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A 'SEAT AT THE TABLE': EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
PLURALIST STRUCTURES AND INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING—THE
CASE OF THE NILE BASIN INITIATIVE

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

Simon Humphreys Randiga Okoth

B.A., Berea College, 1980
M.P.A., Murray State University, 1984

Director: Susan T. Gooden, Ph.D.
Professor, Public Policy and Administration
L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
November, 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I ventured into an expedition with a fair knowledge of where the destination was and how I would get there. However, it turned out to be daunting. At most, the mission required appropriate tools, courage, patience and persistence, reflexivity, energy, and support. In an attempt to conquer the River Nile, French General Napoleon Bonaparte marshaled the help of soldiers but still failed. On my expedition to uncover the unknown about involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders in the decision-making process of the Nile Basin Initiative in Ethiopia, I did not have any soldiers but relied incessantly on the support of my trusted team of academic advisors, friends and family. It is through their guidance and support that I was finally able to document what I found at the end of that long journey and how I got there.

Foremost, I would like to thank my dissertation chair and mentor Dr. Susan Gooden for providing me with the navigation tools and ensuring that I stayed on course up to the end. Dr. Gooden's superb mentorship progressively built my confidence about how to portage the rapids and to successfully thrive in the vast and rough waters of academic life. Dr. Clifford Fox patiently explained the intricacies and how to navigate a river such as the one I was dreading. I also learned from him that this daunting task required tested and working radar in the form of a theory. The theory he suggested served as my radar to trace the route and to validate whether I had reached the destination or not. I will cherish his intellect and patience. Dr. Avrum Shriar's knowledge taught me patience, how to ask the right questions, structure, and prepare a report on a complex

expedition such as this one. I am indebted to you. I am also grateful to Professor Blue Wooldridge for cracking the floating nutshell in which I had been protected and buoyed. Because of his experience of the territory, I learned to welcome the “other” and to accommodate the small truths about what is here and there.

I will cherish Dr. Richard Huff’s advice that at times one needs to portage the rapids to stay on course, and that treading carefully can ensure a successful voyage. To my friends Paul Lewis and Diane Rodill for their constant reminders to remain focused despite intermittent turbulence en route, thank you. I must also extend my appreciation to Dr. Judith Bradford for her support and ensuring that I had some means to refuel during the long safari.

The courage, the patience and support that I received from my wife Elizabeth is immeasurable. I was also fortunate to have Amy, a daughter who believed in me; sons Jona and Jesse who both inspired me by constantly asking about my estimated date of arrival at the pier. To my late parents, mother Kilmetina Min-Simi and father Joram Okoth, for the dignified way in which they raised me—in a land not far from the source of the Nile.

To my brothers Job, Richard and the late James for sacrificing their incomes to support my earlier education; that is one thing that successfully works in our land.

Finally, I am grateful to the research participants in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and to the Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat staff in Entebbe, Uganda.

The navigation, the portaging of the rapids, the sailing, and reaching the dock couldn’t have been possible without all these wonderful people. Thank you God!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.C.E.	“Before Common Era”; same as Before Christ (B.C)
CBSI	Confidence Building and Stakeholder Involvement
ENTRO	Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office
ENSAP	Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program
EtNBDF	Ethiopian Nile Basin Dialogue Forum
HYDROMET	Hydrometeorological Survey of the Catchment of Lake Victoria, Kyoga and Mobutu
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NBD	Nile Basin Discourse
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NILE-COM	Council of Ministers of Water Affairs of the Nile Basin States
NILE-SEC	Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat
NILE-TAC	Nile Basin Initiative Technical Advisory Committee
SAP	Subsidiary Action Program
SVP	Shared Vision Program
TECCONILE	Technical Cooperation Committee for the Promotion of the Development and Environmental Protection of the Nile Basin

ABSTRACT

A 'SEAT AT THE TABLE': EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
PLURALIST STRUCTURES AND INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING—THE
CASE OF THE NILE BASIN INITIATIVE

By Simon Humphreys Randiga Okoth, Ph.D., M. P. A.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2009

Major Director: Susan T. Gooden, Ph.D.
Professor of Public Policy and Administration
L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

The goal of this study was to explore the relationship between pluralist structures and involvement in decision-making of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI). To establish this relationship the study asked two primary questions: What are the characteristics of power structures of the NBI as they relate to stakeholder involvement in Ethiopia? For those not involved in the decision-making process, what constraints prevent them from getting a 'seat at the table'?" Two secondary questions were also asked: Do the power structure characteristics in Ethiopia relate to pluralism and, if so, how? To what extent are the conditions in Ethiopia compatible with the prerequisites of pluralism? The study focused on one issue-area, the Water Resources Planning and Management Project.

Qualitative data were collected primarily from NGOs in Ethiopia during the month of December, 2008. Background information was collected in Entebbe, Uganda, the home to the NBI Secretariat. Data sources included in-depth key informant interviews (n=30), archival, geographical, historical, and scientific accounts. The findings show that 1) the characteristics of power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative in Ethiopia are both pluralistic and elitist; 2) the level of involvement in the Water Resources Planning and Management Project by nongovernmental stakeholders is low; 3) the framework for involvement is limited and restricted to invitations to selected meetings in which the role of the NGOs is that of the observer; 4) political factors are the leading constraints to involvement, followed by lack of capacity of the NGOs and the NBI, structural limitations, and lack of information and awareness.

The study concludes that, even though there is consistent theoretical link between pluralist structures and stakeholder involvement, the mere presence of pluralist structures does not guarantee involvement. It all depends on how well those structures function. The findings thus leads this study to hypothesize that the pluralist structures and elite power structures exist side by side, at least in the context of Ethiopia. Through the pluralist structures, organized groups are formally recognized while the elite power structures determine the process and who makes the decisions.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Introduction to the study:

This study seeks to explore the characteristics of power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) and to understand how they relate to nongovernmental stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process in Ethiopia. Another objective is to assess whether or not these power structures are pluralist in nature.

Analyses of power structures have been conducted through several studies, including by Floyd Hunter (1963), Robert Dahl (1961), Wallace Sayer and Herbert Kaufman (1960), Aaron Wildavsky (1964), Yishai (1990), and Nelson Wilkstrom (1993). In each of those studies, the overarching goal was to establish who in the community was involved and had influence in the decisions affecting specific issue-areas. Similar studies have sought to establish whether the power structures are either pluralist or elitist (Hunter, 1963; Dahl, 1961). Such systematic studies have confirmed that pluralism increases involvement while elitism reduces broad involvement (Olsen, 1982; McCool, 1995).

As the world's pool of fresh water resources dwindle, combined with the growing demand and threats of climate change, how existing resources are managed and shared will be critical to maintaining peace and avoiding conflicts among nations. Although

no major war has been declared over shared water resource within the last century or the present, tensions have flared and caused major political rifts between and among nations (Giordano & Wolf, 2003). The River Nile, shared by ten riparian African countries, is one such transboundary water that has created tensions among those who have stake in it (Collins, 2002).

Efforts to thaw such political rifts and tensions prompted the creation of a transitory compact, the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999. The main goal of the framework is to facilitate cooperation in the management and use of the water so that all riparian stakeholders can benefit. The NBI also desires to find win-win solutions in which those who have a stake are provided with the opportunity to have a voice on how decisions are made. The latter is one of the top priorities for the NBI.

The involvement of stakeholders is critical to garnering support for its basin wide policies and to engender stakeholder buy-in of the projects and to facilitate their implementation. Despite such efforts and resources dedicated to those goals, involvement by stakeholders, particularly the nongovernmental organizations, have been missing in Ethiopia. Such a poor response is curious given the fact that Ethiopia has a relatively high stake in the Nile. The country's water tower contributes 86 percent to the total water flow of the Nile as measured at Aswan High dam in Egypt, but only consumes one percent. Ethiopia is also known to have an aggressive policy stance aimed at ensuring increased use of the Nile waters. That stance have, in the past, brought Ethiopia

and Egypt to the brink of war. Hence decisions affecting the Nile water use will require greater involvement by policy makers and organized groups in Ethiopia.

