

**Effects of municipal water crisis in Harare, Zimbabwe: A
case study of Greendale and Mabvuku residential
suburbs**



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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.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts, Development Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Tongai Maodzwa

_____ day of _____ 2015.

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Abbreviations & Acronyms

ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GNU	Government of National Unity
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WWDR	World Water Development Report
ZANU–PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority

CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Background

Water is a natural resource and a basic necessity that should be easily accessible to everyone as it forms the basis of life in its various facets. Rural to urban migration, urbanisation, politics and economic development, together with environmental events such as drought and climate change have made access to what was once a freely available common resource a challenge. Despite the importance of water for human life, the United Nations World Water Development Report (UNESCO 2014: v) asserts: “the fundamental right to freshwater is not exercised by some 3.5 billion women and men”. In sub-Saharan Africa half of the population – roughly 300 million people – is deprived of the right to safe and basic freshwater supplies (Mukuhllani and Nyamupingidza, 2014: 144). Since water is an indispensable human right that fundamentally shapes all aspects of human survival, stakeholders such as the state, businesses and international development agencies must deploy policies and practices to ensure that individuals and communities have access to adequate freshwater to guarantee decent livelihoods. Failure to enact policies and practices that guarantee access to adequate freshwater will result in “...large-scale human misery and suffering will continue to grow, contributing to impoverishment, ill-health and the risk of social and military conflict” (Rowan, 2009: 8–9). Critical questions, when looking at access to water, include the following: How is the quality of life affected when basic and adequate fresh water is denied? How are spatial, class and gender dynamics transformed by limited access to water? These are questions that go beyond quantitative data. Instead, they require a qualitative interrogation to gain an

understanding of specific socio-economic, political and historical aspects affecting communities with regard to access to water.

This study focuses on urban municipal water crisis in the suburbs of Greendale and Mabvuku in Harare, Zimbabwe and the effects it has on the residents. For over a decade cities in Zimbabwe have experienced municipal water rationing that has affected quality of life and livelihoods. While a comprehensive understanding of how access or lack of access to water affects citizens of Zimbabwe broadly and the role of various local authorities is required, this study will focus on the challenges that prevent residents from accessing adequate water supply and the effects it has on their lives and livelihoods. Furthermore, the study inquires into the coping strategies residents in Mabvuku and Greendale are employing to fare with the water problems.

1.1 The Political Economy of Zimbabwe

At independence in 1980, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) government had a vision for nation-building through the creation of inclusive economic opportunities for the majority black population who had been previously neglected by the minority white settler regime. On the economic front, this vision was partially achieved as the country experienced an economic boom in the first few years following independence (Muzondidya, 2009). This enabled the government to provide social services – including health, education, and municipal water and electricity services – on an expanded and unprecedented scale. The government was commended by organisations such as the World Health Organization for providing 84 per cent of

Zimbabwe's population with freshwater by 1988 (Musemwa, 2007: 6; Muzondidya, 2009: 168).

However, the government's development agenda was spatially differentiated. The government was mostly focused on rural development to the neglect of urban areas¹ (Musemwa, 2008). Muzondidya notes how economic and social gains following independence were unevenly distributed to the broader population (Muzondidya, 2009: 169–170). The neglect and failure to plan for development in urban areas to match the growing urban population would have negative repercussions over time as demand for the provision of water and sanitation, housing and transportation services increased. Notwithstanding the neglect, the supply of water services in Harare in the decade following independence remained “relatively secure” (Rakodi, 1995: 59). This can be attributed to the fact that ZANU–PF retained control of both the central government and City of Harare's local government structures, so there was a good working relationship between the two structures of governance.

By 1990, the relative economic stability that the government and people had enjoyed was slowly being eroded as the economy stagnated. This led the government to adopt the World Bank's Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP) from 1990 to 1995 in an effort to remedy the economic problems through economic liberalisation (Raftopoulos, 2004: 8). As a result of ESAP the government abandoned most of its policies on delivery of social services so as to comply with the adjustment programmes of

¹ Musemwa (2008: 5) argues the government's 'rural bias' was informed historically by the need to rehabilitate the rural spaces that were previously marginalised during colonial rule. Furthermore, this bias is also attributed to that ZANU (PF)'s electoral base was concentrated in the rural areas.

the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Muzondidya, 2009: 169). The case of Zimbabwe is similar to those of other countries where ESAP exacerbated the economic problems (see Martin, 1991). After the implementation of ESAP economic growth in Zimbabwe declined from “4 per cent to 0.9 per cent” in 1991 (Muzondidya, 2009: 188). However, a series of natural shocks such as the severe droughts from 1982 to 1984 and 1992 to 1993 also negatively affected the economy. By 1997 the Zimbabwean economy was virtually stagnant. This was accompanied by a growing discontent with the ZANU–PF government among urban workers and the unemployed who were experiencing the severe effects of structural adjustment in the urban areas (Kanyenze, 2004; Muzondidya, 2009). ZANU–PF was thus facing a crisis of legitimacy as a result of its failure to address these socio-economic issues.

The period from 2000 to 2008 was laden with noteworthy political and economic events in Zimbabwe. In 2002 inflation had risen to 198.9 per cent (Kanyenze, 2004: 132); by 2008 the inflation had skyrocketed to over 231 million per cent (Mukwedeya, 2012: 48). Subsequently, the capital city’s credit rating was downgraded. This meant that Harare’s local government could not independently borrow money from financial institutions to finance its operations. Thus, the local government structures had to financially rely on the central government but, the central government also lacked disposable capital to finance the city’s capital projects (Mate, 2005).

Politically, insofar as there were democratic ideals enshrined in the post-independence constitution, from the onset the ZANU–PF government sought to consolidate its political

gains by establishing a one party state and silencing any opposition parties or individuals who challenged its political hegemony. As Muzondidya (2009: 177) puts it, the ZANU–PF government adopted strategies that entailed “an undisguised, intolerant, commandist and deliberately violent policy towards the opposition.” Muzondidya (2009) and Raftopoulos (2004) note that the political landscape in post-independence Zimbabwe is reminiscent of Zimbabwe under colonial rule (then Rhodesia). The post-independence government used strategies such as amending constitutional provisions and replacing them with ones that consolidated its power. For instance, Compagnon (2001: 214) shows that the Urban Council Act amendments of 1995 sought to strengthen the ZANU–PF central government’s control of local government when it started to lose the urban constituencies to opposition parties. In 2009, after a decade of a political antagonism and hyperinflation, ZANU–PF and the opposition MDC formed a Government of National Unity (GNU). The coalition between the two parties, which lasted until 2013, did not entirely solve the municipal water services problem. It did, however, relatively ease the political tensions and macro-economic problems faced by the country, until the 2013 national elections when ZANU–PF regained control of the central government. It is against the backdrop of this political and economic landscape that the water crisis and water politics in Greendale and Mabvuku can be understood.

1.2 History of Urbanisation in Harare, Zimbabwe

The history of urban planning in colonial Zimbabwe and other African countries such as South Africa was based on the creation of urban centres that limited the quality of urban life for Africans through deprivation of basic services such as water and sanitation, as

well as decent housing facilities, since their stay in urban areas was considered temporary (see Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni, 1999; Musemwa, 2012; Swatuk, 2008).

In colonial Zimbabwe, the majority of the land was reserved for white people, who made up a minority of the population, while the African population was restricted to far less land, despite constituting the vast majority of the population. As a result, in colonial Harare (then Salisbury), white people lived in low-density areas, while the African population – mostly migrant labourers – lived in high-density areas (Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni, 1999; Musemwa, 2012). During this historical period, municipal water services were delivered along racial lines. In the low-density suburb of Greendale municipal water services and service delivery generally was abundant, whereas in the high-density township of Mabvuku services were rationed. The inequitable distribution of resources between Greendale and Mabvuku was premised on the fact that, under colonialism in Harare there was no need to provide comfortable housing and full amenities for migrant labourers residing in the township of Mabvuku (or in other townships for that matter) as they were only in the city for a limited period of time to minister to the needs of the urban white man.² After a day's work these migrant labourers would return to their townships, sleep, wake up and return to work, repeating the cycle on end. Once their labour contract ended, migrant labourers were expected to return to their rural homes. So, there was no need to provide adequate or abundant water to the

² See Musemwa, M. 2014. 'The Rise of Makokoba Township' in *Water, History and Politics in Zimbabwe: Bulawayo's Struggles With the Environment, 1894-2008*, pp. 48–90. Musemwa provides a rich historical account of the Rhodesian colonial government's "deliberate and systemic inequitable distribution of scarce resources" as a means of controlling the African population and protecting the white community from water scarcity in Bulawayo, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The historical trajectory presented by Musemwa in the case study on Bulawayo intersects with how the same colonial government similarly operated in Salisbury (now Harare) in its treatment of suburbs like Mabvuku, Tafara, and Greendale.

townships, as they were not considered areas of ‘permanent residence’ (see Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni, 1999; Musemwa, 2006 and 2012; Swatuk, 2008a, 2008b). Subsequently, this created racially segregated environments where the suburb of Greendale had abundant water to beautify and green its environment and, Mabvuku had relatively low water supply for the purposes of beautifying its environments due to water rationing. In contemporary Zimbabwe, urban planning remains patterned along the colonial planning trajectory. However, the ability to live in a given residential space is now predominantly determined by class as opposed to racial categories. In post-colonial Harare, racially segregated residential patterns gave way to class-based segregation.

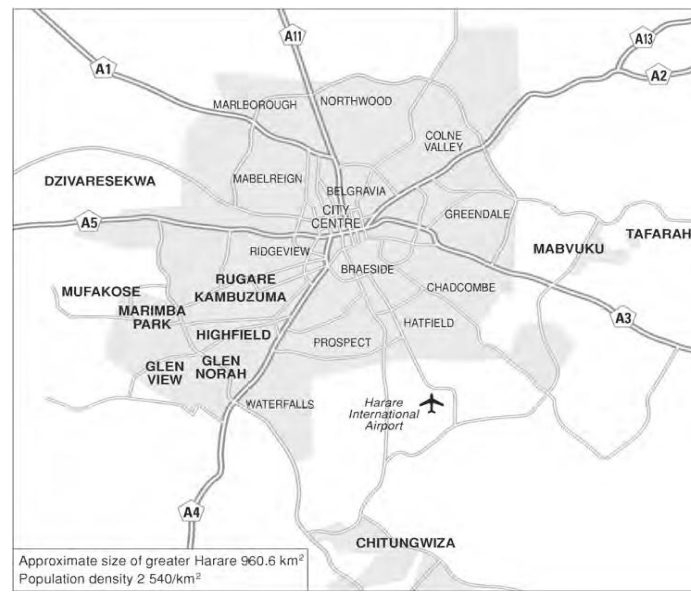
1.3 Greendale and Mabvuku: A brief sketch

Greendale and Mabvuku are located on the eastern side of Harare (see Figure 1). The former is a low-density suburb while the latter is considered a high-density suburb. High-density areas are “former black townships of the colonial era” and “low-density areas are former white-only neighbourhoods” (Gervais-Lambony 1994 as cited in Compagnon, 2001: 211). In a general sense, high-density townships in post-independence Zimbabwe are areas populated by lower income earners while low-density suburbs are populated by middle to high-income earners. Both residential areas have been facing water problems and, these problems are attributed to many factors.

The topographical location of Greendale and Mabvuku is of great significance in understanding the flow and distribution of water to these areas. Municipal water problems in Mabvuku have been attributed to its topographical location, which has its

roots in colonial planning. Manzungu and Machiridza (2005: 928) assert that, “Mabvuku lies on slightly higher ground than Tafara...[and]...in times of reduced water supply, water flows down to Tafara, leaving Mabvuku with little to no water”. Tafara is a high-density township that is located in the eastern side of Mabvuku (see Figure 1). The more affluent residential area of Greendale is located on a much higher gradient than Mabvuku, which further affects the amount of municipal water that flows to Mabvuku. By the time the water reaches Mabvuku, Greendale residents would have already consumed most of it owing to their geographical location (see Figure 1). Thus, water problems in Mabvuku can be traced back to the legacy of residential planning. Such colonial planning and the subsequent effect it has on water supply is not a phenomenon unique to Harare alone but applies to other cities in Zimbabwe, such as Bulawayo (see Musemwa, 2006, 2014).

Figure 1: Map showing the geographical location of Greendale and Mabvuku



Source: Redrawn from <http://www.heavenonearth.co.zw>
 Accessed on 19 and 20 March 2012 as cited in Musemwa, 2012: 16

1.4 The Delivery of Municipal Water Service in Harare

Municipal water rationing in Harare townships is not a new phenomenon but has its roots in the country's colonial and racial legacies of separate development (see Musemwa, 2012). However, unlike in the colonial era, the problem of water has intensified as a result of the socio-economic and political problems currently faced by Zimbabwe. The poor township of Mabvuku and relatively opulent suburb of Greendale have been worst affected by the water problems in post-independence Zimbabwe, especially since 2002. However, strikingly, the water shortages have had a differential impact on the two suburbs. For instance, from 2008 to 2009 Greendale did not experience the cholera and diarrhoea outbreak caused by water shortages to the same severity as Mabvuku (Hove and Tirimboi, 2011; Musemwa, 2012). Such differentiated experiences are attributed to the fact that Greendale residents have access to minimal municipal water available and many residents have private boreholes within their residential space. This contrasts starkly with the situation in Mabvuku where residents hardly have reliable portable water supplies. In summation, the water problems faced by the residents of Mabvuku and Greendale are attributed to an array of factors which include poor urban planning, decay in water infrastructure and meddling of the central government in local affairs, which leaves the local government incapacitated in providing water.

1.5 Definition of Water Politics

The term water politics keeps on recurring in this study. This raises the question: What is water politics? This section looks at the four domains that constitute the term 'water politics'. Mollinga (2008: 6-8) identifies the domains of water politics as: (1) "the

everyday politics of water control”, (2) “the politics of national water policy”, (3) “inter-state hydropolitics” and (4) “the global politics of water”. This research focus is located within the first domain: the everyday politics of water access and control. Everyday politics of water control refers to the day-to-day contestation in accessing water. It includes how community members access water, whether from the municipal tap water system or use of boreholes and, the subsequent effects (Mollinga, 2008: 7). The critical questions when looking at everyday politics of water control are: How much water is released, by whom, to whom, at what time, and with what consequences? Essentially, a focus on the domain of everyday politics of water control allows the researcher to conduct a micro-level analysis of water access, usage and management by, and effects on individuals, households and communities.

Whether municipal water is available or not, the majority of the residents in Mabvuku and Greendale are – and continue to be – connected to the municipal tap water system. Thus, there is a direct link between the everyday politics of water and the politics of national water policy, since a central institution – the Harare municipality – serves as the provider of tap water. This means that the national water policies and politics have a direct bearing on the municipality’s ability to provide water and consequently affects the everyday availability, use and management of water. The domain of the politics of national water policy can be defined as “the contested nature of policy processes...*whereby the political contestation of water policies take place* within state apparatuses, but also in the interaction of state institutions with the groups directly and indirectly affected by the policies” (Mollinga, 2008: 7; *emphasis added*). Here the focus

is on central water control, meaning the use, management and governance of water resources by a central authority such as the central or local governments, and the ramifications it has on groups who directly or indirectly consume water resources. However, it is important to go beyond national water policies and how these policies affect water consumers. The politics of national water policy can be broadened to encompass the relationship between state apparatuses such as the central and local government, and groups and communities that consume water, to other domains such as party politics. A consideration of party politics enriches the understanding of the national water policy domain and the subsequent political facets that shape policies and control of the resources.

Drawing from the two domains presented above, ‘water politics’ in this study refers to the micro-level day-to-day contestation in water access, usage and management by Mabvuku and Greendale residents and, how the relationship between the residents and local government apparatuses affects their ability to access water from various sources.

