Day Zero: the role of social movements in the face of Cape Town’s water crisis
Abstract

In 2017 and 2018, the city of Cape Town, in South Africa, suffered one of the most severe water crises ever seen, becoming the first big city to face a realistic scenario of a "Day Zero", the day in which the dams reach a water storage level unable to provide water services to other than critical services. In the wake of this emergency, several organisations and movements started to organise themselves to mitigate the effects of the drought and find a solution. The measures undertaken by the local government, which included punitive tariffs for the citizens, caused a big discontent among the population, who protested in the streets to demand a proper solution. Amid the protesters, the social movements rose to demand from the authorities democratic and reasonable management of the water in the city, putting pressure by protesting, creating petitions, mobilising people and spreading facts about the crisis and what they believed were the true problems behind it.

This qualitative research included a field study in the city of Cape Town and uses abductive research for the analysis of data. The study is exploratory, as it intends to understand and explore what happened during the crisis and the role of social movements to create a narrative. Five interviews were conducted between two different target groups: social movement actors and authorities.

This thesis focuses on the role that social movements played and their dynamics in the outcome of the actions taken by the authorities to address the water crisis in Cape Town. Using social movement theory and alliances theory, this explores what actors were involved, what actions and activities the social movements conducted, and what was the outcome of the role they played. This is done in order to create a narrative of the facts that occurred during the crisis until the Day Zero was officially called off by the local authorities, the moment in which the organisations stopped their engagement due to whether the loss of the momentum, the collapse of the alliances or the accomplishment of their minimum demands.
The study concludes that there were two moments that determined the role of social movements during the water crisis: first, with the emergence of the crisis, the movements gathered and played a communicator role, delivering information and sharing facts; secondly, after the measures taken by the authorities were announced, the movements played an instigator role as an opposition to the local government, putting pressure mainly in the streets. We conclude that the outcome delivered by the authorities, the so-called Water Strategy, was an important step but did not respond to the demands of the movement sufficiently, as it was not conducted in a participatory way, although it included some of the demands of the movement. It is not possible to conclude that the role played by the social movements was key to determine the outcome of the crisis, but they contributed to put pressure and make visible the demands for a more democratic water management.
List of abbreviations

ANC  African National Congress
DA  Democratic Alliance
COSATU  Congress of South Africa Trade Unions
EMG  Environmental Monitoring Group
SAFTU  South African Federation of Trade Union
SRWP  Socialist Revolutionary Party
UN  United Nations
UNCCD  United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
WCC  Water Crisis Coalition
WCWSS  Western Cape Water Supply System

Key words
Water crisis, social movements, peace and development, South Africa, Cape Town.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and justification

1.1.1 Background

1.1.1.1 Cape Town, South Africa

This thesis is geographically focused in South Africa, the southernmost country in the African continent with a current population of over 57 million inhabitants, according to the 2019 World Population Review. Cape Town, its legislative capital (Pretoria is the executive one and Bloemfontein is the judiciary one), is located in the Western Cape Province, in the southwest of the country, and has a population of 3.7 million inhabitants, according to the last census of 2011 (World Population Review, 2019). This region is surrounded in the south by a large coastline that makes part of the South Atlantic and beginning of the Indian Oceans (CIA, 2008; South African Maritime Safety Authority, 2008).

The City of Cape Town is a metropolitan municipality that includes several neighbourhoods with different socio-economic characteristics. While the Atlantic Seaboard, located in the west, includes the wealthiest people in the city, the Cape Flats and townships are home to the least privileged part of the society, as it used to be part of the non-white population during the apartheid. The term “township” is considered to be an “underdeveloped (but not only) urban, residential areas that during Apartheid were reserved for non-whites (Africans, Coloureds, and Indians) who lived near or worked in areas that were designated ‘white-only’” (Pernegger and Godehart, 2007). The townships of Khayelitsha (almost 400.000 inhabitants) and Mitchells Plain (more than 300.000 inhabitants) figure between the most densely populated and fastest-growing in Cape Town (Mdladla, 2019).

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1 Descendants of individuals from different ethnicities
Figure 1 Source: OCHA, 2019

Figure 2. Provincial division of South Africa. Source: Wikimedia commons, 2019.
1.1.1.2  The water issue

According to the UN, water demand has rapidly increased in a large number of zones around the world, pushing the limit on water sources and putting at risk the sustainability of the water system, particularly in arid regions. Nearly two-thirds of the world population experienced severe water scarcity during at least one month of the year, according to Mekonnen & Hoekstra (2016). According to the UNCCD and the Global Water Institute, if the existing climate change scenario continues by 2030, intense water scarcity could displace between 24 and 700 million people worldwide (Global Water Institute, 2013).

1.1.1.3  Water issue in South Africa

According to the Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas, South Africa is classified in the group of countries with high water stress risk and classified as one of the most vulnerable areas to suffer from severe water scarcity. Most recently, one of the most populated cities in the country faced a severe water crisis. In January 2018 the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs of South African had to declare national disaster due to the severe drought, triggered by “El Niño” affecting southern and western regions of Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and eventually Western Cape.

The province of Western Cape experienced one of the worst droughts in the past century from 2015 to 2018, leaving its inhabitants in extreme risk of water scarcity, particularly in Cape Town, the most populated city of the region. Running water became scarce in the city affecting nearly four million people, caused by a wider pattern of climate change all around the country, the risk of shortage also hit the industrial and agricultural sectors in the city (Macharia, 2018). The wine industry played a particularly important role since it is one of the biggest businesses in the Western Cape and uses a considerable amount of water to irrigate and produce wine every year.

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2 An El Niño state occurs when the central and eastern equatorial Pacific sea-surface temperatures (SSTs) are substantially higher than usual (FAO)
The city is quickly becoming the first major city in the world to run out of water and is at extreme risk of getting closer to the “Day Zero” threshold (Maxmen, 2018). Although the city postponed the feared Day Zero, climate change experts have warned that the shortage experienced during 2017 – 2018 could occur much more frequently, once every 50 years will increase to an average of 15 years, if the water resource system is not adapted to the new climate conditions (New et al., 2018).

The local government, to avoid the imminent crisis, fashioned a short term plan. First, they promoted the strategy named “Day Zero” to create consciousness about the crisis; secondly, investing in surveillance technology to monitor water consumption, claiming that it was more effective to reduce the households’ water usage than increasing the water supply (Robins, 2019). Day Zero is the point in which the six biggest dams supplying Cape Town will reach a storage level of 13.5%, the minimum amount of water needed to supply critical services, such as providing to health facilities (Winter, 2018). In that stage, the residential and commercial areas will be cut off of tap water forcing many citizens to queue for water.
There is an existing debate surrounding this strategy, while different parts of the society affirm that it’s been a successful tool to warn citizens of the consequences of wasting water and effectively had an immediate result reducing water usage, other parts of society have criticized this strategy arguing that it’s a hoax of the municipality to privatize the access to water.

1.1.1.4 Causes of the water crisis in Cape Town

Many academics have pointed out that the crisis was avoidable if the authorities had performed preventive measures to secure the water systems, however, government failures left the city vulnerable to the water crisis (Olivier & Xu, 2018). The responsibility of the water management lies on the two main political parties at the national and municipal level, the African National Congress (ANC) in charge of the national government and the Democratic Alliance (DA), the opposition party who is in charge, of the provincial and local governance.

The national government controls some parts of the water supply of the city, it is responsible to develop and operate the major water infrastructure in the region. While at provincial and municipal levels, they ensure the provision of basic water services to the households and commercial and industrial sectors (Olivier & Xu, 2018). The Western Cape Province owns and manages three of six of the major dams that supply the region (City of Cape Town, 2019).

Both national and local authorities ignored the fact that rainfall patterns were becoming unreliable and failed to take measures to prevent future scarcity diversifying the sources of water supply. The main resource of water that supplies the metropolitan area, comes from rainfalls and depends on a smaller scale from other sources, such as desalination water or groundwater. While it’s been largely discussed the lack of efforts from governmental authorities to secure water supply in extreme scenarios, as was evident during the recent drought, New and other experts in climate change studies, proclaim that climate change exacerbated the crisis.

From another standing point, the water demand has been increasing steadily in the city. The population increased significantly as well as the agricultural sector expanded, especially the wine industry, which uses a third of the water supply. These factors have been putting extreme pressure on the water system, and in a foreseeable future will exceed the capacity of the six major dams (The Lancet Planetary Health, 2018).
1.1.1.5 Government actions

During the droughts, the provincial government declared the emergency and started constructing emergency water augmentation infrastructure. The local government reacted to the crisis steeping the tariffs, encouraging water rationing by limiting the amount of water consumption to the minimum for survival to 50 liters per day. Along with punitive measures for those households that exceeded the minimum rationale allowed. One of the most explicit examples was the creation of the first water police in the world (Robins, 2019), who had the purpose of conducting surveillance around the city to arresting and giving out fines to residents who weren’t abiding by the new rules. According to Deputy Mayor Ian Neilson, the water consumption of the city declined to a record of 526 million liters per day, he affirmed that the efforts were taken to regulate the flow of water and to resident’s cooperation to curb their consumption led to the historical reduction (Macharia, 2018).

In order to elaborate a strategy to prevent a Day Zero, in May 2017, the local government formed a “Water Resilience Task Team” which, according to News 24, it was “a team of experts and project managers to work with the City's water and sanitation department to develop a new drought crisis plan” (News 24, 2018). However, due to internal reasons, as argued by Mayor De Lille, the team was disbanded in early 2018 to create a “daily water meeting” committee.

According to Robins, other contributing factors to mitigate the crisis were the donation of water from nearby dams and the city augmentation plans. Furthermore, the fear of the collapse of the water systems led to the municipality to implement security plans in the approximately 200 water queues all over the city and the nearby townships. All these measures prevented that the city started the feared “Day Zero”, nonetheless the concern of another water crisis remained in their citizens.

1.1.1.6 Cape Town Water Strategy

In the aftermath of the water crisis, the local government developed a strategy called “Cape Town Water Strategy – Our shared water future” (City of Cape Town, 2019). The first draft was released in January 2019, so NGOs, businesses, and everyone concerned in the management of the water supply system could participate and comment on it. This strategy was divided into five commitments: safe access to water and sanitation, wise use, sufficient, reliable water from diverse sources, shared benefits from regional water resources and a water sensitive city.
According to the municipality of Cape Town, the first commitment is to prioritize the residents of informal settlements and townships, in order to solve the lack of proper sanitation facilities in many households in these parts of the city, where people are forced to use communal sewage facilities, that in some cases can be dangerous and leave them vulnerable to crimes.

The second commitment involves the promotion of wise use of water. The city plans to continue providing a basic amount of water for those who are not able to afford it while pricing water consumption on the cost of additional supply. Besides tariffs, the municipality aims to review laws and regulatory instruments to incentive the use of water-saving devices.

