

When a Good Policy Goes Bad.

An analysis of framings and silences in Uganda's 1995 National Environment Management Policy and effects on forest conservation

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- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Methodology**
- 3. Findings and Discussion**
 - 3.1. Problem representations
 - 3.2. Presuppositions underpinning the problem representations
 - 3.3. How did this come to be?
 - 3.4. Silences
 - 3.5. Effects
 - 3.6. Dissemination
- 4. Conclusions and recommendations**
 - 4.1. Conclusions
 - 4.2. Recommendations

Keywords: sustainability, biodiversity, conservation, institutions, participation, marketization.

Abstract. *I critically analyze the Uganda National Environment Management Policy (NEMP) from 1995. The big question is why Uganda continues to experience tremendous loss of forest resources while the NEMP, which set strong objectives towards forest conservation and management, has been in effect for nearly three decades. I apply Carol Bacchi's "What's the Problem Represented to be?" approach to unpack how the problem of forest and biodiversity loss is represented in the NEMP, the underlying presuppositions that enliven it, and the processes and practices that led to the pervasiveness of these problem representations. In addition, I identify the silences and effects of the problem representations and ways in which the policy has been disseminated, defended, or contested. I have found that the language in NEMP around defining sustainability, biodiversity conservation, institutional collaboration, public participation, and marketization largely aligns with language promulgated in international treaties and institutions like the Convention on Biological Diversity and the FAO. The NEMP is therefore subject to the discursive critiques of these themes that scholars in various fields have developed in the past decades. While my analysis engages briefly with these critiques, my central argument centers on the active silences such as corruption and ignorance that underlie environmental injustices and that are worsening forest degradation. In conclusion, without addressing these silences, the NEMP has little chance of slowing or reversing biodiversity loss.*

1. Introduction

Environmental management has for decades been on Ugandan political agenda. Uganda's forests suffered from especially 1972 to 1985. With a new focus on "good governance" in 1986, Uganda aligned national with international policies and agreements, thereby establishing the Ministry of Environment in 1987, under which the National Environment Action Plan (NEAP) was developed in 1991. The NEAP led to the enactment of the National Environment Management Policy (NEMP) in 1995 with the goal:

Sustainable social and economic development which maintains or enhances environmental quality and resources productivity on a long-term basis that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (NEMP, 1995).

Under the broad objective of sustainability, the NEMP includes six specific sectoral policy goals and objectives: agriculture and farming systems, forest conservation and management, wildlife conservation and management, livestock and Rangelands management, fisheries and other aquatic resources conservation and management, as well as energy (Republic of Uganda, 1995). The present study focuses on the second objective; conserving and managing forests (NEMP, 1995-chapter IV).

Despite the focus on sustainability in the NEMP, two decades ago, NEMP instead increased biodiversity loss in Uganda's forests, with 25% forest cover in 1990 to 9% in 2017 (NFA, 2018), which situation was aggravated by increase of oil palm plantations from 3% in 2010 to 8% in 2017 (NEMA, 2019) especially in Kalangala District, the focus of this study. Here residents have been dispossessed of their farms to make way for commercial oil palm plantations. Furthermore, carbon trading/commodification of forest resources has become the dominant approach to conservation.

2. Methodology

To better understand the pre and post 1995 situation and the question of the NEMP not to have slowed forest biodiversity loss in Uganda, I analyzed the original NEMP document using Carol Bacchi's *What's the Problem Represented to be?* (WPR) approach. The WPR policy analysis is supplemented with insights from fieldwork carried out in Kalangala District from 2015 to 2020.

The WPR (Bacchi, 1999; 2012a;2012b; Bletsas and Beasley,2012) derives from Foucault's famous poststructuralist approach to policy analysis (Fischer, et al., 2015; Yanow, 2015). The solutions in policy proposals are the problem representations because they reflect the problem. Policy analysis is based on the notion that "what one proposes to do about something reveals what one thinks is problematic and needs to change" Bacchi (2012, p. 21). Problem representations exhibit "two interrelated levels of analysis and judgement", including the concern and causes of a problem (Bacchi, 1999, p.4). In their engagement with Carol Bacchi, Bletsas and Beasley (2012 p. 38) also indicate that the solution to a policy proposal is "what the problem is *understood- represented to be*" (Bacchi, 2009;2019).

This logical understanding enables policy analysts and other professionals to reflect upon policy problems.

The first reason I used the WPR approach to analyze the NEMP (1995) was because it is applicable to any policy proposal (Bacchi, 1999). Secondly, problem representations are the problem implied solutions in the policy document (Bastian and Coveney (2013). Thirdly, the approach is open to studying beyond single issues, and identifying a range of issues that would go unnoticed, because it follows a step-by-step analysis of six questions which include (Q1-Q6):

1. What is the problem of forest conservation and management represented to be in the NEMP (1995)?
2. What assumptions underpin these problem representations?
3. How did these representations of the problem come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in these problem representations, and thus is silent?
5. What effects are produced by these representations of the problem?
6. How/where have these representations of the problem been produced, disseminated, questioned, replaced and or defended?

The specific focus was forest conservation and management. I critically interrogated how the NEMP issue of forest conservation and management was problematized, the premises that problem representations rest upon, and its effects, as well as problems that could be nested in the policy problem itself.

In question 1, synthesized problem representations identified in the policy proposal itself were categorized into themes based on created paradigms. In question 2, I reflected on the underlying premises or “knowledges” in identified problem representations. To examine these “knowledges”, I adopted a Foucauldian archaeology (Bastian and Coveney, 2013) where I questioned the commonly accepted authoritative “knowledges” or discourses that determined the truth in our society, thus ontology and epistemology (Tubey et al., 2015; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Rehman and Alharthi, 2016). To deepen my understanding of the presuppositions that underpin the NEMP problem representations, I further borrowed ideas from Bastian and Coveney (2013, p.164) to examine the “language used and meanings attached to key concepts” that revealed the NEMP underlying assumptions and values (Bastian and Coveney, 2013). Therefore, to identify assumptions underpinning problem representations in the NEMP, I compared NEMP discourse to ongoing debates around sustainability, biodiversity conservation,

institutional collaboration, public participation, and marketization of nature. In other words: what notions of these terms are suggested and advanced in the NEMP? The goal was to summarize debates and distill what approach to each “concept” underlies NEMP. To answer question 3, I applied a ‘Foucauldian genealogy’, to analyze the NEMP “in both temporal and spatial context” (Bacchi, 2016: p.9). As regards question 4, I scrutinized the “possible gaps or limitations in the representations of the problem, accompanied by inventive imagining of potential alternatives (Bacchi, 2012a: p.22) or that there exist other ways of thinking about this particular problematization, but which were left silent in the policy. For question 5, I identified possible effects of the problem representations/solutions, and in question 6, I extracted from the relevant literature ways and where problem representations were shared locally in Kalangala district, nationally, continent wide and globally.