1.6 Problem Statement

The core problem that the study seeks to address and understand is how a pervasive water problem affects the daily lives of residents in Mabvuku and Greendale. This study argues that the municipal water problems in Harare pose serious challenges to urban residents, especially those staying in high-density townships where there is no municipal water supply at all. This can be exemplified by how parts of Mabvuku went for ten months without water (Zimbabwe Independent, 14 January 2008: 1). However, residents of low-

density suburbs have not been spared from the challenges caused by this water crisis except for those who have developed alternative private water sources in response.

A related concern is the commercialisation of water. Since public water from the municipality is hardly available, residents have turned to private companies for water provision. As a result, life has become increasingly precarious for the urban poor, as exemplified by residents of Mabvuku who have limited economic resources to purchase water from private providers.

In addition, the government of Zimbabwe inherited urban water problems stemming from faulty urban planning during the colonial era. The government has not only failed to solve the colonial-era water problems but has in fact exacerbated them (Musemwa, 2012). It is thus essential to consider the contemporary problem from a historical perspective for its roots are firmly embedded in the long trajectory of colonial urban planning (Musemwa, 2012: 33).

Furthermore, Zimbabwe has experienced an increase of rural to urban migration predating the colonial period to date. This has resulted in overpopulation in the urban areas, especially Harare. Consequently, urban planners have expanded the residential spaces despite the city's meagre resources. Beach (1999: 16 cited in Musemwa, 2012: 4) observed that, "as the population in Zimbabwean cities, such as Harare, was potentially increasing at a rate faster than the national average, they are going to run short of water relatively quickly." The increase in population density and ensuing water problems are

not unique to the Zimbabwean context; such problems are a global phenomenon. The United Nations World Water Development Report (UNESCO 2014: 62; *emphasis added*) notes that “almost 200,000 people are projected to be added to the world’s cities every day; Ninety-one per cent of this growth is expected to take place in cities of developing countries *such as Harare, Zimbabwe.*”³ The increase in urban population impedes on the delivery of municipal water services if it is not accompanied by an equal expansion of municipal water supply systems and infrastructure. In light of the many perspectives to understanding municipal water problems in Harare, this research project aims to understand how municipal water rationing affects the day-to-day lives and livelihood strategies of households and residents in Greendale and Mabvuku.

1.7 Research Topic

Effects of water crisis in Harare, Zimbabwe: A case study of Greendale and Mabvuku residential suburbs.

1.8 Research Question

How has the urban water crisis affected household livelihoods in the suburbs of Greendale and Mabvuku in the city of Harare, Zimbabwe?

1.8.1 Sub-Questions

1. How is access to, and control of, water differentiated in Harare in general and in Greendale and Mabvuku in particular?

³ The report, *Thinking about water differently: Managing the Water-Food-Energy Nexus*, by the Asian Development Bank (2013) presents a rich account of how water crises and insecurities are increasing becoming a global phenomenon affecting all regions. The case study of Asian countries is used.

2. How has the municipal water crisis affected households, and individual livelihood strategies in both Greendale and Mabvuku?
3. How does party politics affect the delivery of municipal water in Greendale and Mabvuku?
4. What are the environmental consequences of the municipal water crisis?

1.10 Significance of the Study

Research on how municipal water rationing is affecting day-to-day existence of residents has been mostly tangential. Instead, the main focus of study has been the political party antagonism and mismanagement of resources underlying the water problems in Greendale, Mabvuku and Harare at large. This thesis explores how municipal water problems affect the day-to-day lives and livelihoods of Greendale and Mabvuku residents. Capturing everyday experiences and strategies is essential in both amplifying the plight faced by residents and, understanding how stakeholders can address and seek to solve the problem. The findings present a rich understand of everyday living in Mabvuku and Greendale with regard to access to municipal water and, water from other sources such as boreholes and wells. For example – as will be elaborated in the forthcoming chapters – the findings about the effects of high concentration of boreholes on the water table helps stakeholders and residents understand the environmental consequences of drilling too many boreholes and wells.

The study's focus on experiences of the water crisis at the household level also reveals the intra-household dynamics of how various members within an individual household

deal with water problems in Greendale and Mabvuku, including how the crisis affects men, women and children differently.

In addition, the study considers the relationships between the central ZANU–PF government, the Harare municipality government and residents of Mabvuku and Greendale vis-à-vis the impact the relationship has on access to municipal water services. The study is significant insofar as revealing how the provision of municipal water or lack thereof, is interwoven to and unravels the day-to-day understanding and perceptions of how party politics affects access to water by residents and, the power and gender dynamics that get to shape access to the resource.

1.11 Chapter Overviews

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the political economy of Zimbabwe since independence in 1980 to date as a point of departure to understanding the municipal water problems in Mabvuku and Greendale. The chapter briefly discusses the geographical location of the two areas under study. The chapter then outlines the research topic, questions and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a discussion of prominent scholarship that has examined the water problems in Harare, Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the world and then identifies gaps within this scholarship. The chapter goes on to present the theoretical perspective that informed the study – namely, theories on power. The chapter then presents the livelihoods approach as the conceptual framework for the study.

Chapter 3 outlines and discusses the data collecting process. The chapter explains why qualitative research design methods were used to gather data and notes the types of methods used during the fieldwork – namely, interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis. The study applied a case study approach, with Greendale and Mabvuku selected as the two case studies under inquiry to understanding the effects of municipal water problems in Harare. Chapter 3 also provides an overview of the areas where the fieldwork was conducted and the demographic profile of the research participants.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the research findings. Chapter 4 discusses the impact of water rationing on Mabvuku and Greendale residents in seven broad themes; themes that are primarily based on and capture the narrative voices and experiences of the participants. The theme on socio-economic challenges discusses how water rationing is affecting pre-existing poverty levels in Mabvuku. Here, it is argued that water rationing has tremendously affected livelihood activities such as the cultivation of vegetable gardens for consumption and for sale by residents in Mabvuku. The chapter then addresses the effect of water shortages on morality and cultural practices. The theme on morality focuses on how perennial water shortages are undermining the Shona ethic of *'hunhu'* of *sharing water* – this ethic decreed that one cannot deny water to a thirsty person. The theme on gender challenges discusses how women in Mabvuku have borne the brunt of municipal water shortages more than men and more women in Greendale. The theme notes that women in Mabvuku bear the preponderance of water-related problems –

compared to men, or women from the more affluent Greendale who are able to mitigate the effects of the water problems – because women’s work is mostly concentrated in household-related work that is highly dependent on water.

Chapter 5 discusses how the politics between ZANU–PF-led central government and the MDC-led City of Harare is at the heart of the municipal water problem. The chapter argues that partisan politics that is concerned with power retention is crippling the delivery of municipal water.

Chapter 6 discusses how water rationing reinforces environmental segregation between Mabvuku and Greendale, with residents in Mabvuku failing to beautify their community’s landscapes due to lack of water. Meanwhile in Greendale, the environmental aesthetics have survived municipal water rationing and remain beautified and green because the residents have relatively more disposable income to purchase excess water from alternative sources. The chapter goes on to discuss the effects on the water table that are being caused by the high concentration of boreholes and wells in Mabvuku and Greendale.

Chapter 6 presents the overall conclusions of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

The provision of municipal water services in Harare and other cities across the world is a topical subject, examined from an array of different and intersecting perspectives including environmental, historical, geographical, economic, and demographic. This literature review provides neither a comprehensive survey of the literature nor an exhaustive examination of themes related to the provision of municipal water or the city's water politics. This chapter simply presents a discussion of the principal scholarship that has examined water problems in Harare, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere in order to identify gaps in the literature. These gaps inform this study's approach. Lastly, the chapter then looks at theories of power and considers the livelihoods approach as the main analytical paradigm for this study.

2.4 Introduction to the Literature Review: Understanding the demise of water service delivery in Harare

A wide range of literature from different disciplines has examined the demise of delivery of water service in Zimbabwe. This section reviews the various explanations in the literature. Water resources management, access and distribution involve very complex power relations among different interest groups (see Bennett, 1995; Donahue and Johnston, 1998; Bakker, 2010; Musemwa, 2014). Some of these interest groups include the state, local governments, communities, the business sector and ordinary citizens. In

urban cities the interplay of the power relations vis-à-vis access to water is more elaborate since water is increasingly recognized and managed as a finite economic resource.

2.4.1 Urban population density in Harare

Spatially, the water challenges faced by Mabvuku and Greendale residents have resulted from the tremendous increase in the city's population in the post-independence period (Mate, 2005; Musemwa, 2008). Mate (2005: 227) states that the populated surface area in Harare grew from 559 square kilometres in 1980 to 900 square kilometres in 1994. In terms of population, in 1982 the city had approximately 650,000 residents (Mate 2005: 227); while in 2012 the city's population was approximately 2,123,132 residents (Zimstats, 2012: 12). The population increase can be attributed to urbanization generally but, more specifically to the economic and political problems Harare and the country as a whole have been facing over the past two decades. As Mate (2005: 227) notes, "urban migration intensifies whenever there are political and economic shocks, such as droughts." Mate's claim rings true in qualifying the reasons for population growth in Harare, as many individuals have migrated to the city in search of better living conditions during the country's political and economic instability. Thus, overpopulation in Harare, which puts pressure on finite water resources, is one of the causal factors of the water and sanitation crisis.

Population growth in Harare has not been accompanied by an equivalent expansion of water services and infrastructure. Mate (2005) states that the city has a capacity to

process 640 megalitres of water, but the available infrastructure only allows for the processing of 560 megalitres. Yet, the city's daily demand is estimated to be 750 megalitres leading to a shortfall of 190 megalitres (Mate, 2005: 228). These statistics clearly expose the city's incapacity to meet the water and sanitation needs of its growing population. Moreover, the local government's failure to rehabilitate aging water and sanitation systems has also been attributed to the water problems faced by residents of Harare. According to Mate (2005), 30 to 40 percent of the processed water is lost due to underground leakages since many of the water and sanitation infrastructure has passed its 'use-by-date'. For example, in Mabvuku, little has been done to upgrade water and sanitation systems that were built in the 1950s (Kwidini, 2008: 1). The failure to upgrade water and sanitation systems and the persistence of the urban planning trajectory results in the continuation of colonial patterns of delivery of municipal services.

In Harare, historical residential hierarchies still determine the distribution of water (and other municipal services generally). As in colonial times, in post-colonial Harare a substantial share of water services is channelled to more affluent suburbs such as Greendale (Hove and Tirimboi, 2011). Under colonialism, access to water services in Mabvuku and Greendale was dependent on racial privilege. In post-independence Zimbabwe, the key determinant of the quantity and quality of water services available is class privilege, which often hinges on one's place of residence. Thus, although water distribution in Mabvuku and Greendale still embodies the colonial legacies, at present access to water is least determined by race and depends more on class. This pattern is not

unique to the city of Harare but is also evident in other cities in the country such as Bulawayo (see Musemwa, 2006, 2014).

However, during the cholera epidemic in Harare in 2008 and 2009, most high-density townships on the western side of the city were scheduled to receive water daily, whereas low-density areas were scheduled to receive water three days a week (Hove and Tirimboi, 2011). In Mabvuku, this arrangement of water distribution merely intensified its water problems since the suburb is spatially located in the eastern side of the city, which has predominately low-density suburbs. Subsequently, Mabvuku was scheduled to receive water three days per week despite being a high-density suburb (Hove and Tirimboi, 2011). Notably, the pumping pressure of water to Mabvuku is also perennially slow due to the suburb's topographical location; hence, the water that flows to Mabvuku is a mere trickle. The problem is largely the result of the failure of the City of Harare and the Government to implement technological upgrades for over three decades. The latter is the most crucial point concerning the trickling flows of water to Mabvuku.

2.4.2 Central and local politics

Previous studies on the water crisis in Harare by Compagnon (2001), Kamete (2006), and Musemwa (2012) have attributed the problem largely to the city's disposition as a theatre of political antagonism between the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF)-led central government and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)-led local government. Compagnon (2001: 214) argues that, the Urban Council Act amendment of 1995 is a key constitutional provision deployed by the central

government to strengthen its control of local government operations. This piece of legislation has significantly shaped the relationship between the central and local government structures in the country by establishing the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing. This ministry is accorded major powers to control the operation of local governments in Zimbabwe.

Dr Ignatius Chombo, who has been the Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing for over a decade, has been a key actor in the politics between the central and local government. When ZANU–PF lost the Harare local government elections in 2002, Minister Chombo ensured that the MDC-led council was disabled from effectively running the city (Kamete, 2006; Musemwa, 2012). As Kamete (2006: 260) explains, the minister “gave himself powers to approve key council decisions on finance and human resources, and barred executive mayors from attending Cabinet Committee meetings unless invited by government.” Consequently, at times the Minister did not approve the Harare City Council’s budgets. The council budgets were disapproved as a means to incapacitate the opposition led council. But, also as a result of the hyper-inflationary economic environment, the central government did not have adequate capital resources to fund council budgets. Thus, the council had to operate without a revenue base with detrimental effects on water and sanitation services in Harare (Kamete, 2006; Musemwa, 2012).

In addition to orchestrating a disabling environment for the MDC-led local government, in April 2003 Chombo dismissed the former Harare mayor, Elias Mudzuri, over

allegations of incompetence. In the subsequent months the minister also sacked councillors with MDC allegiances over claims of incompetence. In light of these incidents, scholars such as Kamete (2006) and Musemwa (2012) attribute the water problems in Mabvuku and Greendale to ZANU–PF’s meddling in local government affairs and the central government using the water problem to seize control of the city from the MDC-led local government.

The contestation between the central and local government in Harare is not unique to post-colonial Zimbabwe, it can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s when the Rhodesian central government introduced central party politics in local government structures (Kamete, 2006). Nonetheless, this did not result in water problems to the extent as those that have occurred in independent Zimbabwe; in particular post-2002 when Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) started to manage water services that were previously managed by the local municipal government.

2.4.3 The Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA)

Apart from direct government interference amounting to near micromanaging of the Harare City Council and its water supply responsibilities, the central government’s establishment of Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) in 2000 added another layer of complications for the municipality. Musemwa (2012: 26) states that the central government delegated ZINWA “to oversee the implementation of the neo-liberal reforms in the water sector aimed at realising profits from sale of water rather than treating it as a ‘social good.’” The creation of ZINWA to oversee the implementation of neo-liberal

water reforms was ironic in that the central government had publicly claimed to reject the neoliberal economic project (Mate, 2005: 226). Scholars further argue that the water authority was not solely concerned with effective provision and management of water services by the private sector (Kamete, 2006; Musemwa, 2012). Instead, the establishment of ZINWA is perceived as a political move by the ruling ZANU–PF government to undermine the local government’s influence by taking over water and sanitation services after the party lost the Harare constituency in the 2002 elections to MDC (Kamete, 2006; Musemwa, 2012). The subsequent transfer of water services to being handled by ZINWA after ZANU-PF lost the local government election to MDC did not fare well with the residents.

Harare residents heavily criticised ZINWA’s management of water services, which they claim to have exacerbated the water shortage as a result of poor management and lack of funds to carry out its mandate (Musemwa, 2012; Kwidini, 2008: 1–2; Zimbabwe Independent, 14 January 2008: 1). As a result, water cuts in Mabvuku subsequently became a ‘way of life’ with some places going for “more than 10 months without tap water because of ZINWA’s operational deficiencies and incompetence” (Zimbabwe Independent, 14 January 2008: 1). In light of the water crisis faced by the city and the subsequent failure of ZINWA to avert the problem, residents from Mabvuku, Greendale and Harare in general saw the water cut-offs as a move by the central government to punish the urban population for allegedly being pro-MDC. Nonetheless, water cut-offs were affecting all of the city’s residents regardless of their party affiliation. Following ZINWA’s failure to solve the water problems in Harare, in 2009 the central government

decentralised the management of water and returned it to local government (Musemwa, 2012; Zimbabwe Independent, 30 January 2009). However, decentralising municipal water services back to local government structures hardly solved the city's water problems.

The following two sections will review the literature on water and service delivery problems in Harare in relation to the country's institutional design, structures of governance, party systems, and patronage politics.