In the third commitment, the municipality states that it will diversify the current water system, which relies mainly on surface water, making the city extremely vulnerable to water scarcity. The city is going to build a new program based in different possible scenarios that will consider external factors, namely future climate changes, the unreliability of rainfall and future demand.

Due to the fact that the water supply management responsibility is shared by all levels of government, and a significant part of the water supplying the city comes from the Western Cape Water Supply System, the fourth commitment has contemplated the adjustment of the city’s reliability on the WCWS, investing in water schemes owned by the municipality.

For the last commitment, the municipality will become a Water Sensitive City\(^3\) using three mechanisms, economic and financial incentives, regulatory instruments and direct investment in infrastructure.

\[1.1.1.7 \quad \text{Citizens’ actions}\]

Due to the consequences of the water crisis and the extreme measures taken by the authorities, Cape Town citizens came together and tried to do as much as possible to face the adversity. Day zero created a widespread panic specifically in the middle classes and created a new interest in “the water politics” and the importance of public common goods created greater public awareness (Macharia, 2018). For the poorest households, which accounts for one-third of the city’s population, the

\[^3\] City planned and designed to integrate urban water cycle management, including water supply, sewerage and storm water
situation became more critical. With the rise of water prices, many township and informal settlements struggled to keep within the minimum water consumption scheme, for those who had access to running water in their households. While another part of the township’s residents, there were no major changes and continued queuing in one of the water points.

The widespread fear of running out of water in every part of the city led to the mobilisation of several formal and informal organizations formed by citizens coming from different backgrounds and classes. Anti-privatization activists, for instance the Water Crisis Coalition (WCC), a group of anti-privatisation activists, South African Federation of Trade Union (SAFTU) that mobilised poor and working-class Capetonians against the measures taken by the local government to mitigate the crisis, as well as other issues as the abandonment of the working class which struggles to have potable water and adequate sanitation facilities. However, once the Day Zero was postponed, the public discourse seemed to dissipate. (Robins, 2019).

1.1.2 Study justification

This research is embodied in the peace and development field as it is known water is critically important for human survival and sustainable development as for every other social aspect, and therefore the right of access to water and water security becomes an essential part of social justice (United Nations, 2019). Water security can be defined as the access to adequate quantities of water of acceptable quality for human consumption, includes sustainable use and protection of water systems. The lack of water security can cause conflict at the local level affecting the political, economic, social and environmental aspects of the region (Abedin, et al., 2013).

As Abedin indicated, the fear of what it seemed to be an imminent and prolonged water scarcity in the city of Cape Town, started to affect big businesses, middle class residents and tourism sector, spheres of society that generally remained isolated from the deprivation of basic services, in comparison with the lower classes and residents in townships, struggling daily to get adequate access to water and sanitation.

These circumstances pushed forward several groups of citizens and activists to engage in different activities to voice their apprehensions and concerns about the measures taken by the local government to manage the crisis or, as some authors refer as the exertion of their hydraulic citizenship (Robins, 2019).
On the other side, social movements are historically a critical part of civil society, being part of important catalysts for social change. This issue is also part of the peace and development field, as social change has an ultimate focus to improve people’s lives and generate peaceful and sustainable conditions for them.

1.2 Research problem and relevance

According to Diani (2003), “[social movements] cannot be reduced to specific insurrections or revolts, but rather, resemble strings of more or less connected events, scattered across time and space; they cannot be identified with any specific organisation either, rather, they consist of groups and organisations, with various levels of formalisation, linked in patterns of interaction which run from the fairly centralised to the totally decentralised, from the cooperative to the explicitly hostile”. The debate around social movements is broad and crowded, however, it can be said that their role in society has been ever-present and turned to be increasingly relevant and decisive since the 1930s (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996).

From the civil rights movements in the United States to the anti-apartheid movements in South Africa, the masses have been the protagonists of massive social change events in the world. This evidence shows that social movements’ role in society cannot be ignored, especially during conflicts, emergencies or other types of social struggles.

According to Buecher, the social movements’ domain moves around four main debates. The first is about the threshold between what can be considered old and what a new social movement is. The second debate concerns the emergence of the movements, whether it surges as a defensive reaction or a progressive origin. The third debate is about whether movements are cultural instead of political driven. And the fourth debate seeks to define the social base of the new movements (Buechler, 1995).

To start, civil rights movements in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s inspired many scholars to research different aspects of the new uprising mobilisations standing against oppressive policies, in contrast to the 19th-century unions and women movements. McCarthy & Zald analysed it from a structural perspective and draw from the Resource Mobilisation theory trying to explain how social movements emerge at particular historical moments, and also how they interact with different actors (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The strong economic and politico-
institutional rationale and the indifference towards political and ideological content led to the emergence of a new set of theories called the new social movements.

One of the most prominent authors in this field is Habermas, who affirms that current social movements seek to defend traditional values and forms of association from changes imposed by modernisation forces (Chesters & Welsh, 2011), and new conflicts are shaped by the defence of social property instead of welfare concerns. Klandermans works in the same line as Habermas, however, he draws from the social-psychological approaches to analyse social movements in counter position to the resource mobilisation theory (Klandermans, 1984). Whereas, Melucci’s main argument backs up the idea that social movements move towards the social construction of “collective identity”, which is at the same time the outcome of the work conducted by the movement actors (Chesters & Welsh, 2011).

In the case of South Africa, whereas civil society seems to have stepped up for democracy, human rights and fight against corruption in a very positive way (Gumede, 2018), it has also seen its political space be shrunk and faced several threats, as Piroshaw Camay says (2018). During the apartheid era, civil society was virtually absent (Essongou, 2013) and viewed in a very romantic way, when everyone hoped that it would engage with the new democratic government (Camay, 2018). According to Glaser (1997), civil society emerged in the early 90s along with the whole democratisation wave, but it soon suffered from a shrinking political space and pressure from the governments, who always saw civil society as a rival or competitor and not as a speaker of the communities. As Camay states, many civil society organisations started to shut down because of the lack of support and access to funding, which leads to a weakening of the state of democracy in South Africa. In this sense, despite several challenges, civil society managed to emerge from an anti-apartheid context to a more prominent role in society, fighting corruption and defending civil and human rights but has lately seen its capacity to act threatened.

From the post-apartheid context, civil society has been constantly fighting against the lasting consequences of the regime, specifically inequality and marginalised citizens. In that context, it recently has been a debate regarding hydraulic citizenship and one of the most current examples is the water crisis in Cape Town. According to Robins (2019), the crisis leads to citizens and activist to engage in a public debate about hydraulic citizenship and public common goods.

The water crisis in Cape Town brought the attention of the international community, as the city faced the possibility of a Day Zero, becoming the first major city at risk of getting out of water supply in 2017 to 2018 (Maxmen, 2018). The consequences affected the population in the Western Cape area, especially the city of Cape Town,
leading to a political debate about the consequences of climate change and water infrastructure management.

This political debate was raised, mainly, by the population, who organised themselves in a major and collective social movement in favour of the rights of access to water and an improved water management system. Their role in the actions taken by the authorities to solve the crisis cannot be ignored.

For this reason, this research will have an abductive approach, which means that it will try to understand, rather explain or prove a fact or theory, what was the role played by social movements and to what extent their participation and actions taken influenced the decisions taken by the authorities. This research fits into the body of studies of social movements, which lack empirical evidence to understand their role and impact. The main research problem is, therefore: what was the role that the social movement played and their dynamics in the outcome of the actions taken by the authorities to address the water crisis in Cape Town?

1.3 Research objectives and questions

This thesis will attempt to contribute to the body of research on social movements. Much has been theorised about the role of social movements in bringing about social change. However, there remains a lack of enough empirical evidence to explain the role and impact of social movements in this regard. This is the gap that this study aims to address.

This thesis will aim to understand the role that the social movement played and their dynamics in the outcome of the actions taken by the authorities to address the water crisis in the short and long-term in Cape Town. Additionally, it will identify the actors who influenced in the alleviation of the water crisis, the actions undertaken by them and the results obtained from the mobilisation.

Our main research question is:

- What was the role that the social movements played and their dynamics in the outcome of the actions taken by the authorities to address the water crisis in Cape Town?

Our subsidiary questions are:

- Who are the actors in the social movements that addressed the water crisis?
- What actions or activities were conducted by social movements?
• How they have carried out these activities?
• What was the outcome of the activities?

1.4 Methodological and analytical research frame

To understand the role and the dynamics of social movements in Cape Town regarding the water crisis, in this thesis was used a methodology composed of qualitative fieldwork research using abductive reasoning to collect current and primary information. There were selected two target groups: organisations and authorities to interview and the snowballing method was used to select the key respondents. The in-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way. This is indicative, as the comprehensive methodology is stated below as an own chapter.

The analytical framework utilised to analyse the collected data it is divided into two parts. The first part is drawn upon the social movement major aspects: political opportunities, mobilising structures, framing processes and forms of actions. The second part consists of the theoretical frame of alliances’ literature, to answer the main and secondary research questions.

1.5 Structure

The structure of this thesis is divided into six chapters. Following this introductory section, the methodology applied to perform qualitative research on the subject is presented. Chapter three introduces the analytical framework, in which it is shown the discussion about the emergence, development, and outcomes of social movements, with the purpose of illustrate the academic debate on social change and the debate about alliances theory. Chapter four puts forward the findings collected during the field research and subsequently, chapter five displays the analysis drawn from the data according to the analytical framework described in the previous chapter. And to finalise, in chapter six features the conclusions and recommendations to further research on.
2. Methodology

2.1 Study design

The methodology used to achieve the objectives of this thesis was composed of qualitative fieldwork research using abductive reasoning. The aim was to obtain recent and primary data to understand the role and the dynamics of social movements in Cape Town regarding the water crisis.

According to Bryman (2012), qualitative research is appropriate when the goal is to understand in a deeper level the priorities and perspectives of those being studied. The drought and water scarcity in Cape Town was experienced in different ways by different sectors of the population, which is why an intersectional approach was also necessary (that is, an analysis that considers more than one political and social aspect, which in this case are socio-economic class and race), and the reason why a qualitative method was used: it was necessary to gather all the pieces of what happened during the crisis to rebuild and understand the facts through the people’s perspectives, worldviews and, experiences. As Cresswell states, “qualitative research is appropriate when a problem or issue needs to be explored, we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimise the power relationships that often exist between the researcher and participants” (2013: 48); this aspect makes this an exploratory study.

As mentioned above, the reasoning chosen, abductive, was used to understand rather than to define a problem or create meanings. The aim was to explore the facts through the lenses of the people that experienced the water crisis in order to understand the story told by them and give recommendations. Using abduction provides the researcher the capacity to ground “a theoretical understanding of the contexts and people he or she is studying in the language, meanings, and perspectives that from their worldview” (Bryman 2012: 401).

