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Table of Contents

Articles

Book Review

Miscellaneous

Being or Becoming Modern —Clean Drinking Water Projects in Gilgit

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Abstract

This article looks at the discourse about water quality in Gilgit city and how clean water provision and consumption are influenced by and reinforce the fragmented water supply system in Gilgit. Both the discourse about clean water quality and the installation of water filtration plants in Gilgit revolve around local ideas of modernity based on Western-style notions of progress, as well as on global developmental and modernization concepts.

Introduction

This article looks at the discourse about water quality and practices of water provision in Gilgit city. I want to argue that they revolve around local ideas of modernity which are based on Western-style notions thereof, as purported by global developmental and modernisation concepts. In Gilgit, the provision of clean drinking water is a central issue for the public sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private actors. However, the question is how do these efforts actually work out?[1] The provision of water to the growing population of

[1]The article relies on approximately six months of fieldwork in Gilgit city (foremost in the ward of Jutial, the fastest growing area in the city, both in regard to territorial expansion of the settlement area and the large amount of in-migration from neighbouring rural areas). The research was conducted from April to September 2012 as part of a doctoral research in social anthropology on the social and cultural meaning of water in the high mountain areas of Pakistan. The research is a sub-project of the Crossroads Asia Competency Network, which

Gilgit, and its subsequent consumption, is fragmented on multiple levels — this fragmentation is criticised by all actors, but at the same time it is reinforced time and again through individual and institutional engagement. Following Bakker´s (2010) layout of fragmented water supplies, the article will trace the fragmented network and then discuss what this fragmentation suggests about the experience of urbanisation and of modernity. Water is not only the basis on which to make the desert inhabitable, in which Gilgit is situated. Water is also taken as a basis for health and hygiene and becomes a marker of modernisation and civilisation, whereby the aforementioned hygiene, including clean bodies, neat houses and good health, becomes a moral virtue. As Bakker proclaims, "the experience of modernity is intimately, viscerally associated with water" (Bakker 2010, 54).

The inhabitants of Gilgit relate the ideas of modernity and progress (regarding water and other matters) to two different sources. On the one hand they are linked to Islamic teachings and associated demands to develop society and individuals according to Islamic guidance,[2] although these were hardly mentioned by any of my interlocutors. Instead, they were rather eclipsed by a discourse on modernity which draws on global developmental modernisation concepts on the other hand. Based on my interlocutors´ evidence I take up on their accounts, in that their ideas on development and progress (*taraqqi*) strongly resonate with notions of material and economic progress and societal changes following a "Western" model.[3] Indicators or markers of progress, development and modernity in Gilgit include, for example, a Western-modelled form of education, health facilities, family planning, monetary system and market

is generously funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research. Fieldwork access was kindly granted by the Pakistani Ministry of Interior.

[2]See also Halvorson 2011, 284-286.

[3]I argue thus, even if this may be resented as uncritical of postcolonial discourses on agency and critical development theory.

economy, as well as female education and employment.[4] At the same time we can assume that local ideas of progress and societal change oscillate between (diverse) Islamic ideals and interpretations (ideas which are furthered by processes of Neo-Islamisation) and a state and NGOs (like that of the Aga Khan Development Network) which sway between Western and Islamic modernity.

Discussions about such modern features often overlap with what Mader sums up as essentially *public goods*, that is "basic services, essential public services, services of general interest or public utilities" such as peace, order, education, healthcare, electric power and sanitation, which are usually expected to be provided by the state (Mader 2011, 7), both in Gilgit and in many other settings as well. Although Mader defines them as public goods, he does not define the existence of such services or goods as essentially necessary; on the contrary, he argues that they are sometimes even absent. Instead he defines them as public goods, since they are attainable only through collective action:

> The key characteristic of these goods and services is that, to a large degree, their benefits are difficult to internalise privately for their producers and consumers, while the exclusion of some users generates detriments for others. For this reason they are referred to […] as public goods. Due to the spread of benefits over wider groups of actors, the question of how public goods are produced and distributed is inherently linked with the problem of collective action, whereby social actors must cooperate in order to achieve their shared interest (Mader 2011, 7-8).

As such, I wish to argue that clean water, too, is a public good that the public has to provide through collective action. Essentially the modern state argues that it is responsible for the provision of this resource through the public sector. While this is also the case in Pakistan, in Gilgit neighbourhood communities supplement the state's efforts (for example through private and

[4]See also Varley 2010, 64.

NGO engagement), the effects of which I shall discuss in this article.

Looking at the drinking water infrastructure in Gilgit, we will see how ideas of modernity transfigure in effect, and then ask what this tells about the modern state and about modernity in the city. The local ideal of a water supply—as claimed by most residents, NGO workers and government planners—is the consistent and equal provision of water facilitated through state institutions. The provision of "clean water" is understood as an essential basic quality for individual and public health. Ideas and ideals of an integrated, reliable, equal and responsible form of water provision are promoted both by government project concepts and policies and by the powerful images and policies of the Development apparatus, which comprises transnational Development organisations and donor agencies.[5] Ultimately, though, their involvement reinforces fragmentation.

However, diverse dilemmas get confused with practices and discourses. Firstly, we can see that global Developmental modernisation concepts work with categories and binary oppositions that simplify complex realities. Prevalent theoretical and local ideas of modernity are inverted through NGO and government interventions. The Government´s effort to establish water filtration plants, for example, demonstrates that modernisation does not necessarily mean a shedding of tradition, as is often assumed. What is modern and what is traditional can hardly be separated; centre and periphery can barely be characterised as neatly as is often assumed, and Gilgit does not comply with the "urban primacy" on which most Development programmes rely. Neither can private, public, formal nor

[5]Following Amita Baviskar, I will distinguish *Development* with a capital "D" as referring to "the official world of Development i.e. projects of welfare initiated by the state or NGOs and often funded by international agencies" against *development* as "a historical process of capitalist accumulation and legitimation where Development is embedded in a larger cultural politics that includes resource extraction, dispossession and displacement" (Baviskar 2012, 127).

informal be separated easily and successfully.[6] Moreover, global Developmental modernisation concepts depart from the idea that urban centres are already modern. As a result, their appliance in Gilgit-Baltistan creates two sources of friction for the residents of Gilgit: firstly, infrastructure for clean drinking water in many cases becomes more "modern" in the rural areas while the urban wards lag behind in this regard. Secondly, once an NGO gets involved in the city, urban residents are confronted with "health and hygiene training"-sessions that show them up as what the residents themselves regard as "backward".[7] Thus, NGOs may at the same time shape *and* unsettle prevalent local as well as theoretical ideas of modernity.

Secondly, in and exclusion in water supply structures may elicit questions on political engagement and political categories. For example, we will have to question what constitutes a "citizen" in Gilgit after all. Looking at the urban water provision, we become aware of how much political representation and public sector service provisions are in fact related to constructions of citizenship.

After a short overview of theories on modernity and ideas about modern water supply systems, I want to show that in Gilgit an integrated network in fact does constitute the Government´s "modernist ideal" for an urban water supply. In effect though, even while the federal and the local Governments as well as NGOs continue to strive for modern facilities for the city's residents, Gilgit's water supply system is significantly

[6]Cf. Bakker, who also challenges the common notion of distinguishing different levels or groups of actors such as "private" "public" or "informal". Furthermore she calls attention to the term "network", which is often employed. She claims that while it evokes the idea of an "interconnectedness", it is not necessarily suitable for the reality of a fragmented water provision and use (Bakker 2010, 21).

