Involvement and participation

Practices and perceptions in collaborative resource management: the case of Bwindi National Park,Uganda

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Declaration

I, Hanifah Atuhaire, do hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is the result of my own original research work with the exception of quotes and work of other people, which I have duly referenced and acknowledged herein. This work has not been presented to any other university or institution for the award of a degree or its equivalent.

Hanifah Atuhaire

Oslo, November 2009

Dedication

For my mother Alice, who has made me the woman I am today. Your unconditional love and spiritual support has always made me patient in tough times. You have truly blessed me with unfailing love, hope and belief each day, so thank you for all sacrifices made to educate me. I hope this far, I have made you proud.

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Abstract

Uganda is one of the most biologically diverse countries in Africa. Most of its biodiversity is represented within a system of national parks, wild life reserves and forest reserves. In 1991, Bwindi forest was turned into a National Park which led to conflicts between communities and park managers due to resource use restrictions. In 1996, a strategy of local participation was established by Uganda Wildlife Authority. This strategy included the involvement of local people in benefit sharing, resource use schemes and decision-making processes.

This study examines the involvement and participation of local people in collaborative resource management at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. It describes practices and local people's perceptions toward their involvement in these conservation initiatives. Employing theories on Power and participation, an analysis has been made of the findings and in comparison to Pretty's ladder of participation, local participation at Bwindi has been evaluated. Data has been collected through household and key informant interviews, participatory observation and examination of written material.

I found that local people living around Bwindi are involved in three main aspects of collaborative resource management. These aspects are revenue sharing, multiple resource use and problem animal management. Results show that although these aspects provide avenues for local involvement, they do to a limited degree imply active forms of local participation, especially in decision-making aspect. Relying on elected representatives in decision-making structures and institutions is also a challenge due to limited consultation with electorates and accusations of corruption and nepotism. Decision-making power remains in the hands of those in authority and local people have no power to make or influence park related decisions. Thus, there is still need to review the notion of local participation at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in terms of empowerment, equitable sharing of rights and responsibilities.

List of abreviations

BIFCT	Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation Trust
BINP	Bwindi Impenetrable National Park
CARE	Christian Action Research and Education
CPI	Community Protected Area Institution
CRM	Collaborative Resource Management
GEF	Global Environmental Fund
GMP	General Management Plan
HUGO	Human Gorilla Conflict Resolution Group
IGCP	International Gorilla Conservation Programme
ITFC	Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation
LC	Local Council
MGNP	Mgahinga Gorilla National Park
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MUZ	Multiple Use Zone
MWLE	Ministry of Water, Land and Environment
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PA	Protected Area
SUM	Centre for Environment and Development
UNCST	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
WCED	World Conference on Environment and Development
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Table of Contents

DECLARATION ..... **I**

DEDICATION ..... **II**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ..... **III**

ABSTRACT ..... **V**

LIST OF ABREVIATIONS ..... **VI**

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... **VII**

1. INTRODUCTION **1**

1.1 BACKGROUND 1

1.2 RESEARCH AIM, RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS 4

1.3 RATIONALE 5

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS 6

1.5 SUMMARY 7

2. THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW **8**

2.1 INTRODUCTION 8

2.2 POWER IN COLLABORATIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT 8

2.3 LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN COLLABORATIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT 12

2.4 COLLABORATIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT BINP 16

2.4.1 Implementation of collaborative resource management at BINP *19*

2.5 SUMMARY 22

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY **23**

3.1 INTRODUCTION 23

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN 23

3.3 THE AREA OF STUDY AND THE INFORMANTS 25

3.3.1 Selection of Kabale District as the study area *25*

3.3.2 Selection of the informants *27*

3.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION 27

3.4.1 Documents *28*

3.4.2 Interviews *30*

3.4.3 Participant observation *32*

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 34

3.5.1 Prior to the Field *34*

3.5.2 During the field study *35*

3.5.3 Confidentiality and anonymity *35*

3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY 36

3.6.1 Reliability ... *36*
3.6.2 Validity ... *37*
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS ... 37
3.8 SELF REFLECTION ON THE FIELD WORK ... 38
3.9 LIMITATIONS ... 39
3.10 SUMMARY ... 40

4. INVOLVING LOCAL PEOPLE IN THE THREE MAIN ASPECTS OF COLLABORATIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT BINP ... 41

4.1 INTRODUCTION ... 41
4.2 ASPECT ONE: REVENUE SHARING ... 41
4.2.1 Practices and perceptions ... *45*
4.3 ASPECT TWO: MULTIPLE RESOURCE USE ... 50
4.3.1 Practices and perceptions ... *52*
4.4 ASPECT THREE: PROBLEM ANIMAL MANAGEMENT ... 56
4.4.1 Practices and perceptions ... *58*
4.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION ... 62

5. LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AT BINP ... 64

5.1 INTRODUCTION ... 64
5.2 INVOLVING LOCAL PEOPLE IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AT BINP ... 64
5.1.1 The local government structure in Uganda ... *65*
5.1.2 Local government and local participation in decision making at BINP ... *66*
5.3 EVALUATING LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AT BINP ... 75
5.4 SUMMARY ... 81

6. CONCLUSIONS ... 83

REFERENCES ... 86

Appendix I: List of key informant organisations and local interviews recorded at BINP in Nov. 2008 ... *i*
Appendix II: Research permit for the field study ... *iii*
Appendix III: Gorrilla tracking certificate received during participatory observation ... *iv*
Appendix IV: Interview guide for key informants ... *v*
Appendix V: Interview guide for local people ... *vi*

List of Tables

TABLE 1: PRETTY'S TYPOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION 14
TABLE 2: DECISION-MAKING LEVELS IN UGANDA REGARDING CONSERVATION 67
TABLE 3: TYPES OF LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AT BINP 80

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF MY SAMPLE PARISHES (NYAMABARE AND MUSHANJE) AND THE OTHER PARISHES THAT BORDER BINP. INSET IS A MAP OF UGANDA SHOWING THE LOCATION OF BINP. 26
FIGURE 2: A PHOTO OF THE COMMUNITY IN ONE OF THE VILLAGE MEETINGS I ATTENDED. 34
FIGURE 3: PHOTO OF A MOUNTAIN GORILLA AT BINP TAKEN BY RESEARCHER..... 42
FIGURE 4: A FLOWCHART SHOWING REVENUE SHARING CHANNELS AMONG BINP COMMUNITIES 44
FIGURE 5: A MAP SHOWING MULTIPLE RESOURCE USE ZONES (MUZS) AT BINP..... 51
FIGURE 6: CLEAR PARK BOUNDARY FROM CULTIVATED PLOTS OF LAND AT BINP 57

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Conservation efforts have historically been dominated by efforts to separate humans from nature and reserving places for nature (Brockington 2002). In the colonial period, there was a concern of over-exploitation of natural resources by local people. Therefore, forest reserves and national parks were established, and policies were formulated to guide their management. A key turning point was on 1st March 1872, when the US established Yellowstone National Park as the world's first national park (National Park Service 2007).

Consequently, starting with the 1890s there was a proliferation of national parks. Wherever a national park was created, people were separated from nature. This involved, but was not limited to, eviction of people who had been resident in those areas as hunter-gatherers, and stopping consumptive usage of the resources on these lands. In essence a fence was constructed around such a Protected Area (PA) and trespassing carried a fine. The approach therefore came to be known as the fences and fines approach but has a host of other names such as fortress conservation. This became the conservation paradigm for much of the 20th century (Hutton et al. 2005).

Gradually, the fortress conservation paradigm lost dominance and was increasingly challenged because of its exclusion of local participation (Namara 2006). Local people increasingly voiced their concerns and got support from human rights activists. But also, in its own self-interest the conservation constituency behind fortress conservation saw it that their paradigm could not survive, at least politically, amidst resistance by the local people and leaders in newly independent countries (Hutton et al. 2005). This precipitated an ideological shift in conservation policy stressing local participation and involvement in benefit sharing in collaborative resource management. It also ushered in a community conservation paradigm which became popular and

rapidly won over many converts in the 1980s (Fischer 1995; Adams et al. 2001). Consequently, many protected areas, that had previously gone the fortress way, sought to have ways in which local people would participate. Uganda, like many African and indeed other developing countries jumped onto the bandwagon. Uganda converted six of her major forest reserves into national parks between 1991 and 1993 (Tumusiime 2006). One of these parks, which I chose for my case study, is Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP).

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) is located in south western Uganda between latitude $0^{o}53` - 1^{o}8`$South and longititude $39^{o}35-`29^{o}50`$E (Mwima & McNeilage 2003) (Figure 1). It covers an area of 321 km^2 on the edge of the western rift valley occupying the highest blocks of the Kigezi highlands (Babaasa et al. 2004). BINP lies along the boarder of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and is about 29 km by road to Kabale town, 30 km north of Kisoro town and about 540 km from the capital city; Kampala.

The park is also shared by some of the most densely populated districts in Uganda which are Kisoro 324 people/ km^2 , Kanungu 163people/ km^2 and Kabale 281people/km^2 which is above the national average of 122.8people/ km^2 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2002). BINP lies in an altitudinal range from 1160m at the northern tip to 2607m at Rwamanyonyi hill on the eastern edge of the park. Its topography is extremely rugged with narrow steep sided valleys that were formed through up-warping of the western Rift valley (Harcourt 1981). It is also a major water catchment area in Uganda, hence a source of many rivers that flow North West and South into Lake Edward.

Its annual mean temperature is $13^{o}C$ and annual mean rainfall at 1440mm especially between the months of March-April and August-November. The park is thus, critical to the hydrological balance of the region and the country at large (UWA 2001). BINP is also the country's most biologically diverse and important Afromontane forest famously known as a habitant for at least ten species said to be threatened with global extinction and for this reason it was placed on the

World Heritage list by UNESCO in 1994 (UWA 2001).The park is also widely known for being home to more than half of the world's remaining population of the critically endangered mountain gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*) (Kamugisha et al. 1997; Hamilton et al. 2000; Namara 2006)

Prior to its gazzettement as a national park in 1991, Bwindi was a designated forest reserve; regulations about the right to access the forest resources were more liberal and not often enforced (Mutebi 2003). Bwindi was a source of timber, minerals, non timber forest products, game meat and agricultural land to the local communities living in and adjacent to it (Korbee 2007). These activities led to continued significant losses of forest cover due to heavy encroachment and settlement up to the late 1980s. Consequently in 1991 BINP became a national park. Among other changes, this led to the eviction of over 2,400 people who were living inside the forest reserve in 1992.

This reclassification therefore, had a large impact on local people, who were no longer permitted to enter the park or access its resources at free will. This led to resentment and conflict between the local communities and park authorities (Namara 2006). As such, Uganda followed the paradigm shift in conservation from restricted resource management areas to involving local people through community conservation at BINP as well as at some of the other national parks. Following the framework of the international policy terrain, for example the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP 1992), Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 (United Nations 1992), Uganda has put in place a number of national policy provisions such as the National Environment Policy (Republic of Uganda 1994) and the Uganda Wildlife Statute (Republic of Uganda 1996) among others to provide for public participation in natural resource management.

As a result, several approaches have been undertaken around BINP to involve and to benefit local people through benefit sharing in the two of the three main aspects of collaborative resource management. The first of these aspects is the

sharing of part of the revenue collected from gorilla tourism at BINP. The other aspect is multiple resource use where resource use agreements have been signed with some communities living adjacent to BINP, allowing the residents to collect selected park resources particularly for subsistence use.

Though communities are sometimes optimistic about such collaborative arrangements because these agreements at least promise some physical and monetary benefits at BINP (Hinchley et al. 1998), there are claims by some researchers that the arrangements have largely failed due to limited local participation, for example in deciding which park resources are to be harvested (Blomley 2001; Mutebi 2003; Namara & Nsabagasani 2003). Furthermore, they argue that there is limited local participation in decision-making processes especially on how to use the revenues returned to the local people from park entry fees and local empowerment is very minimal.

This therefore, raises the need for an in-depth examination and understanding of issues relating to involvement and local participation in collaborative resource management as a sustainable conservation approach in the management of protected areas. This study is thus an attempt to explore the concepts of involvement and local participation in the various aspects of collaborative resource management at BINP.

1.2 Research aim, research objectives and research questions

The aim of this study is to examine the involvement and participation of local people in collaborative resource management at BINP, Uganda. The main research question is: how can local involvement and participation in collaborative resource management at BINP be described and evaluated?

I divide this into two objectives:

Objective 1 is to describe how local people living adjacent to BINP are involved in the three main aspects of collaborative resource management.

These three aspects are; revenue sharing, multiple resource use and problem animal management. The description is made through answering the following three questions:

i. What are the specific aspects in collaborative resource management that are of interest to both the park managers and local people at BINP?

ii. How and at what point are local people involved in the collaborative resource management aspects at BINP?

iii. How do the local people perceive their involvement in the different aspects regarding collaborative resource management?

Objective 2 is to evaluate local participation in decision-making at BINP basing on Pretty's typology of participation.

i. Given the nature of local people involvement, where on Pretty's "ladder" of participation can local participation at BINP be placed?

1.3 Rationale

It is over two decades since collaborative resource management was pioneered in Africa, but as arguments in a variety of fora indicate, the outcomes of the approach have been mixed. One key explanatory variable has been the nature and extent of local participation (Kamugisha et al. 1997; Wells & McShane 2004). Following an increased dominance of a discourse based on community conservation, agencies and governments have instituted policies embracing local participation in collaborative resource management. However, observers have argued that a persistent gap between policy and practice has characterized many collaborative arrangements (Mugisha 2002; Namara 2006).

BINP is often argued to be a classic case of successful collaborative resource management, given the fact that it hosted the first pilot parishes where collaborative resource management aspects were practiced before replicating the approach in other Ugandan parks, such as Mountain Elgon National Park (Worah et al. 2000; Mutebi 2003; Namara & Nsabagasani 2003). However, some researchers claim that collaborative resource management practices at BINP have not been so successful (Blomley 2001; Ribbot 2001; Borrini-Feyerabend & Sandwith 2003Namara 2006). Critics argue that often conservation policies that are in place, do not elaborate on what actually is the meaning of local participation in decision-making rather than involving local communities in the three aspects of collaborative resource management (Fischer 1995).

Further, Fischer (1995) and Ribbot (2001) argue that local communities should have meaningful input into the collaborative resource management process right from the start as partners with rights, responsibilities and sharing of power in decision-making. It is against this background, that the findings of my thesis will make a contribution to the knowledge of how local participation related to protected areas takes place in the case of BINP. My study also can be drawn upon by local practitioners at BINP as well as at other protected areas to improve collaborative resource management practices. Thus, the study adds to the international literature that compares involvement and local participation in conservation.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter one gives a brief introduction to the problem and highlights the rationale of the study. Chapter two presents the theoretical framework as well as the literature review on claims and earlier research findings related to local participation at BINP and other protected areas. Also some important concepts used in this study are defined in this chapter.

Chapter three consists of study area description and presentation of the methodology that I used in the study.

Chapter four provides the research findings on how local people at BINP are involved in the three main aspects of collaborative resource management. These consist of revenue sharing, multiple resource use and problem animal management. The chapter thus addresses objective one of the study.

Chapter five focuses on objective two by giving a description and an evaluation of local participation in the decision-making process at BINP basing on Pretty's typology of participation. Drawing inspiration from Pretty's typology on participation (1995), in chapter six conclusions of this study are presented.

1.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have given an overview of the research topic, research aim, main research question, objectives and rationale. Finally, I have presented the structure of the thesis.

2. Theory and literature review

2.1 Introduction

My study applies various theory elements. First, I apply theories that shade light on objective one's description of how, at what point and in which aspects of collaborative resource management the local people adjacent to BINP are involved. These are theories on power, such as the role it plays in collaborative resource management.

The second theory element is to guide my addressing of objective two with the evaluation of local participation in the decision-making process at BINP. Here I apply a normative theory provided by Pretty et al. (1995) on scales of participation.

Third, my case study is compared to the research findings and claims about local participation in BINP and also to central literature on participation in other cases of protected areas in Uganda. Fourth, I also refer to central research findings on protected areas and participation in other African countries that are of particular relevance for my own study. Each of these theory elements are presented in the following sub-chapters.