2.5 Institutional Design and the Structures of Governance

According to North (1989: 1321), "institutions are rules, enforcement characteristics of rules, and norms of behaviour that structure repeated human interaction." The role of institutions is to guide and instruct behaviours of various actors. When behaviours are guided they become consistent and predictable. Literature on the urban water problems in Harare (see Musemwa, 2012; Kamete, 2006; Mate, 2005) arguably points to the problem of interlocking political and economic institutions. This institutional hypothesis calls for an inquiry into why there is poor service delivery, by locating the problem within the context of the type of institutions that prevail in a given place and a subsequent inquiry into the governance structures created by these institutions. Acemoglu and Robinson (2010) note that understanding the types of institutions ultimately requires a confrontation with the question of state formation as a point of departure.

In Africa, the question of state formation is intertwined with the history of colonialism (see Mamdani, 1996 on the legacy of colonialism in Africa; Acemoglu and Robinson,

2010 for an analysis of state formation in Africa). Consequently, the legacy of colonialism in Africa has – to a large extent, though not absolutely – shaped the state’s political and economic institutions. The state is an important piece of the puzzle because it is a crucial entity that makes it possible for a society to create public goods such as “law and order, legal systems, education, *and other services such as municipal water*” (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2010: 25; *emphasis added*). This section reviews literature on political and economic institutions and considers how an institutional perspective provides insight into the malaise of municipal water services in Harare.

Acemoglu and Robinson argue that many African states are not realising development prospects as a result of poor political and economic institutions and the historical dynamics of institutional development in Africa. Politically, African states are characterised by predominantly absolutist and patrimonial institutions. These political institutions impede development prospects such as the provision of public goods (such as service delivery) because the *modus operandi* for political actors is rent-seeking – using economic resources to increase one’s share of existing wealth without creating wealth – and consolidation of power. Furthermore, Acemoglu and Robinson (2010: 23) attest that colonialism created political incentives that “led to a style of politics which reproduces the historical patterns of insecure and inefficient property rights and absolutist states with little ability or interests in providing public goods”.

Economically, Acemoglu and Robinson (2010) argue that institutions in Africa undermine development because elites do not invest in public goods. Elites from

underdeveloped countries do not promote development and are merely conduits for the development interests of the developed countries. They are neither involved in production nor have the material and intellectual resources to promote development. In instances where the elites do acquire material resources, as noted by Fanon (1961: 49), they prefer to spend their resources on “...cars, country houses, and on all those things which have been justly described by economists as characterising an underdeveloped bourgeoisie”.

2.6 Party Systems, Patronage Politics and Service Delivery

Hansain (2008: 129) posits that despite an increase in the number of democratic governments in the world, most of these democracies have systematically continued to pursue policies that have detrimental effects on the poor. In a study on political parties and service delivery in Pakistan, Hansain examines why service delivery is dwindling despite the growth of democracies by analysing political party systems as crucial institutions.

In terms of service delivery, political parties act along a spectrum with absolute patronage at one end of the spectrum and delivery of services across the board to all sections of the population at the other. The determinant of the route taken by political actors with regard to service delivery subsequently becomes the extent and prevalence of divisions and dissent within the party systems and among the population. As Hansain argues (2008: 129), “the more fragmented, factionalised and polarised the party systems, the greater are the incentives for patronages, weakening service delivery improvements”. In Pakistan, when party systems embodied such features of factionalism and polarisation, elected

politicians were incentivised to provide service delivery to privileged sectors of Pakistani society and particularly to constituencies that supported the politicians. Acemoglu and Robinson (2008: 28) make a similar argument in their inquiry on why African states are economically poor, arguing that the institutional structures in most of countries result in “rights and responsibilities [being] determined by the ruler who endows them conditionally on people in exchange for support”.

When such patrimonial institutions prevail, party politics becomes a winner-take-all scenario (see Acemoglu and Robinson, 2010: 39–43 for examples of stories documenting such institutions in African states post-independence). As a result, political actors state to have a tendency to use resource endowments that are supposed to provide services for the population’s benefit to consolidate their own individual power. The dominance of such distribution biases in service delivery in turn defies the democratic principle that “public goods cannot be targeted to one’s friends and they cannot be withheld from one’s foes” (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2010: 42). The scholarly debates on party systems are relevant in understanding whether and how the political party systems in Zimbabwe, in general, and Harare, in particular, are impeding the delivery of municipal water services.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: Power

2.2.1 Power

When people routinely turn on a tap, are they also positioned within a myriad of relations and techniques of power that bind them to the survival of capitalism? (Ekers and Loftus, 2008: 698)

The provision of metered municipal water services is typified by: “the quest to capture, store, and distribute a reliable supply of water (or energy) implies the capture of a commons resources and the building of structures and institutions to enclose, commodify, and control it” (Johnston and Donahue, 1998: 3). Ultimately this leads to a myriad of power relations. Here, the state as a central institution becomes absolutely crucial in understanding power and the exercise of power in relation to the provision of water services. This section analyses different theoretical perspectives of power that underpin the provision of water services and shape this study.

In a study on urban waterscapes in Durban, Loftus (2006: 1029) states that the rising demand for water in the city resulted in universal metering of domestic water supplies. Initially, urban water metering was confined to affluent suburbs, but the practice was ultimately rolled out in poor townships.⁴ For most scholars, the underlying logic behind metering domestic water supplies was to ensure that the hedonistic domestic water consumption patterns were not to affect industrial and economic progress. Similarly, metering poor townships was meant to ensure water security for affluent suburbs when townships began to expand (Musemwa, 2014; Loftus, 2006). Thus, water infrastructure provided by state institutions such as municipal government is meant to regulate “what volume of water residents will receive and at what times that water will be available” (Loftus, 2006: 1023). This becomes a question of power.

⁴ See Musemwa, M 2014,, *History and Politics in Zimbabwe: Bulawayo's Struggles with the Environment 1894–2008*, New Jersey: Africa World Press, cite the page numbers where the point appears; Loftus, A 2006, ‘Reification and the Dictatorship of the Water Meter’, *Antipode*, vol. 38, no. 5, pp. 1023–1045.

Development services such as water infrastructure provided by the government are linked to broader development prospects. However, instead of conceiving the government as solely the provider of development services, one may also think of those services as a means to govern and discipline the population (see Ferguson, 1994). In this sphere, municipal water is viewed as a form of deploying power that is meant to govern and discipline urban residents through a 'code of conduct'. This terrain of power is embedded in Foucault's conception of 'governmentality'. Drawing from Foucault's theory of disciplinary power, the provision of metered water by municipalities is perceived as a way of making individuals or residents of the city discernible. Thus, water infrastructure serves "to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them" (Foucault, 1975: 172 as cited in Hoffman, 2011: 31). A number of scholars have addressed how access to water services can be used – and indeed has been used – for social and disciplinary purposes, and the governing of relations between the state and citizens. These include Musemwa (2012, 2014) who analysed the provision of water in Bulawayo and Harare, Loftus (2006) who analysed the provision of water in Durban, and Ekers and Loftus (2008) who wrote on the power of water in general. The disciplinary power of water service provision should not be viewed as a totality of absolute domination by the central institutions that provide the services. Conversely, the power of water services is not solely disciplinary; instead, it opens up other terrains of power through resistance or alternative forms of water access.

Moreover, debates on the privatisation of water services (Bakker, 2010), alienation from water resources and uneven development (McDonald and Ruiters, 2005) shed light onto another dynamic of power produced by municipal water services – power embedded in class relations. Meyer (2003: 103 cited in Johnston and Donahue, 1998: 2) notes that “many of those facing water shortages live in the world’s cities, where water is often supplied to the rich by municipal systems while the urban poor, living on the fringes of the cities are forced to purchase water from vendors at rates as much as forty times higher.” Here, the loss of water resources and deprivation of water service is underpinned by a Marxian view that state institutions prioritise the interests of the upper classes of society resulting in the enclosure of common resources for the benefit of the elite.

The above discussion presented two notions of power – disciplinary power and class power. These perspectives provide important analytical tools for this study. Provision of water services is linked to an array of power relations between the provider and receivers of these services. Essentially, exploring the range of powers involved in accessing water enables the study to analyse and “focus on the issues of who does (who does not) get to use what, in what ways, and when (that is, in what circumstance) (Ribot & Peluso, 2003: 154). These strands of power configured to accessing water subsequently open up an understanding of how different facets of people’s livelihoods and lives are affected.

2.3 Conceptual Framework: Livelihoods Approach

The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987: 2-5 cited in Chambers and Conway, 1991: 5), defines “livelihoods” as “adequate stocks and flows of food and

cash to meet basic needs”. In the simplest sense, the concept of “livelihoods” refers to the means of survival. It is important to note that this study focuses on urban livelihoods. Urban livelihoods are primarily focused on one’s access to and ownership of monetary assets. Unlike in rural areas where resources such as clean air, water or security are available as non-monetary assets at the disposal of the broader community, in urban areas these assets are less available as non-monetary assets, instead, they mostly monetary assets (Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2002: 31). Consequently, urban livelihoods are over and above determined by one’s access to monetary resources. Instead of focusing on access to monetary resources and assets of single individuals, the study focuses primarily on multi-persons households.

There are multiple definitions for the concept of household. A household can be defined as a “human group that shares the same hearth of cooking” (Chambers and Conway, 1991: 6) and entails kinship obligations and responsibilities (Rakodi, 2002: 6). Another approach to defining household that has been consistent over time is to categorise households as “one-person” and “multiple-person” household. A one-person household is defined as “a person who lives alone in a separate housing unit or who, as a lodger, occupies a separate room or rooms in a part of a housing unit but does not join with any of the other occupants of the housing unit to form part of a multi-person household” (Randall, Coast, Antoine, Compaore, Dial et al, 2015: 3). On the other hand multiple-person households are defined as:

A group of two or more persons who combine to occupy the whole or part of a housing unit and to provide themselves with food or other essentials for living. The group may pool their incomes and have a common budget

to a greater or lesser extent. The group may be composed of related persons only or of unrelated persons or of a combination of both, including boarders but excluding lodgers (Randall, Coast, Antoine, Compaore, Dial et al, 2015: 3).

This study employs the multiple-household approach to understanding household livelihoods, whereby the focus is on groups with and, that use shared pool of resources.

Household livelihoods can thus be conceptualised as the means to gain and sustain basic living conditions used by a particular human group based on kinship and non-kinship ties and who own and share the same assets. In this study, a focus on household livelihoods is essential for looking at the socio-economic and political survival strategies adopted by the residents of Mabvuku and Greendale at the level of each household in how they respond to the water crisis in the city. The livelihoods approach allows the researcher to consider how two residential areas, divided by invisible barriers, are facing the same water problems yet are experiencing and negotiating survival strategies differently. The findings of this approach will allow the researcher to determine whether the two areas should be treated as binaries or as a continuum with regard to how they negotiate their water problems.

The livelihoods approach endeavours to understand how people cope with precarious conditions such as lack of water. The purpose of the livelihoods approach is not to focus on the problems faced by an individual household but to look at “their capabilities and assets” (Rakodi, 2002: xx). In addition, Rakodi (2002) points out that the livelihoods approach encompasses an array of factors and issues in its analysis, including “environment, health or gender.” Since access to water affects all areas of life, research

on water issues inevitably requires an inquiry into environment, cultural and gender issues.

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature reviewed on the water problems in Harare attributes the problem of service delivery broadly to institutional design, governance structures, and patronage party politics. However, the voices of those who are affected by the water problems are generally absent from the literature. Furthermore, very few studies have sought to address the interplay of institutional design and structures, patronage politics, micro-politics, and intra- and inter- household dynamics of how individuals and households negotiate everyday life when the municipal water supply is limited.

Musemwa (2012) briefly addresses the intra-household politics in Mabvuku and Greendale by focusing on household coping strategies to the water crisis and the cholera outbreak of 2008 and 2009. However, these issues are only addressed as a background to understanding how the water politics and crisis in Harare are embedded within a particular historical trajectory.

The literature reviewed generally presents Greendale and Mabvuku as internally homogenous communities. Greendale is presented as an area that is able to address the water crisis; thus, it was not severely affected by the cholera outbreak of 2008 and 2009. The opposite is true when it comes to Mabvuku. The limits of such an approach are that it does not recognise the internal dynamics within these residential areas. By considering

water problems in both Greendale and Mabvuku using the livelihoods approach lenses and the theories of power analytical tools, the research reveals intra- and inter- household politics, similarities and differences, how these elements intersect with broader party politics in the city and broadly the effects of the water problems on the residents.

CHAPTER 3: Researching Everyday Life in Mabvuku and Greendale

3.1 Introduction

Methodology is the way in which research is conducted – that is, how research is done, how data is collected and how it is reported. This chapter encompasses all the aspects that informed and shaped the data collection, interpretation and analysis of this study. In essence, the chapter documents the research methodology used for this study. It points to why the selected methods, instruments and sites of study were appropriate, and identifies the strengths and limitations of these methods experienced during the process of collecting and analysing the data. The analysis also notes the researcher's reflections on the selected methodology.

3.2 Research Design: Qualitative Approach

This study predominantly used the qualitative research design method. Since the research sought to inquire into everyday experiences of life, qualitative design was the most appropriate design for data collection and analysis. Qualitative design allows for in-depth inquiry, assessment and critique of the flexible logic and relationships that form the crux of social reality. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to be immersed in, capture and understand the dynamism of the micropolitics underlying personal, interpersonal and spatial relations with regard to water problems in Mabvuku and Greendale. As Limb and Dwyer (2001: 6) point out, “qualitative methodologies see the world as something that is dynamic and changing, always constructed through the

intersection of economic, social and political processes.” The flexible nature of qualitative methods allowed the researcher to adjust the research instruments as needed, based on experiences during the data collection.

In certain areas of inquiry, qualitative design did not suffice. Consequently, the researcher decided that quantitative measures would usefully complement and extend the qualitative design of this study. Quantitative methods were used to statistically categorise features of the samples, such as figures on household occupants, employment and unemployment. As these features permeate and shape aspects of everyday life, it was important to account for them quantitatively.

3.3 Research Site: Mabvuku and Greendale

This study selected two sites – the residential suburbs of Mabvuku and Greendale – located in the eastern part of Harare. The population distribution of Mabvuku and Greendale is 57,082 and 40,326 persons, respectively (Report CTSE/3/10, Department of Urban Planning Services, 21 September 2010: 26). These demographics are likely to have changed in the years since they were recorded.

The urban planning methodology used in Zimbabwe, which demarcates low- and high-density urban residential areas, informed the researcher’s choice to use two sites of study. According to this urban planning method, Greendale is regarded as a low-density suburb, while Mabvuku is considered a high-density township. Historically, this method of urban planning is linked to colonial theories and racial segregation policies of separate

development in then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). During colonialism in Zimbabwe, most of the land was reserved for white people, who made up a minority of the population, while the African population was restricted to a far less land, despite constituting the vast majority of the population. As a result, in colonial Harare, white people lived in low-density areas in colonial Harare (then Salisbury), while the African population – mostly migrant labourers – lived in high-density areas. In contemporary Zimbabwe, urban planning still continues to be patterned along the colonial planning trajectory. However, the ability to live in a given residential space is now predominantly determined by class.

The use of Mabvuku and Greendale as research sites is appropriate for this study because it reveals the similarities and differences of the participants – including personal, familial and household aspects – from the two locales. Spatial similarities and variances reveal details of the uniqueness of each case. Also, using these two research sites prevents the researcher from treating locations as homogenous entities. Mills, van de Bart and Bruijn (2006: 621) capture the significance of such an approach by stating that it does: “not only uncovers differences between social entities, but reveals unique aspects of particular entities that would be virtually impossible to detect otherwise.”

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

3.4.1 Case study

The research used a case study approach. This approach enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the household conditions, interrelations and variances in each case. According to Kothari (2004: 130), the case study approach “involves a careful and

complete observation of a social unit, be that a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group or even the entire community.” As a result of the limited time frame for this research, it was impossible to observe extensively the entire communities of Greendale and Mabvuku. Thus, the researcher observed families and individuals as the key social units of study in order to understand how water problems are affecting the communities, as well as the related water politics. Further, the case study approach made it possible to observe households, persons and community dynamics in their natural context.

