

Private-community Partnerships: Investigating a New Approach to Conservation and Development in Uganda

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Abstract

Nature-based tourism is well recognised as a tool that can be used for neoliberal conservation. Proponents argue that such tourism can provide revenue for conservation activities, and income generating opportunities and other benefits for local people living at the destination. Private-Community Partnerships (PCPs) are a particular form of hybrid intervention in which local benefits are claimed to be guaranteed through shared ownership of the tourism venture. In this paper, we evaluate one such partnership involving a high-end tourist eco-lodge at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda. We examine the introduction, development, and implementation of this partnership using the policy arrangement approach. This is done through analysing the actors involved and excluded in the process, the emergence of coalitions and forces, power relations, the governing rules, and the role of framing discourses. The analysis reveals that the technical conceptualisation of the partnership arrangement failed to take proper account of political and contextual factors, resulting in escalating conflict up to the national level. The paper concludes that while more time is needed to evaluate the full impact of hybrid neoliberal approaches such as PCP, the unbalanced power relations they imply can create fertile conditions for political conflict that ultimately undermines their ‘win-win’ goals.

Keywords: nature-based tourism, policy arrangement approach, conservation, development, partnerships, conservation enterprise, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

INTRODUCTION

Reflecting wider trends in political economy, many recent conservation strategies designed to protect biodiversity have adopted the rhetoric of neoliberalism, seeking to commodify nature and develop market-based mechanisms for its conservation (Büscher 2008). Neoliberalism is an economic

and political philosophy that emphasises the role of market forces in determining appropriate resource use, and rejects regulation and government intervention (Heynen et al. 2007). Nature-based tourism has been one of the most widely adopted mechanisms for neoliberal conservation, particularly in highly biodiverse developing countries with limited alternative economic activities (Brockington et al. 2008; Spenceley 2008, 2010; Van der Duim et al. 2011). Advocates of this approach suggest it can provide ‘win-win’ outcomes for conservation and development by generating tangible benefits that compensate for costs and create incentives to conserve. As Sachedina et al. (2010: 26) argue, “from this perspective there are no losers. Wildlife, local people, NGOs, government agencies, western tourists, investors and for-profit companies all come out on top.”

Although there is no doubt that tourism can generate

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considerable revenues from natural attractions, concerns have been raised about the inequitable distribution of costs, benefits, and power among different actors and at different scales, undermining the effectiveness of tourism as a tool for conservation and development (Wells et al. 1992; Goodwin 2002; Kiss 2004; Brockington et al. 2008; Sandbrook 2008; Sachedina et al. 2010; Ahebwa et al. 2012). In recent years, partnership models between various combinations of local, state, and private sector actors have emerged. It is claimed that these can circumvent such failures, on the basis that private sector partners should ensure profitability, and local benefits can be guaranteed through community equity (Spenceley 2008). This partnership approach reflects the wider emergence of 'hybrid' neo-liberalism, which links neoliberal strategies to civil society and at times local government institutions (McCarthy 2005; Dressler and Büscher 2008).

Partnership arrangements can be classified in different ways (see for e.g., Ashley and Garland 1994; Ashley and Jones 2001; Barrow and Murphree 2001; Ashley and Ntshona 2002; Spenceley 2003; Eagels 2009), including Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), Public-Private-Community Partnerships (PPCPs), and of late, Private-Community Partnerships (PCPs). Important variables for classification include the type of actors involved, the degree of centralisation or decentralisation, the type of management body, the main sources of income, and the land tenure arrangements (Van der Duim 2011). This article focuses on a particular form of partnership: Private-Community Partnerships (PCPs) often mediated by public and third sector organisations. These arrangements are intuitively appealing and have gained rapid popularity worldwide with donors and policy makers. However, few studies to date have examined the outcomes of the approach on the ground. Spenceley (2003) reveals successful partnerships in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, which have had positive implications for both livelihoods and conservation. Likewise, Varghese (2008) found that similar interventions in South African national parks have played a role in increasing net economic benefits attributable to parks, stimulating local economic development, mitigating environmental impacts, and financing several conservation activities. Despite these successes in Southern Africa, the approach has raised new challenges and dilemmas in other African regions. For example, Southgate (2006) indicates that power imbalances between actors, institutional failure, and corruption frustrated the success of a PCP involving the Maasai communities and a private company at Kimana wildlife sanctuary in Kenya.

This paper aims to make a contribution to this research by making use of important ideas which have been studied in different contexts. The first is that projectised interventions, be they intended for conservation, development, or both, tend to over-simplify the concept of 'community', treating it as homogeneous (Brosius et al. 1997; Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Ahebwa et al. 2012). A second key concept is 'anti-politics', introduced by Ferguson (1994). This refers to a process by which development projects seek to present their actions as non-political, tending instead to frame their work in purely technical

terms—what Li (2007) refers to as "rendering technical". The anti-political strategy can fail to take adequate account of different interests and understandings in development, resulting in failed projects and 'top-down' interventions. The concept has been further unpacked by Büscher (2010: 35), who emphasises that neoliberal projects use anti-politics to "replace political debate over the distribution of interests and power by 'marketized' political mechanisms that enable the quantification and 'trading' of interests and value conflicts through commoditization." The final important concept is that local actors can, under some circumstances, find political means to resist such interventions by employing what Scott (1985) calls the "weapons of the weak".

Making use of these concepts, this paper aims to explicate the processes and context in which hybrid neoliberal partnership arrangements are implemented and how this might enable or constrain the attainment of the intended objectives. It addresses this particular issue from a policy arrangement perspective with reference to the Clouds Lodge, a new PCP at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda (hereafter Bwindi). First, we introduce the four dimensions of Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) and the methodology adopted. Second, we describe the process by which the Clouds Lodge PCP arrangement was designed. Third, we analyse this process using the PAA. Finally, we discuss the results, drawing on the theoretical concepts presented above. The study reveals that the technical conceptualisation of the partnership arrangement failed to take proper account of political and contextual factors, resulting in escalating conflict up to the national level. We conclude that while more time is needed to evaluate the full impact of hybrid neoliberal approaches such as PCP, the unbalanced power relations they imply can create fertile conditions for political conflict that ultimately undermines their 'win-win' goals.