2.2 Study area

For this research and since the opportunity was offered, we decided to do a field study specifically in the city of Cape Town, South Africa. The main reason for this was the relevance of such a dramatic event to occur in a major city - it was the first major city to face a “Day Zero” type of risk -, but not only in terms of the environmental impact or the climate change, but because of its broad impact in the economy and in the well-being of, mainly, the poor population, which was already having difficulties to deal with water restrictions.
The water crisis affected many sectors of society and with different intensity. A field study provided us the opportunity to get access to primary sources and get recent and reliable information. It also provided us the opportunity to observe the aftermath of the crisis and the measures taken by the population in their daily lives, and also possible social movement manifestations regarding the issue (as it was the case). This does not necessarily mean that all the data is valid and accurate since it is subject to the interviewees’ perspective, but it is sufficient for this kind of approach. Of course, more interviews with more actors could have been conducted for broader and more comprehensive research, but as stated in the limitations, the time available was limited.

2.3 Study population and sampling procedure

The target groups were separated into two, social movements’ organisations and authorities. On the side of the social movements organisations (concept that is going to be defined in the next chapter), we contacted leaders, spokespersons, organisers and representatives working in community-based organisations, non-profit and non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and activists advocating for the right to access to water or any other issue related to the water crisis in Cape Town. On the side of the authorities, local and provincial representatives of the government were contacted in order to crosscut the information provided by the first target group.

We interviewed five organisations, three from the first group and two from the last group. The low number of interviewees did not have a significant impact on the elaboration of this thesis since they were all high-quality members of their respective organisations that held a key role during the water crisis.

2.4 Data collection methods

For the data collection, semi-structured in-depth interviews were used, which were later recorded. These were conducted in English, as there was no need for a translator. Since we were two researchers, there was no need to transcribe the interviews, as one of us took notes of all the relevant parts of the interview, and also since there was no necessity to use textual quotations from the respondents. The recordings were enough in case there was the necessity to listen to a specific part of the interview more than once. The reduced amount of time was also a limitation in this matter.
The interviews aimed to capture the narrative of the people interviewed about their perspectives and experiences. According to May, “interviews yield rich insights into people’s biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and, feelings” (2011: 135). As our reasoning was abductive and, as it will be explained below, our method of analysis was narrative analysis, the interviews intended to extract the pieces of the puzzle necessary to tell the story about the water crisis. The questions can be found in appendix 1. The findings are based on the two target groups mentioned above and following the semi-structured interviews to create the narrative.

A snowballing method was used since during the interviews the contacts provided valuable information about other organisations that could contribute to the research. In any case, the sampling was purposeful and selective, as the interviewees were intentionally selected because of their importance or relevance in the water crisis. For some reasons that went beyond our possibilities, some of the organisations could not be reached. Besides the interviews, informal interviews and observation were also used to collect data.

Besides the interviews, the observation method was also used to collect data. This research includes data collected in public debates that were happening around the city as a result of the electoral campaign for Western Cape elections on May 8th. We had the opportunity to meet authorities and representatives of seven political parties debating and sharing with the public and some social movements working on different types of environmental issues. We used this event to observe the reactions of the attendants, which were mainly formal and informal social movement organisations from different parts of the city, many of them belong to Khayelitsha and Mitchell Plains areas, besides the main two formal non-profit organisations that promoted the event Project 90 by 2030 and South African Faith Communities’ Environmental Institution, both working in clean energy. All the data was collected for analysis and the event was useful to contact local authorities (the Democratic Alliance, or DA, in charge of the provincial and local government and were present in the event).

2.5 Data analysis

This research used narrative analysis as a method for the analysis of the data. As stated above, we intended to collect the pieces of a puzzle to rebuilding the story of the role of social movements during the water crisis in Cape Town. As Byrman states, “narrative analysis is an approach that emphasizes the stories that people tell in the course of interviews and other interactions with the qualitative researcher and
that has become a distinctive strategy in its own right for the analysis of qualitative data” (2012: 588).

The case of the water crisis in Cape Town was experienced differently by the different sectors of society. On one hand, the most precarious zones, which were already affected by water shortages and lack of drinkable water, struggled not only to avoid a Day Zero scenario but to give their situation visibility. On the other hand, movements organised to protest in the streets, request meetings with the government or simply to make the population aware of the situation. And there was the government; the local and provincial governments tried during a long and critical period to find a solution to the situation and avoid Day Zero. This story has different parts and actors that are needed to tell the whole series of events, and this is the reason why we decided to choose a narrative analysis, to gather all the possible pieces and rebuild this event as it was experienced by their protagonists. This doesn’t mean, by any means, that there is a single story with a unique perspective. All perspectives and experiences were respected and stated here as told by the interviewees.

According to Bryman, “the answers that people provide, in particular in qualitative interviews, can be viewed as stories that are potential fodder for narrative analysis. In other words, narrative analysis relates not just to the lifespan but also accounts relating to episodes and the interconnections between them” (2012: 582). The whole story, collected from the interviews, will then be analysed as a particular event with different perspectives and points of view, focused on the role of social movements but not limited to it, since the interviews are semi-structured and any finding will be considered useful and relevant for our final considerations and recommendations.

2.6 Study limitations and delimitations

This research had limitations related to (1) access to information, (2) a tight schedule and (3) funds received. Regarding the first point, civil society organisations, social movements (formal and informal) and community-based organisations were interviewed, not limited to authorities or high representatives, but any member organisation with knowledge about the water crisis, this means that the access to information was conditioned by the will of the interviewees. The reduced schedule, from April to May, means that only responsive organisations were contacted before the end of the stay in South Africa, which did not hamper the quality of research since the minimum number of interviews was achieved. And finally, the funds received, that covered the travel expenses to South Africa and back to Sweden, did not cover, however, transportation inside the city, which limited the possibility to visit a higher number of organisations and people or other
costs related to the access to interviewees. This meant that some interviews had to be made by phone or virtually.

The self-imposed delimitations included, for instance, and as mentioned above, looking for interviewees that were minimally aware of the water crisis, that could contribute to their perspective about the role of social movements and that didn’t necessarily were involved in the decision making processes. Because of the magnitude of the crisis in the Western Cape region, we decided to focus in the city, which means that no rural areas were covered. And finally, because of security reasons related to the difficulties to access townships and organisations that worked inside them, we decided not to enter this kind of settlements. However, organisations that had input about the situations in the townships have listened since we considered their situation relevant to the research.

2.7 Ethical considerations

Regarding the ethical considerations, there was made referencing and correctly citation of the statements done by the interviewees and it was ensured that the data was used with an unbiased filter also maintaining anonymity and confidentiality for the interviewees. Additionally, interviewees were informed about the purpose of the interview, the information regarding the research and their permission to involve them in the study.

An informed consent form was used in order to come to an agreement with the respondents regarding: the explanation of the purpose of the project to the interviewee; the approval of the use of a recording device; the voluntary character of the interview; the use of the information for academic purposes; and the understanding that the information provided will not be shared besides the academic audience. The consent form can be found in Appendix 2.

As mentioned in the section above, all the interviewees’ experiences and perspectives were taking into consideration and respected and were not changed or manipulated. Objectivity was at the core of the collection of the data process.
3. Analytical framework

Concerning the analytical framework, it draws upon two theoretical backgrounds. Initially, it is drawn from the vast social movements puzzle, composed by three main enclosing factors, the structure of political opportunities, mobilising structures or forms of organisation and framing processes to understand the emergence, development, and outcome of a social movement. To complement the analysis, the study relies on alliances' theory, which will explore the issues behind interest groups’ decisions to form alliances or work alone, defining the main characteristics that define the probability of these groups to ally.

As explained in section 2.3, we decided to interview a lower number of people that initially planned due to (1) the difficulty to get access to government officials and (2) the high-quality of the interviewees contacted, which had relevant roles in the water crisis, whether as leaders of their organisations or highly involved in the issue.

3.1 Social movement theory

Many authors have theorised the emergence, development, and outcomes of the social movements. Due to its complexity and broad set perspective involving mobilisation, there are many different structures of categorisation. For this study, it was used one of the wider categories to classify movements according to their scope and historical background.

Social movement theories can be classified by three general categories. According to Ballard (2005), first, there are the old movements that directly challenge the state, pursue reform or revolution. The second category is the new movements, and their main challenges are related to identity issues and they target society structure. In the third category are the new-new global movements, which are the result of a new wave of mobilisations against globalisation processes (Ballard, et al., 2005).

Besides classifying social movements according to their scope, early theorists sustained that social movements were the result of three facets: extremism, deprivation, and violence (Tarrow, 2011), characteristics observed in older movements. According to David Abele, deprivation was a necessary condition to push the creation of social movements. Though contrasting several mobilisations during the last centuries, some authors suggested an alternative set of factors were required for social movements to emerge. One of those authors was Tarrow (2011), who identified extremism as the dramatization of a meaning, deprivation as a
particular form of common purposes and violence as the exacerbation of collective challenges.

From that debate, many authors distinguished several different causes, nevertheless according to McAdam et al., there was a consensus among scholars regarding three facets that cluster the diverse causes. Those are (1) political opportunities and constraints, (2) forms of organisation or mobilising structures and (3) collective processes of interpretation, attribution and social construction, or in other words, framing processes. Understanding the interaction and interdependency between those three notions will help us explain how social movements originate, their development process and their outcomes.

Resource Mobilisation theorists affirm that the role of resources and formal organisations is the key explanatory factor to understand the success of a mobilisation. In contrast, the Political Process model affirms that the emergence comes from the expanding political opportunities, and additionally believes that political opportunities are a necessary prerequisite to action. Despite the lack of organisation, the framings would never emerge (McAdam, 1996). Certain social circumstances are necessary so that social movements emerge. For Ferree and Miller, a required condition to initiate collective action is homogenous people who are in constant contact with each other (McAdam, et al., 1996). Often, movements develop in established institutions or informal association networks but are rare that they remain in those settings. According to McAdam, opportunities and framing processes are more a product of organisational dynamics than during the emergence of the movement.

3.1.1. Political opportunities and constraints

Changes in the political structure, which means expansion or contraction of opportunities, is a key explanatory variable regarding the timing, form, type, and outcome of the social movements. According to McAdam, there is an intrinsic link between institutionalized politics and social movements. Nevertheless, social movements thrive in an informal and formal political context. The emergence of the social movements can be founded on the changes of institutional power or informal relations of a political system (McAdam, et al., 1996). In the same line, Tarrow (2011) suggested that changes in the political opportunities and constraints incentive contention for people with collective claims.

