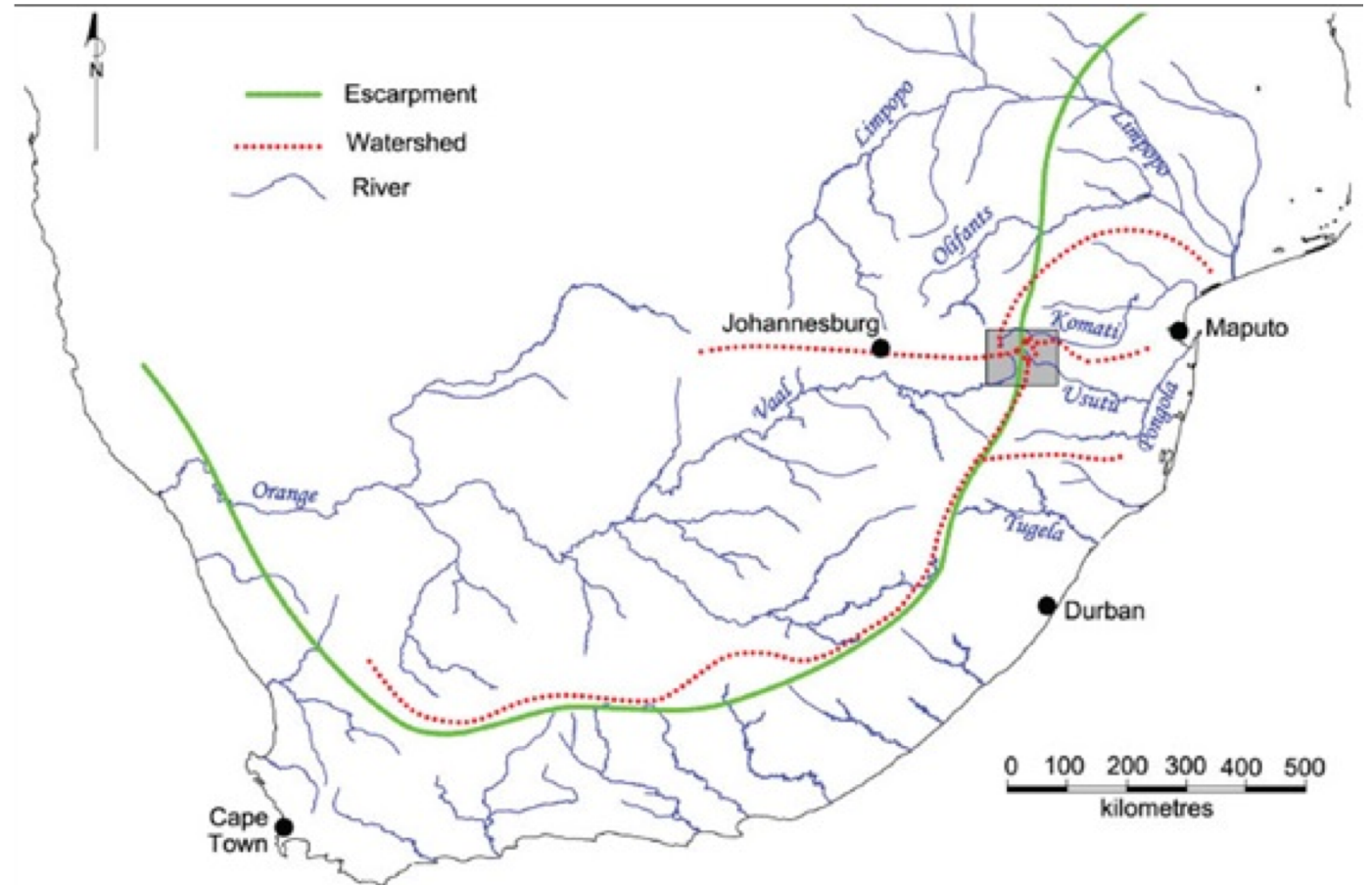


Water Justice in South Africa's water sector

Ferrial Adam
PhD scholar
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Its in the constitution

- In South Africa, the state holds the environment and our water resources in public trust for the people, which means that the water belongs to all the people of South Africa
- But in reality...



Outline

SA's state of water

Day zero for whom?

Empowering communities and
activists

Water justice and sovereignty

State of water resources

Scarcity

- Global challenge –
 - > one third live in water stressed areas
 - Only have 60% by 2030
- South Africa
 - 30th driest, 450mm of rain a year (global 860mm)
 - Naturally water scarce
 - Worrying state of water ecosystems – 60% threatened

Pollution

- Mining, agriculture, infrastructure

Climate change

- Increased occurrence of floods, drought

Threatened ecosystems and pollution

Our river ecosystems are not in a healthy state.

