery often led individuals or collectives of slum people to demand and protest for service improvements and to be treated as valued and legitimate customers. However, and contrary to the assumptions of the World Bank, seldom were their attempts at exerting client "voice" effective in holding the service provider to account and achieving improvements in their services. Instead, when people in slums made demands through social protest, which were frequently a result of individual complaints going unresolved, they often found themselves in a worse situation as engineers retaliated by threatening to withhold or continuing to withhold water supply. As economically and politically weak citizens, commercialising service delivery and charging people in slums user tariffs did little to strengthen their "voice" or, as the WDR proposes to incentivise the service provider to supply the poor. Furthermore, and again in difference to the WDR, given that the formal water network was structured as a monopoly service, the poor were far from empowered to "vot[e] with their feet" (World Bank, 2004a, p. 9). Rather, individuals were faced with accumulating bills, irrespective whether water was supplied, and were often forced to use water from inferior sources such as groundwater, or to request or beg for water from neighbours or surrounding middle-class houses.

The experience of water reforms in Karnataka has revealed that in a variety of ways, the proposed compatibility between decentralising commercialising and privatising water services and achieving water security for the poor, such as that outlined in the World Bank's 2004 WDR, is extremely flawed. Some writers on water governance have advocated for a theoretical and empirical approach to service delivery that goes beyond the public-private debate and instead seeks the most effective alignment of both state and market through various forms of public-private partnerships and private sector participation (Seppala, Hukka & Katko, 2001; Hukka & Katko, 2003; Lee & Floris, 2003; Rothenberger & Truferr, 2003; Rodriguez, 2004; Biswas, 2005*a*), or ways to make private operators responsive to the poor (Tsogas, Komives & Fuller, n.d.; Water UK, 2003; UN-Habitat, 2004; Kjellen & McGranahan, 2006; McGranahan & Owen, 2006; McGranahan & Satterwaite, 2006). I would agree with such writers that we are beyond the public-private debate, but not in the same way as they may suggest. Under the auspices of the good governance discourse, privatisation of water services continues to be advocated by leading international development agencies, despite studies from the post-1990s privatisation experiments that highlighted, the commercial goals of private companies were deeply incompatible with the rights of the poor (Hardoy & Schusterman, 2000; Grusky, 2001; Loftus & McDonald, 2001; Marsden, 2003; Morris & Cabrera, 2003; Public Citizen, 2003; Robbins, 2003; Shultz, 2003). Furthermore, public utilities in the water sector are now becoming required to perform like private companies in order to not have their functions out-sourced, or in preparation of such. Based on the historical and contemporary lessons of such, it seems fair to conclude that this determined path of reform will continue to perpetuate a poverty of rights for the poor.

Indeed, it is disquieting that such reforms remain core policy prescriptions. The experience of Karnataka sheds some light on how such policies are perpetuated in the era of good governance and reveals how this is, at least in part, with the way in which such reforms are constructed and implemented through a "politics of consensus" among networks of reform agents. In the following section I elaborate on this politics of consensus and argue that ushering in market reforms that are unlikely to result in water security for the poor, requires

diminishing the substance and spaces for social actors to effectively engage in democratic politics.

Good Governance Reforms and the Anti-democratic Politics of Consensus

While the good governance discourse emphasises the importance of democracy, participation, and reaching a broad-based consensus on how a society's resources should be managed and allocated (UNESCAP, n.d.; DFID, 2007), the development apparatus that I encountered constructing and implementing reforms, and the politics of consensus that I refer to, was neither genuinely participatory, nor democratic, nor always consensual.

By proposing that good governance reforms take shape through a development apparatus that operates as an anti-democratic politics of consensus, this thesis builds on the growing body of ethnographic work that seeks to unravel and reveal the "*internal* dynamics of development's 'regimes of truth',... the interrelation of policy ideas, institutions, and networks of knowledge workers who serve the development industry and who organise, and are organised by, its ideas" (Mosse, 2007, p. 1, emphasis in original), while simultaneously continuing to explore the intended and unintended consequences of development (Ferguson, 1990, Li, 2007). As I have already stated, many of those engaged in the reform network (although by no means all), genuinely believe that what the good governance discourse promises is achievable, and that their development efforts and interventions are for the good of society. Therefore, I do not propose that good governance reforms and the idea of development should be confined to a theory of conspiracy. Alternatively, I propose that good governance reforms and the development apparatus operates as an anti-democratic politics of consensus in the way hegemonic notions of market oriented development are re-produced, and how agents within the reform network engage in intentional and unintentional practices to manage dissent, and build compliance or consent for reforms.

In Chapter Four, I suggested that this politics of consensus has three dimensions:

- *ideology* – a set of ideas that form a general consensus on what the character and problems of water governance are, a normative vision of what it should be, and the technical and other solutions required to achieve this;
- *agents* – the interconnected and intersecting networks and constellations of individuals, organisations and institutions who accede to the consensus; and,
- *actions* – the strategies and tactics that these constellations and networks of agents employ and deploy in order to extend and embed political and social support or consent for such ideological reforms.

By examining the deployment of development ideology locally through the everyday practices of networks of reform agents, this thesis extends and compliments the body of work that has focused on the international dynamics of how development knowledge and a consensus on water reforms has been created and sustained by powerful international actors (for instance Bond, n.d.; Goldman, 2005; Finger, 2005; Moore & Sklar, 1998; Hall & Hoedmann, 2006; Mehta & La Cour Madsen, 2003). Specifically, it has been unable to unravel some of the intersections between local and global actors, expose the diversity of agents involved, and illuminate the limitations that are presented for the deepening of democracy under the progression of the good governance discourse. It is the existence of these limitations that expose critical tensions in a discourse that advocates for inclusion and democracy on the one hand, yet on the other hand appears to require limiting actually existing and possible democratic space in order to introduce the market oriented reforms the discourse also advocates.

In advancing the idea that the development apparatus operates an anti-democratic politics of consensus, I suggest that this takes shape through two broad sets of dynamic relationships and interactions: *among* the agents within the development apparatus' reform network; and, *between* those within the reform network and those outside.

Collaboration and consensus politics within the reform network

In Goldman's (2005) ethnography of the World Bank he explained how the Bank operates as a powerful producer of development knowledge, and how, through strategic international

policy networks, a global consensus on the need for water reforms has been established. In contrast and in complementarity, in this study I have explored the micro dynamics of how such international policy became embedded locally. By exploring the localised politics of good governance reform projects from their conceptualisation through to their implementation, I have shown how no actor single-handedly controls development, nor possesses the full power to reform. Rather, the power to construct and implement good governance reforms is acquired through the combined efforts and expertise of a vast assemblage of individuals, organisations and institutions, including multi-national and bi-lateral development agencies, public sector bureaucrats and state agencies, private consultants and NGOs.

That a diversity of actors are involved in good governance reforms is not surprising. As Craig and Porter have pointed out, the good governance discourse emphasizes that everyone “can, indeed must be included” (2006 p.2), UNDP has declared that “(e)ach domain of governance - the state, the private sector and civil society - has a unique role” to play (2007 p.16), and the World Water Council have argued that abating the global water crisis requires “making water everybody’s business” (2000 p. xxvii). However, in practice not everyone is invited to participate in governance reforms, with invited participation being largely reserved for those who are willing to conform to the already defined determined path of development. Furthermore, those who do participate often act contra to the good governance ideals of transparency, accountability and democratic inclusion.