Earliest formulations of the concept conceived political opportunity to any environmental factor that facilitated movement activity, including cultural changes.
For Gamson and Meyer, “changes in cultural values that suddenly enacted grievances, the dramatization of a system’s vulnerability or illegitimacy and innovative master frame in which challengers can map their grievances and demands” (McAdam, et al., 1996), this concept was, subsequently, referred as a framing process. For the Resource Mobilisation theorists, political opportunities represented another resource whose availability was key to the emergence and development of a social movement. Nevertheless, the concept remained too extensive, virtually every aspect of the social movement could fall into that category.

To delimitate the concept of political opportunities and constraints McAdam developed a method to conceptualise the notion. First, he compared political opportunities to other kinds of opportunities, then scoped the composition of the political opportunity structure, and lastly distinguished different dependent variables to which the concept has been applied (McAdam, et al., 1996). The result from that method derived in four dimensions that delimitate the political structure in which the SM are embedded. Those dimensions are:

1. The relative openness of closure of the political system
2. The stability or instability of a broad set of elite alignments
3. The presence or absence of elite allies
4. State’s capacity and propensity for repression

The first dimension represents the importance of the formal legal structure of power, while the second and third represents the informal structure of power. The three first dimensions were the result of compatible characteristics found in the theories of social movement scholars, while in the case of the fourth dimension, it is the result of an additional input added by McAdam, who considered that repression systems impacted directly the expansion or contraction of the political structure.

3.1.2. Mobilising Structures

Two large theories have theorised about the mobilising structures: on one hand, the resource mobilization theory by McCarthy and Zald, and later on, the political process model by authors like Tilly. Mobilising structures show the trajectory of the social movements, according to the Resource Mobilisation theory, mobilising structures are the choices taken by movement leaders to pursue change, therefore the consequences resulted from those choices show the ability to raise resources and
mobilise and affect directly the chances to succeed. For the political process model, mobilising structures are the means to engage in collective action.

The basic structure of a mobilisation hail from family and networks of friends named *micromobilization*, it’s the most informal and less organised structure part of the whole spectrum of mobilising structures. Micromobilisation illustrates the process of movement recruitment and how they take hold of solidarity and communication. In the less organized portion of the spectrum are the informal networks or *Social Movement Communities* that exist within existing organizations, for instance, church congregations, group studies and so on. Laying in the middle of the spectrum, are the *free-standing protest campaign committees* which have as main objective to link and create networks within the different organizations in the social movement space in order to coordinate events. These structures tend to be more enduring coalition structures (McCarthy, 1996).

In the more organised section are the independent local volunteer-based group or grassroots groups enclosed in the *Social Movement Organization* label. Those local groups are generally connected with national structures, main examples are federations or coalitions, called *Membership Groups*. In recent years, these groups are linking to more global structures. And the most formal structures are the *Movement Halfway Houses* whose purpose is to mentor smaller groups or communities to provide technical advice and resources, for instance, legal defence and litigation professional organizations.

![Types of mobilising structures](image)

**Figure 4.** Types of mobilising structures.

Each of the structures has access to a different set of distinctive tools or repertoires. According to Neidhardt, the coherence of the mobilising structures, meaning...
coordination between various structures, make a functioning movement. According to McCarthy, effectively chosen mobilising structures lead to social change.

Mobilising structures have internal and external targets. Internally, it takes hold of commitment from adherents and activists, and the other side grabs the attention of bystanders, opponents, and authorities. More stable political environment leads to the mobilising structures, and in the long run, will have more range. While if the environment is more volatile the social movements will struggle to have a wider range of structures.

3.1.3. Framing processes

Framing processes or collective processes of interpretation, attribution and social construction can be defined as shared meanings and definitions between the adherents of the social movement. This factor is based on the sociology notions of ideas and sentiments. Resource Mobilisation theorists remained outside these two notions, their main concern is focused on the role of resources and formal organisations without taking into account the socio-cultural context. In the opposite side, the New Social Movements theorists such as Melucci and Tourraine appropriated those notions referring to them as cultural values and collective identity.

David Snow defined these processes as the “conscious efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action”. Nevertheless, this factor lacks a defined conceptual dimension.

According to Zald (1996), frames provide support in order to interpret and define problems and suggest action paths to solve the problem. They generally use rhetorical and dramaturgical tools or what it is called symbolic interactionism, meaning metaphors, images, and definitions. Framings of injustice almost always draw upon the social notions of rights and responsibilities to highlight the wrong with the current social order and suggest a direction for change (McAdam, et al., 1996).

Social movement’s innovation is linked to cultural analysis through the notions of the repertoire of contention. The cultural stock on how to protest and how to organize the social movement. Templates of organisation are different from the repertoire, the templates are skills that take from the whole society while the repertoires are exclusive to the social movement sector. The cultural stock tends to
change grow and evolve. Additionally, participants are differentially situated in the social structure and use the frames compatible with them (McAdam et al, 1996).

3.1.4. Forms of action

There is a wide variety of forms of action conducted by a broad range of actors that needs to adapt to changes in the political context in which social movements are embedded. The success of a Social movement lays on its capacity to employ a wide array of performances and repertoires (Tarrow, 2011). Additionally, those forms of action in the long term have to evolve and adapt to change in the state, while in the short term, response to the change in political opportunities and constraints.

Charles Tilly defined the repertoire of contention as the ways people act together in pursuit of shared interests, not only including the actions taken by the members but also the overall skills of the diverse group of the organisations. From a historical point of view, the repertoire can be divided into the old and modern repertoire, distinguishing activities such as tarring, feathering and petitions commonly used before advances in technology permitted spread more rapidly information.

The modern repertoire is characterised by three features, cosmopolitan, modal and autonomous. Cosmopolitan actions refer to the interests that affect centres of power whose actions disturbs many localities; modal denotes the capacity of the actions to be transferable from one setting to another, and autonomous means that the actions were conducted by the claimants who have direct contact with the centres of power (Tarrow, 2011).

The repertoire of contention can be divided between three types of collective action: contained behaviour, violence, and disruption. According to Tarrow (2011), contained behaviour actions build routines that authorities accept and even facilitate, their ability to influence make them predominant in the social movement repertoire. Collective violence or violent actions are the easiest to initiate and are generally limited to small groups that lack resources to conduct more organised activities. Disruptive repertoire refers to innovative types of action that purposely break routines and leaves elites and authorities disoriented, however, they are generally unstable and have a tendency to become violent and, on the contrary, if routinized they become into the convention.

Besides repertoires, social movements profits from another type of collective action known as performances. Ritualization of collective action becomes a performance, for instance, public demonstrations to allure media and public opinion, it can be
online or offline, and its main purpose is to aid solidarity to grow. Performance differentiates from repertoires, as a result of direct and in some cases violent manifestations (Tarrow, 2011).

### 3.2 Alliances’ theory

In 1997, Marie Hojnacki published a research titled “Interest Groups’ Decisions to Join Alliances or Work Alone”, in which she explored “how groups act to articulate their policy preferences and exert their influence, and why they chose particular strategies for advocacy” (Hojnacki, 1997:61). Diverse authors are cited in a debate about the reasons in favour and against interest groups’ decisions to join coalitions, which will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Hojnacki’s work is going to be used in this thesis as part of the analytical framework to explain the dynamics of the social movements that took part in Cape Town’s water crisis, specifically the reasons why they decided to work together or not. The relevance about social movements’ capacity to articulate and create coalitions in the face of a crisis to strengthen their support to put pressure on the authorities justifies the use of this framework.

Hojnacki makes two main assumptions: the first one is that interest groups are rational actors, that is, they prefer success in achieving their goals to any other outcome and they assess the alternative most likely to maximize their chances for advocacy success, and the second one is that environments in which interest groups work are diverse and crowded. On one side, according to her, groups that are on the same side might see advantages in working together by sharing costs, information and, skills, besides getting broader support from the population for a specific policy. Nevertheless, on the other, competition for resources, support and access to decision-makers is greater, which means that distinguish themselves and their reputation from others representing the same interests might be a reason to avoid alliances.

The author revises what the literature says about the topic, and she ends up with two different views. According to the traditional view, there are three main reasons why alliances are unlikely to happen: the first one is that interest groups require autonomy to survive, especially if we consider that the environment is diverse and crowded; secondly, they need to enhance their reputations in a policy niche; and finally, they need to distinguish themselves from groups representing similar interests and clientele (Wilson 1973: 263, Berry 1997, Browne 1990: 480 in Hojnacki 1997: 63). In opposition to this view, an alternative view, defended by authors like Baumgartner and Jones (1993), Salisbury (1990), Costain and Costain
(1981), Ornstein and Elder (1978) and Wright (1989, 1990), says that building alliances can improve effectiveness in a more complex decision making environment, since few groups enjoy dominance in a policy area currently, and that organisations opportunities for alliance involvement are greater now than in the past (Hojnacki 1997: 64).

Based on a study made by the author with different interest group organisations and the two views above described, she proposes four kinds of forces that shape this groups’ behaviour to join an alliance or work alone: the context, the allies, the autonomy, and the characteristics. There are several variables comprehended in each of these forces that will define the probability of a group to join a coalition.

Regarding the context that surrounds the issue, the factors that define the probabilities include:

1. An organised opposition, since the chances to defeat it are greater if an alliance is formed and because an alliance equals broader support.
2. Congressional opposition or support will determine the attitudes taken by the groups. The higher the congressional opposition, the lower are the chances for success.
3. A need for broad interests (and not narrow) of different groups to make alliances.

Concerning the allies, that is, the knowledge about them, their experience and reputation, the factors considered are:

1. The experience of groups as previous allies. The higher the experience of having contributed in a coalition, the higher the chances to contribute again.
2. The need for a “pivotal player” among the members of the coalition is crucial, its presence in the alliance legitimises what they are advocating for.
3. Organisations recruited to join are less inclined to work together.

In third place, regarding the autonomy, which means the willingness to retain an identity in a crowded group environment, the element considered is:

1. Groups facing competition for members and resources worry about maintaining an institutional identity, which means they are less likely to join alliances.

And finally, regarding the characteristics (the type of interests, tangible or symbolic), there are three factors:
1. The type of interest may influence the appeal of allied activity.
2. Groups representing social or public interest are more inclined to engage in allied activity.
3. Groups representing expressive interests must work harder to raise funds, maintain support and keep the public and decision-makers focused on their concerns. To remain visible, active and reduce costs, coalition membership might be an answer.

In summary:

$$\Pr(\text{join}) = f(\text{context}, \text{allies}, \text{autonomy}, \text{character})$$

Hojnacki concludes that organised interests choose advocacy strategies best-suited to attain success, and this means that: when opposition is strong, it is of greater benefit to join a coalition; when groups are asked to join a collective advocacy campaign, they may infer from the invitation that the recruiting groups have little to offer to the cause, this leads to needing of lobbying groups that are perceived as important; the greater the experience as allies, the more likely groups are to join coalitions; expressive groups seem to need coalitions in order to show broader support for their concerns. To conclude, how groups act as advocates are likely to depend on their allies, the context of the debate and the type of interest they represent (Hojnacki 1997: 85).