[7]While Development organisations work with the notion that they are advancing "backward" areas and "backward" people, this "backwardness" can either be used strategically by the people themselves in order to attract projects or may be understood as an insult.

fragmented. This fragmentation owes to factionalism, local and specific ownership rights, the matter-of-fact distinction between "residents" and "citizens", as well as a lack of funds and resources. Thus, I will first describe the pattern of fragmentation of the current water supply in Gilgit and how it is substantially fragmented on both the supply and the consumer side. Secondly, I wish to retrace how this fragmentation is shaped by the processes of exclusion. Following Knauft (2002), I argue that a "sense of being modern" is created hand in hand with processes of othering, i.e. the imagination of being modern oneself and the imagination of an opposed other which is backward and not (yet) modern. Thirdly, I wish to trace what this multiple fragmentation suggests about citizenship and urbanisation.

Theories of Modernity

In academia, the term "modernity" denotes two different notions (although they are historically connected). Initially the term referred to a historical European process in the 17th to 18th centuries. Later it became synonymous with a meta-narrative for progress and development and the idea of "being contemporary" (in comparison to the past and to the rest of the world). Theories of modernity abound, and the initial idea of a global and inevitable process leading to homogenisation is mostly questioned. Eisenstadt (1966, 2002) for example proposes an adaptation of a linear, homogenous concept of modernity, to allow for so-called "multiple modernities" that exist side-by-side with the Western patterns of modernity (Eisenstadt 2002, 2-3, cited in Houben and Schrempf 2008, 9). Gaonkar (2001) suggests the concept of "alternative modernities" and claims that modernity is everywhere and inescapable, but it may take on a different form than in the West and may develop differently at different sites. Friedman (2002) argues that "modernity is social order per se. Its own discourse and logic is a social construct based on binary oppositions of (progressive) modernity versus (backward or lost) tradition" (Houben and Schrempf 2008, 11). Like Friedman´s, many concepts work with binary oppositions

such as modernity as opposed to tradition, centre as opposed to periphery and homogenizing processes as opposed to heterogeneity. Looking at the data collected in Gilgit though, even if the variables repeatedly do appear in local discourse (especially the idea of a "backward" other), I did not find these standard oppositions applying to the suggested contrasting polarity. For example, in the field of water supply, the standard assumption of a modern urban centre in contrast to rural peripheries lagging behind was in the first instance reversed in Gilgit-Baltistan by the interference of the Development apparatus, thereby inverting the very assumption. Additionally, following Appadurai (1996) and Houben and Schrempf (2008), I want to maintain that local practices are not turning from "traditional" to "modern"; rather, as the authors argue, "traditional practices are both defended and transformed in the process of becoming modern" (Houben and Schrempf 2008, 11). Modernity does not necessarily involve a shedding of tradition; instead, it seems that changes in the system will be successful when they actually rely on traditional ideas and expectations.

Since the opening of the Karakorum Highway in 1978, Gilgit-Baltistan's access to and from down-country Pakistan (as well as China) has been strengthened and greatly facilitated change in the region. In the beginning of the 1980s, Development organisations began to establish in Gilgit—foremost the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and its institutions—and to promote images of and aspirations for development and modernity in Gilgit-Baltistan. This quest, to become what the residents of Gilgit themselves call "developed" and "aware" (some even say "Westernised"), is largely appreciated and pursued by the majority of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. Although academic critics have pointed out that "modernity" is neither limited to the West nor that "the rest" only imitates a Western model, the local discourse on modernity and development in Gilgit-Baltistan resembles the concept of modernity proffered by Bruce Knauft, who maintains that social and economic development is often related to people's aspirations for a better life and that modernity is often "defined as the images and institutions associated with Western-style

progress and development in a contemporary world" (Knauft 2002, 18, emphasis removed). As he explicates, modernity "is often associated with either the incitement or the threat of individual desire to improve social life by subordinating or superseding what is locally configured as backward, undeveloped, or superstitious" (ibid.). Modernity and progress thus may be perceived through the creation and projection of alterity; people imagine themselves as more modern, more forward or more developed than a supposed "other". In Gilgit, discourses about modernity are likewise enmeshed in the pursuit of upward social mobility and in processes of social exclusion and othering. Such processes e.g. also influence the in and exclusion of residents and neighborhood communities in water provision schemes, as discussed below.

Modernist Ideal Water Supply

Following Bakker (2010) I begin with what a modern ideal water supply entails. The construction of, access to and use of water networks depend, among other things, on the physical landscape, economic possibilities and cultural processes. They are also influenced by global and local ideas of development, Development programmes and technologies. All such aspects influence the inclusion of certain people in the network and the exclusion of others, as well as the terms and conditions of inclusion (cf. Bakker 2010, 131). Comparing different international urban water supply systems, Bakker argues that in the 20th century the municipal management of water was the "most conventional approach to managing water supply systems", aiming at an abundant water supply, ownership rights promising equal supply to all citizens and a commitment to social equity and to universal provision (ibid., 31).

As Bakker states, cities especially are expected to conform to the "modernist ideal" of water supply that aims at "large technical systems and integrated networks" (ibid., 24). Although the contemporary ideal is to provide water equally to all inhabitants, this is not always the case, for example due to

fragmentation at the supplier and consumer levels (ibid.). Nonetheless, this modernist ideal, which is intended to service all residents, is often not put into effect. Firstly, the network often does not "operate homogeneously over the urban landscape" (ibid., 22), which means that certain urban residents may be excluded. Secondly, according to the standard notion of "urban primacy", most modern activities, infrastructure and economic production are likely to be concentrated in urban centre(s), while rural or peripheral places are excluded or marginalised. Public resources may be "spent on the privileged consumption of a small minority of urban residents; only these citizens are considered to be political constituents of society with full entitlements to state services" (ibid., 49). The question which ensues, and which is also relevant in the context of Gilgit, is ultimately, who is considered a "citizen" with the right to certain state services and support? Especially with regard to limited resources, not all residents and populaces may be granted access to state services. Furthermore, provision by government or municipal administrations and institutions may easily be handicapped by poor management (e.g. environmental degradation or neglect of certain populaces). They may not have the means of monitoring, evaluating and penalizing declining performance, overstaffing, bribery and corruption, or establish projects with heavy subsidies and failing hierarchies (ibid., 43-4). The necessary requisites for government or municipal provision (democratic accountability, technical and fiscal resources and the ability to collect and synthesise information on a large scale) provide both possible advantages and disadvantages in regard to an equitable and reliable provision (ibid., 31-2). The biggest issue in her eyes, though, is what she calls "Governance failure": when institutional water management does not effectively incorporate the needs of *all* citizens. Bound by fiscal, managerial and social constraints, governmental services are often not extended to the whole population, especially "when there is a mismatch in decision making between citizenship and associated political rights, on the one hand, and institutional and cultural practices on the other" (ibid., 45).This means that there are always some people

(e.g. those in new or illegal settlements) who are "excluded from the project and promise of modernization" (ibid., 48).