Of the 223 river ecosystem types, 60% are threatened with 25% of these critically endangered by a changing climate and human activities.

Many of the human activities include waste run-off from residential, industrial, agricultural and mining areas.

the country's key river systems, such as the Vaal, Olifants and Crocodile are severely affected by

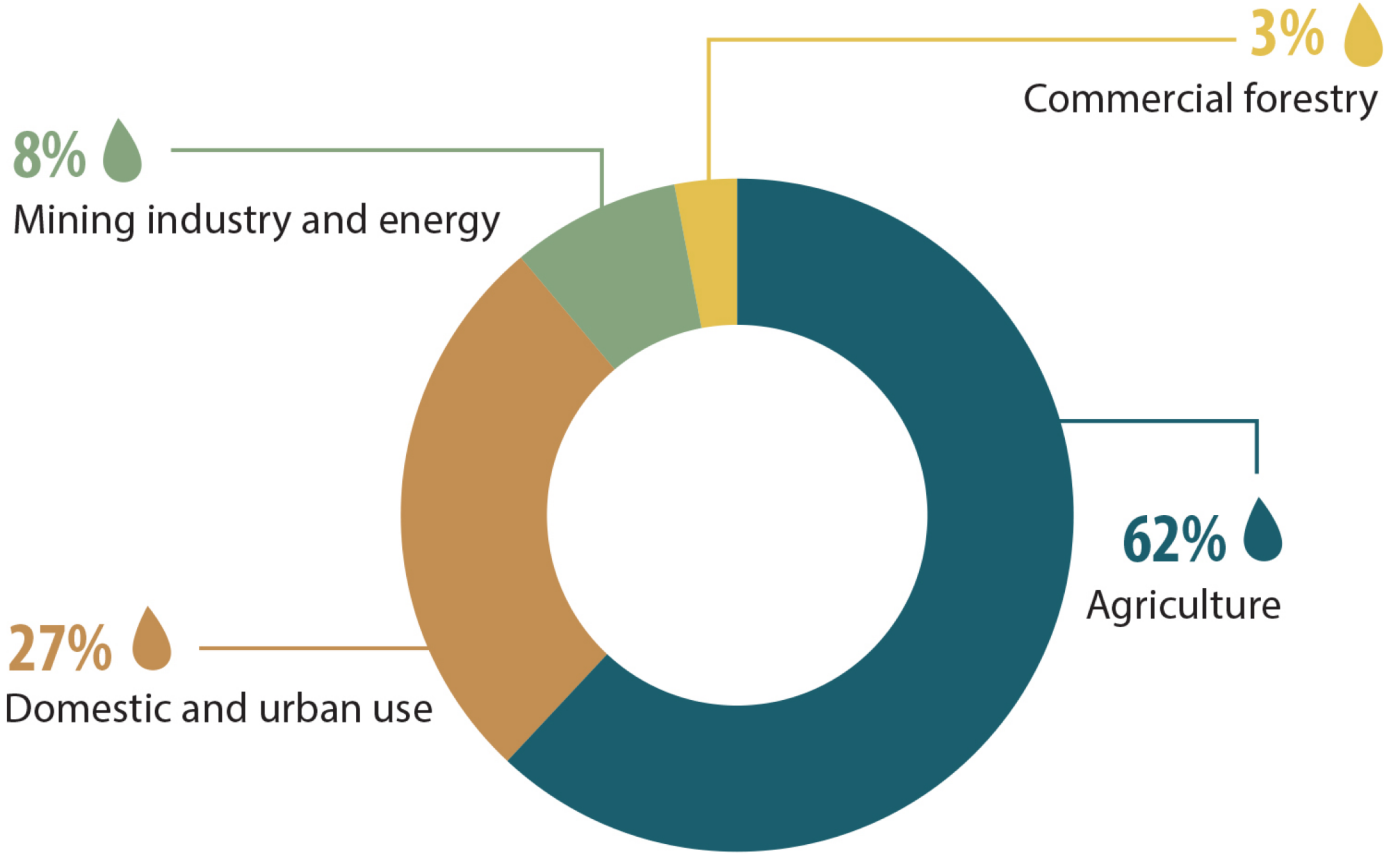
- salinity due to mining activity,
- ongoing acid mine drainage,
- pollution through sewerage
- High levels of radioactive pollutants





Day Zero?