A number of commentators have highlighted how conditionalities imposed by international development agencies plays a powerful part in the embedding of such global water policy locally and have challenged this in terms of its limiting effect on national sovereignty and local democracy (Joy & Hardstaff, 2005, Public Citizen, 2003)⁸⁶. While I concur with such analysis, in this study I have shown how, and as Randeria (2003) has also highlighted, how the Indian state should not be considered a mere victim of neo-liberal globalisation since it plays an active role in transposing it locally. Furthermore, international development agencies now recognise the significant role the state plays in making global policy a local

⁸⁶ This was also raised by many of the European NGOs that I interviewed as part of this study.

reality, and since the late 1990s have been experimenting with ex post conditionality”, that is, when governments and state agencies demonstrate an already existing commitment to the international policy reform prescriptions (Hout, 2007). In Chapter Four, I briefly explained the Government of India’s commitment to neo-liberal reform and how, in order to speed up reforms in the sub-continent adopted a similar model of ex-post conditionality under a national mission of “urban renewal” where sub-national governments are restricted from central government funding for essential infrastructure unless they adopt market oriented governance reforms. However, I also explained how the state of Karnataka has not required such carrot-and-stick forms of persuasion, as a market oriented reform climate had been fostered and advanced by corporate influence in Bangalore, as well as from the highest echelons of the state’s political leadership, such as that of Chief Minister S.M. Krishna. However, this chapter also illuminated the persistence of influence of international agencies in domestic reform, and critically began to expose the power of state-level bureaucrats in ushering in reforms.

Indeed, while the international, national and state reform climate, as well as international agencies set the tone for Karnataka’s water reforms, a significant force in the acceleration of reforms was consensus on the need for market oriented reform among high ranking bureaucrats in charge of key urban departments over the years 2002-2005. These bureaucrats actively pursued neo-liberal water reforms and relationships with, and guidance and funding from, international development agencies. Through their combined bureaucratic agency and with control over key urban agencies, and in a very short space of time, they brought about a rapid increase in market oriented infrastructure and reform projects. This involved them writing (and having approved by the Government of Karnataka) public policies as front-loaded conditionalities for loans with international banks, preparing legislation that allowed the privatisation of water services, and entering into contracts with international water corporations. It also involved leveraging off their combined bureaucratic agency to influence upper levels of government to approve reforms and pressuring lower tiers of government to adopt such reforms. These measures were at least in part, to demonstrate to international development banks that the state of Karnataka was willing, able and ready to reform. Thus, while international actors such the World Bank may be

extremely powerful and political will may be necessary, willing-to-reform state bureaucrats are critical agents in making international policy a domestic reality.

However, in a bid to accelerate the speed and depth of reform, these bureaucrats, and the international agents who they were working closely with and who talk of good governance, did not themselves follow suit with good governance principles of transparency, accountability, decentralisation and participatory governance. Seldom did they seek input from the local governments, politicians, and citizens, nor did the prescribed reforms transfer decision-making authority and power to lower levels of government. Simply because the state (or select state actors), take “ownership” for reform, is by no means an indication or a guarantee that the development process will be more democratic, even in an already existing democracy such as India. Instead, the actions of these reform-minded state bureaucrats often resulted in the preservation and extension of their own power to reform, rather than the expansion of local democratic space and politics.

In Ferguson’s (1990) study on the workings of the development apparatus in Lesotho, he exposed how the development apparatus de-politicises development whilst concurrently expanding the reach of the bureaucracy. However, he has also suggested that this “result may be no part of the planners’ intention – indeed, it almost never is...” (Ferguson, 2006, p. 273). In contrast, in Karnataka state bureaucrats working in collaboration with international development agencies, often actively and intentionally sought control and authority over reforms in order to keep them on the determined path. A significant control mechanism for this was the employment of “expert” development consultants. These consultants were specialists in law, environmental management, social development, urban poverty, engineering, and so on and so forth and were employed to construct the detailed plans for reform projects, prepare legislative changes and legal documents, and develop Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns. Their work was usually technical in nature and they played an important part in creating and maintaining what Li (2007) refers to as the “rendering technical” of development. However, the rendering technical of development through the employment these development consultants was very political, and also, significantly anti-democratic in the way the work of private consultants could be

controlled to extend the power of the unelected and non-local bureaucracy, how their work was used to manufacture public opinion in favour of reforms, and how easy to control private consultants were preferred in project design over the messiness of public consultation.

For instance, in the World Bank funded demonstration zones in North Karnataka, a legal consultant was contracted to draft an operator-consultant contract. This contract firmly secured authority for the project with the KUIDFC, the agency of their employment and one with little direct accountability channels to the public. Studies conducted by consultants also provided reform agents within the state bureaucracy with important data about how citizens felt about the pre-determined projects, and thereby gave them a critical edge in devising strategies and tactics for swaying opinion and inducing compliance among the public. For example, the *Demand Assessment and Willingness to Pay Study* that was conducted through the World Bank as part of the GBWASP (Chapter Seven) contributed to strategic changes in the funding structure, as well as the drafting of a pro-poor policy. While the funding changes were designed to encourage financial participation by citizens, the pro-poor policy was deemed necessary to avoid public and political contention on the issue of privatisation and to give the impression that privatising water services was no threat to the water security of the poor. In both the GBWASP and KUWASIP demonstration zones, studies by private consultants were also used as background for developing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns designed to shift public opinion in favour of reforms.

Furthermore, in Karnataka the employment of private consultants as development experts was favoured over any genuine public consultation by key implementing agencies such as the KUIDFC. This was not, as Bobbio (1986) has asserted because “[t]echnocracy and democracy are antithetical” (p. 33-34 as cited in de Sousa Santos and Avritzer, 2007, p. x1), although they may well be. Rather, it was because the constructed knowledge of private consultants was considered far easier to manage and control than the plurality and messiness of public consultation and democracy which could, and indeed was, likely to present alternative visions and proposals for development. Consulting with citizens on

reform and infrastructure projects was considered a “nuisance”, whereas private consultants were trusted to provide the “right” recommendations. They were “hired to tell their clients what the clients want to hear” (Stiratt, 2000, p. 41) and employed as creators and maintainers of existing development ideology. Indeed, over the course of this research I read thousands of pages of consultant’s reports yet there was never any challenge presented within in them to what had already been pre-defined as the reform agenda. The Terms of References and contractual responsibilities private consultants have to their clients, meant they were largely bound to produce reports and recommendations which conformed to, and supported the market imperatives of the reform agenda.

The employment of private consultants as knowledge workers is on the rise in development as governance reforms open a whole gamut of possibilities for expert consultants. Yet, their employment and the products they produce can act to secure and extend the power of their clients, or more specifically the power of the state bureaucracy and international agencies implementing reforms. In the Karnataka case this was counter-productive to the good governance goals of decentralised governance, the expansion and quality of democracy, and transparent and accountable governance practices. Furthermore, private consultants were not accountable to the public, or the elected body. They were not required to provide their reports to the public. Rather, their only clear channel of local accountability was to their client’s who may or may not have adequate channels of accountability to the public, such as the KUIDFC and the World Bank. These actors, as I explained in earlier chapters, have the power to keep such knowledge out of the public realm and away from the public gaze and in doing so limit the citizenry from engaging in informed public debate – a core element of democratic politics.