When government services are incomplete, alternative strategies such as developing small artisanal technologies and strategies emerge in order to fulfil the needs of, and to provide water for, members of "the public" (ibid., 21), and often, these are points of social and political struggles (ibid., 29). As Bakker explains for such fragmented systems:

> Acquiring water is a complex and time-consuming task, and it requires intimate knowledge of the political ecology of the city's water: where it flows at different times of year [sic], how much it costs and how those costs vary, how trustworthy different suppliers are, and how much water quality varies across time and space (ibid., 21).

Accordingly I will now describe the fragmented social landscape and the fragmented waterscape of Gilgit, in which the modernising discourse and practices partake.

Fragmented Social Landscapes

Gilgit-Baltistan is an area in the north of and administered by Pakistan. It has a political set-up resembling that of the Pakistani provinces, especially since the institution of the "Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-Governance) Order, 2009". While the Gilgit-Baltistan Council under the Prime Minister of Pakistan takes care of larger projects and of revenue-generating resources such as electricity and bulk water storage, the Local Bodies, the local Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly and the Gilgit-Baltistan Administration, located in Gilgit, are in charge of drinking water supplies, irrigation canals, drainage and embankments.

Gilgit is the urban and administrative capital of Gilgit-Baltistan. The city has a population that is estimated at between

85,500[8]and 150,000[9]. Owing to births, the immigration of people from neighbouring valleys and a small number of immigrants from down-country Pakistan, Gilgit´s population increases steadily. The population is heterogeneous regarding geographical and ancestral origin, language and sectarian affiliation, which constitute "multiple pluralities" of belonging, which often has severe significance and implications. Although there is no census data on this issue, one can assume a majority of around 50 to 60 percent Shia for Gilgit, with large minorities of Sunni and Ismaili (Khan 2002).[10] In the last few decades, sectarian denomination has become the most important criterion for differentiation, which has even changed from a mere criterion of identity to one of alterity and exclusion (Ali 2010, 745-6).[11] Nonetheless, in different contexts people may refer to specific identities for in- and exclusion (Sökefeld 1997a, 1997b).

For most people from the surrounding valleys, Gilgit is

[8]The latest available national census is from 1998 (Government of Pakistan 2000). Projecting the past growth rates, we can assume an estimated population of 85,500 for Gilgit city and 1.3 million for Gilgit-Baltistan in the year 2013.

[9]Due to extensive immigration, the Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency in 2013 calculates with a growth rate higher than those of the previous years and estimates a population of around 150,000 for Gilgit (Government of Gilgit-Baltistan 2013, viii).

[10]There are no official estimations available, since the census only gives the option of "Muslim" or other religions such as "Hindu" or "Christian". Thus, such numbers vary in local discourse and the absence of actual data contributes to a "politics of numbers" used in local discourse. While in Gilgit there are large numbers of Shia, Sunni and Ismaili, most districts in Gilgit-Baltistan in contrast have a majority of one sect with a minority of either other sect.

[11]Ali argues along the concept of a "sectarian imaginary" which plays out in different aspects of everyday life (Ali 2010, 745-6). Sectarian discrimination today has repercussions in almost all aspects of life, be it education (e.g. Ali 2010), neo-natal and medical services (Varley 2010), residential spaces and spatial mobility (Grieser and Sökefeld in print), or, as I will argue here, practices pertaining to water.

the first "place to go" when it comes to education, health and employment. Although the respective infrastructure is not perceived as ideal, it is still more substantial in scope than that in the surrounding valleys. On the other hand, this infrastructure, along with governmental and NGO administrative institutions, is thought to provide possibilities of social upward mobility. For this reason, an increasing number of people not only make short visits to Gilgit, but also take up permanent residence. Almost all families to whom I talked, and who had migrated to the city from neighbouring valleys in the past years, cited education, health and employment as reasons for their shift to Gilgit. However, hardly any of them consider Gilgit as the ultimate destination, as many immigrants—even if they buy land and build a house—speak of the city as a transitory place where they remain, for example, while they educate their children, before moving on to another area or going back to their original homes. As a consequence of the steady growth of the population, residential areas in Gilgit are also steadily growing. New houses are being built on former agricultural land and on adjoining barren land, and many of these new houses are being rented out, bringing in higher returns than agriculture (cf. Gratz 2006, 211; Sökefeld 1998, 144). Correspondingly, people seek jobs in non-farm employment and increasingly turn their backs on subsistence agriculture. While some keep small plots to grow animal fodder for one or two cows or goats, most families nowadays retain only vegetable gardens. Accordingly, water consumption has moved from agricultural to domestic use.

Gilgit´s Waterscape

The water supply system in Gilgit is fragmented at three levels. First of all it is fragmented concerning the different sources that provide water to the city. Secondly, it is fragmented at the network level due to these different sources and a number of government, NGO and private actors (although it is debatable whether it is profitable or even possible to distinguish actors accordingly). The Government's schemes do not adhere to the

"modern ideal" of an "integrated network" though (cf. Bakker 2010, 21-2), as they provide neither (potable) water proficiently nor sewerage. Instead, water infrastructure is distributed unevenly throughout different parts of the city. Since the urban and social landscapes are factionalised, water is distributed unevenly among neighbourhood communities based on different locations and times of settlement, as well as the sectarian and regional affiliations of its residents. Thirdly, the water supply is fragmented at the household level, as people make use of multiple sources.

Water Sources

While water is abundant in Gilgit-Baltistan, in the form of snow and glacier-melt water, it is not easily accessible or usable. Rain- and snowfall are higher at higher altitudes, the inhabitable areas including Gilgit though are situated in a so-called "cold desert climate". Gilgit lies at an altitude of approximately 1,500 m.a.s.l., and the mean annual rainfall is around 130 mm (Government of Pakistan 2000). Gilgit's irrigation and household water is thus primarily accessible from springs, two snow-fed streams (*naulah*) and the Gilgit River.

In order to make the bare mountain slopes inhabitable, channel systems have been constructed by inhabitants in collective efforts for many years like in the whole of Gilgit-Baltistan (cf. Sökefeld 1998, 145-6). Most of the agricultural and residential water demands in Gilgit are met by water from two small side valleys (*naulah* in Urdu / *gah* in Shina) to the south of the city, one called Kar Gah or Kargah Naulah, the other called Jutial Naulah. Gilgit lies at the Gilgit River, but although water is constantly present, it is not easily accessible due to the high cliff running along the river basin. Thus, only minor channels divert some of the river water. While it is also possible to access river water through long diversion channels upstream, this possibility is hardly developed for Gilgit proper, since most parts of the city are rather high above the water level; only small patches of land near the river are thus watered with

river water. Instead, river water is by some inhabitants fetched with containers or tankers. Additionally, since approximately 30 years, household, government and NGO hand- and electric pumps have been installed to a limited extent to pump up water from the river bank and to extract ground water in the lower lying areas of Gilgit.[12]

Thus, until recently, only canals (*khul / dalja*) and channels (*nali / yap*), diverting *naulah* water, provided water for agricultural irrigation and household consumption,[13] and *naulah* water remains the main source of water in Gilgit. The channels were mostly built and maintained by the residents themselves, and mostly at the neighbourhood or village level. New channels, built in order to irrigate or settle new areas, were often constructed by the people under the authority of local rulers. Since around the 1960s, a complementary pipe system has been constructed for household/drinking water by the Local Government and Rural Development Department (LG&RD) and Public Works Department (PWD). Nowadays, the household water is distributed through the Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA).