The case study approach is criticised for its tendency to generalise findings to other cases (see Punch, 2005: 145). Although this criticism has merit, this study endeavoured not to generalise its findings but rather to gain a well-informed understanding of the nuances of water problems in Greendale and Mabvuku and the subsequent effects.

3.4.2 Interviews

The researcher conducted interviews with residents of Mabvuku and Greendale, engineers and councillors working for the city of Harare and members of the Zimbabwean Parliament. The interview guide allowed for semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Key Informants Interviews: Interviews with key informants was used as a starting point for the research. The strength of starting with key informants’ interviews was that, most of them were visible public figures such as City of Harare councillor or members of Parliaments hence it was relatively easy and quicker to identify them and request for

interviews. In addition, key informants had more information to impart which enabled the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the water crisis in Harare.

However, the limitation of key informants is that they have the ability to shape one's research because there are usually 'experts' or 'leading players' in the society with extensive and detailed accounts of the research subject (see Payne and Payne, 2004: 134-138). Thus, during interviews with key informants, the researcher treated the information they revealed with caution. Since the key informants interviewed by the researcher had partisan orientation, their political responses were partial and embodied certain political persuasions that had the capacity to shape the research. Foster's (1999: 3 as cited in Payne and Payne 2004: 137; *emphasis added*) reflection on key informant interviews resonate with the researcher's own experiences with key informants:

For those in positions of power, interviews in a variety of forms go with the job...The encounters with two members of parliament, one City of Harare councillor and two engineers left me with a very different set of questions and emotions to ponder – had they told the truth? Were their emotions spontaneous or engineered? How much had they revealed...? In some cases individuals moved between talking 'on' and 'off' the record, a sure sign that they were consciously constructing and controlling their accounts.

The researcher addressed the limitation of key informants being partial by using documentary analysis. Findings from previous scholarly work on the provision of water services in Harare were analysed to see whether the key informants' insights resonated with what previous studies had revealed.

Semi-structured interviews: Interviews were conducted in English and Shona depending on the participant's preference. Conducting the interviews in an indigenous language that the participants were comfortable with enabled the researcher to capture narratives of the water problems in their proper context since language is a key component in how stories are told and understood. In *Out of Place: A Memoir*, Edward Saïd vividly explains: "everyone lives life in a given language; everyone's experiences therefore are heard, absorbed, and recalled in that language" (2000: 15). In this light, the researcher – who is proficient in both Shona and English – conducted the interviews in one of two languages, according to participant preference. Such an approach to interviews – as opposed to conducting interviews in a single language that may be 'remote' to the interviewee – enabled the participants to confidently express their views on the subject of inquiry.

In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to understand and document how different households, individuals and locales were coping with the water problems, and also to understand the perceived reasons behind the water problems experienced by communities. In addition to providing data in the form of narratives, in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to observe facial expressions and other non-verbal cues – such as how respondents reacted to politically charged questions and tried to provide apolitical answers – made an immense contribution to the data. These non-verbal cues and expressions were important in order for the researcher to understand the volatility of the political landscape in Harare. It would have been difficult to obtain such non-verbal cues and expressions had the research been using a research instrument such as a questionnaire (see Kothari, 2004 for an analysis on cues and expressions during research interviews).

Many earlier studies have explored service delivery matters, particularly of water, and the underlying politics of service delivery in Harare. Throughout the interviews most of the participants, especially those from Mabvuku, stated that many researchers had interviewed them about service delivery in their area. The researcher noted with concern that service delivery and water issues in Mabvuku, Greendale and Harare in general had become a great story, told and retold many times by the participants. In the process a sort of official version had been established – a master narrative told by the residents that tends to align with what they sense researchers would want to hear. The establishment of this master narrative is unlikely to tell the whole story behind service delivery, water services and the underlying politics in the two areas under study. The establishment of this master narrative is evident when looking at the interview transcripts. Narratives such as “we are struggling because we don’t have water” and “during Smith’s time things were much better for us” recurred throughout the interview transcripts.

In *Dominance and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1990), James Scott addresses the impasse underlying the establishment of a master narrative by subaltern populations. A defining feature of the master narrative or “public transcript” as Scott terms it, is that “practical mastery through repetition may make the performance virtually automated and apparently effortless” (Scott, 1990: 26). Thus, insofar as in-depth interviews are enriching in understanding everyday life, the establishment of and recitation of the master narrative may mask certain important aspects in the lives of participants. Further, Scott argues that researchers should break away from merely

relying on the official story told by the participants and supplement these officially established narratives by observing “offstage speeches, gestures and practices that confirm, contradict or inflict what appears in the public transcripts” (Scott, 1990: 4–5). In this regard, the researcher supplemented the interviews with participant observation as an additional method of gathering data.

3.4.3 Participant observation

Power relations between the researcher and research participants affect the interview setting. As noted in the previous section on interviews, this can result in the production of hegemonic narratives that participants feel resonate with what the researcher wants to hear. Thus, participant observation is a key instrument with which to supplement data from the interviews. In this study, the researcher employed participant observation to gain a picture of how the participants live in their natural settings. In some instances the researcher went to merely ‘hang out’ with the participants, while in the process observing their daily lives. During one of the ‘hang out’ experiences in Mabvuku the researcher made an interesting observation – at nearly all of the public boreholes visited during fieldwork, women and young girls comprised the majority of the people queuing for water. Yet, at the same time, a considerable number of young men were loitering around the streets. In another case in Mabvuku, a few men came to the public borehole, bypassed the queue and went straight to fill their buckets without facing any resistance from the women in the queue. Through this observation, the researcher gained perspective as to how water problems are intertwined with the dominant patriarchal culture in

Zimbabwe. Thus, participant observation contributed worthwhile perspectives and data to the study.

One limitation of participant observation is the possibility of “subjective interpretation” by the observer (see Kothari, 2004: 97). To avoid being overly subjective in the interpretations made during participant observation the researcher painstakingly tried to have his interpretations validated or refuted during interview sessions. Thus, for instance, the question “Do women get affected and experience the water problems differently from men?” was included in the interview guide after the aforementioned observation where the researcher interpreted certain observed experiences to embody certain patriarchal and culture and gender dynamics in the community.

3.4.4 Documentary analysis

Another method that the researcher used to collect data was documentary/secondary analysis of previous studies on municipal water in Harare with particular focus on Mabvuku and Greendale. This method entails a “re-analysis of either qualitative or quantitative data already collected in a previous study, by a different researcher normally wishing to address to address a new research question” (Payne and Payne, 2004: 214). Firstly, the researcher used secondary sources in the preliminary stages of the research project to establish the research questions. Then, secondary sources from previous studies were not merely quoted and replicated in researcher’s study. Instead, the researcher used secondary data from previous studies on water issues in Harare as if he had collected them, that is “*the researcher* evaluated in detail, re-processed, and placed as evidence in

an argument that is different from the first study” (Payne and Payne, 2004: 214). For example an analysis of previous studies on municipal water in Harare by Musemwa, (2012) gave historically rich information about the subject. The researcher would not have been able to obtain considering the time limitations of the study. In a study on water supply Mate (2005) found that Harare municipality’s water production capacity was 560 megalitres per day, and the city’s water demand was 750 megalitres per day. The researcher’s findings in this study show a similar trend whereby Harare municipality’s water production capacity is disproportionate to the water demand. The current water production capacity of Harare municipality is 641 megalitres per day while the demand range between 1200 to 1400 megalitres per day. In light of the researcher’s own finding and secondary data it is possible to cross-reference the two studies and show that the municipal water problems are not isolated. Rather, they have persisted for over a decade. In addition, the researcher used secondary analysis of previous studies to further understand and identify areas where the key informants were partial in their imparted understanding of the water problems in Harare.

The limitations of documentary/secondary analysis are that the original research can be “highly intrusive” and “dependent on the unique interactions of the original researcher with people and events” (Payne and Payne, 2004: 217). This impasse raised the question of how the researcher was going to claim access to that original understanding of previous studies. In addressing these limitations, the researcher’s used a wide range of other methods to obtain data instead of sole reliance on secondary data analysis.

3.4.5 Sample size and sampling procedure

The sample size for the study was 16 households – eight from Greendale and eight from Mabvuku. The number of actual respondents was 23 people. Of the 23 respondents, 10 were from Greendale and 13 were from Mabvuku. Initially, the researcher wanted to randomly select households from particular locations in Mabvuku and Greendale for convenience and easy accessibility. Thus, random convenience sampling was used. This sampling approach entailed that the researcher randomly chose the households and the respondents based on their availability to participate in the research. In Mabvuku, this approach worked well in identifying the research sample for the study since most of the individuals willing to participate in the research were from different households in the same area of Ward 21.

However, in Greendale, the researcher found it difficult to randomly choose households from one section of Greendale because most of the household occupants were not forthcoming in participating in the research. Generally, this problem can be attributed to the fact that most ‘gated’ and ‘affluent’ suburbs/areas are not easily accessible or willing to participate in social research.⁵ In the end, most of the research participants in Greendale were selected through referrals from participants who had agreed to participate in the research. As a result, the research sample was spatially scattered across different

⁵ The inaccessibility of ‘gated’ and affluent communities for social research can be attributed to an array of reasons. One of it is, the stories of the affluent are usually put to the periphery. Primacy is usually given to the struggles of the subaltern. Experiences in Harare and other parts of Zimbabwe like Bulawayo shows that a holistic and enriching understanding of access to water needs an integrated approach whereby both the stories of the affluent and less-affluent are taken into cognisance (for more on water politics in Bulawayo see Musemwa, 2014). As, the findings for this research shows there are many areas where these stories intersect.

parts of Greendale, as opposed to Mabvuku where the participants were concentrated in one area, particularly Ward 21⁶ of old Mabvuku.

The researcher used purposive sampling in order to obtain information from key informants. The objective was to gather information from those who occupy official positions and are likely to provide details about the technical aspects of the water problems in Harare. The cohort of key informants comprised of: two members of Parliament, namely, Honourable Jesse Majome and Honourable James Maridadi; the Harare City Council councillor for Mabvuku constituency, Councillor Barnabas Ndira; and City of Harare engineers, Munashe Mvura and Kunyadini. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with key informants but used a different interview guide from the one used when interviewing residents in Mabvuku and Greendale.

3.6 Data Analysis

After the completion of the interviews the researcher, for the most part, immediately transcribed the interviews from the audio recordings. The recordings were transcribed in either Shona or English depending on the language used for the interview. Then, the Shona transcripts were translated into English, the language of presentation for the findings and the research report. As articulately captured by Rossman and Rallis (1998: 161; *emphasis added*), this research involved moving between languages, whereby the researcher and interviewees were “fully and fluently bilingual – and they would slip between the two languages during the interview; *that is between Shona and English.*” As

⁶ According the Constitution of Zimbabwe, “Ward” means “one of several subdivisions of a local authority area delimited for the purpose of electing members of the governing body of that authority” (105).

a result, the collection of data in one language (or multiple languages as is the case in this research) and the presentation of the findings in another has a direct impact on the validity of the research, since meaning may be lost or misrepresentation of a language may occur. Vulliamy (1990: 166) states that, when translating one language to another during the research process, the researcher's knowledge of the original language, the culture of the people under study, and the researcher's fluency in the language of write-up (English) will influence the quality of translation. In this case, the researcher is proficient in both languages used for the study. However, the problem of validity mostly emerged during the editing of quotations from the translated transcripts. As captured by Rubin and Rubin (1995: 273), editing quotations always involves the risk of misrepresenting the meaning of conversational partners. Wary of this possible impasse, the researcher used the most accessible and simplest phrases and words that suffice in expressing the meaning of Shona phrases and words in English. In addition, the researcher followed every data translation and transcription session with a close reading of the field notes. This improved the researcher's understanding of the perspectives, views and opinions that participants sought to articulate during the interviews.

Upon completion of the transcription and translation process, the researcher performed a thematic analysis of the data. This entailed that the researcher capture "something important about the data in relation to the research question" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 82). Studying water and its relationship to human lives and livelihoods renders challenging and interdisciplinary data findings. Thus, the research considered thematic analysis an appropriate means of sifting the data in order to meet the research objectives.

This approach as clearly articulated by Braun and Clarke (2006) entailed that the researcher identify, analyse and report patterns, and themes from the data that align to and achieve the study's objectives.

3.7 Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

The researcher collected the following key demographic characteristics from respondents: age, marital status, number of household occupants and employment status. The demographic characteristics were important in determining the availability of various kinds of resources necessary for survival, such as access to an income. The table below shows the combined age profile of the respondents who participated in the study from both Mabvuku and Greendale. The age profile of the study's participants spanned from 18 years to 70 years. Three respondents were between the ages of 18 and 30 years, while eleven of the respondents were between 31 and 40 years; four respondents were between 41 and 50 years; three respondents were between 51 and 60 years, and the remaining two respondents were between 61 and 70 years. For the purposes of the themes outlined in the forthcoming chapters, it is important to note that all of the respondents whose age ranged from 51 to 60 years and 61 to 70 years were from Mabvuku. Even more important, respondents whose age ranged from 51 to 70 years gave an in-depth account of the history of Mabvuku. For example, one respondent recalled:

You know back in Smith's⁷ time we used to wash our hands whenever we came out of the toilets. Water was always available. But now we cannot do that because the water is not enough or it's not even there (Gogo Makore, 18/07/2014).

The oral recollections of Mabvuku's history were of great significance in understanding municipal services during colonial times. However, it is also important to treat these oral

⁷ 'Smith' refers to Ian Smith, the Prime Minister of colonial Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) from 1964 to 1979.

histories with caution. Respondents may have been romanticising the colonial history because of the frustrations with the current municipal water problems.

Figure 3.1: Age Profile

Demographic variable	Number	Percentage
A. Age		
18 – 30	3	13%
31 – 40	11	48%
41 – 50	4	17%
51 – 60	3	13%
61 – 70	2	9%
TOTAL	23	100%

N = 23

3.7.1 Employment Status of the Respondents

Of the 13 respondents in Mabvuku two were self-employed as vendors. The other 11 respondents stated that they were unemployed and dependent on someone in their household who was employed. In Greendale, all participants were formally employed except for one participant who was a university student. Considering the time limitations for the study, the sample size was convenient enough to give a relative picture of the socio-economic dynamics of Mabvuku and Greendale. However, the sample size might not have captured other important features of these communities. For instance, all the family units who participated in the study had a mother and a father – at no point did the

researcher interview a household that was headed by a single parent. Thus, the findings and discussions lack enough depth in terms of representations and diversity of experiences.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher constantly paid keen attention to all aspects of the data collection process to ensure that the study was conducted in line with the basic ethical considerations for research involving humans. The researcher obtained informed consent from all individuals involved in the study. Participants gave their consent to participate in the study – either verbally or by signing the informed consent sheet. Even after consenting to participate in the study, respondents were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt that the study was compromising aspects of their lives or livelihoods. In addition, they were not forced to answer questions they did not want to answer. In the end, none of the participants withdrew from the study.

Furthermore, the researcher obtained an official letter from City of Harare local government who authorised the researcher to conduct research in Greendale and Mabvuku. Considering the tense political climate in Harare, the researcher emphasised confidentiality. Efforts were made to ensure that individual responses remained anonymous, so as to avoid responses politically indicting any of the participants. Hence, during the interviews the researcher asked the respondent to give either their first name or last name as a measure. However, when dealing with public figures, the research took a different approach. After informing the public figures or key informants about the

objectives and intent of the project, all consented to being mentioned by name in the study.

In addition, all participants voluntarily participated in study without any form of incentive or reward. For convenience and in order to ensure that participants were comfortable with the interview setting, the interviews were conducted in an informal manner at a place of their choosing. This was done to avoid raising curiosity within the community and to relieve anxiety among participating families and individual participants. Lastly, as part of ethical considerations, the interview guide for the study was solely focused on the subject matter. The researcher avoided asking about information outside the scope of the study, except when it was necessary for purposes of qualifying the interview questions and clarifying the respondents' remarks.

