

1 Exploring FEW security at city scale: An Agent-Based Modeling approach for the City of Cape
2 Town

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12 [Abstract:](#)

13 The impact of human activities and climate change occurs across a range of spatial and temporal
14 scales, and the city or regional scale is critical for managing food-energy-water (FEW) resources.
15 We develop a coupled human-natural system model for Cape Town, South Africa, which
16 consists of an agent-based model and a regional hydrologic model, to study the FEW nexus
17 connecting the agricultural, urban, and hydroelectric generation sectors. We use the model to
18 compare three policies—a simple adaptive approach, adaptation with free water to indigent
19 households, and water supply augmentation—and assess their ability to provide reliable FEW
20 services to the different stakeholders under four different climate scenarios, representing
21 moderate to severe amounts of warming. Our results indicate that Cape Town is likely to face
22 increasing water stress as temperatures rise, and that adaptation strategies could effectively
23 mitigate the effects of water limitations and avoid severe failures in providing FEW services
24 across sectors. One way to manage demand for FEW services is by adjusting water price tariffs,
25 but high prices create inequality in access to water for households with different incomes. Our
26 analysis suggests that the water supply system in Cape Town may already be at, if not over, its
27 sustainable capacity within the FEW nexus. Our model serves as a test-bed for assessing policies
28 to manage stresses on water resources for the benefit of stakeholders across FEW sectors. This
29 model can be adapted to cities and regions around the globe.

30 [Keywords:](#)

31 Food-Energy-Water Nexus; Demand-side management; Drought mitigation; Cape Town, South
32 Africa; Agent-based model; Coupled human-natural system model.

33 [Highlights:](#)

- 34 • The Cape Town region is likely to face increasing water stress that endangers the
35 livelihoods of the people, energy generation, and viticulture.
- 36 • We designed an agent-based model at the city level to highlight the resources competition
37 among FEW stakeholders and how heterogeneities in financial status could affect their
38 quality of service and inequality.
- 39 • Adaptation strategies with demand-side management could mitigate the impacts of
40 climate change on the city and surrounding region.
- 41 • We provide a testbed for policy testing and informing policy design to improve the FEW
42 system performance for diverse stakeholders.

43 1. Introduction:

44 Approximately 70% of the world's population is expected to live in an urban setting by 2050
45 ("68% of the world population projected to live in urban areas by 2050, says UN | UN DESA |
46 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs," n.d.). Delivering adequate food,
47 energy, and water (FEW) services will become increasingly challenging as urban populations
48 keep rising (Zhang et al., 2019). Ensuring meeting the ever-increasing demand of FEW resources
49 for the future is among the top priorities for societies around the globe; careful planning of the
50 utilization of resources is required. Climate change makes such planning even harder because it
51 affects both the availability and the variability of the global and local FEW resources. Climate
52 change also drives the transformation of societies, as they adapt to emerging and future changes
53 and to attempt to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate
54 climate change itself. A sustainable future with sufficient FEW resources needs to take both
55 societal activities and climate change into consideration.

56 The FEW nexus can be assessed at various scales, which address different research interests.
57 Previous policy-oriented research on the FEW nexus has mainly focused on factors that
58 influence the dynamics of the nexus (i.e., processes, interrelationships, and outcomes) at larger
59 scales ranging from global and continental levels to the national level. For example, previous
60 research has utilized regression techniques to link FEW resources and services to specific factors
61 such as greenhouse gases and agricultural sustainability in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Ozturk,
62 2017; Zaman et al., 2017). Ding et al., (2019) used a FEW Resources-Services-Health
63 framework to explore the internal and external factors that influence the interrelationships of
64 resources-to-services and services-to-health of the FEW nexus, in which they found that
65 governance and socio-economic factors, rather than the lack of resources, most significantly
66 influence the FEW services and health in SSA. Susnik (2018) demonstrated the connection
67 between GDP and each of the FEW sectors using global data collected at the national level.
68 Research on FEW issues at the national scale has identified important relationships, but much of
69 the decision-making apparatus related to allocation and distribution of resources occurs at
70 smaller spatial scales. For example, cities are central to the operation of FEW services as they are
71 where the services are primarily produced, provided, and consumed (Lant et al., 2019).
72 Therefore, it is important to study and address the challenges of FEW activities, or providing
73 FEW services, at the city level. For instance, studies have used urban metabolism and life cycle
74 analyses to quantify the fluxes of energy, water, and nutrients to further assess the costs and
75 benefits of specific infrastructural and technological policy implementations (Heard et al., 2017;
76 Villaruel Walker et al., 2014). Such approaches could be particularly successful in urban areas
77 where data is abundant, but the data constraint limits the applicability to the study regions.(Heard
78 et al., 2017; Villaruel Walker et al., 2014).

79 In urban systems that suffer from resource deficiency, we argue that more versatile and adaptive
80 methods that could assess policies to optimize the utility of limited FEW resources are needed.
81 Additionally, each urban area may need responses to FEW stress that are tailored to their own
82 unique conditions and constraints such as local politics, legal and regulatory codes, availability
83 of natural resources, economic conditions, and so forth. For example, more affluent and energy-
84 rich regions can trade a large amount of energy for desalinated water, as seen in Singapore and
85 Dubai (DEWA, 2018; "PUB Desalinated Water," n.d.). Cities draw upon food, energy, and water
86 resources from much larger regions than just the metropolitan area, so urban-rural and urban-
87 urban interconnections both within and across regions must be considered. Watersheds extend
88 far beyond urban boundaries, and at larger scales inter-basin transfer projects can divert water

89 from water-abundant regions to more arid regions, as seen in the United States and China
90 (Shumilova et al., 2018). To ensure sustainable and sufficient supply of FEW resources under
91 future climate uncertainties and with growing population and demand, we need new methods to
92 systematically assess the FEW system outcomes and to evaluate tradeoffs and benefits of
93 different management policies.

94 FEW nexus models build at such mesoscale has demonstrated their ability to simulate and
95 assessing sector interactions, system outcomes, resources accounting and management, and
96 future climate conditions. More specifically, agent-based modeling (ABM) that includes resource
97 accounting has emerged as a promising method for simulating the performance of urban or
98 regional FEW systems under the influence of both human and natural aspects of the systems
99 while taking heterogeneities among different sectors and stakeholders into account in decision-
100 making (Ding, Gilligan, et al., 2019; Hyun et al., 2019; Kanta & Zechman, 2014; Yang et al.,
101 2018). Cities usually get their water, energy, and food supplies from outside of their political
102 boundaries. Understanding this system thus requires us to couple a model of the urban system to
103 a regional scale model. Recent work using downscaled regional climate models to project future
104 climate at the local and regional level has enabled higher-resolution studies of the local effects of
105 climate change (Naik & Abiodun, 2019). In this study, we introduce a novel coupled model
106 consisting of an ABM simulating water policy and demand, coupled to a hydrological model for
107 the Cape Town region and apply this to studying challenges to the sustainability of regional
108 FEW resources under different policy scenarios and under future regional climate conditions
109 drawn from multiple downscaled global climate model projections.

110 We chose Cape Town and Western Cape Province in South Africa as the locale for this model
111 because it represents a complex FEW system comprising more than 3.8 million people,
112 economically important vineyards, and hydropower installations that supply peak demand to the
113 power grid (Figure 1), and it faces serious FEW insecurity challenges. Motivated by the recent
114 “Day-Zero” drought crisis (Visser, 2018), our previous study considered a simple ABM with
115 lumped geographical and agent representation and demonstrated that a simple adaptation policy,
116 as oppose to “business as usual”, could significantly improve the services and avoid FEW system
117 failures (Ding, Gilligan, et al., 2019). In this study, we expand our analysis of Cape Town to a
118 coupled human-natural system model by coupling our ABM with a regional hydrologic model to
119 examine the water usage across multiple FEW sectors—urban freshwater, vineyards irrigation,
120 and hydropower generation (Figure 1)—each of which has different impacts on management
121 decisions. We disaggregate the urban sector into water users across the residential regions (the
122 regions where water usage data is collected at) and regroup and represent them in 94 wards
123 (smallest level of administrative divisions in South Africa where census data is reported at) with
124 varying economic conditions and other institutional water users, including government, business,
125 and industry. We take advantage of the agent-based structure of the model to represent the urban
126 sector as a heterogeneous collection of 94 agents, each representing a different ward and
127 characterized by that ward’s water demand and median socio-economic status. Since 94 agents
128 reacts differently based on their unique characteristics, we can use our ABM model to assess the
129 overall performance of the FEW system through their indirect interactions via withdrawals from
130 the common-pool resources. We use this coupled human-natural system model to study how
131 climate change may affect Cape Town’s water supply and the water consumption of urban
132 dwellers, vineyard farming, and the power generation of a hydropower dam out to 2100 under
133 different climate scenarios from moderate to severe. We also use the analysis to test how
134 different policies can affect the city’s ability as a whole to provide sufficient FEW resources and

135 ensure steady water supply for other sectors, and to explore any side effects of those policies
136 such as affordability of water to municipal users across the economic spectrum. Here we focus
137 on the water supply system in Cape Town, nonetheless, the FEW nexus was assessed through the
138 withdrawal of water from the common poll by stakeholders in the food, energy, and water
139 sectors. Our study focuses in particular on the role of reservoirs in storing and supplying water
140 during drought periods. We address the following three hypotheses, each of which we investigate
141 with a different resource planning and management policy under four different climate scenarios.
142

143 Hypothesis 1: a simple climate adaptation policy can provide enough water for the operation of
144 the hydropower dam and reasonable prices for the urban dwellers (urban water sector) and the
145 vineyard farmers (agricultural sector) in the Cape Town region, but that this will produce large
146 economic disparities in access to water for drinking and basic hygiene.

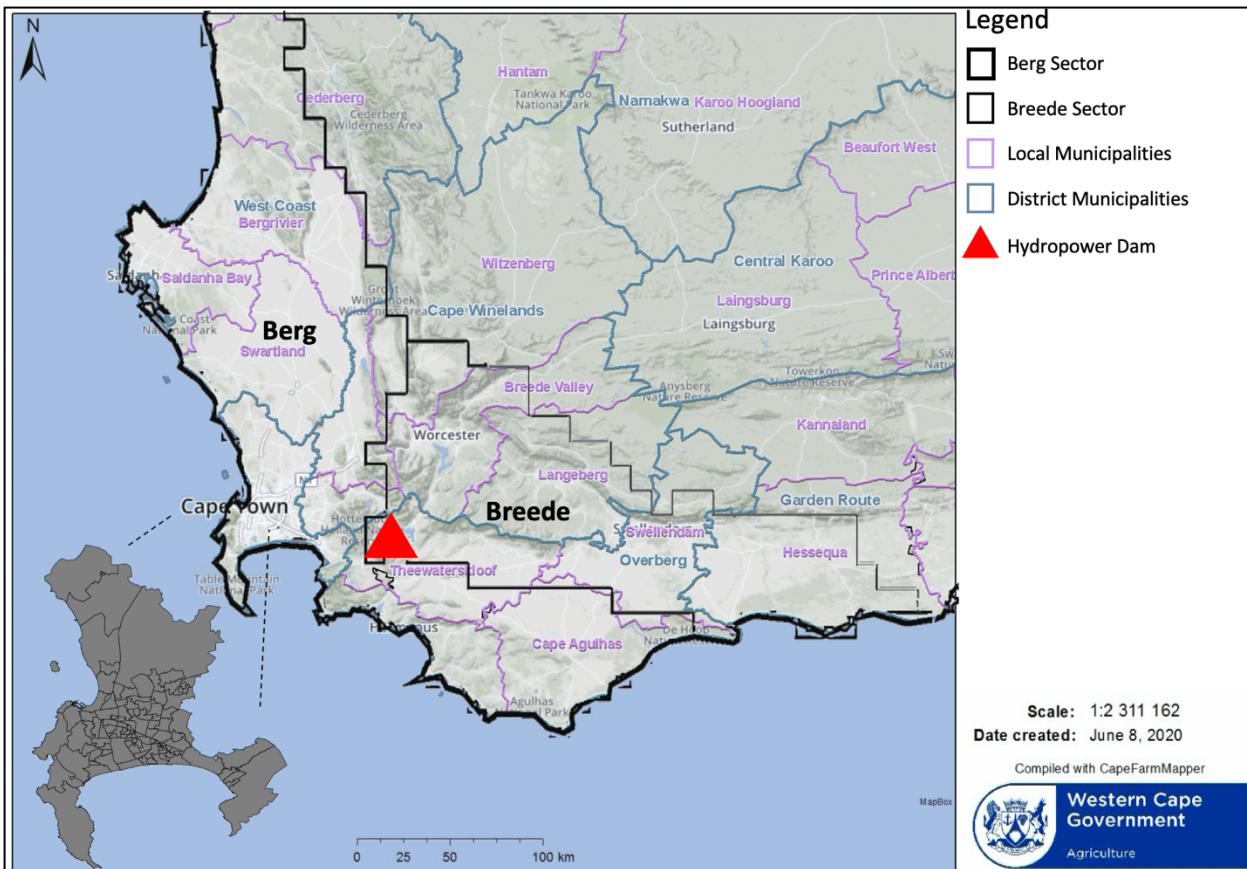
147 Policy 1- simple adaptive approach: proactively raises water tariffs to reduce water demand
148 when the monthly reservoir storage falls below a threshold

149
150 Hypothesis 2: providing a basic quantity of water without charge to indigent households can
151 alleviate economic disparities in access to the necessary levels of water for hygiene and drinking
152 while maintaining adequate reservoir storage for reliable hydropower generation.

