

DEVELOPING LOCAL CAPACITY FOR PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS: THE CASE OF TARA NATIONAL PARK

RAZVOJ LOKALNIH KAPACITETA ZA SUDJELOVANJE U UPRAVLJANJU ZAŠTIĆENIM PODRUČJEM NACIONALNOG PARKA TARA

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SUMMARY: In this study the focus is on the role of local communities in the management of protected areas with the expectation that without the cooperation and assistance of local communities achieving biodiversity conservation in places where the land and resources are fundamental to supporting people's livelihoods will be less successful than if the local people actively support this goal.

Management capacity in protected areas depends upon the system of governance, the level of resources and local community support. The key question of interest at the global level are whether the responsible authorities have the capacity to manage their protected areas effectively, and whether desired outcomes are achieved on the ground. Measuring these dimensions is contextual; what is effective in one country or locale may be inappropriate in another. Thus, assessing management capacity is context specific.

The potential declaration of Tara National Park located in Serbia as a Biosphere Reserve necessitated research to characterize the institutional context, the social and demographic situation of the communities within the Park boundaries. There is a growing recognition that the sustainable management of protected areas ultimately depends on the cooperation and support of the local people. In order to achieve sustainable conservation, state legislators and environmental planners should involve local people in the management of protected areas and need to identify and promote social processes that enable local communities to conserve and enhance biodiversity as a part of their livelihood system.

Drawing upon research in Tara National Park, this paper analyzes the potential capacity of people living within Tara National Park to effectively participate in the management of the protected area by incorporating activities that promote biodiversity within their everyday livelihood strategies. The results demonstrate that sustaining or providing alternative livelihood strategies is necessary in order to halt the exploitation of protected areas by local people striving to survive.

Key words: Participatory management; protected areas; local community; livelihoods; communicative action

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INTRODUCTION – Uvod

Experience around the world has demonstrated that planning for the sustainable conservation of biodiversity requires the participation of local people living in the area (Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004a, 2004b; Winterbottom 1992). Local communities need to be actively involved in conservation planning and management so that their needs and aspirations are met and biodiversity is sustained (West 1991; McNeely 1993; Lewis 1996). Community participation in biodiversity management and recognition of the role of traditional knowledge in sustaining the landscape and associated biodiversity are consistently recognised as fundamental to the success of development projects (Alexander 2000). In general, research and practice has confirmed that the attitudes of local people towards the conservation of resources can be improved by increasing the benefits these populations receive as a result of supporting and carrying out protection measures, and by involving these communities directly in decision-making processes (Parry and Campbell 1992). It is also useful to note that participatory process is a key principle of emerging new modes of environmental governance (Shannon 2006).

Participation of local people in environmental assessments, planning, and management assumes sufficient social capacity to engage in a communicative relationship with the diverse array of other actors (Shannon 2002b). In this context, other actors consist of managers, scientists, government officials, non-governmental organizations, international experts and so on. These actors all have in common access to knowledge, theories, concepts, and vocabulary produced outside of the local community that affects the programmes and policies (Shannon 2002a; Kruger and Shannon 2000). Agrawal and Gibson (2001:11) argue that “it is possible that the existence of communal norms will promote cooperative decision-making within the community.” Thus, in a participatory process, it is critical to develop inclusive communicative relationships among the network of governance actors that respects local knowledge and recognizes the importance of local needs and values. Through the communicative process, understanding that local natural resource livelihood strategies are essential to creating and sustaining biodiversity emerges and the role of local social capacity is recognized by all actors. It is for this reason that the principle of participation as an essential element of good governance (DePoe, Delicath and Elsenbeer 2004; Shannon 2003b).

Mr. Pekka Patosaari, Director, UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, stated at the Sixth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples during the ‘Dialogue with Agencies’ focused on “Territories, Lands and Natural Resources” that one of the *Global Objectives*

on Forests is to “*enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people*” (Patosaari, 2007). Emphasis on the importance of local communities in securing the sustainability of forests and protection of biodiversity continues to grow among managers and policy makers, and has become an international focus of research (c.f.; Agrawal and Gibson 2001; Brosius, Tsing and Zerner 2005; DePoe, Delicath and Elsenbeer 2004). While increasing knowledge about forest dependent people and communities is a necessary first step, achieving this policy objective of improved and enhanced benefits depends on their capacity individually and collectively to participate in the communicative processes of resource management and governance (Kruger and Shannon, 2000).

Furthermore, meeting the needs of local people should be the principal objective of forest management, and this should be reflected in control and tenure arrangements (Peluso & Padoch, 1996). Poverty-oriented forestry is concerned with reducing the vulnerability of the poor by enabling people to continue to have access to the resources and product flows needed for subsistence purposes (Warner, 2003). A detailed assessment needs to be prepared by, or at least with the people concerned, in order to identify the complete range of relationships between the people and forest that they use and/or manage, the current limitations to their livelihoods and the potentials and desire for change (Byron and Arnold, 1999). Experiences in community-based forestry demonstrate that a people-centred approach is viable and effective (Warner, 2003).