Each water infrastructure system has specific qualities and conditions under which specific quantities of water are provided. The consumption of the *naulah* water especially is often fraught with rivalry and even exclusion; therefore, water in Gilgit is not necessarily a public good as commonly defined. The commonly employed definition criteria of non-excludability and non-rivality do not apply here. But even so, as Mader suggests, water and sanitation are essentially resources with public goods characteristics since they can only be attained through collective efforts (Mader 2011, 7-8). Additionally, water has an intrinsic value, yields public benefits and constitutes an essential for a "decent life" (ibid., 13-4). At the same time, as Mader argues, water and sanitation "have multiple

[12]According to the Environmental Protection Agency there are around nine pumping stations, most without filtration treatments though (Government of Gilgit-Baltistan 2013, viii-ix).

[13]See e.g. IUCN 2003, 33-4.

statuses which change over time and can be affected through human activity. It is up to societies to determine which status(es) receive emphasis in their water governance systems and water projects" (ibid., 17). Thus we have to understand the weight of the social and cultural handling of what is often thought of as a mere physical essence or natural resource. As Linton maintains, "water is what we make of it" and hence we have to study also "the institutional, social and political dimensions of the water-society nexus" (Linton 2010, 48).

Government Efforts for an Integrated Network

Although commonly, as also in Gilgit, "integrated networks" constitute the "modernist ideal" for water supply (cf. Bakker 2010, 24), Gilgit´s water supply does not actually conform to this idea, because it is fragmented through personal, community, Government and NGO interference in line with both material infrastructure and actual services involved in providing water to households and gardens. At least since the 1980s, the Government has toyed with the idea of an integrated network, both for fresh water supply and for sewerage, but implementation has not yet begun. One case in point is a feasibility study in 1987/88, set up to discuss the option to construct an integrated sewerage network. The report opted for an integrated system for the whole city, in order to solve the issues of wastewater. The sewerage system was proposed in order to contribute to public health and to prevent the appearance and transmission of waterborne diseases and additionally to solve problems of water-logging in the plains of Gilgit. Domestic waste water at that time mostly flowed from sullage drains or irrigation channels, and it was ultimately discharged into the river (the report states that faeces are collected in cesspits and then removed). The sewerage system was proposed in order to collect all waste water and discharge and dissolve both into the river. The planners advised to remove floating matter beforehand, in order to "keep an aesthetically beautiful [river] environment" (Government of Gilgit-Baltistan

and Northern Areas Public Works Department 1988). Although the plan calculated population growth from around 40,000 in 1988 to 140,000 in the coming 30 years, the sewerage system was ultimately not built. Ideas for integrated networks were taken up again recently in so-called "pilot projects" for a "Sanitary and Sewerage System for Gilgit Town" and a "Chief Minister´s Special Package for Clean Drinking Water in Gilgit-Baltistan", although their approval is still pending.

Principally, in Gilgit-Baltistan, public sector institutions of the Planning Department under the direction of the Local Bodies or (as was the case in the past few years) the Legislative Assembly plan water supply infrastructure. After approval, they are developed by the Public Works Department (PWD). The Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) is formally responsible for the provision of water. The standards for drinking water are since recently provided by the Environmental Protection Agency established in 2006. Although water is provided to the population free of cost, the provision is fragmented in terms of availability and equity, since it is not operated homogeneously over Gilgit´s urban and social landscape. An open system for irrigation exists besides a closed one for household consumption, and both are not automatically extended, for example, to newly established neighbourhoods. Based on local claims to customary ownership rights, most wards are serviced on specific terms every few days, while some neighbourhoods may regularly be bereft of water, especially during times of shortage in winter and spring, when the first priority of water supply lies with the old settlers' core settlements and (former) irrigation areas. Especially during winter and spring, when the melting of snow is negligible, there is only a small amount of *naulah*-water. In spring this water is primarily channelled to neighbourhoods that insist on traditional ownership rights. These rights were fixed in the *wajib-ul-arz*, the written record of customary rights fixed during the time of British Rule, which leave the local Government with a negligible amount of water

for new settlements.[14] While essentially public sector institutions are supposed to work on the basis of equal rights for all citizens, water, and even the necessary water infrastructure is not provided in all parts of the city, or only after many years and substantial efforts of the inhabitants themselves (lack of funds being the primary reason mentioned). At the same time, when infrastructure is extended to new parts of the city, the provision of water is still not guaranteed, as old wards and core settlements are prioritized.

While the legitimacy of the government rests on the promise to extend "the material entitlements of modernity", such as utility services, to all and everyone, this is not necessarily the case in Gilgit. This means that there are always some sections of the populace (e.g. those in new settlements) who will be, at least for the time being, omitted from the "project and promise of modernization" (cf. Bakker 2010, 48). Public resources are often spent first on privileged wards in the city, which are inhabited by "Gilgitis"—people who were born in and belong to Gilgit and thus cast their vote in Gilgit itself. New settlements, which are often established and inhabited by immigrants, are said to be lost to investment in the view of political representatives, since many local small-scale infrastructure projects in the last years were initiated not on the need analysis of the Public Works Department or the Councillors, i.e. the representatives of the Local Bodies, but instead by political representatives, i.e. the members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). Under the Chief Minister´s Special Package, these MLAs in the past years, had a yearly budget at their disposal, in order to spend on such small local infrastructure projects. Many immigrants though return to their home villages to elect the respective member of the legislative assembly there. Thus, many MLAs of Gilgit´s wards regard investments in the immigrants´ settlements as investments which will not pay off for them, i.e. they would not secure them votes in upcoming elections. Accordingly, only

[14]One member of the Legislative Assembly, for example, complained that while the PWD was doing good work, traditional water rights are the actual problem within water provision to new settlements.

those who vote on the ground, i.e. "citizens", not "residents", are considered political constituents in the full sense and enjoy full attention and privileges to the services of the representatives of Gilgit (see also Bakker 2010, 49).

Fragmentation on the Household Level

Thus, when government services are incomplete, alternative strategies emerge in order to fulfil the needs of the people. While Bakker argues that often bureaucracies dominate in developmental states (Bakker 2010, 28), in Gilgit-Baltistan it is active citizens who can and must engage in infrastructure and service provision, for example in regard to water.

We find individual, unregulated and illegal (although tolerated) approaches tapping into the existing system, as well as small-scale artisanal technologies devised by individuals, communities and NGOs,[15] which aim at providing water for "the public" (cf. ibid., 29). At the same time this distinction between "public" and "private" is not as clear-cut as it might seem at first glance. We have to bear in mind that all institutions, be they governmental or non-governmental, are made up individuals from "the public", thereby leading to a blurring of terms such as "private", "public" and "institutional". "The public" does not necessarily refer to the whole population, and people use "private" strategies to approach both governmental and non-governmental service providers equally, for example by drawing on extended networks of families, faith communities or a sense of belonging to a shared place of origin.