THE POLICY ARRANGEMENT APPROACH

The Policy Arrangement Approach (Arts 2006; Arts and Leroy 2006; Van der Zouwen 2006; Wiering and Arts 2006; Buizer 2008) was developed as a methodological 'lens' to "describe and characterise [policy] arrangements [and] to interpret and understand their relative stability or change, and the mechanisms behind these dynamics" (Arts and Leroy 2006: 13). It does so through the analysis of four different dimensions of a policy arrangement, namely: 1) actors and coalitions; 2) resources and the associated power and influence; 3) rules of the game; and 4) policy discourses (Arts and Leroy 2006). These four dimensions are inextricably interwoven, implying that any change in one dimension induces changes to other dimensions. By considering each of these aspects, the approach captures both technical and political dimensions of policy formation (Van der Zouwen 2006; Wiering and Arts 2006).

The dimension of actors involves an analysis of individuals, organisations, and coalitions involved in or associated with a particular intervention (Buizer 2008). A coalition is formed when individual actors join with others to achieve more or less similar

goals. Coalitions may share resources or the understanding and interpretation of discourses in the context of the applied rules of the game (Arts 2006). But it is important to note that in this process, dominant discourses and rules may be supported by some, while others challenge them. What emerge are supporting and challenging coalitions, the 'wielders and the yielders'.

Access, possession, or ability to mobilise resources defines and configures relations of power. Power is on the one hand the ability of actors to mobilise resources and, on the other hand, it is a relational and structural phenomenon of social and political systems (Arts et al. 2000). Resources can be financial, knowledge, political, religious, land, contacts, etc. (Buizer 2008), and may be mobilised and deployed in a policy arrangement. As they are the media through which power is exercised, they may lead to new inequalities within and between societal fractions. However, there is always a possibility for the 'powerless' actors to form coalitions and command negotiation power over the powerful actors. On the other hand, the ability to manipulate the social situation of others or their perception of it, by the exercise of one's resources and rights, thereby increasing the pressures on others to act in accordance with one's own wishes is power based on influence (Meyer 2001). Influence is always hidden power, and its inclusion in power analysis widens the focus and helps to generate deeper understanding of all hidden forces that could be influencing policy processes, implementation, and decision-making processes (Meyer 2001).

Rules (of the game) imply both formal and informal rules that guide, enable, and constrain the behaviour of the actors (Van Tatenhove et al. 2000; Buizer 2008). The formal rules are fixed in legal forms or agreements defined by the actors involved, while informal rules simply raise the dos and the don'ts for actors (Arts 2006). Rules shape the way a policy intervention is implemented, for example, by specifying who shares what, who does what, and how issues are raised.

Discourses refer to sets of ideas, buzzwords, perceptions, narratives, storylines, or key paradigms prevailing in a given policy domain. They are interpretive schemes that actors or coalitions make use of and are closely linked to practices (Arts and Leroy 2006; Wiering and Arts 2006). It is through the ensemble of these perceptions or ideas which are produced and reproduced in certain practices that meaning is given to physical and social realities (Arts 2006). Generally, a policy arrangement can be characterised by one particular dominant policy discourse, the content of which is often challenged by competing discourses. Discourses might support or challenge a policy arrangement and might refer to detailed theories or policy programmes, or simply popular buzzwords like "sustainability" or "participation" (Arts et al. 2000).

METHODS

For the purpose of this study, we conducted a thorough review of all relevant policy documents. These documents included agreements, reports, advertisements inviting bids for a private partner, financial disbursement records, and minutes of meetings. Other relevant documents studied were

the Nkuringo tourism plan, petitions of complaining groups to courts of law, written complaints to the district authorities, petitions to the President of the Republic of Uganda and to the Minister of Tourism, all the associated replies, newspaper articles on the subject, and the report of the Inspector General of Government (IGG). Documentary review provided baseline data for understanding the actors and their roles, discourses, flow of resources, operational rules, and other implementation issues related to the Bwindi PCP arrangement. In addition, key stakeholders at implementation as well as those affected by the arrangement were selected and interviewed (n=15). These stakeholders were purposively selected and represented the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP). The former is a parastatal entity which oversees Uganda's wildlife. The latter is an international conservation NGO which is a coalition of the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and Fauna & Flora International (FFI), and has been active around Bwindi and the Virunga region since the late 1980s. These two organisations facilitated and mediated the PCP arrangement at Bwindi. More key informants were selected from The Uganda Safari Company (TUSC), the Nkuringo Conservation and Development Foundation (NCDF), the Kisoro Tourism Association (KTA), the Association of Uganda Tour Operators (AUTO), and Kisoro district administration. To allow further probing by the researcher and the respondents to reveal in-depth issues relating to the implementation of the policy intervention, the interviews were open-ended. Four focus group discussions involving 20–25 people were held in the villages of Nteko parish, and four others involving 15–30 people were held in the villages of Rubuguri parish. In both parishes, focus group meetings were attended by both males and females above 18 years and an effort was made to encourage all participants to contribute to the discussion. It was in these discussions that community views about the PCP arrangement were captured. Informal discussions were held to fill in gaps.

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is located in southwestern Uganda within the Kigezi highlands. The current study was conducted in the two park-adjacent parishes of Nteko and Rubuguri, Kisoro district, where the Clouds Lodge policy intervention is being operationalised (see Figure 1). The study was conducted during two periods totalling four months;

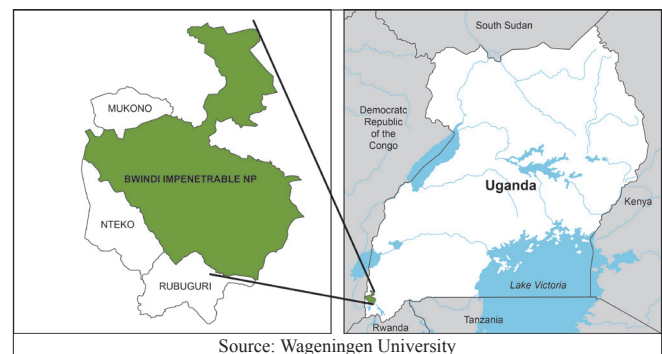


Figure 1
Location of Bwindi National Park

September and October 2009 and July and August 2010. All fieldwork was carried out by the first author.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIVATE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AT BWINDI

Tourism based on gorilla trekking began at Bwindi in 1993 (McNeilage 1996), when the only access point for trekking was at Buhoma in Mukono parish on the northern side of the park (Ahebwa and Van der Duim 2012). Tourist numbers have grown steadily from 1,313 in 1993 to 4,048 in 2002 and 10,124 in 2008 (UWA 2010). At the time of this study, six groups of gorillas were available for tourism, and visitor numbers were limited by a permit quota to eight tourists per gorilla group per day. This is intended to limit the exposure of gorillas to tourists (Homsy 1999). The PCP venture on which this study is based is linked to one group located in the Nkuringo sector, south of Bwindi, which has been open for tourism since 2004.