In addition to private consultants, NGOs also performed a distinctive function within the reform network. The good governance discourse prescribes an active and participatory role for civil society organisations as deliverers of social services, in the process of democratisation, and as an essential counter-weight and active proponent for greater state transparency and accountability (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Fisher, 1997; Howell and Pearce, 2005; Ward, 2005). However, in the projects I examined the NGOs who were invited

to participate in reforms by state or international agencies were not expected to play a role in service provision, nor in democratisation and making the state more transparent and accountable, although the latter was often presented as the rationale for their involvement. Rather, they were regarded as important intermediaries between state and supra-state actors, and local communities. As intermediaries, their expertise and specialist skills in working with communities was expected to help legitimise and facilitate the market oriented reform agenda: their contribution was strategically employed (although not always paid for), for gaining compliance and buy-in amongst the public for reform projects.

In Chapter Six, I explained how local NGOs participated in a program to transform people in slums from users of public taps into paying customers. The reason they were invited to participate was because of their perceived comparative advantage over state actors and external development agencies in mobilising households to pay connection charges and user fees. Because of their already established presence in the slums it was thought that they “commanded respect from the community” (WSP-SA, 2006, p. 12), and therefore would be more productive in convincing communities of the program. While many of these NGOs chose to participate with the self-assured hope and belief that their involvement would make the intervention more community-centered and pro-poor, in reality, they had little influence over the commercial objectives of the program and their contribution did little to empower the poor. In the post-implementation phase of the program when services to slum households were poor, seldom did these NGOs take an active role in supporting community members to hold the service provider accountable, and in the instances that they did there efforts were fruitless as the commercial motivations of user-pays services took precedence over poor people’s right to water.

In both the KUWASIP and the GBWASP (Chapters Five and Seven respectively), NGOs were invited to participate in the projects as agents for rolling out IEC campaigns. In the KUWASIP demonstration zones, the NGO was paid out of project funds and was required to rally support for the project and convince community members to opt for the new, and more expensive, water distribution network. When local opposition to the project flared, the NGO did not work with community members and other civil society groups to have the

concerns addressed and incorporated in the project plans. Rather, as a contractor to the state they followed orders from the project hierarchy to misled the public about the reform intentions of the project. Similarly, in the GBWASP a local NGO was also appointed to develop a participatory platform as part of a larger communication campaign that was being supported by international development agencies. This NGO offered to provide their services to the state on a voluntary basis and therefore the KUIDFC, who was in charge of the project, felt there was no state obligation to comply with processes of open and transparent tendering for the position. The founder of the NGO, who has a history of working with state on corporatising urban spaces and governance, has since been awarded a more prestigious and influential role as a special technical advisor on participatory governance for the Government of India's urban renewal mission.

In recent years, as NGO numbers and activities have expanded their accountability has begun to be questioned (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Najam, 1996; Ebrahim, 2003; Lee, 2004; Bendell, 2006). What this study revealed, however, was when NGOs actively worked *with* the state on reform projects, their own accountability to the public and their potential contribution to serving the public good was compromised given that they were not agents for making the state more accountable, governance more democratic, or projects more pro-poor. Rather, as insiders in the reform network their involvement often clouded and shielded state accountability and achieved little in terms of democratising development and governance, and securing rights for the poor. Many NGOs I met in Karnataka wanted to work with the state in the belief that in a democracy the state is a legitimate actor in development and has the necessary responsibility and authority for the improvement of society and securing rights for the poor. However, the experience in Karnataka brings into question the effectiveness and limitations of NGOs for serving the public good and acting as a counter-balance to state authority, if these are their genuine aspirations, when they collaborate with states and international agencies that conform to the determined path of market oriented development.

It is important to point out, however, that collaboration and consensus among the diverse actors in Karnataka's reform network did not emerge organically, nor simply from

ideological commitment. Indeed, from my time in Karnataka it was clear that different actors wanted to participate for different reasons, and at times there were divergences in opinions and perspectives. Nevertheless, what also revealed itself was how, in practice, these differences were kept relatively minor as a system of rewards and punishments rendered inoperative any major rebellion within the reform network: to participate as an insider was to participate compliantly and in consensus with the reform agenda. This presents a clear contradiction to the good governance discourse of inclusion and participatory governance, as only those who were willing to conform and collaborate with others on the pre-determined path of development were invited to participate in the conceptualisation and implementation of reforms. Furthermore, in Karnataka there was a clear contradiction between good governance in policy, and good governance reforms in practice, where the principles of good governance were for others to abide by and conform to post-reform, rather than the means through which reforms were implemented.

Such willingness to defy the principles of good governance and undermine democracy in the process has, however, been rewarded. Karnataka is being showcased as success and a reform leader by international and state agencies implementing reforms. The KUIDFC, a key state agency involved in water reforms, continues to be pursued by international agencies who want to lend for reforms or provide finance free technical assistance. There have also been personal rewards. Bureaucrats who performed well such as K.P Krishnan have been moved to higher, more powerful positions. In contrast, the Chairman of the BWSSB who wrote to the Government of Karnataka opposing the privatisation of water services under the GBWASP, was quickly and quietly removed from his position of power and authority.

Furthermore, only a small handful of trusted consultants were employed in the reform process, and only those who exhibited an aptitude and willingness to produce reports and recommendations in tune with the defined reform agenda were given more contracts. Similarly, only NGOs who were prepared to work with the state on the commercial agenda of reforms were given an insider role in projects. Some NGOs, such those involved in BWSSB slum program chose to participate in reform projects thinking that their

involvement would contribute to more pro-poor outcomes. Others, however, were not so benevolent. NGOs contracted to implement communication strategies and create societal buy-in for reforms can be paid large fees for their efforts or get to move on to bigger, more prestigious programs and projects. They can also acquire political influence within the state apparatus despite that they are not democratically elected. For private consultants and NGOs, development can be extremely lucrative in terms of financial gains, and if sought after, policy influence.

Collaboration and consensus politics within the reform network was a significant characteristic of the reform process in Karnataka, but so too was the deployment of strategies and tactics by reform agents to build consent and dismantle dissent among the wider social and political body.

The politics of consensus building outside the development apparatus

Citizen participation and participatory development have risen up the “discursive agendas” of international agencies and governments in recent years (Ackerman, 2004), however, there have been warnings that participatory strategies designed and invoked by development agencies and states may be regarded as valuable only in so far as it cuts government costs, creates legitimacy, and facilitate the implementation of top-down development (Rahmena, 1992; White, 1996; Cornwall, 2002; Ackerman, 2004). Others have cautioned that invited spaces of citizen participation need to be examined critically in terms of who is doing the inviting, who gets invited, for what reasons, and with what outcomes (White, 1996; Cornwall, 2002). In the preceding section I considered participation within the reform network and outlined who was invited to participate and why. This exposed a number of contradictions between the policies of good governance and good governance reforms in practice in terms of accountability, transparency, participation and democracy. In this section I focus on when and why the participation of citizens was invited, and when it was not. Again, this section illuminates some critical tensions and contradictions between good governance policy and practice when market reforms are coupled with ideals of democratic governance.