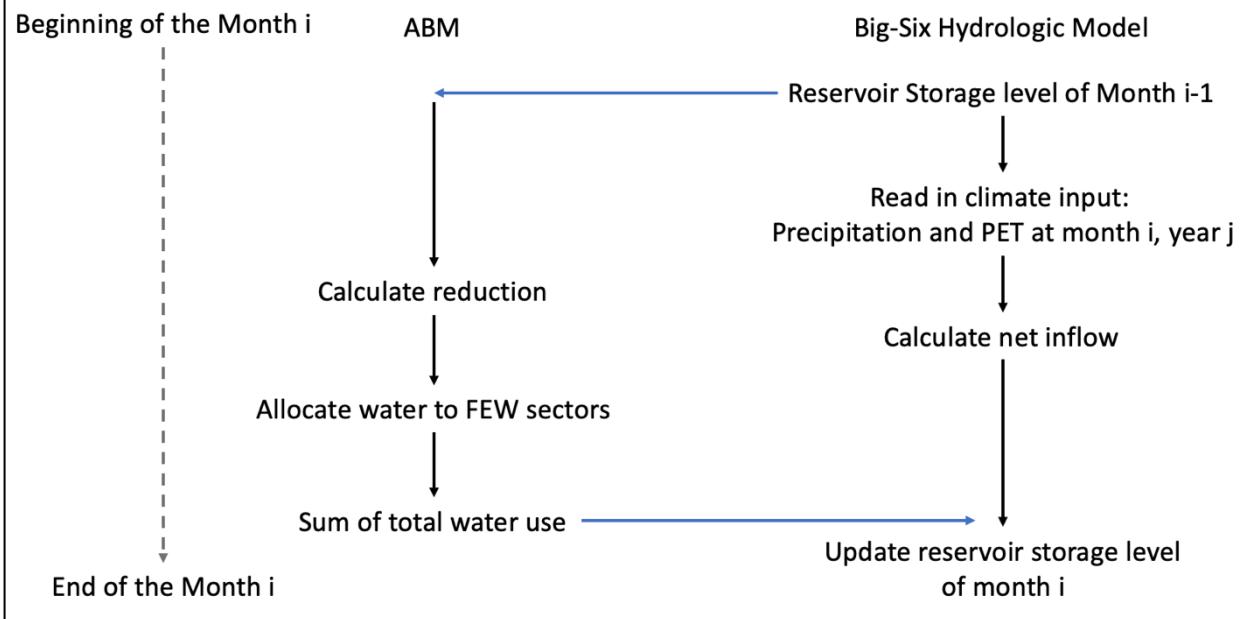
153
154 Policy 2 follows Policy 1 except that indigent households are not charged for the first 6kL
155 per month of consumption.

156 Hypothesis 3: A water augmentation policy proposed by the Cape Town government can
157 outperform the previous policies at meeting the needs of all sectors—the urban water sector, the
158 agricultural sector, and the energy sector—under expected economic and population growth.

159
160 Policy 3- Supplement demand-management by expanding the water supply, including
161 groundwater extraction, wastewater reuse, and desalination.



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Figure 1, FEW stakeholders and the coupling mechanism of the human-natural system model. Upper part highlights multiple stakeholders of Food-Energy-Water sectors in Cape Town regions. Berg and Breede river catchments are the two sectors of the “Big Six” reservoirs system. Wine regions included in this study are Breede Valley, Cape Town, Drakenstein, Langeberg, Stellenbosch, Swartland, and Witzenberg. The vineyard irrigation of the seven wine regions

169 represents the food sector. Cape Town has 116 wards as seen in the grey map at the lower left
170 corner. For the urban water sector, we represent the urban water users in 94 representative wards.
171 The Steenbras upper hydropower dam (red triangle) represents the energy sector in Cape Town.
172 Lower part of the figure illustrates the coupling mechanism of the agent-based model and the
173 Big-Six hydrologic model. The information exchanged between two models are highlighted by
174 the blue arrows.

175 2. Materials and Methods:

176 In this study, we developed a coupled model of the natural and human aspects of the FEW
177 system as a testbed for comparing different management policies in the city of Cape Town. The
178 coupled model consists of two parts: an agent-based model of water demand and management,
179 which we adapted and refined from our previous paper (Ding et al., 2019), and a local hydrologic
180 model of the “Big Six” reservoir system (Climate System Analysis Group, 2019) used by local
181 authority. We used historical climate data to calibrate the model (Figure 2). To simulate future
182 climates, we selected simulated climate data from four downscaled global climate models under
183 Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 8.5 (Naik & Abiodun, 2019). We recognize that
184 RCP 8.5 is an extreme emissions scenario that represents a very unlikely, perhaps even
185 implausible, climate future under anticipated technological, social, economic, and policy
186 scenarios; however, this was the only emissions trajectory for which downscaled model output
187 was available (Hausfather & Peters, 2020; Ritchie & Dowlatabadi, 2017). Rather than following
188 the climate model results as an expected trajectory over the next 80 years, we followed the
189 approach of Naik and Abiodun (2019) and extracted 30-year periods with different mean
190 temperature change relative to estimated preindustrial conditions: 1.5 °C (least severe), 2.0 °C,
191 2.5 °C, and 3.0 °C (most severe). This approach is justified because both transient and long-term
192 climate change depend far more on cumulative greenhouse gas emissions than on the exact
193 trajectory of emissions over time (Allen et al., 2009; Goodwin et al., 2015). This approach
194 enables us to compare the results of different model realizations of four scenarios of regional
195 warming levels for Cape Town regions (RWL), even though we only have simulation output for
196 a single emissions pathway. We use this approach to compare different water management
197 policies under different amounts of warming. The four levels of temperature change represent
198 future climate scenarios from most severe to least severe. Under the ensemble of realizations,
199 these scenarios correspond to different temporal intervals (Table 1).

200 Table 1, details of the four climate model ensemble members.

Model No.	GCM/RCM	Period of global warming levels			
		1.5 °C	2 °C	2.5 °C	3 °C
M1	CanESM2/RCA4	1999-2028	2012-2041	2024-2053	2034-2063
M2	EC-EARTH-r1/RCA4	2003-2032	2021-2050	2035-2064	2046-2075
M3	CNRM-CM5/RCA4	2015-2044	2029-2058	2041-2070	2052-2081
M4	GFDL-ESM2M/RCA4	2020-2049	2037-2066	2052-2081	2066-2095

201
202 The two-way coupling mechanism between the ABM and hydrologic model allows these models
203 to exchange feedbacks at a monthly timestep (Figure 1). Each month, the hydrologic model
204 calculates the net inflow based on climate information and passes the current reservoir storage
205 level (the volume of the available water) to the ABM. The ABM then simulates water managers
206 using current water supply and demand conditions to determine the release to water, energy, and

207 food sectors under each policy scenario. Finally, the ABM passes the water usage to the
208 hydrologic model, which updates the reservoir level.
209

210 **2.1 The agent-based model:**

211 The agent-based model consists of 3 sub-models: the agricultural model for vineyard irrigation
212 and other irrigation demand, a hydropower generation model for the Steenbras upper dam, and
213 the urban water usage model of citizens and other institutional water users including businesses
214 and industries in the city of Cape Town.

215 For the agricultural sector, our model considers the agricultural activities in the wine regions
216 adjacent to Cape Town. Within the scope of this paper, we only model the irrigation demand of
217 viticulture in Cape Town because vineyards represent the most economically important and
218 water intensive component of the agricultural sector in the region. For simplicity, we assume that
219 water consumption from other crops is proportional to vineyard use, and thus represents a
220 consistent fraction (57%) of the total irrigation demand. The agricultural sub-model was adopted
221 from the original model and is described in detail in the model Overview, Design concepts, and
222 Details (ODD) document (<https://github.com/ding-k/Cape-Town-ABM>) (Ding, Gilligan, et al.,
223 2019).

224 For the energy sector, we model the Steenbras hydropower dam with 180 MW of generation
225 capacity. We assume the dam can fully operate when the total storage level of the water supply
226 system (total storage level hereafter) is more than 20% of its maximum. When the total storage
227 level is less than 20%, we assume the Steenbras dams cannot be kept at full anymore and a linear
228 decrease in hydropower generation, and the hydropower generation capacity decreases to zero as
229 the total storage level falls below 15% of its maximum. The energy sub-model is also adopted
230 from the original model and is described in detail in the ODD (<https://github.com/ding-k/Cape-Town-ABM>) (Ding, Gilligan, et al., 2019).

231 The urban water usage sub-model includes agents representing households and institutional
232 water users, such as businesses and industries, in each of 94 wards. We model each of 94 wards
233 as a single agent, which represents all the households and institutional water users in that ward.
234 Each agent is characterized by parameters corresponding to the number of households, the
235 average household size, the average unrestricted water demand for households and institutional
236 users, the median annual household income, and the price elasticity of water demand for the
237 median household. The heterogeneity of household income is reflected at the ward level, and the
238 households within a ward are treated as homogenous because household-level microdata is not
239 available. Future work will explore the effects of intra-ward heterogeneity.

240 We assigned values for these parameters based on data from the local and national demographic
241 survey (Cape Town Department of Water & Sanitation, 2018). For the initial average water
242 demand of the households and institutional water users, we use the water usage data of 400
243 residential regions in Cape town in 2013- a pre-drought normal year (Cape Town Department of
244 Water & Sanitation, 2018). For the number, size, and income level of households, we use the
245 demographic data from the 2011 census survey at the ward level. To overcome the challenge of
246 the difference in spatial scales of the water usage and sociodemographic data, we aggregated the
247 usage data to the ward level. The sub-ward residential regions do not always fall in a single
248 ward. Where a residential region spanned multiple wards, we assigned it to the ward that
249 contained the largest portion of its area. Cape Town comprises 1.12 million households, with an
250 average of 3.4 people. After the aggregation, the 94 wards accounted for the entire population
251 (22 wards had no residential regions assigned to them). Residential consumption accounts for
252

253 70% of urban water use (Cape Town Department of Water & Sanitation, 2018). We calibrated
254 the initial water demand in the household and institutional sectors to match this ratio. We assign
255 each of the 94 wards to one of four income levels based on its median annual household income:
256 30,000, 57,500, 117,000, and 230,000 as the income above 200,000 (200k), rand per year per
257 household. These levels represent a roughly exponential sequence where each level represents
258 roughly twice the income of the previous one. We represent each ward by an aggregate price
259 elasticity based on the ward's median income level. It is widely observed that households with
260 greater income are less sensitive to prices, so we assign greater price elasticities to lower-income
261 wards. For a general price elasticity ϵ_D , we assign an income-dependent elasticity $\epsilon_D' = \epsilon_D - 0.3$,
262 $\epsilon_D - 0.2$, ϵ_D , and $\epsilon_D + 0.3$, for the four income levels, from low to high. We assign each ward a
263 price elasticity drawn at random from a normal distribution with a mean of ϵ_D' and a standard
264 deviation of 0.05. We assign institutional and agricultural water users the general price elasticity
265 ϵ_D . We also design additional sensitivity analysis for the price elasticity of agricultural water
266 users in which we vary the ϵ_D from -0.3 to -0.7 at 0.1 interval and compare the reduction level of
267 water usage for the agricultural sector and the dam storage with the baseline where the ϵ_D of
268 agricultural water users is the general price elasticity.
269