Research Questions:

In order to understand the characteristics of power structures in relation to stakeholder involvement, this study is guided by the following research questions:

Primary:

1. “What are the characteristics of the power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) as they relate to stakeholder involvement in Ethiopia?”
2. “For those not involved in the decision-making, what constraints prevent them from getting a ‘seat at the table’?”

Secondary:

1. “Do the power structure characteristics in Ethiopia relate to pluralism and, if so, how?”
2. “To what extent are conditions in Ethiopia compatible with the prerequisites of pluralism?”

Significance of the study:

Even though the Nile has generated a great deal of interest among scholars of various disciplines, not much effort has focused on the NBI as a budding institution. Conspicuously missing is a systematic assessment of the extent of involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders. Secondly, there is a dearth of documented information

on the characteristics of power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative. Therefore, the significance of this study lies partly in its ability to fill the latter gap.

The importance of this study is also anchored on the investigation of the constraints to involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders as reported by the literature. The analyses of key informant interviews and archival data relative to the constraints are presented in the findings chapter.

Another significance of this study lies in the use of power structures as the frame of analysis in order to understand the distribution of power in the Nile Basin Initiative and to demonstrate its efficacy, if any, in determining who has influence in policy decisions. The findings will provide useful information to the NBI policy makers as they attempt to create new structures and improve their functions.

This study also hopes to demonstrate the significant role that nongovernmental stakeholders can play in international water compacts such as the NBI. The participation of NGOs in the policy process is based on the pluralist paradigm, democracy, representative government, and the distribution of power. The hallmark of democracy, as Dahl (1989) has noted, is its ability to grant the expression of the public interest. Similarly, the study offers the opportunity to inform public policy makers about the strategies for enhancing stakeholder involvement. As has been noted in the literature, ensuring involvement, especially where many countries with different interests, values, and expectations are involved, can be daunting and complex (Kameri-Mbote, 2005). The geographic dispersion, degree of political will, mistrust, structural, economic and

personal limitations can create difficulties for involvement (Berger-Bartlett & Craig, 2002; Bell & Jansky, 2005; Offenbacher, 2004).

Further significance of this topic is its timeliness. The NBI is currently engaged in a long and complex negotiation of a new framework intended to replace the 1929 and 1959 treaties signed between the British, Egypt and Sudan. How these two treaties were designed and implemented without involvement of other riparian countries are pointers to the present problem. The current beneficiaries of the treaties, Egypt and Sudan, are resistant to any changes of the status quo that will potentially take away some of the water they receive and give it to others previously denied the right. This redistributive attempt by the current negotiation will likely create clear winners and losers. This is a further source of potential conflicts.

This study is not only timely but offers a sense of direction for present and future treaties. As the review of the literature provided later in this chapter attempts to document, the processes applied by the British to negotiate the Nile treaties were flawed because they did not consider the realities of pluralism, neither did the relevant institutions at the time have pluralist structures to facilitate broad participation by riparian stakeholders. For example, the formulation of a new Nile Basin treaty, currently in progress, is trickier because the most powerful actor is at the end of the pipe. Geopolitically, Egypt enjoys military and economic strengths yet it is the most vulnerable. This, ultimately, creates a real potential for water-generated conflict.

The absence of partnerships with stakeholders in the management of international water compacts, such as the NBI, can cause mistrust and lack of support, weaken the

compact, and the probability of conflicts. Similarly, disputes over water rights can take a long time to resolve if there are no partnerships with local stakeholders. Without such partnerships, it is difficult to take into account deep-rooted values and where legal systems cannot easily find a common ground. The case of water rights dispute between the Nez Perce Indian tribe and the U.S. Federal government is instructive. The dispute that started in 1855 over Snake River (“Idaho, Nez Perce Tribe,” 2007) was only resolved through financial compensation in 2007. Similarly in 2008, a three-decade dispute over water rights in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint and the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa river basins, brokered by the White House, failed after Florida, Georgia and Alabama disagreed about water allocations (Evans, 2008). Hence this study has the advantage of sensitizing policy makers, public administrators, and water experts on the importance of forming partnerships with stakeholders affected directly or indirectly by treaties.

Another critical element that this study hopes to unravel is the importance of climate change, a potential stressor to the Nile basin. Ethiopia, lying within the Nile basin, is vulnerable to climate change. According to the IPCC data, there is evidence of decreasing precipitation, warming temperatures, and an increase in floods in Ethiopia (United Nations Development Program, 2007). By 2030, the mean annual temperature across the country is projected to increase between 0.9 and 1.1degrees Celsius, while precipitation will increase by only 0.6 to 4.9 percent. These indicators have negative implications for the country’s five principal natural resources: water, forest, biodiversity, agriculture and energy.

Ethiopia is also at risk because its abundant water resources are neither evenly distributed nor fully developed for agriculture, water supply, industry and hydropower (United Nations Development Program, 2007). Another problem is that the country's agricultural export earnings depends 90 percent on rain-fed agriculture. Similarly, Ethiopia relies on biomass for 95 percent of its fuel needs, 4 percent on petroleum, and only 1 percent from hydropower (p. 32). Heavy reliance on biomass has thus led to extensive deforestation which ultimately will affect the watershed feeding the rivers on which hydropower projects depend.

Further evidence shows that these resources are already being impacted and will negatively affect the economy and livelihoods. For instance, it is projected that wheat yields will decrease by 33 percent and runoff to Nile tributaries (Abbay/Blue Nile and Awash rivers) by about one-third (World Bank Climate Risk Factsheet, 2008). The World Bank (2008) observes that "droughts and floods are endemic, with significant events occurring every 3 to 5 years severely impacting the GDP" (p. 34). The Bank further warns that the "climate change can exacerbate the already high climate variability in Ethiopia in complex ways" (p. 34).

According to ongoing discourse, unless there is joint action climate change will potentially fuel violent conflicts as a result of competition over resource scarcity and population displacement caused by either droughts or floods (United Nations Development Program, 2007). Ethiopia has already experienced the effects of floods resulting in difficult policy choices to resettle the affected segments of the population (World Bank Climate Risk Factsheet, 2008).

Therefore, this study offers an opportunity for the NBI to begin to address the importance of strengthening its decision-making structures vis-à-vis climate change impacts.

One other potential contribution of this study lies in baseline data on stakeholder involvement it provides, against which future studies can be based. Although the focus is on the NBI in Ethiopia, the variables identified through the study can be useful to future empirical research on related topics.

Purpose of the Study:

This study attempts to achieve the following objectives:

- Exploring the characteristics of the power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative.
- Determining the relationship between these structures and pluralism.
- Assessing whether the power structures have any relationship with the level of involvement by nongovernment stakeholders.
- Identifying the constraints to involvement in the decision-making
- Contributing to the development of baseline data for further research on stakeholder involvement in the Nile Basin Initiative

Background and Overview

In order to explore the characteristics of power structures of the NBI, it is important to understand the contextual background leading to the NBI's formation. Another important piece of information is about Ethiopia, the setting of this study.

Background to the NBI's formation:

The NBI finds its roots in the historical struggle over the control of River Nile, dating back to the first half of the twentieth century. Described as the “sexiest of all rivers” by a public administration scholar (J. D. Farmer, personal communication, November, 2006), the Nile raises curiosity, imagination or even joy. It is the most romanticized, traveled and explored, navigated, written about, and fascinating of all of the international waters (Brander, 1966; Collins, 1994; Evans, 1994; Fagan, 2004). The river has also been described as “one of the great natural wonders of the world,” (Collins, 1994, p. 110) “the monarch of all rivers,” (Brander, 1966, p. 13), and “one of the . . . romantic wonders of the world” (Collins, 2002, p. 11). The *National Geographic* described the Nile as a river that “has influenced, somehow, every person living in our western world today” (Brander, 1966, p. 11). Philosophers, geographers, historians, engineers, and politicians have similarly been mesmerized by the Nile (Evans, 1994).

