Hydropolitics of Water and Sanitation Delivery

The Durban Case (eThekweni Municipality)

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Definitions (Mollinga 2001)

• (1) official state and inter-state politics regarding water (or hydropolitics),

• (2) the politics of water resources [and services] policy (policy formulation and implementation as politically contested terrain), and

• (3) the everyday politics of water use (the day-today contestation of water resource use).
History of Durban

‘It was the systemic function of the apartheid cities to ensure that white residents had all the social benefits of living in the city, and to deny black residents equal access to urban social goods and opportunities. The result is cities where very large proportions of the population are not included – materially or psychologically in urban life’ (South African Cities Network 2004, 77-78).
Uneven and Asymmetrical settlement patterns
South African New Water Policy

Institutional vision – the water sector

water sector

Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
sector leader and national water policy maker

water resources sector

catchment management agency
water resource management, allocations, monitoring and licensing (where delegated)
national water resources regulation

national water resources regulator (and oversees licensing)

water services sector

water services authority (local government)
constitutional responsibility for water services provision; and local regulation of water services

national water services regulation

DWAF will regulate water services in medium term; independent regulation will be assessed

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Table 1. The Population Breakdown for Durban

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population group</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black/African</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: eThekweni Municipality 2002b, 11
Innovative Pro-Poor Municipality

80% of the people without sanitation, about 2 billion people, live in rural areas

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Durban’s Social Movements

- level of service provided to low incomes housing areas
- escalating household debts
- inadequate provision in Durban’s burgeoning informal shack settlements
Police were later called in to assist the security guards who were battling to control the crowd. Charity Mache said that residents were angry because they had not been consulted about the disconnection of the water pipes. “We were not told about this new system or even how it would work. They cannot just cut our water without informing us,” she said.
Ideal Deliberative Space

Ordinary People

Civil Society and Social Movements

Policy and implementation

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Emergent Deliberative space

Social movements

Ordinary People

Policy and Implementation

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Characteristics of the Social Movements
Discourse

- Highly antagonistic and polemical approach
- Outdated and inaccurate research
- Reliance on anecdotal and selective evidence
- Urban bias
- Unwillingness to acknowledge progress
- Highly idealistic demands
- Poor understanding of the policy environment
- Intra-movement strife
Characteristics of the discourse space more generally

- National and international acclaim
- Professional acclaim for the head of eThekwini Water and sanitation
- Financial solvency and well-maintained infrastructure
- Overall customer satisfaction
- Strong rural service track record
- Emphasis on sustainability and alternative technologies
- Emphasis on job creation
- Inter-departmental umbrage