Therefore, I adopted a qualitative interpretive approach, acknowledging interpretivism as the nature of knowledge, purposely to understand the studied phenomenon (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Tubey, et al, 2015; Yanow, 2015), and so related the NEMP framing of forest conservation and management to other authors’ beliefs as paradigms for what I studied. Such literature included paradigms like (1) Sustainability (Brundtland, 1986; Caldwell, 1998; Fischer et al., 2015; Francis et al., 2003; Namanji, et al., 2019; OECD, 2011; Schneider and Francis, 2006; Siamanta 2017; Wu, 2013); (2) Biodiversity Conservation (Adams, 2017; Blaikie, 2006; Boyle and Boontawee, 1995; Barrow and Murphree, 2001; Büscher, et al., 2012; Brundtland, 1985; CBD, 1993; Clark and Munn, 1986; Dasgupta, 2021; Eckersley, 1992; Elliot, 1996; Griggs et al., 2013; Kashwan, 2020; Kiwango, et al., 2015; Moreno et al., 2017; Muir, 1898; NEMA, 2010; 2016 and 2019; Sachs, 2012; Silva and Mosimane, 2013; Thakholi, 2021; Towns, et al., 1990; UNSDG, 2015; West and Brockington, 2006); (3) Institutional collaboration (Bastian and Coveney, 2013; Bazaara, 2003; Namanji, et al., 2017; North, 1990; Ostrom, 2008; Ribot, et al., 2010); (4) Public participation (Brundtland, 1986; Chambers, 1992; 1997; 2010; Clark and Munn, 1986; Claridge, 2004; Collins, et al., 2021; Eckersley, 1992; Griggs et al., 2013; IUCN, 1980; Sachs, 2012; SDGs 4 and 6; Ribot et al., 2010); and (5) Marketization paradigms (Asiyanbi and Maresarella, 2020; Collins et al., 2021; Fairhead, et al., 2012; Green and Adams, 2015; Ian and Qin, 2019; UNCED, 1992; UNFCCC, 1992).

(1) Sustainability is a difficult concept to define. It can either be (overly) simplified and self-evident, as in the Brundtland (1986) report definition, or it can be a highly contested term, the simplification of which tends to conceal complex social relations and inequalities on the ground. In the Brundtland (1986) report,

sustainability relates to an aspect that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

(2) Biodiversity is a resource component of a strongly sustainable ecosystem, which must be conserved (CBD,1993). Thus, biodiversity is the variety and variability among living organisms and the ecological complexes in which they occur (Boyle and Boontawee, 1995). Biodiversity conservation is a World community’s commitment to sustainable development through conserving, through sustainable use, and fair sharing of genetic resources (UNCBD, 1992).

(3) The definition of institutions varies. North, (1990 p. 1) and Ostrom (2008) define institutions as “rules of the game in society...or devised constraints that shape human interaction”, or organizations in general (Ribot et al., 2010). North (1990) distinguishes between institutions and organizations by showing that while institutions are the rules of the game, organizations are the players, bearing the responsibility of enforcing rules or taking actions to achieve the desired goal. In this study I defined institutions as organizations responsible for implementing rules or actions towards sustainable conservation and management of biodiversity. While performing their duties, these organizations do not work in isolation, whereby institutional collaboration. Collaboration involves two or more organizations working together for a common goal, also called joint management. This is the dominant approach which involves cross-sectoral collaboration, including ministries, local government, and communities.

(4) There is a substantial amount of work on participation, a concept that has evolved and defined widely (Chambers,1997; 2010, Ribot et al.,2010). Chambers’ work presents two distinct ways of understanding participation, first as a method and second as a methodology. Participatory method is “a discrete type of activity, usually facilitated, usually carried out interactively by a group of people” (Chambers, 2010 p.8). It involves activities such as social mapping in which the local people are actively involved in all activities that determine their social status (ibid). Participatory methodology is a “A combination of approach and methods through which people do things themselves interactively” (Chambers, 2010 p. 8). For example, people do participatory planning by involving in processes to identify their needs and means of solving them thus empowering communities to contribute towards their wellbeing. Ribot et al. (2010) focus on popular participation through democratic decentralization, the meaningful transfer of power to community representatives, to exercise their authority. Popular participation, termed as “inclusive of the whole population” (ibid, p.2) is what I refer to as public participation in this article, thereby involving the representatives of the public in decisions towards the management of forest resources.

(5) Marketization of forest resources takes its roots from “the establishment of the framework of forest carbon sequestration” Ian and Qin (2019 p. 7), leading to global initiatives towards the management and mitigation of global warming. The global initiatives commenced with the June 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. The Rio conference adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992) which aimed at stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations. To finance climate adaptation projects, the UNFCCC had to establish an adaptation fund, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Emission Trade (ET). These initiatives asked countries to increase greening activities and reforestation to offset carbon dioxide emissions. In relation to the current debates about marketization, the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (UNCCC) in Copenhagen in 2009 emphasized Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+). To meet the REDD+ objective of removing greenhouse gasses by forests, the Paris Agreement developed the carbon market, to incentivize carbon emissions. The global market-based initiatives to solve natural resources depletion have emerged with a new appropriation of nature termed as green grabbing (Fairhead et al., 2012). Although green grabbing seems to be new, it has become a dominant approach. Green grabbing is the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends. Appropriation is the transferring of resource rights from certain groups to others who may be more powerful (ibid), for capital gain. Among the main processes that lead to the appropriation of nature is financialization, where financial systems facilitate redistributive activity. Another process is through “crisis narratives” (Schneider, 2014) such as “resources scarcity...to justify large-scale land investment” (p. 8).

These paradigms were subjected to the content analytical method (Lal Das, 2008) to arrive at themes. I utilized the steps followed in content analysis, first by deciding the level of analysis, which in my case led to themes. Secondly, by flexibly deciding how many concepts to include in the analysis. Thus, I identified key words or statements to mean themes under each research question, where applicable.

3. Findings and discussions

This section presents results of the analysis of the NEMP based on WPR, with the 6 research questions, under which results of identified themes are presented and discussed. Problem representations flow through the six research questions.

Themes are not exclusive, and theme content is complementary especially in the case of problem representations.

3.1 Problem Representations

Synthesized problem representations were in the policy proposal itself and were categorized into themes based on existing paradigms. Themes included sustainability, biodiversity conservation, institutional collaboration, public participation, and marketization of nature. Every theme consists of the most appropriate problem representations (PRs) indicated in the policy document. Thus, sustainability has 3 PRs, biodiversity conservation 4 PRs, institutional collaboration 5 PRs, public participation 4 PRs and marketization has 5 PRs. There were three cross-cutting PRs (Table 1).

