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Actor Network Theory and *Ziziphus mauritiana*: Building the Resilience of Communities in Muzarabani District, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Viewed as a radical approach, the Actor Network Theory (ANT) has been used extensively in scholarly works to understand the interactions and connections between human and non-human entitles to bring about the formation of a new entity. The key argument with ANT revolves around the assumption that these connections tend to lead to the creation of new entities that do not necessarily practice the sum of characteristics of the original constituent entities. With this background, this paper focuses on how ANT and *Ziziphus mauritiana*, a tropical fruit tree species belonging to the family Rhamnaceae can be used to build the adaptive resilience of poor rural households in Muzarabani District against the impacts of climate change-induced risks and hazards. The paper is based on a study that used the qualitative methodology. Using both secondary and primary data collected in Muzarabani District, it is argued in the paper that beyond the ordinary outlook of *Ziziphus mauritiana* as a source of food and the associated commodity value chains, it can play a significant role in facilitating pro-poor adaptation of rural households to climate change and variability. However, to understand its contribution in building the adaptive capacity of rural communities, it was important to have a clear comprehension on how rural actors combine the use of *Ziziphus mauritiana* with other players such as social networks to build resilience against both internal and external stressors. These issues have been analysed within the broader and contemporary discourse on climate change adaptation and natural resource use.

Keywords: Actor network theory, commodity value chains, network thinking, *Ziziphus mauritiana*

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