These two theories allow is to make a more in-depth analysis that considers both the external and internal factors of social movements. On one side, social movement theory explains the external aspects, such as the actions, activities, and outcomes of the actions, while the alliance theory explains the dynamics of the movements, that is, the internal interactions between them and their decisions before they choose to create an alliance. At the same time, the alliance theory allows analysing the chances of success of a movement through the characteristics that determine the decision of a movement to work together or not.
4. Findings

This section will be divided into two parts, according to the interviews and observations conducted in the field: the observation conducted in events and public spaces, the interviews with social movement actors and authorities. These findings will be presented according to this division and not necessarily in chronological order. As stated in the methodology, our data collection was selective and purposive, which means that the organisations chosen for the interviews were carefully selected. However, all information gathered through different sources was useful for the research, which includes informal interviews and observation.

4.1 Interviews

4.1.1 Social movement actors

4.1.1.1 Actor 1: former member of Water4CapeTown

As mentioned above, informal interviews were as valuable as the others for the research. This was one of those cases, as we found out that this particular organisation, Water4CapeTown, was no longer active. Luckily, we were able to...
meet and informally interview one of the former members, who shared the information with certain restrictions regarding lack of time and his apprehensiveness.

As informed by this person, Water4CapeTown was established as a local non-governmental and non-profit charity in the city of Cape Town during the water crisis. Their main aim was to provide potable and non-potable water for free to the population but stopped working for undisclosed reasons. At the moment of the interview, the person still worked in the water delivery field, working for a private water delivery service company.

Since the interview was informal, the questions were not structured and the person shared the information freely. Regarding the origins of the water crisis, they considered that the local government did not act on time to prevent the crisis and that they had a big amount of fault. However, according to them, the citizens got together and collectively faced the crisis changing their behaviour regarding the use of water. The population faced the crisis differently, when privileged people realised how difficult it was for the lower classes to get access to water, not only during the crisis but also before everything happened. According to them, people realised how important it was to recognise the value of water in their lives, which was something that poorer people had to deal with daily. There was a need to educate people about the use of water and the citizens as a whole made all the efforts possible to avoid a Day Zero scenario.

Regarding the role of social movements, the interviewee could not recall a specific organisation involved in the water crisis that stood out or was particularly relevant. About the water strategy developed by the City of Cape Town, the only comment was that it was relevant but not sufficient to avoid a future crisis and that the role of citizens was going to crucial for that.

4.1.1.2 Actor 2: Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG)

As part of our selection of specific organisations that were considered important and relevant for our research, one of them was the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG), selected as part of our snowballing interview process. The interview was conducted in a semi-structured way with the project manager for the Western Cape.

EMG was founded in 1990 and changed its name in 1994, and is currently a non-profit organisation that, according to the respondent, builds networks to benefit, facilitate and educate the society to be in balance with nature. The main field of
action is environmental and social justice, and the main partners are community-based organisations.

The respondent began by giving an overview about the protests related to water: they observed that more protests were going than before the crisis regarding the water devices and the tariffs implemented by the local government, which were considered punitive and abusive. These protests were a product of a lack of a communication channel with the authorities. According to what they said, the government did not show interest in the situation of the poorer areas, such as Khayelitsha, which is why the inhabitants of those areas had no trust in the authorities and used protests in the streets as a way of demonstrating their disagreement about how the crisis was being handled.

Questioned about the reason why EMG got involved in the water crisis, the respondent answered that it was a matter of responsibility on the field they have always worked with, that they knew well the subject and was their duty to make the issue public. Besides that, the respondent was from the Khayelitsha Township, which suffered severe shortage, and that made them aware of the water problem for a long time, even before the crisis, and also made them very vocal about it.

About the role of EMG during the crisis, the interviewee responded that it was to facilitate and mediate information about the crisis, spreading true facts to fight against the fake news that were being shared. In the early stages, the organisation received calls and had to explain the situation to the media and researchers. On the other side, according to them, the government’s approach was to “kill active citizenship” without explanation, and started giving different messages to the population: depending on the area, the message was polite (in the middle or upper-class neighbourhoods and properties) and punitive in lower-class areas.

Regarding the activities conducted by EMG during the water crisis, they responded that the main objective was to spread true facts and the differences between Day Zero and the drought, and for this matter they supported campaigns, did small research, used social media, developed factsheets, organised community-based meetings and public meetings, made petitions and tried to have meeting with city officials. Asked about the groups or organisations that EMG worked with, the respondent mentioned Women on Drought, the Social Justice Coalition and EITC as some of their partners, and also mentioned that they did not work with the Water Crisis Coalition. The person commented that not only environmental or water-related organisations were involved, but other organisations working in other fields started being affected by the crisis and also got involved, for instance, land and agricultural workers, domestic workers, and others.
According to the respondent, the main achievements of the social movements were the level of unity of the communities and the empowerment of the people, who became more vocal at the grassroots levels and got deeply involved during the protests and the development of the solutions, organising meetings and debates (for instance, about the affordability of water and how to fund it). People had solutions, according to them, but did not know how to use them and started using water differently, which led to a behavioural change that made the difference. The interviewee mentioned that the change should be embedded in the policies, and that failure made the people refocus their attention in that issue: instead of challenging the water scarcity, they started to challenge the policies that were being proposed.

EMG referred to the Water Strategy developed by the municipality, in which they participated actively, attending the meetings and commenting on the draft that was proposed. During this process, the government realised that structural changes were needed. According to the representative of EMG, different government departments worked differently and separately on the same issue, which made difficult to recognise the accountability of the water crisis and the communication channel between local authorities and the population. This is the reason why the municipality saw the need to create a specific task team and a department in charge of this matter.

Asked if they had some final comments, EMG mentioned that the situation was not only reduced to the city of Cape Town but the whole Western Cape Province and that climate change, as a global issue, could affect more places around the world. About the government, the interviewee responded that they wished there were more spaces and communication channels to talk to the government and that the general mistrust towards the authorities made people stop going to the meetings. Finally, they emphasized that the policies should come from the citizens, in a participatory way, which was not the case of the municipality of Cape Town.

4.1.1.3 Actor 3: Water Crisis Coalition (WCC)

One of the key organisations identified for our interviews was the Water Crisis Coalition (WCC), one of the main and most vocal organisations that organised since the beginning of 2018 to unify the discourse and create pressure, according to their spokesperson. The interview was conducted with the provincial executive and member of the education committee of the Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party (SRWP) of South Africa, who acted as spokesperson of the coalition.

The interviewee, as an active member of the WCC, explained how the movement was formed: according to them, it was part spontaneous and at the same time not
spontaneous, it had a socialist background, since it started with the Workers Party and other socialist groups when they decided to organise council meetings and launch processes of objection. The crisis, obviously, according to them, was the reason why they gathered around the cause and created a movement. According to the respondent, the proposition that there should be a coalition emerged when they realised that the crisis was affecting not only the working class but also the middle class, and that is how the movement started on January 18th, 2018.

The first massive protest occurred on January 28th, when they gathered 200 people on a broad campaign against the decisions taken by the local government, specifically against the water tariffs. According to them, the justification for the high and punitive tariffs was the possibility of a Day Zero. As time passed, the movement started to research on the subject and looked for advice to understand what was really happening, and, as they mention, they discovered that the essence of Day Zero was to mask a privatisation of the water services in the city and the province, using the crisis to justify high water tariffs and the need of a desalination plant. The government’s assumption, according to the WCC, was that there wouldn’t rain at all and that the weather conditions were going to be adverse, which was contradicted when it started raining again and the authorities called the Day Zero off.

According to the respondent, the identification of a single problem and “enemy” create unity among the members of the coalition. Even traditional rivals worked together, like the SRWP and the ANC. The goal was to reveal the true intentions of the authorities, as the WCC states, like privatisation of water sources, lands, the building of private properties were the aquifers were located or some privileges given to private companies that did not suffer the consequences of the tariff rise. The WCC mentioned that the government could have easily got the city out of crisis using different techniques to extract water from other sources, like springs, aquifers or underground water.

However, less than a year later and after the peak of the crisis, the coalition collapsed. According to the person interviewed, this was caused by the lack of a political line in the moment, which survived because of the momentum, a principle built around the water issue and accepted by the members, but the internal forces weakened after the end of the crisis and the different groups involved spread and left the movement. Certain rules imposed made the movement too complex, which created a difficulty to agree on certain values. After the momentum passed, the WCC came to an end after a historic moment, according to the members.

Asked about the role of WCC, the respondent answered that it was mainly to research about water and make it public, as well as creating a political resistance
and almost a revolution (they mentioned that the citizens of Khayelitsha were angry at the point to start a revolution). According to them, there was a need to fight for the right of access to sufficient water for all, which was a struggle of decades for some of the sectors of the population.

The WCC was clear about their achievements during the water crisis: get free water for the townships, pressure the government to come clean and bring solutions, share information about the crisis and create a unified movement to resist. According to them, the achievement was accomplished in the streets, mainly, and the threat of a revolution, especially in Khayelitsha, was a major factor. The activities conducted included community meetings, pamphlets, mouth-to-mouth information, and WhatsApp communication for the articulation and street demonstrations.

Regarding the water strategy developed by the municipality, the respondent mentioned that there was a role played by the WCC that lead to the active participation of the citizens in the document, but that they still managed to keep privatisation purposes and grow water capital. They also mentioned that the document looked progressive on paper, but that they still were waiting for the next opportunity to privatise the services. Asked about the provincial government’s representative comments (mentioned below) about the fact there was no specific social movement involved in the water crisis, they mentioned that the authorities tried to diminish and airbrush the role of the WCC and other movements, but that the scale of the resistance was huge and undeniable. Among some of the groups with whom the WCC worked, according to what they stated, there was SAFTU (South African Federation of Trade Unions), ANC activists and COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions).

Asked about the future of social movements in Cape Town, the respondent mentioned the fact the WCC was organised in weeks and collapsed in a matter of days so that the environment was fruitful and favoured the emergence of new movements. The potential was clear, according to them, because of political maturity among the movements and the unexpected amount of people present in the streets during the streets. WCC mentioned that the resistance was still alive in other forms and that it would re-emerge if another Day Zero situation happened. The result was clear: people have more knowledge about water and a higher level of understanding of the subject.