A great deal of attention has been given to the issue and challenge of financing urban water services (Hall, 2003; Lee & Floris, 2003; Winpenny, 2003; Rodriguez, 2004; Mehta, Fugelsnes & Virjee, 2005; Kehew, Matsukawa & Petersen, 2005; Van Hofwegen, 2006), or ascertaining pricing and subsidy arrangements (Gomez-Lobo & Contreras, 2003; Biswas, 2005; De Azevedo & Baltar, 2005; Garcia, 2005). While, I have not focused on these issues specifically, in all the projects I examined an overarching reform goal was to improve the commercial viability of urban water services through various market oriented shifts in financing and pricing arrangements, such as the introduction of private operators, households contributions to infrastructure and connection costs and incremental steps to increase user charges to full cost recovery.

However, getting citizens to contribute financially and to participate in a commercially motivated water market was no easy task and in order to encourage and convince citizens to do so various forms of non-financial participation were embarked upon. These “participatory” strategies, rather than seeking to empower citizens, had as their principle goal to generate ‘buy-in’ and to manufacture consent and compliance amongst the elected body and the citizenry for reform projects. At times these strategies were devised to provide reformers with the information they would require to devise strategies to sway public opinion. Other times, and quite intentionally so, their purpose was to send the message that the reform process was inclusive, participatory and pro-poor. This was, however, an illusion. Indeed, while the intent of such activities was apparent in project documents and at times was plainly confirmed to me by reform agents, what also substantiates this is how, when these strategies failed to build agreement and conformity, they were abandoned, their usefulness dissolved.

At the most minimal level, citizens were surveyed and invited to participate in focus groups and consultations. These were most often conducted by private consultants and while they were designed to solicit feedback from citizens on things such as their perception of the reform projects and their willingness to pay. However, they were not intended as a means for incorporating citizen’s aspirations or preferences into the project design. As I explained when I examined the KUWASIP demonstration zones no changes were introduced into the

project as a result of citizen feedback. Rather, such (limited) involvement of citizens in the early stages of projects was calculated to provide reformers with the data they needed to develop strategies to convince citizens of the already defined plans and commercial goals of the projects, such as the IEC campaigns.

Often these IEC campaigns involved more elaborate forms of citizen participation. The GBWASP was a clear example of this. As I explained in Chapter Seven, the participatory platform for the GBWASP was designed and facilitated by a local NGO. The NGO and the state promoted the platform as being a forum for democratising decision-making on core elements of the project. However, the project documents clearly indicated that their role was to facilitate the achievement of the reform objectives, which included convincing citizens to financially ‘participate’ in the project by paying an up-front capital contribution, and to consent to the privatisation of the new services. Thus, the real motivation for state to adopt the initiative was its “operational significance” in persuading citizens to pay the up-front capital contributions required for the infrastructure development. Furthermore, by the time the platform was being designed, all the major decisions on the project had already been made. When a group of local civil society organisations challenged the founder of the NGO in a public meeting on his role in the project within two weeks he had walked out of the GBWASP, citing a lack of state transparency in the project process. Participation was desirable, but only to the extent that it contributed to the reform goals, and when this was exposed and challenged by citizen groups, such insitutionalised participation in the project was discarded.

Similarly, in Chapter Six I explained how as part of an AusAID funded pilot project people in slums were required to pay a capital contribution for constructing service infrastructure. In line with ideas of participation as contributing to the efficiency and sustainability of the project, this was expected to raise community stakes in the infrastructure and cut costs for the utility. Community participation was also invited through membership of community water and sanitation (WATSAN) committees as part of an AusAID funded pilot project. These committees were established and trained by local NGOs and although the WATSAN committees were given some decision-making functions, it was limited to the already pre-

defined set of possibilities. These committees were also expected to convince the fellow community members that water services could not be provided for free and that they had to pay not only capital costs, but also user fees. What was apparent from my discussion on this was how neither the up-front contributions nor the WATSAN committees resulted in any genuine choice for slum households or a sustainable improvement in their services. The ineffectiveness of this approach was recognised by the Social Development Officer who was in charge of upscaling the project and in rolling-out of the pilot, the formation of WATSAN committees was abandoned.

Throughout this thesis I have described multiple ways in which citizens were invited (or intended to be invited) to participate in reform projects and there are too many to mention in this conclusion in detail, but what has been illuminated is how these various forms of participation were strategically devised to support the commercial imperatives of reforms that citizens had no part in designing and which often went against their development aspirations, such as the removal of public taps and the introduction of private operators and full cost recovery for services. Since the 1970s, instrumental forms of participation have been recognised by international development agencies as an important strategy for implementing top down reforms, and as such have received a fair share of criticism (for example Rahmena, 1992). In the new millennium participation was even described as a “tyranny” by development practitioners and theorists Cooke & Kothari (2001). The good governance discourse, with its goal of democracy and its emphasis on making governance transparent and accountable, promises (or at least promotes), the possibility and the necessity for more genuine forms of participation in order for governance to be good. Yet in practice, and at least at the time of implementing governance reforms, this thesis has shown how many of the participatory strategies on offer by reformers reflect a contemporary paradigm rooted in the past. By this I mean to say, where participation remain regarded as instrumental to the effectiveness of top-down interventions rather than empowering for citizens, and contrived rather than open to the democratic imagination and the possibilities that may arise from such.

While instrumental forms of citizen participation aimed to persuade citizens to accept the financial and commercial aspects of the projects, public opposition to reforms often sparked reformers to adopt intentional and carefully targeted acts of exclusion. In Chapter Seven, I explained how a pro-poor policy was prepared as part of the GBWASP to send the message that privatising water services was no threat to the water security of the poor. Despite the good governance promotion of greater citizen involvement in policy-making (Gaventa, 2002), like other policies written as part of the good governance reforms in Karnataka, citizens and the elected body were intentionally kept at arm's length from its formation. This exclusion, it was believed, was necessary to avoid the complications of democratic negotiation and diversity, and to remove the possibility of civil society groups, politicians, and poor citizens demanding that rights entitlements be recognised in a public policy. Rather than public consultation the drafting of the policy was instead entrusted to team who had been involved in bringing about water reforms in the state or who had written positively about such. What ensued from the lack of public involvement was a policy that reflected the commercially-oriented reform consensus. This also explains why, when privatisation was stalled due to the public opposition, the policy has been left unapproved: without privatisation it was deemed unnecessary to have a policy for servicing the poor. Not only were citizens denied access to participate in the formation of the policy, and while some of the reformers I spoke to referred to this policy as an important initiative for the poor, citizen groups who have requested to view it under Right to Information legislation have been denied on the grounds that the policy is still a draft.

When I explored the KUWASIP demonstration zones in North Karnataka I also explained how citizens who openly opposed reform projects were lied to by bureaucrats, private consultants, politicians, and NGOs in an attempt to settle down public displays of disagreement and disapproval for the project. I have also explained how citizen groups who were known for their alternative positions of development such as those on the Campaign Against Water Privatisation – Karnataka were denied access to draft policies, and project documents, all of which it should be noted are were written in English, the international language of development professionals and experts, which most urban poor are not literate in given they are cannot afford to attend English medium schools. The good governance

discourse may prescribe the need for transparency but in practice such transparency is regarded by local reformers as simply too risky. A poorly informed public is far more manageable than a well informed one when it comes to neo-liberal reforms in sensitive areas such as water services.