3.2 Presuppositions underpinning the problem representations

Assumptions underpinning problem representations in the NEMP were identified. NEMP discourse to ongoing debates around sustainability, Biodiversity conservation, institutional collaboration, public participation, and marketization of nature paradigms were compared to determine notions of these terms as suggested and advanced in the NEMP. Debates were summarized and distilled to ascertain the “concept” that underlies NEMP as presented in Table 1.

NEMP 1995: Forest Conservation and Management		
Themes	Problem representations (S/N)	Whose responsibility?
Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Forestry Department to supervise and regulate sustainable use of forests resources 2. Encourage production of timber products in line with the principles of sustainable use 3. Necessitate multi-sectoral collaboration in both the classification and management of all levels of protection in the PA system 	-National Forestry Authority (NFA)
Biodiversity conservation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Revise and strengthen the Forest Act with particular regard to gazetting and degazetting 5. Establish a common agency with a mandate to coordinate institutions concerned with biodiversity conservation and management 6. Provide total protection and classification of identified key biodiversity rich ecosystems 7. Subject the introduction of non-invasive and invasive exotic species to the environmental impact assessment process, as well as monitor and control the spread of invasive species 	-NFA -National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) -Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)

Institutional collaboration	Problem representations 3,5 and 7 crosscut here 8. Develop and disseminate scientific and technical information conducive to more efficient utilization of forest resources. 9. Revise the forestry training curriculum to enhance the environmental and socio-economic aspects of forest management	-NFA -Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) -Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) -NEMA -UWA; -Ministry of Agriculture(MAAIF) Ministry of Education (MoE) -District Environment Committees (DECs)
Public participation	10. Plan and implement Protected Area system according to particular local needs 11. Improve local capacity to manage protected and gazetted forest reserves by encouraging people's participation in the planning, management and in the sharing of benefits from forests and PAs 12. Encourage communities to participate in non-destructive use of forests such as eco-tourism and agro-forestry 13. Enhance participatory adaptive research, monitoring capacity and information dissemination in all areas of forest management and PA systems for sustainable utilization of forest resources	-NEMA -NFA -UWA -DECs
Marketization	14. Quantify Uganda's forest environmental services and values in terms of short-term market economics 15. Review financial management systems in relation to revenue and forest management costs and explore innovative methods of collecting forest user fees 16. Provide economic incentives and the necessary legal framework and technology to encourage and facilitate stakeholders to be self-sufficient in forest product requirements 17. Promote export of value-added timber products 18. Set prices that reflect the true value of forest products	-OPM, -Ministry of Finance, -Ministry of Gender, -Uganda Bureau of Statistics -NEMA, -NFA, -UWA -DECs

Table 1: Dominant Problem Representations of Forest conservation and Management in the NEMP 1995

Sustainability

Here, the question is whether current environmental activities have the capacity to meet future human needs. Thus, sustainability is understood as perpetual replenishment of resources. A dominant approach to sustainability, for example shows that to sustainably address human needs, then sustainable approaches ought to include three pillars: environment, economy, and society (Wu, 2013). Sustainability perceived as the ability for an environment to provide economic and social development, termed as the triple bottom line definition of sustainability; "People, Planet and Profit". This sustainability definition requires balancing economic activities with social and environmental consequences such that none of these dimensions is compromised. Thus, other than defining sustainability as the mere need for environmental conservation, Wu (2013) affirms that

sustainability ought to be approached with a triple bottom line notion in mind. In the contemporary world, sustainability is understood as a global governance issue, employing “expert indicators as a means of packaging and presenting knowledge in objective and universally valid ways for transparent and democratic policy analysis” (Fischer et al., 2015 p. 19). Fischer’s insights highlight Laureen Elgert’s focus “on the construction and use of sustainability indicators in contemporary global governance”. Elsewhere, researchers do offer critical thoughts about sustainability which focus on applying ethics to growth, development, and environment (Caldwell, 1998). Thus, in the study on ‘building a green economy of low carbon’, Siamanta (2017) shows a new paradigm of sustainable development called the ‘green growth’ proposed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). According to OECD (2011) green growth supports the Brundtland (1986) definition of sustainable development, where economic growth and development should ensure the continued provision of natural resources towards human wellbeing (OECD, 2011).

Both dominance considerations and critical arguments are valid when empirically verified. As such, we consider sustainability measurements to include weak, strong, or absurdly strong sustainability, as by Wu (2013), though these are relative measures. Weak sustainability promotes economic development at the expense of environmental quality, for instance, in situations of huge infrastructure development, industrialization and plantation agriculture without regard to the environment substituting natural resources with man-made resources. Alternatively, strong sustainability calls for a complementarity rather than the substitutability of natural with man-made capital. The implication is that, for sustainable development, natural and man-made capital support each other and must therefore be balanced. Absurdly strong sustainability leaves nature intact without any substitution (Wu, 2013). This is the extreme of strong sustainability. Nature alone does not fully serve humanity, hence the need for strong sustainability, such as community practices that promote agro-ecology (Francis et al., 2003; Schneider and Francis, 2006). The NEMP broad objective assumes sustainability to be strong because it aims at social and economic development, and it is in support of the triple bottom line definition of sustainability, assumed to be achieved through the sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity.

Biodiversity Conservation

Biodiversity conservation is important due to the need for complex forest ecosystems which maintain stable functioning relations between living and non-living parts of the environment. This maintenance is achieved through preserving

biodiversity and respecting principles of optimum sustainable yield in the use of natural resources, as well as effective forest conservation and management. Therefore, the complex forest diversity includes the diversity in forests, among species and ecosystems (Towns et al., 1990), which must be conserved.

There are dominant approaches to conservation including Protected Area systems (PAs) (Adams, 2017; West and Brockington, 2006; Muir, 1898), Community Based Conservation (CBM) (Adams and Hulme, 2001; Burrow and Murphree, 2001) and Market-based conservation (Dusgupta, 2021; Buscher et al, 2012). First, PAs is a dominant approach to conservation that dates back from 1700s in India/Mongolia. Adams (2017) also refers to PAs conservation as strict conservation or as ‘top-down conservation’. Other scholars like John Muir have referred to PAs conservation as ‘‘Preservationism’’ (Muir, 1898). Muir’s interests were in the total conservation of forests from development by arguing that other species should be given the absolute right to live. In line with this preservationism, several PAs around the world have been established and initiatives to encourage nations to take on conservation initiatives have been implemented (Elliott, 1996). Since then, the PA sort of conservation has been a global agenda as articulated in SDG 4,5 and 6 (UN-SDG, 2015; Brundtland, 1986; Clark and Munn 1986; Griggs et al., 2013; Sachs, 2012).