Some conservationists recommend participatory forest management over community or state forest management because participatory forestry enhances collaboration and understanding between forest communities and state authorities (e.g. Murphree 1993; Pokharel, 2000). However, Poffenberger & Singh (1998) and Campbell et al. (2001) warned that implementation of participatory forestry can be difficult, particularly where securing representation on joint management committees and reaching consensus on issues such as distribution of benefits to communities are concerned. Grumbine (1994) and Jacobson (1995) suggested that these issues can partly be overcome if resource users and managers are aware of the forest management goals and practices, and have positive attitudes towards conservation.

However, denying local people the right to use natural resources found within a protected area severely reduces their inclination to support conservation and often undermines local livelihood security (Pimbert and Pretty 1997). At the root of the relationship between local people and management authorities lies a

combination of historical, cultural and socio-political factors (Borrini-Feyerabend 2002: 6). The important issue is “*willingness of governments to recognize that local communities are vital actors in the delivery of conservation objectives. Governments that have not already done so need to move from an implicit assumption that they manage against local communities to one where they recognize that protected areas should be managed for, with, and often by local communities*” (Borrini-Feyerabend 2002: 7).

Thus, two distinct challenges face emerging modes of participatory management. First, the capacity of local people, especially people who are dependent on natural resources for subsistence and trade, to participate in processes designed and managed outside of the community is critical for participatory management to work. Second, the lack of coherence in the policy environment, the fragmentation of authority, and a narrow view of stakeholders participating in management processes limit the institutional capacity to create effective management processes. While the ‘good governance principles’ – ‘participatory processes, intersectoral coordination, adaptive and iterative policies, accountable expertise, and collaboration’ – give normative guidance to the evolution of protected area management, actual social capacity to achieve these lofty goals may be quite limited (Shannon 2006; 2002a).

Hockings and Phillips (1999) contend that protected areas can only deliver their environmental, social and economic benefits if they are effectively managed.

RESEARCH AREA – Područje istraživanja

Tara National Park Tara is situated in the west of Serbia and extends over an area of 19,175 ha. It contains most of Tara Mountain and the region bordered by the elbow-shaped course of the River Drina, between Višegrad and Bajina Bašta, thus belonging to a part of Starovlaške mountains (Gajić 1989). Tara National Park incorporates the region belonging to the Bajina Bašta municipality. Two local communities, namely Jagoštica and Rastište are situated entirely on the national park territory with eight further communities partly within the park’s boundaries (Perućac, Beserovina, Zaovine, Rača, Mala Reka, Solotuša, Zaugline and Konjska Reka) (Gajić, 1989).

The biodiversity value of the area is very high, due to both an abundance of plant and animal species and the presence of relic species, for example, Panchich’s spruce (*Picea omorika*). The vascular flora of Serbia contains 3662 taxa (Stevanović 1999), of which 1,000 plant species have been identified in this region, or one third of the total flora of Serbia (Gajić 1989). Tara National Park was proclaimed a protected natural resource in 1981 by the First Regulation on the National Park (Official Gazette of RS no. 41/81). According to

Thus, they proposed an analytical framework based upon three principal dimensions the ‘capacity to manage’ protected areas – system of governance, level of resources, and community support. Missing in their model, however, is the communicative action necessary for ‘management.’ Thus, some form of participatory management is essential to link resources, people, and governance into locally effective practices of management in protected areas. “While understanding that all participatory processes entail communicative action, it is useful to recognize that in the situation where problems are being defined and actors are forming or changing their roles, the essence of the participatory process is communicative action. This means that the degree of institutional or strategic policy development is low since there is not a clear public problem and no organized social interests. Indeed, one can expect this part of the policy process to possibly extend over years as the nature of the public problem is slowly understood and shared understanding emerges through dialogue between the actors” (Shannon 2003:147–148).

In our study, the focus is on the role of local communities in the management of protected areas with the expectation that without the cooperation and assistance of local communities achieving biodiversity conservation in places where the land and resources are fundamental to supporting people’s livelihoods will be less successful than if the local people actively support this goal (Tomićević 2005).

the Regulation on the National Parks of Serbia (Official Gazette of RS no. 39/93), a public enterprise, ‘National Park Tara’, was founded, with full responsibility for the management of the park (PE, National Park Tara, 2002).

The unique natural and cultural heritage of Tara National Park brought this mountain to the attention of UNESCO and the proposal for inclusion the Man and the Biosphere Program. In addition, greater attention to bioregional ecological protection led to concern for the future “Drina” National Park with Republic Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dimović 2003: 22). Thus, in 2003 the Serbian Institute for Nature Protection proposed that National Park Tara be declared a Biosphere Reserve (Institute for Nature Conservation 2003). A clear purpose for establishing biosphere reserves is to involve the local population in order to improve the social capacity for the sustainable conservation and development of the biosphere reserves.