Interestingly though, because of—or perhaps despite of—fragmentation and different options, the discursive reactions of people to questions regarding water supply can be diametrically opposed. While some people maintain that water is

[15]Since the 1980s, NGOs (especially AKRSP and its offspring WASEP) have provided support to communities in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral for the installation of pumps and supply systems for river water. Due to the policy of funding agencies, though, they have only worked in Gilgit itself for the last five to ten years.

no problem, others complain that there is either no water or only dirty water, and that the water supply is fraught with problems concerning its quantity and seasonal availability, local ownership rights and declining quality.

Although a great number of people did not point out this fragmentation as problematic in itself, the efforts they expended to obtain water were vast. Many people, especially in the new settlements, complained that they were not happy with the quality and quantity of water they received. They pointed out that there was no public integrated network, and often they had to organise water supply privately through "self-help" ("*apni madad aap ke tahat*"). The most basic—and thus often the first resort—is to fetch water with a bucket or canister from the *naulah* or river. NGO help is provided for communities on a neighbourhood level, lifting water from the river (with an NGO / community system e.g. of AKRSP). Thus it is equally limited in provision and outreach. NGO engagement depends on different criteria such as access to the location, the engagement and investment of the residents themselves in the processes of acquisition, installation and maintenance, as well as contributions to a maintenance fund and payment for respective amounts of water. Individual household pumps for groundwater depend on groundwater availability, which is only regular in parts of Gilgit situated on the plains, and also on the availability of electricity, since hardly anyone resorts to other options besides electric motor pumps. In addition to fixed infrastructure, private vendors flexibly and on a small scale through tankers provide water from different sources and of different quality, based on the economic potential of the buyers.

Although most families can access different sources, one can hardly say that these complement each other particularly well. Based on the long-standing practice of organising water resources oneself, and since an integrated network is still absent, what results can be called "solutions of varying degrees of equity" (Bakker 2010, 27), often to the disadvantage of new settlers. In contrast, families who regard themselves as "old settlers" or "original inhabitants" (*mutulphau, pushtune bashinde*) hardly compare the ways in which water is provided.

Even if the water they receive might be of doubtful quality, they at least have access and the right to water throughout the year. Many are even sceptical and critical about new installations and new infrastructure, arguing that they may lose their inherited entitlement to the *naulah* water to outsiders and new settlers. As Sökefeld argues, those who regard themselves as old settlers feel a "sense of deprivation" which goes hand in hand with "a lament about the loss of importance" (Sökefeld 1998, 143). As in Sökefeld's discussion about land, water can be understood nowadays as a "symbol of dispossession", where modern developments such as land reforms of the Sikh Dogra rule, the involvement of Pakistani state authorities, and processes of social change challenge the traditional "moral and social order" (cf. ibid., 138, 144).

Clean Water

Bearing in mind the basic fragmentation of the water supply system though, we may now turn to the idea of *clean drinking water*. In 1994, the Supreme Court of Pakistan declared that every person had the right to unpolluted water. Under the National Drinking Water Policy, the Government of Pakistan recognised in 2009 that access to safe drinking water is a basic human right. This affirms that it is the state´s responsibility to ensure an adequate quantity of drinking water for all citizens "at an affordable cost and in an equitable, efficient and sustainable manner". Drinking water here refers to "water used for domestic purposes including drinking, cooking, hygiene and other domestic uses", thereby fulfilling National Drinking Water Standards (Government of Pakistan 2009).

Before the active state involvement in issues of *clean* drinking water through the Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency (GB-EPA) in 2007, UNICEF and AKDN institutions started to test water samples in Gilgit-Baltistan in the 1990s, in order to make people aware of water-borne diseases. Many interlocutors complained that according to these tests, the water was becoming increasingly dirtier and unfit for human

consumption, due to mud and sand as well as bacteriological contamination and insects. They point to different sources of pollution in the *naulah*, such as cattle waste, chemical fertilisers and contamination by people who wash their clothes and cars in the water source before the water intake into the pipe system. In spite of this, diverse Government employees in the water sector with whom I talked, dismissed claims that the water they distribute is of dubious quality. Instead, they stated that the water from the river might *look* dirty, but is actually clean, and that the *naulah* water is after all naturally filtered as it originates from and percolates through the mountains. They also claimed that they use chlorine regularly to disinfect the water in the tanks before distribution. However, regardless of whether or not the water provided for distribution is clean, many interlocutors refer to the water infrastructure itself as a weak spot. While a closed pipe system was introduced by the LG&RD and PWD in the 1960s, such pipes are often not actually "closed"—either because of problems with the installation or maintenance of the pipes, or because of manipulation by residents themselves, who dig them out in order to tap them by attaching unprofessional (and often times unauthorised) connections. The GB-EPA in 2013 provided data indicating that, if measured against World Health Organisation and National Environmental Quality Standards, hardly any of the water samples collected in Gilgit was fit for consumption due to bacteriological and faecal contamination (Government of Gilgit-Baltistan 2013, 19).[16] Only 22 per cent complied with WHO standards, while the rest had a low to very high risk, with risk increasing during the summer months (ibid., 29).

While some people boil the drinking water or filter it with cloth, sand and stones to ensure clean drinking water, most people in Gilgit nowadays drink the water directly from the tap, especially in the summers. Therefore people are rather keen on receiving clean water directly through the pipe. After the initial

[16]Furthermore, in some areas they could not even take samples, since there was no water available at the time of the survey (Government of Gilgit-Baltistan 2013, 19).

effort to provide clean water through closed pipes by the Government (as we have already discussed, this option was not wholly successful), another attempt was a nationwide programme to supply clean drinking water in the councils and municipalities, known as the National Drinking Water Policy (NDWP). In this programme, the federal Government installed public filtration plants, thereby resorting to an elementary set-up (resembling public wells or water holes) rather than a "sophisticated" approach (such as an integrated water supply network). At the same time this water source is not popular in Gilgit. The plants have specific opening hours but often remain closed due to lacking maintenance, electricity or staff enthusiasm, and some seem to be used as urinals rather than for clean water supply (a nuisance that points to a lack of public restrooms and the conflation of water supply and sewerage). Additionally, reprimands to use the water only for drinking purposes and not for washing clothes or dishes lead to resentments on side of some people. While the facilities are sometimes vandalised and the taps stolen, a recurrent problem is the maintenance of the filters involved. The people appointed to take care of the filtration plants often complain about both theft and missing provision of replacement parts for the filters, following which they often stop water supply completely.

Idea of "Awareness" and Practicalities

As Mader points out, households first have to *recognize* the purported benefits—to be made "aware" of the "issues" at stake"—before they can then internalize them and capitalize on them accordingly (cf. Mader 2011, 12). Thus, public sector organisations, NGOs and medical doctors point out that they do indeed make the effort to raise the "awareness" of people about the risks of contaminated water. For example the Federal Ministry of Environment places emphasis on raising "public awareness": "Intensive information, education and communication campaigns will be developed and implemented to promote water safety, water conservation and safe hygiene

practices. […] Hygiene promotion will be made an integral component of all water supply programmes" (Government of Pakistan 2009).