Measuring 4,266 miles (Soffer, 1999, p. 9), the Nile (Figure 1), with its source in the East African equatorial plateau and destination in the Mediterranean Sea, is the longest river in the world (Hillel, 1994; Howell & Allan, 1994; Brander, 1996; Soffer, 1999; Collins, 2002;). Covering an area between 1.08 million square miles to 1.5 million square miles (Soffer, 1999), or 10 percent of the African continent (Howell & Allan, 1994; Klare, 2001; Collins, 2002), the Nile Basin constitutes 10 riparian countries that have disproportionate shares as follows: Sudan (63.57 percent), Ethiopia (11.74 percent), Egypt (8.99 percent), Uganda (7.87 percent), Tanzania (3.96 percent), Kenya (1.68 percent), Democratic Republic of Congo (0.71 percent), Rwanda (0.68 percent), Burundi

IBRD 30785



Source: Nile Basin Initiative

MARCH 2000

Figure 1: The Nile Basin Drainage Pattern
 Source: Nile Basin Initiative, 2007

(0.43 percent), Egypt administered by Sudan (0.12 percent), Eritrea (0.12 percent), Sudan, administered by Egypt, (0.07 percent), and Central African Republic (0.04 percent) (Collins, 2002; Wolf, 2003).

The Nile's sexy characteristics can be traced back to the spiritual, cultural, economic and political significance which it held by the Egyptian Pharaohs and foreign empires. Therefore, to be able to understand the dynamics of the recent hydropolitics of the Nile, it is important to briefly examine the dominant role the Nile played in the lives of Egyptians and how that role translated into adversarial relationships between Egypt and Ethiopia and later with other riparian nations.

Significance of the Nile

For over 5,000 years, River Nile supported agriculture and sustained Egyptian populations (Collins, 2002). Colonial empires, such as the Romans, had their granaries filled up by Egyptian harvests from the Nile waters (Fagan, 2004; Fox, 2006). It has been argued that the guarantee of bountiful harvests may have in part influenced the occupation of Egypt by the Romans as early as 31 B.C. (Fagan, 2004).

The Egyptian culture and spiritual life were similarly influenced by the Nile (Brander, 1966). In many ways, the river was romanticized. For example, the arrival of the Nile floods was always welcomed with joy and celebrations (Collins, 2002). Dynasties reportedly commemorated annual floods in statues and hieroglyphic inscriptions to the god Hapi of the Nile. Although a minor god, Hapi personified the Nile fertility and thus was portrayed as a

character with protruding belly and pendulous breasts . . . The cultivators, farmers and peasants . . . preferred to sing hymns to Hapi, for he had no temple or official cult; they cast their annual offerings into the rising waters with simple and sincere supplications (Collins, 2002, p.15).

Kings also offered gifts to the Nile god in the form of white oxen and ushered into the river papyrus laced with magic hopefully to make the water levels rise (Ludwig, 1939; Starr, 1995). The river was also portrayed “as the male god Hapi . . . giving life to the northern and southern Nile” (Starr, 1995, p.13). It was in this context that Homer, the Greek poet, described the Nile in the masculine and Egypt in the feminine.

The belief in the Nile’s spiritual powers also influenced the Egyptian cultural practices and values. For example, the Nile was sanctified that any man who drowned in it had to be embalmed with special ornaments (Ludwig, 1939). The river’s healing powers were also exhibited by a woman in labor pain hauling herself to the river and eating pieces of dry mud from its banks to reduce pain. Similarly, an emaciated infant was taken to the Nile by the mother who, at every time the child cried, threw cakes and dates into the water. The act was believed to make the child increase in weight and strength. The spiritual strength of the Nile was also depicted in ancient Egyptian hymns as the following excerpt illustrates:

Hail to thee, O Nile, that risest from the earth, out of mysterious darkness,
to the light of day where men hymn thy coming: who waterest the fields,
whom Ra hath created to feed all the cattle, who waterest even the desert,
which is far from water, for it is thy dew that fallest from heaven. If the

Nile is sluggish, men's noses are stopped up, all men are wretched, the sacrifices vanish, millions die. If it riseth, then the earth rejoiceth, every back laugheth, every mouth is glad, every tooth is to be seen...O Nile, thou greenest, thou makest green, O Nile (Ludwig, 1939, p. 392).

In addition to the above, the Valley of the Nile served as haven for temples and their gods (Brander, 1966). It was also the site for burying the kings (Ludwig, 1939), an area of increasing interest to archeologists today (Fagan, 2004). The importance of the Nile was also symbolized through Greek and Roman coins, while Egyptian Coptic Christians celebrated on June 17 the "Night of the Drop" when the angels asked the Lord to raise the water levels (Collins, 2002). On the same date, the Egyptian Muslim leaders sent out "Munadee el-Nil" or the messenger of the Nile, to publicly announce the rise of water levels (Collins, 2002).

The arrival of Nile floods was also associated with romance and love. As Ludwig (1939, p. 395) notes, "When the first wave of the flood reached Thebes and Memphis, when the canals were opened, the great popular festival turned into a feast of love, for the young men were inflamed by the idea that the Nile, on the opening of the canals, took bodily possession of its beloved the dark earth. Under its influence, nights of love and marriages took place, and the young men sang."

Governance of Egypt was to a large extent dependent on the Nile river flow. Specifically, the rise and fall of Egyptian dynasties, including survival of the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, and their successive rulers, were influenced by the Nile water levels. In the 6th dynasty for example, Pharaoh's central government collapsed because low

water levels reduced available resources necessary to support the system (Karyabwite, 1999; Collins, 2002). In fact, for 200 years after 1797 B.C.E, the Egyptian dynasty disappeared due to low Nile floods as there were no resources to govern or to protect the country from foreign invasions. However, with the resumption of the Nile floods, between 1550 and 1070 B.C.E, the dynasty reappeared and thrived.

The styles of leadership and foreign invasions were equally influenced by the rise and fall of the water levels (Collins, 2002). For example, when the water levels dropped, Pharaoh's authority "dissolved into feudal anarchy, banditry, wanton destruction, and civil war" (Collins, 2002, p.19). Invasions by Libyans and Nubians, the Greeks, and the Romans, including Alexander the Great, were occasioned by low Nile floods that had weakened political leadership. The Greek and British occupiers of Egypt are said to have romanticized the Nile through their Pharaonic leadership styles (Ludwig, 1939). The subsequent expansion of British colonial empire to the East Africa region in the 19th century, the infiltration of the Islam and subsequent defeat of Christianity in the Nubian Kingdom in the present day Sudan have also been attributed to the Nile (Karyabwite, 1999; Tvedt, 2004).

The broad fascination of the river contributed to Egypt's vulnerability to foreign invasions and colonization by far more empires than have ordinarily been witnessed in the world. The land of the Pharaohs was invaded and colonized by the Greeks, Romans, Persians, Turks, Libyans, Arab caliphs and Byzantine emperors, Nubians, French, and the British (Brander, 1966; Fagan, 2004). Interest in the Nile was also manifested through a series of expeditions in an attempt to trace its source and to control it (Baker, 1866).

Among the first to make the attempt were the Greeks. Historian Herodotus explored the Nile in 457 B.C., reaching the First Cataract at Aswan (Brander, 1966; Collins, 2002). It was through that experience that Herodotus declared Egypt as the gift of the Nile (Howell & Allan, 1994; Mohamoda, 2003). The second were the Romans. Emperor Nero sent an expedition along the river to find its source, a journey that stopped in southern Sudan (Baker, 1866; Hillel, 1994). This caused Baker (1866), a British explorer, to comment that “even Roman energy failed to break the spell that guarded these secret fountains.” In the second century A.D., Ptolemy, another Roman astronomer and geographer speculated the river’s origin (Collins, 2002) as two round lakes located in Central Africa (Hillel, 1994).

Other countries that sent explorers were Portugal (Brander, 1996), Scotland (Fagan, 2004), Denmark and France (Fagan, 2004), Belgium and Egypt (Collins, 2002), and Britain (Baker, 1866, Collins, 2002). Of particular interest were the escapades by the French military. General Napoleon Bonaparte (Fagan, 2004, p. 46-47), out of his interest in the Nile for commercial and strategic goals, sailed in 1798 “from Toulon with a fleet of 328 ships and an expeditionary force of 38,000 soldiers and 10,000 civilians to conquer Egypt and colonize the Nile Valley.” Napoleon’s servants and soldiers attempted to navigate the upper Nile but were defeated by the Mamluk rulers. After the defeat, Napoleon deserted his army and fled back to Paris. Ethiopia’s Abbay River (Blue Nile) was among those navigated by the Scottish and Portuguese (Collins, 2002; Bangs & Scaturro, 2005).