Direct community involvement in the tourism business was introduced at Bwindi in Buhoma in 1993 with the foundation of Buhoma Community Rest Camp, owned collectively by all adult residents of Mukono parish. This was the first direct policy intervention mediated and facilitated by UWA, USAID, and IGCP aimed at enabling communities to benefit from tourism with the hope that it would address livelihood and conservation concerns (Ahebwa and Van der Duim 2012). Based on the Buhoma experience, tourism was subsequently proposed by UWA and IGCP as a way to address a long standing history of human-wildlife conflicts in the southern side of Bwindi (UWA Official, Research Interview 2009). The tourism concept for Kisoro district was supported by members of the community in Nteko and Rubuguri parishes, who envied the benefits that tourism was generating for the people of Buhoma in Mukono parish (Founder Chairman of NCDF, Research Interview 2009). Through the Kisoro district administration and local opinion leaders, demand grew for habituation of gorillas for tourism in Kisoro district, so that the area could share in tourism benefits (Kisoro District Chairman, Research Interview 2009). Having had this plan, but also responding to the community and district administration pressure, UWA and IGCP started the habituation process at Nkuringo, Kisoro district in 1997 (IGCP Official, Research Interview 2009).

Preparing gorillas for tourism is a long process that first involves habituating the gorillas to the presence of humans. It took about seven years for the Nkuringo group to be opened for tourism in 2004 (UWA Official, Research Interview 2009). In 1999 however, the gorillas undergoing habituation proved more dangerous and troublesome to the surrounding communities than before. Gorillas which were becoming used to humans began to stray further into the community areas. This exacerbated raiding of crops like bananas, avocados, maize, and other related problems:

The gorillas were spending most of their time in people's gardens, escalating the standing human-wildlife conflicts.

We had to find a short-term solution to the problem, but also come up with a way how the local people could benefit from the existence of gorillas (IGCP Official, Research Interview 2009).

UWA and IGCP sought communities' views on how the problem could be tackled. This opened up negotiations between UWA, IGCP, and the community leaders. Negotiations were based on two options: stop the habituation process and hence put the planned tourism development on hold, or acquire the land that gorillas had frequented and turn it into a buffer zone. In anticipation of tourism-related benefits and also having suffered conflict with gorillas and other wild animals, the majority of community members opted for option two and accepted to sell the land to UWA. Some of the people who sold their land migrated to other regions in Uganda, others bought land within Kisoro district, while others stayed on the small pieces of land that remained (Local leader, Research Interview 2010). Selling the land was on condition that communities would maximally benefit from tourism and that UWA and IGCP would put in place interventions to stop crop raiding. Although a few members of the community were against the idea of selling, they were overtaken by events as they could not remain 'islands' in an area frequently invaded by wildlife (Elder in Nteko, Research Interview 2010). They too were forced by the prevailing situation to sell their land to UWA. IGCP obtained the required funds from international donors and assisted UWA to buy the land, an area 150 m wide and 12 km long on the edge of the park on the Kisoro district side (UWA-NCDF 2004). IGCP later signed an agreement with UWA that necessitated the land to be turned into a buffer zone annexed to the park and allowed to regenerate into forest vegetation. This buffer zone is currently co-managed by UWA and the community and is intended to cushion the communities from conservation related losses (IGCP Official, Research Interview 2010).

Meanwhile, IGCP hired a consultant to establish a tourism development plan for the Nkuringo area encompassing Nteko and Rubuguri parishes and design a business plan for gorilla trekking for the same area. In the plan, the consultant recommended a PCP as an appropriate intervention to ensure guaranteed quick tourism-related benefits to communities, and that this could be achieved through a high-end lodge. Preference for PCP intervention over the direct community involvement model as at Buhoma was hinged on two main reasons: 1) Nkuringo area being so remote it is not easy to access, and therefore it would be very difficult to generate quick benefits from a community managed tourism venture; and 2) there was a need for high-end accommodation units for the upper category of visitors at Bwindi and UWA wanted to use this opportunity to meet visitors' demands while addressing community interests as well (UWA Official, Research Interview 2009). The consultant's report was adopted by IGCP and the Kisoro District Council (IGCP Official, Research Interview 2009).

The PCP proposal for Bwindi fitted well with the broader

work of AWF, which is the main partner in IGCP, with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. AWF has promoted and facilitated the PCP model through the introduction of 'conservation enterprises' (Nthiga et al. 2011; Van der Duim 2011). Conservation enterprises are commercial ventures designed to create benefit flows that support the attainment of a conservation objective and may include eco-lodges, campsites, and cultural villages, fishing villages, harvesting and processing natural resource products. AWF supports around 30 of these projects in Eastern and Southern Africa. According to AWF, these conservation enterprises are likely to do well with sound private sector and community partners, clear contractual agreements and community ownership, transparent intra-community benefit sharing arrangements, and a clear conservation logic (Elliot and Sumba 2010).

While habituation of gorillas in Nkuringo was ongoing, a group of 23 community members from Nteko and Rubuguri parishes formed an association called Nkuringo Tourism Development Association (NTDA), with the intention of taking advantage of the tourism related opportunities through running private tourism businesses. They had planned to start a community campground, but UWA and IGCP managed to convince them to "transform this into an institution with broader objectives that represented general community interests" (IGCP Official, Research Interview 2010).

Through NTDA, IGCP and UWA hoped to implement the recommendations in the tourism plan the consultant had prepared and to reach out to other community members from Nteko and Rubuguri. As a public relations gesture, but also as a step to bring the community on board, IGCP and AWF sponsored a trip to Kenya to enable NTDA leaders to learn about best practices as far as community enterprises in tourism involving PCP are concerned. The Founder Chairman of NCDF described the Kenya trip as follows:

What we saw in Kenya was great...we all thought of starting a big thing and not just a community campground if we were to benefit from tourism. When we returned from Kenya, we delivered the idea to the people of Rubuguri and they accepted it (Founder Chairman of NCDF, Research Interview 2009).

The post Kenya-trip period was dominated by discussions involving the rest of the NTDA members and some other community members from the two parishes on which tourism investment option should be taken. The results of these discussions, as revealed by key informants and in focus group discussions, were positive as these community members endorsed the IGCP and UWA's idea of a high-end lodge:

The idea of the high-end lodge was endorsed after realising with the help of UWA and IGCP that clients to the area are high class and therefore high-end services would be on demand...But also, since tourists trekking gorillas are always limited, it would not make sense to set up fragmented and many low-end accommodation

establishments in each of the parishes (NCDF Official, Research Interview 2009).