The UNESCO-MAB World Network of Biosphere Reserves is governance framework for involving local people in biodiversity conservation. The biosphere reserve approach links ecology with economics, sociology and politics, and ensures that good policy intentions do

not yield inappropriate results. Biosphere reserves are indeed special places for people and nature. They are internationally recognized, nominated by national governments and remain under sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located. Biosphere reserves perform three main roles: conservation *in situ* of natural and semi-natural ecosystems and landscapes; demonstration areas for ecologically and socio-culturally sustainable use; and logistic support for research, monitoring, education, training and information exchange. Biosphere reserves are organized into three interrelated zones, known as the core area, the buffer zone and the transition area. This zonation is applied in many different ways in the real world to accommodate geographical conditions and local constraints.

'Inherent in biosphere reserve concept are the ideas of both conservation and change – conservation of biological diversity as well as traditional ecological knowledge and resource management know-how, but also change in the way that societies use their rural environments and their natural resources' (UNESCO 2000: 7). It is important to emphasize that the concept of Biosphere reserves takes into account human beings as 'an integral part of the ecosystem and recognizes the necessity of involving local inhabitants in conservation activities'

RESEARCH METHODS – Metode istraživanja

This study was initiated to understand the local population living within Tara National Park, in particular the socio-economic conditions of local people, local relationships with land and natural resources, local participation in park management, and local attitudes about National Park conservation goals and management. To carry out the institutional analysis, experts in the relevant agencies and management organizations were interviewed. In addition, plans and other policy documents were analyzed.

Assessing local capacities for participatory management is an important first step towards creating effective institutions and processes for local participatory management. Our research in National Park Tara was the first time that researchers focused on the social, economic, and institutional environments rather than just on the biophysical environment. Thus, the study included basic descriptive information as well as questions and analysis aimed at assessing local capacity to engage in participatory management within the Park.

This case study focused two villages - Rastište village has 107 households and 285 inhabitants and Jagoštica village has 53 households and 163 inhabitants - that are fully-surrounded by the Park and geographically isolated due to poor transportation infrastructure. This allowed us to focus on places of high dependency on local natural resources, high influence of Park management and policies, and low access to education and

(Kothari *et al.* 1997: 276). It is this full integration of the human dimension of biosphere reserves that makes them special, since the management of a biosphere reserve essentially becomes a 'pact between the local community and society as a whole' (UNESCO 2000: 6).

Despite the international principles for participatory management, and thus the need for local community participation and cooperation, Serbia has a long history of centralized planning for and management of protected areas. In particular, national park planning and management has been characterized by a top-down approach. As a result, local people living near and within the boundaries of the proposed area were marginalized during the process establishing Tara National Park in 1981. In 2003, the Serbian Institute for Nature Protection proposed that National Park Tara be declared a Biosphere Reserve (Institute for Nature Conservation 2003). This proposal was simply handed to the park managers without consultation with other stakeholders who found it interesting – but really did not know what it might mean in practice. Since the concept of a Biosphere Reserve includes social and cultural benefits along with nature protection, managers now needed research on the people living in communities located within National Park Tara.

other sources of livelihood. These two communities are the most isolated rural villages in the national park and NP Tara has never been accepted by these two local communities therefore we chose villages Jagoštica and Rastište for this research. The field work was conducted in 2004 and in Rastište village, sixty-five household interviews were conducted which represents 60% of the total number of registered households and in Jagoštica, there were thirty-seven household interviews, corresponding to 70% of the total number.

The household interviews included: general demographic information about the household; their attitudes towards rural life; perceptions of nature and their landscape; their relationship with Tara National Park authorities; and questions regarding their livelihood strategies historically, currently, and their expectations for the future (Tomićević 2005: 86). The questionnaire included a mixture of open, fixed response, and multiple response questions. The household interviews were all conducted within the homes and fields of the residents, thus allowing the respondents to often demonstrate to the interviewer how their work and lives were manifested within the landscape. This means that they could also easily explain how institutional changes influenced their willingness to cooperate with Park managers and their hopes or dreams for future livelihood strategies.

Household interviews were fully transcribed. The data acquired from the household interviews were ana-

lyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the collected data were processed using descriptive statistics. For the analysis to determine which demographic and socio-economic variables could help to explain why some respondents hold more positive attitudes towards conservation in NP Tara, the nonparametric test of rank correlation was applied together with the Spearman rank correlation coefficient. Expert interviews were also conducted, but these were a problem-centered interview. By this we mean, the respondent does not stand as an individual case, but provided expertise in the context of his/her institutional or organization context (Meuser and Nagel 1991). These expert interviews were open and semi-structured around key problems regarding participation of local people in the management of national parks, including conflicts between the local people and their utilization of natural resources, and their opinions regarding the future of Tara National Park.

In addition to the household and expert interviews, numerous documents were analyzed. Most importantly, reports and programs of the Tara National Park Public Enterprise, a spatial plan of Tara NP, reports by the Institutes for Nature Protection of Serbia and by the then Ministry of the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment, and the population census compiled

the Republic of Serbia's Institute for Statistics. This material provided an important background for understanding the institutional linkages in protected area management as well as understanding how these linkages are related to our research sites. In addition, historical information helped to understand how changes in the political, social, cultural, and economic context may have affected people's livelihoods and the institutions that can help to sustain them. This analysis provided part of the framework for developing the household questionnaire.