Local elected representatives, often the first point of call for citizens interested or concerned about local projects and governance reforms, were also often kept uninformed about the reform agendas attached to infrastructure projects, or efforts were taken to keep them at arm's length from interventions. Elected representatives I spoke with in the GBWASP area explained to me that they were unaware the services were to be out-sourced to a private operator. In the BWSSB slum program, some of the NGOs involved as well as the Social Development Officer, felt that politicians were a disruption to their work and their involvement in water services bad for the poor. Exclusion of local elected representatives is propagated partly from the view that politicians with vested interests are a significant part of the governance "crisis". However, this fails to account for the fact that elected representatives and particularly those at the local level, are important interlocutors for poor citizens concerned with issues of service delivery, governance, and reform and infrastructure projects. Many people in the slums expressed to me that they wanted more active involvement from their elected representatives in securing water services, not less. This view was also held by activists I engaged with in Bangalore and North Karnataka. Indeed, many citizens wanted development to be politicised and democratised as part of the means through which rights could be demanded and realised, *not* de-politicised and de-democratised, as was the mode of market oriented reform interventions in Karnataka.

Final Remarks

I have not provided a set of recommendations for development policy or practice in this conclusion. The aim of this study was not to determine or prescribe a future path for development, but to investigate the complex power and political dynamics embedded in good governance reforms and the workings of the development apparatus, and the possibilities and limitations contemporary reforms present for the expansion of rights for

the poor and the deepening of democracy. Through a detailed critical ethnography of urban water reforms, I have been able to illustrate how good governance reforms that are conceptualised, designed and implemented by development experts, are not achieving all that they promise. After some ten years of such reforms in Karnataka, strengthening the voices of the poor, the genuine participation of social actors in governance processes and decision making, and the realisation of rights, remain aspirations and not realities for many citizens. This is not because the rate of reform has been sluggish, indeed good governance reforms have been introduced into Karnataka at an accelerated pace.

What this thesis has also illuminated is how there are a number of tensions and contradictions that exist and manifest within, and between, the policies of good governance, the everyday practices of how they are implemented, and the outcomes of such. It has revealed how at the time of constructing and implementing good governance reforms many of those with the power to reform, including international development agencies, state actors, some NGOs and private consultants often act contra to the good governance ideals of transparency, accountability, responsiveness, broad-based consensus and pro-poor development when they act (intentionally or otherwise), as trustees of ushering in market reforms. Furthermore, and contrary to the good governance discourse, it also exposed how there is no inherent complementarity and compatibility between market oriented reforms and the rights of the poor, or between market oriented reforms and the deepening of democracy. Rather, through the evidence from Karnataka, it would appear that ushering in market reforms that do not, and possibly cannot, secure rights for the poor, requires limiting actually existing liberal democracy, as well as more direct or participatory forms of democratic politics. Such a conclusion presents a critical challenge to the contemporary hegemonic construction of good governance that claims human rights, democracy and market oriented reforms are congruent and mutually reinforcing.

Despite this conclusion, I do not abandon the idea of development, or reject the need to reform and transform governance. Many citizens of Karnataka who I met and shared time with wanted improvements in their life conditions and the way their society and basic services were governed, albeit not always with the same set of aspirations and goals as those

on offer under the good governance paradigm. However, what this thesis also exposed was how incorporation of the aspirations of these citizens in development policy and practice, cannot be expected to emerge from within the development apparatus and the benevolence of those who already hold the power to reform. The political economy, power structures and politics of consensus of development is deeply embedded in, and sustained by, the belief and execution of expert development knowledge and skills, and the logic of the market. Within this framework there is little room for the voice of the common citizen and the messiness of genuine, inclusive and deeper democratic politics. Thus, what has also been exposed is just a small part of the enormity of the challenge faced by those who genuinely desire, struggle for, or actively seek, a more inclusive and just development path in the present, and within possible futures. I hope this exposition of the power and political dynamics of local reform can contribute in some way to the achievement of these aspirations.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The right to water: A selective summary from General Comment No. 15
(2002)

Obligations of state parties	Description	Section
Respect	The obligation to <i>respect</i> requires that State parties refrain from interfering directly or indirectly with the enjoyment of the right to water.	III.(a) 21
Protect	The obligation to <i>protect</i> requires State parties to prevent third parties from interfering in any way with the enjoyment of the right to water. Third parties include individuals, groups, corporations and other entities as well as agents acting under their authority.	III. (b) 23
	Where water services... are operated and controlled by a third parties, States parties must prevent them from compromising equal, affordable and physical access to sufficient, safe and acceptable water.	III. (b) 24
Fulfil	The obligation to <i>fulfil</i> can be disaggregated into the obligations to facilitate, promote and provide. The obligation to facilitate requires the State to take positive measures to assist individuals and communities to enjoy the right. The obligation to promote obliges the State party to take steps to ensure that there is appropriate education concerning the hygienic use of water, protection of water sources and methods to minimize water wastage. States parties are also obliged to fulfil (provide) the right when individuals or a group are unable, for reasons beyond their control, to realize that right themselves by the means at their disposal.	III. (c) 25
	To ensure that water is affordable, States parties must adopt the necessary measures that may include, inter alia: (a) use of a range of appropriate low-cost techniques and technologies; (b) appropriate pricing policies such as free or low-cost water; and (c) income supplements. Any payment for water services has to be based on the principle of equity, ensuring that these services, whether privately or publicly provided, are affordable for all, including socially disadvantaged groups. Equity demands that poorer households should not be disproportionately burdened with water expenses as compared to richer households.	III. (c) 27
International relations	To comply with their international obligations in relation to the right to water, States parties have to respect the enjoyment of the right in other countries. International cooperation requires States parties to refrain from actions that interfere, directly or indirectly, with the enjoyment of the right to water in other countries.	III. 31.
	Steps should be taken by States parties to prevent their own citizens and companies from violating the right to water of individuals and communities in other countries.	III. 33.

	States parties should ensure that their actions as members of international organizations take due account of the right to water. Accordingly, States parties that are members of international financial institutions, notably the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and regional development banks, should take steps to ensure that the right to water is taken into account in their lending policies, credit agreements and other international measures.	III. 36.
Normative Content on the right to water	Description	Section
Freedoms & Entitlements	The right to water contains both freedoms and entitlements. The freedoms include the right to maintain access to existing water supplies necessary for the right to water, and the right to be free from interference, such as the right to be free from arbitrary disconnections or contamination of water supplies. By contrast, the entitlements include the right to a system of water supply and management that provides equality of opportunity for people to enjoy the right to water.	II. 10.
Elements of the right to water	Description	Section
Adequacy	The elements of the right to water must be adequate for human dignity, life and health... Water should be treated as a social and cultural good, and not primarily as an economic good.	II. 11.
Availability	The water supply for each person must be sufficient and continuous [regular] for personal and domestic uses.	II. 12. (a)
Quality	The water required for each personal and domestic use must be safe... [and] of an acceptable colour, odour and taste.	II. 12. (b)
Accessibility	Water and water facilities and services have to be accessible to <i>everyone</i> without discrimination, within the jurisdiction of the State party. Accessibility has four overlapping dimensions: (i) <i>Physical accessibility</i> : water, and adequate water facilities and services must be within safe physical reach for all sections of the population. Sufficient, safe and acceptable water must be accessible within, or in the immediate vicinity, of each household, educational institution and workplace. All water facilities and services must be of sufficient quality, culturally appropriate and sensitive to gender, life-cycle and privacy requirements. Physical security should not be threatened during access to water facilities and services; (ii) <i>Economic accessibility</i> : Water, and water facilities and services, must be affordable for all. The direct and indirect costs and charges associated with securing water must be affordable, and must not compromise or threaten the realization of other Covenant rights;	II. 12. (c)

	(iii) <i>Non-discrimination</i> : Water and water facilities and services must be accessible to all, including the most vulnerable or marginalised sections of the population, in law and in fact, without discrimination on any of the prohibited grounds; and, (iv) <i>Information accessibility</i> : Accessibility includes the right to seek, receive and impart information concerning water issues.	