In the 19th century, interest in the Nile continued to increase. By 1882, the British succeeded in occupying Egypt and eventually it became one of Britain's valuable colonies (Collins, 1994; Tvedt, 2004). That occupation was timely for Britain because she wanted to take control of the Suez Canal, a strategic gateway to India. The control and development of the Nile was also important to the British for two other reasons: to sustain its colonies and to increase cotton production in order to resuscitate the ailing textile industry in England.

Effort to control the Nile became a strategic priority for many players. In fact, the British and the French were brought to the brink of war after the latter conducted military maneuvers in southern Sudan (Collins, 2002; Tvedt, 2004). Such attempts were, however, repulsed by the British military after claiming that such activity violated rights of Britain (Tvedt, 2004). Consequently, British control over the Nile prevailed. In part, this event symbolized what was already taking shape—an international clamor for control of the Nile and political imperialism within the basin.

The Nile Treaties

One of the first formal actions to control the Nile was a study commissioned by Lord Cromer, Governor of Egypt, in 1904. The comprehensive study, conducted by William Garstin, the then Under-Secretary for Public Works in Egypt, produced *Report on the Basin of the Upper Nile* (Okidi, 1994; Collins, 1994, 2002; Tvedt, 2004). The overarching theme of that report was how to control and utilize the waters of the Nile for the benefit of Egypt (Collins, 1994, 2002; Tvedt, 2004). Included in its specific

recommendations were regulation and control of the lakes in the Equatorial region, utilization of the Ethiopian Blue Nile for irrigation, and to ensure constant supply of water to Egypt and control the floods.

Following the recommendations, the British engaged in negotiations with Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II to secure access to the Blue Nile (tributary). Ethiopia was the only country that was not within British hegemony (Collins, 2002; Tvedt, 2004). As it later turned out, Italians under Mussolini were interested in Ethiopia and therefore its water potentials as well (Tvedt, 2004). The unfolding of these events is instructive of subsequent Nile treaties between Ethiopia and other foreign empires.

Through the Exchange of Notes, a treaty between Britain and Ethiopia was signed on May 15, 1902 (Collins, 1994, 2002; Okidi, 1994; Tvedt, 2004). The treaty was significant because it formalized Britain's claim on the Nile Basin. At the same time, it provided for Britain's strategic interest of having no dam built in Ethiopia that could affect the regular flow of Nile waters to Egypt, unless it was under the control of Britain's imperial government. Article 3 of the treaty read in part,

His Majesty the Emperor Menelik II, King of Ethiopia, engages himself towards the Government of His Britannic Majesty not to construct or allow to be constructed, any work across the Blue Nile, Lake Tsana, or the Sobat which could arrest the flow of their waters into the Nile except in agreement with his Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of Soudan.

An interesting aspect of the agreement was the monetary rewards offered to Emperor Menelik if he agreed to comply with the treaty (Tvedt, 2004). The offers were

later withdrawn after Menelik refused the terms. No agreement was thus signed. It can be construed from these efforts that despite the refusal of Menelik to comply, he was at least consulted but to the exclusion of his compatriots. The outcome of the 1902 treaty marked the beginning of a stubborn contract with Ethiopia, a country whose leaders made it near impossible to have its waters officially accessible to foreign empires. These political hurdles, imposed by Menelik and his compatriots, made Ethiopia an “impassable cataract” as other treaty efforts will also attempt to show.

In 1906, another agreement was signed; this time between Britain, France and Italy. The purpose was to legitimize their spheres of influence in Ethiopia. The agreement further provided for consultations should any project be taken that threatened the interests of Egypt and Britain. Article 4(a) of the treaty made reference to the use of the Nile waters within Ethiopia. It stipulated, that “the interest of Great Britain and Egypt in the Nile Basin, more specifically as regards the regulation of the waters of that river and its tributaries [due consideration being paid to local interests] . . .” (Okidi, 1994, p. 325). It is interesting to note that Ethiopia was neither part of the tripartite agreement nor was it a direct beneficiary.

Despite the 1906 agreement, Britain’s long-term quest for her own dam built on Lake Tana, to boost cotton production in Sudan’s Gezira region, did not come to fruition because of the unexpected political events in the region (Tvedt, 2004). The death of Menelik II in 1916 and Egyptian revolution for independence in 1919 militated against such plans. Ethiopia’s new leader, Ras Tafari, later known as Emperor Haile Selassie, refused any form of bribes, earlier extended to Menelik, to be able to sign an agreement.

The Nile drama, and in particular Ethiopia, became more interesting as Mussolini, the Italian fascist leader, entered the scene (Collins, 1994; Waterbury, 2002; Tvedt, 2004). It has been suggested that Italy's interest in Ethiopia was prompted by Britain's weakened position following Menelik's refusal to budge over the proposed dam on Lake Tana, and Egypt's subsequent political independence in 1922 (Tvedt, 2004). In fact, Haile Selassie opted to build the dam as a national initiative through an American engineering firm. Although this pitted the British against the Americans, the Tana project was later abandoned. Instead, British interests turned to the development of the White Nile in the upstream where its colonial power was still dominant (Collins, 2002). Combined with the need to expand cotton production in the Sudan and to appease Egypt, Britain engaged in further negotiations that led to the 1929 Nile Water Agreement.

The 1929 Nile Waters Agreement was a product of study recommendations by the 1920 Nile Projects Commission and the 1925 Nile Water Commission set up by Egypt to examine how the waters could best serve its interests. Through *Exchange of Notes* in May 1929, the agreement was signed between the Egyptian government and the British High Commissioner in Egypt, the latter acting on behalf of Sudan and other East African colonies (Okidi, 1994; Klare, 2001; Collins, 2002; Tvedt, 2004). Based on the mean annual discharge of 84 billion cubic meters, Egypt and Sudan were allocated 48 and 4 billion cubic meters respectively, with the rest lost to evaporation (Table 1) (Hillel, 1994; Klot 1994; Okidi, 1994; Soffer, 1999; Swain, 2004).

Table 1*The 1929 Agreement (Billion Cubic Meters/BCM)*

Country	BCM/Year 1929
Egypt	48.0
Sudan	4.0
Evaporation and seepage	32.0
Total average flow	84.0

Source: Hillel (1994); Kliot (1994); Okidi (1994); Soffer (1999); Swain (2004).

A major clause to the agreement read in part,

Save with the previous agreement of the Egyptian Government, no irrigation or power works are to be constructed or taken on the River Nile or its branches, or on the lakes from which it flows so far as these are in the Sudan or in countries under British administration, which would, in such a manner as to entail any prejudice to the interests of Egypt, either reduce the quantity of water arriving in Egypt, or modify the date of its arrival, or lower its level (Howell & Allan, 1994, p. 84).

In essence, the agreement prohibited upstream countries from undertaking major water works involving the Nile, its tributaries and lakes without consultations of Egypt

and Sudan (Swain, 2004). Kliot (1994) has argued that the application of absolute territorial integrity doctrine in favor of Egypt relied on its historic and ancient rights. In addition to being inequitable, the agreement was challenged by upstream states (Hillel, 1994; Hefney & Amer, 2005) for failing to specify expiration time line (Okidi, 1994; Swain, 2004).

Although the agreement was signed by two parties, the rationale and expectations were diametrically opposed to each other. For one thing, the British used it as an olive branch to entice Egypt to accept the colonial status in the Sudan (Tvedt, 2004). The agreement also had the potential for improving relations with Egypt and a possible Anglo-Egyptian treaty. In addition, Britain wanted to use the agreement to convince Egypt about the need to develop the upper Nile. For Egypt, the agreement was a framework that potentially could ensure the free flow of Nile waters to its territory.

Egyptians were also opposed to any provision in the treaty that emphasized the construction of water storage and other development works upstream. Egyptian nationalist leader, Abdel Nasser, was opposed to the idea of a storage because such a venture would put Egypt hostage to upstream states should those countries become negative towards its interests upon attaining political independence (Collins, 2002; Waterbury, 2002). Instead, Nasser pushed for the construction of Aswan High Dam, a project known to have brought diplomatic conflicts between the west and communist Russia during the cold war era over its financing (Collins, 1994; Waterbury, 2002; Tvedt, 2004).