Using basic methodology of triangulation, these data were analyzed with respect to one another and together provided a strong basis for understanding the past, current, and potential future household livelihood strategies, relationships between local people and the Park administration, and the larger geographic and institutional environment affecting the capacity for nature protection within Tara National Park. Methodological triangulation: involves using more than one method to gather data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents. The purpose of triangulation in qualitative research is to increase the credibility and validity of the results. Altrichter et al. (2008) contend that triangulation 'gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation'.

RESULTS – Rezultati

Results of Household Interviews – *Rezultati intervjuja u domaćinstvima*

In the period 1948-1981, the population of the Tara region decreased to 5,000 people, of which 900 or 17%, live within the newly designated national park. The main occupations of the inhabitants of this region are agriculture and forestry. A small number of inhabitants of the region are employed outside the household, mainly in forestry working with National Park Tara Public Enterprise. The possibility of employment in other activities is limited, leading to a population drain, which along with a low birth rate means that the population is in decline (Gajić 1989). A characteristic of both villages is permanent out-migration (Tomićević 2005). Furthermore, the population is aging, the number of single men is increasing, and there is a decreasing number of educated people. All of these are very important factors leading to the low levels of human capital (Messer and Townsley, 2003: 9).

Based on the goal of the Biosphere Reserve Programme of *enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the living conditions of forest dependent people*, the sustainability of the livelihoods of people living in Tara region is at risk. The agricultural sector, which has deep cultural roots in the community, has become inefficient and ineffective as a result of the low capacity of human resources (low education and labour capacity as young

people leave due to their lack of positive expectations for future opportunities). Of special emotional and practical concern was the loss of access to land, because private property holdings had been reduced to a maximum of 10 ha in communist times where wealthy peasants – especially those considered to be enemies of the nation – had their land confiscated and placed in a communal fund or given to a landless poor peasant. Furthermore, natural resources now controlled by the Park Administration are generally not accessible to local people. But, perhaps most important for the present and future prospects of these villages is the limited access to markets and capital due to poor roads and lack of knowledge.

Even with these limitations, agriculture remains central to the local economy as a major source of food and income for the local community and as defining factor of the regional landscape. However, our survey results indicated that local people would be willing to invest in the agricultural sector, if there was the potential for realizing greater economic benefits (Tomićević 2005). Willingness to invest is a strong indicator for positive social capacity for participatory management and governance. Social action theory (Giddens 1979) conceives of individuals as exercising agency (the ability to change the rules), voluntarism, giving meaning to objects and events and acting with intent. However, as

Max Weber argued, social context and history shape human action and individuals act within historically constructed institutional environments (Weber 1978: 4–7 and 22–31; Breiner 1996). Thus, ‘willingness to invest’ indicates recognition by local actors of their ability to reshape their current context so as to create new choices by creating new institutions. This is the essential quality necessary for democratic practices like participatory management (Shannon 2006).

The livestock sector also plays an important role in Tara area. Cattle and sheep herding are traditional activities and play important roles in the daily life of the community. Today livestock is a major part of the local production system (e.g. milk, meat, wool). From the survey results we found that in both villages meat, wool, and dairy products are produced for household purposes along with brandy, honey and other craftwork. In Jagoštica village, which is a much more isolated village than Rastište, local people produce mostly for household purposes since market access is very restricted. While in Rastište, there is both subsistence and commercial production largely due to slightly better access to markets. However, the continued emigration of younger people and the reduced numbers of livestock are leading to more forest cover, less cultivated land, fewer pastures and meadows, and relatively more orchards in the area. These landscape changes affect not only the resources available for human sustenance, but also the nature and quality of the biodiversity in the Park. It is within this context of subsistence as well as limited commercial production and landscape changes that a participatory process with National Park authorities would be initiated. Participatory management would link local social issues of ‘expanding market opportunities’ with ‘biodiversity protection’, thereby opening opportunities for improved local livelihoods and biodiversity conservation through participatory processes.

The goal of local community empowerment in relation to sustainable development requires that the local communities are ready to participate in development as well in conservation processes. Tomićević (2005) learned that the people of the Tara region are willing to cooperate in implementing any idea of environmental improvements that also provides them with economic and educational benefits. Their collective memory maintains customs aimed toward maintaining good relations between human beings and their environment, even though economic development is needed for continued survival. Assessing readiness and capacity to participate in management draws from these expressed intentions, both individual and collective, framing desired outcomes and strategies.

As noted above, part of the historical context of the region, and still an important factor in the memory and attitudes of the local people, is that after the Second

World War, the land belonging to the ‘enemies of the nation’ (individuals who profited during war time) was confiscated by the State (Ignjić 1986). Confiscated land was placed in a communal fund or was given to poor peasants for cultivation (in 1945, 303 ha of cultivated land were confiscated and in 1954, 852 ha of land were taken from 272 wealthy peasants). At the time, there were proposals to establish cattle breeding farms on the confiscated lands’ (Ignjić 1986: 250). Surprisingly, given this historical context, we learned through the interviews that only 13.8 percent (Tab. 1) of the local population in Rastište expressed a lack of willingness to cooperate with the National Park managers. From what people told us in the interviews, these attitudes toward the Park were related to the confiscation of private lands during post-war and communist times and the continuing lack of clear ownership structure between the state and local people. However, these negative attitudes regarding the Park characterized older people who had directly experienced the war and its aftermath.

