

# CO-MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR RESERVED FORESTS IN ZIMBABWE AND BEYOND: POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF FOREST MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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## Abstract

Many attempts have been made worldwide to find ways of solving relational problems between the State and local people around national parks and protected forests through co-management or joint management. There are many forms of co-management that have evolved in many parts of the world, depending on the policy thrust of the different governments or supporters of such initiatives. It is from the Zimbabwean attempts at finding solutions between the State and local people around two reserved forests that this research explored these problematic relations. Such problems have not been solved by simplistic notions of co-management as the relations between the State and different local people are a manifestation of much more complex socio-political issues that are better understood from a standpoint of the different power relations of the different players involved. The paper explores in detail how a pilot devolution scheme turned out not to offer any meaningful partnerships between the State and different sets of local people. The paper discusses a feasible management option for improving the current circumstances requiring a more nuanced view of partnerships, especially interrogating the issue of 'community' is treated. The paper concludes by pointing out the challenges posed for joint management by issues of 'power', 'community' and 'partnerships' mean for such a development intervention.

Key words: Policy options, co-management, contexts, local people, embeddedness.

## Editorial Note

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