270 2.2 The hydrologic model:

271 All the water in our model is supplied by the “Big Six” reservoir system that supplies Cape
272 Town and other regions of Western Cape Province. We simulate the water supply using the “Big
273 Six” hydrologic model, a water balance model developed for this system and used by water
274 managers there (Climate System Analysis Group, n.d.). This model was officially used to
275 monitor and manage water resources during the Day-Zero crisis. The hydrological model
276 apportions rainfall into runoff and infiltration and accounts for evaporation of soil moisture as a
277 function of potential evapotranspiration and the level of saturation (soil moisture
278 content/available water content). The model is calibrated and has been validated by comparing
279 simulation results to historical observations during the period from 2008 to 2018. Complete
280 descriptions of the big six model are documented on the product website
281 (<http://cip.csag.uct.ac.za/monitoring/bigsix.html>).
282

283 2.3 Data:

284 The ABM and the “Big Six” model were calibrated using the historical climate and reservoir
285 data from 2009 to 2018. We adopted the parameters for the agricultural, energy, and municipal
286 sectors from the earlier version of the model (Ding, Gilligan, et al., 2019).
287 The primary climatic inputs were precipitation and potential evapotranspiration for the
288 hydrologic model and monthly soil moisture deficit, which the agent-based model used to
289 calculate the irrigation demand. The potential evapotranspiration is calculated as an average
290 value across the Breede and Berg sectors that represent the “Big Six” catchment (Figure 1). The
291 precipitation is taken as the average of meteorological stations located at five of the “Big Six”
292 reservoirs. We use linear regression to calibrate the average PET against the historical data from
293 2009 to 2018. We calculated the soil moisture deficit in each of the wine regions under each of
294 the four downscaled climate models by applying Jacobi et al.’s (2013) PDSI tool to the gridded
295 temperature and precipitation model output fields.

296 2.3.1 Precipitation and potential evapotranspiration under climate scenarios:

297 The two key input variables of the “Big Six” model are monthly potential evapotranspiration
298 (PET) and precipitation (PR). For historical data, these are composite values from multiple

weather stations and under climate simulations, these are taken from gridded model output fields. The composite PET input used in the original ‘‘Big Six’’ model from 2009 to 2018 was a single time series of Penman-Monteith ET₀, representing the arithmetic average of the individual values of ET₀ at the 35 meteorological stations in the Breede and Berg sectors of the ‘‘Big Six’’ catchment (Figure 1). We prepared the PET input for the model runs from 2009 to 2100 by applying a similar procedure to the gridded downscaled model output for the four downscaled climate models. These downscaled models had relatively coarse spatial resolution (0.44° by 0.44°) compared to the density of observational stations: the Breede and Berg sector contains 35 stations and is covered by 13 grid cells. Therefore, for the model runs from 2009 to 2100 we calculated average PET as the average of the PET values for each grid cell in the sector. Over the period 2009 to 2018 the calculated composite PET for all four members of the ensemble was lower than the historical composite PET calculated from observational data. We used linear regression to adjust the PET for the climate scenarios to match the calculated values over this period (Figure 2).

Unlike PET, the downscaled simulated precipitation values for the first decade of the simulation period were in the same range as the composite observational value used in the original ‘‘Big Six’’ model from observations at the reservoirs so no adjustments were required. Overall, the climate projections from the four climate scenarios show a decline in rainfall and an increase in potential evapotranspiration.

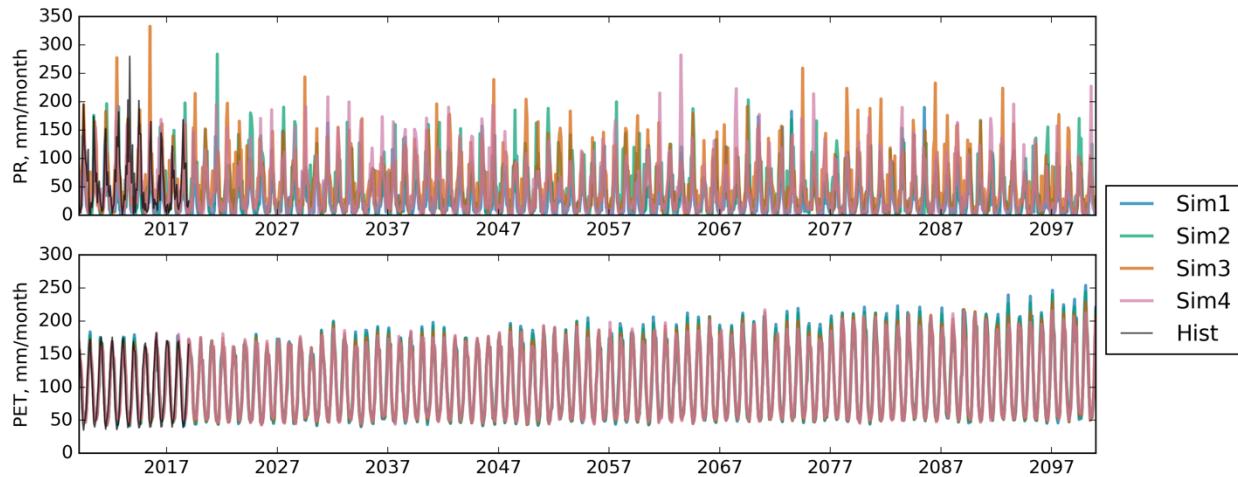


Figure 2, average precipitation (PR) and calibrated potential evapotranspiration (PET) of different climate scenarios from 2009 to 2100. Sim 1, 2, 3, and 4 correspond to the four climate scenarios realized by climate models M1-4, respectively. Hist represent the values from observation or calculated using observations from 2009 to 2018.

323

324 3. Policy Design:

325 Policy 1, which we use to test hypothesis H1, is adapted from Ding, Gilligan, and Hornberger
326 (2019). It takes a simple adaptive approach that reduces the water demand when the reservoirs
327 show early signs of drought. This policy allocates water to meet the full demand of water users
328 from municipal and agricultural sectors as long as the seasonally adjusted storage level of the
329 reservoirs is above a threshold, which we specify as a fraction of the long-term average storage
330 level (Algorithm 1). When the storage level falls below the threshold, the policy raises the price
331 of water to reduce demand.

Algorithm 1 Allocations for Policy 1 and 2

if $V > 0.9V_{max}$ **then**
 Allocate full water demand to each sector // No restriction
else
 Calculate desired change in urban consumption: $\% \Delta D = \frac{V_{avg} - V_{current}}{V_{avg}}$ // Level 2 restriction
 Assign water tariff (new price) based on the price elasticity of demand (ϵ_D) // Urban sub-model
 Calculate actual water usage of households in 94 wards based on their price elasticities of demand ($\epsilon_{D,i}$) // Urban sub-model
 Calculate reduced allocation to the agricultural and other institutional water users

 Calculate the average water bill for households in 94 wards // Urban sub-model
 Allocate water
end if

332 Note: V_{avg} and $V_{current}$ are the long-term average and current reservoir storage level of the month.

333 The price-elasticity of demand ϵ_d is defined as

$$\epsilon_d = \frac{dQ}{dP} \quad (1)$$

334 where Q is the consumption and P is the price.

335 The new price P_1 to achieve a reduced demand (Q_1) are calculated from the previous price and
336 consumption (P_0 and Q_0) by integrating Equation using the unmodified basic price-elasticity ϵ_d
337 (Equation 2).

$$P_1 = P_0 * \left(\frac{Q_1}{Q_0} \right)^{\frac{1}{\epsilon_d}} \quad (2)$$

338 We then calculate the individual consumption Q_{1i} of each ward i using that ward's price
339 elasticity ϵ_d (Equation 3).

$$Q_{1i} = Q_{0i} * \left(\frac{P_1}{P_0} \right)^{\epsilon_{D,i}} \quad (3)$$

340

341 Cape Town suffers from great income inequality, with a Gini coefficient for income of 0.6 and a
342 poverty rate of 19% (Karuri-Sabina 2016; Sieff 2018). The tariffs imposed by Policy 1 may
343 impose hardship on low-income households, and indeed the tariffs imposed in 2017-2018 left
344 lower income households struggling to afford water while wealthy households continued to fill
345 their swimming pools (Sieff 2018). Avoiding these disparate outcomes motivates Policy 2, which
346 augments Policy 1 by providing a basic level of necessary consumption free of charge.

347 Following current South African policy (Cape Town Department of Water and Sanitation, 2018),
348 it provides up to 6 thousand liters (kL) of free water for households with annual incomes below
349 30,000 Rand. These households pay for any consumption beyond 6 kL at the same price as
350 others.

351 The key parameter in Policy 1 and 2 is the general price elasticity of demand for water, which is
352 used to adjust the tariff when reservoir levels are low. The elasticity is negative, meaning that
353 demand drops as prices rise, and larger magnitudes correspond to greater sensitivity to price. We
354 conducted sensitivity analysis to elasticity by running simulations of Policies 1 and 2 for three
355 values of ϵ_D : -0.4, -0.5, and -0.6.

356 Cape Town is considering policies to augment its current water supply by adding additional
357 surface water impoundment at Voelvlei reservoir, groundwater extraction with recharge at Cape
358 Flat and Table Mountain aquifers, wastewater reuse, and desalination (Cape Town Department

of Water & Sanitation, 2018). Policy 3 explores the implications of this water augmentation plan and quantifies the energy tradeoff by energy-intensive water supply sources such as desalination and wastewater reuse. This policy examines the sufficiency and reliability of these 4 different water supply sources. We adapt the estimation of construction cost and energy consumption (only for wastewater reuse and desalination) to calculate the new water price (Table 2).

Table 2. Scale, cost, and energy consumption of different water supply sources.

Water Supply Sources	Scale of Augmentation (Million Liters/Day)	Construction/Operational Cost (Rand/kL)	Energy consumption (kWh/kL)
Surface water	60	5	-
Groundwater	100	6	-
Wastewater reuse	70	7.5	2
Desalination	120	36	4

In calculating the new water price with water augmentation, we account for both the operational cost of existing surface water sources and the cost of the new water supply. We assume that the cost of surface water from the augmented impoundment at Voelvlei will be the same as the cost for water from the existing surface water storage: 5 R/kL. The total cost for the augmented Cape Town water, C_{new} , is calculated as

$$C_{new} = \frac{C_{sw}*V_{sw} + C_{nsw}*V_{nsw} + C_{gw}*V_{gw} + C_{gsw}*V_{gsw} + C_{wwr}*V_{wwr} + C_{ds}*V_{ds}}{V_{new}} \quad (4)$$

where C represents the cost, V represents the volume, sw and nsw denote existing and added surface water, gw denotes groundwater, wwr denotes wastewater reuse, and ds denotes desalination.

Augmentation alone will not solve the water shortage. A new normal reduction (NR) in water use, a universal demand reduction for all Capetonians moving beyond the “Day-Zero” crisis proposed by the city government, is needed for the water supply to be sustainable even with augmentation. To test the sustainability of the augmented water supply system, we ran simulations for a range of NR from 0 to 45% in 5% increments under each of the four climate scenarios, as realized by each of the four downscaled models.