2.2 Power in collaborative resource management

Raik et al. (2008:730) claim that a highly technocratic outlook dominates the field of natural resource management and conservation. Technical activities like the manipulation of fish stocks, establishment of silviculture and the monitoring of populations of endangered species all require a high level of professional expertise. Although much technical knowledge of natural systems is applied to practice in supposedly neutral and disinterested ways, in natural resource management –whether intentionally or unintentionally– there is a tendency to exclude, dominate, marginalize or otherwise disadvantage some groups (Raik et

al. 2008:731). Raik et al. (2008) draw inspiration from previous studies on power like Lukes (2005) and refer to three major views of understanding the concept of power. They use these views to illustrate how power is operationalized in natural resource management. Power can be viewed as coercion, as constraint or as consent.

Power as coercion is what Lukes calls the first dimension of power and it is often limited to description of one person's power over another. In simple terms, it can be understood as A has power over B to the extent that he or she can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do (Dahl 1957 in Lukes 2005:16). Raik et al. (2008:731) claim that many discussions of power in natural resources are limited to this understanding of power as coercion, mainly because the initial model of fortress conservation used coercive means to separate people from protected areas.

Power as constraint or what Lukes calls the second dimension of power is exercised by A to suppress the actions or possible actions of B. The argument that A can act to constrain the actions of B rests on the idea of mobilization of bias (Schattschneider 1960 in Lukes 2005:20). "Mobilization of bias" involves a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals, and institutional procedures […] that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense of others. This view of power also involves both decision-making and non-decision-making. Making a decision takes place by choosing between different modes of action, while a non-decision is a decision made to thwart or suppress challenges (latent or manifest) to the values or interests of the decision maker (Lukes 2005:21-22).

Where as decision-making involves a forum where various actors or groups fully and equally participate, non-decision-making which is similar to power as a constraint occurs when powerful groups prevent the less powerful from being involved in the decision-making process. (Raik et al. 2008:733) argue that exercising power is not merely a matter of actively controlling decision making,

but it can also involve the ensuring of inaction on issues. This view therefore recognizes that some institutional procedures systematically organize bias to skew the process to benefit the interests of one group over another (Raik et al. 2008). For instance, power as constraint is involved when particular individuals and groups determine what makes something to go into a meeting agenda by suppressing undesired alternative views during discussion, or interpreting silence as agreement. However to conceptualize power as coercion or constraint, is too limiting in trying to understand all of its dynamic and pervasive nature. Both views are agent-centred, saying nothing about the social-structural processes that shape human relations and interests (Raik et al. 2008). Lukes argues that power has a third dimension, where it secures the consent of willing subjects to domination.

In the third dimension, which Raik et al. (2008) call *power as consent*, power is constituted by forces above and external to the individuals. Characteristics such as ethnicity, caste and educational background operate silently to influence people and their behaviour (Raik et al. 2008). Here, People do not possess power individually, whereas power instead stems from structural forces. Those who exercise power over others do that because of their position in social structures. In this situation, A has power over B when A's behaviour causes B to do something B would not otherwise do. Lukes claims that this form of power is real and operates in many direct and indirect ways.

Thus, "power can be at work, inducing compliance by influencing desires and beliefs, without being 'intelligent and intentional'" Lukes (2005: 136). In collaborative resource management, structural views of power that focus solely on social structures and ignore individually exercised power are limited in their ability to account for agency as they assume that a false consciousness among the dominated is created by the social systems (Raik et al. 2008). The subordinated local people believe and behave contrary to their true interests as they are also seemingly blinded into accepting their role in the existing order of things (Lukes 2005:28).

One shortcoming though, is that this false consciousness is not equally applied to all individuals. Minwary (2009) contends that the actions of each player are influenced positively or negatively by their perceptions and compliance to the laws, rules and regulations. Backman et al. (2001) argue that although definitions and models vary, the critical element in collaborative resource management is involvement of 'all stakeholders' in the decision making processes, in implementing and evaluating the decisions as well as in benefit sharing.

This is in agreement with the realist view of power sharing in collaborative resource management which highlights the importance of social relationships for structuring interaction. "Rather than A getting B to do something B would not otherwise do, social relations of power typically involve both A and B doing what they ordinarily do" (Isaac 1987: 25 inRaik et al. 2008:737). Thus, explicitly recognizing and understanding power and its role in natural resource management may lead to insights about how natural resource practitioners can be strategic in their actions to democratize and equalize asymmetrical power relations and improve the practices of natural resource management and conservation, especially in cases of decentralisation (Raik et al. 2008:737).

In chapters four and five of my study, I do apply these power elements in the analysis and discussion of my findings on involvement and local participation in the three aspects of collaborative resource management at BINP. For instance, power is exercised as constraint in decisions regarding multiple resource use and revenue sharing at BINP when some individuals or institutions determine what and how much is to be given to the local people living adjacent to BINP as benefits accruing from conservation. In chapter five while discussing and evaluating local participation at BINP in collaborative resource management, I find that Power is exercised as constraint and consent when passive local participation and 'silence' from the local communities is interpreted as agreement for decisions made regarding conservation.

2.3 Local participation in collaborative resource management

> *"At the 2003 world parks congress, it was stressed that protected areas should contribute to poverty reduction or at least not increase poverty, and that bio-diversity be viewed not only as a national and global resource, but also for its contribution to local livelihoods. This therefore calls for an urgent need for equitable participation of all key stakeholders in decision-making, sharing of costs and benefits with particular attention to the needs of local communities and disadvantaged groups" (Namara 2006:62).*

Namara (2006) sees participation of local people as a (key feature) for collaborative resource management related to protected areas. Such participation can be achieved in a range of practices including but not limited to; full information sharing, capacity building, benefit sharing, negotiations, full empowerment and or transfer of powers as rights to local people rather than privileges (Namara 2006; Mannigel 2008). According to Vedeld (2002), local participation can be seen as a strategy of devolution of authority and power, resources, rights and duties from state to local levels of governance and from public to civil society. However, Mannigel (2008:499) contends that although participatory approaches are now being employed more frequently in protected area management, the underlying goals, objectives and methods used can differ greatly. Whereas many actors in conservation today claim to include participation as an element of their practices, often this is just rhetoric.

> *"…almost everyone now says that participation is part of their work. This has created many paradoxes. The term 'participation' has also been used to justify the extension of control of the state and to build local capacity and self-reliance; it has been used to justify external decision making; and to devolve power and decision making away from external agencies"* (Pretty et al. 1995:168).

Participation is also thought to facilitate social change (Arnstein 1969; Vedeld 2002; Mannigel 2008), often to the advantage of marginalized groups and thereby claimed to ease tensions, conflicts and distrust between local people and other stakeholders (Vedeld 2002). In the light of this, the term participation may seem ambiguous and susceptible to differing situations, as it can signify different goals pursued by the distinct stakeholders (Mannigel 2008).

Mannigel (2008) therefore suggests two distinct perspectives that can be useful in understanding the term local participation in collaborative resource management. The first perspective is to use participation as a 'means' to improve the efficiency of management interventions, resulting in changes that are sustainable and approved by a large number of people. The second perspective is to apply participation as an 'end', seen as necessary for equity and empowerment of suppressed groups. Mannigel (2008) further explains that, while the perspectives are often mixed and not easily distinguished from each other, it is important to bear them in mind when analyzing participatory approaches, because participation as an end in it self leads to empowerment. Pretty et al. (1995) developed a typology of local participation based on seven scales ranging from sharing of information to transfer of power and responsibilities (Table 1).

Pretty argues that in levels A to E, power and total control of decisions belongs to other stakeholders than the local people, and most decisions are made prior to community involvement. Manipulative participation (A) is the extreme form of no local participation. At scales F and G, there is full participation in which all stakeholders are involved and self mobilization (G) is the ideal form of total participation in which all basics are carried out bottom-up. In these two forms of participation local people have power and control and may influence the decision-making process. Drawing on Pretty's typology, similar scales of participation can be found in the literature (Borrini-Feyerabend 1996; Agarwal 2001; Mannigel 2008).

Table 1: Pretty's Typology of Participation

Typology	**Characteristics of each type**
Manipulative participation (A)	Participation is by pretence. "People" have unelected representatives on official boards without power. Almost no interaction occurs between local stakeholders and managing institutions.
Passive participation (B)	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management who do not listen to people's responses. The information offered belongs only to external professionals.
Participation by Consultation or information giving (C)	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes. They control data analysis. This process does not concede any share in decision making and professionals are under no obligation to adopt people's views. People have no opportunity to influence proceedings.
Participation for Material incentives (D)	People participate by contributing resources, e.g. labor, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. This is commonly called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging practices when the incentives end. Decisions are made by the managing institutions alone.
Functional Participation (E)	People's participation is seen by external agents as a means of achieving project goals, especially reductions in costs. People may form groups to meet pre-determined objectives. This participation may be interactive and may involve shared decision making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have been made by external agents. Local people may only be co-opted to serve external goals.
Interactive participation (F)	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and the formation, or strengthening, of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just as a means of achieving project goals. Formalized decision making structures such as management councils involve local stakeholders and meet on regular basis. Local people take control over local decisions and determine how local resources are used, thus maintaining structure and practice.
Self Mobilization (G)	Local People participate by taking initiatives, independently of external institutions, to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions and there is primary transfer of authority and responsibility for the resources.

(Source: based on Pretty et al. 1995 and Arnstien 1965)

However, I find Pretty's (1995) argument that participation should find ways of moving from passive or incentive-driven forms to a more interactive form or even self-mobilization limited in the sense that it only refers to participation in terms of information sharing. Oliphant (1999) notes, participation of all stakeholders should not be limited to only information sharing. Whether it is used

as a ‘means’ to achieve an end or an ‘end’ in itself, a matter of principle, practice or both, the issue should be to find out whether it empowers those involved and if it makes any difference to those mostly affected by any direct planned intervention.

Borrini-Feyerabend (1996) argues that when using the literal sense of “taking part” or “acting together” neither levels A and B nor level G can be considered as participatory, as either local people or the institutions are only very distantly involved in management and decision-making activities. For instance, when participation is seen as a ‘means’, institutions usually will not share decision making authority, and scales E, F, and G are seldom used, while on the other hand when participation is considered as an ‘end’, these latter levels become preferable (Mannigel 2008:500).

Cleaver (2001) observes, participation has become “an act of faith in development, something we believe in and rarely question”. It is based on three main tenets: that participation is intrinsically a 'good thing' (especially for the participants); that a focus on ‘getting the techniques right’ is the principal way of ensuring the success of such approaches; and that considerations of power and politics on the whole should be avoided as divisive and obtrusive. He further says that although all attempts at community based development are well-meaning, they are ineffectual. Even though they can be promising, they are inevitably messy and difficult, approximate and unpredictable in outcome.

Although, the translation of some of the conceptual underpinnings of participatory approaches into policy and practice in collaborative resource management is not necessarily consistent with the desired impacts, the methods of participation can still be unrepresentative; which does not mean total participatory democracy. Some researchers like (Mosse 2001) and (Nelson & Hossack 2003) argue that while participation can be smaller or larger, ultimately, power and decision-making remain with the implementing agency and it is at best minimal in conservation.

Thus, I apply the elements of this normative theory in participation based on Pretty et al. (1995) in my chapter five where I address objective two of this study. Basing on Pretty's typology of participation, I evaluate the participatory forms of local people living adjacent to BINP in the decision-making process. This helps me to analyse and conclude on whether or not local participation at BINP in collaborative resource management aims at empowering local people especially in the decision-making processes. Local participation should be an end in itself and not a means of attaining conservation goals by simply involving local people in the three main aspects of collaborative resource management.

The next section reviews relevant research findings and claims about conservation and collaborative resource management at BINP in Uganda relating to management and practice.

2.4 Collaborative resource management at BINP

Historically, natural resource management and conservation has been the responsibility of the central governments in Africa. However, this strategy has not been successful in protecting natural resources and integrating development of rural areas. Some scholars show that governments are not necessarily better or more successful managers of resources (Gibson 1999).

Scholars and conservationists currently favour the decentralized community based approaches where communities are involved in the management of the resources (Caldecott & Lutz 1996). Agrawal and Ribot (1999) define effective decentralization as "the establishment of a realm of local autonomy by meaningfully empowering local authorities with decision-making powers and resources to act on them" (Namara & Nsabagasani 2003:9). Pyhala (2002) contends that decentralization improves conservation and managing of natural resources because local institutions play a key role in managing eco-systems and conserving biodiversity.

Despite claims that decentralization yields benefits such as equity, administrative efficiency and resource conservation (Namara & Nsabagasani 2003), some scholars argue that little evidence exists to justify de-centralization as a generalized strategy for effective resource management (Caldecott & Lutz 1996). Successful models of collaborative resource management are scarce in developing countries, partly because of their complexity and the need for each protected area to be assessed on its own in order to determine appropriate management strategies. However, as Namara (2006) notes, collaborative resource management remains a common approach to protected area management in Africa.

Collaborative resource management is a pluralist approach to managing natural resources. It involves some type of partnership of different stakeholders in various roles and its end goals are environmental conservation, sustainable use of natural resources, the equitable sharing of resources, related benefits and responsibilities. Collaborative resource management further seeks to create agreements between local communities or groups of resource users and the agency with jurisdiction over the resources which are usually under some form of statutory authority (Barrow et al. 2001).

Barrow et al. (2000) claim that collaborative resource management in Uganda was as a result of the use rural people made of timber and other non-timber forest products which were originally carried out under the customary arrangements of forest reserves. Unfortunately under the customary arrangements few or no responsibilities were attached to these permit based rights of access, and so the system became open to abuse, both by the authorities and local people. As such, it became imperative for the government of Uganda to put to practice this new phenomenon (Barrow et al. 2000).

The designation of Bwindi forest reserve as a national park in 1991 brought the forest under a new management regime (Namara & Nsabagasani 2003). Suddenly, community access to the park and use of its resources was stopped.

Entrance to the park without permission from the park management was henceforth illegal, as was extraction of any forest resource by community members. This led to serious conflicts between the park management and the local communities on one hand and park management and local government on the other (Mutebi 2003). Barrow et al. (2000) indicate that the reality of increasing pressures on protected areas from local communities and the apparent impossibility of fending them off using traditional law enforcement practices were recognized. Coupled with government support for both human rights and the decentralization of power to the grassroots, the ability of the protected area managers to ignore the demand of local people weakened. Barrow et al. (2000) note that while the previous management policies were highly centralized and based on paramilitary policing of wildlife resources, the Uganda Wildlife statute of 1996 and consequently the 1999 policy is significantly different in emphasis and tone;

- It obligates UWA to involve local communities and to ensure that conservation goes towards rural economies.
- UWA is obligated to consult through public meetings on the development of management plans for protected areas.
- UWA has to share 20% of its park entry fees with local government for the development of communities living around protected areas.
- The granting of user rights to community groups and individuals including; hunting, farming, ranching, trading in wildlife and wildlife products, using wild-life for educational or scientific purposes, medicinal experiments, development and general extraction.

Consequently, park management in collaboration with NGOs like CARE initiated the joint planning programmes in 1992 which started with the formulation of the first General Management Plan (GMP) for the park (UWA 2001). During its formulation, the communities were consulted on how the park

community issues should be addressed to foster development and conservation. The negotiations around resource use and access were undertaken in the early 1990s. These negotiations looked at actual benefits to the local communities and the power relations between the community institutions. The negotiations also had broader implications in that they began to open lines of communication between park authorities and local communities at a time of deep mistrust and hostility (Worah 2001 in Mutebi 2003).

These initiatives also created various entry points for local communities and local government to actively participate in the management of the park. The various actors and their activities demanded coordination to ensure harmony and a shared responsibility in the management of the park. On recommendations of key stakeholders, UWA sanctioned the piloting of collaborative resource management in BINP starting with a few initiatives, notably the multiple resource use initiative (Mutebi 2003). It is claimed that many local resource users attach high value to the fact that they can now enter the forest unchallenged by park staff, whereas previously this was an offence punishable by law (Namara & Nsabagasani 2003).

2.4.1 Implementation of collaborative resource management at BINP

As part of the statutory process of consulting with communities prior to national park declaration, Uganda National Parks (now UWA) was forced to accept that it would continue to allow access to forest resources by local people (Barrow et al. 2000). Consequently, building on the experience of joint forest management in India and other more successful stories like the Nepal forest user groups (Borrini-Feyerabend 1996), a community conservation and development program was established with two main objectives. First, it sought the sustainable management of park resources through joint efforts of UWA and the local people.