3.9 Summary

The researcher's objective in this study is to understand the everyday life experiences of Mabvuku and Greendale residents with regard to municipal water rationing. Thus, qualitative research design methods were the most appropriate methods of data collection and analysis. Qualitative research design methods are flexible and rich in capturing the essence of everyday social life. The researcher used two residential areas namely, Greendale and Mabvuku. The choice of these two residential areas as case studies was informed by the historical legacy of racial residential segregation and, contemporary residential planning that is shaped by class differences.

The household sample size from the two residential areas was 16 households – eight from Greendale and eight from Mabvuku. The actual number of respondents was 23 people. Of the 23 respondents, 10 were from Greendale and 13 were from Mabvuku. In addition, five key informants namely two engineers, two parliamentarians and a City of Harare councillor were also part of the study. In-depth interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis were the methods that the researcher used to collect data. Multiple data collection methods were employed by the researcher as a means to complement the limitations in each methods being used.

The researcher addressed possible ethical concerns during the study by obtaining informed consent from the participants and emphasising confidentiality. All the research participants from Greendale and Mabvuku and the key informants participated in the study voluntarily. No rewards were offered to the participation. In addition, the researcher applied for authorisation to conduct the study in the two residential areas from the City of Harare. The authorisation was granted. The main methodological challenge the researcher experienced was the difficulty in obtaining participants in Greendale. As a result, Greendale participants were scattered across different parts of suburb. This made it difficult and expensive to travel to each household for interviews.

CHAPTER 4: Water Rationing in Mabvuku and Greendale

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the experiences and narratives of Mabvuku and Greendale from the in-depth interviews, key informants interviews, and participant observations conducted for this study. The in-depth interviews were conducted with the residents of Ward 21 in the suburb of Mabvuku and residents in the suburb of Greendale. These experiences and narratives allows the researcher and audience to tease out a nuanced understanding of the day-to-day living of residents in these two locales in light of the limited and perennial municipal water supplies. At the crux of these narrative and experiences is to illuminate socio-economic challenges, coping strategies and political perceptions of what underlies the water problems. Since the interview questions were not confined to only getting information about municipal water supply problems, residents' frustrations, hopelessness and helplessness in light of the water problems were also derived from the interviews. The researcher also inquired about and gathered other relevant information on employment and moral issues related to the study. Participant observation was used to supplement the information gathered through the interviews. Furthermore, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews were also conducted with key informants from the City of Harare and the Parliament of Zimbabwe. Here, the researcher's objective was to have an understanding of the technical and political aspects of municipal water supply challenges affecting Mabvuku and Greendale. This chapter presents a thematised account of the participants' narrative voices and experiences. The key issues presented in this chapter are: socio-economic and political challenges; the experiences and impact of limited

municipal water supply; and the strategies adopted by respondents to cope with the municipal water challenges.

4.2 The Experiences and Effects of Municipal Water Rationing

As a point of departure, it is important to note that – as revealed by the interview narratives –the experiences and effects of municipal water problems on residents were startlingly similar at some levels and different at others. The differences and similarities were owing to the two areas under study lying in the same geographical space; by the gender dimension – that is whether one is a man and woman; and level of disposable income to enable one to access alternative water supply. In essence, being a woman or a man, and a household's ability to participate in the economy to ensure a stable income were key factors in shaping the experiences and effects of the municipal water problems.

One respondent eloquently captured this, remarking:

To a great extent the water problems are dependent on how much disposable income the next person has. But, I think we have been affected equally. How we respond to this situation is the major difference. Here in Greendale most people have more disposable income so they have more solutions to the problem. However, the problem is the same in Mabvuku, only the solutions are different (Mrs Machiridza, 18/07/2014).

Another respondent noted:

Here in Mabvuku there are boreholes, but the boreholes are quite a few compared to the population...So, everyone has to get water to use from those few boreholes (Mrs Makande, 16/07/2014).

The view that residents from Greendale have more disposable income can be interpreted as, they relatively have more disposable income compared to residents of Mabvuku. When asked, do Greendale residents suffer the same fate as Mabvuku? A respondent remarked:

Unfortunately people think that people from the ‘Dale Dales’⁸ don’t face any problems...You need to understand that the economic challenges are affecting everyone. I have next-door neighbors, they still have their big house, but they don’t have cars anymore. They had to sell them to make money. Now they use *kombis* [public transport]...My other next-door neighbor, the whole house is almost full of tenants. He lost his job a few years ago, so he is surviving by renting part of his house. Everybody is having problems of some sort, so I don’t understand the basis of City of Harare’s contingency plan to only channel municipal water to water-stressed Mabvuku when we are all suffering (Tendai, 14/07/2014).

Other respondents in Mabvuku stated that their water problems were not similar to those of Greendale. They saw Greendale as having more abundant and disposable water to use. When asked, “What do you think of people in Greendale in regard to the water problems you are facing? Are there any connections?” some respondents in Mabvuku stated that the water problems were not affecting those in Greendale. One respondent articulated:

People in Greendale always get water; they always have trucks that bring them water. Whenever we pass through there with *kombis* we always see them watering their lawns and gardens, but, here we don’t have water (Mrs Chibwanya, 17/07/2014).

What can be evidenced from the foregoing narrative accounts is that, while both Mabvuku and Greendale residents see themselves as experiencing the same problem – a shortage of municipal water – the experiences and effects of the problem manifested differently especially in terms of coping strategies to ensure adequate water supply

Since “it is nice to have water, excess water” (Mrs Machiridza, 18/07/2014) most respondents indicated that the absence of adequate water supply was affecting their quality of life, physical security, and the community’s sense of right and wrong (morality) as well as putting a considerable strain on available monetary resources.

⁸ ‘Dale Dales’ is a colloquial phrase that refers to affluent suburbs such as Greendale.

4.2.1 Water and Societal Values

The findings from the study show that water rationing is being perceived to be undermining certain values within the two societies. The experiences of residents below show how the absence of municipal water is being perceived as the underlying reason for many moral challenges such as stealing and bad behaviour amongst children and the youth. The discussion reveals the perceptions and societal constructions of what is good and bad in light of the water problems, in essence it show how the communities are tying the water problems to understand broader societal values and mores.

Greendale: Residents in Greendale revealed that they were unhappy about the illicit activities that were occurring ostensibly because of the unavailability of tap water. One of the most cited examples of these illicit activities was that of ‘garden boys’⁹ stealing and selling water without the consent of the homeowners who own the boreholes. Greendale respondents’ concerns over private borehole water being stolen were prompted by fear that if they lost all borehole water to theft this would lead to desperation. Thus, private borehole owners stated that they were trying to use their water sources minimally. Needless to say, respondents also saw it as unfair for someone to have access to their private boreholes considering that they were the ones who had to service the borehole when it was not working. An exasperated respondent in Greendale fed up with water theft from her borehole stated that:

⁹ ‘Garden boy’ is a name/phrase that is usually used to refer to a male domestic worker who usually tends to outdoor work such as gardening, manicuring the lawn and the like. The name predates back to colonial Zimbabwe and embody negative connotation of infantilising (through the use of ‘boy’) since most of these individuals being referred to as ‘boys’ are actually adults.

Here we have a gardener who lives at a cottage there; he has no other way of getting water except to either go to the public borehole there or connive to get water from other 'garden boys' who have private boreholes. But, what is that! That is actually stealing. The 'garden boys' are actually stealing water from their 'bosses' so that they can give their counterparts (Mrs Goredema, 20/07/2014).

Along a similar observation, another resident from Greendale stated that:

People, especially our gardeners, are now engaging in illicit activities of supplying our borehole water to their friends who do not have access to private boreholes (Rumbi, 19/07/2014).

The allegations of supplying water to fellow 'garden boys' who did not have access to private boreholes were confirmed in an interview with a participant who lives and works as a gardener in Greendale. When asked about how water problems were affecting the community of Greendale the respondent stated that:

It [municipal water problems] has affected people a lot because if you look at those who do not have boreholes they always come and ask us for water, which is a sign that they are struggling...they are struggling because they come and asks for water here and there. That guy [Pointing] I was talking to; he was actually asking me to give him water. He was saying, "even if you give me two tanks, three tanks or four tanks of borehole water." And, I usually make them pay US\$5 per tank (Stewart, 16/07/2014).

The excerpt affirms that gardeners were indeed giving water to their colleagues at a monetary cost. Thus, the moral challenges regarding municipal water problems that respondents saw occurring in Greendale appeared to be normalising the stealing of private water resources. However, the respondent (Stewart) stated that in most instances the water they supplied to their fellow gardeners would not be meant for their own household use. Instead, it will be meant for a landlord who they work for and did not own a private borehole.

Interestingly, the observation that ‘garden boys’ were stealing water to help their colleagues without water seems to contradict many of the respondents’ cultural practices, particularly the Shona ethic practiced from time immemorial of ‘*hunhu*’ of sharing water. The ethic is centred on the idea of the connectedness of the lives of individuals; thus, an individual’s survival depends on the surviving of others.¹⁰ The cultural practices premised on the ‘*hunhu*’ of sharing water ethic thus decreed that you cannot deny water to a thirsty person. However, as a result of persistent water shortages and residents’ need to protect their meagre water resources, such cultural practices and ethics are being undermined. However, the erosion of such cultural practice of sharing water with those who do not have can also be attributed to the individualistic nature of the urban space, which results in the perception that survival depends on connections with immediate family as opposed to the broader community.

Mabvuku: The experiences of Mabvuku residents also indicate the moral implications of the limited availability of municipal tap water. In Mabvuku most participants pointed to how the unavailability of tap water and the subsequent need to send children to collect water had resulted in children and the youth engaging in bad behaviour. Many participants who were parents to young girls stated that they were concerned that their daughters were prone to engage in bad behaviour such as unprotected sexual activity because the girls and boys can now use the excuse that they are going to collect water at night even if they are lying. One respondent remarked:

¹⁰ For a more nuanced analysis of the ethic of *hunhu*, see Muzvidziwa, I & Muzvidziwa, VM ‘Hunhu (Ubuntu) and school discipline in Africa’. Retrieved: <http://www.dharmaramjournals.in/ArticleDetails.aspx?AID=38>

Nowadays these young girls are going out at night using the excuse that they are going to the borehole, yet they will be going to meet up with boys so that they can engage in bad behaviour. But, do you think as a parent I will restrict them from going when I need water in the house (Mrs Chibwanya, 17/07/2014).

To emphasise the gravity of the moral challenges related to the unavailability of tap water, most of the participants in Mabvuku cited cases of three seventh grade pupils who had become pregnant. The respondents claimed that had tap water been available these girls would not have become pregnant because they would not have had excuses to loiter around at night and engage in underage sexual activity. The council representative for Ward 21, Councillor Ndira, also indicated that he was dealing with the aforementioned cases of young school-age girls from his constituency who had become pregnant.

Another noteworthy finding of the interviews in Mabvuku pertained to the increased risk of rape for women and girls going to collect water at public boreholes. The respondents stated that on two separate occasions women were nearly raped when they were going to collect water at a public borehole in the early hours of the morning. It is important to note that these were said to be isolated incidents. However, the respondents who cited these incidents stipulated that the incidents attest to the community's loss of a sense of right and wrong and the possibility of physical insecurity – especially for girls and women – caused by limited access to tap water in their private homes.

While I have no objections to underscoring that the absence of municipal water is furthering some of the challenges narrated by the respondents, I do have serious misgivings to what is left out of the causal picture in the perceptions narrated by

respondents. For example, Mabvuku has a high level of unemployment, and there are few opportunities for the broader community, this creates a fertile environment for such societal problems that are being attributed to the absence of municipal water. In addition, it is difficult to draw a direct correlation between the availability of municipal water and the solutions to the problems that respondents attribute to water rationing. Thus, it can be said, when people are enveloped by multiple structural crises – as is the case with Greendale and Mabvuku residents – such as high unemployment, a hyperinflationary economy and political instability, a proximal problem such as lack of municipal water can easily be used as a scapegoat for these broader problems.

4.2.2 Socio-economic challenges

Greendale: According to the interview findings, a major concern for respondents in Greendale was the deterioration of their social status and economically related endeavours. Respondents stated that the unavailability of municipal water resulted in borehole water being channelled towards household purposes as opposed to when municipal water was still available. As a result residents could no longer use borehole water to beautify their lawns and fill their swimming pools. As one Greendale participant remarked:

You need to understand that property is an investment. So, we used to keep our grass green not because we are vain, but we wanted to maintain the market value of our houses or to increase the market value. Now our houses don't look like they used to. Before the water problems, we used to have a code as a neighbourhood, that, our grass had to be green and manicured all the time. But, we cannot enforce that code because borehole water is no longer for watering the gardens or lawns, it is now for drinking. So, what's important drinking water or watering the garden? (Rumbi, 19/07/2014)

Another Greendale respondent recalled that:

When I drilled my second borehole the engineer told me that “Don’t fill up your swimming pool. The water is only enough for drinking and household purposes.” So I had to switch off my swimming pool. That has really affected me a lot because my young son used to be a good swimmer at school because he used to practice a lot here at home. But, now he is meeting very stiff competition from those who have swimming pools that are functional (Mrs Machiridza, 18/07/2014).

The findings in Greendale highly suggest that, the unavailability of municipal water is affecting various socio-economic facets of life. Firstly, Greendale respondents consider water a key resource for enhancing or retaining the economic value of their property through beautification. Thus, the absence of an adequate water supply has negatively affected the aesthetics of their properties, which results in depreciation of their properties and community. In addition, some respondents identified the problem to be affecting their children’s recreational activities that are linked to their academic development.

Mabvuku: Similarly, respondents in Mabvuku noted that the limited availability of municipal water was affecting their social and economic activities. Municipal water was perceived as a key resource for beautifying yards and micro-economic activities such as gardening for sale. Respondents asserted that, viewing Greendale and Mabvuku as polar opposites in terms of landscape aesthetics is a relatively recent phenomenon caused by lack of water. When asked, “How have social and urban conditions changed in the city since you started staying here?” a respondent remarked:

When we used to say Mabvuku is a high density, it didn’t mean it is not a suburb. The difference compared to places like Greendale was the number of houses in a square metre...We also had flowers and green grass just like Greendale, but now we don’t have any of that (Mrs Chibwanya, 17/07/2014).

This change in the image of Mabvuku was largely attributed to the demise in services such as municipal water.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that water is one of the resources fuelling economic endeavours, for some Mabvuku residents. According to the respondents, fruits and vegetable selling was the main economic activity affected by the limited availability of water. Some respondents stated that they were forced to stop pursuing this economic activity because of the water problem. To exemplify how municipal water had affected economic livelihoods of residents in Mabvuku, one respondent stated:

Now that the economy is dead and industries have closed, we would have used water for gardening to supplement our husbands' meagre income as we used to do, but we cannot do that anymore (Gladis, 19/07/2014).

In addition, most respondents noted that residents in Mabvuku rely on informal businesses such as vending and brick moulding as their main sources of income. Most of these businesses require access to water. As a result, the limited availability of water is said to have forced people to stop businesses such as brick moulding. In addition, the fieldwork findings also revealed that the water problem was affecting the academic progress of children. Respondents who are parents to school-going children noted that their children no longer had time to study because once they come back from school they had to spend time queuing for water at the public boreholes. Consequently, this was affecting their academic performance.

4.2.3 Gender dimensions: Impact of water rationing on women and men

The findings further show that limited availability, or in some cases unavailability of municipal tap water affects both men and women in Mabvuku and Greendale. However, the findings suggest that women and children bear the burden more than men.