4. Results

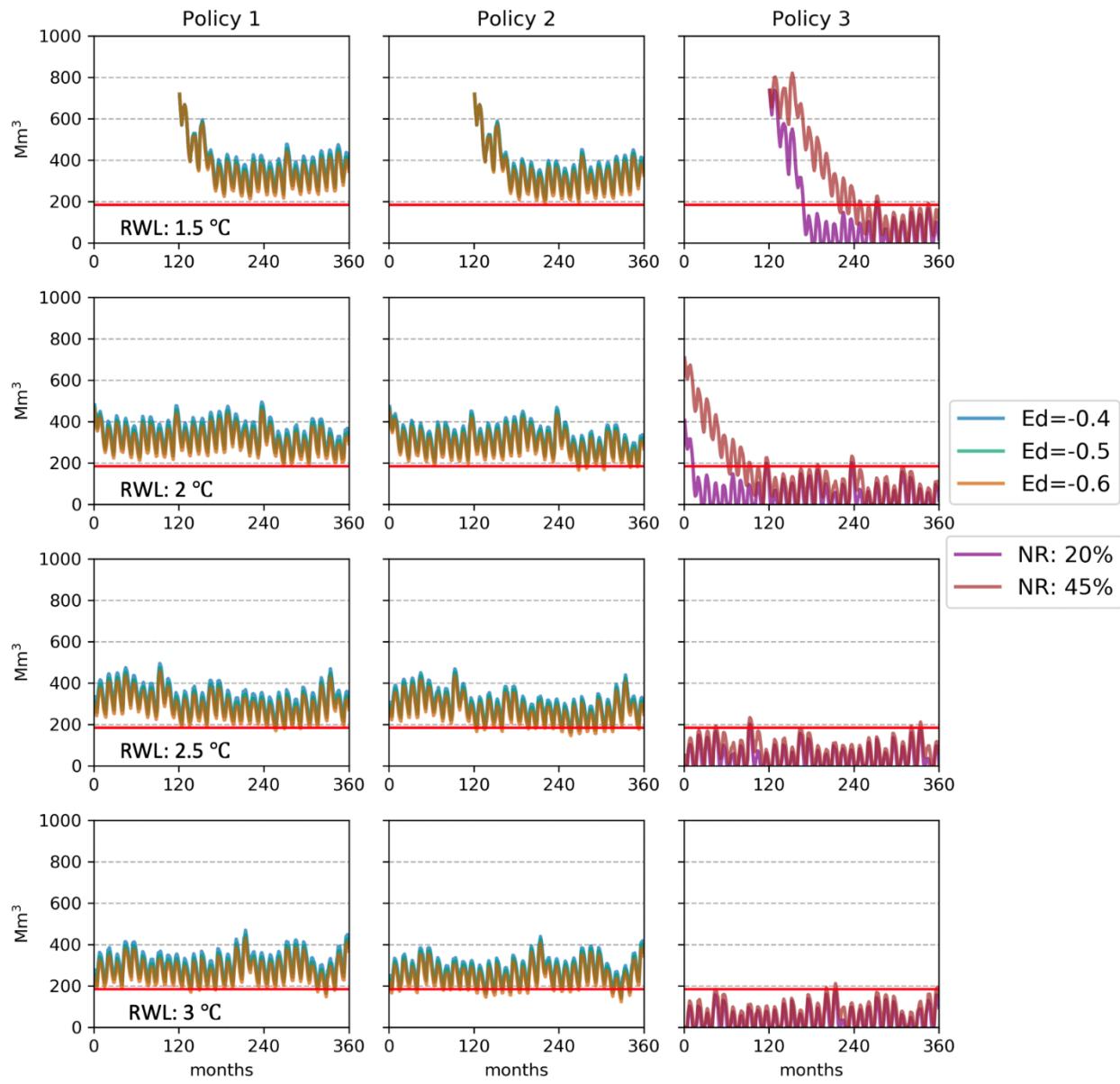
We ran the model in configurations specific to the 3 policies from 2009 to 2100 driven by climate output from each of the four downscaled models (Figure 2) and then extracted 30-year intervals from each model run corresponding to the four different warming scenarios in which the mean global temperature during the interval is 1.5°C, 2.0°C, 2.5°C, and 3.0°C above pre-industrial temperatures. It is important to note that we do not posit that policies will remain the same over a century, but we use the long simulation runs to generate the 30-year intervals that will be used to assess the performance of each of the three water management policies under different amounts of warming. We organized our model outputs into 48 sets, corresponding to each of three policies, under four different amounts of warming, as realized by each of four different climate models. We assessed the FEW system outcomes using overall dam storage, reduction of water consumption, water affordability, and hydropower generation.

4.1 Overall Dam Storage

It is critical to maintain reservoir storage levels in the “Big Six” system above 20% of total storage capacity because when storage drops below this threshold, hydropower generation capacity declines and it becomes harder to extract water from the reservoirs.

396 Under Policy 1 and 2, the dam storage can be maintained above the 20% threshold even at 3 °C
397 global warming level (GWL) under all four climate models except the model with the highest
398 climate sensitivity (M1). The dam storage levels for policy 1 and policy 2 were close, but with
399 slightly lower levels of Policy 2 because of free water supplied to the indigent households
400 (Figure 3). The dam storage levels were relatively insensitive to the general water price
401 elasticity, which is to be expected because the elasticity is used within the policy model to set
402 tariffs. We did additional sensitivity analysis for the water price elasticities of the vineyard
403 farmers for all climate scenarios, and it also did not make significant impact on the reservoir
404 storage (examples shown in Figures A7 and 8). Under all climate scenarios, the dam storage
405 levels trended downward at higher GWLs (M1, 2, 3, and 4 shown in Figures 3, A1, A2, and A3,
406 respectively).

407 Under Policy 3, the government-proposed new normal reduction rate of 20% was only sufficient
408 to manage the storage level above the threshold of 20% of the total storage capacity for climate
409 model M3, which had the most rainfall for each level of warming, while for models M2 and M4,
410 new normal reduction rates of 45% or higher are needed to maintain achieve a similar storage
411 levels (Figures 3, A1, A2, and A3). Model M1, with the greatest climate sensitivity, the
412 reservoirs struggled to avoid complete depletion despite the water augmentation and new normal
413 reductions of 45% under the more extreme climate scenarios (Figure 3).



414

415 Figure 3, overall storage for Policy 1, 2, and 3 (columns from left to right) for the 30-year
 416 periods of 4 climate scenarios 1.5 °C, 2 °C, 2.5 °C, and 3 °C (rows from up to bottom) of
 417 warming as realized by Climate Model M1. The red line indicates the critical threshold of 20%
 418 of the maximum storage capacity. Ed represents the general price elasticity of water demand, and
 419 NR represents the level of new normal reduction.

420

421 4.2 Water use reduction of different agents from FEW sectors

422 The first two policies use demand-side management with variable water tariffs to achieve the
 423 resources conservation target and assure water supply to users across the FEW sectors. Policy 3
 424 augments the water supply to achieve the same goal as the previous two policies, but with
 425 smaller reduction of demand.

426 Policy 3 applies a uniform reduction of consumption across all sectors through command and
 427 control regulation, whereas Policies 1 and 2 implement flexible demand reduction that varies

428 across sectors and across income levels within the household sector (Table 3). In policy 1,
 429 households with higher incomes experienced milder reduction of their water consumption than
 430 less affluent households, and the reduction rates decreased nonlinearly with increasing income
 431 levels of households in all climate scenarios (Table 3). The households of more than 200k
 432 Rand/year cut their usage to about 60% of their original demand at most, while other households
 433 used 10% to 30% of original demand under the 3° C warming scenario. In policy 2, the free
 434 allocation of basic water to indigent households reduced this disparity: middle-income
 435 households experienced slightly more water usage reductions, although the wealthiest
 436 households did not reduce their consumption much more than under policy 1 (Table 3). Across
 437 all scenarios and models, High income households did not respond nearly as much as lower or
 438 middle income households to tariff increases.

439 **Table 3 summary of average water usage reduction of households at different income levels.**

Climate/Policy Scenarios	30k Rand/month	57k Rand/month	117k Rand/month and agricultural sector	200k Rand/month
CS1	Policy 1 Constantly under intense reduction, cut to less than 10% of the original demand (OD) towards higher global warming levels (GWLs).	Constantly under intense reduction, cut to less than 20% OD towards higher GWLs.	Constantly under serious reduction, cut to less than 35% OD towards higher GWLs.	Under moderate reduction, cut to no more than 60% OD in the worst conditions.
	Policy 2 Constantly fluctuate between 50% and 70% OD		Similar but slightly worse than P1.	Similar to P1.
CS2/3/4	Policy 1 Frequently under serious reduction, cut up to 30% OD in higher GWLs.	Frequently under serious reduction, cut up to less than 40% OD in the worst conditions.	Frequently under moderate to serious reduction, cut up to 50% OD in worst conditions.	Under minor to moderate reduction, cut to less than 80% in the worst conditions.
	Policy 2 Under large fluctuations ranging from half to full demand.		Similar but slightly worse than P1.	Similar to P1.

440
 441 Under policies 1 and 2, households at different income levels were moderately sensitive to
 442 general price elasticities. The gap in reduction rates between the highest (-0.4) and lowest (-0.6)
 443 general price elasticities further expanded as climate scenarios became more severe. Higher
 444 general price elasticities resulted in higher price tariffs (Figure 4), and the reduction levels are
 445 consequently higher across the FEW sectors.
 446 The reduction rates for the agricultural sector and other institutional urban water users varied
 447 across the three policies. In policy 1 and 2, the water usage reductions in the agricultural sector
 448 and the other urban sector were the same as the reduction rates of households with 117 k Rand
 449 per year (Table 3), because their price elasticities were assumed to be the same as the general
 450 price elasticity. Compared to Policy 1, the agricultural and other urban users experienced slightly
 451 more reduction as a trade-off to the free basic water policy under Policy 2 (Figures A9 and A10).
 452 In Policy 3, the water reduction rates were the same across all water users as the reduction rates
 453 depend on the decision of the final new normal rate made by the policymakers.
 454

455 [4.3 Water Affordability](#)

456 Water availability determines the water price in Policy 1 and 2 because the reduction target of
 457 water usage is realized by the price tariff. Under the realization by climate model M1, the unit
 458 price of water could go above 100 and 180 Rand per thousand liters in Policy 1 and 2,
 459 respectively, at 3 °C RWL (Figure A4). While under realizations by climate models M2, 3, and

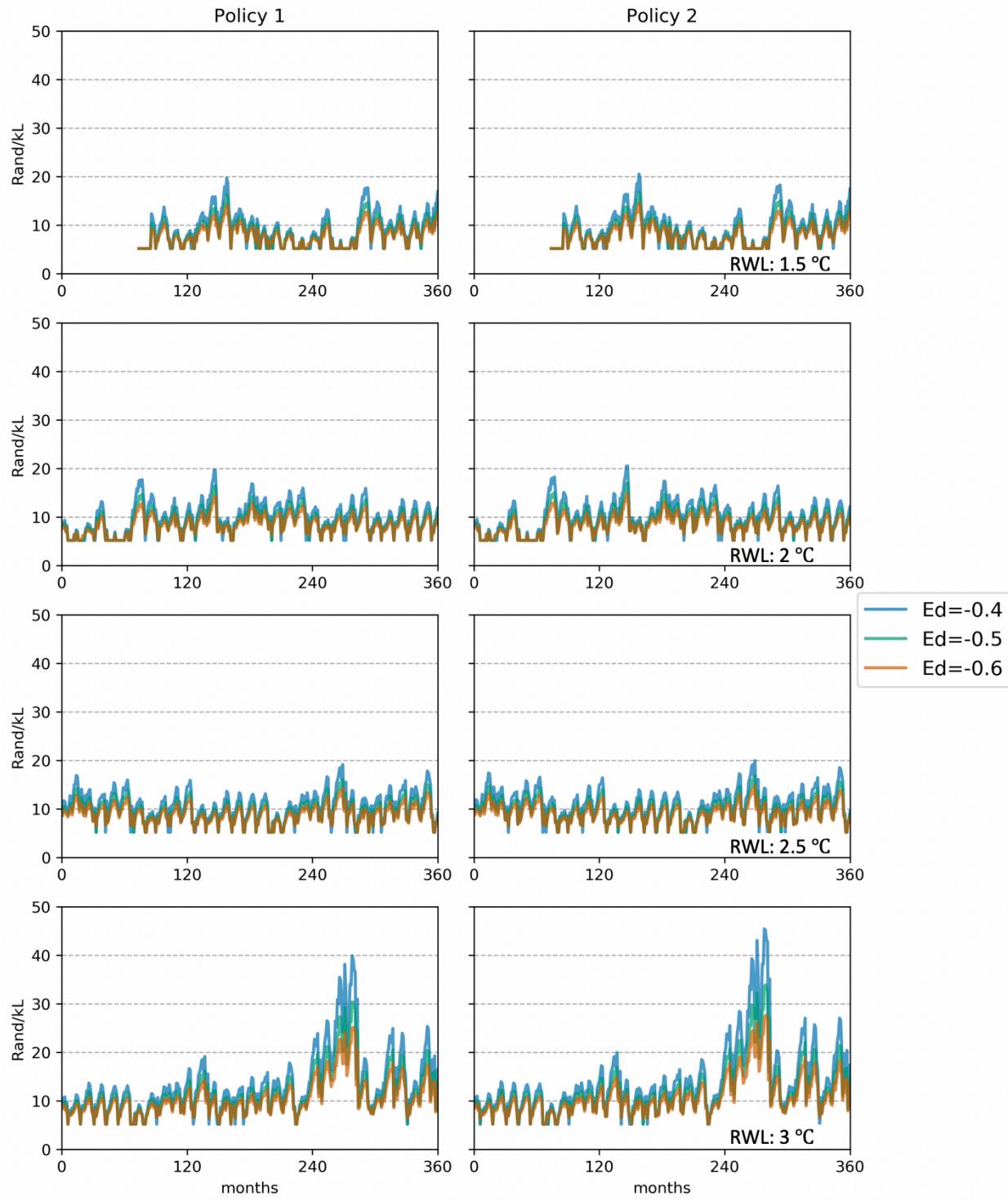
460 4, the unit water price ranged from 5.2 to 40, and from 5.2 to 50 Rand/kL in Policy 1 and 2,
461 respectively (Figure 4, A5, and A6). Compared to Policy 1 and 2, the water price of Policy 3 was
462 more affordable because it does not rely on price but used a uniform command-and-control
463 restriction of water usage. The calculated water price after factoring in the costs of all types of
464 water augmentation was about 8 Rand/kL.