Community members also seem to have approved of working with a high-end partner, for the following reasons:

From what the community members who went to Kenya had learnt and considering advice from IGCP, and UWA, it was more prudent if a high-end lodge was established in partnership with the private sector. This was partly due to our limitations in hospitality business management skills, but also to follow the condition that IGCP had given for soliciting funds on our behalf for constructing the eco-lodge (NCDF Official, Research Interview 2009).

At this stage, the 23 members of the NTDA renamed their organisation the Nkuringo Conservation and Development Foundation (NCDF), with technical and financial facilitation from IGCP and UWA. It is important to note that this subsequently led to controversy. Some community members, district officials and opinion leaders felt the group of 23 members were not representative of all the people in the two parishes since they were not elected in the first place, and argued that they capitalised on the 'ignorance' of the masses. They described the group as 'local elites' who aimed at advancing their interests and that the same group was behind the development of the NCDF constitution. The NCDF constitution indicates 23 names of this group with appended signatures. Through an advocate, they registered NCDF with the registrar of companies as a 'company limited by guarantee' in 2004. Members of NTDA chose to register NCDF in this way for three reasons: liability of members is only limited to the amount guaranteed in the articles and memorandum of association; the company is not liable to pay corporation tax on profits as long as the profits are ploughed back into the company in line with its objectives; and, instead of declaring dividends, like in the case of a company limited by shares, profits are ploughed back to support social activities (NCDF 2009: 6).

The registration of NCDF as a company worsened the controversy, as some community members and tourism companies saw it as more evidence suggesting that NCDF was not a community focused venture, but a kind of private initiative driven by a few individuals who were using the community name to attract support. This period saw the beginnings of a coalition opposing the PCP process, described in more detail below. Defending their work with NCDF, IGCP argues that:

We had to start from somewhere, and this group was already united and engaged in activities that suited our interests... so it was rational and in good faith to work through them to bring other communities on board (IGCP Official, Research Interview 2009).

IGCP further argues that all provisions were in place to

involve the entire community. On the issue of registering NCDF as a company, IGCP and the NCDF leaders claimed to prefer this as it would ease the legal process of partnering with a private developer, and meant that profits made on the part of the community (NCDF) would be re-invested into community undertakings to expand benefits to the entire community in the long run.

In the following events, the 23 NCDF members on behalf of the Nteko and Rubuguri communities started brainstorming on how to move forward with the new idea of a high-end lodge. They resorted to the Nkuringo tourism development plan that had earlier been developed by the consultant (NCDF Founding Chairman, Research Interview 2009). A committee constituting NCDF with representatives from IGCP and UWA, in consultation with Kisoro district, agreed that Ntungamo village in Nteko parish be taken on as the site for the project. This was because the UWA - Nkuringo sector office where gorilla trekkers converge for a pre-trekking briefing is located in Ntungamo village. NCDF however did not have land in this area on which the project could be established. With NCDF formed, the new challenge at this stage was mobilisation of resources to purchase land.

Mobilisation of financial resources

NCDF purchased 13 acres of land for the PCP lodge for a total of UGX 31 million (about USD 15,500). Of these funds, UGX 15 million was from NCDF reserves, and UGX 16 million was borrowed from the Solidarity Fund of Rwanda (a conservation fund also administered by IGCP for Rwanda). In both cases, IGCP played a major role in facilitating access to finance. The sum taken from NCDF reserves for land purchase was the same as an amount paid by IGCP and UWA to NCDF in exchange for labour to remove exotic fruit species from the new Bwindi buffer zone, necessary as these were attracting gorillas out of the park (UWA Official, Research Interview 2009). The UGX 16 million was also brokered by IGCP as loan deal between NCDF and the Solidarity Fund of Rwanda, whereby the borrowed money was to be paid back once NCDF got any other funding for the project or after the eco-lodge started operating. This money has since been paid back using remittances from Clouds Lodge to NCDF [see AWF (2010) for details of NCDF expenses 2008–2010].

With NCDF in possession of land for a lodge, IGCP and UWA started facilitating the process of identifying the private developer to partner with NCDF in the PCP arrangement. A tender committee was constituted, comprising three members from NCDF, three from UWA, and three from IGCP, and the search process began in late 2004. The tender advertisements were placed both locally and internationally in newspapers and on websites (IGCP Official, Research Interview 2009). Four companies—The Uganda Safari Company (TUSC), Inns of Uganda (currently Geo Lodges), Serena Hotels, and a Kenyan Consortium—responded to the advert by submitting concept notes and later, Serena hotels and the Kenyan consortium withdrew leaving TUSC and Inns of Uganda who submitted

full proposals (IGCP Official, Research Interview 2009). The proposals detailed their business plans and company profiles.

The two proposals were reviewed by a consultant hired by the tender committee. This Kenyan-owned and Kenyan-based consulting company was brought on board by AWF on behalf of IGCP. The tender committee developed selection criteria based on the bidder organisation, the proposed product concept, and the proposed partnership dynamics. On the basis of these criteria, TUSC emerged as the best (IGCP Official, Research Interview 2009) and was therefore selected by the tender committee to build and run an eco-lodge with NCDF.

The tendering process proved controversial in two respects. First, the direct involvement of IGCP, AWF, and UWA in the tender process attracted mixed reactions. The Founder Chairman of NCDF said that the involvement of IGCP and UWA in the tendering process was initiated by NCDF to benefit from their experience and expertise:

It was not easy for us to identify a private sector partner... That is why we sought the assistance of IGCP and UWA and it is not that they were imposing on us, but they were actually advising us (NCDF Founder Chairman, Research Interview 2009).

In contrast, the Kisoro Tourism Association (KTA), which was emerging as a key opposition actor in the process, argued that it was a ploy by IGCP and UWA to bring one of their own into the whole arrangement:

IGCP and UWA had a hidden agenda from the start of all the arrangement, they had preferential treatment and supported the monopoly of the gorillas in Nkuringo, that is why they brought in TUSC... It was very unfair... and we shall continue to oppose it (KTA Official, Research Interview 2009).

On the other hand, UWA stated that its interest in the whole process was purely to secure the safety of the park through helping communities get a better deal:

Our only interest in the...arrangement was to assist communities to secure a credible private developer to partner...In any case our sole aim is to conserve, and we were very much interested in communities in these two frontline parishes who are facing conservation problems (UWA Official, Research Interview 2010).

Secondly, some actors felt there was a conflict of interest between UWA, IGCP, and TUSC. At the time of the tendering process and awarding, the proprietor of TUSC was a Board member of UWA (the top most decision making organ) [UWA, KTA, AUTO Officials, Research Interviews 2009; Inspector General of Government (IGG) 2010]. Because of this, KTA and others have since argued that he might have used his influence to get favour from the tender awarding committee.