Mabvuku: All the female interviewees in Mabvuku confirmed that they were the ones primarily responsible for household chores, such as cooking and cleaning, which are highly dependent on water. As a result, the water problems cause hardships in how they manage and execute this work. To exemplify on the extent of the hardships faced by women in Mabvuku due to shortages of municipal tap water, one participant in study remarked:

You see, I'm married and I have children. So, I have to wake up every morning at 4am and go to the public borehole to queue for water before the queue gets long. Then, by 6am I need to be back at home so that I can prepare for my kids and husband to go to school and work, respectively. And, I also have to go to work afterwards (Mrs Chibwanya, 17/07/2014).

Another respondent remarked:

As women, we usually stand in the queue for a long time. When men come to fetch water they don't stand in the queue, they just skip and go in front. That is why we go there early morning or at night (Mrs Makande, 16/07/2014).

These narratives resonate with what most women in Mabvuku attested to. In addition, the findings can further be substantiated by the researcher's observations in Mabvuku. During participant observation in Ward 21, the researcher noticed that at most of the public boreholes women and children were queuing to collect water. Yet, there were a lot of middle-aged men loitering on street corners. It is important to note, however, that the

cohort of participants for the research was comprised of mostly women. Since women were forthcoming and willing to participate in the study, this may suggest that their willingness to participate in the study may relate to the observation that water problems directly affect women more than men.

In addition, the findings illuminate that women bear the responsibility to ensure that there is water available in the house. The reason for this was cited as because most men were the breadwinners in the family. As one participant remarked that, “a woman’s duty is to tend to household-related work such as going to the borehole because I have to go to work...That is how our culture has been (Brighton, 20/07/14)”.

Women shared this view. They saw it as culturally appropriate and determined that they must tend to household work including water collection. There are two major points of contention to the cited perceptions. Firstly, the gender roles that the respondent, Brighton, ascribes to cannot be viewed as rigid. In the case of Greendale, all the women who participated in the study from Greendale had professional employment and were not directly responsible for work in the household. Instead, they directed the work to their domestic workers. Similarly, women interviewed in Greendale were also breadwinners in their household by virtue of their employment, which further disqualifies the perception of gender roles as rigid.

Importantly, the study found that men and boys in Mabvuku were using the water problems as a way to create employment. Most respondents noted the prevalence of

‘water marshals’ who sell and deliver water collected from the public boreholes. Water marshals were mostly men and boys who quickly collected and delivered water from the public boreholes without the limitation of spending time in the queue. In response to whether she uses ‘water marshals’ to get water one respondent expressed her views as such:

If you look at it this way, I am a woman, I need to sweep the yard and cook. When I go to the borehole I usually spend more than three hours in the queue. So, I have to occasionally look for those ‘boys’ to quickly fetch water for me and I will pay them a dollar (Mrs Mukombero, 17/07/2014).

Information about ‘water marshals’ was gained during the researcher’s second interview session in Mabvuku. The researcher observed a man passing through the road and making several trips back and forth with a wheelbarrow containing buckets of water. When the researcher asked the interviewee about the man, the interviewee noted that his ‘job’ was to collect water for people at a cost. Other interviewees in Mabvuku went on to illuminate that men, especially young men, were being informally employed as ‘water marshals’. According to the interviewees, water marshals were charging US\$1 per four 25-litre buckets. Respondents attribute the prevalence of this practice to unemployment amongst many of the young men in the community.

Greendale: The findings from Greendale did not explicitly suggest that the water problem was affecting women and men differently to the extent as it did in Mabvuku. Nevertheless, in Greendale as in Mabvuku, primarily, women were willing to participate in the study. Also, the women who were directly affected by the unavailability of tap water in Greendale were those working as domestic workers in Greendale, since they

directly execute work that is highly dependent on water such as cooking, washing and cleaning.

4.3 Other Service Delivery Challenges

According to the research findings, municipal tap water problems are not the only service delivery problems affecting residents in Greendale and Mabvuku. Other key service delivery problems noted in Greendale and Mabvuku were lack of electricity – “load shedding” – and infrequent “refuse/waste collection”.

All respondents in the study identified that they were experiencing load shedding of electricity. On average, based on the information from respondents from both locales, load shedding happens at least three days per week. When asked, “What do you use when electricity is unavailable?” respondents identified that they use either: “generators” “gas”, or “firewood”. Respondents from Greendale predominantly use generators and gas, while in Mabvuku the respondents mostly use firewood as a source of energy. The unavailability of electricity was identified to be worsening the situation of precarious and minimal water sources.

In Greendale, respondents stated that when electricity is unavailable, it is difficult to pump water from the borehole to the tap system. As one respondent remarked:

Those times when there is no electricity, it's as good as there is no water too because I cannot use the generator to pump water from the borehole to the tap-system – it is too expensive...So we end up drawing water manually as if it's a well (Mrs Machiridza, 18/07/2014).

This resonates with the problem identified by Greendale residents with regard to load shedding of electricity – it was said to worsen their access to water.

Similarly, respondents from Mabvuku also identified load shedding of electricity to be another crucial service delivery challenge that they were facing. Most respondents in Mabvuku were using firewood as a source of energy in light of the load shedding and stated that this was in turn putting a strain on their minimal supplies of water. As one respondent noted:

When we use firewood it means we are going to need a lot of water to scrub the ash layer off the pots...We don't have plenty of water to do that, so that's another problem (Gladis, 19/07/2014).

The findings suggest that out of all service delivery issues, the respondents were primarily concerned about the availability of municipal tap water. All respondents noted that they wished that they could have consistent access to clean municipal tap water. Other service delivery problems were located on the periphery when compared to the water problems. As captured in an interview with the City of Harare Council representative for Mabvuku, Ward 21:

In feedback meetings, they [residents] don't want to talk about other issues such as roads, electricity or refuse collection, all they want to talk about is "when will water be available" (Councillor Ndira, 23/07/2014).

The emphasis that residents gave to municipal water services in light of all the other services unavailable in Mabvuku reaffirm that water is an essential and primary resources for human life.

4.4 Coping Strategies: Alternatives

Amidst the municipal water problems in Greendale and Mabvuku, the research findings show that residents in both locales have not been passively affected by the water problems. As I have noted in other sections, residents have adopted strategies to cope with the problem. The main strategies found to have been adopted by the residents in both locales under study were the use of public and private boreholes (wells), hiring of private water companies and suppliers, and rainwater harvesting.

Greendale: Private boreholes were identified as the main alternative source of water in Greendale. Most respondents in Greendale stated that they were now relying on private borehole water as an alternative to municipal water. However, private boreholes were considered to be gradually becoming unreliable sources of water supply due to the possibility of boreholes drying up. In this regard, one participant stated that:

Our source of water is from our neighbour's borehole since ours dried up. It dried up when everybody started digging boreholes. So, since ours wasn't deep enough we ended up not getting water anymore (Rumbi, 19/07/2014).

Another respondent recalled how after managing to get a second borehole drilled after the first one had dried up, the engineer told her that:

"Don't fill up your swimming pool, this is just enough for you to drink and for household necessities," which I have adhered to (Mrs Machiridza, 18/07/2014).

Thus, based on the findings from the participants in Greendale, private boreholes are the main alternative strategy employed by Greendale residents to cope with the limited supply of municipal tap water supply. However, the cases of boreholes drying up because

of too many boreholes being drilled points to how even private boreholes are becoming a precarious strategy.

Residents who either did not have boreholes at all or their boreholes had dried up noted their reliance on private water suppliers. The private suppliers identified were either “water companies”, “neighbours’ boreholes”, or “individual suppliers”. The cost of water from private water companies or suppliers, such as gardeners, ranged from US\$5 to US\$60 (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.1: Cost of water from private suppliers

Respondents Name	Cost (U.S Dollars \$)	Quantity (Litres)
Stewart	5	1000
Mrs Goredema	25	2 500
Wilma	40	5000
Rumbi	60	10 000

However, respondents who obtained water from private companies raised concerns about how they were not aware of where the water came from. Thus, they felt at risk of contracting diseases if the water was coming from unsafe or contaminated water sources. This meant that, in addition to purchasing water for household use, they had to purchase drinking water. The aforementioned sentiment is clearly captured in the following remarks:

The water we buy, we don't know where it comes from...So what we usually do here is that, we just use the water to wash and bath. Then we buy water to drink. So, apart from spending money to buy water to wash and bath, you still have to buy water to drink or find water from other sources you know are clean and secure (Mrs Goredema, 20/07/2014). These remarks resonate with what Greendale respondents who relied on private water suppliers articulated. What is evident here is that residents are adopting the strategy of relying on multiple-suppliers and sources to obtain water for different purposes.

Furthermore, as a supplementary measure to the monetary resources channelled towards obtaining water through private suppliers or drilling private borehole, respondents in Greendale also noted that they had stopped paying municipal rates related to water services. When asked, "Since you hardly receive municipal water, do you still pay the rates and charges related to municipal water services and other services?" one respondent noted that:

There are no services here, so I decided on my own that I am not going to pay...But I am not bothered about it because I cannot afford to pay council and, at the same time buy water from somewhere else. If I pay the council then I won't be able to buy water to use (Mrs Goredema, 20/07/2014).

Another respondent remarked:

I hardly pay municipal rates related to water charges. In fact, I decided to have the City Council's metre removed because they would always come here and knock the gate saying that they are coming to take water-metre readings and I would always tell them "we haven't had water in this area for the past thirteen to fourteen years" (Mrs Machiridza, 18/07/2014).

As cited in the residents' assertions, the findings suggest that not paying municipal rates is another strategy that residents in Greendale are employing to respond to the municipal water problems. In turn monetary resources are then directed towards the purchase of

alternative water sources, such as drilling private boreholes or buying water from private suppliers. The case of residents not paying can be understood from multiple perspectives. It cannot be discounted that not paying rates is a form of protest and resistance against city governance structures that have failed to address the municipal water problems. Furthermore, as discussed in section 5.2.2, the decision of residents not to pay their rates can be attributed to the directive to the City of Harare by the Minister of Local Government to cancel all municipal debts owed by residents. This directive may have influenced residents to think that even if they accumulate municipal debts they will be eventually cancelled. In addition, considering the economic problems in the city – which creates conditions where residents do not have adequate monetary resources to pay for services, especially in less affluent areas such as Mabvuku – not paying municipal rates can be a way to reduce household expenses.

Mabvuku: Respondents from Mabvuku are using public boreholes as their main coping strategy for lack of municipal tap water. The research noted that public boreholes had been dug at various points in Mabvuku. The city of Harare municipality and international development agencies were the main providers of public boreholes in Mabvuku. Basically, these shared public boreholes are supposed to provide for the water needs of all residents. Insofar as public boreholes relatively provide for the water needs of the residents in Mabvuku, the findings show that drawing water from a public borehole takes a lot of time for the residents. The respondents identified that the number of public boreholes available was not enough to meet the water needs of the densely populated areas in Mabvuku.

As a result, some respondents noted that in some instances they hired ‘water marshals’ to collect water for them rather than standing in the queues. However, reliance on water marshals to deliver water from the borehole was a strategy that residents were often unable to take because it was expensive. As one respondent stated: “We have to pay those boys so that they can fetch water for us from the borehole quickly...This month I’m actually in debt because of sending them [water marshals] to get me water (Gogo Makore,” 18/07/2014).The cost of getting water collected and delivered by a water marshal was found to be US\$1 for four 25-litre buckets. Thus, residents often used the services of water marshals to get water when they needed quick supplies of water and could not afford to spend a long time in the public borehole queue.

Furthermore, another for coping with the water problems was water harvesting. The researcher found that international development agencies such as UNICEF¹¹ and USAID¹² had installed water-harvesting tanks to allow residents to collect rainwater and use it for household purposes (see Figure 4.2). However, not all households had received these water-harvesting tanks. When asked how they were selected to receive the harvesting-tank, one respondent stated:

The criteria used was, to put a tank at a house where there is an older person or someone who is terminally ill...I got the water tank because I have problems with my legs (Mrs Makande, 16/07/2014).

Residents who did not have water-harvesting tanks noted that, generally, they collect rainwater with buckets during the rainy season. The case of water harvesting exemplifies

¹¹ UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund

¹² USAID: United States Agency for International Development

that as a result of the municipal water problems, residents, with the help of stakeholders such as international agencies, are harnessing sustainable methods of collecting water.

Figure 4.2: Water harvesting tank at a respondent's house



Photograph by author, Tongai Maodzwa, taken on 16 July 2014

4.5 Politics and Municipal Tap Water: Perceptions

The in-depth interviews conducted in Mabvuku and Greendale revealed that the residents perceive the municipal water problems to be tied to party politics in the city. Nearly all respondents identified the problem to be intrinsically linked to politics. Most respondents, either explicitly or implicitly, identified that the delivery of tap water and other service delivery problems, such as load shedding of electricity and potholes on roads, were the result of neglect by political leaders. In Mabvuku, access to reliable and secure alternative private water sources, such as well a functioning private borehole, was linked

to politics. The next section discusses findings on how residents in Mabvuku and Greendale drew linkages between the municipal water problems and politics.

Many respondents perceived not receiving municipal tap water as a punishment for political mistakes they had committed. A respondent in Mabvuku expressed the following sentiments:

I really don't know the transgression we committed as Mabvuku residents. Because, those at the top have made us live a scavenger-like type of life (Gogo Makore, 18/07/2014).

A respondent from Greendale remarked:

We all know that Greendale and Mabvuku's gradient affects our ability to receive tap water and that the City of Harare is cash-strapped. But, we cannot discount that this is a political problem. You need to understand the relationship between our government and residents of Harare; it's not a good one (Rumbi, 19/07/2014).

Furthermore, besides using the phrase 'people at the top' or 'the government' the majority of respondents did not explicitly identify the political actors who had neglected them or the perceived people they had presumably wronged. When the researcher inquired more on the subject of party politics with regard to service delivery in both communities most of the respondents showed a sense of discomfort or gave vague answers for the questions with political undertones. Instead, the respondents painstakingly tried to maintain apolitical and neutral narratives that did not indict any specific political actors or parties. The dominant apolitical narrative can be exemplified by the following response – when asked about the possible solutions to the water problems in Greendale and Mabvuku:

I want to tell you the truth here; I don't want to lie to you. The problem cannot be solved until... [Mumbles]... We cannot out-rightly say it since we are not politicians. But, the truth is that it has to be solved at the top levels (Stewart, 16/07/2014).

Another respondent remarked:

The water problem is being caused by top people who are not fixing things. Recently, they were given money to fix the water pipes but they used the money to buy luxurious cars.¹³ Do you think we live or drink cars! This time they have really set us down. If we could change the government and put young people maybe things will change because these old men with the big bellies are now full¹⁴ (Gogo Mudhonhi, 17/07/2014).

What can be derived from these dominant narratives is that respondents were wary of indicting any definitive political actors. Instead, they gave all-encompassing remarks that did not single out any political actors except in one instance cited below. In recent years, particularly from the mid-2000s to 2009, the city experienced a lot of political party violence. This makes political party violence in Harare something that is recent and ingrained in the minds of many residents. Thus, the choice of respondents not to indict any political actors can be attributed to that fear of being subjected to political violence.

Furthermore, although all the respondents noted that the water problems faced by Mabvuku, Greendale and Harare at large were technical and management related. The overarching problem that resonated in the responses was the prevalence of political interference in the functioning of the Harare municipality. The respondents shared the

¹³ The case referred to here is a US\$144 million Chinese loan meant for the refurbishment of Harare's Morton Jaffrey Waterworks. Reportedly, part of the loan meant for the refurbishment of the City's water services was controversially used to buy luxury cars for council executives. The following newspaper articles document information regarding the loan: 2014, 'ZIMRA gets Tough on Harare Water', *The Herald Newspaper*, 15 July, p. 2; 2014, 'ZIMRA stalls Harare Water Project', *Newsday Zimbabwe*, 15 July, p. 4.

¹⁴ The phrase "old men with the big bellies are now full" colloquially refers to how those in positions of socio-economic and political power are benefiting monetarily or materially through dubious means such as corruption from services and resources that are supposedly for the broader public.

view that political elites were benefiting from the water problems facing their suburbs. Thus, there was no political incentive by the ruling political elites to rectify the prevailing service delivery problems such as limited municipal water supply. This is best captured in the remarks of a respondent from Greendale:

You have to understand that some people are benefiting from this chaos. People who started selling water are the ones in Urban Planning and Harare City Council, so do you think they want to solve this problem when they are earning dollars? (Rumbi, 19/07/2014).