98% OF WATER IS ALLOCATED AS FOLLOWS



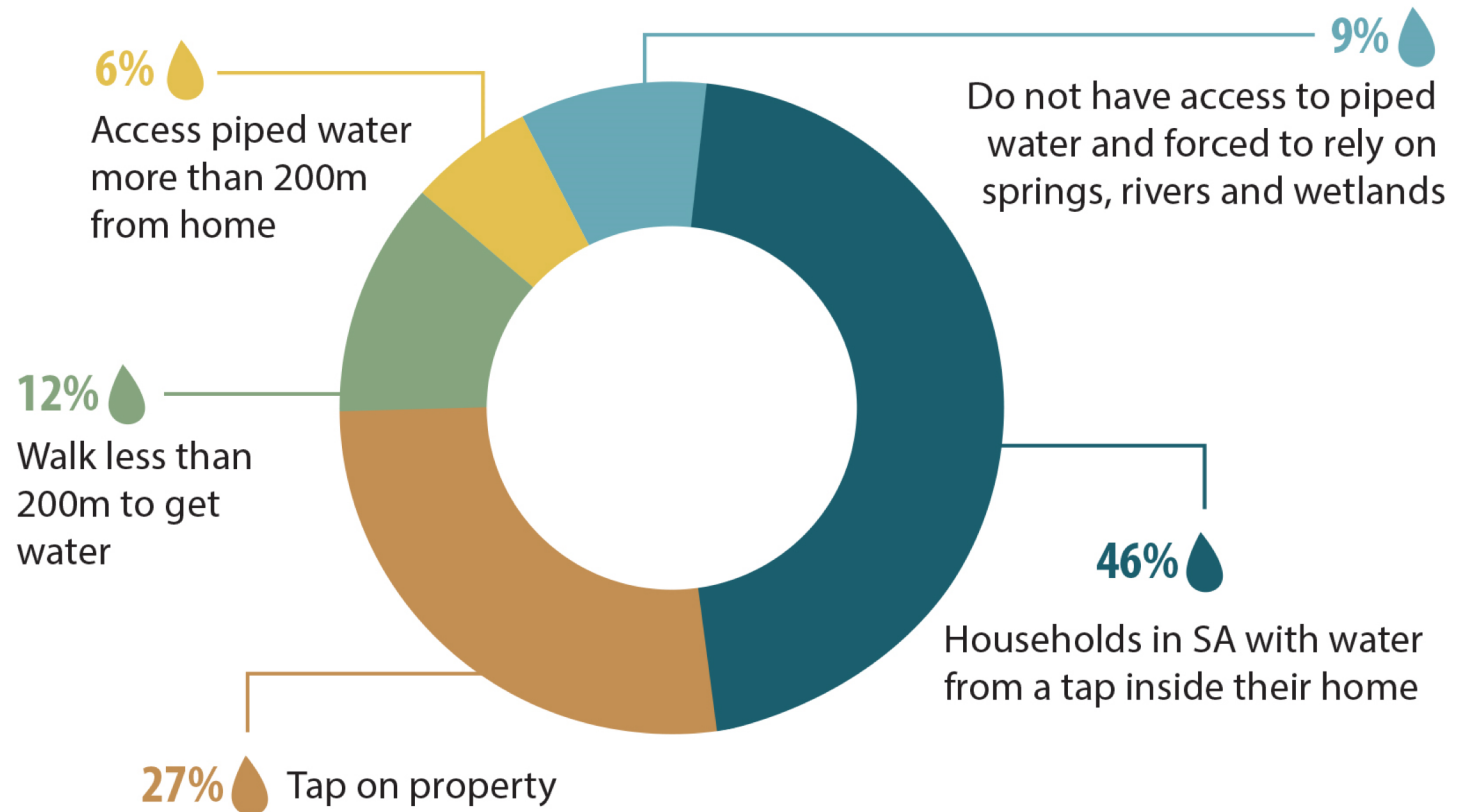
Inequality of resource

- Government allocation
- Gap between the haves and have nots
- 10% of large water users = 70-90% of water
- 1% of rural users = large scale farmers and use 95% of agric water

Lack of access

less than half of all households in SA obtained their water from a tap inside their home

ACCESS TO WATER (2014)




Infrastructure and drought

Eight out of the nine provinces were declared disaster areas in 2016 due to the ongoing drought.

Water tanker mafia and borehole bourgeoisie

It is estimated that 37% of South Africa's clean, potable water is being lost and wasted through poor infrastructure such as leaking pipes.