465 Because households at different income levels have different individual price elasticities, their
466 monthly water bills vary significantly in the first two policies. The indigent households could
467 only afford to pay about 100 Rand per month for water, while households for income levels at
468 57k, 117k, and 200k Rand per year could pay up to 200, 600, and 1500 per month for water.
469 Policy 2 was designed to address the water affordability issue by offering free basic water to the
470 indigent households, but the water bills for other households were consequently higher.
471

472 [4.4 Energy generation and consumption](#)

473 The hydropower generation capacity would be interrupted once the storage level falls below the
474 critical threshold of 20% of the total storage capacity. In general, the hydropower capacity would
475 be impacted more frequently as the GWLs intensifies in all policies. For Policy 1, the
476 hydropower was rarely interrupted until the GWLs went up to 2.5 °C or higher. Compared to
477 Policy 1, Policy 2 experienced more frequent interruptions in hydropower generation as a trade-
478 off due to the free water policy (Figure 3, A1, A2, A3).

479 Whereas in Policy 3, the hydropower dam could barely operate under the most severe climate
480 scenario (CS1), and all water users needed to adopt a new normal reduction rate of 45% to
481 ensure the hydropower dam operated at full capacity with minimum interruptions in other
482 climate scenarios (Figure 3, A1, A2, A3). Unlike the first two policies, the desalination and
483 wastewater reuse consume a significant amount of energy to treat water. The desalination
484 requires between 17.5 MW and 20 MW of power input for its operation at 120 MLD, and the
485 wastewater requires 5.8 MW for its operation at 70 MLD. The combined power input accounts
486 for about 14% of the full hydropower generation capacity.
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Figure 4, water prices for Policy 1, 2, and 3 (columns from left to right) for the 30-year periods of 4 climate scenarios 1.5 °C, 2 °C, 2.5 °C, and 3 °C (rows from up to bottom) of warming under Model 2 in the ensemble. Ed represents the general price elasticity of water demand.

493 5. Discussion

494 Application of a simple adaptive policy (Policy 1) can provide sufficient water to users across
495 multiple FEW sectors with moderate average water use reduction and price tariffs at or below
496 2.5 °C under all climate scenario except the worst-case scenario, CS1. Even under the worst-case
497 scenario, Policy 1 effectively maintained the Cape Town regions away from a “Day-Zero” crisis
498 and ensured minimal interruption for hydropower generation. However, Policy 1 created
499 inequality of access to water in which households with lower income levels had to cut their water
500 use much more compared to wealthier households (Table 3). This has been a persistent issue for
501 policies of using water tariffs to reduce demand, and the issue exacerbates inequality during
502 water crises (Sieff, 2018).

503
504 The second policy, designed to help the indigent households during critical times, provides a
505 basic allotment to indigent households of 6 kL per month free of charge. It produced a slight
506 decrease in dam storage levels, a modest increase of reduction rates for other water users, and
507 more interruptions of hydropower generation under all climate scenarios. Policy 2 protected the
508 indigent households when future climate conditions worsened and water availability shrunk in
509 Cape Town. The significant improvement for the indigent households comes at a cost, more
510 rigorous reduction rates for the households with income levels in the middle (middle-class
511 hereafter)- 57k and 117k Rand per year, but not the wealthiest households (Table 3). The two
512 middle-class households experienced a further 10 % reduction on average compared to Policy 1,
513 and they had to cut 80 to 90% of their water use under the worst climate scenario. The wealthiest
514 households did have to pay a hefty water bill -- up to 1500 Rand per month -- to maintain high
515 water use rates, but this did not cause them to reduce their consumption by as much as middle
516 and low-income households. Policy 2 reduces the inequality between middle and low-income
517 households, compared to policy 1, but at the cost of imposing additional stress on the middle
518 class, and without causing the wealthiest households to reduce their consumption any more than
519 under policy 1.

520
521 The water augmentation plan of an additional 350 MLD capacity in Policy 3 cannot sustainably
522 meet the need of the water users across the FEW sectors, and it did not show better performance
523 compared to Policy 1 and 2. Under the highest-sensitivity climate model (M1), the reservoir
524 quickly depleted to below the critical threshold of 20% percent of the maximum storage capacity
525 even under the 1.5 °C scenario and never rebounded. Under the other members of the ensemble,
526 the government proposed new normal reduction rate of 20% was not sufficient; at least a 35%
527 reduction is needed to keep the storage level above the critical threshold to prevent reservoir
528 depletion and ensure hydropower generation for climate scenarios with GWL <= 2.5 °C (Figure
529 3: Policy 3). The energy consumption from desalination and wastewater reuse at a combined
530 scale of 190 MLD was significant, accounting for 14% of total hydropower generated at its full
531 capacity. Desalination also faces the issue of water quality as the seawater near the shores of
532 Cape Town contains high concentrations of chemical and microbial contaminants (Tafirenyika,
533 2018). The pollution from industries, pharmaceuticals, agricultural practices, informal
534 settlements, and so on impose additional challenges in water recycling methods such as
535 wastewater reuse and in using groundwater (“How dirty is the Cape Flats groundwater? |
536 GroundUp,” n.d.). Although the estimated water price of Policy 3 was only 8 Rand per kL, this
537 price is not likely to be realistic given the much larger scale of water augmentation needed that
538 would drive the cost of infrastructure and energy consumption higher.

539
540 An important caveat is that this analysis was conducted with the population size at 2009 levels,
541 3.8 million. The modeling results indicate Cape Town will face intensifying water stress and
542 variations as the global warming levels increase. The issue will only be exacerbated if Cape
543 Town keeps growing in size. With the projection using an ensemble of four downscaled models
544 realizing the four climate scenarios of 1.5C, 2.0C, 2.5C, and 3.0C warming, we argue that 3.8
545 million is the cap for the current Cape Town water supply system. The augmentation of 350
546 MLD did not provide much help because the capacity of the original surface water will be
547 shrinking as the rainfall decreases with higher regional warming levels (Figures 2, A11, A12) at
548 the same time under climate change.
549

550 [5.1 Limitations and Future works](#)

551 The future of shrinking water availability intensifies the competition for limited water among the
552 agriculture, urban freshwater, and energy sectors. Under all three policies, the agriculture sector
553 including the wine producers can expect to experience a 20% to 60 % reduction of their
554 irrigation capacity, just as the households and other urban institutional water users who share the
555 general water price elasticity, ϵ_d . This future will likely call for a shift in agriculture practices,
556 which may be a reduction in the area irrigated or an improvement in irrigation efficiency. Under
557 more extreme climate conditions, agriculture and hydropower will be significantly impacted
558 because the urban water users have the highest priority. Future works could include an actual
559 wine production model to study the feasibility of the wine production in Cape Town. The social
560 consequences cannot be neglected because reducing irrigation water will impose a huge
561 economic and impact and possibly undermine social stability, as seen in other parts of the world
562 such as California in the United States (“The key conflicts over California’s evolving water
563 supply | CALmatters,” n.d.).
564

565 The treatment of uncertainty in agent-based models of coupled human-natural systems is a ‘grand
566 challenge’ (Elsawah et al., 2020). A thorough exploration of uncertainty is beyond the scope of this
567 paper, although we note that uncertainty in socioeconomic factors can have a greater impact on
568 outcomes from models than biophysical factors. We take a first step in this paper by exploring the
569 sensitivity of our results to price elasticity.
570

571 In this study, we ran a series of simulations with a frozen technology and population assumption
572 to establish a baseline, a scenario in which how climate change along could impact Cape Town.
573 Future works could incorporate technological advancement and social-economic growth in
574 intermediate-term planning cycles to study how to mitigate the pressure of population growth on
575 the regional water supply system and the food and energy sector where water is also a critical
576 input. Future works could also consider the potential human migration triggered by climate
577 change and stringent policies of resources conservation and price tariffs.
578
579

580 [6. Conclusion:](#)

581 Our regional analyses conducted at the city and surrounding region level illustrate the future
582 availability and variability of the essential FEW resources specific to their own unique societal
583 and environmental conditions. In this study, we used a coupled human-natural system modeling

584 approach to project the future of water resources use across FEW sectors- the Capetonians, wine
585 agriculture, and hydropower generation under moderate to severe impact of climate change.
586 Among the three policies of resources management, we found that adaptative water conservation
587 could effectively maintain the regional water supply system above the critical threshold of 20%-
588 a level to ensure very basic functioning for all stakeholders. Imposing a variable price tariff
589 could effectively cut the water usage, but it also creates inequality of access to water for
590 households at lower income levels A policy modification that provides free basic water for
591 indigent households increases the burden on middle-income households and has little effect on
592 upper-income households. Our analysis showed that Cape Town's water supply system might
593 already be at its capacity to serve the current population, wine production, and hydropower
594 generation, and that rigorous water conservation practices across FEW sectors is needed to
595 compensate for the negative impact of climate change. The water augmentation plan, including
596 wastewater reuse and desalination in the government's proposal in 2018, may not be enough for
597 the worst climate scenario, and also requires intensive economic and energy input to treat water.
598 We conclude that future climatic stress on Cape Town will create difficult tradeoffs to address
599 the disparate impacts of water scarcity upon different economic sectors in the FEW nexus, and
600 upon households at different income levels. Augmenting the water supply to include
601 groundwater, wastewater reuse, and desalination may reduce the severity of these tradeoffs
602 somewhat, but is unlikely to eliminate them. As Cape Town and other cities and regions contend
603 with questions of unequal access to water, our coupled human-natural system model can be
604 applied to other policy options and can be adapted to other cities and regions to assess their own
605 potential FEW-related challenges and to help create effective policies of sustainable resources
606 management to achieve FEW security.