Finally, asked about the other interviewees’ claims that the climate change was a big cause for the water crisis, the respondent mentioned that this issue was, in fact, relevant, but it was used to privatise services and public properties.
4.1.2. **Authorities**

To understand the role of the social movement during the water crisis and their outcomes, we interviewed two government officials who were involved in the decision-making and in the implementation of the measures to mitigate the severe restrictions on water and ending the crisis. Since the water crisis affected the majority of municipalities in the Western Cape and the water supply system is managed by provincial and local institutions, it was necessary to target both governmental levels to have a better understanding of the issue. Nonetheless, due to time and access constraints, we couldn’t interview a City of Cape Town official with knowledge about the subject, though we had the opportunity to talk from an official of who worked in the contingency group formed by the government to mitigate the water crisis.

**4.1.2.1 Western Cape Province representative**

The first respondent was the Minister of Economic Opportunities of the Western Cape Province. Regarding the role of the social movements during the water crisis, they observed that the Cape Town civil society saw the looming day and the severe drastic implications if the water scarcity continued. Nevertheless, the respondent did not observe any particular organisation or distinctive NGO working to solve the crisis.

Concerned residents contributed taking direct actions as the authority specified that “everyone saw it as a personal responsibility”. Every citizen was suffering the immediate consequences and they foresaw the future repercussions of running out of water, consequently, the citizens decided to reduce to the minimum their water consumption.

One of the major results from the different sets of measures taken to address the crisis was the dramatic behavioural change detected in the city population, as citizens understood the implications of getting closer to Day Zero. Moreover, the interviewee declared that this radical reduction of water demand has been noticed around the world. According to the minister, Cape Town is one of the first cities to dramatically change behaviour, regarding water use, in the agricultural sector as well as in the urban areas.

As part of the government’s response to the water crisis, it was designed a strategy mentioned in previous chapters, to diminish the reliance on rainwater and prevent water scarcity in the future. Concerning this document, they confirmed that it was
an initiative from the local government, it was designed by the major, government officials and experts, and then it was approved by the city council of Cape Town. According to the minister, there was not any type of civil society organisation involved in the design of this strategy. The first version of this draft was released at the beginning of 2019 to be commented by everyone interested in those matters.

4.1.2.2 Water Resilience Task Team representative

The second respondent from this target group was a Water Sector Analyst from Green Cape. Green Cape is a development agency located at the regional level and their goal is to enable the green economy in the Western Cape Province. It is a non-profit organisation established by the provincial and local governments, and additionally receives funds from multilateral agencies like the World Bank.

The agency works with businesses, academia and the government to promote sustainable development in the region. The water sector desks principally work with big water users, industry and commercial sectors; their role is to help them in the development of management plans to reduce water consumption. Also, they work with foreign companies that seek opportunities to use water-saving technology. According to the respondent, the water sector is growing and rapidly changing although in the region those initiatives face many financing constraints.

During the water crisis, the Green Cape made part of the inter-institutional initiative, the Water Resilience Task Team. According to the respondent, their main role in the team was to use their networks to communicate the urgency to reduce water consumption to major industrial businesses and commercial sectors. While the Western Cape government officials spread the message and work to join efforts in the smaller municipalities in the region and hire international advisers.

Regarding their observations from the social movement actions, they affirmed that every citizen in Cape Town played a role to mitigate the crisis, and because of the different ways in which the crisis have affected each part of the Capetonian society, people proceeded according to their needs. For instance, independent groups of citizens used social media to share tips and help each other to save water.

In the end, the respondent insisted that the main outcome of the joint efforts was that the crisis ceased and the city didn’t run out of water which was contributed by the
incredible reduction in the water demand, it drastically diminished in 60% in a three-year.

Concerning the strategy, the interviewee sustained that it was a very good, proactive and a progressive initiative from the City of Cape Town and that it is important to understand that it was designed before the drought. Studies were done by the government show that in the near future the demand was going to surpass the supply, however, the severe drought caught them by surprise.

4.2 Observations

During the observation in the public debate, we observed that, while the debate was about concerns around climate change, such as environmental impact taxes, the workforce in carbon-intensive industries and security concerns of environmental activists, one of the most discussed subjects were the water crisis and the lack of sanitation in the townships.

The participants demanded more attention from the government authorities, expressly to facilitate immediate solutions to build proper sanitation infrastructure in the informal settlements and townships around the city. Khayelitsha representatives emphasised that the government targeted black settlements during the water crisis, installing water devices that restrict water consumption. Moreover, in the winter periods, the lack of a sewage system leads to constant flooding.

Besides public debates, during our stay in the city, we witnessed activists and protesters voicing their concern about several environmental issues. For instance, Khayelitsha residents were protesting against the installation of the infamous water devices, protesters took violent stances to voice their discontent blocking streets in the township and burning tires. Other observed movements, were the new global movements concerned about climate change, one of them was Extinction Rebellion demanding the government to take actions to mitigate climate change and UnitedBehind a coalition of several civil society organisations working in different areas, corruption, infrastructure, security, land, housing and environment, at that moment they were protesting against the local government to take measures to mitigate climate change.

4 It is a non-violent global rebellion movement against criminal inaction on the ecological crisis (Extinction Rebellion)

5 Civil society coalition that seeks justice and equality in South Africa, (United Behind)
While it’s been a year since the city experienced the crisis, many residents are still very conscious of its consequences, we could observe in many public areas, libraries, restaurants, universities, malls, hair salons, had several announcements reminding residents to take care of the water. Additionally, many of those places adapted their facilities to take advantage of saving-water technology.

5. Analysis

The analysis of the previously described findings is presented in this chapter. We utilise the analytical framework to categorise and study the mobilisations and protest that happened during the aligid points of the crisis in Cape Town, in order to answer the main and secondary research questions. The analysis starts with an overall discussion of the significance of social movements and then it is divided into four subchapters: actors in social movements addressing the water crisis, actions and methods of social movements during the water crisis, outcomes of social movement’s actions, and role and dynamics of the social movements, following the structure of the research questions. For the last part of the analysis, we included a fifth subchapter called current challenges for social movements with an analysis of other aspects identified in the findings that not necessary fitted in the analytical framework although, we consider it is important to address.

To understand the notion of a social movement and enclose the broad spectrum in within social movements are embedded, there was used a definition drawn by Tilly and Wood (2012) in which social movements are collective challenges based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with the elites, opponents, and authorities. In a more practical way, Ballard and other scholars propose the next definition: “Politically and/or directed collectives, often involving multiple organisations and networks, focused on changing one or more elements of the social, political and economic system within which they are located” (Ballard, et al., 2005).

In the case of Cape Town, the opportunities and constraints circumscribed during the water crisis lead to several activists, community leaders, non-governmental organisations and citizens to pursue changes regarding the measures taken by the government to mitigate the crisis in the city. The evidence collected from the findings shows that the social movement was dissatisfied by the government’s lack of preventive procedures and its reaction towards the crisis. This movement aimed to change distinctive parts of the management of the water supply system, also achieve more participation in the decision-making spaces or what some authors call democratic governance of water and hold the government accountable for the lack of proper water and sanitation infrastructure in certain zones of the city.
5.1 Actors in social movements addressing the water crisis

Many actors were identified as part of the social movement that played a role in Cape Town’s water crisis, according to the data we were able to collect from the interviewees, which are also considered as part of the movement themselves. From more formal to more informal organisations, the actors got engaged in the crisis not only to solve the problem but to demand more democratic governance of water in a short and long term, as stated in the introductory part of this chapter.

According to figure 4, which explains the types of mobilising structures and the levels of formality or informality, we identify, on one side, the citizens as a whole and without a specific organisation, who organised themselves to face the crisis and are part of the social movement defined above. On the other side, we identify the “broad front”, as mentioned by the WCC representative: the conglomerate of organisations that gathered and worked together in different issues related to water because of the common problem they were all facing on an economic, cultural and social way. This broad front created a collective identity since the common problem was affecting all actors at a personal level and in all levels of society. This last factor also leads to an intersectional approach of the issue due to the struggles that the citizens were facing in terms of socio-economic class and race (which was strongly related to the apartheid era, which divided non-whites and whites into different zones of the city). This last group belongs to the informal side of the diagram in figure 4 since there was no structured organisation or any kind of membership to a collective group.

On the formal side of the diagram, we identify organisations such as the Environmental Monitoring Group or Water4CapeTown, which fit into the halfway house movement because of its strong level of formality as legally established non-profit organisations. As mentioned by EMG’s representative, they provide resources and tools to less-organised organisations to empower to become more organised and independent. They, like other specialised NGOs and non-profits, were already working on the water and environmental issue for a long time and took part of the social movement because of its relevance and proximity to the movement’s goals.

On a less formal level, we identify the membership groups: WCC, COSATU, and SAFTU among the most representative. As trading unions, the last two require a formal membership to belong to them, and they got involved in the crisis because of political reasons, since their main group, the workers class, was being deeply affected by the crisis. As for the first one, there was also a political reason behind their engagement in the crisis, as its creation and emergence was a clear initiative of the SRWP.
And finally, on the informal side of the diagram, we identify the Khayelitsha protesters as a social movement community, as they did not have any formal affiliation to a membership group or community and were small less-organised movements as an initiative of a localised area (the neighbourhood itself, in this case).

The social movement as a whole emerged after a political opportunity was presented: the water crisis, as it was a chance to show and make their demands visible, as well as themselves. This occurred, of course, in different ways, since for some of them the visibility was more important for others, like the case of the Khayelitsha protesters, which saw their demands being ignored during a long time even before the crisis started.

We were unable to categorise the movement in one specific type since it has characteristics of all three but doesn’t fit into any in particular. It can be seen as an old movement because of WCC’s characteristic as a political movement, due to its relation to a political party and the worker’s class; as a new movement because of its anti-society structure characteristic, since it challenged society’s system and discrimination of certain groups; and as a new-new movement because it pushed an anti-globalisation and anti-privatisation agenda. Despite all categories’ characteristics can be identified in the movement, the new-new characteristics highlight more than the others.

Of all social movement organisations involved in the crisis, the Water Crisis Coalition was the only one that took advantage of the momentum and formed a coalition. Their members were not necessarily already involved in water issues particularly, but the political opportunity presented to them was used timely as a response to the government’s approach to the crisis. On the other hand, the other movements had a history of already working with water or environmental issues or had a struggle related to water. EMG is an example of the first, while the Khayelitsha protesters are an example of the second.

We consider that the protests, the actions taken by the organised groups, and the forming of the coalition emerged not because of the crisis itself, but because of the government’s response to the crisis. The measures that were taken, such as the punitive tariffs, affected not only the lower classes but the middle-class as well, as well as the industry and the commerce. A message of fear was used at the moment that the municipality announced an imminent Day Zero scenario, causing commotion and revolt among the population because of two reasons: the lack of precaution and prevention of the crisis by the local government, and the type of response given to handle the crisis.

The heterogeneity of the movement’s members made it diverse, broad, and capable of different actions. The broader the type of organisation, the more effective because of the availability of a broader set of tools and resources. As an example, Khayelitsha’s use of violence was used as informal and more extreme measures,
which at the same time lead the government to prefer the dialogue with more formal organisations, such as NGOs and the coalition itself.

