

https://dspace.org/

Municipal employees at the coalface of service delivery: Stories about electricity provision in Thokoza

Mpapane, Gugu Gloria

2017

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/27659

Mpapane, Gugu Gloria (2017) Municipal employees at the coalface of service delivery: Stories about electricity provision in Thokoza, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <http://hdl.handle.net/10539/27659>

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

Municipalities are the face of the state at the local level. Municipal employees at the coalface of service delivery are an even closer representation of the state and its service delivery function at the community level. South Africa has experienced a spate of service delivery protests[1] in its first twenty years as a democracy. Various studies have been conducted to assess factors responsible for the widespread service delivery protests which have grown in frequency and intensity over the last few years and yet the voices of municipal workers have remained glaringly absent in ongoing debates about what could possibly be the driving force behind this sweeping wave of protests. Municipal employees at the coalface of electricity provision in the Thokoza township of Ekurhuleni share their experiences in accounts that could lead us to newer understandings of how South Africa's democratic state and frontline bureaucracy has occasioned itself twenty years after the country was declared a democracy. Perceptions of the municipal workers are of an immensely entitled citizenry. These perceptions are framed within the ideals of the good citizen and on the basis of official norms. Practical realities and the behaviors of residents, councilors and municipal workers alike destabilize this idealist mindset and make it necessary to investigate how practical realities and lived experiences of consumers, mediators and implementers of service delivery shape service-related behaviors in ways that are far from normative.

[1] See Peter Alexander, (2010)