

Queen's University Belfast
European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation
2015/2016

Come Hell or High Water:

Research on Detroit's water crisis in its national context and the response by activists
where the state has failed.

Author: Yeva Jet Swart
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Mohsen Al-Attar

Abstract

This research discusses the water crisis in Detroit that broke out in spring 2014 and continues up to today. It focusses on the origin of the water crisis and by elaborating on its economic context, it is shown that the water crisis was not coincidence. It will also give insight into larger systematic issues that are manifesting in the USA with regards to water access. For this reason, this research also concentrates on other water crises currently going on in the USA. In short, it will establish that there is a prioritisation of finances over people's wellbeing and a nationwide deprivation of clean water access of poor communities of colour perpetrated the state.

The second half of this research is dedicated to solutions to the water crisis in Detroit proposed by activists. It will also look at how similar ideas have already been developed in Bolivia a decade ago. This will give us insight in the practical implementation of these initiatives. What has manifested clearly is a push in a change of law to ensure the right to water and better protection of people and nature. The second similarity is the initiative of the commons and communal governance over water.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Detroit's Bankruptcy	5
Chapter 2: Detroit's Water Crisis	17
Chapter 3: Water Crises in the USA	35
Chapter 4: Detroit's response	42
Chapter 5: Bolivia	62
Conclusion	71
Bibliography	75

2016

Come hell or high water: research on
the Detroit water crisis in its national
context and the response by activists
where the state has failed

Swart, Yeva Jet

<https://doi.org/20.500.11825/219>

Downloaded from Open Knowledge Repository, Global Campus' institutional repository