Second, it aimed at ensuring that benefits accruing from park conservation were shared with the local communities who incur the biggest cost of conservation from sharing a boundary with the park. Thus, agreements between UWA and community user groups were made to provide for access to certain resources within the national Parks as the notion of collaborative resource management continued to evolve. Bwindi pioneered various means to share the benefits of the national park with its boundary communities.

The earliest efforts to involve local people at BINP were pioneered by CARE-Uganda through its Development Through Conservation (DTC) program in 1992 (Wild & Mutebi 1996). Since then, community conservation and thus the involvement of local people at BINP has been a gradual process with different elements being introduced using different approaches and at different time periods. According to Wild & Mutebi (1996), access to valued plant resources for use in both handcrafts and medicine at BINP has helped to support and strengthen traditional institutions as well as stimulate the development of new ones.

However, it is claimed that this arrangement provides a limited number of resources to a limited number of people but places a significantly greater reciprocal responsibility on the shoulders of local communities, such as responsibilities on patrolling for illegal activities, reporting law breakers within the community to park staff as well as assisting in extinguishing forest fires (Blomley & Namara 2003). On the other hand, an essential and initial step towards distributing conservation benefits to the local people was the establishment of an effective communication channel, the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) between the park and its neighbours to identify and discuss issues regarding sustainable resource management and work towards solutions.

This Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) system was a result of an extensive consultation process aimed at linking the park management team, local government and the communities. Formulation of this Community Protected

Area Institution presented the first forum for park management and local people to meet and discuss problems. It was also a major step forward in mending community–park relations as they were allowed to participate in the drafting of the first park general management plan (GMP) for Bwindi- Mgahinga which is only done every 10 years. Previous park management plans at BINP had been prepared either by hired expatriates or by park staff. Thus, they were criticized by some scholars for being one-sided because park neighbours were not consulted and their views were not addressed (Namara 2006).

This scenario is also echoed by Goldman (2003) who notes that in most of Africa, local communities remain peripheral in defining the ways in which conservation is viewed and nature managed. Borrini-Feyerabend and Sandwith (2003 in Namara 2006) contend that this is not only unique to Uganda, as it is documented that many Protected area authorities in Africa remain unwilling to involve local people in genuine partnerships, which involve dialogue, shared assessment of problems and opportunities and fair negotiation of decisions and actions. Wells and McShane (2004) add that conservation agencies prefer to keep local people at a distance.

This diverts from WCED's definition of participation as “an active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of the development project with a view of enhancing their well being in terms of income, personal growth, self reliance or other values they cherish”. UWA has therefore instituted a revenue sharing scheme at BINP that shares 20% of park entrance fees with the park boundary parishes. This money should support development within front-line boundary parishes that bear the brunt of park related problems. As a result of this arrangement, Park management enjoys enhanced support for BINP from its immediate neighbours.

This arrangement, however, makes it the role of the local people to stay out of the protected areas in order to preserve biodiversity by accepting compensation or development benefits in return. Further still, the park in collaboration with its

NGO partners such as CARE, have introduced a small grant scheme to enable individual families to generate income to supplement their traditional activities. People have been supported in cultivation, agro forestry for firewood, poles, rearing animals and projects in poultry, goat keeping, rabbits and bee keeping with hopes of reducing the pressure people exert on the fragile park resources (Chhetri et al. 2004). UWA also tries to give employment opportunities to the local youth living around the park.

These opportunities include employment as park rangers, guides, porters and small temporary contracts such as boundary maintenance and camp cleaning. For instance, at BINP over 90% of the employees come from local communities (Charles Atuhe, pers.comm.). Despite this, collaboration at BINP is largely still perceived by UWA as a privilege delegated to the local communities. Mutebi (2003) observes, it is possible for the community members to recognize the efforts UWA makes to solicit and improve local participation in the management of Bwindi, but they still feel powerless before the Park Management.

2.5 Summary

I have presented theories on power and participation in this chapter. I have discussed their scholarly arguments in regard to natural resource conservation and have also demonstrated their apparent relationship with the concept of collaborative resource management. I have also briefly mentioned how I intend to use these theories to answer my research question. Finally I have presented earlier research findings on the history of collaborative resource management at BINP.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I start by providing a description of the research design, including the reason for the choice of methodological approach used. Thereafter, I tell the reasons why I chose the case of BINP and concentrate the study in Kabale District. Furthermore, I introduce the informants and then I describe the methods I have applied for data collection. Finally, I discuss ethical considerations for the study, as well as the reliability, validity, self reflection and limitations of the research.

3.2 Research Design

Qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative procedures provide a means of accessing unquantifiable aspects about people by observations and interviews. As a result, qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others as well as to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Berg 2004:7).

In this study, I chose to apply a qualitative approach basing on a single case study as a research strategy because I found this to be the best approach to answer my research questions on how local people involvement in collaborative resource management can be described and evaluated. Yin (1989:23) defines a case study as "*an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used".*

A case study is used as a research strategy in many settings, including political science, sociology, organizational and management studies, and city and regional

planning research (Yin 1989:13). A case study is often one of the preferred strategies when conducting explanatory qualitative studies revolving around questions of 'how' and 'why'. This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence. While the historical method is preferred when dealing with the past, case studies are preferred when dealing with contemporary events. It relies on many of the same techniques as the historical method, but adds two more sources of evidence which are: direct observation and systematic interviewing (Yin 1989:18-19). Case studies are usually associated with a specific place, community or organization in order to shade light on a phenomenon (Bryman 2001).

I chose BINP as my case because it is considered to be a collaborative resource management 'show case' for Uganda since it is the country's first park in which the idea of local participation in park management was institutionalized (Namara & Nsabagasani 2003; Namara 2006). BINP is unique because its aspect of gorilla tourism contributes 54% of the total revenue collected from the country's tourism industry.

BINP is also an exemplary case of collaborative resource management in Uganda because these initiatives have been taken to other parks in Uganda from Bwindi (Namara 2006). Namara (2006) argues that BINP is not only the pioneer site for this initiative in sustainable resource management, but it has also registered a certain degree of success in terms of resolving local people - park management conflicts which resulted from its conversion into a national park. Therefore, I find it a particular interesting case to see how local people are involved and to what extent in these collaborative initiatives at such a resourceful national park.

3.3 The area of study and the informants

3.3.1 Selection of Kabale District as the study area

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) is shared by three districts (Kabale, Kanungu and Kisoro) in south western Uganda. I chose to concentrate on Kabale district as my study area due to logistical reasons. Here I had the easiest access to the park, communities, accommodation and communication. Besides, I am fluent in the local language (Rukiga) that is spoken in Kabale; while I do not speak the most common language (Rufumbira) used in Kisoro and Kanungu Districts.

Due to the need to carry out in-depth studies when doing a case study, I had to interview a small number of people so as to attain a thick description of the phenomenon. Six parishes in Kabale district border BINP out of a total of 23 parishes shared among the three districts. Since the participatory phenomenon under study is a dynamic process which changes over time, I randomly selected two parishes (Nyamabare and Mushanje) from the six.

Two villages were then randomly selected from each parish and my local interviewees were also randomly selected from within these villages. Figure 1 shows a map of the parishes surrounding BINP including my study sites of Nyamabare and Mushanje.

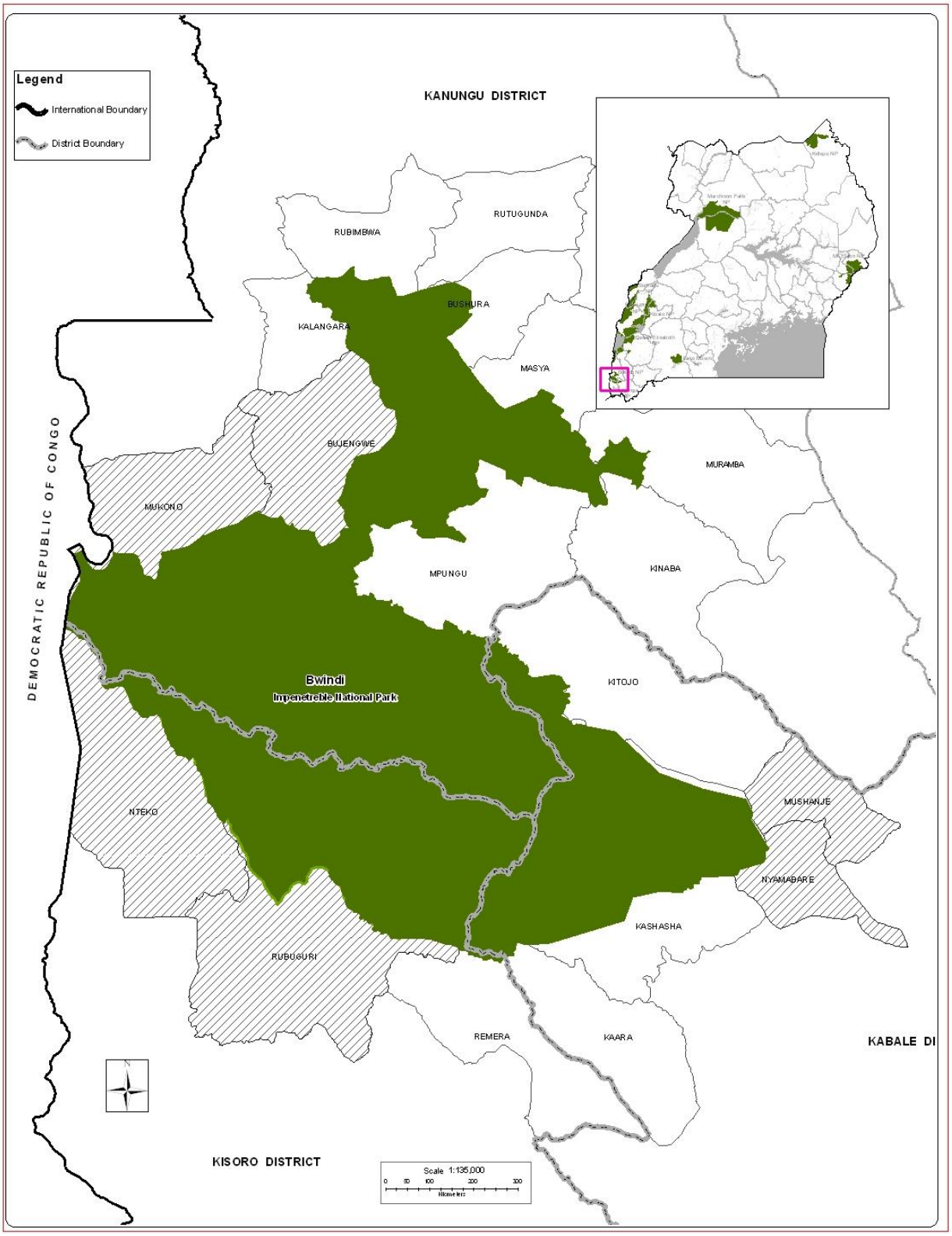

Figure 1: Location of my sample parishes (Nyamabare and Mushanje) and the other parishes that border BINP. Inset is a map of Uganda showing the location of BINP.

3.3.2 Selection of the informants

The topic of the study meant that I saw it useful to interview local people and key informants from the implementing government authority (UWA), other NGO's as well as local politicians. As such, my informants were categorized into two groups. I selected people living in the villages closest to the park and whose day to day activities are related to the park as local interviewees. Key informants comprised of UWA staff at various positions. Most of these are from around Bwindi while I also interviewed officials at the UWA headquarters in Kampala. Furthermore, I interviewed locally elected political leaders and other representatives from conservation NGO's such as CARE, BMCT around BINP as well as members of the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI).

A total of thirty six interviews were conducted. Ten were with key informants and twenty six were conducted with local interviewees from the general community. Finding the local people on whom semi-structured interviews were conducted was relatively easy as it was a random activity from one household to another. However as many as twenty six of the interviewees were male while only ten were female. This was the case because most households were headed by males who were at home by the time of the interviews while the women were away tending to the gardens. Therefore, in order to end up with a reasonable number of interviews with women, I actively searched for female interviewees in the end.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

This thesis is based on empirical data collected from different sources during my fieldwork carried out in the months of November and December 2008. Yin (1989) contends that the benefits of different sources of evidence in a study can be maximized by following certain principles. If used properly, these principles can help with the problems of establishing validity and reliability in the case study. First, multiple sources of evidence should be used. This allows the

researcher to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and observational issues. Second, a case study database should be created. For case studies, this database is likely to be created in form of notes that may take a variety of forms. It could be a result of interviews, observations or document analysis, and be handwritten, typed, or in form of audiotapes.

The third principle to be followed is to maintain a chain of evidence. This allows an external observer to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate conclusions (Yin 1989:95-102). Thus in my study, I applied various sources of evidence which included previously published documents on BINP, the interviews I conducted and participant observation. Robson (2002:188) observes, the kind of information sought, from whom and under what circumstances determines what method or methods are to be used. Since this study sought to explore the practices and perceptions of local people involvement in the various aspects of collaborative resource management at BINP, I found it necessary to use three different methods of data collection.

First, I used secondary documents as a source of information to try and understand how participation in collaborative resource management was initially intended to be. Secondly, I conducted interviews, both of household individuals and key informants to uncover the practices as well as local people's perceptions on their degrees of influence in the decision-making process. Third, participant observation was used as a method to facilitate the in-depth conceptualization of the actual participatory processes that go on at BINP, and this also allowed me to pursue other new interesting issues that could have been silent in the interview process.

3.4.1 Documents

According to Scott (in Bryman 2001), when discussing the different kinds of documents used in social sciences, distinctions between personal documents and official documents should be made. The latter can be further classified in terms of private as opposed to state documents. Personal documents can be diaries,

letters, and autobiographies, but it can also be visual objects like photography. The official state documents are a source of a great deal of information through statistical and qualitative information which is based on reasonably large representative samples.

Official documents from private sources include company documents, which may be annual reports, policy reports, mission statements, press releases and public relations material either in printed form or on the internet. Scott (in Bryman 2001:6) further suggests another set of useful distinctions which relate to the criteria for assessing the quality of the documents because a lot of questions are raised about the reliability and validity of official documented data. Thus, four check points have been suggested for this purpose since it is not entirely possible to abandon the use of documents in qualitative studies:

- Authenticity. Is the evidence genuine and of unquestionable origin?
- Credibility. Is the evidence free from error and distortion?
- Representativeness. Is the evidence typical of its kind, and, if not, is the extent of its untypical known?
- Meaning. Is the evidence clear and comprehensible?

In my study the documents I have carefully analyzed are mainly official documents from UWA related to the management policies of BINP, such as park management plans and policy reports. I have also analyzed previously published studies of BINP and newspaper articles.

I have used these documents to compare and compliment data on the political aims and strategies for management of BINP especially, its history, management styles, power and participatory processes.

3.4.2 Interviews

Interviewing may be defined simply as a conversation with a specific purpose of gathering information. At least three major categories of interviews may be identified: the standardized (formal or structured) interview, the unstandardized (informal or nondirective) interview, and the semi-standardized (guided semi - structured or focused) interview. In the standardized interview, the interviewers are required to ask subjects to respond to each question exactly as worded. The rationale is to offer each subject approximately the same stimulus so that responses to questions, ideally, will be comparable (Bryman 2001).

In unstandardized interviews, the interviewers begin with the assumption that they do not know in advance what all the necessary questions are. They also assume that not all subjects will necessarily find equal meaning in like-worded questions. The interviewers must develop, adapt, and generate questions and follow-up probes appropriate to each given situation and the central purpose of the investigation. This will result in questions arising from interactions during the interview itself.

The semi-standardized interview, involves the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and special topics. These questions are typically asked in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers are permitted to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions. In my study, I chose to conduct semi-standardized in-depth interviews in order to gather information that would have been difficult to obtain if I had only used observation and secondary documents.

For instance stories told by my interviewees about their participation and perceptions on the phenomenon I was investigating. Thus, this became my natural method of choice for interviews. Bryman (2001) stresses the importance of face to face interaction with respondents because it provides a unique opportunity for the interviewer to inquire deeply into the topic of interest and explore the complexity and richness of the interviewees' opinions, cultures,

values, experiences and challenges as they lead their lives. I had a structure and was aware of what type of questions I wanted to ask my interviewees, but I was also willing to be flexible and let them share with me what interested them most or their concerns outside my questionnaire. This meant I had to spend longer time carrying out the interviews than I would otherwise have but I was comfortable with it.

