

# **Water Security at Local Government Level**

## **What do People Think it Means in eThekweni?**

**By**

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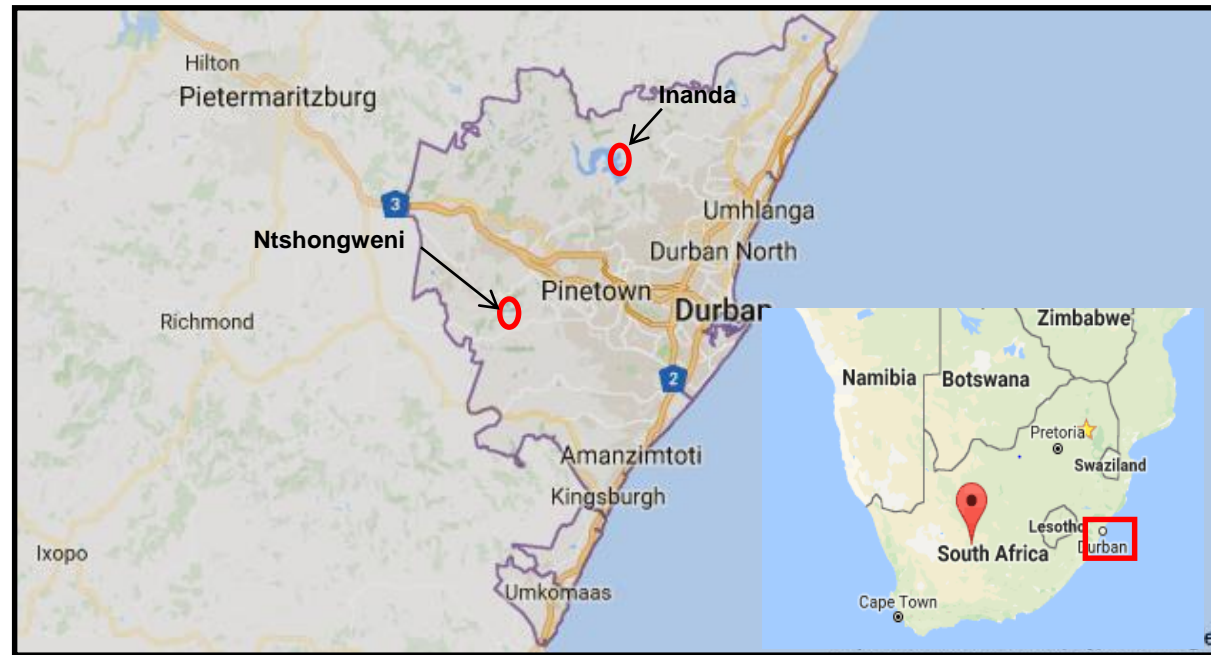
# Outline

- Setting the scene
- Water security: What do People Think it Means?
- To end



# Setting the Scene: eThekweni

- Category A municipality (Local Government Municipal Structures Act [No. 117 of 1998])
  - High population density.
  - Intense movement of people, goods, and services.
  - Extensive socio-economic development.
  - Multiple business district and industrial areas
- Sub-tropical climate
  - Summer temperatures low to mid-thirties
  - Between 55% to 75% humidity
  - Winter temperature seldom below 10°C
  - Relatively high rainfall – 1 000 mm per annum – Remember 10 October 2017!
    - SA average is around 480 mm per annum
- Demographics
  - 2 297 sq. km
  - 3 555 868 people (2012 stats)
  - Urban and peri-urban
  - 70% peri-urban





# Setting the Scene: eThekweni





# Water Security: What do People Think?

- UN Water agency's definition of water security.
- Our research project on water security
  - Water security starts and ends with the individual.
  - Sekhukhune and eThekweni
  - Interview stakeholders in industry, government, mining, agriculture and communities.
- Most view it as the availability and quality of water.
- A more nuanced picture is in the offing.
- Mine in Sekhukhune using bottled water.
- Maintenance of water infrastructure.



# Water Security: What do People Think?

- Water security costs money.
- Water security impacts human health.
- The link between fresh water and the marine environment.



| Typology group                                    | In summary   | Groups  | Positive aspects   | Negative aspects   |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Helping municipalities to help themselves         | Working together we can secure our water future  | Diverse - from national government to local community and NGO   | People should get involved in securing their own water, for example report leaks   | I'm so frustrated - I don't get why municipalities can't do this without help  |
| Supply and demand                                 | Aligning supply and demand with infrastructure and realigning equitable share is a complex issue   | Scientists from national government, academia and research organisations  | Perhaps we could build more dams to supply more people   | We will never be able to supply everyone with enough water   |
| Water security begins and ends with water quality | Water quality is the key to a sustainable water secure future  | Scientists from government, NGO's academia  | Good water quality will ensure healthy people, environments and livelihoods for now and in the future                            | Surely mines can't use good quality water  |
| More for some (forever?)                          | A water supply hierarchy has negative implications for achieving equity  | Mostly national government and academic level   | A water supply hierarchy supports a stable economy and appeases influential water users in the economy                           | It is naive to speak of equity in terms of water supply because while this strongly underpins political rhetoric, it is not being actively pursued in the current South African context. |
| No water security, no food no jobs                | Water security is a critical prerequisite for livelihood security  | Local level   | Water security is an enabler for livelihood security (including food security, better opportunities for people and job security) | An overemphasis on the economic benefits of water security may overshadow ethical implications   |
| Our water our responsibility                      | People across all levels of society need to take responsibility for their communal water resources   | Local level   | Taking responsibility and building agency to look after communal water resources   | A strong emphasis on the imperative for people to take responsibility for their communal water resources can be interpreted as "letting municipalities off the hook".                    |
| Operation infrastructure                          | Water security depends on infrastructure planning, implementation and maintenance  | Mostly communal and municipal   | Building and maintaining water infrastructure can improve water security and create jobs.  | Holding this exclusive view can create a false sense of water security since it might create a belief that you can 'build' a society out of water insecurity.                            |
| The future is now                                 | Water security can be improved through good foresight and planning, but there is a dilemma in that government is not good at this.               | Local, national and geographically wide areas linked to climatic conditions.  | The capabilities of foresight and planning can enable better water security.   | Rationalist foresight and planning are not the only ways of planning for the future.   |
| Water is life                                     | Water security can be improved through good and collaborative water resources management and intuitively linking water resources and livelihoods | Academia, local communities, individuals, companies, irrigation boards, and local governments linked through water as a life-giving water resources | Collaboration between civil society and local governments to improve water security  | More authoritarian and blame shifting local governments in the current political climate   |
| Ignorance and criminality                         | We are not water secure because people (not us) vandalise infrastructure   | Mostly local level  | People should get involved in securing their own water   | "I" am not responsible for the current situation. Government needs to do more  |
| Water management as usual must fall               | We are not water secure because we are stuck in a rut - business as usual  | Locally situated but they think nationally  | Changes needed in how things are done - introduction of new ideas  | Theory dominates - idealistic and out of touch with reality on the   |

