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**Title:** The management of the Matobo Hills in Zimbabwe: perceptions of the indigenous communities on their involvement and use of traditional conservation practices
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Beginning in 1992 when the category of world heritage cultural landscapes was adopted by the World Heritage Committee, scholarly debates have ensued on how best they could be managed. One approach, which appears to have gained significance over the past two decades or so, is to consider the use of traditional conservation practices and the involvement of local indigenous communities in the management of world heritage cultural landscapes. To examine the efficacy of the approach, this thesis explores the concept of indigenous communities, the nature of the Matobo Hills in which the study was conducted, the indigenous communities of the area, and the management history as well as the traditional conservation practices of the Hills. Based on the perspectives of the Matobo Hills indigenous communities, this thesis examines the extent to which traditional conservation practices and the involvement of local indigenous communities can be germane in the management of the cultural landscape. Findings of this study shows that although some of the traditional conservation practices still survive in the Hills, some of them are declining as a result of the survival of local indigenous communities that is going through rapid change. The study also shows that a number of factors and management issues such as loss of value and meaning of traditional conservation practices, lack of support by the local indigenous communities as a result of their failure to benefit from the management of the Hills, politics and the breakdown of traditional leaders’ authority, christianity which result in the breakdown of traditional conservation practices and power struggle between the main stakeholders to manage the area, make it difficult to use traditional conservation practices and to involve local indigenous communities in the management of the world heritage site. Based on the results, the thesis argues that the preservation of existing practices, incorporation of traditional conservation practices in legal heritage frameworks, harmonisation of heritage legislations with related state and international legislations and compliance with the legal frameworks are some of the challenges that affect the idea of using traditional conservation practices and of involving local indigenous communities in the management of world heritage cultural landscapes. In conclusion, the study contends that for the idea of using traditional conservation practices and of involving local indigenous communities in the management of world heritage cultural landscapes to work, there is need to understand the local indigenous communities themselves, existing traditional conservation practices of the area, politics of the cultural landscape, views of local indigenous communities and to address the issues which affect them.