Yet, Gilgit residents' awareness of the quality of drinking water nowadays often correlate with global developmental modernisation theories, as embodied, for example, in the UN Millennium Development Goals.[17] While rules for storing and consuming water are certainly provided in Islamic teachings, interestingly these were hardly mentioned by my interlocutors. Instead, most of them, when asked about drinking water, referred to the awareness about the concept of clean water as announced by developmental organisations such as UNICEF or WASEP.[18] The promoted benefits of clean water and sanitation facilities are better health, leading to savings in medical bills, better earnings and time savings that can be used for other activities such as working and earning. Thus, it is often financial benefits which are used to argue that private investments in water and sanitation ultimately pay off.

At the same time, many interlocutors complained that the water which comes through the pipes is actually dirty, but that they don't have the time or material resources to purify it, other than let the mud settle to the bottom of the water container. Some families—often educated and better-off families with a small number of children—point to the importance of using clean water, and they either boil the water or otherwise resort to bottled water from the shop.[19] Many others refer to the option of

[17]UN Millennium Development Goal number seven relates to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

[18]Halvorson relates that the women in her research on women's workload and childcare in Danyore, a town neighbouring Gilgit, referred to the importance of practices relating to hygiene, sanitation, cleanliness and physical and moral purity. Regarding the origins of their knowledge and practices the women referred to own testing and experience, the teachings of Muslim clerics and education programmes of the Government or the Aga Khan Health Services-Pakistan (Halvorson 2011, 284-5).

[19]Shops in Gilgit sell water in 500 ml and 1.5 litre bottles, most of which are transported to Gilgit from down-country. Since 2013, two

boiling the water—an option which they don´t practice though, even if they maintain that it would protect them and especially their children from diseases. Even a female health worker contended that, given the costs of firewood and gas, it is too expensive to boil water for a big family. It is equally impossible for her to boil that much water on an electric stove. Since electricity is often not paid for, the electric stove is an essentially cheap or cost-free alternative; however, due to power shortages and cuts, it is not a viable option. She also pointed to unfavourable circumstances such as the general contamination of water and the lack of awareness of other families. She claimed that even if she could give boiled water to her children, they would take dirty water at school or from other families, or when playing outside the house and drinking from an open source, as many children still do.

Thus, many people are very well aware of the benefits of clean water and the dangers of dirty water, but often feel left alone in the eventual implementation and don't consider the Government´s efforts as particularly helpful.

Artisanal Government Efforts

Since providing citizens with clean drinking water through an integrated network is not the norm in Pakistan (either due to difficulties in providing infrastructure or clean water, due to lack of filtration technologies or specific ownership rights), a country-wide "Clean Drinking Water Initiative" (CDWI) was started in 2004 under then-President Musharraf. One filtration plant was to be established in every *tehsil* (council). Shortly after it was extended to the region of Gilgit-Baltistan, as a President's Special Development Package to the Northern Areas, named "Provision of Potable Drinking Water Facility in Gilgit District". For the years 2007-2009, 23 plants were

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private vendors sell 19 litre containers of local water. One of the vendors draw their water from the Jutial Naulah itself, the other from Danyore, a town neighbouring Gilgit. They also deliver the containers to households directly.

planned for Gilgit-Baltistan, although in September 2009 they were still waiting to be contracted. In 2009, the country-wide initiative was extended into a so-called "mega project" and renamed "Clean Drinking Water for All" (CDWA). One filtration plant was to be installed in each union council, pushing the number of plants for Gilgit-Baltistan up to a staggering 115 (Government of Pakistan, Senate Secretariat 2009). Although there is no information available as to whether all of the plants have actually been built or at least contracted yet, according to an employee of the PWD around 52 are actually established in Gilgit, although not all are functional. Nonetheless, employees of the PWD and WASA complain that they were a waste of money, since they are barely used by the people and are frequently out of order. Residents themselves complained that the filtration plants are hardly providing an attractive option, since the opening timings are often not observed, and the filtration plants not maintained properly. As the investigation team employed by the Supreme Appellate Court GB also notes, the plants are not kept properly, due to lack of electricity and technical personnel (Supreme Appellate Court Gilgit-Baltistan, not dated).

Additionally, the efforts of the federal Government to address the issue of clean water through the establishment of public water sources might not give enough consideration to the specific traditional situation in Gilgit-Baltistan. While the filtration plants are supposed to address the need of the people for clean water, they are accepted by the people only to a limited extent, due to various reasons. Firstly, for many people the idea to fetch water is "out-of-date". People explain that a new era has begun, with new facilities and new conveniences. They lack in time, commitment and enthusiasm to fetch water, and also don´t trust in the quality of the filtration plant water either, and therefore go for convenience and drink the pipe water, whether clean or not. Secondly it may be termed "out-of-place". Fetching of water for the longest times mostly occurred in a neighbourhood or village context where most inhabitants had family relations. Since most duties of the household which involve water, such as cooking, washing clothes, cleaning and

caring for the gardens are the duties of women, it was also the women who in most cases were responsible for fetching the water for those tasks—in old times either from the river, a channel, a neighbourhood water hole called *ghulko*, or from neighbours' supply. In an urban context, though, especially in areas that are not (any more) inhabited only by families, the task of getting water from a public place cannot be performed by women: gender segregation permits inter-gender contact only between relatives. Urban mixed settlements of non-relatives do not offer the environment to implement this and especially if the filtration plant is located in what is considered as a public place (e.g. along a main road or junction), only boys and men can get the water and women are dependent on them to do it on a regular basis. Due to a lack in water considered fit for consumption, especially since the turn of the century, people resort to different strategies to get (clean) water. For example in the inner city that lies in a plain and offers the ability to tap the groundwater easily, people started to dig private wells. This owed on the one hand to the desolate public water supply and on the other hand also to the increasing intrusion and settling of non-related men into the neighbourhoods. With increasing population and industrial location of car service points in the main city, the water in the channels rapidly became unfit for consumption. Additionally, due to the intrusion of non-related men, it became insufferable for many women to wash clothes at the channel or perform other similar duties outside the compound (see also Gratz 2006, 215). Therefore, in an urban context the duty of fetching water (especially drinking water) nowadays has to be relegated to children and men, who also do the shopping and other duties outside the compound.

Community Projects

While the provisioning of the people with (clean) water for household consumption is seen by people and public sector institutions as the state´s duty, the present Governmental water supply set-up does not meet the demand of the people, as we

have discussed above. Therefore, people and neighbourhood communities engage in complementary structures to meet their demands of a perennial water supply. While in some areas in the city centre people resorted to the option of digging wells (where the water table allows this), in other areas, such as those located on a slope, this is not possible. In more and more locations river water is pumped up to supply neighbourhoods with irrigation or household water. Since this involves considerable costs and technical assistance, people approach either the Government, or, increasingly also Non-Governmental Organizations. In Gilgit, the most prominent in this regard are the institutions which are under the umbrella of the Aga Khan Development Network. While the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme is working on irrigation water supply in Gilgit-Baltistan and even in Gilgit for a number of years, since recently WASEP (Water and Sanitation Extension Program) is also working in Gilgit to supply clean drinking water to wards that lack in a perennial supply of household water and I want to discuss two of their schemes as case in point where a neighbourhood community engages jointly in order to address the issue of a deficient water supply.