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Appendix: Additional results from the model simulations

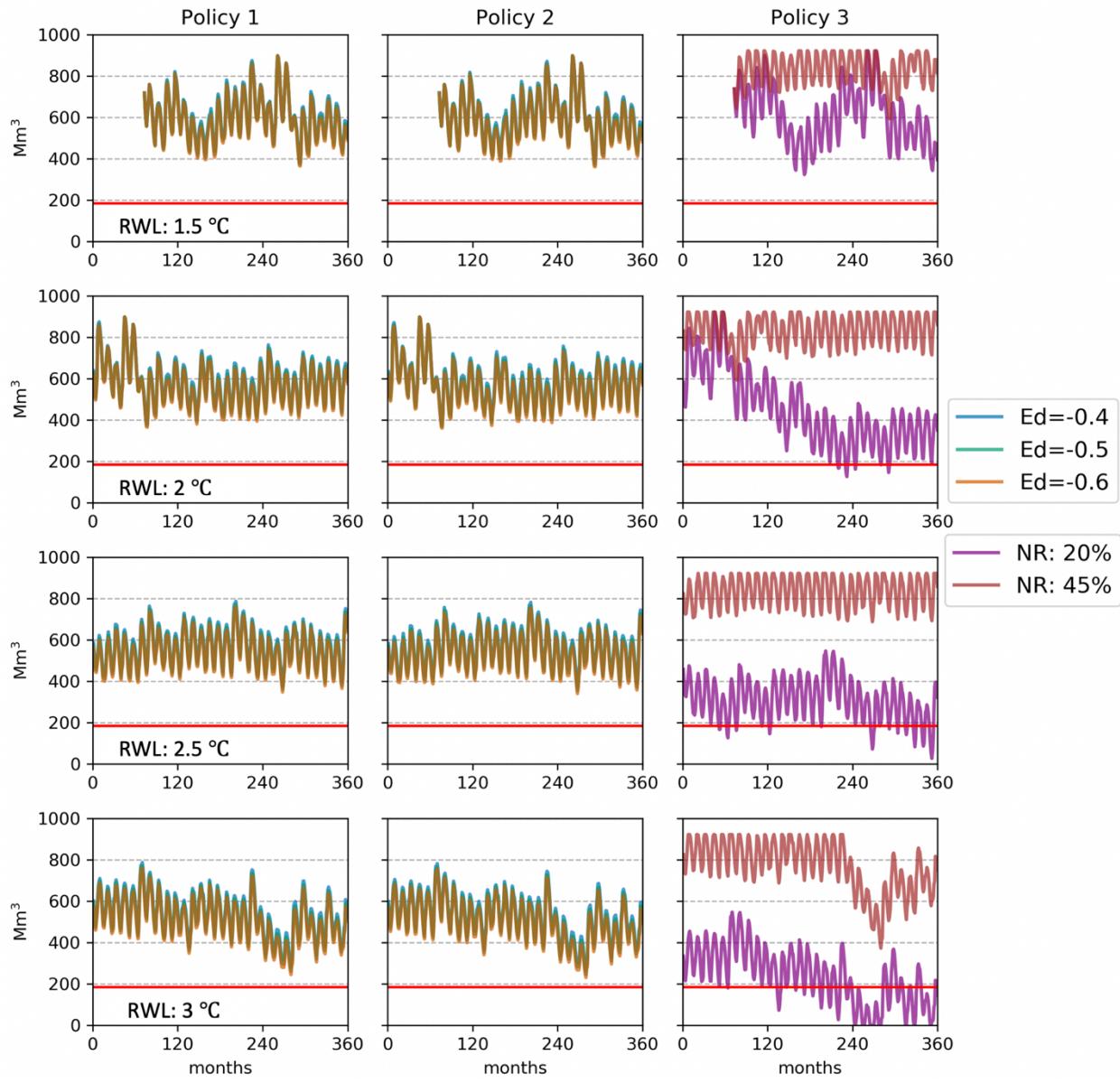
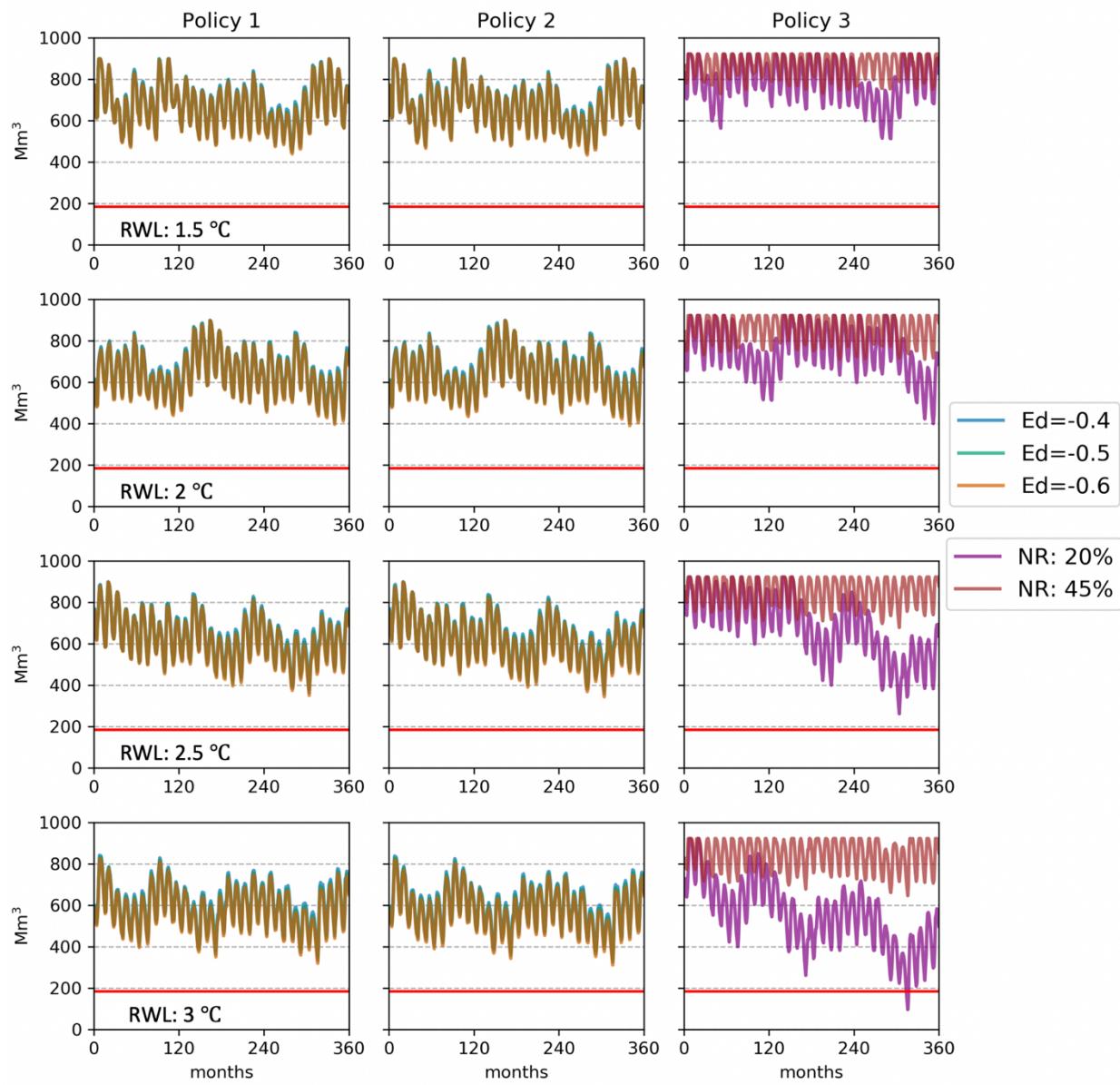
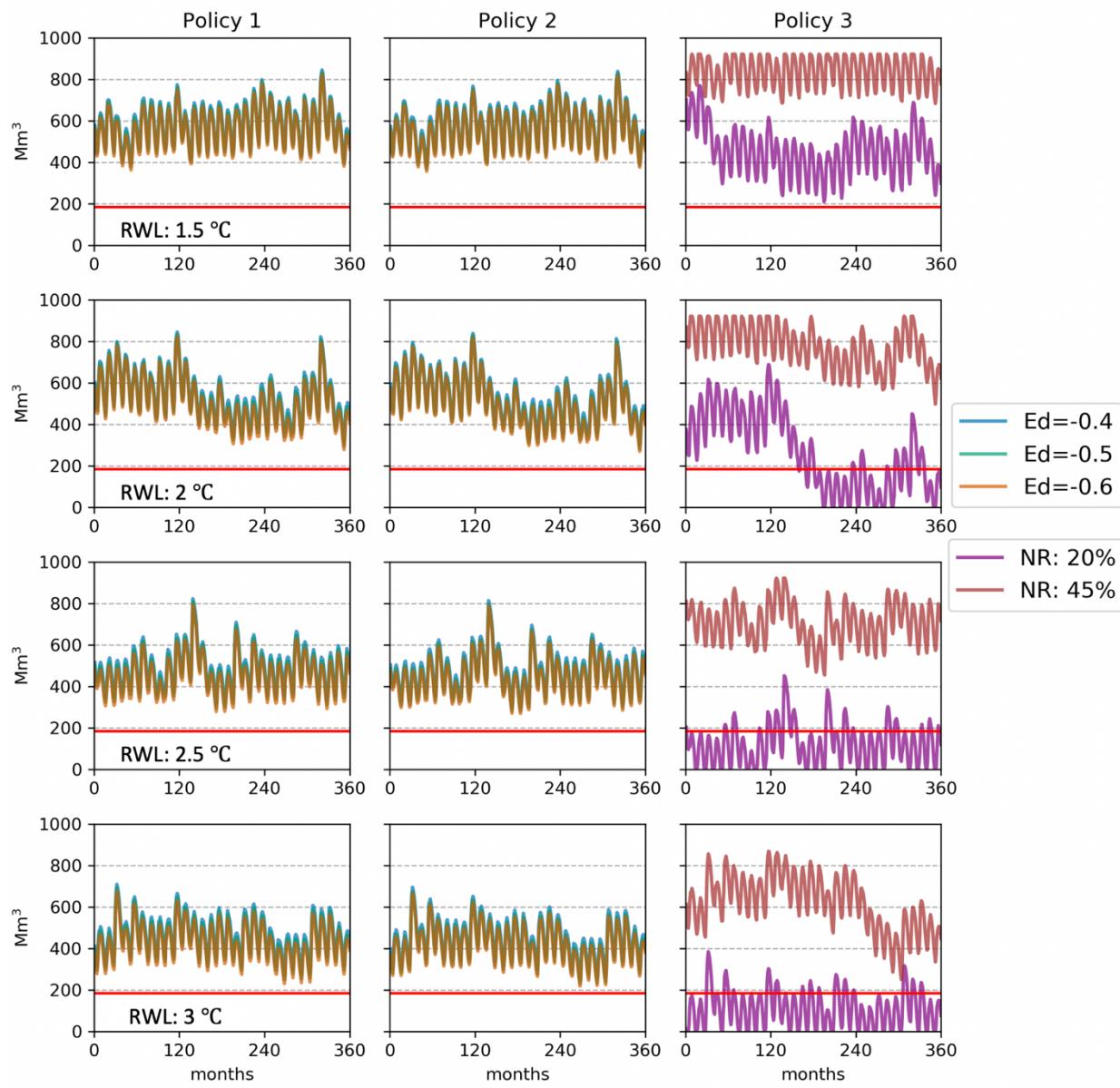


Figure A1, overall storage for Policy 1, 2, and 3 (columns from left to right) for the 30-year periods of 4 climate scenarios 1.5 °C, 2 °C, 2.5 °C, and 3 °C (rows from up to bottom) of warming as realized by Climate Model M2. The red line indicates the critical threshold of 20% of the maximum storage capacity. Ed represents the general price elasticity of water demand, and NR represents the level of new normal reduction.



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Figure A2, overall storage for Policy 1, 2, and 3 (columns from left to right) for the 30-year periods of 4 climate scenarios 1.5 °C, 2 °C, 2.5 °C, and 3 °C (rows from up to bottom) of warming as realized by Climate Model M3. The red line indicates the critical threshold of 20% of the maximum storage capacity. Ed represents the general price elasticity of water demand, and NR represents the level of new normal reduction.



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Figure A3, overall storage for Policy 1, 2, and 3 (columns from left to right) for the 30-year periods of 4 climate scenarios 1.5 °C, 2 °C, 2.5 °C, and 3 °C (rows from up to bottom) of warming as realized by Climate Model M4. The red line indicates the critical threshold of 20% of the maximum storage capacity. Ed represents the general price elasticity of water demand, and NR represents the level of new normal reduction.