Source: United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2003, January).

Appendix 2: List of interviewees in Europe

1. ActionAid
2. Building Partnerships for Development in Water and Sanitation
3. Both ENDS
4. CLIFF (of Homeless International)
5. Corporate European Observatory
6. Department for International Development
7. International Water Association
8. Partnerships for Water and Sanitation
9. Progressio
10. Public Services International
11. Public Services International Research Unit
12. Tearfund
13. United Nations Research Social ID
14. UN Water
15. Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor
16. Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor partners:
 - a. Halcrow
 - b. Cranfield University
 - c. Unilever
 - d. World Wildlife Fund
 - e. Wateraid
 - f. Thames Water
 - g. CARE
17. Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
18. World Business Council for Sustainable Development
19. World Development Movement

20. War on Want

Appendix 3: Details of interviewees for Bangalore's slums

Slum communities who were part of the BWSSB slum program

	Community members	Community volunteer		NGO		CBO		Councillor	MLA	BWSSB Engineer
		present	interviewed	Present	Interviewed	present	interviewed			
Slum 1	27	x	x	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x
Slum 2	20	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓
Slum 3	18	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	x
Slum 4	41	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	x	x	x
Slum 5	24	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	x	x	✓
Slum 6	32	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Slum 7	41	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Slum 8	38	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	✓
Slum 9	25	x	x	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓
Total interviews	256		1		4		8	2	1	6

The x's denote where there was none of these agents active in the community, or when interviews were not conducted with this group of agents. The ✓'s denote the presence of these agents in the community or when an interview was conducted. More than one ✓ in any box indicates that more than one of these agents had a presence in the community and more than one actor was interviewed.

Slum communities in the GBWASP area

	Community members	Councillor	Valvemen	CMC Engineer	Private Operator
Slum 10	22	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slum 11	27	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slum 12	29	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slum 13	40	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slum 14	18	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total Interviews	136	5	5	2	2

The ✓'s denote that interviews were conducted with these actors. The number of total interviews at the end of column may differ from the number of ✓'s because in some cases it was the same individual for a number of slums.

Appendix 4: Water quality testing results for Bangalore's slums, 2007

Results from water quality testing in Bangalore's slums - Primary source

	Cauvery slum 1	Cauvery slum 2	Cauvery slum 3	Cauvery slum 4	Cauvery slum 5	Cauvery slum 6	Cauvery slum 7	Cauvery slum 8	Cauvery slum 9	Borewell slum 10	Borewell slum 11	Borewell slum 12	Borewell slum 13	Borewell slum 14
Hardness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x
Hardness- WHO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x
E-coli	✓	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓
Ammonia	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fluoride	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nitrate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓
Nitrate - WHO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x
Chloride	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chloride - WHO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x
Phosphorous	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Overall - Indian standards	✓	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Overall - WHO guidelines	✓	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Results from water quality testing in Bangalore's slums - Secondary source

	Slum 2 Borewell	Slum 3 Borewell	Slum 4 Borewell	Slum 8 Kaveri Tanker	Slum 9 Borewell	Slum 10 Borewell	Slum 11 Borewell	Slum 13 Borewell
Hardness	✓	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓
Hardness- WHO	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x
E-coli	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	x
Ammonia	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fluoride	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nitrate	✓	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x
Nitrate - WHO	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x
Chloride	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chloride - WHO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
Phosphorous	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Overall - Indian standards	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x
Overall - WHO guidelines	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Appendix 5: Researching Poverty Beyond the Slums

It is not surprising that I chose the slum as my empirical space of urban poverty. Slums are the chosen field-site for many researchers interested in urban poverty. Generally speaking, slums are easy to locate and relatively easy to study on and in. They have names, specific locations, many are featured on street maps and the government keeps lists of those that are 'officially' recognised. In my experience local translators were generally comfortable accompanying me to slums and because they can be quite large there is usually someone around to talk to, no matter what time of day you visit. But in addition to researchers' interest in slums, these communities are also identified and favoured by NGOs doing development for the poor, by social and political activists who want to mobilise the poor, and by government departments who want to run schemes for the poor⁸⁷. I have come to believe that this convergence of interest in the slum creates and perpetuates a 'slum-bias' when it comes to urban poverty: a bias that frequently results in other urban poor groups being ignored or overlooked by development professionals.

Even before beginning fieldwork I had fallen into slum-bias by assuming that the slum would be my empirical space for understanding urban poverty. In Bangalore this bias was authenticated. Whether it was government schemes and programs, NGO projects, or the activities of social and political activists everyone seemed to be talking about, working in, trying to mobilise or wanting to develop, people in the slums. No-one, including myself, was talking about those who may be the most marginalised and disenfranchised of the urban poor: the homeless.

It was only as I was nearing the end of my year long fieldwork period that I began to recognise 'slum-bias' in my work and started to wonder and want to know why no-one who I was engaging with was doing, or saying much about the homeless. It was almost as though these starkly visible people were invisible. I also wanted to know what their existing water situation was and what impact market oriented water reforms were having or likely

⁸⁷ The state has special departments established for providing infrastructure for slums, in Karnataka it is the *Karnataka Slum Clearance Board*.

to have on their lives. I started to discuss the idea of conducting a small study to learn about the water realities of the urban homeless with a friend from the Campaign who had since taken a position as the head ActionAid, Karnataka. My friend thought it was a good idea but by this point in time I had just over a month left to spend in Karnataka and there was simply insufficient time to take the idea forward. I returned home to New Zealand but six weeks later I was on my way back to Bangalore. My motivation for this was partly to engage more fully in the activities of the Campaign but also to pursue the urban homeless study. I spent the next six months in Bangalore and while this was not part of my official fieldwork period and nor was the urban homeless study explicitly part of my doctoral research project, I want to reflect on it briefly in this methodological discussion because it provides an illustration of my own development as a researcher and what came to be a definite blurring of boundaries between an academic researcher and an academic activist researching for the purpose of advocating for social rights and justice.

During my first year in Karnataka I had seen a number of studies on the urban poor being presented in public forums in Bangalore but to my knowledge, few, if any of these went beyond an analysis and presentation of findings to action. This was something I had come to dread could be the outcome of my interactions with people in Bangalore's slums. If I was to pursue the urban homeless study I wanted to shift from exploratory research to action-oriented research because without the intention of action, embarking on the study seemed a futile and possibly self-gratuitous activity. Within a few weeks and with the help of my friends at ActionAid we started to put the idea into action.