Upon soliciting NCDF's equity fund into the partnership and identifying the private developer, discussions on the partnership agreement ensued. These discussions involved NCDF and TUSC, mediated and facilitated by IGCP and UWA. The agreement was drafted by AWF lawyers who were based in Nairobi, Kenya.

Further resistance emerged when it was realised that in the agreement there was a clause that required NCDF, upon signing the agreement with TUSC, to transfer its exclusive rights to gorilla permits to TUSC. It emerged that on August 30, 2004, UWA had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NCDF giving it exclusive rights to purchase all the six gorilla trekking permits available in the Nkuringo section of Bwindi at that time. This clause however attracted the attention of the Association of Uganda Tour Operators (AUTO), which joined as a new actor into the opposition. AUTO is an umbrella association of more than 120 major tour operators in Uganda, all of which compete for the limited gorilla permits available at Bwindi. Other AUTO and KTA members viewed TUSC as a competitor supposed to operate under the same business environment as themselves, and argued that the transfer of gorilla permits' exclusive rights to TUSC would give it an unfair advantage in this section of the park. As the KTA Chairman argued:

We own many tourism accommodation facilities in Kisoro; by giving TUSC exclusive rights...it would mean that all clients coming to the Kisoro side of the park would stay at Clouds Lodge...we shall then be disadvantaged (KTA Chairman, Research Interview 2009).

As for AUTO, the argument was that, "exclusive rights would make TUSC the 'boss' in the gorilla business which is disastrous in a free economy" (AUTO Chairman, Research Interview 2009).

On the contrary, IGCP and UWA argued that giving exclusive rights to NCDF was intended to create an assurance of the market for the joint venture. This was an inducement to attract the interest of a private developer:

Investment in Nkuringo area was risky since it is so remote, located near Congo and trekking the gorilla group is tough...an assurance of the market by tagging the permits was necessary to attract a private sector partner (IGCP and UWA Official, Research Interview 2009).

NCDF also signed the MOU that stipulated in Article 3.7 that NCDF will share all benefits accruing from the utilisation of the said gorilla permits with the entire Nkuringo community (the residents of Nteko and Rubuguri parishes), and that these benefits would be shared in a transparent and fair manner, and in accordance with NCDF's memorandum and articles of Association. Accordingly, UWA justifies this to have been targeting the entire community shouldering the burden of conservation.

Intensifying conflict

At this time, deep-rooted conflicts within NCDF itself began to emerge. Power struggles took place regarding who should lead and who should benefit and this in part led to the emergence of a 'Rubuguri pressure group'. It emerged from various focus group discussions and key stakeholder interviews that the leader of this group was earlier among the founding members of NTDA and NCDF, but dropped out due to conflicts. At the same time, he had also started an accommodation establishment in Rubuguri town and saw the joint venture as a threat to his business. He was quick at mobilising other disgruntled members of the community especially from Rubuguri, and their local coalition linked up with Association of Uganda Tour Operators (AUTO) and Kisoro District Tourism Association (KTA) to take their stand forward.

On July 7, 2006, the Minister of Tourism travelled to grace the signing of the NCDF-TUSC agreement at Kisoro district council hall. The opposition coalition, which had grown to include KTA, AUTO, the Rubuguri pressure group, and some district officials, requested the Minister not to sign the agreement. Issues of contention largely emanated from the gorilla permits 'monopoly' clause. The large coalition proved a force that the Minister could not resist, and he did not sign the agreement. The Minister called a side meeting on the same day and listened to the views of stakeholders and advised members that though it was difficult at that stage to stop the arrangement, it was necessary to postpone the signing of the agreement to allow more time for consultations among various stakeholders. He urged the district administration and UWA to hold a meeting with NCDF and the opposition coalition members (KTA, AUTO, and Rubuguri pressure group) to come up with a win-win solution to the standoff. Following the minister's directive, the Executive Director of UWA called a meeting of KTA and Kisoro district leaders in the same year (2006). One UWA official indicated that the meeting was successful:

NCDF retained exclusive rights of 6 permits as per the draft agreement and in a situation that the 6 permits are not sold, other operators would be offered an opportunity to buy them (UWA Official, Research Interview 2009).

It emerged in the same period that IGCP had initiated talks with the conservation authorities in Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to increase the number of tourists per trekking from six to eight per day, partly to address the high demand for gorilla permits in the region. This idea was accepted and became applicable in the whole region and for the Nkuringo area; the extra two permits became available to be competed for by other tour operators (UWA Official, Research Interview 2010). However, despite this agreement, the district council still raised a complaint about how they were not comfortable with the NCDF-TUSC agreement being drafted in Nairobi. At this stage, another committee composed of the district administration (Secretary for Natural Resources, the District Executive), KTA, and NCDF was established to again scrutinise the draft agreement. The key issue here was

Box I <i>Summary of key articles of the PCP agreement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NCDF was bound to transfer exclusive rights of 6 permits to TUSC, Clouds Lodge management.• NCDF had to handover USD 250,000 solicited by IGCP to TUSC to build the lodge structures.• The eco-lodge was to be legally owned by NCDF. The Uganda Safari Company (owned by a private investor) was to manage it on behalf of NCDF for a period of 15 years.• In the period of 15 years, for every guest to the lodge, NCDF would get USD 30 per night.• The Uganda Safari Company was also mandated to pay NCDF a sum of USD 5,000 annually as ground rent.• All the amounts above were to increase by 5% every year.• At the time of the agreement, the private developer was to charge tourists USD 150 per person per night.• The agreement also provided that if Gross Published Room Rate increased by more than the inflation rate, NCDF's earnings would automatically increase.• TUSC was mandated to train and employ members of NCDF as much as possible.• No investor could operate a similar business within a radius of 20 km.• No investor could construct structures within the sightlines of the Clouds Lodge.• Discussions or conversation with guests would be controlled by NCDF, UWA, and IGCP.• Clouds Lodge was to buy supplies and services from members of NCDF where possible (local sourcing).• The Uganda Safari Company was mandated to promote conservation ideals of AWF-IGCP and encourage its clients to join AWF-IGCP membership.

mistrust between some members of the district administration and IGCP and UWA.

From what I read from these district officials, they were suspicious of IGCP and UWA and thought they were taking advantage of the community...but at the same time, the district also wanted to find avenues of how it could directly benefit from the arrangement (NCDF Official, Research Interview 2010).

