

Abstract

The research report presents an analysis to, responses to and dynamics around the municipal water problems in Harare, Zimbabwe using the case of two residential suburbs namely Mabvuku and Greendale (one high density and the other one low density respectively). The key questions that inform this research report are as follows: How has the on-going urban water crisis affected residents' lives in the suburbs of Greendale and Mabvuku in the city of Harare, Zimbabwe?; how does party politics affect the delivery of municipal water in Greendale and Mabvuku?; and, what are the environmental consequences of the municipal water crisis? The findings from this study contribute immensely to an understanding of the consequences of and various issues and, the key players underlying the protracted problem of municipal water availability in the city of Harare. The study argues that the prevalence of partisan politics and political power struggles in Harare are at the heart of the municipal water problems faced by Mabvuku and Greendale. In this regard, the study critically interrogates the relationship between the central ZANU–PF government and Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)-led local government and tries to understand the ramifications it is having on municipal water services. Interestingly the study also reveals that, despite the differences in coping strategies by residents of Mabvuku and Greendale, both locales have not been passive victims of the municipal water crisis. Instead, residents from both suburbs employ strategies according to their needs to ensure survival. However, despite some of the coping strategies (such as borehole and well drilling) significantly helping residents to manage and avert the water stress in light of the absence of municipal tap water, the study presents, explores and discusses the environmental consequences that are likely to happen as a result of the high concentration of these alternative water sources.