First, I felt that it was respectful and it also helped me to maintain an open relaxed way of communicating. On an earlier pre-field visit, I attempted to meet with a few local people and their leaders such as elders and local council representatives in order to create a rapport which enabled my interviewees to relax while I conducted the interviews because they began to view me as one of their own. Secondly, I was genuinely interested in understanding the issue at hand from their point of view especially with an added advantage of having been able to speak the native Rukiga language which we used as the main medium of communication. Some few interviews, particularly with key informants were however, conducted in English.

The local interviews lasted between 30 minutes to 1 hour where as interviews with key informants took about 1 hour to 2 hours. I used a digital voice recorder to record the interviews of both villagers, key informants of UWA and local politicians. The interviews were later transcribed and analyzed. Weiss (1994) supports the use of recorders although permission from the informants must be sought beforehand. He argues that note taking alone "tends to simplify and flatten informants' speech patterns" (Weiss 1995:54). I asked everybody for prior consent to record the interviews and I assured the interviewees of confidentiality. Out of the twelve key informants, three declined to be recorded. I respected this view and took notes instead of recording these interviews.

Later on, I discovered that the recorded interviews provided richer empirical data than the three interviews where I had to rely on my notes for analysis. It was not easy to recall exactly the interview that I had scribbled down as I struggled to

listen, write, guide and also ask questions at the same time. Although Bryman (2001) observes that it takes considerably a huge amount of time to transcribe all recorded interviews, often using up to six hours of transcription for just one hour of audio recording, I found it to be most helpful in data analysis since I did not have to struggle in recalling what my interviewees had told me.

3.4.3 Participant observation

Bryman (2001) contends, one of the key and yet most difficult steps in ethnography is gaining access to a social setting that is relevant to the research problem in which one is interested. The way in which access is approached differs along several dimensions, one of which is whether the setting is a relatively open one or a relatively closed one (Bell 1969 in Bryman 2001). The access problem can be eased by assuming a covert role. In this case the fact that one is a researcher is not disclosed. Gaining access to social settings is a crucial first step in ethnographic research, in that, without access, one's research plans may be halted in their tracks.

Bryman (2001) observes that access is not complete when one makes contact and gains entry to the group; one also needs access to people because gaining access to an organization does not mean that one will have an easy passage through the organization. People will have suspicions, perhaps seeing one as an instrument of top management or authority. They will worry that what they say or do may get back to bosses, colleagues or those in authority especially should the researcher interact with them while they carry out "illegal" activities like fetching woodlots from the park. If they have worries, they may go along with the research process but sabotage it, by engaging in deception and misinformation.

Ethnographers may attain help from individuals who act as guides and reference points with in the communities. These individuals may provide access to the group that is to be studied and may become key informants that provide information and direct the ethnographer to situations, events, or people likely to be helpful to the progress of the investigation (Bryman 2001:292-297). I relied

on some key informants from UWA, the local leaders and some local people to gain access to local communities, UWA documents and sites. These key informants also provided me with information regarding the role UWA plays in the management of BINP in our informal discussions which I was able to verify through participant observation.

For instance, in one of the villages neighboring the park, a local guide told me that he did not attend UWA-village meetings for participation in the decision-making process because he considered these meetings to be avenues for the park officials to tell the local people what to do and what not do regarding the park without meaningful dialogue. I then verified his narrative through participant observation at one of the revenue sharing mobilization meetings that I attended while in the field. At this meeting, I found out that the meeting had been organized by UWA officials and local participation was very minimal since those who had attended were quiet most of the time.

I also attended a meeting with the Human Gorilla conflict resolution group (HUGO), a two day workshop in Kabale organized by ITFC on research about conservation of Bwindi and other protected areas in the Rift Valley region including Rwanda and Republic of Congo where I mostly engaged in participant observation. I also participated in Gorilla trekking activities along a 6 km trail in the park where I had the opportunity to engage park rangers and porters in informal discussions about the phenomenon I was studying. As such, for purposes of checking and validating information given by my interviewees, the participant observation method became imperative.

Figure 2: A photo of the community in one of the village meetings I attended.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Social scientists have an ethical obligation to their colleagues, their study population, and the larger society. This is because social scientists go into the social lives of other human beings. It is often imperative that the privacy, rights and welfare of the people studied must be considered (Berg 2004:43). This section highlights the important ethical concerns that were associated with this particular study.

3.5.1 Prior to the Field

It is ethical and of paramount importance to seek written and certified permission to carry out any study. My working title and research instruments had been approved by Centre for Environment and Development (SUM), University of Oslo. On arrival in Uganda, the site of the proposed research, I sought permission to conduct the study from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), which has the mandate to authorize research to be carried out in the country on behalf of the state. Permission was granted to me in form of a research permit (Appendix 1).

3.5.2 During the field study

One of the most serious ethical concerns during a field study is the assurance that subjects are voluntarily involved and informed of all potential risks. The concept of voluntary participation in social science research is an important ideal. On the other hand, Berg (2004:58) gives two justifications for not using voluntary participants. First, if all social research included only those persons who eagerly volunteered to participate, there would be no way of determining if these types of persons were similar to others who lacked this eagerness to volunteer. Secondly, volunteer subjects may in reality be coerced or manipulated into volunteering as respondents in many cases.

Consequently, research in many public institutions and communities may be conducted covertly if it is to be meaningful, but also it is argued that researchers must define for themselves what is ethical. However, I clearly identified my self to all my informants, explained my topic of study and its purpose prior to the interviews. I also tried as much as possible to blend in and become a part of them since I did not have an interpreter during my stay in the field.

3.5.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

According to Berg (2004), confidentiality and anonymity are sometimes mistakenly used as synonyms, but they have quite distinct meanings. Confidentiality is an active attempt to remove from the research data any elements that might indicate the subjects' identities.

Anonymity, however, literally means that the subjects remain nameless. In most qualitative research, anonymity is virtually nonexistent because the subjects are known to the investigators. Thus, it is important to provide subjects with a high degree of confidentiality. Names of places in association with a description of certain characteristics about an individual may make it possible to discover a subject's identity. It is important to always be extremely careful about how one discusses one’s subjects and the settings as well (Berg 2004:65).

During the period of this study, I asked the interviewees' permission to use the information recorded in my final report; they all agreed to this which was a good thing. However on probing further, if they would like their names to be revealed in the report, all local interviewees accepted and all the key informants preferred anonymity. However, the study has some sensitive revelations. I therefore, decided to keep all the interviewees anonymous and also to make sure that interviews are quoted and referred to in ways that also ensure confidentiality.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Reliability and validity are important criteria in establishing and assessing the quality of research for a quantitative researcher, but there has been some discussion among qualitative researchers concerning their relevance for a qualitative research. It has been argued that reliability; validity and generalizability are different kinds of measures of the quality, rigor and wider potential of research, which are achieved according to certain methodological and disciplinary conventions and principles (Bryman 2001). Writing about reliability and validity, Bryman (2001:270-272) refers to LeCompte and Goetz who write about the following:

3.6.1 Reliability

- External reliability, meaning the degree to which a study can be replicated. They suggest that a qualitative researcher replicating ethnographic research needs to adopt a similar social role to that adopted by the original researcher.

- Internal reliability, meaning whether members of the research team agree about what they see and hear in cases when there is more than one observer.

It is important for the readers of my findings to bear in mind that due to the dynamic nature of this study, findings and conclusions depend much more on the

type of informants and the existing situation at BINP at the time of the study. Nonetheless, the reliability of my study can be contextualized in the rigor and meticulous care taken in selecting the appropriate methods, informants and data analysis in order to minimize bias. I believe that I have done my best to convince the reader that my interpretations are reasonable and supported by the empirical data collected.

3.6.2 Validity

- Internal validity, meaning whether there is a good match between researchers' observations and the theoretical ideas they develop. Internal validity tends to strengthen ethnographic research because the prolonged time of participation in the social life of a group studied allows the researcher to ensure a high level of congruence between concepts and observations (Bryman 2001).

- External validity, referring to the degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings. However this may be a problem for qualitative researchers because they tend to us case studies and small samples.

In my study, I used a three method triangulation system in order to collect valid data. These were documents, interviews and participant observation. My intention of using more than one method was to try and minimize the usual irregularities, sampling errors and over sights associated with data collected in qualitative studies. For example, through the participant observation technique I was able to compare and relate data previously collected by the interview method; thus internal validity can be claimed in this case.

3.7 Data analysis

To analyze the empirical data collected throughout the field study, I started with transcribing the recorded audio into a manually hand written format. This

involved first writing word by word without change of meaning as recorded directly from (Rukiga) the local language to English. The files that had been recorded were identified using real names of the interviewees, places of interview, time and duration. As mentioned earlier, I had three specific aspects of collaborative resource management namely; Revenue sharing, multiple resource use and problem animal management and these were the initial categories I used during the interviews to solicit local people descriptions and perceptions of their participation at BINP.

When I had my written transcripts ready, I tried to identify the three main aspects in each text by thoroughly reading each interview and writing simple notes on the right hand margin about common themes. Later on I realized that there were other surprising, interesting and relevant statements that were similar or different among the different interviews, especially when I asked them about their involvement in the decision-making process. This meant that, I had to make copies of interviews with similar perceptions or understandings to form sub-themes which I color coded that were relevant to the research questions. This helped me to further organize and present coherent data relevant to the research aim of the study.

3.8 Self reflection on the field work

Weiss (1994:128) comments that:

> "*The interviewer is a work partner, not a therapist, not a friend, not an appraising audience".*

I had attempted qualitative research before at my bachelor degree level, so I assumed that I had quite some experience. However, this study was highly explorative in nature, which was a bit different from what I had attempted before. During my field study, through the participant observation method and interactions with the local people at BINP, the situation became very real to me and more often I found myself anxious about the interviews with some of my

respondents. Thus, I had to draw a line between what was a formal interview during the process and what "our" usual informal interactions were.

3.9 Limitations

Prior to the field work, I had carefully read and analyzed relevant written documents on the issue of local participation both at the international level and in particular on my case study, BINP (mainly Blomley 1994; Fischer 1995; Pretty 1995; Adams et al. 2001; Cooke & Kothari 2001; Mutebi 2003; Namara & Nsabagasani 2003). This created a situation where I felt like I had a fair idea of what to expect from my interviewees' or at least I thought I did.

Upon my arrival in the field, I was amazed to realize that my own perceptions based on my study of the literature about local participation in collaborative resource management were completely different from what my interviewees had to say. In such a situation, it is possible to ask leading questions while conducting interviews, so I tried hard to refrain from that and to gain as good as possible knowledge about my interviewees' perspectives.I also up-dated, revised and in some instances abandoned the use of my questionnaires in preference for an open approach initially inquiring about broad thematic aspects of collaborative resource management while probing and guiding the development and emergence of questions, theories and explanations through out the interviews.

Furthermore, fieldwork does not always conform to plan as many other researchers will say. During my pilot study, I visited all the three districts namely Kabale, Kisoro and Kanungu, where BINP is located. I decided that I would conduct fieldwork in at least one parish and one village neighboring the park boundary in each of the three districts to have somewhat a representative outcome in my findings. Unfortunately, in my pursuit of trying as much as possible to fit in the field situation, I fell ill due to the harsh conditions. As a consequence, I had to change plans and concentrate the study on Kabale district.

This therefore means that the results can not be representative of all the different practices and perceptions of local people involvement in collaborative resource management around BINP across all of the three clearly distinct districts. However, as Yin (1989) puts it, basing on results from one site in which a few interviewees are carefully selected enables a researcher to investigate and describe the phenomenon as it seems in its actual social setting rather than in a laboratory. Thus, the findings of this research based on Kabale district can contribute to the knowledge and on-going international and national debates as to whether or not local participation in protected area management is actually practiced in accordance to the claims of the rhetoric.

3.10 Summary

In this chapter, I have argued that the qualitative case research approach is the most appropriate choice to answer the research question. More specifically, I have shown that it is appropriate in this study to use document reviews, informant interviews and participant observation.

The next chapter presents research findings on how local people at BINP are involved in the three main aspects of collaborative resource management.

4. Involving local people in the three main aspects of collaborative resource management at BINP

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present and discuss findings of data collected on the practices and perceptions of local people involvement in collaborative resource management in Uganda at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP). The three main aspects of collaborative resource management in which local people are involved are revenue sharing, multiple resource use and problem animal management. I address objective number one by describing each of these three aspects in terms of how local people are involved and their perceptions. The findings are presented and discussed using theories on power and participation from chapter two. I also compare my findings to other researchers' conclusions from studying the same or similar cases.

4.2 Aspect one: Revenue sharing

Scott (1998) holds that to varying degrees and through a range of approaches, the sharing of benefits, responsibilities and decision making powers among some or all of the stakeholders is the underlying principle of collaborative resource management. The Constitution of Uganda specifies for the involvement of all stakeholders in the conservation of natural resources. These stakeholders can be project financiers, policy makers, implementers, local communities, park care takers or managers.

In relation to this, a key informant working with UWA said that, "it is enshrined in our 1995 constitution that local communities must be involved in one way or the other in collaborative resource management initiatives," ***(****Key informant UWA).* Subsequently, in 1996 a number of conservation institutions and NGOs recommended to Uganda wildlife Authority (UWA) to involve local people in

the management of the park if natural resources were to be sustainably managed for the benefit of the people of Uganda. Among these were conservation partners like World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC), International Gorilla Conservation program (IGCP), CARE International and the World Bank's Global Environmental Facility (GEF) (Mutebi 2003).

Following this recommendation, UWA embarked on various collaborative resource management initiatives passed under the Uganda Wildlife Statute 1996 which included revenue sharing and access to forest resources as well as providing employment opportunities for the local people as park rangers, guides and porters. BINP was the pilot park for such initiatives. One of these initiatives is the revenue sharing scheme which heavily relies on park revenue collected from the massive gorilla tourism project at BINP.

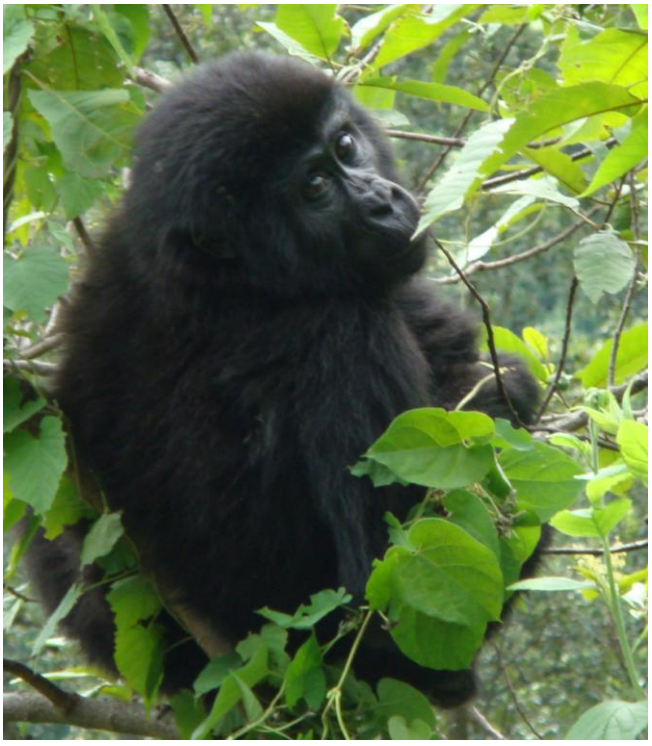

Figure 3: Photo of a mountain gorilla at BINP taken by researcher.

The revenue sharing aspect encompasses two elements of collection and allocation of revenues. The element of collection involves first of all the principle that 20% of total park entry fees are to be collected by UWA annually and remitted to the local communities. Section 70 (4) of the Uganda Wildlife Statute, 1996 states that "The Board shall, subject to sub-section (3) of section 23 pay 20% of park entry fees collected from a protected area to the local communities through the local Government". In addition, a new scheme known as the 'gorilla levy fund' has recently been initiated. In this scheme USD 5 from each gorilla trekking permit is to be collected for distribution to the local people. One key informant told me the following about the yet to be implemented USD 5 Gorilla levy fund:

> *The USD 5 issue originated from the realization that the 20% of the gate entrance fee which the local people received was too little. Out of the 500 US dollars the foreigners pay as the gorilla-tracking fee, 30 US dollars of this is what is collected as the gate entrance, and the other 470 US dollars is collected by UWA as part of its annual income to facilitate other activities. So the local people share 20% of the 30 dollars and not of the full amount. So we found that, it is quite small. Now the arrangement is that the communities will get the additional 5 US dollars from each permit added to their twenty percent (Key informant UWA).*

In the element of revenue allocation, the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) at Local Council II (parish level) plays a central role. CPIs are responsible for articulating local communities' interests in regard to revenue sharing issues to both the district and UWA officials. They screen and recommend projects for funding within the communities. The CPIs decide on the amount of funds to be disbursed per project and when. They also identify what parishes will benefit depending on how much revenue sharing funds have been received from UWA in a given year. In addition, the CPIs are responsible for monitoring and ensuring that revenue sharing funds are not diverted to other programs.