PAs have persisted as a way of protecting biodiversity; conservation of nature imposed from top to bottom; planning done by nature experts and imposed on local communities (Adams, 2017). The need for PAs arose from those who loved nature, so they perceived the idea of wilderness. North America is one of those countries that adopted this conservation model. The proponents of PAs argued that biodiversity was being destroyed by unnatural human beings who could not co-exist so it needed protection (West and Brockington, 2006). In addition, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) argued for PAs on the premises that morally animals needed to thrive, endangered species and ecosystem services needed protection for carbon sequestration and for economic benefits such as ecotourism, yet also PAs have the potential to benefit some of the World’s poor people.

However, the PAs system has some drawbacks such as not aligning with the franchised indigenous way of life (Kashwan, 2020), as well as the spatialized and racialized division of labour (Thakholi, 2021). Furthermore, PAs would improve nature, but they do not favor economic growth and have high potential to deprive local communities of their livelihoods because they promote ‘Green grabbing’ (Fairhead et al., 2012). Accordingly, PAs conservation differs from the social science aspect of conservation as ‘‘things people do to maintain good

relations with nature” (Sandbrook, 2014). Thus, people can informally respond to nature as they are part of it, hence the bottom-up conservation. Although top-down is the dominant paradigm of conservation, it is important to exercise a mixture of both top-down and bottom-up conservation approaches, because the “future of conservation depends on equilibrium between these conservation visions” (Adams, 2017; p. 121).

Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) is also another main biodiversity conservation paradigm. According to Dressler et al. (2010), CBNRM emerged in the 1970s arising from the many critiques of PAs. Consequently, it was realized that effective conservation is achieved if local people are involved and benefit from such conservation. Approaches to CBNRM common in East and Southern Africa include protected area outreach, collaborative management and community-based conservation (Barrow and Murphree, 2001). Accordingly, protected area outreach aimed at species biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, with the state as the final decision maker and owner of land resources like national parks and forests, with beneficiary rural communities’ collaboration. The objective of Community-based conservation is sustainable rural livelihoods, emphasizing developing the rural economy where land and resources are owned by local users although the state may have final control. Other than addressing the challenges of protected area conservation, Silva and Mosimane (2013) have presented other advantages of CBNRM including its ability to combine environment and development strategies, providing economic benefits, and giving responsibility to local communities. In addition, a bottom-up rights-based conservation supports justice when done meaningfully¹. However, Kiwango et al. (2015) have shown that although CBNRM is fostered, its invisibly successful because of the state’s upper hand, biased towards development industry other than local communities (Blaikie, 2006).

Third Market-based conservation forms include payments for ecosystem services such as REDD+, conservation marketing, ecotourism etc. (Dasgupta, 2021). Market-based conservation arose from the need to adequately align conservation with economic issues such that all conservation problems can be addressed through the market. The argument is that, if people are incentivized, they can change their behavior. Thus, the advantage of market-based conservation is that nature is prioritized in all business decision-making (Dasgupta, 2021). However, market-based conservation is contradictory by encouraging activities such as ecotourism which increase flights and safari jeeps leading to mass tourism. In

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agQDKkueT-c>

addition, market-based conservation has disembodied humans from nature through tourism, nature documentaries, and thus nature is consumed at a distance (Buscher et al., 2012).

Critical approaches to conservation include the resource conservation Paradigm, where biodiversity should be conserved for its continued provision and wellbeing of society (Elliot, 1996). This paradigm supports strong sustainability. At the United Nations conference on environment and development in 1992 and the Helsinki resolutions of 1993, it was noted that humanity is central to conservation (Eckersley, 1992). Thus, issues of democratic rights, equal access to natural resources, environmental quality, psychological and recreational needs are a must consideration when conserving natural resources. Accordingly, Adams (2017 p. 114) indicates that the new paradigm of PAs would be that of “equitably integrating them with the interests of all affected people”. Furthermore, this inclusiveness and care about humanity creates an enabling environment for effective forest conservation and management.

To gauge whether there is effective forest biodiversity conservation and management, it is important to understand ways of measuring or defining biodiversity. To determine levels of Biodiversity, we consider its common measure to be the alpha, beta, and functional diversity (Moreno, et al., 2017). While alpha diversity measures biodiversity on a small scale within an ecosystem, beta diversity considers the diversity between two ecosystems. Functional diversity measures the variability in the functional characteristics of species. Biodiversity affects how an ecosystem functions so the range of species in an ecosystem have different functions which form a complex environment with a wide range of services (ibid). Each of these functions support each other so are equally important.

Therefore, when the NEMP included PAs, the aim was to have biodiversity conserved within different forest ecosystems. The understanding of conservation was first in gazetting of PAs, although there was need for some community access and earning income from forest resources. This later proved a mixture of PAs, CBNRM and market-based conservation (Table 1). This means that for the NEMP proponents, conservation aimed at having communities access some forest resources concurrently with areas designated as protected and completely sealed off from the community, though earning revenue. In implementing biodiversity conservation activities, the NEMP proposal provides institutions that had to collaborate in the process.

Institutional collaboration

The NEMP assumed institutional collaboration through decentralization. To solve natural resources conservation and management problems, the government of Uganda embraced decentralized governance (Bazaara, 2003), aiming at creating related institutions and involving local communities in conserving and managing forest resources. To achieve the NEMP objectives, sectoral and cross-sectoral objectives had to be operationalized by multi-sectoral engagements and institutional collaboration. Relevant ministries and institutions such as the National Forestry Authority (NFA), the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the district forest services which later comprised the district and local environment committees, had to work simultaneously to manage and control the use of forest resources. Therefore, according to the NEMP, institutional collaboration would help in enforcing environmental laws through a participatory approach.

Public participation

In the 1960's development decisions were top-down and concentrated in the hands of foreign experts, or governments and scientific knowledge were dominant (Claridge, 2004). From the 1980s local poor peoples' needs and aspirations were recognized, hence their participation through Participatory Rural Appraisal (Chambers, 1992). There is an increase in the spread of the bottom-up development approach involving communities in natural resource management towards sustainable development (Claridge, 2004).

Sustainable development goals 4 and 6 deal with inclusive governance, linking agencies, institutions, structures, and networks on environment programmes (Griggs et al., 2013; Sachs, 2012). Inclusive social and economic development is one of the drivers of improved resource productivity as these calls for fairness, ethical, accountable sustainable use of environment and resources (Brundtland 1985; Clark and Munn 1986; IUCN 1980; Sachs, 2012). Additionally, in a study on "plotting the coloniality of conservation", Collins et al. (2021), emphasized conservation as an outcome of social organization, that empowers citizens' participation in decision making. These authors argue for the spirit of '*Buen vivir*', which "recognizes the importance of diverse ontologies and epistemologies in valuing how and why nature matters", *Ubuntu* which highlights "communal and mutual responsibility for humans and the environment" and *Eco-swaraj* which highlights "the need to empower every citizen to be part of decision-making in the spirit of ensuring a right to and responsibility of meaningful participation (p. 17)". Their argument for *buen vivir*, *Ubuntu* and *Eco-swaraj* was based on the

background from the colonial legacies of “Eurocentric, abyssal thinking of monopolizing judgement on what counts as true knowledge” (p. 17). Thus, inclusive governance which promotes the human welfare conservation paradigm (Eckersley, 1992).