Resolving this conflict was critical, as under Ugandan law, any development in a district must be endorsed by the district administration.

The committee resolved that there was need for legal advice and interpretation of certain sections of the agreement necessitating the involvement of the Solicitor General (Government's legal advisor). The Solicitor General studied the draft agreement and certified that it was sound according to Ugandan laws. His comments, which were communicated in writing, gave the committee a green light to allow the signing of the agreement between TUSC and NCDF which was effected on March 22, 2007, facilitated by IGCP and witnessed by the Kisoro district local government and UWA (see Box I).

The agreement was a milestone in the enactment of the

Box II <i>Extracts from the IGG's Letter to The Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry, 2010</i>
<p>In view of the above and pursuant to Article 230 (2) of the constitution and S. 14 (6) of Inspectorate of Government Act, 2002 this is therefore to direct as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">i. The illegal and irregular contracts, namely the Agreement between Uganda Wildlife Authority and Nkuringo Conservation and Development Foundation of 30/8/2004 and its addendums of 23/11/2006 and 29/11/2006, and the agreement between Nkuringo Conservation and Development Foundation and Uganda Safari Company, should be revoked.ii. Uganda Wildlife Authority should comply with all the laws and policies that govern it in executing its mandate without taking advantage of the ignorance of the communities it works with. It should particularly comply with the Uganda Wildlife Act Cap. 200, Local Government Act, 1997 and the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, 2003.iii. Uganda Wildlife Authority should draw up a well thought out framework for the development of tourism opportunities for the whole region where Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is located, but not for particular isolated areas.iv. The sub-counties of Nyabwishenya and Kirundo, where Rubuguri and Nteko parishes respectively fall, should in consultation with the district take over the Nkuringo Gorilla tourism project and improve development for the benefit of their communities after other modalities have been addressed. The sub-counties have the mandate and capacity to plan for their local communities, and can be held responsible for transparency, accountability and reporting because they have a planning and budgeting mandate for their parishes to channel any project opportunities for their communities.v. The Ministry of Tourism should strengthen its supervisory role over Uganda Wildlife Authority, without simply being informed of what Uganda Wildlife Authority has already done regardless of its irregularity.vi. NCDF should be wound up because it does not serve the interests of the Nkuringo community for which it was allegedly formed. Another organisation that will genuinely serve the interests of the people of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park be formed and registered with the relevant authority. <p>The IGG's office expects a feed back (from UWA/Ministry of Tourism) on action taken in implementing the directions herein within sixty (60) days from the date of receipt of this letter that was dated 28 April 2010.</p>

PCP arrangement, and the project also received an approval from the Uganda Investment Authority. However, opposition to the agreement continued. The opposition coalition lodged a case in courts of law which they lost, but extended their opposition campaigns to the internet and also continued with their petitions to several government officials, including the Minister of Tourism. According to the Chairman of KTA, their discontent was worsened by inclusion of clauses which they had rejected earlier. The clauses were: 1) that no investor should operate a similar business within the radius of 20 km; 2) that no investor shall construct structures within the Clouds Lodge sight lines; and 3) that discussions or conversation with guests was to be a preserve of NCDF, UWA, and IGCP. To the KTA members and other members of the opposition coalition, this was totally unacceptable in the free economy of Uganda.

An official petition was also sent to the Inspector General of

Government (IGG—The Government’s anti-graft body), which attracted a fresh investigation into the matter. It is important to note that soon after NCDF-TUSC signed their agreement on March 22, 2007, USD 250,000 from USAID was passed on to TUSC by IGCP as was stipulated by the agreement (Clouds Lodge Official, Research Interview 2010). The construction of the Nkuringo lodge, to be called ‘Clouds Mountain Gorilla Lodge’, started and was officially opened for business on July 31, 2008. This was the first PCP tourism lodge to open in Uganda.

The findings of the IGG’s investigations were released in mid 2010. The IGG report questioned the procedure through which the USAID contribution for NCDF was channeled to TUSC without being reflected in NCDF bank transactions for audit reasons:

Funds of USD 250,000... were not properly accounted for as Nkuringo Conservation and Development Foundation for whom it was received did not know how it was used. There was no evidence of receipt of the said money by NCDF and the bank statement of Nkuringo did not reflect receipt of the said money (IGG 2010).

Interestingly, despite the earlier approval given by the Solicitor General regarding the NCDF-TUSC agreement, IGG quoted and used other rules and articles of procedure from the Ugandan constitution to challenge the actions of UWA, and in this case quashed the observations of the Solicitor General (see IGG 2010). The IGG drew on the constitutional powers conferred to his institution and gave directions that were communicated to UWA and the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry in a letter dated April 28, 2010, as detailed in Box II.

The strength of the findings of the IGG report has attracted a lot of debate locally and nationally, with the Uganda Investment Authority on the one hand calling it “an anti-investment move” that should be stopped, and on the other, the opposition coalition calling it a breakthrough towards attaining justice and fairness. The Ministry of Tourism has constituted a committee to further look into the matter by giving stakeholders a second hearing. The recommendations of this committee will most likely determine the next wave in the events regarding the Clouds Lodge arrangement.

Meanwhile, at the local level, several focus group discussions, especially in Nteko where the lodge is located, revealed some support for the existing arrangement. On September 25, 2009, UWA opened up another gorilla group (Nshongi) to visitors. This is located in Rubuguri parish. Partly, this was intended to address the gorilla permits conflicts and pressure from the communities. Nonetheless, opposition continues, with some actors arguing that although this group has been opened for tourism, the other six permits should also be opened up to allow fair competition.

POLICY ARRANGEMENT ANALYSIS

The case study provides evidence for how an attempt by international and national conservation agencies to address

conservation and development concerns can be hampered by escalating conflict. The next section analyses the process of design and implementation of this particular private-community partnership in terms of the four dimensions as distinguished in the policy arrangement approach.

Actors

The course of the Bwindi PCP arrangement involved a bewildering array of actors, including local people, local NGOs, international NGOs, local, district, and national politicians, and the tourism industry. What was intended to be and presented as a ‘simple’ partnership between a ‘community’ and a private partner, facilitated by IGCP and UWA, turned out to be a messy arena of smaller conflicts leading to bigger ones.