ActionAid Karnataka sponsors thirteen local NGOs to work as a network (the BRIDGE network), on rights based development for, and with, the urban homeless. However, over the couple of years the network had been in existence they had done little on homeless issues and the majority of their efforts had focused on slum communities - a notable case of slum-bias⁸⁸. Over a couple of meetings I discussed the idea of the study with members of the

⁸⁸ The sponsorship arrangement between ActionAid and the BRIDGE network is done through ActionAid's child sponsorship program. However, urban homeless people are perceived to be a highly mobile population and because the child sponsorship program supports the development of children for a number of years it was felt to be difficult to maintain the relationships with urban homeless people that would be required under the program. This was one reason why the BRIDGE network had done little on urban homeless issues but it was also because,

BRIDGE network and they agreed that it was feasible, necessary and timely to conduct such a study. We mapped out a study design, the objective of which was to explore the water situation of the urban homeless and their relationships with state actors, and then to develop a plan, in collaboration with homeless people on how to improve their current situation. This would require two distinct phases. First, an exploratory phase when we would submit Right to Information applications, interview government bureaucrats across eight government agencies we believed had some direct responsibility to the urban homeless, and interview and hold focus groups with people in eight urban homeless 'pockets' scattered around the city. The second phase was to consolidate the findings and develop and put in place a plan of action. The specifics of this we didn't elaborate on given that it would be dependent on what the study revealed and how, if at all, the homeless wanted to be involved.

For the most part phase one went as planned and after our initial interactions with homeless people and government agencies we planned a day-long meeting to analyse the data and to begin to develop an action plan. In my view it was critical that the urban homeless people we had interacted with be present at this meeting and the members of the BRIDGE network took on the responsibility of inviting and supporting homeless people to attend. On the day, however, no-one from urban homeless pockets that we interacted with arrived and when I asked the BRIDGE members about this some of them reluctantly informed me that they had thought it better and more appropriate that *we* analyse the situation and develop an action plan and then share this with the homeless later. I was very disappointed.

Despite this setback I continued with my goal of supporting the homeless and having them actively participate. One thing that had struck me from the interviews and focus groups that we conducted with the urban homeless was a willingness and desire among them to form networks amongst themselves and to engage directly with the state⁸⁹. Many had expressed

in my view, amongst some members of the BRIDGE network there was a misconception of the difference between homeless people and slum communities. For example, one member of the BRIDGE network identified a government recognised slum as participants for the homeless study.

⁸⁹ From my interactions with homeless people not only had I become aware of their situation and their desire to actively engage with the state, but also that many homeless lived in small community groups and in some situations the same community had lived in the same location for more than three decades. It had also become

how they wanted to be at the forefront of this with the BRIDGE network only providing a supporting role. Given this, I again started talking to my friends at ActionAid and we discussed the idea of holding a one-day consultation where the findings from the study could be presented to members of the homeless community, as well as the state agencies we had interviewed. The idea was that the program would provide a platform where the two groups (state actors and homeless people) could be brought together to share, learn from and about each other, and define some concrete steps forward.

Over the next couple of weeks I began speaking to some of the government bureaucrats that I had got to know pretty well about the possibility of holding such a consultation. To be honest they were not very interested in the idea. They thought such a meeting would be too confrontational for the government and would only arouse animosity and tension, but I persisted. After a number of long and rather emotive meetings I was able to convince a couple of bureaucrats in reasonably high positions that such a consultation would be valuable and productive and they started to support me on moving forward by guiding me on how to gain the approval and participation of the key departments and top-level bureaucrats. On their advice I drafted letters, briefs and outlines of what the consultation would entail, and in the company of one of my supportive bureaucrats I went and visited a number of state agencies, including the Government of Karnataka's Urban Development Department to whom most other urban government agencies and departments report directly to.

The program never happened, however, as no government agency was willing to take ownership for the program. One agency would say that they would participate and support the event if another one did, and that one would say they would support and participate if the other did. No one agency and no one bureaucrat would make that first seal of commitment. I shouldn't have been surprised by this. Of the eight government agencies, the nineteen government employees, and three political representatives we interviewed only one individual acknowledged that their agency had any responsibility to the urban

clear that some of the homeless people regarded themselves to part of a larger conceptual idea of a homeless 'community'.

homeless. Nevertheless, I was left feeling pretty frustrated and felt that I had let down the homeless people who had participated in the study. Talking to my supportive bureaucrats afterwards they explained to me how within the state apparatus the general feeling would be that there was no point holding a consultation between government agencies and homeless people when there were no existing policies, programs, projects or funds available for these citizens. In my mind this neglect was a large part of the purpose of the consultation. They explained how many of these “bloody fellows” simply did not really care about the needs and rights of the poorest of the poor and in having to engage with them. The same bureaucrat suggested I should write about this experience and the apathy of the state in this thesis. And so this is what I have done.

Appendix 6: Karnataka Urban Drinking Water & Sanitation Policy, 2003

Good quality reliable drinking water supply and sanitation are essential basic needs of every citizen. It has been the endeavour of successive Governments of Karnataka to satisfy this need for all its citizens. It is an on-going effort which aims at meeting the growing demand both in the urban and rural areas. The policy framework for rural drinking water provision is already in place. In view of the different institutional structure and different sets of issues involved in the delivery of the services of urban areas, it is necessary to have a separate policy statement for this sector. A detailed sector strategy paper to action plan will be issued later to carry forward the objectives outlined in this statement.

Increasing urbanization has resulted in greater pressure on the existing urban water supply and sanitation systems leading to increasing demand on the one hand to augment the source and improve distribution and on the other to increase the coverage of under ground drainage (UGD). At the same time, as stated in the State Water Policy brought out by the Department of the Water Resources, there is an urgent need to conserve the limited water resources of the State to ensure sufficient availability of water for various needs as well as for the future. The Government's efforts, therefore, have to focus on raising the levels of efficiency in the management of drinking water systems in urban areas so as to give satisfactory service to the citizens while at the same time discouraging over exploitation of resources and preventing wastage.

Objective

The Government of Karnataka in partnership with urban local bodies in the State, the Karnataka Urban Water Supply & Drainage Board (KUWS&DB) and the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will continue and strengthen its efforts to provide all residents of urban areas of the State, piped water supply and sanitation services at or near their dwellings. The efforts of the Government of Karnataka and its partner agencies will be to:

- Ensure universal coverage of water and sanitation services that people want and are willing to pay for and
- To do so in a manner that preserves the sustainability of the precious water resources of the State, protect and enhances the commercial and economical sustainability of the operations at the same time.
- Ensure a minimum level of service to all citizens.

Institutional Arrangements

Government of Karnataka: The Government of Karnataka will continue to be responsible for:

- Policy Formulation
- Ensuring provision of the bulk of the resources required for capacity creation

- Regulation, monitoring and evaluation of the efficiency of operations, including prescribing reporting requirements, procurement procedures, etc.,
- Setting minimal service standard
- Encouraging the use of public private partnerships as well as private sector participation to achieve the sector goals
- Promotion of the economic and commercial viability of water supply systems and the exploitation of economies of scale and scope by appropriate aggregation options
- Institution of necessary incentives for urban local bodies and other service providers to implement sector reforms
- Ensuring co-ordination and collaboration among the various agencies both at the policy and operational level through the establishment of appropriate committees and agencies.