Measuring participation requires understanding its different meanings because some approaches are regarded as participatory, yet they do not provide meaningful sharing of power. Thus, just informing people is passive participation, but if participants are actively involved in answering questions, they participate even though may not make major contributions to changing their circumstances. Also, if participation is through people’s provision of services, such as payable labor, participation would be without their control. Lastly, where people/agencies take active part in joint activities, in a multidisciplinary approach, to tackle multiple objectives, this is interactive participation and with full control of their destiny (Claridge, 2004).

The NEMP 1995 understood public participation to be involving a mixture of bottom-up, top-down, and multidisciplinary approach, where different agencies and ministries were supposed to interactively participate in the management of natural resources. The NEMP documents wide participation, consultation, and focused thought. Recommendations in the NEMP also provide for public interactive participation to be part of conservation (Table 1). So, the NEMP plan encouraged public interactive participation even in the sharing of forest benefits and incentivizing forest resources through marketization.

Marketization

All marketization initiatives aimed at combating environmental damage through deforestation. However, studies have shown gaps in the ability of initiatives like REDD+ to generate substantial results (Collins et al., 2021; Asiyambi and Massarella, 2020). In this discussion, I’m aware that the NEMP came into being before some global initiatives towards marketizing environmental resources, but I had to comprehend the various discourses regarding this concept and how it relates to the NEMP.

According to Green and Adams (2015), it is neoliberal conservation being market driven, with regulation of nature through commodification. Neoliberal conservation gives an upper hand to non-state actors and capitalists who commodify and trade natural resources in markets. Commodification of natural resources is supported by privatization of forests and reducing the opportunity for local people to enjoy ecosystem services from the once public forests. Privatization of

forest resources has intensified forest loss because it laid the ground for green grabbing, the appropriation of land and natural resources for green credentials.

In the NEMP, one of the solutions to improve biodiversity conservation and management was to accord forests their true value, thus creating “a market for different elements of valued ecosystems” (Fairhead et al., 2012, p.244). Thus, the NEMP perceived the need to market nature as a way of improving it. Other problem representations on marketization articulate this (table 1). However, marketizing forest resources poses the danger of NEMP’s opening the way for “contemporary market-based policies, which build on and revitalize preceding colonial modes of governing nature-society relation” (Collins et al., 2021, p.3). In common terms, marketization was perceived in the NEMP as those market-based solutions to the problem of biodiversity conservation and management, but which could be leading to further degradation of resources because of profit incentives.

In a nutshell, the presuppositions that underpin the problem representations in the NEMP objective of forest conservation and management showed the NEMP’s understanding of sustainability, biodiversity conservation, institutional collaboration, public participation, and marketization as summarized in table 2.

3.3 How did this come to be?

Here, I discuss NEMP’s reflection of both international and national understandings, approaches, and historical trajectories to conservation. So how did these problem representations come to be as important aspects, and what process did they take (Q3)? Subsequently, I identified the various Global and national initiatives and processes through which I could understand how problem representations of forest conservation and management were framed in the NEMP.

In the late 1980s, there was a global threat of the Sahara Desert gradually extending southwards. This change in climatic and vegetation conditions prompted African countries, including Uganda, to act immediately. Elsewhere, there were similar observations and so action was eminent as evident from the global response scale. Global initiatives started with the June 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro and Uganda got committed to this global environmental agreement. Other initiatives followed, that is the Convention for Biodiversity (CBD) of 1992, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2005), the UNFCCC (1992), and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) (1994). Uganda, among several countries, ratified the CBD and related treaties such as the

UNFCCC (1994), and UNCCD (1994), prompting the enactment of the NEMP (1995).

At the national level, in 1986, Uganda gained political stability after the war of liberation. This stability promoted population growth, economic reforms, increased urbanization, increased demand for food products and for export marketing, which put pressure on forests and other natural resources (NEMP, 1995). It is noted that by the time of writing the NEMP 1995, over 90% of Uganda's population depended directly on natural resources for their survival. Besides, the investment policy favored Indian and Chinese investors by allocating free land to such investments. This also paved way for industrial development. All these occurrences required a legislation to guide natural resources use to attain sustainable socio-economic development. So, Uganda enacted a National Environment Action Plan (NEAP) (1992) which paved way for emphasizing the country's natural resources. The NEAP process culminated in the NEMP (1995) strategy to combat environmental degradation. The Uganda Constitution was also enacted in 1995 providing the context for the NEMP. The constitution provided institutional arrangements towards the conservation and management of biodiversity. Consequently, the NEMP was formulated by a policy committee in the Office of the Prime Minister. The committee comprised of all line ministries including the Prime Minister as Chairman, and Ministers responsible for Natural Resources, Agriculture, Finance and Economic Planning, Education, Health, Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Local Government, Gender and Community Development, Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, and Trade and Industry. This committee provided guidelines, then formulated, and coordinated the environment policy development in liaison with the National Cabinet. The policy committee had technical committees such as soils conservation, pollution, biodiversity conservation, and environment impact assessment. The Policy Committee also put in place a statute to bring into force the National Environment Management Authority, NEMA (2006) with mandate to identify funding, and initiate policy research, legislative proposals, standards, guidelines, and ensures observance of proper safeguards during planning and implementation of all development projects. Other institutions and organizations in collaboration included the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the National Forestry Authority (NFA).

Later in 1997, Uganda enacted a decentralization policy under the Uganda constitution (1995) and other Acts such as the Local Government Act, cap. 243 and the Environment Act, cap. 153. Decentralization involves devolving a significant amount of power to local authorities to manage natural resources (Ribot et al.,

2010). In Uganda, natural resource management was devolved to the district and village levels, culminating into establishment of district and local/village environment committees. Decentralization also extended natural resource management to include civil society organizations/NGOs, the private sector, and private landowners.

Subsequently, it was necessary for the NEMP to come into force, to bring back Uganda's glory once the "Pearl of Africa" as described by Sir Churchill Winston in recognition of the fact that before Uganda's independence in 1962, its environment was the best in the whole of Africa (Rwakakamba, 2009). Besides the conventions, policies and local events that took place, there are various conceptualizations on respective problem representations in the NEMP. For instance, an IFRI pilot study in Uganda showed forest degradation as a global environmental problem which required reference to international treaties and national policies (Becker et al., 1995). Relatedly, Gasparatos and Wallis' (2015) green economy study showed the crucial roles of nature services such as clean air, fertile soils, and food, thus requiring the "realization that biodiversity and human well-being are inextricably linked", leading to adopting numerous environmental policies (p. 2). Although this genealogy describes a robust process and existence of practices leading to the pervasiveness of the problem representation, the policy document and later research (Namanji et al., 2019) unveiled some silences that were not problematized in the policy.