Interestingly, in Mabvuku one household had a well-functioning private borehole similar to those that the researcher observed to be prevalent in Greendale. What was noteworthy about this household is that all of the participants the researcher interviewed in that street claimed that this particular household had a well functioning borehole because of their political affiliation. One respondent said outright: “You see there... [Pointing gesture]...they have a borehole because of their alignment to ZANU–PF. They campaign for them during election time” (Gogo Vera, 18/07/2014).

This was the only time in the interviews when the researcher noted a participant directly singling out a political actor. Still, they did not indict the political actor to be the cause of the water problems they were facing. Instead, what is illuminated by this remark is the assumption that one’s political affiliation played a role in whether they were able to access better sources of water despite the municipal water problems.

Furthermore, in responses to how urban existence has changed throughout the time they have lived in Harare, the research participant cited a historical practice of linking politics

and tap water. The respondents from Mabvuku whose age ranged from 51 to 60 years and 61 to 70 years, and who had also lived in colonial Zimbabwe, pre-1980, made this point especially clear. Their remarks indicated that the provision of municipal tap water is inherently political. The elder respondents stated that during colonial Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) the government always provided them with adequate tap water. The comparison of the provision of tap water in colonial Zimbabwe and the current situation was frequently met with the following response, particularly from those who had lived in colonial Zimbabwe:

During Smith's time things were much better. People always say we were abused back then. We were not abused. It is only now that we are being abused (Gogo Mudhonhi, 17/07/2014).

This narrative, expressing the view that the colonial era had been better, arguably romanticises the past. What these comments do reveal, however, is the real frustration of residents with the municipal water problems to the extent that they recollect the colonial era as an improvement.

4.6 Summary

The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that both residents in Greendale and Mabvuku are affected by the inadequate availability or total unavailability of municipal water. However, residents from the two suburbs have adopted different coping strategies to deal with the water problem. In Mabvuku, the respondents chiefly rely on public boreholes as a water source and the use of 'water marshals' for delivery and collecting of water. In Greendale most residents rely on private boreholes and private water suppliers. Another significant finding to emerge is that the women and men are affected differently by the municipal water problems, with women being the most

affected than men. Lastly respondents identified the municipal water problems to be inherently political.

CHAPTER 5: Water and Politics in Mabvuku and Greendale, Harare

5.1 Introduction

The sustainable provision of municipal water to residents of Mabvuku and Greendale is hampered by a number of issues, including increases in population, the stagnant economy and deterioration of water infrastructure. As cited in Chapter 2, the city's population has increased from approximately 650,000 in 1982 to over two million to date (Mate, 2005: 227; Zimstats, 2012: 12). However, as this chapter will explore, political conflict between ZANU–PF and MDC is one of the key factors at the heart of the absence of municipal water and the associated problems. The struggle over control and provision of municipal water in Greendale, Mabvuku and the city of Harare as a whole shows the interwoven nature of water resources, power and politics. In Harare's tense political environment, the retention of political power is prioritised over service delivery; this underlies the inability of the municipality to sustainably provide sufficient clean tap water to residents in Mabvuku, Greendale and Harare in general.

This chapter discusses the prevalence of partisan politics and strategies of power retention in Harare and, how politics is crippling the provision of water services and broader development in Mabvuku and Greendale. The politically intractable nature of municipal water problems not only affects the management and allocation of water resources and the environment in Mabvuku and Greendale. It also silences the long suffering of the residents, thereby masking the water rationing problem – in contrast to

service delivery protests elsewhere, such as in neighbouring South Africa. This leads to a culture of impunity as the silencing of dissent ensures that a semblance of order is shown to the outside world.

5.2 Party Politics and Municipal Water in Harare

5.2.1 “Those at the top have made us live a scavenger-like type of life”¹⁵

The encounters with fieldwork participants from Mabvuku and Greendale and key informants from the City of Harare revealed that party politics underpin the water problems faced by the two locales under study and the city at large. Respondents from both suburbs stated that they were experiencing municipal water problems because of the political mistakes they had made. As one respondent stated:

I want to tell you the truth here; I don't want to lie to you. The problem cannot be solved until... [Mumbles]... We cannot out-rightly say it since we are not politicians. But, the truth is that it has to be solved at the top levels (Stewart, 16/07/2014).

The political undertones of these remarks indicate that the municipal water problems in the city may be inextricably linked to antagonism between political parties. Respondents from Mabvuku and Greendale were implicitly pointing to their presumed affiliation (by virtue of their staying in MDC-led constituencies) to the MDC-led local government and opposition to the ruling ZANU–PF-led central government as the reason for the water problems. Arguably, the apolitical responses of respondents and care taken by respondents not to explicitly identify any political party structures responsible for water problems may result from the residents' fear of partisan political violence being deployed against them if they indict either ZANU–PF or the MDC for the water problems. In

¹⁵ Interview remark by Gogo Makore, (18/07/2014).

recent years, particularly from the mid-2000s to 2009, Harare has become a volatile political arena with prevalent partisan violence between supporters of ZANU–PF and supporters of the MDC. A key informant who is a member of parliament for the MDC explicitly stated that:

Harare is a political liability for ZANU–PF...So its modus operandi has been, ‘make the residents suffer a bit if you can, ignore them or cause a little bit of inconvenience for them’ (Hon Jesse Majome, 9/07/2014).

In this light, municipal water problems in Harare may be perceived by respondents as a means of punishing residents of Mabvuku and Greendale, employed by ZANU–PF, for dissenting to its rule. Although this perception is reasonable, it is important to note that the municipal water rationing schemes and delivery problems are affecting ZANU–PF and MDC supporters alike. The fact that municipal water shortages are affecting both ZANU–PF and MDC supporters in Mabvuku and Greendale makes it problematic to hypothesise that the decisive reason behind municipal water problems in Mabvuku and Greendale has been to police dissent within the city.

Instead, the perception of municipal water as a means to discipline dissident populations brings to the fore the critical view that “government services” such as municipal water “...are never simply ‘services’; instead of conceiving this phrase as a reference simply to a ‘government’ whose purpose is to serve, it may be at least as appropriate to think of services which serve to govern” (Ferguson, 1994: 253). Therefore, municipal water services can be understood as services used by both ZANU–PF and the MDC to enforce political power and control of the urban constituency for partisan purposes. It is thus

important to inquire how political tensions between the central government and the City of Harare have led to the absence of municipal water.

5.2.2 Central government's meddling in municipal operations

Musemwa (2012, 2014), Kamete (2006) and Mate (2005) have comprehensively articulated the partisan conflict between the central and local government, its relation to the absence of portable municipal water and the associated problems, including the broader unfavourable macro-economic situation in the country. Briefly, when ZANU–PF lost the urban constituency in Harare to MDC in 2002, the ruling party employed a strategy to regain the lost urban constituency by undermining the operations of the MDC-controlled municipality government (Musemwa, 2012, 2014; Kamete, 2006; Mate, 2005). ZANU–PF party functionaries, either voluntarily or through coercion, incapacitated the local government, using constitutional provisions such as the Urban Areas Act or even means outside the legal provisions as can be stated in the case of Minister Chombo (Musemwa, 2012; Kamete, 2006). As other scholars have observed, in this study the researcher noted that party politics remain at the heart of municipal water problems.

To this day, ZANU-PF continues with this trend of meddling in municipal operations. For example, in 2013 prior to the national elections a local government minister aligned with ZANU–PF directed local authorities for the City of Harare to write off municipal debts owed by all the city's residents. Commenting on this directive, a key informant stated:

That decision shows that the minister is a political activist for ZANU-PF. Maybe for him it was a political mileage to do so. But, residents are going

to suffer more because that directive was a clear sabotage to the entire process of recouping City of Harare's operations (Councillor Barnabas Ndira, 23/07/2014).

People in Harare are suffering but, what are the consequences of writing off bills? What did they [ZANU–PF] put in place so that they can cover that budget void caused by bills being written off? (Hon Jesse Majome, 9/07/2014)

The directive to write off bills can be interpreted as a political manoeuvre by ZANU–PF to win the urban vote. Regardless of the political consequences or motives behind the action, it resulted in the City of Harare being further cash-strapped. In addition, in this study the researcher recorded admissions by residents that they no longer pay municipal charges. Another residual effect of the ruling party's directive is that it signalled to residents that there is no need to pay for the municipal charges because they may eventually be written off. The effect of the debt cancellation manoeuvre and how it motivated residents not to pay their municipal charges is not well documented scholarly. However, soon after the debt cancellation, it was revealed that residents and industrial companies already had accumulated debts amounting to over US\$200 million (NewsDay, 29 October 2013). According to one newspaper report "the residents had accumulated the debts apparently on the assumption that the government would announce another debt relief soon" (NewsDay, 29 October 2013).

Furthermore, in scenes reminiscent of the ZANU–PF-allied Minister of Local Government Dr Ignatius Chombo sacking the MDC-aligned Mayor Engineer Elias Mudzuri in April 2003, minister Chombo has continued to use his power to achieve political gains for ZANU–PF through his involvement in the City of Harare. This can be

exemplified by the minister's reinstatement of the suspended town clerk and ZANU–PF apologist, Tendai Mahachi, in 2014. Mahachi, alleged to be incompetent and corrupt, was suspended by the sitting council as per the provisions of the Urban Council's Act.¹⁶ However, Minister Chombo revoked the town clerk's suspension – an action perceived by the opposition party as a clear act of patronage. Commenting on the minister's actions, key respondents stated:

Minister Chombo wants his agenda done and, as the council we also need some things done. When we voted for Mahachi's suspension it was on the basis of incompetency. We had seen that he had failed and he is failing. But, the minister responded as if we are the problem (Councillor Barnabas Ndira, 23/07/2014).

The amended constitution adopted last year [2013] abrogated and deemed unlawful the ministerial powers retained by minister Chombo over the past decade; but it seems he has kept exercising them unlawfully (Hon Jesse Majome, 9/07/2014).

The new Constitution of Zimbabwe adopted in 2013 decentralised power from the Ministry of Local Government to local authorities, so that local authorities could take charge of the affairs of local communities. The provision in reference here is section 276 (1) of the constitution, which states that “a local authority has the right to govern, on its own initiative, the local affairs of its people within the area it has been established and has all the powers necessary for it to do so” (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013: 109). In this light, it can be argued that by meddling in and revoking local authority decisions the minister of local government is acting outside of the parameters of the law and using political power to do so.

¹⁶ For the allegations against the Harare town clerk Tendai Mahachi, see Muperi, W. 2 February 2014, 'Chombo reinstates Mahachi', *DailyNews*. Retrieved: <http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2014/02/02/chombo-reinstates-mahachi> 28 October 2014.

Furthermore, at the time of his reinstatement, Mahachi was facing vehement rebuttals from the public and MDC-led council for approving the purchase of luxury vehicles with part of the US\$144 million loan from the Export-Import Bank of China (New Zimbabwe, 16 May 2014). This loan was intended for refurbishing the Morton Jaffray Water Treatment Plant in order to ensure that the water system is technologically efficient to enable the pumping of water to areas such as Mabvuku and Greendale whose locations on a gradient make it difficult for the dilapidated water infrastructure to reach. Reports alleged that US\$8 million of the US\$144 million loan was used to buy luxury vehicles by the Mahachi without the authorisation of council (New Zimbabwe, 16 May 2014). Respondents in Mabvuku and Greendale expressed discontent with how the loan was being handled. One respondent said:

The water problem is being caused by top people who are not fixing things. Recently, they were given money to fix the water pipes but they used the money to buy luxurious cars. Do you think we live or drink cars? (Gogo Mudhonhi, 17/07/2014).

The mismanagement of the loan intended to rehabilitate Harare's waterworks can be seen as an act of sabotage towards the city's efforts to rehabilitate and normalise the water problems faced by residents. The treatment of the loan further reinforces Fanon's hypothesis that the impediment of development in African states can be attributed to the failure of political and economic elites to invest resources in development endeavours, such as, in this case, the rehabilitation of the city's waterworks. As Fanon predicted (1961: 49) the available resources are used for "...cars, country houses, and on all those things which have been justly described by economists as characterising an

underdeveloped bourgeoisie”. This is clearly evident in the case of Mahachi and his use of some of the loan funds that were meant to rehabilitate Harare’s water infrastructure.

5.3 Partisan politics and service delivery

In light of the discussion so far, the direct correlation between party politics and service delivery in Harare is evident. The rise in population and related increase in population density have indeed resulted in the demand for water services outgrowing the city’s production capacity. However, the political crisis and the impasse between MDC and ZANU–PF is worsening the situation and failing to create an enabling environment for the development of appropriate water services for the demographically and spatially expanding city. Similarly to Musemwa (2012) and Kamete (2006), it is evident that despite the local municipal government’s painstaking efforts to ensure sustainable water provision, ZANU–PF party functionaries continue to control the city’s municipal operations. ZANU–PF political elites continue to use patronage politics, which ultimately disrupt service delivery as a result of corruption.

Notably, the provision of water services is tied to and shaped by party politics as evident in Harare, as well as globally.¹⁷ Similar to Hansain’s finding from the study on party politics in Pakistan, the case of Harare, Zimbabwe, shows that “the more fragmented, factionalised and polarised the party systems, the greater are the incentives for patronages, weakening service delivery improvements” (Hansain, 2008: 129). The idea

¹⁷ Bakker (2010) provides a theoretical analysis of the intersectional relationship between water provision and politics using various case studies from the world; Hansain (2008) investigates the case of Pakistan and how politics shapes service delivery in that country; Bennett (1995) examines the case of Monterrey, Mexico and how politics affects the delivery of urban water.

that fragmentation, factionalism and polarisation of political parties impede service delivery is reinforced by the fact that during the period from 2009 to 2013, under the GNU between ZANU–PF and MDC, tap water started to flow in Mabvuku and Greendale. Many respondents in the study pointed to how during the GNU municipal water was relatively available and, although the water rationing continued, it was not as severe as prior to 2009. Thus, it can be argued that the political dispensation under the GNU did not entirely resolve the municipal water problems in Greendale and Mabvuku, but there were steady gains since the two parties were in a power-sharing agreement. As respondents stated:

When there was the unity government things became much better, water had actually started coming frequently. In some instance it would come three day a week. Now, it has become worse again (Mrs Mukombero, 17/07/2014).

In 2009 – 2010, we started seeing trenches being dug to put new water pipes and we felt like ‘okay fine maybe there is something that’s going to happen’. But all that has stopped now” (Gladis, 19/07/2014).

These examples of steady gains during the GNU affirm the argument of this study: the polarisation and fragmentation between political parties either enables or disables service delivery. In the case of Harare the polarisation of the two dominant parties is trickling down and affecting the operations, management and provision of basic services such as water.

5.4 Summary

This chapter demonstrates how – in addition to the stagnant economy and relative lack of adequate resources to rehabilitate the municipal water infrastructure – political parties’ antagonisms between ZANU-PF and MDC is further exacerbating the municipal water

problems in the city of Harare. The cited cases of Dr. Ignatius Chombo, the minister of Local Government and Urban Planning and, that of City of Harare town clerk, Tendai Mahachi – corresponding with literature such as Mate (2005), Kamete (2006), Musemwa (2012) to mention but a few – clearly reveals an unconcealed meddling in, and managing of municipal operations and affairs along partisan lines. How these key political figures have managed the municipal affairs is an epitome of one of the fundamental problems that has resulted in the persistence of the municipal water problems. The narratives by respondents’ advance the same sentiments of attributing the water problems they are facing to the city’s party politics. Supporters for both parties – ZANU-PF and MDC – have not been spared from the problems of inadequate municipal water, they all experience the problem with the same severity save for those who have reliable alternative water sources such as boreholes and wells.

