

Green burial conundrum: constructing the intersection between stakeholder perceptions and sustainable land use in a multi-cultural society

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Abstract

Green burial is an emerging practice in Zimbabwe and is being encouraged as a strategy for enhancing sustainable land use. This study explores stakeholder perceptions towards green burial and its implications on environmental sustainability. Interview data was collected from a purposively selected sample of 26 participants drawn from Harare and Bulawayo, the major metropolitan cities in Zimbabwe. The results of the study showed that the most promising route to promote green burial is through religion by invoking the principles of spirituality and ecological faith. Green burial was also perceived to be more affordable suggesting that cost effectiveness may be used as a positioning strategy. Cultural beliefs and lack of green burial infrastructure were identified as the main inhibiting factors. The findings of this study point to the need for stakeholders to explore strategies to reconcile the conflict between green burial and cultural beliefs. The development of green burial legislation and supporting infrastructure is recommended as a way of promoting the mainstream adoption of the green burial practice.

Keywords: Green burial, stakeholder perceptions, religiosity, family traditions, environmentalism, culture, Zimbabwe.