Hojnacki’s alliances’ theory can be used to explain the alliances and coalitions created by the social movement. We consider that the movements that gathered around the water crisis (WCC) did so in a temporary way, with a clear beginning and end of the movement. Because of the response of the authorities, the movements organised themselves around a common problem with a common enemy: the government. It can be said that the common enemy was the local government and not the crisis because the movement gathered and organised as an opposition to the government’s measures, and this is the element that helped them to identify a commonality to build a coalition around.

Besides the commonality of the interest of the coalition, there was its broadness: since the main argument was built around water, a broader rather than a narrow argument, it was easier for the different members to agree on the issue and work together. Additionally, it can be said that, regarding the history of alliances, which, according to Hojnacki, can play a key part in the possibilities of forming an alliance, the SRWP had a clear past of creating alliances, mainly at their protests, gathering members of other members (such as ANC activists, as stated by the WCC representative), and this improved the chances of creating new alliances, which in fact ended up happening (COSATU and SAFTU were part of the movement too). Finally, regarding the presence of a pivotal player among the members, we could not identify any that legitimised the movement, precisely because of the broadness of the issue. All members were affected at the personal level and there was no specific organisation that had the legitimacy to call themselves key or pivotal player during the crisis.

Autonomy is another factor to be analysed in the alliance’s theory. Hojnacki states that autonomy refers to how autonomous is the discourse of each organisation and that the higher the dispute for the ownership the discourse in their field of specialisation, the less the chances to form an alliance. This can be seen in the case of the SWRP, which was the only party member of the coalition and did not openly work with another party, except for a few ANC activists, as mentioned by the WCC representative. In this case, since the discourse against privatisation and the measures taken by the government was not a “property” or considered to be “owned” by any organisation, there was no competition and the chances of creating a coalition were higher.

Finally, according to the last factor of the alliances theory, it can be said that water was considered as a relevant topic for all actors regardless of socio-economic class, race or background, and all of them were interested in resolving it. This increased the chances of creating an alliance. On the other side, the crisis was also seen as an opportunity to gain visibility, reduce costs and stay active as a movement by forming partnerships with other organisations.
5.2 Actions and methods of social movements during the water crisis

To analyse the development of the organised mobilisations, we examined the actions and activities done by the social movements during the crisis and with which resources they counted to execute those actions. According to the social movement theorist, the way social collectives act it’s called forms of actions. Rendering the analytical framework, we classified the detected actions and activities into three categories, contained behaviour, disruptive and violent actions as part of their repertoires.

Within the category of contained behaviour, we can classify most of all the different types of interactions between the government and the social movement. The following examples illustrate the engagement of the collective mobilisation found in the collected data, those are: public debates, petitions, and dialogue with the government performed mostly by the more formal social movement organisations such as EMG.

Additionally, fitting in the same category are activities like support campaigns, community-based meetings, pamphlets, developing fact-sheets and use of social media platforms. Those activities were used to spread accurate information collected from small research about the drought and water usage, to promote effective methods to save water and to counteract false material that was being scattered on social media during the crisis.

Other parts of the social movement utilised repertoire accessible to them according to their resources. For instance, the main activities performed by the Water Crisis Coalition consisted of protests and manifestations. They used their strengths, a wide range of adepts and experience in mobilising people, to promote anti-privatisation messages on the streets. In conjunction with the broad set of organisations that were affiliated to the coalition, we can determine that they had a more varied set of repertoires of contention to resist their opponents, in this case, the local government.
Figure 6. Members of the Water Crisis Coalition hand a memorandum to local government authorities during a protest. Source: Shaheed Mahomed

While EMG used their scientific knowledge to spread information and true facts about the crisis and WCC used classic repertoires from the social movements, informal organisations, such as Khayelitsha protesters employed violent tactics to disturb the local government. We can observe that, because of a lack of resources and access to power, they were forced to use violence to gain more visibility. Although classifying Khayelitsha’s mobilisations in one category, we are diminishing the complexity of their role in the crisis.

In the middle of contained behaviour and violence, there are disruptive actions. The two evidences point at a unsettling example of actions that we found in our research, both are related to the warning call of Khayelitsha protesters who were willing to initiate a revolution in the case of the government failed to eliminate the Day Zero caution that one of the respondents mentioned, as well in our observation we can sustain the affirmation, as we observed a defiant attitudes from Khayelitsha protesters towards the authorities and the consistently violent protests around the township demanding just and equal conditions.

Although the threat of revolution falls in the delicate line between violent and disruptive actions, we cannot classify this action as violent, neither disruptive taking into account the definitions portrayed in the analytical framework. Therefore, we have no evidence that indicates the existence of disruptive neither innovative actions, however, we cannot conclude that the social movement didn’t use these types of actions.

Moreover, we evidenced another distinctive difference between the different components of the social movement. Even though Khayelitsha protesters used violent repertoories, they had access to another set of tools from their cultural stock that differentiated them from more formal organisations, which were beneficial for
the movement. Some community members employed body expressions, such as chants in Xhosa⁶ and idiosyncratic dances, to express their identity as a form of resistance and protest, which made a strong presence and stance.

5.3 Outcomes of social movement’s actions

This part will explore what were the outcomes of the actions conducted by the social movements and the outcome of the water crisis itself, that is, the strategy proposed by the City of Cape Town.

The political opportunities aspect of the analytical framework analyses power structures as formal and informal, and the structures of power were key to determine the outcome of the water crisis. Regarding the formal structures of power, which refers to the role of the local government, it can be said that the interaction between them and the social movements failed to succeed. As the interviewees stated, the municipality was not enough structured to create a communication channel with the citizens or organised movements, and the crisis was useful to show this failure. In relation to the informal structures of power, the government had different messages for different socio-economic classes: according to the EMG representative, the municipality took a punitive attitude towards the least privileged zones of the city, while with the richer areas they had a kind and more comprehensive behaviour.

After the authorities called the Day Zero off, the momentum was lost and some movements collapsed, as it was the case of WCC or Water4CapeTown. According to the respondent of WCC, the coalition collapsed because of a lack of clear political identity after the Day Zero was called off and the crisis officially ended. The movement’s diversity was one of its strong points, but it also ended up being its weakness, as it divided them from the inside.

After the end of the crisis and of the different movement’s engagement in the crisis, some of them continued working on the issue, whether because of they were already engaged in the topic before, or because they opted to do so. The topic never stopped being relevant for the citizens, and that is why they kept sending messages to the population to keep the same behaviour regarding water management. Despite they gained visibility, the momentum was lost. Khayelitsha, for instance, still struggles with this issue and did not stop being active. EMG, on the other side, continues working on the issue because of their background and continuous work on water and environmental justice.

Another aspect that led to the collapse of the WCC was the fact that the social movement had one single objective regarding the water crisis: call the Day Zero off, as a minimum requirement, and as soon as this happened and the problem diminished, the movement collapsed quickly.

⁶ One of the official languages in South Africa and the most spoken language in Khayelitsha
The Water Strategy, developed by the City of Cape Town, can be considered as the outcome proposed by the local authorities to show their commitment to avoid future crises. When the strategy was published, it came as an initiative from the local government, but our evidence is unable to explain if the civil society or other citizen’s movements were included in the discussions during the development of the document. Despite being a document open for discussion and comments from citizens, the process was not participative enough, as it did not include other actors, according to what the authorities responded. Nevertheless, despite our evidence leads to this argument, we cannot conclude that other movements were not heard at all, since one of the demands from the Khayelitsha protests, water, and sanitation, is included in the strategy.

It can be said that, after the crisis ended and the different movements dissolved, they refocused their discourse and efforts towards broader issues; one of them was climate change. Some organisations shifted their discourse from being against the government’s to handle the crisis to discourse about tackling climate change, globalisation, and privatisation. As observed during the public debate event mentioned in the findings, one of the main arguments to address the environmental issue during the elections period was the recent water crisis as an argument to do something about climate change as well. New movements, such as Extinction Rebellion, as observed during the same event and in social media, have climate change as their main social and political struggle.

Our analysis about the outcomes must address the following question: did the social movement dissolved because of the desired social change was achieved, or because the momentum was gone? We can conclude that both elements were presented, but that there was more momentum that a social change. The movement was able to achieve the minimum required by them, which was avoiding and calling the Day Zero off, but on the other side, the strategy proposed by the municipality did not reflect the changes that the movement was asking for. Inequalities regarding water issues are still present and pretty big in the city, mainly among the least privileged. Additionally, the government was unable to implement a participative process, without including different sectors and actors of society. As a result, for instance, the Khayelitsha protesters are still active.

5.4 Role and dynamics of the social movements

Now, after answering the emergence, development or actions and methods, and outcome of the social movement during the water crisis in Cape Town, we can answer the main research question of this study. What was the role of the social movements in solving the crisis? First, to answer the question it is necessary to distinguish two different momentums during the emergence of the movement.
At the beginning of the crisis, some mobilisations upraised, however, it was not strong as in the later stage, and at that point their purpose was to communicate to the residents of the Western Cape the urgency to save water. At the moment in which the provincial and local government realised the severe reduction of potable water and the lowering levels on the principal dams, the emergency was declared, in conjunction with several measures to reduce drastically the water demand.

Some of those measures caused dissatisfaction to residents all over the city, mostly the steep increase in the tariffs and the installation of water devices in some parts of the city. At that moment, the initial mobilisations gained momentum and lead to several groups working alone decided to join and form alliances, as the emergence of the Water Crisis Coalition. The sudden change in the management of the water supply system lead to a momentary expansion of the political opportunities, first, for political parties (SWRC and some members of ANC) in opposition to the current local ruling party (DA); second, for environmental and social justice organisations and activists (Social Justice Coalition or EMG), and third for local and grassroots organisations pursuing structural changes (Khayelitsha protesters).

Following the track of the two momentums, we consider that the role of the social movements should be divided into two segments according to their targets. First, it was the communicator, delivering information to the major part of the Cape Town society and working on solutions to mitigate the crisis. Second, it was the instigator, opposing what it considered punitive and unjust measures from the government to change the residents’ behaviour towards water consumption.

In the end, the crisis ceased and the Day Zero threat was over. The mobilisation followed the same path and some of the coalitions dissolved as they achieved their main goal, have running water in their households. The other parts that belonged to the social movement are still active because they still seek to solve a different set of goals related to environmental social justice.

5.5 Current challenges for social movements

We observed that the globalisation processes in Cape Town and their unequal patterns of development impact directly in the form and the goals of the social movement studied. Informal social movement organisations belong to the least developed zones from the city and at the same time, have the least available contained repertoire.