One important source of conflict involving actors in the process was the issue of ‘community’ representation. The Nkuringo Conservation Development Foundation (NCDF) claimed to represent the community in Nteko and Rubuguri parishes. NCDF was supported, facilitated, and promoted by IGCP and UWA. But some community members (especially from the Rubuguri parish), a section of district officials, and opinion leaders rejected NCDF’s claim and insisted that the members of NCDF were ‘local elites’ who aimed at advancing their interests since they were not elected in the first place and capitalised on the ‘ignorance’ of the masses. It was a common complaint among many actors that NCDF started as a private institution without community consent and its transformation into NCDF and claiming to act on behalf of the community was questioned. Despite IGCP’s efforts to broaden the objectives of NTDA and later transforming it into a loosely woven NCDF, the core issue remained that the partnership was built on inaccurate assumptions and incomplete considerations of community (Spiteri and Nepal 2006). This finding reflects similar misconceptions of ‘community’ described elsewhere (see for e.g., Brosius et al. 1997; Agrawal and Gibson 1999).

Actors identified in this research used coalition building as a strategy to enhance their impact. IGCP is itself the product of an international coalition between the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Fauna & Flora International (FFI), and World Wildlife Fund (WWF). This gives it access to a wide range of resources and networks, and strong links to international actors central to the promulgation of the neoliberal conservation discourse (see also “Discourses” below). Much of the PCP process was driven by a larger core coalition of IGCP, UWA, and NCDF, later working in conjunction with TUSC. The multi-sectoral nature of this coalition, including local and international NGOs, a government agency, and a tourism company, helped to give it legitimacy and the ability to push forward its agenda on multiple fronts. On the other side, a strong opposition coalition emerged, gradually building in size over time. It includes a fraction of the community who opposed NCDF and formed the Rubuguri pressure group, the Kisoro Tourism Association, and AUTO. Working together, this coalition managed to delay signing of the PCP agreement, launched repeated legal challenges, and successfully brought the IGG into the process,

resulting in a major setback to the PCP. Whilst the opposition coalition formed around a particular issue—resistance to the PCP agreement—the motivations of each member are fundamentally different. AUTO wants to see open competition for gorilla permits, KTA wants to see greater opportunities for local actors in tourism at Bwindi, and the Rubuguri pressure group is concerned with the sharing of benefits and the legitimacy of NCDF. Whereas in the latter case the conflict refers to the unequal distribution of scarce resources for those living in poverty outside the national park, paradoxically, the former refers to high market value of resource (that is: gorilla) rich-landscapes as Bwindi NP itself (Nelson 2010). Therefore, should the opposition coalition succeed in dismantling the PCP agreement, it is quite probable that the coalition will break apart due to differing interests.

Resources

The distribution of resources of actors taking part in the PCP process at Bwindi has had a strong influence on outcomes. Particularly resourceful actors have been IGCP and UWA: for example, by facilitating the trip to Kenya for NCDF members, IGCP was able to encourage the option of a high-end tourism partner in the style of those seen on the trip. Similarly, although NCDF was able to provide some finance itself for the purchase of the land for the Clouds Lodge, this money originally came from IGCP in payment for the clearing of exotics in the national park buffer zone. The acquisition of the last installment to clear land payment was also brokered by IGCP. In both cases, NCDF members may have been left with a sense of indebtedness to IGCP and a compromised ability to go against IGCP's preferred options for the PCP agreement, a process that has been described elsewhere under similar imbalances of resources (e.g., Nadasdy 2003). UWA had the authority to set the rules for access to gorilla permits, giving it great power to determine the policy arrangement. However, it has subsequently been undermined by the IGG, a rival state institution in terms of rule setting.

The resources of the two major coalitions identified in the PCP process varied relative to one another and through time. The coalition of IGCP, UWA, and NCDF had considerable financial resources, particularly considering the backing of a major USAID project which initially had invested USD 250,000 to facilitate the 'community' in starting up a tourism venture. This coalition also had gorilla permits, access to knowledge, technical skills, and political contacts, which put them in a strong position relative to early opponents of the PCP agreement. This enabled the coalition to shape the PCP agreement and guide the community towards its preferred outcome.

However, over time, the opposition coalition grew in resources and power as it recruited more members. The addition of influential district politicians in Kisoro to the opposition severely hampered the PCP process, as did AUTO with its national and international business connections. Individual contacts of members of the Rubuguri pressure group

also played a key role, bringing the Minister, the Solicitor General, and the IGG into the process through personal appeals and petitions. The success of this coalition in breaking the monopoly permit arrangement and bringing about the IGG's report demonstrates the ways in which coalitions can form and draw on their diverse resources to influence policy processes. It also demonstrates the success that can be achieved by relatively less powerful local actors when they are able to recruit more powerful actors to their cause. This is an example of the 'weapons of the weak' in action (Scott 1985).

Rules of the game

The rules of the game were seriously disputed. Rule refusal is one of the main reasons for policy arrangements not being able to mitigate or solve the social problems they were developed for (Van Gossum et al. 2011). In this case, both the way the agreement was drafted as well as some of the terms were not accepted by all. Referring to the former, the question of who got to draft the legal agreement was a source of considerable conflict in the Bwindi PCP process. The fact that it was drafted by AWF lawyers based in Nairobi, Kenya, was seen as inappropriate by members of the opposition coalition. AWF argued that drafting the agreement from Nairobi was one way of cutting costs as their lawyer could do it as part of his daily work. This example demonstrates that even a solution which may seem pragmatic from the perspective of one actor can seriously undermine trust in the process from the perspective of others. Referring to the latter, some of the terms of the PCP agreement were also a major source of conflict, particularly the 20 km exclusion zone for other lodges around the Clouds Lodge site. This, together with the 'monopoly' over gorilla permits, was heavily criticised and legally challenged by the opposition coalition as anti-competitive. The fact that these clauses were present at all in the PCP agreement demonstrates the considerable power the UWA/IGCP/TUSC coalition was able to exercise in influencing the terms of the agreement.

As the conflict over the Clouds Lodge PCP has escalated in scale, the power of different actors to dictate the rules of the game has varied. Initially, all the power lay with UWA and its coalition supporters. Following initial complaints from the opposition and ministerial intervention, the Solicitor General became the key player, who found that the agreement was legal. However, further lobbying from the opposition coalition brought the IGG into the picture, who was able to over-rule the Solicitor General and found that the agreement was void. This demonstrates that even laws of the land are open to interpretation, and that state actors can be influenced and may not be in agreement. The shifting sands of rule setting in this process have made it difficult for actors to understand where they stand or to plan for the future.