CHAPTER 6: Environmental Effects in the Face of Water Crisis

6.1 Introduction

As discussed in the Chapter 1, during colonialism pre-1980 in Zimbabwe, urban residential areas were racially segregated. Low-density suburbs like Greendale were reserved for the white population while the high-density suburbs were reserved for the black population. High-density suburbs like Mabvuku received minimal services because the inhabitants, predominantly African migrant workers, were considered to be only temporary residents of the city. This had a negative bearing on the appearance of high-density suburbs as it resulted in them not being provided with the necessary water to beautify their yards with lawns and gardens. However, in contemporary Zimbabwe, the ability to live in a given residential space is now predominantly determined by class. In postcolonial Harare, racially segregated residential patterns have given way to class-based segregation. This chapter argues that water rationing and broadly, the municipal water problems are having a direct effect on the environment in Greendale and Mabvuku. It is in light of the latter argument that the chapter will discuss how lack of planning and mismanagement of water resources in the city is worsening the quantity and quality of water resources.

6.2 Mismanagement of water resources and the environment

In Harare, the city's enormous population increase accompanied by party political antagonism and an unfavourable macro-economic situation has resulted in the failure of

the available water infrastructure to meet the population's water demand. Findings from this study show that the city's water supply is failing to meet the population's demand, confirming the results of an earlier study by Mate (2005). The Harare municipality's current water production capacity is 641 mega litres per day yet, the demand ranges from 1,200 to 1,400 mega litres per day (Engineer Kunyadini, 07/14/14). This creates an estimated shortfall of 700 mega litres per day and even more when considering that some of the processed water is lost due to leakages caused by dilapidated water infrastructure.¹⁸ Key informants from the City of Harare further stated that old and dilapidated reticulation infrastructure is impeding the ability of the water system to meet its maximum production capacity and, in addition, has the consequence of occasional leakages of untreated raw sewage into clean processed water. The old reticulation system is not only contaminating the city's processed water and reservoirs but is further complicating the overall water treatment process. The engineers interviewed for this study, Munashe Mvura (07/10/14) and Richard Kunyadini (07/14/14), raised concerns over the high salinity and contamination of Lake Chivero caused by raw sewage and industrial waste as an example of why the city's reticulation system needs to be upgraded and sustainable methods of industrial waste disposal must be enforced.

Clearly, the municipality's water production capacity is operating at a sub-optimal level. A possible claim based on the evidence may be that if the water infrastructure is rehabilitated to work at optimal level the water problem facing Greendale and Mabvuku could be solved. However, cognisant of the population's water demand, even operating

¹⁸ Mate (2005: 228) argues that 30 to 40 percent of processed water in Harare is lost due to underground leakages, which can arguably be seen to persist in the current situation regarding municipal water.

municipal water production at an optimal level may not suffice. One key informant elaborated on the problem in this way:

If City of Harare is to process water at maximum capacity, Lake Chivero will dry up in a few weeks because the demand for water is now very high compared to when the city was first established and the few years after independence (Engineer Richard Kunyadini, 07/14/14).

Hence, decades of reliance by the Harare municipality on a single water catchment area despite the increased water demands have put a strain on the Manyame catchment, thus affecting the quality of the water resources (also see Musemwa, 2012). Another key informant explained some of the impediments to the delivery of municipal water to Greendale and Mabvuku residents, stating:

Manyame catchment is now exhausted and we need new sources... We have designed plans to get municipal water from new sources such as Musanhi, Kunzvi and Mazowe dams, but we don't have the funding required (Engineer Richard Kunyadini, 07/14/14).

In addition, according to the two engineers interviewed for this study the city's main water reservoir, Lake Chivero, now has high salinity levels caused by an over-concentration of industrial chemicals and contamination from raw sewage. These factors further make it expensive to process water and in turn affect the water quality itself. What the two engineers assert to reinforce a cumulative problem observed decades ago. Musemwa (2012: 4) gives as historical link highlighting to how the problems pointed to by the two engineers have to do with "monumental errors of judgement by early colonial planners". Beach (1999: 16) cited by Musemwa (2012: 4) goes on to stress that, due to poor colonial planning accompanied by post-colonial population increases in the cities, Harare was "going to run short of water relatively quickly". Thus, it can be said that the

failure to manage the city's water reservoirs, catchment, and water infrastructure has also resulted in the degradation of the quality of water, as well as a loss of the natural resources available. But, this problem the city of Harare is facing can also be traced to the history of how the city was planned.

Similarly to what is happening in Harare, literature on water and the environment puts into perspective how the ecological quality of water goes beyond being a consumable resource. As identified by Derman (1998: 76), the continued degradation of water sources will result in a “decline in water quality that threatens fresh-water, fish species and aquatic environment”. This is clearly exemplified by the case of Harare. Thus, the mismanagement of water resources in Harare must also be viewed from an ecological stand-point. As discussed below, the deterioration in the aesthetic appearance of Mabvuku's landscape and, the drying up of boreholes in Greendale and Mabvuku signalling the lowering of the water table, are some of the ecological consequences caused and reinforced by water rationing and the failure to sustainably manage the water sources and infrastructure in Harare.

6.3 “What’s important, drinking water or watering the garden?”¹⁹

Musemwa (2014) illuminates a marked contrast in how communities are affected by water rationing in a case study of Makokoba township, Bulawayo. The study reveals that, the water rationing schemes introduced by Bulawayo municipality in post-independent Zimbabwe resulted in the “wilting and drying up of the lawns” and the inability to continue with such activities as “gardening and the decoration of yards with flowers and

¹⁹ Quote from Interview with Rumbi (19/07/2014)

lawns” in Makokoba (Musemwa, 2014: 144–145). However, the study notes that affluent areas such as Hillside, Bulawayo seem to have been least affected by water rationing schemes as lawns in this suburb remained green and flowers remained blooming. The results of Musemwa’s (2014) study inform the findings of this study.

The deterioration of the environment landscape appearance in Mabvuku and Greendale is one ecological consequence of limited water availability due to rationing and cut-offs. Lack of water has resulted in some residents being unable to maintain ‘green’ landscapes in their homes and communities. This is clearly captured by two residents from Greendale and Mabvuku, respectively:

Before the water problems we used to have a code as a neighbourhood that our grass had to be green and manicured all the time (Rumbi, 19/07/2014).

We also had flowers and green grass just like Greendale, but now we don’t have any of that (Mrs Chabwanya, 17/07/2014).

These statements show that residents feel they are no longer able to preserve the beauty and greenery of their landscapes through practices such as gardening or manicuring their lawns. Residents from both Greendale and Mabvuku raised concerns about failure to beautifying their yards through gardens and lawns; however, Mabvuku seem to be affected worse than Greendale. In Mabvuku, there is a complete absence of fertile gardens, green lawns or other features that are dependent on water; the researcher observed only wilted and withered vegetable gardens. Meanwhile, in the more affluent suburb of Greendale, the environment appears to have survived the wrath of limited municipal water supply and remained beautified as exemplified by the presence of several noticeably green lawns, which can be attributed to the abundant alternative water

sources available to Greendale residents. The researcher's observations resonate with the observations of some respondents. When asked whether the two residential areas have been affected differently or in the same way by the water problems a respondent from Mabvuku emphatically asserted:

People in Greendale always get water; they always have trucks that bring them water. Whenever we pass through there with combis [public transport] you always see them watering their lawns and gardens, but, here we don't have water (Mrs Chibwanya, 17/07/2014).

Evidently, the impact of municipal water rationing has been the reinforcement of an environmental landscape beauty that is spatially different along class lines. In Mabvuku, residents do not have the necessary monetary resources to obtain water from alternative sources such as private suppliers or drilling boreholes. Also, the limited space available in residents' yards makes it more difficult to drill private boreholes.

Arguably, the municipal water rationing schemes in Greendale and Mabvuku reveal continuities of the legacy of colonial institutions considering how the water rationing has reinforced the differentiated environmental landscape appearance of the two suburbs. However, contrary to colonial practices where there was "deliberate and systemic inequitable distribution of scarce water resources" (Musemwa 2014: 48–49), in contemporary Greendale and Mabvuku water rationing is common in both residential areas. Yet, since Greendale residents are more affluent and have disposable monetary resources, they are able to access multiple water sources, which enables them to continue beautifying and greening their yards.

6.4 The environmental implications of coping strategies

In response to municipal water rationing in Mabvuku and Greendale, residents – especially those from Greendale – have resorted to drilling private boreholes. In Mabvuku, residents have generally relied on public boreholes drilled by the municipality or international development agencies. These alternative water sources are enabling residents to relatively cope with municipal water rationing. However, the drilling of boreholes presents serious environmental risk.

Many of the private boreholes and occasional shallow wells that are being drilled by residents appear to be installed with little knowledge of the suitable location or depth for such wells, and without concern for the environmental implications of having a higher concentration of boreholes. This can be attributed to the fact that most residents are installing private boreholes and wells without consulting or seeking permission from the municipality. Evidently, the desperate water situation has resulted in frantic responses that often disregard rationality.

These acts of drilling boreholes and wells are forms of resistance and of seeking alternatives beyond tap water in response to years of water rationing. The government, the City of Harare and other stakeholders such as ZINWA who are responsible for water management and regulation of borehole permits and installation appear to be similarly allowing the drilling of boreholes and wells with little to no regulation because the municipal water provision crisis has worsened. Thus, whatever alternative strategies

residents can employ to acquire water for their livelihoods are being permitted with little forethought about the environmental implications.

The cases cited by the participants whose boreholes had dried up possibly indicate that the high concentration of boreholes and wells in Mabvuku and Greendale is lowering the water table. One respondent asserted that:

Our source of water is from our neighbour's borehole since ours dried up. It dried up when everybody started digging boreholes. So, since ours wasn't deep enough we ended up not getting water anymore (Rumbi, 19/07/2014).

Another respondent recalled the experience of having a second borehole drilled after the first one had dried up:

When I drilled my second borehole the engineer told me that "Don't fill up your swimming pool. The water is only enough for drinking and household purposes" (Mrs Machiridza, 18/07/2014).

Similarly, in Mabvuku respondents illuminated a few cases of public boreholes drying up. The high concentration of boreholes in Greendale and Mabvuku may result in increased difficulty in accessing portable groundwater in future. In a study on The Bay Island, Honduras by Stonich, Sorensen and Salvador (1998), a spiralling increase in borehole concentration was found to lower the water table and led to a subsequent decline in the supply of portable groundwater. The study concluded that "the haphazard drilling of an escalating number of wells...is resulting in...the lowering of the water table...as water is extracted from the ground by an increasing number of wells" (Stonich, Sorensen & Salvador, 1998: 274–275). In the case study of India in *Thinking about Water Differently: Managing the Water-Food-Energy Nexus*, it is revealed that "groundwater in

Gujarat have lowered by more than 170 meters, are dropping at 6 meters per year, and are or soon will be beyond economic reach for most users” (Asian Development Bank, 2013: 15). The lowering of groundwater in this case is attributed to unprecedented levels of drilling of wells, with about 21 million wells having been drilled in the past two decades (Asian Development Bank, 2013: 15). Similar to the case Greendale and Mabvuku and Harare at large, the recourse to private boreholes and wells is piecemeal and appears to be environmentally unsustainable due to the likely consequence of lowering the water table. Although, the researcher lacks knowledge in the field of hydrogeology, it is possible to cautiously hypothesize that the incidents of boreholes drying up cited by residents point to the lowering of the water table and will likely negatively affect Mabvuku more than Greendale due to the gradient and topographical juxtaposition of the two locales. This possible outcome will further the environmental segregation of the two locales and lead to a scarcity in portable groundwater in Mabvuku, thereby affecting public water sources. While boreholes and wells are helping scores of Greendale and Mabvuku residents out of water insecurity relatively, this seem not to be sustainable as it is increasing stress on the water table.

6.5 Summary

The findings of this study’s fieldwork data and secondary data from the literature support the premise that municipal water rationing in Greendale and Mabvuku – in combination with the coping strategies residents are employing and the city’s water resource mismanagement as a whole – has multifaceted, mostly negative, environmental consequences. Some environmental issues raised in this chapter relate specifically to the

effect of water rationing on the ‘beautiful’ appearance of the environmental landscape. Owing to differentiated access to disposable monetary resources to acquire alternative and adequate or excess water sources for the purposes of beautifying the environment, Mabvuku and Greendale are being affected differently by the environmental implications of water rationing. This difference perpetuates elements of class-based environmental differentiation.

The possible lowering of the water table is another serious environmental concern that the chapter argued to be evident in the suburbs of Mabvuku and Greendale. The findings of this study reveal cases of boreholes drying up. The lowering of the water table is one possible environmental explanation for this and may potentially result in shortages of portable groundwater. The latter proposition is consistent with those of other studies (see Stonich, Sorensen & Salbador, 1998; Asian Development Bank, 2013) suggesting that the increased concentration and haphazard drilling of boreholes and wells may lead to the lowering of the water table.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis exposes the interwoven nature of access to municipal water, party politics, and political power. In addition, it reveals the effects of absence of adequate water supply on various facets of everyday life for the residents in Mabvuku and Greendale. Therefore, the study permits conclusion in these areas. Firstly, this study's exploration of party politics between MDC and ZANU–PF contributed to a deeper understanding of how power struggles to control the local governance structures have exacerbated the problems regarding the provision of municipal water. The finding reinforces what previous studies have revealed regarding the impediment of party politics on service delivery in Harare, such as Musemwa (2012), Kamete (2006), Mate (2005) and Compagnon (2001). However, these political problems are not the sole cause of the city's failure to deliver municipal water services. The unfavourable macro-economic situation that Harare and Zimbabwe at large finds itself in has similarly not enabled the realisation of a solution to the municipal water problems.

Secondly, a major finding to emerge from this study is that both residents in Greendale and Mabvuku are affected by the of municipal water problems. However, residents from the two suburbs have adopted different coping strategies to deal with the water problems. In Mabvuku, the residents chiefly rely on public boreholes as a water source. The study revealed it is mostly women in Mabvuku who bear the burden of collecting water from these public boreholes. In Greendale most residents rely on private boreholes and private water suppliers. Although respondents in Greendale raised concerns of their boreholes drying up, boreholes appeared to be a major alternative source to municipal water.

Thirdly, beyond municipal water being for consumption, the study argues that the unavailability of municipal water is reinforcing a differentiated environmental landscape appearance of the two suburbs in terms of the availability of green lawns and fertile gardens. The narratives by respondents clearly highlight the environmental repercussions of the absence of municipal tap water in Mabvuku and Greendale and the mismanagement of water resources in Harare. Another major finding to come out of the study is that of boreholes drying up. Drawing on the conclusions of earlier studies by Stonich, Sorensen and Salbador (1998) and Asian Development Bank (2013), the study also argues that the drying of boreholes is a serious environmental concern possibly indicating the lowering of the water table. The explosion boreholes and wells as a coping strategy to the on-going municipal water problem is contributing immensely to lowering of the water table.

Lastly, the study was limited in its sample size. Hence, it was not specifically designed to generalise findings to other locales that are facing similar municipal water problems. However, with a smaller sample size, caution must be applied, as the findings may not have captured all the nuances of how the municipal water problems are affecting the residents of Mabvuku and Greendale. Further research might employ a much broader sample size to gain a more in-depth understanding of household livelihoods amidst the water crisis in Mabvuku and Greendale.

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Tinotenda
Wilma

Key Informant Interviews

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APPENDIX A: Ethical Clearance



HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Maodzwa

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER H14/08/11

PROJECT TITLE

Water politics in Harare, Zimbabwe: A case study of Greendale low-density and Mabvuku high-density suburb

INVESTIGATOR(S)

Mr TLT Maodzwa

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

Social Sciences/Political Sciences

DATE CONSIDERED

22 August 2014

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved Unconditionally

EXPIRY DATE

25/08/2016

DATE 26/08/2014

CHAIRPERSON

E. M. Takane
PP (Professor T Milani)

cc: Supervisor: Prof M Musemwa

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature _____

Date _____