Furthermore, the unequal accessibility to constitutional channels leads them to use violent actions which reflects the urgency of their goals, related to the right of
access to water. In contrast to the middle and upper classes that seek alleviate immediate annoyances caused by the water shortage. While in the townships the fight is against negligence, in the suburbs they fight for a privilege. What's more, it becomes an issue of race, black and coloured neighbourhoods compared to white suburbs and the wine industry in the city, as two of the respondents' remark. In our view, those social cleavages can be lasting consequences of apartheid, that the current ruling parties have not been able to mend.

6. Concluding remarks

The concluding remarks of this research will be structured according to the research questions stated in the first chapter, answering one by one, finishing with the main question. Additionally, we will include recommendations for future research that this thesis was unable to explore in a sufficient manner.

6.1. Conclusions

6.1.1. Who are the actors in the social that addressed the water crisis?

The actors involved in the water crisis can be categorised, according to the mobilising structures model, as partly halfway house movements (formal and legally established organisations, mostly non-profit), partly membership groups (the Water Crisis Coalition and the trading unions) and partly social movement communities (such as the Khayelitsha protesters, who were localised in a specific area and did not have a specific objective before the crisis).

According to the broader categories of social movements, we were unable to determine a particular category, since the movement had elements of an old movement (political party-related and strongly attached to the workers class, in the case of the WCC), a new movement (anti-society structure struggle, since it challenged inequalities and discrimination) and a new-new movement (anti-globalisation and anti-privatisation agenda). Despite this, the last category, a new-new movement, highlights more than the rest because the anti-privatisation agenda was clear and common among different movements.

The emergence of these movements before the crisis occurred after a political opportunity was presented: the failure of the government to (1) prevent the drought and (2) satisfactorily manage the crisis for the citizens. This gap opened by the local
government was seen as a perfect opportunity to (1) organise a movement of discontent regarding the measures taken and to (2) make visible the long lasting demands about water that some communities were already suffering. We can agree here that a common enemy or opponent was identified: the government, and not the crisis itself.

We consider that the social movement organisations took advantage of the momentum to gather and create alliances, in the case of the Water Crisis Coalition. The political opportunity presented was timely used to decide to work together and create a broad front to challenge the local government. On the other side, the rest of the organisations did not form any coalition but decided to collaborate in certain moments with other organisations, such as the Environmental Monitoring Group. The momentum was used to get engaged in the crisis and make visible water-related demands but quickly diminished when the Day Zero was called off, as it also happened with the WCC.

Finally, in regards to the internal dynamic of the social movement groups, the alliances’ theory can be used to explain the factors that determine the chances to form coalitions, in the case of the creation of the WCC. (1) The context of the issue points that a) there was an organised opposition (the government), b) a coalition improved the chances of defeating this opposition, c) the interest of the different groups were broad and not narrow, that is, the water issue improved the chances of organising a movement around it instead a specific demand. (2) There was a history of previous alliances among these groups. (3) The competition for members and the discourse autonomy was not high, which improved the chances of creating a unique discourse among the members. And (4) the possibility of creating an alliance represented an advantage in terms of resources saving, gain visibility and stay active in the issue; additionally, the importance and relevance of the topic for all groups also improved the chances of working together. All these elements conclude that the major alliance that was formed, the WCC, meets all the requirements mentioned in the alliances’ theory.

6.1.2. What actions or activities were conducted by the social movements?

The forms of action conducted by the social movement vary according to the types of mobilising structures, which belonged to the movement and their available repertoire. Our findings show that, while there was a wide range of actions and activities, most of them were contained as Tilly said, those types of actions are more predominant in the repertoire. In contrast, collective violence was sporadic and focalised in certain sectors of the city that had few resources available, although not
necessary we can characterise Khayelitsha protesters as a small group as Tilly suggested.

Additionally, there was no strong evidence of disruptive actions been used by the mobilisations, hence we cannot conclude that social movements used this innovative actions, however we can see that the crisis lead to an expansion in the political opportunities and open a space for the social movements to grow, besides that, worked in favour of other parts of the social movement that were looking for visibility, breaking the stalemate between townships communities and the government.

6.1.3. How they have carried out these activities?

In general, activists, community organisations, communities, and NGOs mobilised all their resources available, funding, adepts, reputation, and legitimacy to conduct their activities. Several groups decided to organise themselves in alliances to join forces, gathering new adepts to their causes on social media platforms, using formal and constitutional channels, sharing true facts about the situation, investigating and teaching methods to save water.

6.1.4. What was the outcome of the activities?

As mentioned in the answer to the first question, the movements took advantage of the momentum as a result of the expansion of a political opportunity, and as such, it had an end. This end, in which the coalition collapsed and the other movements reduced significantly their engagement in the drought situation, occurred when the movement achieved their BATNA, or best alternative to a negotiated agreement: calling off the Day Zero. As soon as this happened, the movements lost traction and the protests reduced. The only exception was Khayelitsha, where their struggles continued and are still an issue today. Despite some organisations continue working with water issues, whether because of their previous work or experience in the field or because of their interest in it, the alliances were over.

Our evidence allows us to understand that the Water Strategy, presented by the City of Cape Town, was the result of the demands of the society as a whole and not necessarily from the social movements. Nevertheless, the process of elaboration of the document, according to what was related, was not participative and did not include enough input of the citizens, neighbourhoods and socio-economic groups. This also leads to conclude there was a lack of a proper communication channel between the authorities, which were unable to attend the population and were forced to restructure themselves and unify their efforts. Despite this, we were unable to conclude that the demands of the population through the social movements’
pressure were not heard since some of the demands were included in the final document.

Finally, we can conclude that, after the official end of the crisis, the organised movements refocused their discourse towards broader topics, such as climate change and anti-privatisation agendas. This occurred after the minimum demand was achieved: call the Day Zero off, but this does not mean that a social change occurred. We understand that there was a significant behavioural change, which was the population’s commitment to value water, to manage it and save it in a way never seen before in Cape Town. However, this was not the social change expected by the social movements, who were asking for more democratic water management, and the Water Strategy did not translate these demands into a reality. That is the reason why the anti-privatisation agenda continues to be a relevant and discussed topic until now. The problems in Khayelitsha and other townships continue and the local government was not able to solve them. We also understand that the threat of a “revolution” by the Khayelitsha protesters played an important role in the decision taken by the authorities, but we are unable to explain if this was the reason why the government decided to include their demands about sanitation in the strategy.

6.1.5. What was the role that social movements played and their dynamics in the outcome of the actions taken by the authorities to address the water crisis in Cape Town?

The role of the social movements during the crisis can be divided into two segments of smaller roles, communicator, and instigator, according to two momentums or stages of the water crisis, the first stage before the reaction of the local government and the second stage after the measures taken by the local authorities.

In the first momentum the social movement utilised their more contained repertoire to communicate the urgency to take preventive actions to mitigate the shortage of water and to promote veridical information about the crisis, their main target was the citizens. In the second momentum, the government took drastic measures that caused an overall dissatisfaction in the city, this created the opportunity for several organisations working on water and in other issues, to form alliances and mobilise their resources to protest against the local authorities, in this momentum their target became the local government.

6.2. Recommendations for future research

The findings from this research elucidate certain paths for future researches to further the understanding of the intricacy of the social movements puzzle. In the
case of Cape Town and other urban areas in South Africa, it will be interesting to do extensive research of the social movement community organisations in the townships, such as Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain, from a different perspective instead of the water crisis.

Taking into account that those mobilisations were working before the tipping point, and what we could observe, they continue working to make structural changes in their neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the complexity of Khayelitsha movements has so many different underlying issues to be addressed, that it will be worthy to study them more deeply, for example, collective identity, structural violence, service delivery.

Another issue that we observed is related to the global or new-new movements and the emergence of global social movements related to climate change. Due to the expansion of the political opportunities regarding this subject and how it’s spreading in cities like Cape Town.
7. Bibliography


Appendix

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW
Guiding questions

Introductory questions

Name of the respondent:
Role/position in the organisation:
Name of the Organisation:

1. What is the main purpose of the organisation?

2. When was the organisation created?

3. Where is the main area of action? Field, where, with whom.

4. How would you describe the members who participate in the organisation?

Main questions

A. Questions for organisations

1. Why has the organization got involved in solving the water crisis? (A result of own decision? Invitation? Forced?)

2. What has been the role of the organization in solving the water crisis?
   • Role in the formulation of plans and strategies/activities
   • Role in the implementation of strategies
   • Role in the monitoring of activities implementation
   • Role in the evaluation of the outcomes
3. What has been achieved as the result of the organization’s role? (Changes in the water crisis)
4. Does the organization have future plans regarding the water crisis? If yes, which ones; if not, why?

B. Questions for government officials

5. Have civil society or activists non governmental organizations got involved in solving the water crisis? If yes:
   • Which ones?
   • A result of own decision? Invitation? Forced?

6. What has been their role in solving the water crisis?
   • Role in the formulation of plans and strategies/activities
   • Role in the implementation of strategies
   • Role in the monitoring of activities implementation
   • Role in the evaluation of the outcomes

7. What has been achieved as the result of their role? (changes in water crisis)
Appendix 2

Consent Agreement

Research project: Day Zero: the role of social movements in the face of Cape Town’s Water Crisis

I have been asked to take part in the above project. By signing this form I confirm the following:

- The purpose of the project has been explained to me;
- I consent to be recorded using a digital audio device for the research;
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without penalty;
- I understand that my participation in these interviews is voluntary. I can choose not to answer certain interview questions without giving a reason;
- I understand that the information given by me in these interviews might be used in reports, publications and presentations;
- I understand that the information given will not be shared to any other organisation or person besides the academic audience to which this research is presented.

Name:

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Signature:

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Date:

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Please sign two copies of this form, one copy is for you to keep.
Appendix 3

**Picture 1.** Capetonians trying to get free water. Source: Shaheed Mahomed

**Picture 2.** Citizens protest against the local government's measures. Source: Shaheed Mahomed
Picture 3. Citizens protest in the streets. Source: Shaheed Mahomed

Picture 4. Citizens protest in the streets. Source: Shaheed Mahomed
Picture 5. Members of the Water Crisis Coalition march in the streets of Cape Town. Source: Shaheed Mahomed

Picture 6. Protesters of the Water Crisis Coalition in a demonstration. Source: Shaheed Mahomed
Picture 7. Protest signs in the streets of Cape Town. Source: Shaheed Mahomed

Picture 8. Protesters show signs in the streets of Cape Town. Source: Shaheed Mahomed
Picture 9. Protesters sits in front of security forces in Cape Town. Source: Shaheed Mahomed

Picture 10. Members of the Water Crisis Coalition hand a memorandum to local government authorities during a protest. Source: Shaheed Mahomed
Picture 11. Protesters of the Water Crisis Coalition in the streets of Cape Town. Source: Shaheed Mahomed