

**Un/known Waters:
Navigating everyday risks of infrastructural breakdown in Mumbai**

RC21 CONFERENCE 2013: Resourceful cities
Berlin (Germany), 29-31 August 2013

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The city of Mumbai is thus characterized by a growing incongruence between its above-ground form and its below-ground flows, with the effect that the city's water pipes have become increasingly volatile and unpredictable. The draws on eighteen months of ethnographic research in highlighting the social and political fields through which water-shortage risk is encountered, as well as the everyday practices to which such risks gives rise. Water risk, it is argued, inhabits a landscape of rumor, stealth and speculation – on materialities such as pipe locations, water pressures, and the timings and operations of valves, as well as on the networks of power and influence that might underpin the appearances and disappearances of water. The ethnographies that follow explore the everyday socio-political practices through which shortage risk is hedged by means of the continuous gathering and ongoing exchange of water-related knowledge and rumor. The opacities of the water distribution system, it is shown, mean that water-related risk does not, as is often supposed, map easily onto a socio-economic geography. Expanding the scope of research beyond moments of spectacular breakdown thus allows for attention to the means by which everyday risks of shortage are mitigated, and provides insight not only into how the poor achieve a measure of water security, but also into how the “world class” effect of uninterrupted infrastructure is produced.