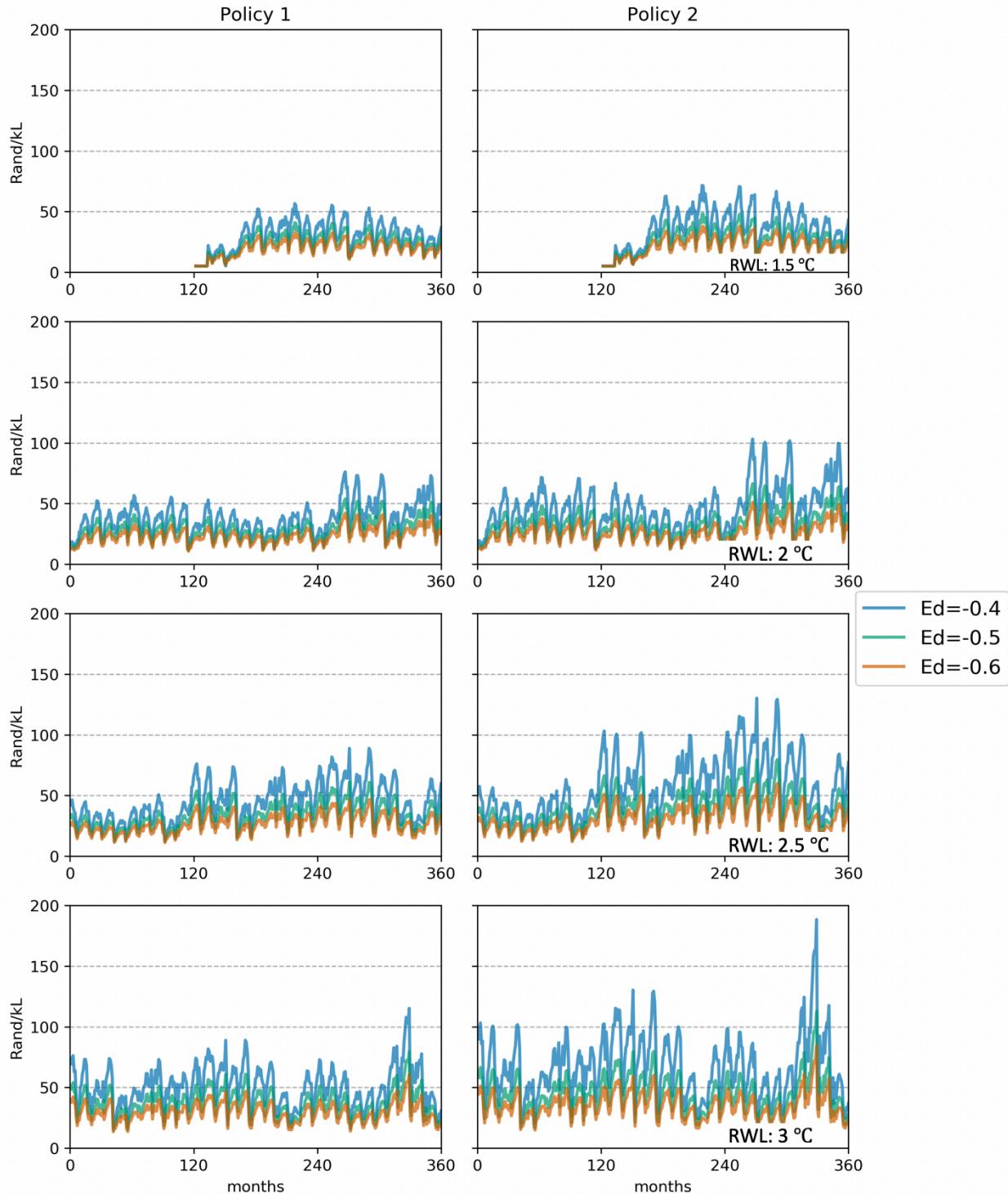
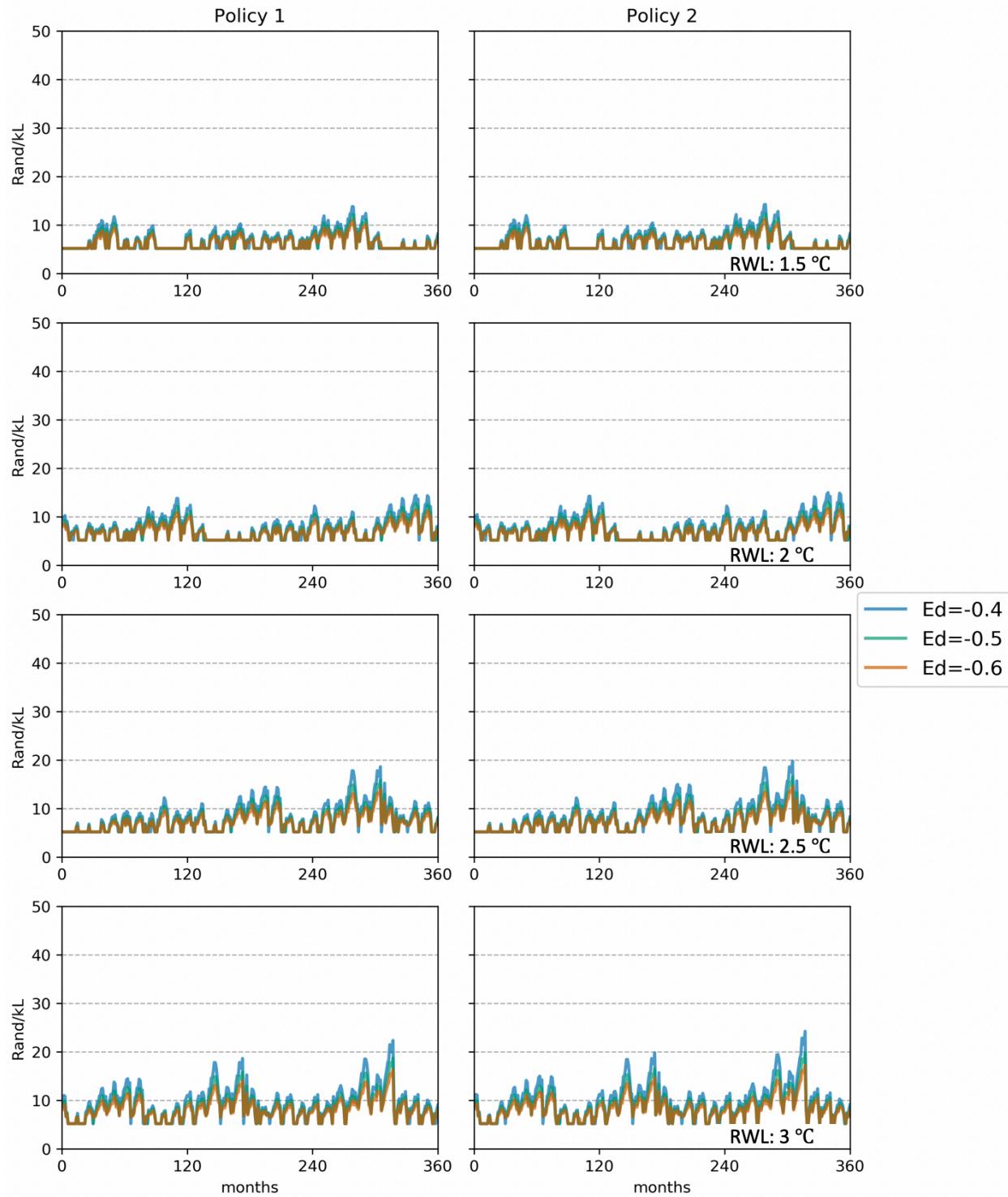
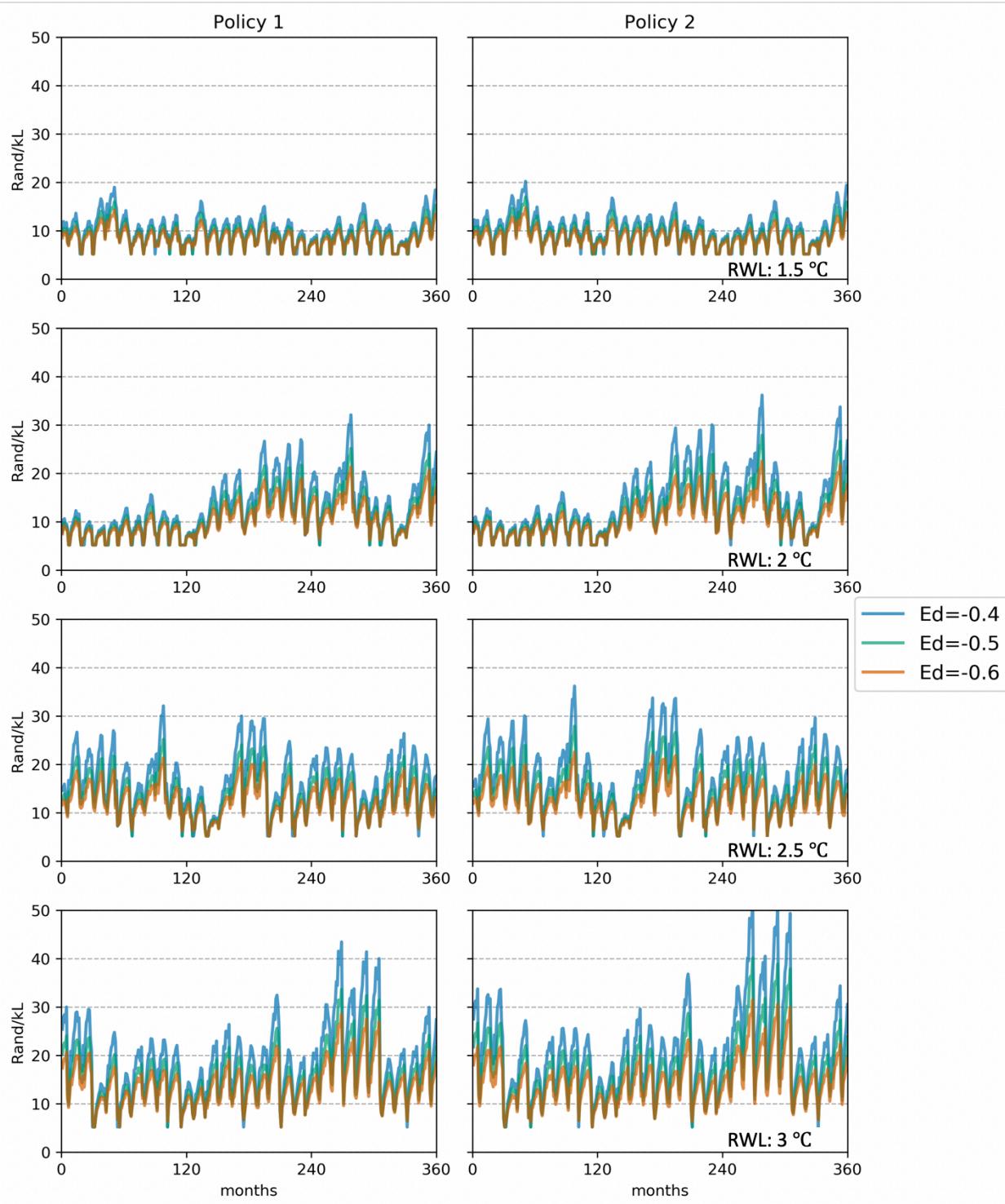


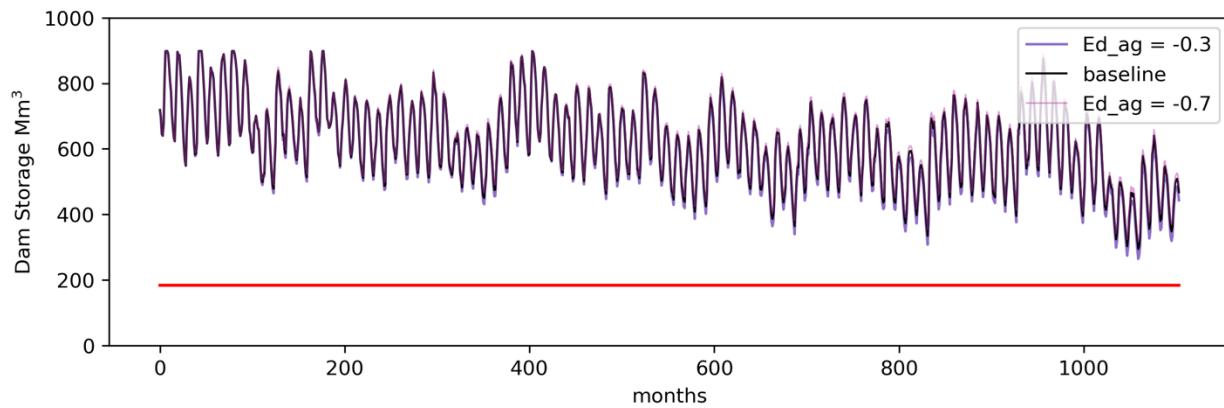
Figure A4, water prices for Policy 1, 2, and 3 (columns from left to right) for the 30-year periods of 4 climate scenarios 1.5°C , 2°C , 2.5°C , and 3°C (rows from up to bottom) of warming as realized by Climate Model M1. Ed represents the general price elasticity of water demand.