# Policy Summary of Water Security Typology

Agency in terms of actions and decisions

Helping municipalities to help themselves

Our water our responsibility

The future is now

**Ignorance and criminality**

Water management as usual must fall

Balance between numbers

Supply and demand

Water security begins and ends with water quality

More for some forever

Performance as catalyst

No water security, no food, no jobs

Operation infrastructure

Water is life



# Policy Relevance of Water Security Typology

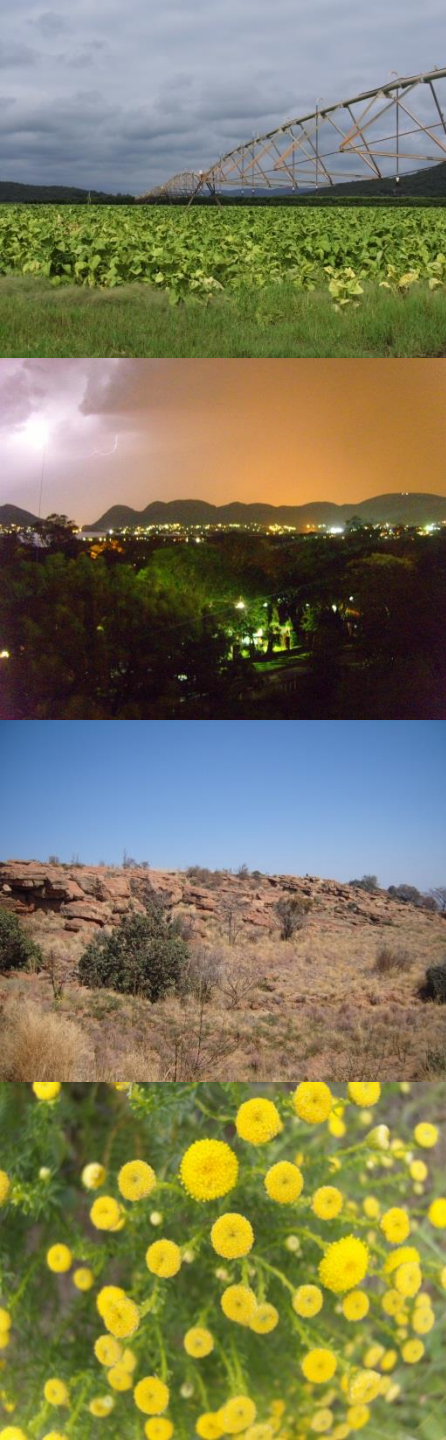
*Ignorance and criminality:* This kind of definition can come from a number of perceptions, specifically about **who is responsible**. For example, **people do not communicate**, and the **municipality** does not listen in any case; **people in less affluent areas** are more likely to vandalise the infrastructure; the **municipality does not have the capacity or drive to keep the infrastructure maintained**—and so it goes on. Holding these perceptions can have **negative** and **positive** implications. **It might be very difficult to work with people who are quite negative in their view of the current situation, and they might blame a host of ‘others’ for the situation.** Nevertheless, **at the same time they often advocate for people doing things for themselves, which is a positive foundation to build on.**

## Policy Views and Expressions based on this typology

- Expect water infrastructure theft and vandalism in *less affluent areas*.
- People, and *not* the poor, commit water infrastructure theft and vandalism.
- People (citizens) can also help maintain water infrastructure.
- Communicate constantly and take *normative structures* into account.
  - *Everybody* is capable of water infrastructure theft and vandalism—not only the poor.
  - *Stereotyping*, as a normative structure (causal mechanism), should, therefore, be avoided.

# To End

- What people think about water security *matters*.
- Water security is not an abstract concept defined by international organisations or scientists, like UN Water.
- Water security is NOT about quantity, quality, availability, reliable supply, water borne diseases...
- Water security is about individuals, and their environment—lived experience.
- Water security begins and ends with the individual.
- Water should be defined by individuals and not by scientists only—ownership.
- Scientists can miss the point—research in collaboration with communities can be a rich and rewarding experience.
- Local governments face many challenges regarding water security.
- The challenges can extend beyond fresh water security to include the marine environment.



# Thank you for listening

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