Table 1. Distribution of answers on question: Are you in conflict with the NP? in villages Rastište (n=65) and Jagoštica (n=37)

Tablica 1 Raspodjela odgovora na pitanje: Da li imate konflikt sa NP Tara? u selu Rastište (n=65) i Jagoštica (n=37)

Village – Selo		
Rastište		
Answers – Odgovori	Frequency Frekvencija	Percent Postotak
no – ne	56	86.2
yes – da	9	13.8
Total number of respondents Ukupan broj ispitanika	65	100.0
Village – Selo		
Jagoštica		
no – ne	37	100
yes – da	0	0.0
Total number of respondents Ukupan broj ispitanika	37	100.0

Nonetheless, in general, the National Park is perceived positively by most people in both villages. Naturally, it is very important as one of the few sources of local job opportunities. Even more interesting, among younger people there is a recognition of the importance of nature protection and how it can benefit them. The collection of medicinal plants is a major source of current household cash incomes. With technical assistance, some of the valuable medicinal plants could be cultivated by the farmers in their own fields and in this way the local knowledge of how to maintain and sustain these plants could be of significant assistance to the Park in conserving them and protecting biodiversity (Tomićević et.al. 2010: 161). In summary, although

the local people were marginalized when Tara National Park was formed in 1981, today they are willing and interested in working with the Park administration in the conservation and management of the region. Thus, the National Park Tara Public Enterprise is well-situated to serve as the convener of participatory management.

Sadly, the local people of Tara share a generally negative expectation about the future for their lives in the Tara area. These views reflect their economic hardship

in general and the visible loss of young people. In order to meet the challenge of strengthening the local economy so as to achieve sustainable development in Tara and maintaining the biodiversity that gives Tara its special ecological value, local people and managers will need to build greater communicative and participatory capacity in order to better understand one another and work together in a community-based participatory management processes.

Attitudes towards conservation in NP Tara Stav lokalnog stanovništva prema zaštiti NP Tara

While summarising the results from the household questionnaire, it became clear that the demographic and socio-economic conditions, which have changed in Tara National Park in recent years, have influenced people's attitudes towards conservation in Tara National Park. For the analysis to determine which demo-

graphic and socio-economic variables could help to explain why some respondents hold more positive attitudes towards conservation the nonparametric test of rank correlation was applied together with the Spearman rank correlation coefficient (Table 2).

Table 2 Correlations between socioeconomic variables¹ in Rastište and Jagoštica villages
Tablica 2. Korelacija između socioekonomskih varijabli¹ u selima Rastište i Jagoštica

Village – Selo Variables – Varijable	Rastište				Jagoštica			
	2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5
1. gender/spol ns	ns	ns	-.251 *	ns	ns	ns	ns	
2. age/dob		ns	-.364 **	-.353 **		ns	ns	-.429 **
3. education/obrazovanje			ns	.348 **			ns	ns
4. work for NP/rad za NP				.841 **				.507 **
5. relationship with NP/ attitudes towards conservation / odnosi sa NP/ stav o NP								

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) – Značajnost korelacije za razinu pouzdanosti 0.01 (2-strano)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) – Značajnost korelacije za razinu pouzdanosti 0.05 (2-strano)

ns – not significant – nije značajno

Spearman's coefficient between gender of respondents in Rastište and relationship with NP is: $-.251^*$ ($df=65$, $p<.05$), what shows that women have bad relationship with NP, or otherwise negative attitude toward conservation, or that male have more positive attitudes toward conservation than women. Age of respondents in Rastište and variable relationship with NP correlates with: $-.353^{**}$ ($df=65$, $p<.01$), what shows that older people have less or bad relationship with NP, or more negative attitude toward conservation. Variable education and relationship with NP correlates with: $.348^{**}$ ($df=65$, $p<.01$), and clearly showed that education significantly has influence on positive attitudes toward conservation. The respondents in Rastište who work for NP have a good relationship with NP or positive attitudes toward conservation, correlation are: $.841^{**}$ ($df=65$, $p<.01$).

The correlation between the work for NP variable and relationship with NP variable in Jagoštica is: $.507^{**}$ ($df=37$, $p<.01$) showing that almost only interviewees who work for NP have a good relationship with National Park and a positive attitude towards conservation. The

correlation between the age of respondents in Jagoštica and the relationship with NP is: $-.429^{**}$ ($df=37$, $p<.01$). The negative correlation means that the correlation is contrary to the set values of the variables, which in a concrete situation means that young people have more positive attitudes toward conservation than older people.