3.4 Silences

Having identified the NEMP (1995) forest conservation and management problem representations (Q1), the underpinning presuppositions (Q2) and the process through which problem representations came to be (Q3), I posed the question of what was left unproblematic in those problem representations (Q4)? Having an environment policy together with continuous loss of biodiversity, has serious implications that the policy could have inadequate solutions, or the problem may have unaddressed underlying ontological and epistemological premises. The WPR approach by Bacchi guides that problem representations are "nested one within the other (Figure 1), necessitating repetition of the question what's the problem represented to be?" (Bacchi, 1999: p.5). Even though elsewhere policy statutes and acts bring out more in-depth problems, there are core underlying concerns that may remain silent in all categories of the NEMP framework. So, at this level I step back and identify silences for problem representations under each theme as presented below.

Sustainability

Although the NEMP has solutions towards acceptable levels of exploitation, this is not realized in practice according to observations and the various state of environment reports for Uganda (NEMA,2010; 2016;2019). Elsewhere, there was concern about putting too much emphasis on development activities without regard for environmental health (Namanji et al., 2019). This notion of weak sustainability is evidenced in situations where oil palms replace natural forests. Thus, although the NEMP theoretically emphasizes strong sustainability, it is silent on mechanisms to ensure definitive implementation.

Biodiversity conservation

One strategy for improving forest conservation and management is through both private and public forests having and implementing forest management plans, although this is not emphasized in the NEMP problem representations. According to Namanji et al. (2019) the government gazette forest reserve Towa had a forest management plan but not implemented. Hence, its trees had a diameter at breast height (dbh) of less than 50cm (meaning that all trees were young and the mature ones had been cut), and had limited ecosystem goods for communities. Effective policy implementation towards forest conservation and management requires implementing forest management plans. However, “there is political pressure on forest managers to ignore forest management plan prescriptions” (Ruhombe, 2014 p. 8). Consequently, the policy is silent on strict implementation and enforcement mechanisms as well as government funding of conservation activities.

Institutional collaboration

First, in its problem representations, the policy mentions collaborative developing and disseminating scientific technical information for efficient utilization of forest resources, through conservation organizations. However, sophisticated information mostly ends up on shelves and is not utilized by local groups. The policy would emphasize integration of Community-Based Research (CBR) through incorporating indigenous knowledge into scientific information, omitting the mode of dissemination. Furthermore, local environment committees were unaware of the environment policy and programmes to ensure its implementation (Namanji et al., 2016), thus creating ignorance in the part of environment committees.

Secondly, problem representations show multi-sectoral collaboration as a necessary aspect in both the classification and management of all levels of protection

in the Protected Area (PA) system but leave out other related aspects such as systemic participation, representation, teamwork, and facilitation that move hand in hand with collaboration. Thus, a systemic perspective is missing. Systems thinking means environment components being synergistic (Kim, 1999). Even if the NEMP mentions multi-sectoral forest conservation and management, this is not enough without systemic participation and representation, adequate funding, and teamwork. These aspects are not clearly streamlined in the NEMP 1995.

Thirdly, the NEMP does not mention how to deal with institutional failure caused by bribery and corruption in the PA system. As long as institutions set up to enforce environmental laws have corrupt officers at all levels, there cannot be progress in conservation. As in cases like Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), the legal framework to incentivize local communities to be self-sufficient in forest product requirements and collection of forest user fees and revenue from PAs cannot work if corrupted.

Fourth, to operationalize institutional collaboration, the government of Uganda enacted a decentralization policy. Even if decentralization had good intentions, it showed some gaps, including the limited collaboration within these institutions, the overlapping roles/activities and the inadequate delegation of decision-making powers over forest management (Turyahabwe, et al., 2007; Smith, 2012). For instance, the policy is not clear on which institutions should support agroforestry as well as strategies for its proper implementation (Kiyingi, et al., 2020). In addition, local and district environment committees were in place to support NEMA in NEMP implementation, but these committees were not trained in their jobs and had a very limited mandate to perform, a sign of institutional failure (Namanji et al., (2017). As Ruhombe (2014), notes Uganda has good policies and laws but there is limited institutional and human capacity in management of forests. These gaps are silent in the policy and certainly lead to inadequate policy implementation.

Public participation

Although the policy mentions enhancing local community participation in the management of PAs, it leaves out the important aspect of meaningful participation, where participants are selected according to sectors and disciplines and are thus able to contribute meaningfully to environmental issues and policy discourse. If participation is not clearly streamlined, there are tendencies to cause some stakeholders' ineffective contribution to forest conservation programmes. In addition, if through decentralization the government of Uganda were to devolve power of forest management to local governments, then that local power

should come with representation. Otherwise, it ceases to be democratic decentralization (Ribot, et al., 2010). The reverse is also true if representatives are powerless amidst powerful autocrats. In addition, there are still questions on inclusive governance being the government's motive, due to the inconsistencies in the policy leading to practice dilemma due to poor enforcement, limited/or no public participation. The policy needs to put more emphasis on enforcement/implementation mechanisms.

Marketization

One of the problem representations was to encourage communities to participate in non-destructive use of forests such as eco-tourism and agro-forestry. However, the PAs system is under government control and management with limited community participation and awareness on ecotourism resources. In addition, ecotourism has some negative impacts. In Kalangala district in Uganda, experience shows that there are increased land and commodity prices due to increased influx of tourists. This has a negative effect to local communities whose cost-of-living increases. The NEMP has no mechanisms to deal with such negative impacts of ecotourism.

Exporting timber implies having faster growing species to keep constant supply but this is not compatible with biodiversity conservation. There is a danger of over extraction of forest resources due to profit incentives. In the NEMP, we do not see how this overexploitation should be dealt with. Besides, the policy is silent on mechanisms for replanting indigenous trees after harvesting, and silent on how to access quality germplasm to support agroforestry (Kiyingi et al., 2020). Namanji et al, (2017) also showed that communities could not access seedlings for planting indigenous trees and what was available were only fruit trees but in inadequate quantities.

The policy mentions reviewing financial management systems in relation to revenue and forest management costs and explore innovative methods of collecting forest user fees. However, the policy is silent on ensuring strict financial audits on how the collected money is used. This has intensified corruption, bribery, nepotism, and favoritism. In addition, increase in timber export has intensified illegal harvest due to corruption. If the policy encourages agroforestry, it should also mention the inclusion of farm trees in the National Forestry Inventory and other environmental accounting systems in Uganda. But this is silent in the NEMP 1995.

All identified silences/nested problems in the NEMP 1995 have been summarized under respective themes and presented in Figure 1.