Whereas the agreement is credited for having provided a framework for Nile water allocation, it had several flaws. First, by allocating the bulk of water to Egypt (48 billion cubic meters) and less to the Sudan (4 billion cubic meters), the agreement had failed the test of equity. Through the principle of *property rule* (Calabresi & Melamed, 1972), the agreement essentially conferred on Egypt monopoly over access to the Nile waters. At the same time, upstream states were left out of the negotiation process.

Ethiopia, which contributes 86 percent to the Nile annual water flow (Hillel, 1994; Kliot, 1994; Mohamoda, 2003), objected to the treaty's provisions, including earlier compacts made on its behalf by Italy (Klare, 2001). As if to fulfill Nasser's fears, countries such as the Sudan, Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda objected to the treaty provisions subsequent to their attainment of political independence (Hillel, 1994; Hefny & Amer, 2005). They renounced the application of *property rule* because their situation had changed and they were not obligated by any arrangement they were not party to (Okidi, 1994; Tvedt, 2004). Thus, the exclusion of other principal actors in the agreement meant that the paradigm of pluralism was not considered.

Although Howell and Allan (1994) and Okidi (1994) have suggested that water allocation was based on the mean discharge of 84 billion cubic meters (BCM), others (Tvedt, 2004) contend that the allocation criteria and how water rights were defined in quantitative terms were not clear. Despite these anomalies, the reality for an integrated development became bleak after World War II because many of the British colonial territories attained their political independence (Klare, 2001). The uncertainty created by

these changes gave Egypt the impetus to push for another agreement that would make Sudan, now politically independent, a strong partner.

In 1959, the Agreement for the Full Utilization of the Nile Waters was signed between Egypt and Sudan (Klare, 2001; Collins, 2002; Waterbury, 2002). The signing of the treaty came at a time when Egypt was planning to build the Aswan High Dam to store water and to control the Nile floods. Although Sudan was initially opposed to the implications of the project to her own interests, the new agreement provided for a compromise over contending issues. Consequently, Egypt increased its water allocation to 55.5 billion cubic meters and Sudan's to 18.5 billion cubic meters (Table 2) (Collins, 2002). With the compromise, Egypt was to go ahead with the Aswan dam construction, while Sudan had the green light to build the Roseires Reservoir on the Blue Nile and continue with other irrigation projects.

The problems with the agreement were threefold. First, it did not involve all the riparian countries. Therefore, it failed to recognize the desirability of pluralism as a model for bringing stakeholders to the negotiating table. Second, the interests of other countries were not heeded as no water allocation was extended to any of them (Dinar & Alemu, 1998; Klare, 2001; Tvedt, 2004). Moreover, no country was allowed to use Nile headwaters for any project unless approved by Egypt and Sudan. As Okidi (1994) has argued, the concept of "full utilization" of the Nile waters, in the absence of other riparians, could not be rationalized in the context of a comprehensive plan for the Nile.

Table 2***The 1959 Agreement (Billion Cubic Meters/BCM)***

Country	BCM/Year 1959
Egypt	55.5
Sudan	18.5
Evaporation and seepage	10.0
Total average flow	84.0

Source: Allan (1999); Hillel (1994); Kliot (1994);
Okidi (1994); Soffer (1999); El Fadel et al. (2003); Swain (2004).

If any thing, Egypt and Sudan were merely recipients while upstream states were the major contributors. Third, the process of exclusion further heightened the already existing mistrust between Egypt and other riparian countries (Erlich, 2002). At the same time, hostility between Ethiopia and Egypt became more fragile due to their relative high stakes in the river (Godana, 1985).

Whereas the 1959 agreement can be viewed as a major step toward allocation of the Nile waters, the process and its outcome only worked to invoke anxiety and mistrust within the basin as political and economic dynamics began to change. How the treaties translated into reality for Ethiopia are instructive of water politics and cooperative arrangements that took shape towards the end of the 20th century.

Since most transboundary water frameworks, such as that of the NBI, are steered by international water laws and guidelines, this study briefly examines whether or not these guidelines were applied to the Nile treaties. If not, what power structures do the international water conventions or treaties espouse for transboundary water institutions?

Relevance of International Treaties

Major international laws guiding water allocation and use are fairly recent (Hundley, 1975; Giordano & Wolf, 2003). Perhaps one of the first known treaties regarding the use of transboundary waters was signed in 2500 BC over the Tigris River between Mesopotamian city-states of Lagash and Umma (Giordano & Wolf, 2003). That treaty was instrumental in ending the only known war to have been declared over water. Otherwise, it was not until the 20th century that international efforts to regulate the sharing of transboundary waters became more evident.

The processes by which international water laws are negotiated and formed are guided by both formal and informal rules (Dinar & Alemu, 1998). The formal rules are those provided by international law while informal rules rely on past experiences and existing domestic politics. Dinar and Alemu argue that there is a tendency for co-riparians to focus on how such treaties guide water allocation outcomes and the regulation of resources in question. However, a serious gap exists about the process leading to those outcomes, especially how they are expected to operate in pluralist, democratic societies. Three treaties are briefly examined in light of the process.

In 1911, the *International Regulation on the Use of International Water Systems* was published through the 'Madrid Declaration' (Giordano & Wolf, 2003). The key rules of the declaration were twofold: establishment of joint commissions to implement the laws, and imposition of 'no harm' to co-riparians by any unilateral modification of a particular basin. That declaration did not mention the importance of participation by riparian stakeholders in policy decisions made by the joint commission. Neither did the declaration suggest the incorporation of pluralist structures to ensure involvement, at least at the national levels.

The Madrid Declaration set precedence to the International Law Commission (ILC). The ILC was established in 1948 by a United Nations Charter to gradually develop and codify international laws (International Law Commission, 2008). Such codification was meant to remove uncertainties to ambiguous international principles upon which practical applications remain contentious.

In 1966, the Madrid Declaration developed the *Helsinki Rules of the Uses of the Waters of International Rivers* under the tutelage of the United Nations (Giordano & Wolf, 2003; Mohamoda, 2003). The purpose of that convention was to codify laws that would provide guidance on international water allocation and use. The rules were broad and required co-riparians to consider the following criteria for shared water allocation: existing and potential uses, effects of the use by one state on the other, population dependent on the watercourse, the social and economic needs of riparian states, and geographic/climatic factors. Despite taking this important step, the rules of the

convention were not adopted because a few member countries did not approve of them. However, shortly after the convention another one was introduced.

On May 21, 1997, the United Nations approved *The Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses* in an effort to find a universally acceptable protocol (U.N. General Assembly, 1997). The convention stressed two doctrines: the 'Equitable and Reasonable Utilization' by member countries sharing international water systems and 'No Significant Harm.' It therefore mandated co-riparian nations to impose no significant harm on watercourses shared by other nations. The convention, however, did not reach ratification stage due to lack of adequate support (McCaffrey, 2001). Of particular interest is the way the Nile Basin countries voted on the convention at the U.N. General Assembly. Kenya and the Sudan voted in favor; Burundi voted against; Egypt, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Tanzania abstained; while absentees were Uganda, Eritrea, and Democratic Republic of Congo (U.N. General Assembly, 1997).

Analyses of the Treaties

Whereas the 1997 convention established the protocol for determining rights and responsibilities of each riparian nation, the inability to enforce these guidelines inhibited any progress towards cooperation in the basin (Mohamoda, 2003). Nonetheless, others (Bruneel & Toope, 2002) have suggested that the convention has been helpful in defining the rules for sharing water rights, thereby shaping the attitude of countries involved in water disputes towards cooperation.