Positive attitudes towards Tara National Park and conservation in both villages were significantly influenced by the age of the respondents and whether or not they worked for the national park (Table 2). The employment in the National Park variable was found to have a significant influence on attitudes towards conservation, possibly the result of benefits received from the Tara National Park enterprise. The findings suggest that benefits are an incentive for people to perceive conservation positively. A correlation between benefits and positive attitudes has been confirmed in many cases (Gillingham & Lee, 1999; Mehta & Heinen, 2001). Furthermore, some differences were evident in the results obtained from the two villages. In the case of the Rastište community, a greater number of variables

were found to influence people's attitudes on conservation. Both gender and the education also exhibited an influence on the attitude to conservation. Males had a more positive perception of the national park than females (see Tab. 2). Sah & Heinen (2001) showed that in Nepal, the variable gender has a significant influence on attitudes towards conservation. Also, education had a

positive influence on the attitudes towards conservation. Education has also been cited elsewhere as a main reason for positive attitudes towards protected areas. Education is just one variable, but can have a powerful effect on attitudes towards conservation (Fiallo & Jacobson, 1995; Gillingham & Lee, 1999).

Results of Expert Interviews – *Rezultati intervjuja sa ekspertima*

Resource managers were selected to interview as experts in charge of Tara National Park (five experts were selected: manager of the national park, head of department for national parks, forestry authorities and environment ministry and a nature conservationist from the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia). The designation of Tara as a biosphere reserve can have a great influence on socio-economic issues, and therefore play an important role in relation to poverty reduction. In many cases, biosphere reserves are 'source of hope for local communities and indigenous peoples that perceive them as a viable option for enhancing their livelihoods' (Marton-Lefevre 2007: 12).

The concepts of the Biosphere Reserves and national park management were explored during interviews with 'experts' regarding the participation of local people in the management of the National Park, the conflicts between the local people and the utilization of natural resources, and the future of Tara National Park. The purpose for expert interviews was not only to understand their personal attitudes towards Tara National Park, but also to explore the institutional environment linking stakeholders.

The major challenge facing protected areas in Serbia is to develop management systems that deliver both environmental sustainability and tangible long-term benefits for the local people. In general, experts identified Tara National Park as a very valuable asset to the area, mainly in terms of biological and geological diversity. More precisely, the report 'Proposal to support the Tara Mountain Biosphere Reserve nomination' (Institute for Nature Conservation 2003) focused on "the features of the Tara ecosystems, primarily their conserved conditions and their high diversity in terms of landscape, ecosystem characteristics, species and consequently, genetic attributes, that make this part of Serbia a region of international importance for conservation of biodiversity." (Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia 2003: 1). The results of the interviews showed that only people from environmental authorities and experts from the nature conservation agency were aware of the of Biosphere Reserve concept. The National Park managers and other government authorities were not aware of this international concept. Due to their lack of familiarity with the Biosphere Reserve concept, and because the management option was imposed by the State (already a good indication of

barriers within the institutional context of governance), the interviewees were not asked to compare the pros and cons of Biosphere Reserve designation for Tara, but were simply asked whether in their opinion Tara National Park should be proclaimed a Biosphere Reserve.

Despite their unfamiliarity with the Biosphere Reserve concept, all of the experts answered affirmatively. Most of the experts agree – once they understood the idea of a Biosphere Reserve program – that the nomination of the Tara area as a Biosphere Reserve could be a means for integration of local people in management of natural resources. In particular, they expressed positive expectations were for improvement of the livelihoods of the local people in the Tara area. The experts from the nature conservation agency emphasised that in the local context, "the re-designation of Tara National Park as a Biosphere Reserve can represent for managers of protected areas and local communities the easiest way to succeed in their projects, which are in harmony with the strategy of sustainable development" (Director of Nature Conservation Institute). Additionally, the Director of the Nature Conservation Agency added, "if local people have a better economic status then they will have a more positive attitude towards protected areas" (Tomićević 2005: 138).

From the perspective of the environmental authorities, the concept of Biosphere Reserve is viewed positively, and "a particularly important reason to support the concept from a Serbian perspective is the interaction between protection and development" (Head of Department for National Parks in the Ministry for Protection of Natural Resources and Environment). Forest ecosystems represent a high percentage of the area of Tara National Park, and the environmental authorities complain to the forestry lobby about their attitudes towards management in protected areas and especially in their attitudes towards the concept of sustainability (Head of Department for National Parks in the Ministry for Protection of Natural Resources and Environment). As foresters value the natural resources in terms of income from the forest, we found similar complains towards foresters in expert interviews with managers from Tara National Park. Director of the Public Enterprise National Park Tara emphasized: "If we want to establish National Parks and achieve the concept of Biosphere Reserve, which will have an international significance, then it

will be necessary to reorganise the enterprise – to work in an old fashioned way, and to think modern is not possible – therefore, we need a new organisational setting, which should be more effective and sustainable”.

As is common, the Serbian institutional framework is currently in a state of flux as a result of the ongoing economic transition process, including changes in government ministries and the Tara National Park management authorities related to the democratisation process. This lack of institutional clarity is having negative consequences. In an expert interview with the Director of the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, he emphasized that “many responsibilities overlap.”