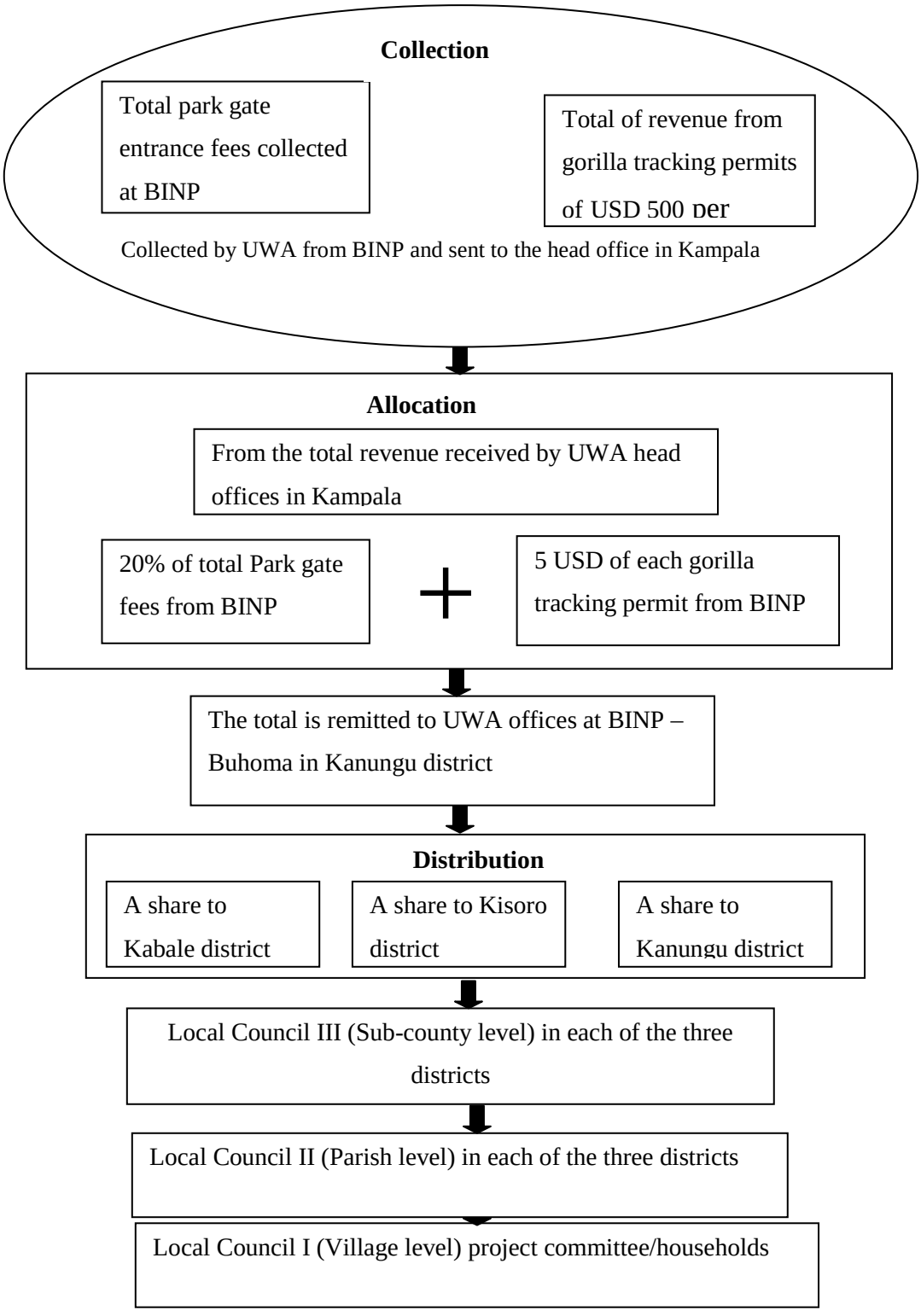

Figure 4: A flowchart showing revenue sharing channels among BINP communities

4.2.1 Practices and perceptions

According to the Uganda revenue sharing policy (UWA 2000), revenue sharing in conservation is intended to ensure that local people living adjacent to protected areas become positive towards conservation by obtaining benefits from the existence of these areas, improve their welfare and ultimately strengthen partnership between UWA and the local communities. Furthermore, according to information I have received from UWA, the total revenue collected from 20% of the park entry fees of BINP alone for the period of the year 2008 amounts to 103 million Uganda shillings (USD 54, 487). This is to be shared among the 23 front line parishes surrounding the park. This means that on average each parish receives about USD 2, 275. However, UWA expects an increase in the money remitted to the local people starting with this year (2009) as a result of the advocacy of CARE-Uganda. It is this NGO that proposed and advocated for an additional USD 5 per gorilla trekking permit to be saved in the Gorilla levy fund.

A key informant from UWA told me that, they were ready to distribute about 298 million Uganda shillings (157, 642 US dollars) which has been accumulated under the USD 5 Gorilla levy fund since 2006 August to June 2008. The three districts sharing BINP namely; Kanungu, Kisoro and Kabale will benefit from this money. In spite of all this, I found a common complaint among many of my local interviewees about the basis of the 20% of the gate entrance fees as revenue sharing money remitted to them. The local informants contested this 20% and kept on agitating for a substantial increase in this percentage. They told me that they were frustrated because their pleas to UWA officials had met a dead end. Blomely et al. (2001) observes that the 20% revenue sharing scheme has been questioned by many of the local people as well as the fact that it is not received regularly (every year) as stipulated in the revenue sharing policy. One local interviewee put it this way:

> *20% of the gate collection is little, UWA should also give us part of the money collected from the people who get licenses to carry out other*

activities within the park. We also do not receive this money regularly most of the time (Interviewee 12).

Interestingly one of my key informants from UWA seemed to appreciate this complaint from the local people that the 20% was too little to be substantially shared. He said:

Our local people argue that 20% of the entry fees seem to be too small. That the parks, Bwindi inclusive, should give 20% of the total amount we collect. They also say that they are aware that the Gorilla tracking permit fees are high especially at BINP. But what they receive is the percentage of the gate entrance and not of the total park collection, thus they continuously complain that it is too small to be reasonable enough for them to share (Key informant UWA).

I confronted an official from UWA with the opinion I had heard from local people that they think the revenues they gain are low. His response to this was that their 'hands are tied' because of the Ugandan law that clearly order that just 20% of the gate entrance fees are to be remitted to local people. This can only be changed by a parliamentary review of the current revenue sharing policy. Even though UWA may feel the plight of the local people, they cannot do anything about the existing 20% from the gate entry fees. However, in spite of the little monetary value attached to the 20% revenue sharing, the impression from a few local people I interviewed was that they were happy with the communal projects that had been realized from this revenue sharing scheme. One of the local leaders had this to say:

We have got a school built out of the revenue sharing money. We only provided stones and labor which we were paid for. We also have a hospital in Kashasha parish. From revenue sharing, my family and relatives applied for a tree planting project and we got the money. (Interviewee 12)

These types of communal projects like schools, health units and community centers were what the local governments at the district level had initially decided to use the money for within each parish. However local people that were living closest to the park, whose gardens had been frequently destroyed by problem animals demanded for a shift from communal projects to individual homestead income generating projects. Later on, these types of public revenue sharing projects where replaced with a system of allocating revenues to selected household projects. I asked one park official in our interview to describe to me the process of allocating this revenue to the communities. His response was:

> *Specifically for revenue sharing there is no laid down guideline which guides how the beneficiaries can be arrived at. As long as these people are from within the neighboring parish they are already part of the beneficiaries except that on our part we have been encouraging or convincing the local officials that their main focus should be on the people residing in the very first villages. These are the people who bear the costs of conservation most when their crops are damaged by wildlife and it is them that waste their time while they are guarding their gardens. (Key informant UWA)*

Another key informant also put it this way:

> *On previous occasions, we have had problems with this money. Its sharing has been surrounded by politics, corruption and nepotism. When we have released this money, it has been used along those lines and when we come to meet the local people who have worked with us to protect the park; we have found that the aim or purpose of this revenue sharing has not been achieved. We find people complaining and asking us how they benefit from the park. We tell them there is revenue money that UWA shares with them. Are you aware of it, we ask? The local people say they are not aware of this. (Interviewee 5)*

When I asked my local interviewees to describe how this revenue sharing was implemented in their respective parishes, one respondent said:

> *The Local Council committee decides since they know the families affected most and those that boarder the park. They can be about 20 families and we cannot give the money to all of them since it is not enough. We therefore, vote for the families to get the money or the goats. Beneficiaries are changed every turn and it is the Local Council II that decides not the park officials. (Interviewee 7)*

On the other hand, a few other interviewees gave different accounts of practice of the revenue sharing aspect in their villages as below:

> *For us from Mukono village what we do is to let people living closest to the park be the first ones to receive the revenue sharing money. We mark the household were we have stopped giving the goats in the first phase and start from there in the next phase. Now, we intend to start from where the second phase stopped. (Interviewee 19)*

Another interviewee said to me that, "In my village it is through a random process whereby numbers have been assigned to households and the lucky ones have been drawn from a raffle" (Interviewee 13). As such, these different descriptive accounts reveal that the revenue sharing scheme is marred by mismanagement and no clarity on its execution by the Local Councils (LCs) and Community Protected Area Institutions (CPI). From this description it seems as though there is no proper stipulated mechanism for the distribution of the 20% revenue collected from the gate entry fees to the local communities. This may be the root cause for the local claims of disorganization, corruption and nepotism by members of the Community Protected Area Institutions.

On another note, UWA tries to address this problem of relying on the inefficient Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) system by asking communities to spare 10% of the total revenue each parish receives so that the members of the

Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) can be facilitated and motivated to do their work. UWA also hopes that this would help solve the problem of corruption and nepotism by Community Protected Area Institution members. This I observed at the village revenue sharing mobilization meeting which I attended when a park official reminded the local people of the importance of this 10% arrangement and requested them to consider it once again. The official said:

> *Last year, you remember how you were supposed to receive 3 million Uganda shillings (US $ 1,587) but received 2.7 million Uganda shillings (US $ 1,428). What do you think caused that? We agreed that 10% of the revenue sharing be given to the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) to facilitate their meetings and deliberations. So if you still want them to continue deliberating on your behalf, agree to set aside some of the revenue sharing money for this institution fund. (Revenue sharing mobilization meeting)*

Almost immediately after the park official had made this comment, a Community Protected Area Institution member stood up and emphasized this suggestion to the local people in the meeting by saying:

> *Now, in short what the official has been saying is that if you want us to follow up your issues; such as meeting UWA and other park conservation partners, we need this money because we cannot go on foot without any facilitation. (Interviewee 21)*

Interesting to note is that previous studies on revenue sharing at BINP, for example (Namara 2006) claim that according to UWA, the money received by the local people is viewed as a small token of compensation to those living in areas of massive animal crop destruction. When I mentioned this claim to a key informant from UWA, the informant said:

> *We feel in a way that revenue sharing came up as a way to compensate these affected people because we do not have a legal compensating*

arrangement. So we still feel that the communities that are directly affected should be given first priority when sharing the revenue remitted to them. Then the other community members in the parish can come next. However we do not have a legal framework for this, so it is just based on goodwill. Ideally whether communities are meeting losses or not, they should benefit from the revenue sharing scheme but at the moment, they are really getting it as compensation of some sort. (Key informant UWA)

Whether this revenue sharing money is viewed as a token of compensation to the local people or not, from my interviews I found that most of my interviewees widely acknowledge that the park is quite beneficial to the local people and they are optimistic that it will play a significant role in improving their livelihoods. Their concern thus is on the magnitude of the money involved and the way the scheme is mismanaged by the local officials who are not involving the local people in decisions regarding how the revenue share should be distributed amongst them.

4.3 Aspect two: Multiple resource use

With the declaration of BINP as a national park in 1991, local people were restricted from free entry and resource use extraction as it had been between 1961-1991. This certainly did not go well with the local people who depended on these resources for their livelihoods; hence it created conflicts between them and park officials.

The Uganda National Parks (now UWA) therefore devised means of bringing on board the local communities as is stipulated in its community conservation policy. First, by formulating arrangements to allow bee keepers on a pilot basis to resume this activity inside the park. Later on, in 1993, park management at Bwindi (BINP) began establishing mechanisms to allow the local people access some vital resources like basketry materials and medicinal plants from the park that they could not otherwise get from outside. Extraction of bamboo rhizomes

and seedlings of indigenous tree species to plant on their farms, access to foot paths leading to spiritual and cultural sites was also permitted. This came to be known as the 'multiple resource use' aspect (Namara 2006).

Multiple resource use was therefore seen as an entry point for collaborative resource management at Bwindi (BINP) that would reduce on the animosity that had erupted, thus improve people-park relations (Mutebi 2003). Consequently the park was divided into various resource use zones which are known as 'multiple resource use zones'. These are tourism areas, plant resource harvest use zones and bee-keeping zones.

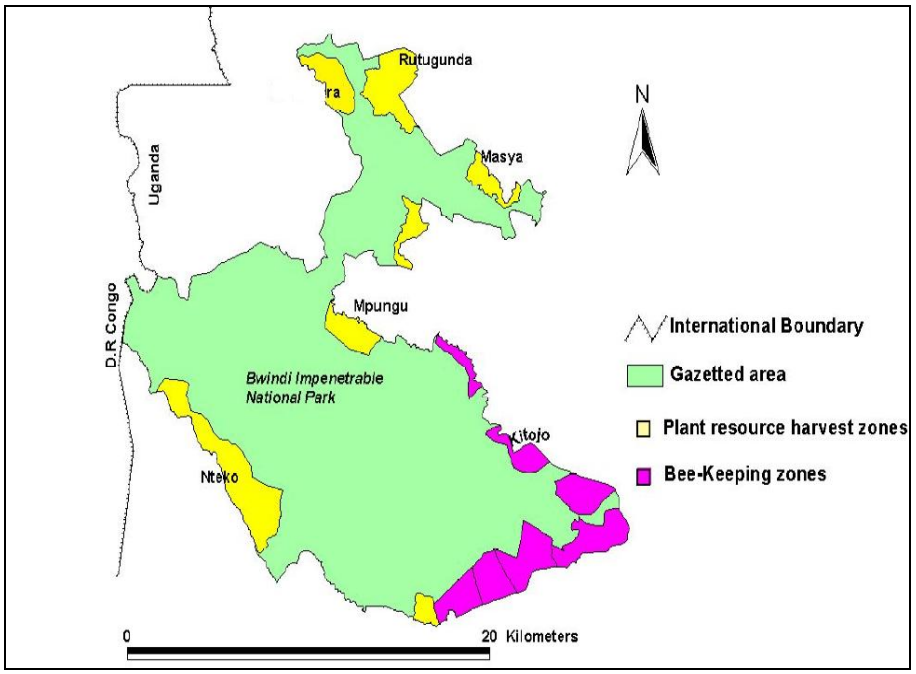

Figure 5: A map showing multiple resource use zones (MUZs) at BINP

Agreements of involving local people in this aspect were also drawn and these are known as 'memorandum of understanding' (MoU). They are signed between local people and the park managers. These act as guidelines on how to actually implement this aspect of collaborative resource management in natural resource conservation. The MoU also specify what resources are to be collected, what quantities, how and when. During the field study, I looked through a few parish memorandums of understanding and I found out that they specified the kind of

resources that were to be harvested, when, where and by what communities or groups of people. They also specified the expected responsibilities and duties of the different stakeholders.

Furthermore, multiple resource use just like revenue sharing relies on the use of the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI). The main role of its members is to liaise between the park and their communities on conservation issues, particularly articulating the needs of the communities and their challenges to the park officials and providing feedback to the local people. Its membership is drawn directly from Parish level (Local Council 2) of the different parishes that touch the park boundaries. These members are elected through the local government system by the local communities and they are usually one or two members representing each individual parish.

