

SDC 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts

Kozanayi, Witness; University of Cape Town
witykozi@gmail.com

Authors: Kozanayi, W1., Wynberg, R.2, and Matose, F3.

1. Presenter. Environmental and Geographical Science, University of Cape Town

2. Environmental and Geographical Science, University of Cape Town

3. Department of Sociology, University of Cape Town

Title: Interrogating the livelihood outcomes of the interplay between customary and statutory forms of governance - The case of commercial baobab use in Zimbabwe



To date, the integration of customary and statutory approaches to governance has yielded only modest progress in the forest sector and knowledge remains limited about the interface between these governance systems and the effect of this dualism on sustainability of natural resource use. Using the lens of the baobab tree, this research set out to address these gaps and elucidate understanding of the interplay between customary and statutory governance in managing natural resources; and the influence of such interactions on ecological sustainability and livelihoods.

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Quantitative methods included an ecological survey to examine the relationships between different indicators of ecological sustainability and different tenure regimes. A household survey was carried out to examine the extent to which households use and benefit from baobab products. Qualitative methods included group discussions, institutional mapping, ranking, scoring and oral histories.

Findings show that the baobab tree has intrinsic values which are typically overlooked in the discourse of natural resource governance. Further, findings from our study suggest that the notion that natural resources can be a poverty trap is not necessarily true for communities that have few economic opportunities and face frequent shocks. Context is thus an essential part of understanding the role of communally owned resources in sustainable development. Lastly, the study illustrates that local arrangements are robust, dynamic and are entrenched in the day to day lives of the resource users. These arrangements may not fit into existing environmental blueprints, and policy from the top may not be connecting with reality on the ground.

The main conclusion from our work is that statutory forms of governance can be introduced to assist customary practices on a demand-driven basis. Results emphasise the importance of considering seemingly peripheral forms of governance such as customary practices within the continuum of resource governance in order to ensure sustainable development in rural communities