In 1997, WASEP was established as a unit of the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, in order to address comprehensively the often absent supply of *clean* drinking water and the related issues of household cleanliness, consumption and sanitation in Northern Pakistan. WASEP is financed through Development funds from all over the world, and it focuses on rural areas, apparently because this was a condition made by donor agencies (in an attempt to counter "urban primacy"). Accordingly, all "modern" activities, infrastructure and economic production are thought to be concentrated in urban centre(s). As a result, the Development apparatus launches projects in order to counter this tendency. This rural focus intends to enhance living conditions in rural areas—not least in order to inhibit a rural exodus to the cities. A second donor condition was that, supplementary to providing material infrastructure and technical support, WASEP had to conduct health and hygiene education. In contrast to the Government's water supply, WASEP's projects rely on engaging the people

themselves, first in the acquisition and then in the planning and execution phases, as well as in the operation and maintenance of the completed project.

Although in Gilgit the most recently established two WASEP projects also involved a filtration plant, their infrastructure relies on two "traditional" ideas: firstly, providing people with water directly to their houses and secondly, involving beneficiaries in construction work. This resembles the traditional way of diverting water from a source towards settlements (see also IUCN 2003, 34). Although this was mostly collective work organised by the local ruler or *lambardar* (village headman), it was eventually the people themselves who benefited from the efforts. Today, WASEP argues that precisely such participation in construction and financing leads to a sense of "ownership". This is also acknowledged by staff of the Governmental Public Works Department. As one employee rationalised, the NGO's projects are locally understood to be more successful, "because the locals own the system. With public works they have no sense of ownership; that's in their mentality. The maintenance [of the government projects] relates to the Government, so it is comparatively not that successful."

Until 2011, all WASEP projects were invariably established in rural areas, as many of my urban interlocutors commented with frustration. They complained that villages frequently enjoy clean and safe drinking water, while in the city they are left with "the dirtiest water", and on top of that with an unreliable water supply. This unfavourable comparison with rural areas contradicts their thoughts about modernity in the urban centre of Gilgit, which they expect should fulfil their aspirations regarding education, employment and health. Especially people who move into the cities from rural areas complain that conditions regarding water in the city are worse than in the villages they have just left, many of which are already supplied with clean water through a WASEP project. Additionally, those who move to neighbourhoods which have been settled in the last 20 years find it hard to get the PWD to connect them to the water system and to enjoy a sufficient share of water, which they compensate for either by diverting water secretly, by

paying for someone to supply it with a tanker, which is comparatively expensive, or by engaging with an NGO such as AKRSP or WASEP.

In a WASEP meeting between staff and community members, in which a future WASEP project in a new neighbourhood of the ward of Jutial was discussed, the men complained that on average they had to spend one hour daily on a "search" for water. Although this might be a strategic exaggeration, in order to strengthen their argument that they are in dire need of NGO help, some plots are indeed far away from a public water source, a road and public transport, and therefore it is tiring to get to and fro, due to the dismal physical infrastructure (many lanes are pot-holed and paths stony, and furthermore many areas lie on a slope). The burden to get water in the city may thus be as challenging as in the rural areas (cf. Hussain and Langendijk 1994).

Thus, different neighbourhood communities in Gilgit applied for a WASEP project, and after a long process negotiating with donors, WASEP in 2012-13 was able to approve and construct two projects in Gilgit—both in the newly-settled areas of Jutial, the fastest expanding residential quarter of Gilgit. Whereas most wards in Gilgit are dominated by either a Shia or a Sunni population, Jutial is characterised by a mixed population of all three faith communities. Also, it has an exceptionally large Ismaili population, most of whom had come in the last 40 years from neighbouring valleys and had settled on barren land that had been owned by the Government or old settlers of Jutial. With the people frequently pointing out that all WASEP projects are carried out only in villages and not in the city, these two projects are remarkable, as the residents and the WASEP staff managed to bring the projects into an urban area.[20]

Both projects were finally started, but not without difficulties even after approval. In both projects, there were

[20]In both cases, it should be noted that members of the committee were working in top positions for AKRSP (WASEP´s sister / mother organisation) and know the workings and mechanisms of the organisation.

problems to muster the financial contributions of potential beneficiaries, as well as struggles pertaining to the inclusion of Sunni residents.[21] During the planning phases of the two projects it seemed that one would fail due to friction concerning a small neighbourhood of a few dozen Sunni households lying at the fringes of the project area. After the project had been approved, the Sunni neighbourhood had asked to be included in the project, to which the original project committee did not agree. In a meeting that had included both the original committee and representatives of the Sunni neighbourhood, the original committee (mostly Ismaili) claimed that this was their project and the Sunni community had neither participated from the beginning nor made any effort during campaigning, and therefore they should not be included. In another argument it was claimed that to include more households would blow up the project and go beyond the financial scope and size of WASEP projects. What is more, when potential beneficiaries are not unanimous, WASEP management often decides to suspend a project rather than carry on working with a community in strife. Therefore, in order to launch the project, it was decided during the meeting between WASEP staff and community members to exclude the Sunni neighbourhood from the project. They justified this decision claiming on the one hand that the whole project would become too big if the Sunni households were included and charging them on the other hand with a lack of enthusiasm and immersion. Especially concerning the claim of involvement, it is important to bear in mind though, that to engage in AKDN projects counts as fulfilling the religious duty

[21]On its website, the AKDN describes itself as a collective of "private, international, non-denominational development organisations" (Aga Khan Development Network 2007a). Staff at the Gilgit institutions are always eager to reinforce this with statements alluding to impartiality, especially regarding sectarian affiliation. All managerial personnel interviewed pointed to a high number of non-Ismaili staff. This was countered by Sunni and Shia staff, who pointed out that there *are* non-Ismaili staff but they are low in number and short of opportunities for advancement.

for Ismailis, while obviously for non-Ismaili it does not hold any specific religious rewards (cf. Wood 2006, 6; Sökefeld 1997a, 135-7). Recurring to Knauft, modern identities and modern social life are often based on an "individual desire to improve social life by subordinating or superseding what is locally configured as backward, undeveloped, or superstitious" (Knauft 2002, 18). In Gilgit there is a constant discourse about being or becoming developed and aware, on the one hand, and being not-developed (*jahil*), uneducated, unaware, unhygienic and unenthusiastic on the other. Likewise, such lines are also drawn between different religious communities in Gilgit itself. As Knauft explains, modernity is an imagination which "creates progress through the projection and management of alterity" (ibid.), and thus one or the other always has to be "the other". Conversely, drawing on such notions of othering, some residents are marginalized discursively and at the same time in- or excluded from the water system, whereby identity and access to resources again become entwined.

While AKDN organisations frequently emphasise that they are providing services "to all communities" (in most contexts referring to different sects), there are accusations from Sunni and Shia residents that their neighbourhoods are left out and that the NGO is not providing equal support. As Settle argues in an article on AKRSP, based on her work with the institution, she suggests that there is evidence that their projects score "poor results in non-Ismaili areas [which] suggests that success may rest less in the participatory development strategy, and more in the religious nature of the organization" (Settle 2012, 399). Although the Aga Khan and AKDN institutions pursue a strategy of inclusion, promoting pluralism and tolerance, many interlocutors, rather off-record, point out that non-Ismailis do not support AKDN involvement and thus are inhibitors of change.[22] While Shia *maulvis* (religious leaders) are said to preach against Ismaili projects, Sunni communities are

[22]For example, a staff member at WASEP told after the meeting that projects which include Sunnis are often doomed to failure, since Sunni residents were "frequently posing problems".

said to mistrust AKDN's institutions and their intensions. While such claims are sometimes dismissed as propaganda, I nonetheless learned from a Sunni community organiser in the second project that some Sunni families actually *do* mistrust the Ismaili organisation; he affirmed that some Sunni households actually *were* reluctant to trust the AKDN project, and subsequently refused to pay any money to support the organisation's water infrastructure. Nevertheless, Sunnis often complain that their settlements are left out, while especially Ismaili neighbourhoods are favoured, and that Ismailis are prejudiced and biased, channelling international donor funds into their own community's projects.