Discourses

The existence of two oppositional coalitions is clearly reflected in two over-arching competing discourses narrating the Clouds Lodge arrangement in either largely positive or negative

terms. However, within these two higher order discourses, fragmentation into lower order discourses can be identified. The positive discourse as expressed by IGCP and UWA is couched in 'win-win' language, and reflects a wider and increasingly pervasive global discourse which stresses the need for hybrid neoliberal partnerships to address the conservation-development nexus. In this sense, the Clouds Lodge case study can be understood as an example of how international actors bring with them generic discourses, which when applied on the ground are unable to take account of specific local conditions. At the same time, there is a more modest positive discourse, voiced by a section of community members employed by the lodge and those operating the crafts shops. In the focus group discussions held with them, they strongly supported the idea that Clouds Lodge arrangement should be upheld and sustained.

According to their story, the Clouds Lodge intervention is new and like any other new policy, it is bound to face challenges. Some of the highlighted challenges are associated with high expectations that local communities always have in sight of a new venture. However, they have already seen some benefits of conservation trickling down through jobs and incomes earned since the lodge started operating. Their narrative also bears a long-term perspective, where they expect more benefits to be delivered to the communities as the operation of the lodge stabilises without any interruptions. It is interesting to note that the majority of district administration members, including the District Tourism Officer, supported this view. They had a lot of hope in the intervention and argued that it is already showing a positive trend in addressing local people's livelihood issues as well as conservation. Whereas they initially opposed the arrangement, currently, they are only suggesting a middle ground where the existing challenges can be addressed to make the arrangement progress well by achieving a win-win outcome for all stakeholders.

On the other hand, there is the 'radical' discourse initiated by the opposition coalition and officiated by the IGG. Two groups can also be identified within this discourse. First, there is a 'community' rights discourse pushed by the Rubuguri pressure group, which holds that the PCP arrangement is an imposition on a vulnerable local community by a coalition of powerful non-local actors, to the detriment of local people. It argues that despite the terms of the PCP arrangement and its negotiation appearing to be participatory and in favour of the community, the process has been, and remains, dominated by non-local actors (UWA, IGCP, and TUSC) holding power, and a local actor (NCDF) which is not representative of the community. In contrast, the discourse framing the views of KTA and AUTO is about the anti-competitive nature of the agreement in the 'free' economy of Uganda. These discourses are aligned in their opposition to the PCP agreement, but justify this stance on very different grounds.

CONCLUSION

There is widespread debate about the socio-economic impacts of conservation programmes, the successes and failures of

community based approaches to conservation (Adams and Hutton 2007; Ahebwa and Van der Duim 2012), and the pros and cons of market-based solutions for conservation (Brockington et al. 2008; Büscher 2008; Sachedina et al. 2010). Although tourism plays an important role in this debate, the role of tourism based on hybrid neoliberal public-community partnerships in the conservation-development nexus has not yet been fully assessed, neither theoretically nor empirically—a crucial task if we are to identify constructive solutions. This paper aimed to make a small contribution to this debate. Using the four dimensions of the policy arrangement approach, this paper discussed the introduction, development, and implementation of a PCP model in Bwindi, Uganda. Based on this case study we conclude the following.

First, it is essential to consider political as well as technical issues when designing and evaluating policy arrangements and their outcomes. When looked at from a purely technical perspective, the case study presented here could be viewed as relatively successful, as it has established and tested a novel mechanism for transferring revenues from high-value tourism to the local community as part of a pan-African experimentation with new conservation and development models. However, a wider view, which incorporates analysis of power, resources, and the interactions of actors, reveals a process which has been beset by ever-growing levels of conflict. The PCP at Nkuringo may be generating revenues, but it has also created or exacerbated disputes within and between local communities, government institutions, and the private sector up to the national level. This outcome can be understood as a consequence of the coalition which supported the PCP agreement making use of an 'anti-politics' strategy (Ferguson 1994) which aimed to resolve conflict through a technical agreement for revenue sharing, and did not create adequate space for public deliberation of political disagreements.

Second, and on a related note, this study has shown that there are circumstances under which such anti-political interventions can fail to suppress the voices of less powerful local actors in the PCP model. Büscher (2010: 49) states that:

Local villagers generally start from an inferior position; this makes a political strategy of challenging what is on offer both risky and often unproductive and so in fact legitimates a further widening and entrenching of neoliberal conservation/development interventions. Neoliberal inequality becomes systemic as both the subjects and the implementers of a conservation and development intervention are constrained from pointing out that the emperor has, in fact, no clothes.

In our case study, an oppositional coalition that includes local villagers has announced emphatically that the emperor has no clothes, and has succeeded in severely hampering, if not entirely derailing, the PCP agreement. In this sense, the anti-political strategy adopted by the core coalition driving the PCP process can be said to have failed. However, perhaps the alignment of local opposition with the perspective of the

tourism industry and district politicians, all of whom joined a single coalition, makes this the exception that proves the rule. We must also not forget that there are local people who are in favour of the arrangement. The conditions under which such local opposition to neoliberal conservation/development interventions emerge is an area requiring further research.

Third, a major challenge in the implementation of PCPs is the complexity of the governance issues at stake (see also Mbaiwa 2005; Southgate 2006; Sumba et al. 2007; Nthiga et al. 2011; Van der Duim et al. 2011; Ahebwa et al. 2012). As this study has shown, challenges of conservation and development cannot be abstracted simply into a technical agreement. Actors have different interests and are able to form coalitions to push their perspective, they have varying resources which they are able to mobilise and deploy to shape the formal or informal rules of the game, and they are able to draw on or establish framing discourses to present their arguments. All of these heterogeneities create a recipe for conflict over the implementation of an arrangement such as PCP. In the present case, this conflict was likely exacerbated by the extraordinary gulf of power and resources between the local people on the one hand, and actors such as TUSC, UWA, and IGCP on the other. The balance of power between actors can also shift over time, as evidenced here by the growing size and influence of the opposition coalition, and the transfer of rule-setting power between different state institutions (UWA to the Solicitor General to the IGG). Clearly, PCP arrangements are not as straightforward as is often made out.

The recent fashion for hybrid neoliberal approaches to conservation suggests that there will be more and more PCP arrangements bringing diverse actors together in the name of conservation and development. Given the results of this and other studies, it seems probable that such arrangements will often lead to conflicts. Further research is required to confirm or reject this hypothesis, and in the meantime, we suggest a cautious approach to the adoption of PCPs as a combined conservation and development tool. Still, it is important to note that it is too early to pass final judgment on the Clouds Lodge arrangement, which has only been in operation since 2008. To establish the long-term impacts of this model, it is essential that the development and implementation of PCPs is closely monitored through longitudinal studies and by comparing particular cases in and between countries. It is possible, although we consider it unlikely, that conflicts of the kind identified in this study are teething problems that will be overcome with time. Should that prove not to be the case, the trend for PCP establishment will need to be re-examined.

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