Access

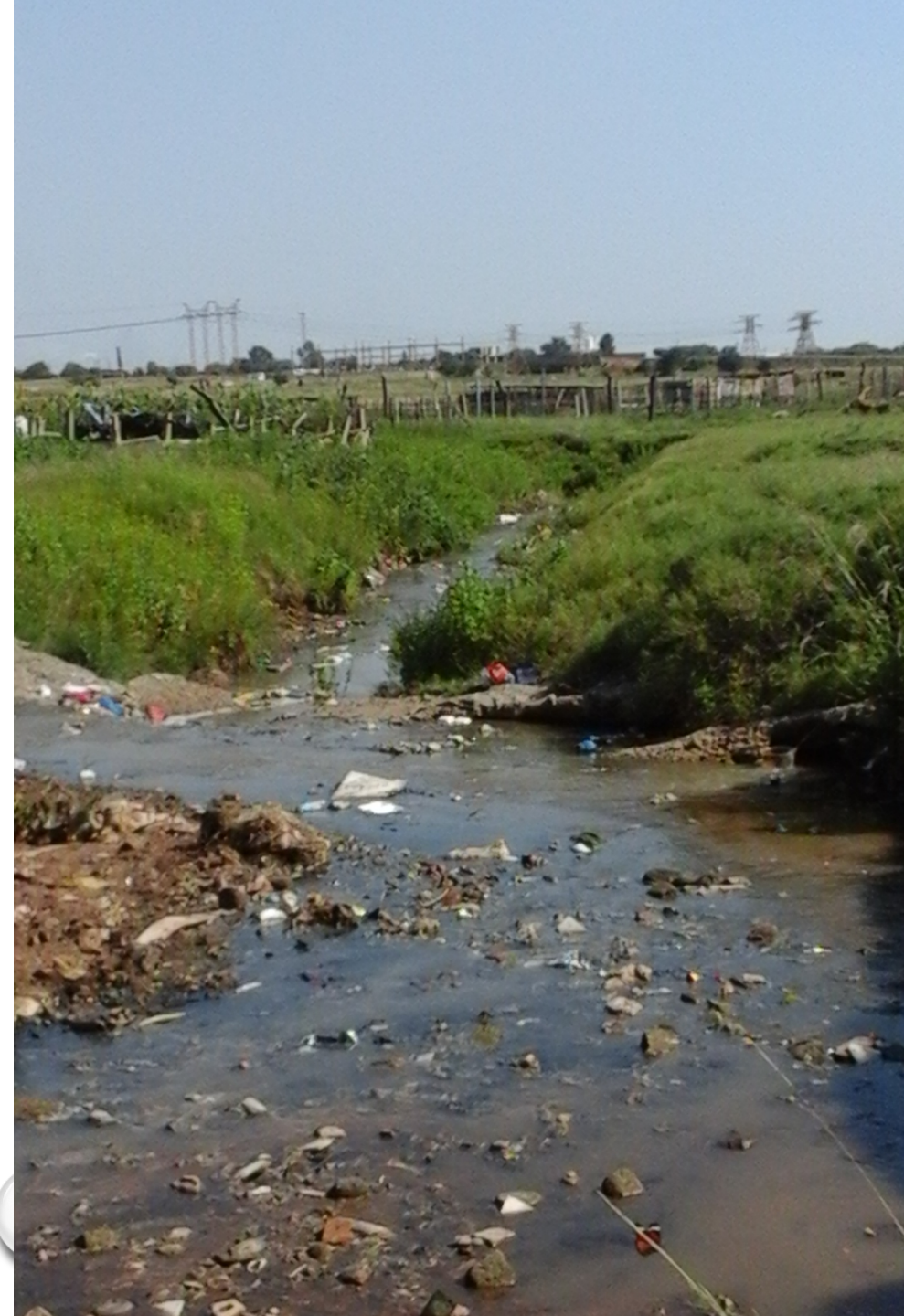
- South Africa has about 569 large public dams, each with a capacity of more than one million cubic metres.
- There are at least 5 122 privately owned dams registered with the department.
- While the water may belong to all of us, there are laws that protect a person's private property thus rendering the dams inaccessible to ordinary people.

Responding to challenges

- Government has used a three pronged approach:
 - Policy – constitution, “access”, water act, NWRS2
 - Public participation
 - CBNRM, CMFs
 - Privatisation
 - Public private partnerships
- Policy vs implementation
 - Racial, economic, social structures

Community-based responses

- Water justice
 - Access, pollution, privatisation, scarcity, climate change
 - Eg cer, emg, SA water caucus, Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance
- Technology – rainwater harvesting
- Indigenous knowledge
- Water use efficiency
- Citizen/people's science
- Agroecology (to be added)



Systemic change for water justice

- The technical solutions are useful and important but they need to be implemented parallel to a systemic change.
- Only then will we be able to achieve a people's science for water sovereignty and in turn people's power



Moving forward

- The current systems must be transformed to address the systemic causes of climate change
- We need to build a deep just transition pathway to sustain life.
- We need to build people's power that realises people's rights to water, meets the needs of nature and builds a sustainable water commons

Thoughts?

- How can we transform the current water system into a water sovereign system that gives people power over water resources?