It is difficult to ascertain the truth of either claim, since the AKDN´s institutions are rather reluctant to release data and figures about their projects. Claims on the basis of sectarian bias are countered with general statements and charts where project applications are rated according to apparently neutral appraisals, such as road access or remoteness. Nonetheless, the rhetoric of exclusion, neutrality and distrust is powerful and is repeated by both Sunni and Ismaili interlocutors. The rhetoric can thus be understood as a witness to the "sectarian imaginaries" prevalent in Gilgit (cf. Ali 2010).

Nevertheless, implicitly drawing on traditional concepts and practices of modern facilities and community work, WASEP´s approach is extremely successful with the local people as well as in an international setting (as can be seen in the honours received from the Energy Globe Award or the Millennium Development Goals Good Practices publication of the United Nations Development Group).[23] Resorting to traditional concepts they successfully tender to the need of access to water, to ideas of Development and the search for upward social mobility at the same time. Thus, what is going on here is not a process of modernization opposed to tradition, but rather the re-configuration of traditional practices. The notion of centre-periphery exists, but it is indeed turned upside-down by

[23]Aga Khan Development Network, 2007b; Aga Khan Development Network, 2010.

interventions that equip the rural periphery with (modern) clean drinking water supply. The opposition between modern awareness and uneducated backwardness that is procured by donor conditions and attached to the Development programmes produces bizarre results, in that those townspeople who think of themselves as educated and aware, and who engage in efforts to acquire clean drinking water through WASEP, are faced with donor-prescribed "health and hygiene training"-sessions. This is rather alienating, as they may see this as appropriate in rural contexts (for the often still uneducated peasants), but certainly not in their neighbourhood, where they engage exactly because they are already aware of matters of health and hygiene and the dangers of dirty water. Nonetheless, the conceptualization of "aware" versus "backward" people is relevant in the urban context as well, where people point out other neighbourhoods as consisting of unaware, uneducated and unhygienic others.
Thus, theoretical concepts about modernity are employed, but they are rendered chaotic by the Development organisation. The Development apparatus on the one hand informs and shapes local ideas of development (such as modern-traditional, centre-periphery, urban-rural, aware-ignorant), and at the same time it confuses them by providing infrastructure in rural areas or sanitation and hygiene training.

Conclusion

The inhabitants of Gilgit pursue different strategies in order to acquire clean drinking water and thereby in order to frame themselves in a context of awareness and progress. In this respect, traditional practices are transformed, for example, through state interventions. People imagine their progress through imaginative strategies, for instance by creating an inferior "other" with whom they compare themselves positively. Access to and use of water systems depend on economic opportunities and simultaneously on cultural processes which influence the inclusion of certain people in the network and the exclusion of others. The processes of mobilising group

affiliations in Gilgit contradict the "Weberian prophecy about modernity in which earlier, intimate social forms would dissolve, to be replaced by highly regimented bureaucratic-legal orders, governed by the growth of procedure and predictability" (Appadurai 1998, 228). This notion of a well-organized system is certainly aimed at in Gilgit, but unofficial practices disrupt official norms and efforts, as bureaucratic engagement is subverted, e.g. by people who disregard the Government's efforts and undermine the ideal of equal provision by illegally tapping or sucking water from the main pipes with pumps, which is again a tolerated practice. Secondly, high but unregistered population growth leads to a lack of necessary facilities and a lack in provision. Lack of funds is cited as the main impasse to providing clean drinking water, as well as lacking expertise and awareness among the users and PWD and WASA technical staff (cf. Government of Gilgit-Baltistan 2013).

Besides technical issues, the conception of different categories of residents, such as distinguishing citizens through the right to vote, leads to a paucity of political representation for the remaining residents. This results in no service provision for non-citizens, which has to be compensated through individual efforts on a neighbourhood basis, such as organising water for the household or for the neighbourhood. In some cases this is done by engaging NGOs, most prominently the AKDN's. While the idea of clean water is certainly not a new one in Gilgit-Baltistan, global Developmental modernisation theories, as purported by NGOs, emphasise the *right to* and the *need for* clean water. WASEP, as one such NGO, attends to and also reinforces people's awareness about the need for clean drinking water. However, as Settle also indicates for AKRSP, the involvement of an NGO—whether denominational or not—is problematic and possibly dangerous, especially when it takes over functions that are actually state functions, since the NGO may "undermine the political system" (Settle 2012, 399). As Mader shows beautifully along the example of microfinance institutions, such institutions' engagement may even lead to (often) poor citizens engaging in and paying for public goods

themselves, instead of having access to the functional public sector provision, which is organised via transfer payments through the governmental institutions. As a consequence of such private engagement, the state is relieved of its fundamental responsibility to serve all. However, public service provision just for parts of the population, aligned with self-help for other (often marginalised) populations, "is objectionable regardless of whether marginalised populations develop modes of resistance, or are grateful for any services they receive at all" (Mader 2011, 2).[24]

At the same time, different questions remain concerning such private engagement in Gilgit. The first seeks to understand how the idea of self-help is perceived by the people themselves. Many seemed to be proud and appreciate that they follow traditional means of organising their own affairs, while others resented the absence of the state, requesting the Government and its institutions to work on the deficient water supply. The second question asks what people should do differently in the face of a state that does not deliver. In this respect, would it be better for them to wait or to coerce the state into finally extending its services?

Yet, such issues are hard to address in a context of partisanship, high unemployment rates, sectarianisation, an unclear political situation and a public mentality of distrust. Furthermore, the blurring of official and private aims and practices makes these issues hard to address. Successful projects like that of WASEP, where members of different sects work together to complete a project, may on the one hand contribute to resolving such tensions, as emphasised by WASEP staff. On the other hand the outreach of the NGO services is not extended to the whole population. From the side of government officials the question arises as to why the people do not take care of the public property and associated facilities through which they will be served, and instead sometimes disintegrate public service

[24]Mader also raises doubts as to whether public goods can actually be provided for successfully by individuals or individual communities, as they will not be able to provide inclusive access (Mader 2011, 2).

infrastructure or extract more water which is then missing for other households.

As Bakker warns, both governments and NGOs fail in the end if they do not effectively tender to the needs of all citizens (Bakker 2010, 45). The mismatching of "citizenship" with political rights, the unclear strategic use of social categories in order to in- or exclude populations from access and supply, as well as the institutional practice of providing unequal services to different localities and communities, stand in the way of equal service provision and an integrated network. Thus, the involvement of private and often even public sector does not lead to the favoured consistent and equal provision through a network either, but instead to further fragmentation.

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