Therefore, in order to describe how local people at BINP are involved in this initiative that aims at possibly resolving conflicts between people and park authority by allowing them access to certain resources, I interviewed local people about the actual practices and perceptions regarding multiple resource use.

4.3.1 Practices and perceptions

According to Beck (2000) the pilot parish for this multiple resource use was Mpungu parish in Bwindi which was later expanded to include at least about 20 other parishes around the park with the exception of those parishes that are considered to be tourism 'hot spots'**.** My key informants told me that in the pilot parish at BINP, sites for collaborative resource management were selected and community awareness meetings were held with various groups of stakeholders particularly local communities, local leaders, NGO representatives and UWA officials.

These awareness meetings aimed at identifying the potential resource users, explaining to them their rights, their role in this process as well as the importance of biodiversity conservation. From my interviews with park officials I also

discovered that after the sites and users were identified, more focused discussions concerning the nature and level of each resource desired by the communities for extraction began. For instance, discussions regarding the extraction of bamboo rhizomes involved large groups of local people while the use of medicinal plants involved smaller groups of mostly traditional healers and local leaders.

Mutebi (2003) writes that after about nine months of these negotiations, discussions and forest resource surveys, the first initiative of multiple resource use under collaborative resource management at BINP was formally launched. Currently the park is divided into three zones: The 'buffer' zone where the local communities have limited access; the 'tourism' zone where the local community cannot go; and the 'core' area where there is total restriction of entry to both tourists and local people.

This implies that in some parishes considered to be tourism 'hot spots', some of the demands of the local people for resource use cannot be met or satisfied, but in areas where there is no tourism, communities can still access basketry materials and medicinal plants. One key informant I spoke with on this issue said that the problem with these zones was that the communities were greedy and it was easy for them to complain about this arrangement especially those who are not aware of the different park zones:

> *We are not in position to give them all that they want. This is really complex, but it is what it is, and in the areas where we have tourism, we have suspended the resource access programs. For example, in Buhoma and in Nkuringo the local people used to extract hand craft materials from the park. When tourism was started we suspended resource extraction. Up to this day, there are a few members of those communities who have been saying: But why did you stop us from accessing the park while people in other places are still free to access? Our response is that, our concern is mainly with gorilla health because in these tourism hot spots once the gorillas are habituated they move even closer to communities and this can*

result into high incidences of human-gorilla disease transmission like scabies if we allow people to go there to harvest.(Key informant UWA)

On the other hand, many of my local interviewees said before the gazettment of the park, they were able to earn a living by hunting, honey gathering and gold mining with almost no restrictions and little regulations on entrance. Basing on this history, some respondents were of the view that they wanted more forest resources like firewood, timber, bush pig hunting and wild honey on a more regular basis. They complained that what the current arrangements offered them was not good enough because they were aware that some of these resources were still permissible for extraction by local people in some parishes yet they were completely forbidden in other parishes. One village member said:

When BINP was still a reserve, we used to get a lot of things from there. I remember for our mud houses we used to go there and collect bamboo sticks for making these houses, but now that is impossible. We have to go and buy from someone else who has planted these bamboos. There is also restriction on collecting medicinal plants and basketry materials to help us make some money, even though these resources are plentiful in the park. (Interviewee 11)

It thus appears that as Hinchley noted back in 1998, that resource use negotiations at BINP are based on what and how much the park managers allow the forest users to use and that it depends on the park authority's (UWA) interpretation of what uses are compatible with the park's conservation objectives. The same situation still prevails even after almost ten years since his findings.

In relation to this, one key informant explained that because of the resource inventory surveys by the Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC), some resources are restricted from community extraction if it is found that they can not sustainably regenerate over time.

Therefore, communities that would have requested for such restricted resources would not actually benefit from multiple resource use zones. He notes that If communities are not aware of these resource use inventories that UWA relies on to determine which resources and how much can be harvested; they may possibly become dissatisfied with the multiple resource use aspect of collaborative resource management**.** He added that although park managers through the signed memoranda of understanding are seen by the local communities as prohibiting activities that seem to be acceptable uses of the park, UWA cannot act against the policies and legislation governing the park.

When I asked my local interviewees about their feelings towards the signed memoranda of understanding, most of them felt that these agreements were favoring the park management more than themselves. They told me that they were often reminded by the park officials in village meetings that if they did not fulfill their responsibilities spelt out in these agreements such as patrolling for illegal activities, reporting law breakers within the community to the park authority and assisting in putting out forest fires, their rights to resource use could be restricted or worse still the resource use agreements revoked. As Mutebi noted in 2003, multiple resource use at BINP seems to be largely perceived by UWA and other conservation partners as a privilege delegated to the local communities.

For instance, in one of the pilot parishes it was reported that the park management had asked the local people to choose between multiple resource use which had been running and gorilla tourism which was proposed to start that year. Mutebi (2003) observes, to the poor local people who heavily depend on these forest resources, such a position reflects a lack of commitment by UWA to multiple resource use as an aspect of collaborative resource management. Related to this, previous field reports as well as my own field observations reveal that gradually some resource user groups have lost interest in multiple resource use, especially those that used to collect basketry materials, and these numbers are

still dropping daily. This therefore undermines the actual notion of collaborative resource management in sustainable natural resource management.

From the analysis of my interview responses, I found out that local people feel that UWA has disappointed them since they are not allowed to extract and use most of their preferred resources like gold, hunting and bamboo collecting. Further still, the resources that they are allowed to extract are not in quantities sufficient to meet their needs. Other local interviewees complained that they are not able to access the park as frequently as before since they are allowed to go into the park once or twice a month now in comparison to the past, when they would enter the park to harvest medicinal herbs whenever need arose. They thus, somehow feel they have been dealt a raw deal through the memoranda of understanding.

Therefore, findings on this aspect of collaborative resource management indicate that whether or not resource use preferences are approved, it is crucial to the process that local people as stakeholders are given a reasonable consideration of their suggestions rather than an outright unexplained dismissal. As Beck (2000) notes, although collection of basketry and medicinal materials is certainly appreciated by some local people, it is not likely to be enough to make all people content because the products they really demand like gold, timber and cultivation rights are still restricted within the national park. My observation at this point is that the outcome of involving local people in the multiple resource use aspect at BINP this far has therefore been a provision of a limited number of resources and to a limited number of local people.

4.4 Aspect three: Problem animal management

Problem animal management is an important concern among many of my interviewees who are local people living around BINP. This is also one of the three main elements of collaborative resource management. In this aspect local communities are involved in direct interventions of problem animal management

in partnership with UWA. At BINP, there is a clear boundary dividing the communities from the national park as a result of the 1991 transformation of the forest reserve into a national park.

Therefore, this implies that local communities are expected to respect this boundary by cultivating only in the land bordering the park. While the communities do not have much access to the national park, the over 120 species of mammals, 10 species of monkeys, bush pigs and baboons, in addition to the gorillas, do not always keep inside these park boundaries. Thus the animals sometimes feed on local people's gardens, especially in the buffer zones. Consequently, this has led to massive crop damage, property destruction and at times people have got injured.

Figure 6: Clear park boundary from cultivated plots of land at BINP

From my interviews with local people, problem animals are described as a real menace to them when they destroy their crops. This is aggravated by the fact that there is a high population density and shortage of agricultural land, thus a considerable amount of additional costs to people's modest livelihoods. One elderly local interviewee told me:

Before the park was gazetted we used to hunt for meat in the forest reserve. We also used to collect basketry materials and fruits from the park. We have now been stopped from hunting, so we entirely depend on the crops we plant for food. However, now animals, like elephants, monkeys, baboons and bush pigs have started destroying our gardens thus making it impossible for us to have sufficient food in our households. (Interviewee 22)

4.4.1 Practices and perceptions

My interviews with local people indicate that many local inhabitants are sad about the fact that there is no clear compensation method for damaged crops, property or human injury. In a discussion with one key informant, I asked him to enlighten me on the issue of 'no compensation' as had been reported by the local communities. He said, "the wildlife policy and law in Uganda does not specify for compensation in regard to crop raids, property destruction, human injury or even death". Nevertheless, Community members feel that UWA has not accorded this issue of problem animals the attention it deserves (Namara 2006). In an interview with another key informant about the same issue, he said:

There is a general feeling from the local communities that UWA has not done much in helping them put-up problem animal control interventions. The local people reason that UWA officials are collecting lots of money from tourism hot spots and at least part of that should either be used to construct a perimeter fence around the park, maybe hire people to guard the gardens or even compensate them when they incur losses. So, on that issue they feel that UWA is not really being concerned about them, and we sincerely try to tell them that we collect money but it is not enough to sustain the operations of UWA, revenue sharing scheme as well as compensation. (Key informant UWA)

Furthermore, the issue of problem animals is compounded in some instances where people's lives, crops and property are damaged or threatened by species of

very high conservation value like gorillas. The habituation of gorillas has made them less fearful of proximity to humans, thus they spend most time in people's gardens within the buffer zones from where they are usually viewed by tourists (Namara 2006). When I spent one morning tracking gorillas with other tourists at BINP, I observed that the gorillas we visited were actually not located inside BINP, but in the gardens of the local people within the buffer zones. One Local Council (LC) representative in one of the villages I visited told me that:

> *We have asked UWA that since gorillas have come closer to us, will they not kill us. They replied that they cannot compensate for the loss of a human being because it is too expensive. Thus, if I kill a gorilla, I am imprisoned, but if the gorilla kills me, nothing happens. This is not good. (Interviewee 4)*

While in the field, I discovered that some community members have moved away from the front line villages bordering the park. I also observed that for those who are still living along the park boundaries, their common strategy to handle the problem is to use children to guard crops, especially during the day time and in the peak of the crop raiding season. These children cannot go to school. The result seems to be that there are high levels of school drop-outs in these areas. This may escalate the incidence of poverty within these communities. A young villager told me his own experiences with this:

> *I could not go to school anymore because the crop raiders were disturbing us, and I was spending a lot of time guarding against them. For example, we plant our seasonal crops around August. In November and December when it is time to sit for end of year school exams for promotion to another class, that's when the baboons do a lot of havoc in the fields, and my parents would make me go guard against the animals instead of going to school. So I dropped out of school. (Interviewee 11)*

However, according to UWA officials, they are trying to solve the problem of crop raiding by advising communities to plant thorny Mauritius (*Ceasalpina*

decapitela) hedges, locally known as '*omukwatagwe*' in Rukiga. Furthermore, scare shooting and trench digging are recommended. Red chili is also planted by the local people along the buffer zones, and noise is made to keep the animals away. These interventions are viewed as a two way kind of cooperation between UWA and the local people through agreements signed specifying their different roles regarding problem animal management.

> *We have a two-way collaboration in terms of problem animal control. We have agreements signed for the local people to work towards establishing interventions to control animals coming out of the park. We all try to work together. The communities make their own input by planting Mauritius thorn hedges along the boundaries. Other local people are voluntarily moving away from planting their traditional crops to non-traditional in order to live in harmony with the wildlife while others are planting red chili which they later burn for purposes of scaring the elephants away. (Key informant UWA)*

However, this has not been easy according to a key informant from UWA. Local people find these interventions very laborious, thus they want UWA to do the work and maintain it as well. Another UWA respondent mentioned that for the elephants which largely destroy local people's gardens, they are yet to introduce the use of grease and a high level perimeter wall which has reportedly been successful in the Kenyan national parks.

However, at the moment UWA is constrained by monetary funds as well as human capital. He also noted that some local people have complained that UWA officials are reluctant at responding to calls from communities when they are attacked by the problem animals. He attributed this situation to the fact that UWA is under-staffed such that they cannot be effectively present in all areas at the required times. But this should not to be interpreted as a lack of concern towards the local communities.

Another mechanism UWA has deployed to try solve the problem of crop raiding is to buy land from local people living within the buffer zones and are willing to sell. This implies that the local people who sell off their land, move to other areas and buy some smaller pieces of land for cultivation. Although, this seems to be a quicker and easier solution under collaborative management agreements, to most local villagers, it is inconveniencing due to acute land shortage and fragmentation in over populated Kabale District.

Furthermore, People find it difficult to find land to buy near their homesteads. Instead they have to walk almost half a day to go cultivate their gardens in other places if they manage to buy some pieces of land somewhere else. Namara (2006) also criticizes the way the selling and buying of land was done. She claims that the legally aware UWA officials hired the assessors and surveyors which led to UWA determining terms of land sale and purchase. She also notes that, this implied that the local people did not have enough information necessary for them to consider all possible options of maximizing value out of their land. They were therefore, unequal but willing partners in this transaction.

Some of my local interviewees that had agreed to sell their land to UWA due to escalated crop damage by problem animals claimed to have done so because they had no alternative. Keeping it would still prove useless to them when the problem animals raided all their crops or if the cost was to keep their children out of school so as to guard the gardens. However, according to key informants from UWA, in most instances the communities agreed to voluntarily surrender their land to UWA in order to create buffer zones so as to control the problem animals from raiding their gardens. One park official mentioned that the local people had been duly compensated for their land in monetary terms. He said:

> *In the areas of Nkuringo, we have communities which freely gave up their land for purposes of creating a buffer zone between the community and the park. They didn't sell it to us, but eventually we had to compensate them because someone is not going to move away without knowing how to*

re-establish himself. He may have the will but he must have a living wherever he goes. So we did put in some 'coins' in their hands, although these 'coins' are not equivalent to the land they gave up. (Key informant UWA)

Basing on theoretical perspectives of power and participation in conservation, the above findings show that the system of land valuation, sale and purchase at BINP as a problem animal management intervention is characterized by unequal power relations, thus there is need to involve local people in these negotiations and transactions in a more transparent, fair and equitable way if they are to appreciate conservation efforts.

4.5 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter I have presented and discussed my findings regarding objective one of my study. I have also used direct quotations from my interviewees to illustrate the practices and perceptions on local involvement in revenue sharing, multiple resource use and problem animal management. Relating these findings to theories on power and participation, this study makes a lot of interesting revelations about how local people are involved in conservation at BINP and here are my conclusions.

This study shows that involving local people in the three main aspects of collaborative resource management varies widely due to a number of reasons as I have discussed in this chapter. Some local people are not willing to take part in collaborative resource management initiatives under the existing agreements and provisions at BINP. They feel that power belongs to a group of people especially their elected representatives who have ultimately misused and abused it in form of being corrupt and ineffective when it comes to benefit sharing.

For instance, results reveal that although local people are involved in the revenue sharing aspect as beneficiaries of the 20% of the gate entry fees, this aspect is still marred by a few hiccups. This has led to a feeling of dissatisfaction on the

part of the local community members regarding its implementation and execution. Most of the local people I interviewed felt that receipt of economic benefits does not necessarily reflect their active participation in collaborative resource management.

On the other hand, those that are involved in these initiatives do so because they expect some form of tangible benefits, which may or may not be necessarily a reflection of their interest in improved conservation. Thus, a clear commitment by UWA and other conservation partners to the articulation and consideration of local peoples' interests in the decision-making element of collaborative resource management is needed.

In the case of local people access to park resources and which resources can be harvested, resource use agreements between UWA and communities need to be reviewed basing on cost-benefit park evaluations in which the ecology of the protected areas and the impact of these resources on local people livelihoods are determined before decisions are made.

Regarding the aspect of problem animals which many of the interviewees reported as the most pressing conservation cost to their livelihoods, the government of Uganda through UWA should develop a policy to address the 'compensation' issue in case of human injury and death resulting from wildlife.

The next chapter presents an evaluation of local participation in the decision-making process at BINP basing on Pretty's (1995) typology of participation.

5. Local participation in decision-making at BINP

5.1 Introduction

Empowerment of local communities is presented as an important aspect of collaborative resource management in Uganda. Some scholars argue that local people involvement in decision-making may have positive effects in resource conservation by bringing about a sense of responsibility towards nature.

In this chapter I first describe and then evaluate my findings on what arrangements are in place at BINP to allow people to participate in decision-making. Drawing on the theory I presented in chapter two on power, I provide findings about what type of actors in the communities tend to have or not to have a say in park management decisions as well as the type of decisions involved. I use Pretty's scale of participation as a comparative tool for my evaluation of how local people participate in decision-making in the case of BINP.