In addition to omitting any mention of public involvement, the rules that guide sharing of international watercourses seem paradoxical. On the one hand, they emphasize the “no-harm” principle and the rights of downstream states, while on the other hand they espouse the Harmon doctrine (Hundley, 1975), which gives the upstream states the rights to use waters within their territory as they so wish. This undermines the effectiveness of these conventions (Kameri-Mbote, 2005). Egypt, for example, used this contradiction as a justification for the validity of the 1959 agreement under the no-harm principle (Ahmed, 1990). On the contrary, Ethiopia, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya have relied on the Harmon doctrine to justify their assertion for water rights within their territories (Makonenn, 1997). Articles 5 and 6 of the ‘Draft Agreement on the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework’ that is yet to be approved by heads of states illustrates this point (Draft Agreement on the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework, 2001). Article 5 (1) states that the “the Nile Basin States shall, in utilizing the Nile River Basin water resources in their territories, take all appropriate measures to prevent the causing of significant harm to other Basin States” (p. 19). Because of the ambiguity and contentious nature of the language used in this part of the article, Egyptian negotiators have insisted that the words “take all appropriate measures to prevent” be replaced with “refrain from and prevent.” Part 2 of the articles goes on to state that,

Where significant harm nevertheless is caused to another Nile Basin State, the States who causes such harm shall, in the absence of agreement to such use, take all appropriate measures, having due regard...in consultation with the

affected State, to eliminate or mitigate such harm and, where appropriate, to discuss the question of compensation (p. 19).

Similarly the Ethiopians have asserted that the phrase “having due regard...” be replaced with “take all appropriate measures, in consultation with the affected state” (p. 19).

A similar contradiction of the rules for international shared water use relates to the principle of ‘equitable and reasonable utilization.’ For example, Article 4 (1) of the Nile draft framework states that “Nile Basin States shall in their respective territories utilize the water resources of...in an equitable and reasonable manner...” (p. 18). The problem with this provision is that it does not define what is meant by “equitable” or “reasonable”. These two terms are relative, ambiguous in their intentions, and contentious as to how precisely they are interpreted by each riparian country.

Another argument against international water institutions is that their operational frameworks have not adequately adopted effective means for stakeholder involvement. As Milich and Varady (1999) argue, conceptual models used by the transboundary river basin compacts “mostly ignore local needs and public inputs and sometimes fail in their specific objectives” (p. 258). At the same time, the structures put in place to address the goals and objectives of those institutions are “newer and weaker” (Milich & Varady, 1999, p. 261). This assertion is supported by Giordano and Wolf (2003) in their study of water sharing in light of the post-Rio convention. The authors similarly note that the international basins are still devoid of appropriate management structures. The problem with the international water institutions is that they tend to neglect “the grievances of political units or ethnic groups [within] nations over domestic management of

international waterways . . .” (Giordano & Wolf, 2003, p. 168). This lack of attention to organized groups limits their ability to exert influence on the international agreements (Milich and Varady, 1998). The only few recent exceptions are the Rio Declaration and the United-States based Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC).

Principle 10 of the Rio Convention’s Agenda 21 specifically mentioned, among other directives, involvement of stakeholders in decisions affecting shared water resources (Giordano & Wolf, 2003). The BECC, a product of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), has institutionalized effective mechanisms for NGO input into policy decisions.

While the process of international treaties may not reflect effective NGO input as that of the BECC (Milich & Varady, 1999), the inadequacy of institutional structures for basin management has been suggested in the literature. Giordano and Wolf (2003), for example, decry the lack of management structures that “incorporate a certain level of flexibility, allowing for public input, changing basin priorities, and new information and monitoring technologies” (p. 170). Such institutions should have the criteria that are adaptable for allocating water resources, equitable distribution of benefits, mechanism to ensure treaty provisions are implemented, and procedures for conflict resolution.

With the exceptions of few international agreements and water management mandates, most of the formulated policies relative to transboundary water sharing tend to be redistributive in nature. As Lowi (Lineberry & Sharkansky, 1971) has fittingly argued, redistributive policies tend to generate conflicts because they create clear winners

and losers. The problem is worsened when the institutions mandated to regulate and ensure compliance with such policies do not have the tools with which to do so.

Given this brief analysis of international guidelines vis-à-vis the process, it can be stated that the 1902, 1906, 1929, and 1959 Nile agreements (Table 3) were deficient because they were not guided by any universally applicable laws. Moreover, the conceptual framework that traditionally guided the process of negotiating such international agreements was “restricted to high-level [political leaders and] professional diplomats” (Milich & Varady, 1999, p. 274). Thus they were closed rather than open.

Similarly, international laws tend to be given priority over local/national ones. As a result, international agreements will be inclined to reflect the views of policy minorities rather than of organized groups. Such top-down decision situations work to marginalize the views of nongovernmental stakeholders and informal arrangements at the local level.

According to Hisschemoller and Gupta (1999), the effectiveness of environmental treaties is based on the international relations principle that such legal arrangement should enhance cooperation on problems that transcend national boundaries. In this respect, the Nile water allocation problem was compartmentalized within Egyptian and Sudanese territories and did not extend to others nations. The authors further suggest that effective international environmental regimes are influenced by appropriate institutional and organizational forums, institutional capacity, development of transnational coalitions, and structural changes in power relations. While the first two factors may not have been relevant to the 1959 Nile treaty, the last two are pertinent to

Table 3*Summary - Ethiopia, Nile Agreements and Treaties*

Date	Treaty Basin	Signatories	Treaty Name
February, 1999	Nile	Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo; Eritrea-observer	Nile Basin Initiative, a temporary framework, to foster peace and promote sustainable development within the Basin. Provides for multi-country projects under Shared Vision Program
July 1, 1993	Nile	Egypt, Arab Republic of; and Ethiopia	Framework for general cooperation between the Arab Republic of Egypt and Ethiopia
November 8, 1959	Nile	Egypt Sudan	Agreement for the Full Utilization of the Nile Waters
May 7, 1929	Nile	Great Britain Egypt	Exchange of Notes between United Kingdom and Egyptian Government
May 15, 1902	Nile	Ethiopia; Great Britain	Treaties between Great Britain and Ethiopia, relative to the frontiers between Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Ethiopia, and Erythroea (railway to connect Sudan with Uganda)
March 18, 1902	Nile	Ethiopia; Great Britain	Exchange of notes between Great Britain and Ethiopia

Source: Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database, Oregon State University (2007)

the assessment of the initial goals of the treaties and their operations. In this regard, the Nile treaty failed to measure up to these conditions. Instead, some form of compliance to the conditions became only apparent with the launching of the Nile Basin Initiative in 1999.

The Nile Basin Initiative: An Overview

Impetus:

Given the past competition over the control and use of the Nile, and recognizing that the 1959 agreement remained in force, the Nile basin countries negotiated a temporary agreement that led to the formation of the Nile Basin Initiative in 1999. While the international laws and experiences of other international basins provided the needed impetus, local realities were equally instrumental.

The changing socioeconomic factors within the basin were significant in the paradigm shift from competition for control to one of cooperation (Brunnee & Toope, 2002). First, in light of the burgeoning population and irrigation needs, the basin countries recognized that the water resources would no longer be sustainable. Therefore, it was not rational to maintain the status quo. Second, the traditional users—Egypt and Sudan—as well as upstream states of Ethiopia and Uganda, acknowledged the importance of having a framework through which the Nile use could be regulated.

Third, the potential for a win-win solution had dawned on the riparians. Each country stood to benefit from shared programs such as hydroelectric power generation and improved water quality. Swain (2002) has suggested that the pressure by the

international community, particularly by the World Bank, contributed to the softening of Egypt's policy towards Nile control and subsequent desire for cooperation. Others have suggested that the end of the Cold War may have been an awakening call for Egypt's need to accept the reality about cooperation with other riparian countries (Allen, 1977). Perhaps more significant was the persistent negotiations among the basin countries themselves (Mohamoda, 2003).

Formation Process:

The Nile basin countries went through a series of formal processes in order to chart out a long-term solution to the water allocation problem. The first such process was the launching of the Hydromet regional project in 1967 through the assistance of the United Nations Development Program (Hefney & Amer, 2005). Egypt and Sudan proposed the formation of the Hydromet project to conduct hydrometereological studies, create databases, launch studies about the river control, oversee the construction and operation of dams, and devise means for hydrological measurements. In their view, the project provided an avenue for establishing the Nile Basin Commission from which they would both benefit (Waterbury, 1990). In 1981, the two countries continued with another project in which they proposed a joint planning and implementation of projects to ensure economic development in the basin. The latter initiative did not achieve much (Waterbury, 1990).