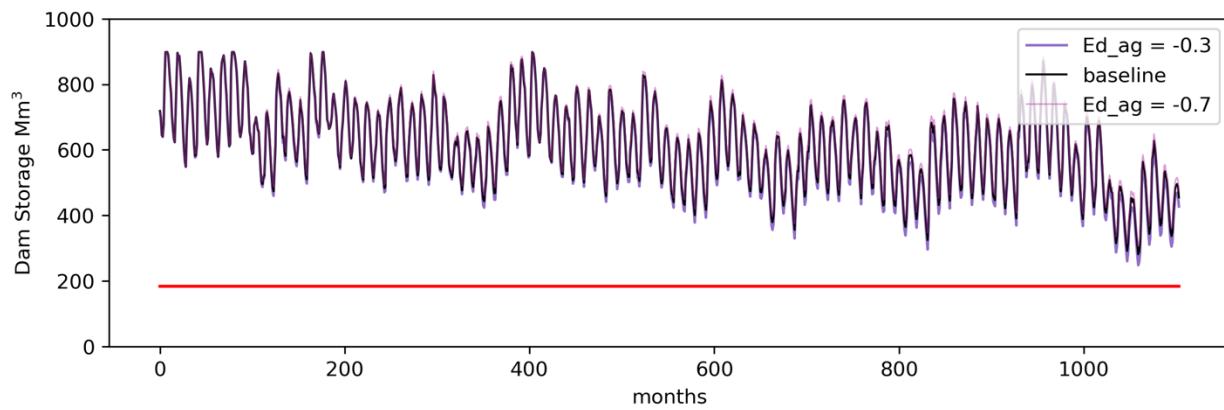
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Figure A6, water prices for Policy 1, 2, and 3 (columns from left to right) for the 30-year periods of 4 climate scenarios $1.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$, $2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$, $2.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$, and $3\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ (rows from up to bottom) of warming as realized by Climate Model M4. Ed represents the general price elasticity of water demand.



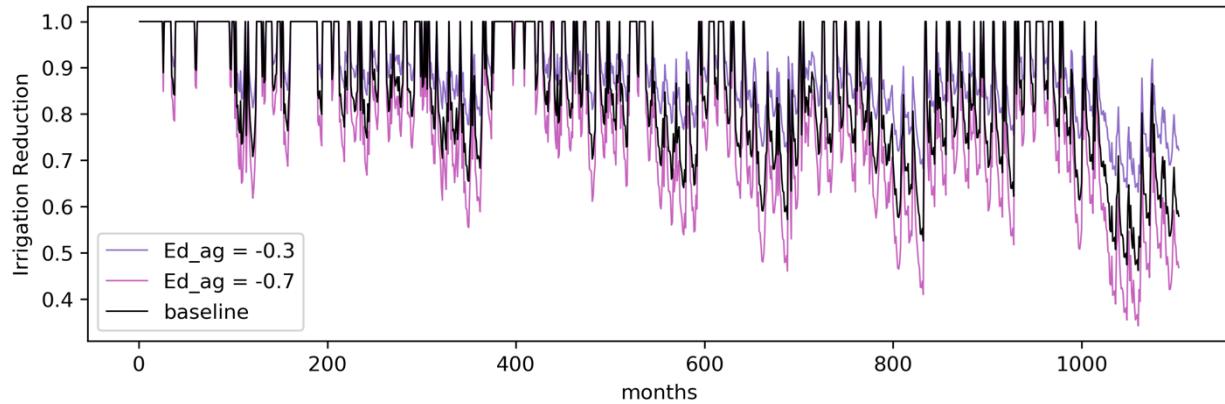
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Figure A7, Dam storage levels when changing price elasticities of water demand for vineyard farmers under Policy 1, Climate Scenario M3. The red line indicates the critical threshold of 20% of the maximum storage capacity.

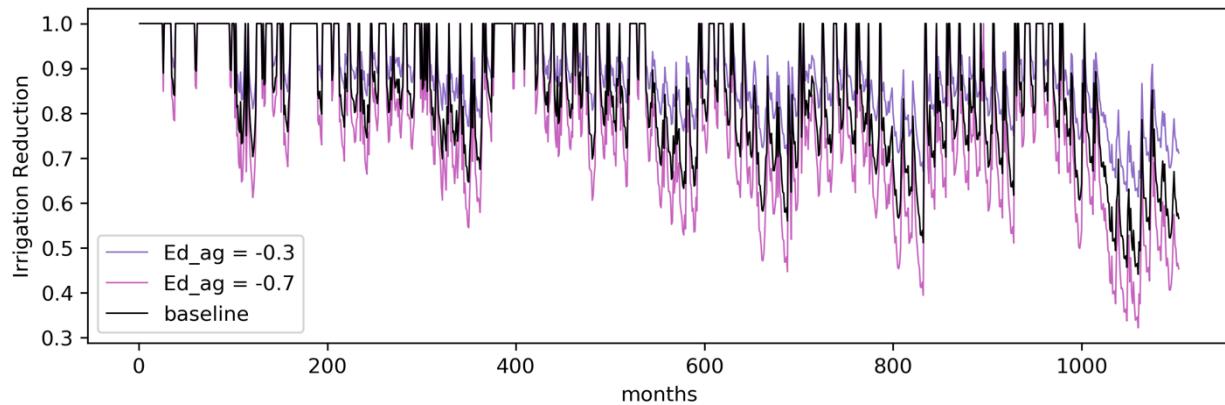


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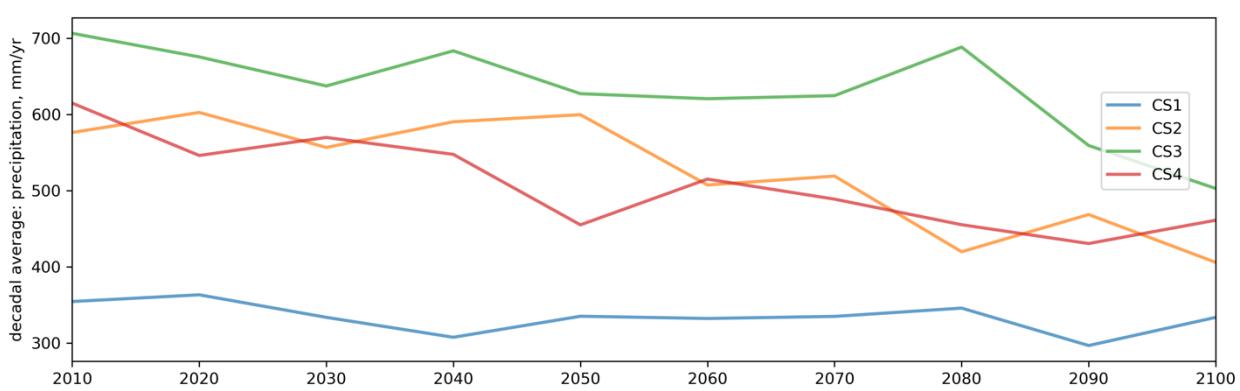
Figure A8, dam storage levels when changing price elasticities of water demand for vineyard farmers under Policy 2, Climate Scenario M3. The red line indicates the critical threshold of 20% of the maximum storage capacity.



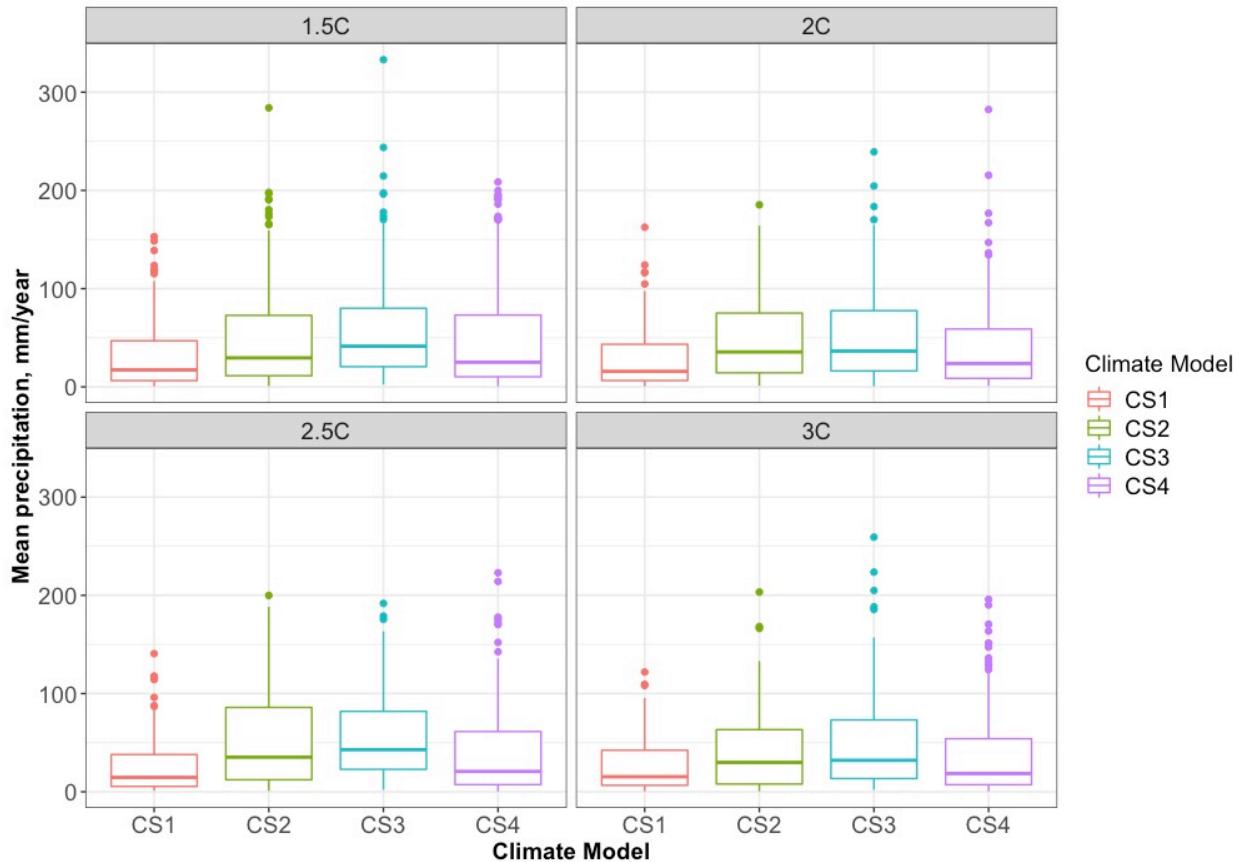
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742 Figure A9, reduction of vineyard irrigation under Policy 1, Climate Scenario M3. Baseline
743 scenario is when price elasticity of water demand in the vineyards as same as the general price
744 elasticity of water demand which is -0.5.



745
746 Figure A10, reduction of vineyard irrigation under Policy 2, Climate Scenario M3. Baseline
747 scenario is when price elasticity of water demand in the vineyards as same as the general price
748 elasticity of water demand which is -0.5.
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751 Figure A11, decadal average of precipitation in the study region. The four lines, CS1, 2, 3 and 4
752 correspond to the precipitation in four climate scenarios generated by model M1-M4 we used in
753 this study.



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Figure A12, boxplot of mean precipitation in different during different periods of regional warming levels. CS1, 2, 3 and 4 correspond to the precipitation in four climate scenarios generated by model M1-M4 we used in this study.