Urban Local Bodies (local governments)

In accordance with the principle enshrined in Article 243 (W) of the Constitution of India read with the Twelfth Schedule, local governments will be responsible for water supply and sewerage services from water catchments to waste water treatment. The Government of Karnataka, however, will have the responsibility to monitor that local governments provide quality services in accordance with the standards prescribed at the State level. Local governments will have the choice of providing the services directly through public bodies or through such appropriate Private Sector Participation (PSP) arrangements. Given however, the paramount need for financial and commercial viability of the operations, the State will monitor strictly policies relating to minimal tariff, operations autonomy of the municipal water operations, etc.

KUWS&DB and BWSSB

The Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board will continue to be responsible for capacity creations and augmentation in all local governments and O & M in selected local governments for the present. Over the medium term, the KUWS&DB will be restructured and its role redefined. In the longer term the KUWS&DB could become a publicly owned independent provider of technical assistance and management support to local governments who do not have adequate capacity. Similarly, the appropriate role of BWSSB will be defined in the action for the Bangalore City and surrounding areas.

Tariff

Given that piped water supply is expensive, it is necessary both for natural resource sustainability and commercial viability of operations to recover from the users of water, the full cost of providing service. The longer-term objective is to establish an appropriate cost recovery mechanism through adequate tariff to ensure that revenues cover operations and maintenance costs, debt service plus a reasonable return on capital. In the medium term, however, subsidies will continue to be needed and will be focused in areas such as pockets and communities of extreme poverty and investments with large-scale externalities like wastewater treatment.

Tariff will be structured in a manner such as to disincentives excessive consumption and wastage of water, whilst ensuring at least a minimum “life line” supply to the poor. In a realistic time frame of about five years, efforts will be made and local governments encouraged to achieve 100 percent metering and volumetric pricing based on long run marginal costs.

Capital investments

Though considerable amount of capital expenditure has been undertaken for creation of water supply capacity, this has not been the result entirely of a coherent plan. The consequences have been

- Mismatched capacities
- No objection criterion based prioritization
- Incremental and hence expensive capital decisions leading to duplication and avoidable expenditures

To deal with all urban water supply investment issues appropriate state level mechanisms will be established. A revised demand driven urban water action plan based on the principles outlined in this statement will be prepared and the GoK will adopt this after discussing it with all the relevant agencies. Future capital investments in the sector will be in accordance with this plan. Investments will be guided by the principle of optimal utilization of water and water system infrastructure and financial resources and the financial as well as the social returns on investment.

Private Sector Participation (PSP)

To improve efficiency in service provision, continuously update technology and ultimately bring in private investment into sector, the GoK will actively encourage private sector participation. Given the current state of the sector, PSP will necessarily have to be gradual. Preparatory work for PSP in the sector like fostering a culture of commercialization, encouraging out sourcing, building local capacity and most importantly identifying and expediting the necessary legislative institutional and regulatory changes that are necessary of PSP will be undertaken in the meanwhile. Given the very different sizes of urban areas in the State, the GoK will allow a range of different PSP methods of Service provision and service providers.

Next Steps

The sector strategy and action plan to be announced as follow up to this policy contain details of the legislative, institutional and co-ordination mechanisms that are needed to be put in place to carry forward the policy.

Appendix 7: KUWASIP Stakeholders- Content, Form and Medium

Stakeholder Category	Content (Message)	Means of Delivery	
		Form	Medium
Local politicians and policy makers who influence water policy.	The World Bank project offers effective solutions to the community's long-term water demands. 24 X7 water is possible. They are an important stakeholder in making this possible. India has the technical expertise and practical experience to help design and implement a project that can make 24 X & a reality.	Meetings Follow-up visits Concise materials--a few	Face -to- face, phone calls and letters Fact sheets, a brochure, a few press clippings.
Water officials – engineers and allocators.	By providing 24 X7 water Urban Local Bodies can create goodwill Providing water 24 X 7 is economically viable. Citizens will be willing to pay more for their water if quality and service is assured. Public education is important. A community based water management system will increase the efficiency of water distribution and supply.	Face-to-face meetings with all concerned personnel Disseminating information Encouraging personnel to be part of the communication hub	News articles, fact-sheets, brochures, and resources. Training to build capacity
Consumers – especially women and youth	24 X 7 water is possible 24 X 7 water has health as well as economic advantages Community participation is vital to ensure 24 X 7 water Consumers will have to pay more for water but in return they get better quality and service. Water will be billed as per usage	Print Face-to-face meetings Audio- visual communication channels	Newsletter and newspaper articles, Op-ed columns, seminars, in-store handouts, radio/television interviews, bill stuffers, special events, public service announcements, and billboards. Traditional media Training Public discussion forums
Media, environmental groups	24 X 7 water is possible 24 X 7 water has health as well as economic advantages Community participation is vital to ensure 24 X 7 water Consumers will have to pay more for water but in return they get better quality and service. Water will be billed as per usage	Print Face-to-face meetings	A simple phone call or informal note to a local media representative Visits to demonstration areas Press releases

Source: Samaj Vikas Development Support Organisation, p. 68

Appendix 8: Demands to the Chief Minister from the Campaign Against Water Privatisation - Karnataka

1. Each and every citizen receives a sufficient amount of water irrespective of capacity to pay.
2. Democratically elected State and Local governments, as per their constitutional responsibilities, provide all citizens with water.
3. Private companies not have any role in the supply of water to the people, except in construction of pipelines, tanks, etc. as civil contractors.
4. The BWSSB, KUWSDB and the local bodies be strengthened and mandated to provide water entirely on their own.
5. That subsidized water for the rich, consumed above the amount necessary for subsistence, be forthwith done away with and groundwater regulation brought in to regulate groundwater use equitably.
6. The tariff for water be so regulated that there is a cross - subsidy to the poor by the sections of society consuming quantities more than that needed for subsistence.
7. That water be recognized as community resource belonging to all and the state be recognized as its regulator. The government should make a commitment that ownership of water will never be privatised.
8. A pro-poor policy on water be immediately developed in consultation with elected representatives, community based organisations, mass organizations and NGOs that ensures free access to water for the urban poor required for subsistence until they realize their right to living wages enshrined in the constitution.
9. That there be greater representation to all stakeholders on decision - making bodies with regard to urban water and more open consultation, greater transparency and *suo moto* supply of information in the formulation and implementation of all programmes and projects in the urban water sector.
10. Evolve alternative management systems, other than privatisation, involving the people as shareholders and managers to ultimately transfer the ownership and control of water to communities as already foreseen in the National Policy on Water.
11. The State Government immediately rescinds the decisions to privatise the water supply in Hubli, Dharwad, Gulbarga, Belgaum and Bangalore's local governments.
12. The proposal to privatise water services in the GBWASP project in Bangalore be immediately abandoned and the responsibility handed over to BWSSB.

13. The government must reconnect all the disconnected public taps in the city and also put up taps in areas where taps are not installed yet, irrespective of whether these are undeclared slums.