In 1992, the Hyrdomet project resulted in a joint meeting of water affairs ministers from six Nile basin countries, namely the Democratic Republic of Congo,

Egypt, Rwanda, the Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Four countries—Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Kenya—were observers (Mohamoda, 2003). The meeting established the Technical Cooperation Committee for the Promotion of the Development and Environmental Protection of the Nile Basin (TECCONILE) in Kampala, Uganda (Dinar & Alemu, 1998; Mohamoda, 2003; Swain, 2004; Hefney & Amer, 2005). The mission of TECCONILE was to coordinate activities related to the basin; its secretariat was set up in Entebbe, Uganda.

In 1993, a follow-up series of conferences were launched in Aswan, Egypt, and continued each successive year until the end of 2002. In 1998, a major meeting was held in Arusha, Tanzania, in which the Council of Ministers drafted the Nile River Basin Action Plan that proposed a series of projects that would benefit each country in the basin. The Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework was chosen and approved by member countries (Mohamoda, 2003).

In February 1999, the foregoing events led to the creation of the NBI and subsequent formalization of the Initiative's Act in 2002 (Mohamoda, 2003). The formalization of the NBI accord, together with previous treaties, is indicative of the iterative process undertaken to regulate the use of the Nile.

The World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency, the United Nations Development Program, the European Union, the African Development Bank, and the Food and Agriculture Organization have all provided financial support for the NBI's operations (Mohamoda, 2003; Hefney & Amer, 2005). Other forms of support have

come from government partners such as the United States, Canada, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, Finland, Italy, France, and Germany. Recognizing the complexity of coordination, the Nile Basin Council of Ministers asked the World Bank to take charge of that role; a task the bank continues to perform (Mohamoda, 2003). The involvement of third parties, such as the World Bank, in multi-country international water management has been recognized in the literature as an effective means to achieving collaboration among riparian nations (Waterbury, 2002).

Next is an overview of the goals and program activities of the NBI.

NBI Goals and Shared Vision Programs:

The overall mission of the NBI (Nile Basin Initiative-Shared Vision Program [SVP], 2001, p. v) is “to achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin Water resources.” The NBI goals include the promotion of economic development, fostering peace, and building a solid foundation of trust and confidence among the riparians (World Bank, 2004; Hefney & Amer, 2005).

To achieve the stated goals, the NBI set the following objectives: (a) to develop water resources of the basin in a sustainable and equitable way to ensure prosperity, security, and peace for all its peoples; (b) to ensure efficient water management and the optimal use of the resources; (c) to guarantee cooperation and joint action among the riparian countries and seek win-win solutions; (d) to eradicate poverty and promote economic integration, and (e) to ensure that the program moves from planning to action

(Hefney and Amer, 2005). These objectives are to be achieved through the Strategic Action Program that has two components: A basin-wide Shared Vision Program (SVP) and the Subsidiary Action Program (SAP) (Mohamoda, 2003).

The Shared Vision Program is a multicountry and multisectoral program that involves an exchange of experience, capacity building, and sustainable development. The SVP consists of eight projects listed below (Nile Council of Ministers, 2001):

1. *Applied Training Project*: This project aims at building the skills needed in each NBI country relative to integrated management of the Nile resources. The regional project management unit is located in Cairo, Egypt.

2. *The Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project*: The purpose is to promote cooperation among the Nile basin countries so that the river ecosystem and the environment can be managed and protected. The management unit is located in Khartoum, Sudan.

3. *The Nile Basin Regional Power Trade*: The role of this project is to establish the institutional means for coordinating the development of regional power markets among the Nile basin countries. The coordinating office is in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

4. *The Efficient Water Use for Agricultural Production Project*: The goal of this project is to provide a sound conceptual and practical basis to increase the availability and efficient use of water for agricultural production. The regional unit is located in Nairobi, Kenya.

5. *The Confidence-Building and Stakeholder Involvement Project*: With its activities managed through the NBI Secretariat in Entebbe, Uganda, this project aims to increase involvement of a broad range of stakeholders in the NBI programs and future investments.

The Confidence Building and Stakeholder Involvement project was set up specifically to: (a) increase awareness and stakeholder involvement in the basin, (b) expand understanding and confidence, (c) foster basin-wide ownership of the NBI and its programs, (d) increase basin-wide trust and confidence in regional cooperation, and (e) enhance the positive impact of the Shared Vision Program as well as the Subsidiary Action Program. These goals were to be achieved through the initiation of public information, stakeholder involvement, and confidence building projects across all member states (World Bank, 2003).

6. *Socioeconomic Development and Benefit Sharing Project*: The objective of this project is to reduce poverty in the Nile basin countries through increased integration and cooperation. The management unit is also located in Entebbe, Uganda.

7. *Water Resources Planning and Management Project (WRPMP)*: This project was designed to build the skills in each country and to enhance their ability to analyze the hydrology, characteristics and behavior of the Nile basin river system. It was also meant to ensure that water resources are developed and managed in an equitable way and to optimize mutual benefits. The project encourages joint project identification and implementation of multi-country water resource activities. The regional office is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. As will be detailed at the end of this section, the WRPMP is the focus of this present dissertation.

8. *The Shared Vision Program Coordination Project*: The aim of this project is to strengthen the capacity of NBI institutions so that basin-wide programs can be implemented and coordinated effectively. The Shared Vision Program Coordination Project is also responsible for developing procedures for quality control, monitoring and evaluation, and facilitation of information sharing within the basin.

NBI Structure:

The NBI structure, as the Figure 2 illustrates, can be conceived in terms of hierarchical model that has the characteristics of a typical bureau espoused by Max Weber, albeit flatter (Downs, 1967). At the highest level is the Council of Ministers of water affairs (Nile-COM) who represent ten member countries. The Council is the highest decision-making body that sets the agenda, and also provides policy guidance (Nile Council of Ministers, 2001). The position of the chair is rotated annually.

Directly below the Nile-COM is the Technical Advisory Committee (Nile-TAC) whose responsibility is to advise and assist the Nile-COM on technical matters. They also have policy decision roles. The membership consists of one representative from each member country, while external partners may attend the Nile-TAC meetings as observers. The position of the TAC chair is also rotated among member countries

The NBI Secretariat (Nile-SEC) is below the Nile-TAC. The Nile-SEC executes policy decisions passed by the Nile-COM. Specific functions include supporting

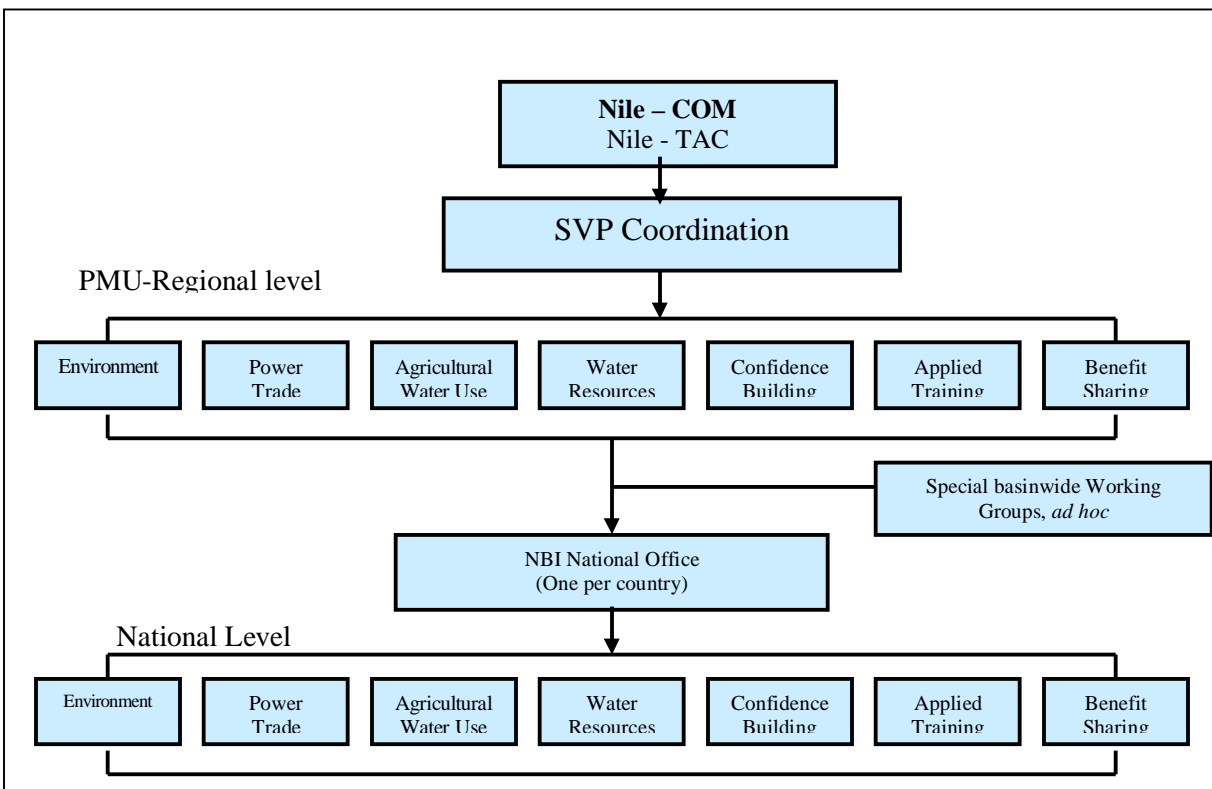


Figure 2: The NBI Organization Structure

Source: Nile Basin Initiative. (2001, March). Nile Basin Initiative Shared Vision Program: Water Resource Planning and Management Project Document (p. 8). Council of Ministers of Water Affairs of the Nile Basin States