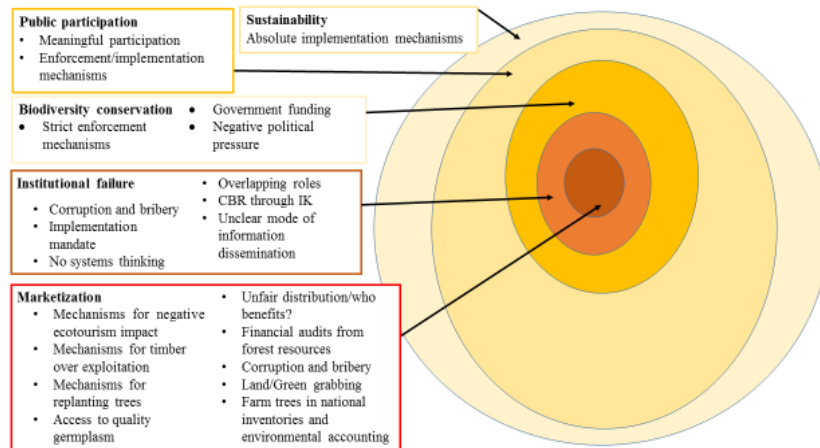


Figure 1 Nested problems not addressed in the NEMP and so remain silent to the failure of the policy. The deeper the color the more silent, critical, and causative the problem.

The stated silences in the problem representations had three kinds of effects: “Discursive, Subjectification and Lived effects” Bacchi (2009, p.48; 2019). Discursive effects link back to question 4. These are effects that follow from the limits imposed on what can be said and thought, how other things are said while others are left out. Subjectification effects show how power shapes our subjectivity; the ways in which subjects and subjectivities are constituted in a discourse. Lived effects indicate how problem representations have an effect on how people live their lives. Bacchi (2019) shows the need to detect implications in particular problem representations that the researcher decides are negative or hurtful to particular groups of people². Therefore, I further analyzed the NEMP 1995 in relation to question five which creates the opportunity to identify the discursive, subjective, and lived effects produced by the respective problem representations.

3.5 Effects

This analysis generated multiple possible discursive, subjectification and lived effects of NEMP-provided solutions to forest conservation and management. Effects could be enablers or deterrents for implementing forest conservation and

² https://youtu.be/2WesB_p2Vc8.)

management. As such, they are not taken for granted, and so they are presented here for the purpose of integrating them into mitigation strategies for future revision of the NEMP. The effects are presented within respective themes and problem representations.

Sustainability

Namanji et al. (2019) reports massive forest degradation and so communities may wonder whether the NFA or NEMA do not promote degradation instead of being custodians. Besides, if forests that belonged to the community are now termed “gazette”, there is transfer to those who apparently hold them in custody and are the key timber value adding and exporters, not the local community.

If forest gazetting is a problem representation for *biodiversity conservation*, then what is the importance of gazetting when there is encroachment on gazetted forests? Moreover, does NEMA as an umbrella organization create a coordinated system when forest degradation continues in spite of NEMP? The effect trickles down to community conservation becoming a myth when responsible institutions are not well coordinated and collaborative.

Institutional collaboration

The effects of problem representations 3, 8 and 9 (in Table 1) under institutional collaboration vary. First, if each sector focuses on benefiting from forest resources, lead sectors may not effectively engage others who in turn become more aggressive in harvesting forest resources as an opportunity arises or simply keep aloof. Secondly, the process of developing scientific and technical information related to utilization of forest resources does not involve communities hence generated technologies are left on the shelf. Thirdly, as long as corruption is still at large, even when the forest curriculum is revised, forests degradation will continue because graduates will have nowhere to implement conservation programmes.

Public participation

The effects of problem representations under institutional collaboration relate to those under public participation. This is so because, without institutional collaboration, there is minimal public participation. Thus, communities lose interest in participating in forest conservation vs those who exploit forests. Besides, since most forest communities are not educated, they get left behind, yet they should be the major beneficiaries of forest resources. Encouraging communities to plant trees comes together with discursive effects of communities questioning between food and trees. Thus, the need to strike a balance between the two.

Marketization

One of the discursive effects of problem representations under marketization is that, due to the ongoing degradation, forests have lost their original potential. Thus, inaccurate data may be generated from quantifying Uganda's forests. The lived effect is of poor planning for forest resources. Without combating corruption, even if forest management systems are reviewed, there shall be misuse of forest user fees. Besides, commodification may not improve biodiversity conservation when forest resources are subjected to over exploitation due to profit incentives. This has a lived effect for communities who cannot access privatized forests.

3.6 Dissemination

Lastly, I addressed question six. The effects of the solutions towards forest conservation and management are the basis for the solution being either reproduced, disseminated, and defended or being questioned, disrupted and replaced. All these scenarios are discussed in view of the global, continental, national and case perspectives.

Globally

The global initiatives mentioned in the methodology section are in line with biodiversity management and emphasize sustainable development. In addition, the recent United Nations Food Systems Summit in 2021 emphasized inclusive sustainable food systems, animal welfare, optimizing land productivity, and reducing land under cultivation, conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems to mitigate climate changes in respect of United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (2015), in particular goal 15 to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”. Other initiatives like the Conservation International identified hotspots for international conservation as a way of prioritizing conservation (Adams, 2017). Conservation International worked hand in hand with those concerned with the protection of nature and sustainable development similar to the NEMP's forest conservation and management problem representation of developing a coordinated PA system. Coordinated global players included the World Conservation Strategy (1980) by the World Wildlife Fund, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). These are powerful conservation organizations with expertise in conservation planning and would therefore handle conservation as a top-down agenda (Adams, 2017).

The top-down notion of conservation is in line with what the NEMP aimed at by proposing that institutions concerned with biological diversity be coordinated to manage and conserve nature. The NEMP also embraced a mixed conservation approach in which community and conservation experts (in this case institutions) are involved. It is noteworthy that community conservation has been difficult to implement (Adams, 2017) globally, and Uganda is not exclusive because as noted from the lived effects of the respective problem representation, forest communities are mostly not educated, and so arises the question as to whether community conservation could solve the problem of biodiversity loss. In this line of thought, we also ask whether policy coordinators and implementers would involve uneducated local communities at the expense of conservation experts like those in international NGOs and partners? Adams (2017) reported that the dominant idea of conservation is something that comes from those who are trained to understand the problem of biodiversity loss. This implies an urgent need to fight ignorance in the forest communities.

Africa-wide

The Malabo declaration elaborated in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the African Union AU (2014) stresses the significance of enhancing conservation and sustainable use of all natural resources such as land and forests. It also stresses the importance of multi-sectoral engagements and inclusive growth. The NEMP stresses multi-sectoral collaboration in both the classification and management of all levels of protection in the PA system. Furthermore, the FAO (2014) report on Africa shows that 85% countries support putting emphasis on the Conservation for Biological Diversity. In their report, Keeley and Scoones (2003: p.3) indicated that in sub-Saharan Africa, issues of soil fertility decline, deforestation and desertification are deeply entrenched policy problems. New challenges such as oil palm, soil fertility decline, oil and gas prompted the ongoing revision of the NEMP, as of 2017.