5.2 Involving local people in decision-making processes at BINP

In 1994, UWA in partnership with other conservation stakeholders at BINP started working towards involving local people in the management of the park. Their argument is that this was envisioned to minimize conflicts between park managers and local communities over the creation of the park. This implied a broader picture of involving people in benefit sharing through the revenue sharing scheme, allowing them access to resources within the multiple use zones, and an active involvement in deciding on issues of park management. Through the provisions of the 1995 Uganda Constitution and the 1997 Local Government Act decentralization was officially embarked on in Uganda. This led to the devolution of broad powers of administration and implementation to the local governments known as districts, leaving the central government with

responsibility for matters of defense, and law and order. Local governments were mandated to meet with the local people, discuss with them and jointly make decisions regarding development of their local areas.

The leaders of local governments are democratically elected by the people they lead and represent the electorate in deciding on some issues and are, at least in principle, accountable to the electorate. Since it is through this local government that the local people are involved and are supposed to participate in making decisions regarding BINP, below I elaborate on the structure of the local government and how it goes about involving people in deciding on management issues before I give my evaluation as to whether the local people involvement observed at BINP translates into local participation, particularly as defined by Pretty.

5.1.1 The local government structure in Uganda

In Uganda there are five administrative levels of decision–making within the local government system (Table 2). The village constitutes the first and lowest level (Local Council I), followed by the parish (Local Council II), the sub-county (Local Council III), the county (Local Council IV), and finally the district (Local Council V). Although parishes are made up of several villages (LC I) which often are seen as the smallest units of a community, the local government defines the parish (LC II) as the lowest level representing a 'community'.

Local Council I, also known as the village level consists of officially elected representatives under the Local government Act 1997. At this level, local people are invited by Local Council I chairpersons to village meetings. These meetings are usually called to address simple village level conflicts like domestic violence, theft and disease outbreaks.

Local Council II (Parish level) also consists of directly elected local government representatives. Through a democratic system of elections, every five years, local people cast votes in favor of those nominated to be their representatives. At this

level there is also the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI), whose membership is drawn from the parish representatives. It is stipulated in the 1997 local government Act that the village secretary for production at local council I becomes a member of the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI). Thus, a secretary of production is appointed by the local council II executive committee for each parish bordering the protected area and together they form the CPI committee at Local Council III level.

Local Councils III (Sub-county), IV (County) and V (District) all consist of democratically elected local representatives under the Local government Act of 1997. However, these three levels are mainly concerned with making administrative decisions regarding the implementation of the general District development plans on behalf of the central government unlike the parish level (Local Council II), the Parliament and UWA where most specific conservation related decisions are made. The Parliament that comprises of constitutionally elected members who represent the interests of their electorates at the highest decision-making structure is at the helm of the five local council levels.

Local government elections just like parliamentary and presidential elections are supposed to be held every five years according to the 1995 Constitution of Uganda. However, the last local government elections were held in 2001 almost eight years ago because due to financial constraints and political reasons, the government of Uganda did not organize local council elections when it held the 2006 presidential elections.

5.1.2 Local government and local participation in decision making at BINP

In regard to making decisions relating to Protected Areas such as Bwindi, the local government works hand in hand with UWA, the managing authority of parks and protected areas in Uganda. At each administrative level in the local government structure, different activities and types of decisions are made (Table 2).

Table 2: Decision-making levels in Uganda regarding conservation

Decision-making structures	**Activities and decisions made**
The Parliament of Uganda	• Passes bills regarding natural resource management. For example, the decision to share 20% of gate entry fees with local communities. • The wildlife statute of 1996 which provides for community participation in conservation was also passed by Parliament.
Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)	• Mandated to collect revenue from park activities like tourism. • Obliged to remit 20% of the park gate entrance fees to the local communities living adjacent to the park. • Decides on which resources can be extracted from the park, when and how much. • Obliged to work with communities in solving the issue of problem animals.
Sub-county level (LC III)	• Mandated to receive revenue sharing money (20%) from UWA and distribute it among the different parishes bordering the park. • Obliged to monitor proper use of the money and report to UWA.
Parish level (LC II)	• Obliged to provide an avenue for local people living adjacent the protected area to present their interests, concerns and suggestions to park management. • Provides avenues for discussion and negotiation on benefit sharing programs. • It also screens, decides and selects parish level projects to be funded under the UWA revenue sharing scheme.
Village level (LC I)	• UWA utilizes the representatives on this level to warn the local people about the consequences of poaching, trapping animals and illegal entry into the park. • Obliged to inform people to write project proposals in anticipation of the revenue sharing money.

Table 2 shows that, the Parliament of Uganda is the highest decision-making level, followed by UWA the managing authority of parks and protected areas in Uganda. Then the other local government structures are shown in descending order of power and administrative authority from Local Council IV (District) to Local Council I (village level).

Local interviewees at BINP told me that the extent and nature of their involvement in decision-making processes varied between the different aspects of collaborative resource management and that different local government levels were involved in each aspect.

The aspect of revenue sharing

Decisions regarding the aspect of revenue sharing in Uganda can be seen to be made at least at two levels. First, revenue sharing as a policy and the stipulation that 20% of the gate fees be remitted to local communities living around BINP was made at the parliamentary level. From my interviews, any deliberations on this have to be made at the same level. Whereas park management officials consistently mentioned to me that they realize that the 20% of gate entrance fees may be a small amount to be shared among the communities, they tended to regard this as a matter of policy over which they have no direct control.

On the contrary, some local interviewees argued that they know UWA draws up the policy discussions, drafts them and submits them to parliament for review and final passing into law. When I asked them as to why they could not influence UWA to draft favorable suggestions or recommendations to parliament, one interviewee said; “we are presumed a marginal illiterate community living at the edges of a national treasure, so we have no effective voice to influence such decisions” (interviewee 12). Despite their pleas, complaints and suggestions, the 20% of the total gate fee as revenue sharing which was decided upon by the Parliament of Uganda almost ten years ago, has not been reviewed. This implies that local people at BINP have no influence on decisions made such as how much revenue sharing money is remitted to them from UWA.

Secondly, UWA is required to channel the local people’s share of the park revenue through the local government structure. The local government, particularly through the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) is in principle supposed to agree with the local people on how this revenue can best be used. The Uganda revenue sharing policy (UWA 2000) states that decisions

regarding which projects are to be supported by revenue sharing money shall rest with the local people through the Community Protected Area Institutions (CPIs). However at BINP, this revenue was initially used to fund communal projects like schools, health units and community centers as I have earlier shown, and according to my local interviewees, these decisions were made largely by the local government. And key informants could testify to this. For example, one told me the following:

> *In theory the communities are supposed to be the ones to come up with what they feel they want to use the money for. But initially the Local Council officials were influencing how the money would be utilized. In fact, we had a very serious case last year. The LC II chairman wanted the money to go towards working on the road that led to his home and the local people wanted something else. So he said that if this money is not going to be used for part of this road, he would not sign their other project proposals. Indeed, he refused to sign these project proposals until when UWA intervened. (Key informant UWA)*

Due to such complaints from the local people, UWA moved from funding community projects to individual household projects. As I have mentioned earlier, here the local people write individual proposals that they submit to their Community Protected Area Institution representatives (CPI). These representatives, in consultation with the local people are then supposed to decide on what projects to fund. But, local people hold that these representatives do not consult them and instead make own decisions.

As such, local people seem not to have power to decide on what projects are to be funded or the beneficiaries. Apart from relying on locally elected representatives for participation in decision-making at BINP, local community meetings are supposed to be used as avenues for some form of local participation in decision-making. However, my local interviewees view these meetings that UWA and other actors rely on to involve them in some form of dialogue as

simply avenues to air their grievances such as on the issue of problem animal management. One local interviewee said:

> *We do not usually attend meetings when there is no problem to discuss. We only meet when there is a community issue to discuss. We do not come to these meetings because we know that there is no benefit from the meetings. Otherwise, usually these meetings are organized to inform us of what to do or not to do regarding park management (interviewee 7).*

This I also observed at one revenue sharing mobilization meeting that I attended. One of the park management officials started the meeting by announcing that the main purpose of the meeting was to warn the people of what would happen to them if they insisted on illegally accessing park resources. He further said that park rangers may shoot these trespassers if they continued to do so after this warning. This resonated with claims from local interviewees that local community meetings were avenues for receiving instructions and warnings from UWA and therefore largely time wasting.

These findings are in agreement with Beck (2000) whose research in Kanungu district revealed that most people perceive such meetings as events where local people are to be taught the rules regarding park management. A few other village informants told me that they were not even aware of such meetings in their villages, and that they usually hear that meetings about the park are only for committee members. Personal field observations reveal that communication between Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) members and local people in regard to decisions about who benefits and distribution of the revenue each parish receives from the Sub-county level seems often to be limited. In regard to my findings about poor communication channels and information sharing with the local people, I asked one key informant from the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) to comment on this revelation and this is what I was told:

> *Truthfully, we have no avenues to meet the local people. I have nothing to give the people. People are spoilt now and they want money for attending*

meetings. So I try to use the available avenues, like church services, or I ask the chairman to make village mobilizations, or when he meets his people in the village, I ask him to create time for me to talk to the people. But I cannot call my own meetings. These days when you invite someone for a meeting, they ask you if there is lunch, and if you say no, then they will not come. You will not find people in meetings; you have to find them where they are gathered without forcing them. (Key informant CPI)

However, local leaders are aware of local peoples' reluctance to attend meetings. One local leader told me that local people may complain, but he was certain that they did not attend meetings because they were of the view that these meetings were time wasting especially if there were no tangible benefits. When I interviewed another local informant about this sentiment, he said that in general, participation in these communal meetings was mostly by those few lucky ones who had reason to expect some benefit. Most of my local interviewees claimed to have very limited influence on the final decisions, thus saw no much reason for attending the meetings.

At two separate village (LC I) meetings I attended, I particularly observed that few women attended the meetings compared to the attendance of men. This reflected that women at BINP were less involved in conservation issues especially decision-making processes because in Uganda, due to cultural and social constructions, men are considered to be the decision-makers. Furthermore, decisions passed at this meeting I attended were based on majority votes by show of hand. Such a method of open voting without anonymity may hinder democracy as local people may be coerced into raising their hand up in favor of a decision they would not other wise have agreed too simply because they are afraid of the repercussions from other community members or authoritative leaders present in the meetings.

Although, some local people around BINP told me that they appreciated the fact that these meetings provide some form of dialogue with the park managers,

compared to the alternative of no dialogue at all, as it used to be in the earlier days, I observed that the majority of local people who attended the meeting were passive, offering limited or no input into the proceedings. As such, most of my local interviewees told me that many of the local people still seem to be dissatisfied. They continue to feel that they have no power to make or influence park management decisions.

The aspect of multiple resource use

In the aspect of multiple resource use, I was told that local people usually within their resource use groups sign agreements with UWA detailing which resources can be accessed, in which parts of the park, and in what amounts. With this access, the local people as "co-managers" are reportedly expected to take up some responsibilities such as monitoring and control of the level of product use to park management, but also reporting "trespassers".

As many of my interviewees narrated to me, it is park management that makes most of the decisions in this aspect as well. The local people are asked what they would want to access from the park and management decides what is acceptable and what is not. Consequently, local people claim that access to the resources "they really want" is not guaranteed. As I found out in my interviews, park management is aware of these sentiments from local people, but they maintain that they are not in position to meet all the local demands and preferences.

Another local interviewee told me that when UWA officials ask them what they want to extract from the multiple use zones, they mention gold, timber and hunting as their top three priorities. As I have earlier shown, UWA does not allow any of these activities to take place in the resource use zones. Local people are only allowed to extract basketry materials and medicinal plants, which are ranked in the lowest positions on their preference lists. Thus, local people complain that their requests, preferences and suggestions are never considered hence they have no influence on decisions that are important to them. An elderly village member had this to say:

> *When we say something and it is not implemented, such as the forest resources we wish to extract, we lose trust because we realize that our pleas are not considered and we have no say. When we mention our suggestions to UWA officials, they never say they have not heard us; in fact they assure us that they will communicate with other top officials and give us feedback. Unfortunately they usually tell us that our suggestions are not possible because there is no law for it or UWA cannot accept this and that. (Interviewee 4)*

As a result, I can say that not many resource users are currently interested in the multiple resource use zones. The only notable exception is a group of beekeepers. The local people feel that park management listens to this group as the group continues access the park even when others were stopped and also continues to benefit from the support of park related interventions such as the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) that is helping this group process its honey and find competitive markets. However, as one leader of a bee keepers association told me:

> *It so happened that some bee keepers helped the park back in the days when some people were trying to destroy the forest by fire. The bee keepers used to go there and stop the fire because they had some bee hives there. And the park authority saw it important to leave the bee keepers to continue with the activity because they were helpful. Even then, unlike other users they were not collecting or destroying any resources. They also help in informing the park authority if some people are sighted setting snares in the park (Interviewee 16).*

Overall, my findings here are in coherence with Hinchley et al. (1998) who made similar observations from Mt. Elgon National Park, that the collaborative resource management agreements that had been drawn between some communities in the pilot parishes around the park and UWA did not provide for a strong mechanism of providing local communities with influence in decision-

making, rights and responsibilities. The negotiation process of participatory agreements was dominated by UWA staff. UWA set most of the provisions basing on what was acceptable to them, rather than establishing a devolvement of decision–making authority to the local communities. Consequently, local people are not able to influence management intentions and decisions regarding park use. Over a decade, the situation is the same.

The aspect of problem animal management

Problem animal management is one aspect of collaborative resource management where local people are believed to be equal partners by UWA in decision – making and responsibility sharing regarding park management. However, according to my local interviewees, UWA makes the decisions by deciding on what methods the communities are to adopt in order to control problem animals. Before the establishment of BINP, local people could enter the forest in order to kill or trap the vermin or problem animals. This was a local way of controlling the numbers of animals as well as reducing the eventual costs of crop raiding, property damage and other social costs like children dropping out of school. Today it is illegal to apply control methods not approved by UWA, such as the use of snares. Local people are only allowed to chase the animals from their gardens up to the forest boundaries and not beyond that point. A female informant told me about this the following way:

> *We used to chase animals deep into the forest, now we only get to the boundary and they reappear. When the wild animals destroy the gardens, you cannot chase them and kill them. If you do, the rangers may kill you too (Interviewee 8).*

Further discussions and interviews on this aspect revealed that the local communities had eventually organized themselves into small groups, comprising of mainly men, known as the Human-Gorilla Conflict resolution groups (HUGO) who are responsible for chasing the gorillas away from people's gardens. HUGO members are not employed by UWA. Instead HUGO is a voluntary arrangement

under collaborative resource management that was initiated when the local people realized that they could not be allowed to hunt and kill the problem animals like before when it was a forest reserve.

While in the field, I attended one HUGO member meeting in which I had an opportunity to further understand their involvement and participation in the aspect of problem animal management and decision-making at BINP. I was told these HUGO groups do not have a right to make decisions on what interventions are to be used. Their duty is to inform UWA park rangers where the problem animals have been sighted in addition to carrying out regular patrols in the front line villages. Thus, although such an initiative among local park inhabitants could possibly signify a better understanding of the importance of wildlife by the local people as well as improved relations with UWA regarding conservation efforts, it is clear that local participation in decision-making processes at BINP is still limited to those with power and authority.

5.3 Evaluating local participation in decision-making at BINP

Participation in decision making may involve the sharing of responsibilities along with some rights and benefits, but it does not at all provide full control on park issues to the local people. Its aim is to gain the full support of people to conservation, and also to empower them in ways that they are able to influence park related decisions or make these decisions on their own. Participation may have different qualities connected to it for different people in different situations depending on whether it is seen as a ‘means’ or as an ‘end’ in itself.

Much of the literature on local participation in collaborative resource management in developing countries dwells on how local communities are involved in the three previously discussed main aspects, (revenue sharing, multiple resource use and problem animal management). Although local people involvement is often documented, some researchers claim that local participation

in decision-making is often elusive. In the case of BINP, there seems to be no clear mechanisms within the local government structures to involve local communities in decision-making processes other than to rely on their representatives. If the representatives consult and seek the opinions of the represented, that cannot be seen as problematic. However, I have found clear indications that the representatives do not involve people in these ways.

From my results, and in coherence with Ribot et al. (2006), this situation may merely reflect the presence of reforms in rhetoric while undermining Power devolution in reality. Furthermore, my findings at BINP reveal that not all local people participate in village level meetings where consultations are held before decisions are made. At other Local Council levels and Parliament where park related decisions are made, only local people representatives participate. This raises an issue of the effectiveness of this system, particularly in situations were local people are never consulted due to financial constraints for mobilization, corruption by the local leaders, nepotism or even the leaders making decisions basing on their selfish interests. One local informant told me that, "if inviting some few local leaders to represent us in workshops at the district, or with UWA officials, is participation, then we can say there is participation at BINP" (*Informant 15*).