“A lack of institutional dialogue and insufficient collaboration exist and the fact is that the state should view protected areas more seriously, especially areas with international significance, because there is still no clear political attitude in relation to the functions and significance of protected areas.” Additionally, “the Republic of Serbia needs a new Law on Nature Protection. The old act does not provide for the sustainable development of Serbia” (Director of Nature Conservation Institute). “A strategy for the protection of biodiversity does not exist,” according to Director of Nature Conservation Institute and the director of the Forest Directorate. Data obtained from different sources (expert interviews, written reports and literature), shows that there are no overall strategic documents on biodiversity management and nature conservation policy.

Thus, the findings of the study show that attitudes towards the nature conservation policy are not clear

and vary with the interests of the different stakeholders. From a local perspective, the expert interviews with the Director of the Public Enterprises Tara National Park, an adviser for private forest, and the mayor of the municipality of Bajina Bašta (also the headquarters of the Park Administration in the Park) revealed, “the Biosphere Reserve nomination is an additional challenge for us.” The mayor emphasised that such concept would “activate a new decision making procedure and foster inter-institutional dialogue.” The director’s attitudes towards projects based on the concept of sustainable development are very positive, and he hoped that “the flexible planning of the Biosphere Reserve model will allow us to negotiate new and more sustainable forms of implementing traditional activities.” He also added that such a model could be positive for local people who “were left on the margin of events.” He claimed, “the state does not ensure the sustainable development of these communities. The consequence of such policies is migration away from the region, and the mountain is lost to its own inhabitants.”

The findings of this study indicate that all experts possessed positive expectations in relation to the future for life in Tara National Park, but that the level of communication and collaboration between stakeholders was poor. Participatory management can only be successful if there is strong institutional support from both government and the community. Both, however, need sufficient institutional and communicative capacity to succeed.

CONCLUSION – Zaključak

The involvement of people in protected area management developed from the realization that traditional top-down management systems were not solving the problems of over-exploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation. The most important findings in our study relevant to participatory management are that demographic and socio-economic variables help us to explain why some respondents hold more positive attitudes towards conservation and the future for life in Tara National Park. For example, our findings confirm that level of education influences the attitudes of the local people with respect to the future life in the Tara area. Positive attitudes towards Tara National Park and conservation in both villages were significantly influenced by the age of the respondents and whether or not they worked for the national park. These findings suggest that when people are engaged in communicative action within their social and institutional context, the capacity for participation is increased. Thus, there is a positive relationship between education and employment with a willingness to work toward a better future

through collaboration with management organizations. As has been found elsewhere, participatory approaches have proved to be more successful in situations where the goals of the process are clear and there are positive attitudes towards conservation (Grumbine 1994; Jacobson 1995).

From the perspective of the local people, we learned that while they are generally willing and interested in engaging in participatory management, there are currently no opportunities for the kinds of deliberative discussions regarding management priorities or implementation strategies. The only clear relationship between the local people and the park administration is through direct employment. It appears that some new discussions are emerging regarding how the local people can be more involved in the development of improved roads and market for local produce. Only if these new discussions move toward issues regarding the management of the resources of the protected area and how the livelihoods of the people can be sustained will increased participatory capacity emerge.

From the perspective of the Park administration, engaging in collaborative planning with the local people requires support from the State. Regardless of the personal interest of a park manager or the willingness of local people to work with the park managers, without adequate resources and commitment, participatory management will not move forward.

Participatory management is a form of facilitation rather than control. Thus, new institutional forms of administration with greater capacity to engage local people in the everyday work of park management are necessary to realize the promise of participatory management in terms of improved nature protection.

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To summarize, the findings of this study indicate the need to strengthen the clarity of nature conservation policy and the missions of the responsible authorities. In addition, in order to promote the involvement of local people and empower the national park management to work with them collaboratively, it is necessary to promote communication among all stakeholders. If the key to biodiversity protection is held by local people, who have so far been ignored but who are increasingly being recognised as key stakeholders, then environmental governance needs to draw upon social science research and theory in understanding and assessing social capacity for participatory management.

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SAŽETAK: Ovdje predstavljeno istraživanje usmjereno je na ulogu lokalne zajednice u upravljanju zaštićenim područjima, s osnovnom pretpostavkom da će bez suradnje i sudjelovanja lokalne zajednice u očuvanju biološke raznolikosti na području gdje su zemlja i resursi temeljni oslonci za život ljudi, biti manje uspješno ako lokalno stanovništvo aktivno ne podupire zadane ciljeve očuvanja.

Upravljački kapaciteti zaštićenih područja ovise o općem sustavu upravljanja, stanju samog resursa i podršci lokalne zajednice. Stoga se postavlja ključno pitanje od općeg interesa: imaju li odgovorne strukture kapaciteta za učinkovito upravljanje zaštićenim područjima, te da li se željeni rezultati postižu na terenu. Mjerenje navedenih dimenzija upravljanja kontekstualnog je karaktera, jer ono što je učinkovito u jednoj zemlji ili lokalno, može biti sasvim neprihvatljivo u drugoj. Zbog toga se procjena upravljačkih kapaciteta po svome karakteru smatra kontekstualnom, odnosno bavi se prvo objašnjavanjem odnosa, a onda institucionalnih i strukturnih okvira.