Perspectives on the national scene

Uganda still has a challenge of balancing conservation and forest exploitation (Banana, 2005). Research in Uganda by Buyinza and Teera (2008), Egeru, et al., (2014), Namaalwa (2006), Namaalwa, et al., (2007), Petursson, et al., (2006), Slette, et al., (2008) Vedeld, et al., (2004) established, that deforestation varied with the forest ecosystems behavior. Ruhombe (2014) and Rwakakamba (2009) questioned the high rates of natural forest tree biodiversity loss in a country where forest protection is adequately articulated in the National Constitution, with a National Environment Management Policy, and questioned the

effectiveness of Uganda's environmental policies. Furthermore, Banana, et al., (2012) reported that Uganda's deforestation rate, which was already the highest in Eastern Africa, had accelerated from the year 2000. By 2010, the NEMA (2010) state of environment report for Uganda indicated that the area of forested land in Uganda continued to decline from 3.6 million ha to 3.3 million ha at an annual rate of 1.86%. On 20th September 2018, in a press statement on corporate social responsibility on tree planting, the NFA indicated that by 2017 Uganda's forest cover had declined to about 9% of the total land area (NFA, 2018), while NEMA (2019), indicated further decline in forest resources. All these results pose questions about the effectiveness of solutions to forest conservation and management. This implies that the forest conservation and management problem is still at large and therefore needs to be handled with utmost importance. Since 2017, there has been contestation of the current NEMP 1995 (NEMA, 2017) because there are new and emerging environmental issues and challenges like climate change, oil and gas, electronic waste, and SDGs (2015) that the current NEMP does not address.

The case of Buggala Island, Kalangala District

Buggala Island in Kalangala District-Uganda had massive deforestation to plant oil palms and other infrastructure, whereby various instances exhibited the ineffectiveness of the current problem representations in the NEMP. For example, in 2009, the Kalangala District NGO Forum reported that in Buggala Island, over 6000ha of natural forest cover had been cleared and planted with oil palms with support of the World Bank/IFAD, yet FAO (2014) identified small islands such as Ssesse Islands ecosystems that were at high risk of biodiversity loss, as was also reaffirmed by Kalangala District state of environment report (2005). Ssemanda and Opige (2018) indicated that on Buggala island, the tropical high forest fully stocked was reduced from 57% of the area in 1990 to 20% in 2015, with an increase in uniform monoculture oil palm farmland from 0 in 1990 to 31% in 2015. It has been noted that Oil Palm plantation agriculture came with unfair acquisition of land in Uganda. Land grabbing has been much debated and contested by various NGOS such as Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) in a Newsletter on 17th Nov 2014; "Take action, stop land grabs in Uganda"³. Others are the media such as in the New Vision 17 April, 2013 Uganda: "Unfair Government Policies Fanning Land Grabbing" by Uganda Land Alliance. Therefore, there is need for moral behavior within agroecosystems due to the environmental effects associated with agricultural systems (Schneider and Francis, 2006).

³ <http://www.foei.org/news/take-action-stop-land-grabs-in-uganda>

For instance, although the problem representation about reviewing financial management systems in relation to revenue and forest management costs may enable earning from the Carbon fund under the REDD+ initiative, isn't this a mechanism of this neoliberal approach to provide an opportunity for the large corporations to invest in and profit from the marketization of nature? (Adams, 2017). Large corporations have access to carbon funds and are engaged in monocultures, but monocultures do not improve biodiversity.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The NEMP presents a multiplicity of forest conservation and management problem representations, with presuppositions and processes in line with global beliefs. However, this WPR based research shows that there remain serious silences which affect attempts at solving the forest conservation and management problem. Among the many silences presented in the NEMP, I emphasize two fundamental issues/silences including *corruption* and *ignorance* which ought to be tackled if nations like Uganda are to achieve sustainable forest conservation and management of biodiversity through progress in conservation. It is noted that the NEMP does not mention how to deal with institutional failure caused by bribery and corruption in the Protected Area system and there is concern about local environment committees being unaware of the environment policy and programmes to ensure effective policy implementation (Namanji et al., 2016) and inadequate institutional collaboration. Yet institutional failure and inadequate institutional collaboration have a negative effect on the uneducated forest communities who are left out of environment management programmes because they are left ignorant. Within the context of the conflicting relationship between ecology and economics, in particular a capitalist economics based on the growth imperative, the NEMP and other related policies cannot lead to sustainability, fairness in distribution, and efficiency in resource allocation-aspects in Ecological Economics (Costanza, 2008; Leefers and Castillo, 1998), if issues like institutional failure characterized by corruption and ignorance of the forest communities are left unproblematized or silent in the policy. Therefore, the success of recommendations in this article shall be based on tackling the key silences of corruption and ignorance and related representations, as well as those with positive effects. Recognizing this as an essential prerequisite, I make some recommendations for a more sustainable management of forest resources.

4.2 Recommendations

1. Adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption and effectively facilitate and motivate coordinating actors, who should restore and safely guard community rights to forests, by entrusting forests to communities living around them as well as their cultural leadership, because gazetting them and putting them in hands of local authorities has not worked.
2. Embrace inclusiveness in enforcing and awareness of the policy but with specific consideration of women and youth involvement. It is the women and youth that collect forest ecosystem provisions and appreciate them most. As such, they would be much more interested in ensuring conservation of forest resources than men who tend to only wish to exploit forest resources for especially commercial timber woodlots.
3. Enforce adherence to environment ethical values among those working with forest related public organizations such as NEMA, NFA, and UWA.
4. Establish and understand the economic value of invasive species to interest stakeholders in protecting them and harvesting them appropriately.
5. Enforce regulations on harvesting, movement, and commercialization of forest resources.
6. Let technocrats, local leaders and communities come together to develop and enforce forest management plans in English and local languages.
7. Mitigate the negative mindset and “To Whom It May Concern attitude” in communities by ensuring their participation at all stages of NEMP implementation.
8. Provide affordable alternative green technologies to substitute forest ecosystem services for indigenous communities so that they spare and conserve forests.
9. Guide and monitor cost effective and efficient land use to ensure sustainable productivity instead of increased production which expands into conserved forest areas.
10. Ensure employee recruitment systems that are ethical in all aspects, and a civil service which recruits, develops, disciplines, and creates room for succession.

11. Monitor generation of data on forest resources such that it is representative of what is on the ground.
12. Develop adequate institutional and human capacity to patrol forests and markets to prevent illegal timber harvest and export.
13. Deliberately sanction politicians who pressurize forest managers to ignore forest management plans.
14. Prioritize the conservation and management of forests resources budgets.
15. Ensure that trees on farms are included in the National Forestry Inventory and other environmental accounting systems in Uganda.

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