Table 2 shows what park related decisions are made at each administrative level and that local representatives at each of the different levels have specific decisions they can make and issues that they can influence. However, it also shows that local communities who mainly participant at village level do not directly decide on park related issues, nor influence them. Thus, actual decision-making regarding resource use and conservation in Uganda is limited to those in leadership positions following the top-down approach starting from parliamentary level, UWA, the district level (LC V), Sub-county level (LC III), Parish level (LC II) and eventually trickles down to the village level (LC I). As I have earlier mentioned that local people involvement in decision-making processes relies on democratically elected representatives at each of these

administrative levels, this would not be an issue of contention if only these representatives regularly consulted their electorates before making these decisions.

From a study in Mpungu parish in 2000, Beck (2000) observed that direct involvement of people living around BINP in decision-making processes was low. Almost ten years later, my study shows that the situation is still about the same and local participation in decision-making at BINP seems more of rhetoric rather than an actual practice. This may be as a result of what remains a largely top-down conservation approach whereby some participatory aspects are inserted into policies and management plans. Namara (2006) observes that the top-down approach of making decisions in Uganda, especially regarding natural resource management, even under the guise of decentralization and democracy undermines the willingness of local communities to participate in these processes.

Accordingly, power ultimately still rests with those in authoritative positions over the rest of the people. Thus, in order to evaluate local participation it is important to examine when and how local people participate in decision-making processes (Sletten 2004). At BINP, I look at each relevant decision-making structure particularly and describe when and how local people are involved in decision-making. Drawing from Pretty's scale of participation, I thus evaluate this involvement and identify the type of local participation present at each decision-making structure as shown in Table 3.

As shown in chapter two, Pretty's scale of participation encompasses the following: manipulative, passive, consultative, functional, interactive, self mobilization forms of participation as well as participating for material incentives. According to Pretty (1995), each of these types of participation has distinct characteristics in terms of how stakeholders are involved and their interaction.

In Uganda, the highest decision making level on park related issues is the parliament. Members of parliament usually consult their electorates and later on make decisions their behalf. However most of these consultation meetings are viewed by the electorates as information giving meetings where they are asked to comment on problems or issues already defined by external agents. Members of parliament are under no obligation to adopt people's views but to act in the best interest of their electorates. Thus, local participation at parliament level is by limited consultation or information giving.

Uganda wildlife Authority that makes decisions oh how to control problem animals and decisions on what forest resources and how much can be harvested by local people, usually relies on village meetings where they ask local people about their concerns, preferences and suggestions regarding park issues. My results have shown that some local people participate in these meetings and dialogue with UWA because of the inventive to receive material benefits like revenue sharing money. This is often confused for participation but according to Pretty (1995), it is participation for material incentives because people have no stake in prolonging practices when the incentives end and decisions are made by the managing authority alone.

At local council levels III and II, local people are not directly involved in decision-making processes. They are only informed of how much revenue sharing money has been received from UWA. Their Community Protected Area Institution representatives scrutinize local people project proposals, decide on which projects will be funded and finally select them. Therefore, local participation at BINP at these decision-making levels is largely passive because people are only informed of already made decisions.

At BINP, the village level councils, there are elected representatives for the local people but they do not have power to influence park management decisions. They are mostly mandated to maintain law and order within their communities, solve domestic crises as well as inform their electorates of all decisions made at

other local government structures that may affect their communities. These representatives are also obliged to mobilize local people for meetings when UWA or other stakeholders intend to communicate with them. Local participation is by pretence and almost no interaction occurs between local people and managing institutions. Drawing from Pretty's scale of participation, this is manipulative participation.

However, it can be said that through the Human-Gorilla Conflict Resolution group (HUGO), there is functional participation at BINP because here, local people often interact with UWA and other conservation stakeholders like CARE to share problem animal interventions. However, often major decisions and course of action have already been made by those in power. Local people are only co-opted to serve external goals of cost reduction from massive crop damage and possible human injury from the problem animals.

Table 3: Types of local participation in decision-making at BINP

Decision-making Levels	**How and when local people are involved**	**Type of participation**
The Parliament of Uganda	• Members of parliament make decisions on behalf of their electorates.	**Local participation by limited consultation/ information giving**
Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)	• Local people answer questions from park officials and other external agents about their preferred park uses, concerns and suggestions. • They also participate by receiving material benefits such as revenue sharing income.	**Local participation by information giving and material incentives**
Sub-county level (LC III)	• Local people do not directly contribute to decisions made at this level. They are only informed of how much revenue sharing money is available for each parish. • They are also asked to submit project proposals that they wish to be funded under the revenue sharing scheme	**Passive local participation**
Parish level (LC II)	• At this level of decision-making, local people are often not involved. The parish representatives (CPI) have the mandate to make decisions on behalf of the local people. • Local people are only informed of which projects have been selected for funding under the revenue sharing scheme.	**Passive local participation**
Village level (LC I)	• Local people representatives have no power to influence park management decisions made.	**Manipulative local participation**
Human- gorilla conflict resolution group (HUGO)	• Local people interact with other stakeholders in authority like UWA to make decisions. • Often major decisions and course of action have already been made by those in power; people may simply be co-opted to serve external goals.	**Functional local participation**

Although, participatory efforts at BINP are by limited consultation, information sharing, material incentive participation and largely passive, my findings reveal that local participation in decision-making does not reflect the interactive and self-mobilization levels of participation which Pretty ranks as the highest and most ideal forms of participation. He claims that at these levels people are empowered and able to participate in analysis, formulation and development of management or action plans. Here, participation is seen as a right and not just a means to achieve project or conservation goals. Thus, according to Pretty (1995), these two forms of participation that are absent at BINP would be the most appropriate for successful collaborative resource management.

Normative theories of governance would envisage a 'win-win' outcome if conservation and development goals are negotiated in a complementary position, with particular active participation of the local people. As can be inferred from Pretty's typology, for meaningful participation, the local people need to be empowered so that they can actively influence the process of decision making. However, my empirical data shows that local participation at BINP occurs within a framework defined by others. The stronger institutions and actors assert power over those that are weaker.

In the case of BINP, I find that local people are interested in more than benefits and mere information sharing and do not feel empowered by the existing forms of participation. Overall, their perception is that the current form of participation has created but a little difference compared to the earlier days when park management made all decisions on its own.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter I have addressed objective number two of my study by describing the nature of local participation in the decision-making processes at BINP. I have also evaluated how local people are involved and identified the types of participation at BINP drawing on Pretty's scale of participation.

Thus, by identifying where local participation at BINP is located on Pretty's 'ladder' of participation, I have found that involving local people in the three main aspects of collaborative resource management at BINP is not a reflection of local participation in decision-making processes. Participation may include involving local people but aims at empowering them where as involving people may not always empower them. It is also apparent that lack of meaningful decision-making authority is a disincentive for effective local participation.

6. Conclusions

In this study I set out to describe and evaluate the involvement and participation of local people in collaborative resource management at BINP. I particularly focused on the three main aspects of collaborative resource management and the practices and perceptions of the local people living adjacent to BINP in regard to these aspects. Finally I described and, based on Pretty's scale of participation, evaluated how and at what point local people are involved in decision-making.

Collaborative resource management initiatives at BINP aim at providing local communities around BINP with some park related benefits that may improve their livelihoods but also at involving them as co-managers in deciding on park management issues. I found that, UWA hopes to accomplish these goals through the involvement of local people in information sharing avenues, negotiations of resource use agreements and sharing 20% of the park entrance fees. However, to a rather limited degree, local participation in decision-making at BINP is mainly through some devolution of authority, rights and duties from central to local levels of governance and other institutional committees such as the Community Protected Area Institution (CPI).

Although it is legitimate in Uganda to be represented by democratically elected members in decision-making processes, these representatives are reported to often make decisions based on selfish interests and not the general interests of their electorates. They are also accused of corruption and nepotism. Besides, many of my interviewees believe that the empowerment of local leaders and committees like Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) does not necessarily mean local people empowerment. This is because active committees may be inactive due to limited interaction and consultation with the local people they are to represent.

Furthermore, local participatory efforts that focus on use of democratically elected committee members and local government structures can easily create

local conflicts and tensions between the electorate and their representatives to the extent that local people feel that their participation in decision-making is mostly passive. However, in the face of these loopholes, the only option that the local people have for influence is to re-elect new representatives in future elections and get rid of those accused of misusing power by corruption and favoritism based on tribe, gender or social status.

Hence, the ability of local people to influence or make decisions at BINP is limited to having the right to nominate, organize and participate in electing their representatives by casting votes. This is however a major challenge to the local people living adjacent to BINP because the government of Uganda has not held local government elections for the last eight years since November 2001. Thus, it is imperative that local government elections are held so that local people may exercise their right to electing those representatives that they think would do a better job at advocating for their concerns and preferences during decision-making processes regarding the management of BINP.

My evaluation of local participation in decision-making at BINP based on Pretty's scale of participation reveals that although local people are involved in aspects of collaborative resource management, participation in decision-making is mainly passive where silence is interpreted as consent by those in power. Participation is also by manipulation especially where material benefits are expected in exchange for local people support and involvement in collaborative resource management aspects. Therefore, my study makes a contribution to the knowledge on local participation in relation to protected areas by revealing that involving local people in aspects of conservation does not necessarily imply local participation or empowerment.

I thus, recommend that there is a need to contextualize local participation in terms of seeing it as a right, therefore an 'end' in itself leading to empowerment rather than limiting it to benefit sharing as a 'means' of attaining pre-set conservation goals as is the case at BINP.

Situating my findings within previous literature on local participation such as Mutebi (2003) and Namara (2006), I was surprised to discover that at BINP involving local people in aspects of collaborative resource management was often referred to as participation which is clearly not the case as I have shown in my study. I however, agree with other previous research findings and conclusions about BINP that although local participation cannot be forced, people's motivation to participate in all aspects of collaborative resource management including decision-making should be reviewed.

Finally, more research at BINP and other protected areas should be done as a continuation of this study to look into how local people can be fully engaged in participatory efforts especially in decision-making processes because local participation involves more than simply being passive participants or participating benefits and material incentives in the three main aspects of collaborative resource management.

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Appendix I: List of key informant organisations and local interviews recorded at BINP in Nov. 2008

A total of ten Key informants from the following Organizations:

1. Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) -4
2. Community Protected Area Institution (CPI) -2
3. Christian Action Research and Education (CARE) -2
4. Local Council leaders (LC) -1
5. Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation Trust (BIFCT) -1

A total of twenty six local people interviews

Parish one -Nyambare

1. Interviewee
2. Interviewee
3. Interviewee
4. Interviewee
5. Interviewee
6. Interviewee
7. Interviewee
8. Interviewee
9. Interviewee
10. Interviewee
11. Interviewee
12. Interviewee
13. Interviewee

Parish two- Mushanje

14. Interviewee
15. Interviewee
16. Interviewee
17. Interviewee
18. Interviewee
19. Interviewee
20. Interviewee
21. Interviewee
22. Interviewee
23. Interviewee
24. Interviewee
25. Interviewee
26. Interviewee

A total of four participatory observation meetings I attended

1. HUGO meeting (Human-gorilla conflict resolution group)
2. Revenue sharing mobilization meeting
3. Meeting with a group of Batwa forest people at BINP
4. Workshop organized by ITFC in Kabale on conservation of BINP

Appendix II: Research permit for the field study

UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

HEADQUARTERS, PLOT 7 KIRA ROAD KAMWOKYA

P O Box 3530, Kampala Uganda

Your Ref:

Our Ref: UWA/TDO-33/02 1st October 2008

Atuhaire Hannah Hanifah
Faculty of Arts, Geography department
Makerere University
P.O Box 7062
Kampala

RE: RESEARCH APPLICATION APPROVAL

I am in receipt of your application dated September 26, 2008 seeking to carry out research in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park addressing **"Rhetoric and practice of local people involvement in Biodiversity conservation of Bwindi National park".**

I am glad to inform you that your research application has been approved for you to carry out research from 1st October, 2008 to 30th December, 2008. You will be expected to submit a progress report by March 2009 and a final report of your findings by October 2009 to the Monitoring and Research Unit of the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

Should you be unable to work within these dates, please notify me in writing. Please note that, any researcher failing to submit reports at the appropriate time will either not be allowed to continue with the research or in the case of the final report, will not be allowed to come back to wildlife protected areas to do further research.

Please report to the Conservation Area Manager (CAM) and the Senior Monitoring and Research Warden (SMRW) of BMCA on arrival at the park for registration and further guidance.

Sincerely,

Anying Pamela
For: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

c.c: Conservation Area Manager, BMCA
c.c: Senior Warden Monitoring and Research, BMCA
c.c.: Mr. Buyinza Mukadasi, Makerere University

Appendix III: Gorrilla tracking certificate received during participatory observation

UWA

Gorilla Tracking Certificate

This is to CERTIFY that

ATUHAIRE HANIFAH

Tracked Mountain Gorillas of Uganda on

12th/11/2008 (NKURINGO GROUP)

in **Bwindi Impenetrable National Park**, Uganda, East Africa

Executive Director

Conservation Area Manager

Uganda Wildlife Authority Plot 7 Kira Road, Kamwokya,
P.O.Box 3530 Kampala, Uganda,
Telephone: +256-414-355000, Fax: +256-414-346291
E-mail: uwa@uwa.or.ug Website: www.uwa.or.ug

Appendix IV: Interview guide for key informants

Exchange of pleasantries and greetings. Brief introduction about the researcher and research problem.

Is it OK for you that I use a **recorder** – in order to use the time more effectively and also to make sure that I get what you say right?

- What administrative position do you hold?
- How long have you had this position?
- What did you do before?
- What is your education background?

- I have specific questions on the organization. **But first:** I wonder if you can give your views of thought about Bwindi Impenetrable NP in relation to the people living adjacent to this NP?

- What are the main aspects of collaborative resource management at BINP?

    - What are the mechanisms through which local people are involved in these aspects?
    - About economic benefits, how are they distributed to various projects and receivers?

- Can you tell me specifically about the story of local people participation in decision-making processes at BINP?

- Questions on **participation** aspects:

- How would you describe the relationship between other stakeholders and UWA?
- What is the role of local government in the management of BINP?
- In what ways are local people involved in the management of BINP?
- Do local people have any influence on park management decisions?
- What is your general comment on the level of community involvement in conservation at BINP?
- Any final thoughts, suggestions about involvement and local participation in collaborative resource management at BINP?

Appendix V: Interview guide for local people

Interviewee's name ..... Education.....

District .....

County.....

Sub county..... Parish .....

Village……..... Sex.....

Age .....

Primary occupation ..... H/H size.....

1. How many years have you lived here.....

2. Do you or any member of your household interact with the park?

   Yes ..... No .....

3. If yes, explain how? E.g. Labor, tourist guide ,ranger, porter, resource use.....
   .....
   ..... If No, explain why you are not involved?
   ……
   ……
   ……

4. What changes have you observed with the management of the park since its gazzettement from a forest reserve?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Do you like the changes?

Yes..... No..... like/do not like some.....

5. Can you tell me how these change/s have impacted on the livelihood of your family/community.

List the positive impact/s

.....

.....

.....

.....

....

List the negative impact/s

.....

.....

.....

.....

....

5. What are the aspects of collaborative resource management at BINP?

……

……

……

…….

6. Are you in any way involved in these aspects of collaborative resource management?

   Yes..... No.....

If yes, how did you come to get involved?

.....
.....
.....
.....
....

In what ways are you involved?

.....
.....
.....
.....
....

At what level are you involved?

.....
.....
.....
...

If not involved, explain why not?

.....
.....
.....
.....
...

7. Does the park authority involve local people in the management of the park, especially in regard to decision-making?

If Yes, How and if No, why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

8. How do you rate the consideration and implementation of your opinions/suggestions by UWA regarding park management issues like revenue generation, sharing and resource use?

a. Highly considered b. Moderately considered c. Least considered
d. Not considered

a. Highly implemented b. moderately implemented c. least implemented
d. Not implemented

Thank you for giving me your time to participate in this interview. This is the end of it, thanks again and hopefully we meet again.

Name of interviewee…….

Time of interview from……to…….

Date of interview……