Prijedlog proglašenja Nacionalnog parka Tara Rezervatom Biosfere ukazao je na važnost istraživanja koje bi opisalo institucionalni okvir, socio-demografsku situaciju u naseljima unutar granica Parka. Jasno je raspoznata ovisnost potrajnog gospodarenja zaštićenim prostorima o podršci lokalnog stanovništva. U cilju postizanja očuvanja biološke raznolikosti nacionalni zakonodavac i okolišni planeri trebaju uključiti lokalno stanovništvo u upravljanje zaštićenim prostorima, te utvrditi i razvijati socijalne procese kako bi omogućili lokalnim zajednicama očuvanje i unapređenje biološke raznolikosti kao dio njihovog životnog okruženja.

Metoda istraživanja je kvalitativna, što proizlazi iz prirode prikupljenih podataka i primijenjenih metoda analize i interpretacije. Primijenjena je studija slučaja (Case study) u sklopu koje su podaci prikupljeni tijekom 2004. godine, kada su obavljena 102 intervjua s lokalnim stanovništvom. Istraživanjem su obuhvaćena dva sela smještena na području Nacionalnog parka Tara: Rastište (67 intervjua) i Jagoštica (37). Oba sela su zbog slabe razvijenosti mreže putova prometno izolirana, te stoga izrazito ovisna o lokalnim prirodnim resursima

kao i gospodarskim i upravljačkim aktivnostima samoga Parka. Intervjui s lokalnim stanovništvom obuhvaćali su: demografske informacije o kućanstvu; stavove prema životu na selu; percepciju prirode i krajobraza; odnos sa Upravom Parka; i pitanja vezana uz strategije kućanstva kroz povijest, sadašnje i njihova očekivanja za budućnost (Tomičević 2005). Sama pitanja bila su otvorena, s ponuđenim odgovorima te mogućnošću davanja više odgovora. Svi intervjui obavljani su u samim kućanstvima, što je omogućavalo ispitanicima da i primjerom objasne kako žive i rade te na koje načine utječu na krajobraz. Također su mogli lako objasniti kako institucionalne promjene utječu na njihovu volju za suradnjom s Upravom Parka, kao i njihova očekivanja u budućnosti. Intervjui su u potpunosti prepisani, što je omogućilo njihovu obradu i analizu korištenjem SPSS (Statističkog programa za socijalna istraživanja) programa.

Dodatno su obavljani i problemski orijentirani intervjui sa stručnjacima i donositeljima odluka u Parku, nadležnim institucijama i znanstvenim organizacijama (obavljeno je 5 intervjuja) kako bi se dobio uvid u način sagledavanja problema s razine donositelja odluka. To znači da ispitanici nisu predstavljali sebe kao osobu, već su pružali stručno mišljenje u svom institucionalnom i/ili organizacijskom kontekstu (Meuser i Nagel 1991). Korištena pitanja bila su otvorena i polu strukturirana, koncentrirajući se na ključne probleme vezane uz sudjelovanje lokalnog stanovništva u upravljanju Parkom, uključujući konflikte između lokalnog stanovništva i korištenja prirodnih resursa. Prikupljena su i razmišljanja stručnjaka o budućnosti Parka.

Svi prikupljeni podaci uneseni su u bazu te analizirani korištenjem SPSS programa, posebno namijenjenom za analizu kvalitativnih podataka. Tijekom analize i interpretacije dobivenih rezultata korištena je metoda triangulacije (unakrsnog potvrđivanja) gdje se jedna grupa podataka analizira u odnosu na drugu grupu, čime se omogućava razumijevanje prošlih, postojećih i budućih postupaka. Ova metoda posebno se pokazala korisnom u razumijevanju strategija primijenjenih u lokalnim kućanstvima. Također je analizom drugih prikupljenih dokumenata i pravnih akata, dobiven uvid u odnose između lokalnog stanovništva i uprave Parka te karakteristike šireg zemljopisnog i institucionalnog okruženja koje utječu na kapacitete zaštite prirode unutar Nacionalnog parka Tara.

Ovim istraživanjem analizirani su mogućnosti razvoja kapaciteta stanovništva, koje živi u granicama samog Parka, te učinkovitog sudjelovanja u upravljanju zaštićenim područjem, kroz uključivanje u aktivnosti unapređenja biološke raznolikosti u svoje svakodnevne životne odluke. Polučeni rezultati ukazuju na neophodnost očuvanja i osiguravanja alternativnih životnih strategija, s ciljem zaustavljanja iskorištavanja zaštićenih područja od strane lokalnog stanovništva, koje se istovremeno bori za očuvanje i unapređenje vlastitih životnih uvjeta.

Analiza stručnih intervjuja ukazala je na nedostatak općih strateških dokumenata, koji bi regulirali zaštitu biološke raznolikosti i upravljanje zaštićenim prostorima u Srbiji, posebice onim od međunarodnog značenja.

Ključne riječi: sudjelovanje u upravljanju; zaštićena područja, lokalna zajednica, komunikacijske aktivnosti