activities of the Nile-COM and Nile-TAC, ensuring an efficient and effective administration and financial management, coordinating, and monitoring activities of the Shared Vision and Subsidiary Action Programs. Nile-SEC also provides necessary support for regional activities, while Nile-TAC members facilitate activities at the national levels.

The ideal-type bureaucracy, as conceived by Max Weber (Hummel, 1994), is illustrated by the NBI's institutional structure. As Figure 2 illustrates, the NBI power structure is elitist in nature, providing the Nile-COM at the top with the powers to make decisions implementation of which are coordinated by the Nile-SEC. Based on the elitist model, the NBI's top-down structure potentially functions to limit involvement by those at the bottom or outside the epicenter of decision-making (Gupta, 2001).

Even though the organizational structure illustrates the decision-making process and who has the power in that process, how well such a structure enables stakeholders to get involved in decision-making can be subject to several challenges.

The Current Problems, Research Gaps, Challenges and Successes

Current Problems:

Despite the above institutional structure, programs, and functions, the sustainability of the NBI is threatened by failure to engage nongovernmental stakeholders (Kameri-Mbote, 2007). Generally, NGOs provide important link between citizens and policy makers (Lane, 2003). In particular, they play the role of advocates; promote social accountability and check on government power and; provide policy feedback to their members; facilitate joint action and public involvement where it is needed; and, provides additional skills and grassroots experience crucial to decision-making affecting communities (Salamon, 1999; Lane, 2003; World Bank, 2005).

Common problems endemic to institutions set up to manage shared water systems include inadequate enforcement mechanisms, lack of public participation, capacity

building, and the absence of cooperative management frameworks (Giordano & Wolf, 2003). Consequently, there is a need to assist international water basin institutions to have in place adaptable management structures that allow public inputs and flexible enough to adjust to changing basin priorities. At the same time, such institutions should adopt flexible criteria for water allocations, equitable distribution of benefits, concrete mechanisms to implement treaty provisions, and conflict resolution strategies.

The foregoing principles provide a backdrop against which the NBI was formed in 1999 by ten riparian countries. Involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process was part of the broad goals built into various projects to create awareness, share information, and build trust and confidence in the regional cooperation.

As Knoke (1990) has reported, the ideal condition for democratic governance of an organization is to have a structured system for stakeholder involvement in decision-making, and one in which well-informed members will not defer to the leaders' discretion. It is on this basis that the Confidence Building and Stakeholder Involvement (CBSI) project and the Nile Basin Discourse (NBD) forums were launched (World Bank, 2003; Mumbo, 2005). The NBD, for example, was initiated to increase involvement of civic organizations and to create strategic long-term inputs into the NBI policies and programs (Inter-Africa Group/Nelsap, 2005; Nile Basin Discourse [NBD], 2008). Unfortunately, involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders has been limited, particularly in Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan, and Rwanda (J. B. Collier, personal communication, November 12, 2007).

According to the World Bank (2003), institutional limitations have been part of the problem. The officials point out that the involvement by stakeholders, especially by civil society, has been impeded by the lack of effective mechanisms, narrow focus on public information, lack of trust among the actors, and the credibility of an institution that has no permanent mandate. It is on the same grounds that Gleick (1998) and Bruch et al. (2005) bemoan the lack of involvement in the management of water resources. The situation is that governance of water institutions tends to be hierarchically based and politically influenced, thus denying those at the bottom the opportunity to participate effectively. As Milich and Varady (1999) state, “the world’s transboundary environmental institutions are driven from the top, function behind closed doors, disregard sustainability, and rely on technical fixes or regulatory mechanisms” (p. 258).

Interest group research supports the presence of an “iron law of oligarchy” in large organizations where a small group of selected elites tend to dominate decision-making functions (Michels, 1958). Within the NBI and NGO community, the perception is that the decision-making role has been exclusively in the hands of selected government representatives, the World Bank (NBI, 2001; Kameri-Mbote, 2005) and other influential interest groups (Kameri-Mbote, 2005). This perception is supported by a project report prepared by the Council of Ministers of Water Affairs of the Nile Basin States (Nile Basin Initiative Shared Vision Program [SVP], 2001) in which it is stated that a team of national experts were to be selected from each country to be able to chart direction for regional and national programs. The document further admits that “the main participants to date have been officials from the ministries responsible for water in each country.

Civil society, particularly women's organizations and others who are likely to be most affected by NBI development initiatives, have had little involvement" (NBI-SVP, 2001, p. 6)

Similarly, the agency lacks effective means for identifying and involving nongovernmental stakeholders (NBI, 2001). The report by the Council of Ministers (2001) agreed to the notion that a lack of involvement by organized groups "even at the preliminary planning stages of development—could derail regional cooperation in the future" (p. 6). There is also a high level of mistrust among the institutions, the governments and civic society. A combination of these factors can weaken the ability of the NBI to champion regional cooperation and to realize its shared vision of a win-win solution for all (Foulds, 2002).

The policy environment has not been supportive either, particularly in Ethiopia — the setting of this study. For many years the imperial and Marxist governments discouraged the formation of NGOs and their participation in public issues (Berhanu, 2002; Rahmato, 2002; Zewde, 2002). Despite the opening of the system by the current political regime, NGOs have not yet expanded their activities into as many areas as their counterparts in the basin. At the regional level, political instability, conflicts, different political ideologies and national agendas, lack of political will and poverty have the potential to slow the institutionalization of stakeholder involvement (Berger-Bartlett & Craig, 2002; Bell & Jansky, 2005; Chomchai, 2005; Kameri-Mbote, 2005; Kidd & Quinn, 2005; Newton, 2006).

Similarly, the integration among several states for the purpose of achieving a joint policy goal can cause “the centers of decision-making to become more remote [and] open mostly to political elites” (Warren, 2002, p. 684). Warren further observes that the differentiation that enhances opportunities for collective actions can also contribute to more complexity and result in unintended effects.

Another strand of argument that illuminates the problem faced by the NBI comes from the work of Theodore Lowi (Linerberry & Charkansky, 1971). In his typology of policy characteristics, Lowi suggests that when a policy is redistributive, it tends to lead to conflicts because such a framework is based on clear winners and losers. The NBI was formed as a transnational agency to redistribute water resource benefits to previously non-beneficiary states. Although armed with regulatory powers, one of Lowi’s forms of classification, the NBI lacks the ultimate legal powers of enforcement and compliance. However, a policy that is distributive will tend to benefit all claimants and reduces potential conflicts. In essence, the initial treaty arrangements should have adopted an inclusive, distributive policy approach.

Research Gaps:

As a result of these problems, two research gaps have been identified (NBI-SVP, 2001). The first one is the need to examine the reasons why organized environmental groups have not been brought into the decision-making process. Second, the desire for further research to “determine the current state of knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and

practices and to establish baseline information to aid in measuring the performance” of the CBSI project (NBI-SVP, 2001, p. 6). This study attempts to address the first gap.

Challenges and Successes:

Some of the challenges faced by the NBI since its inception include conflicts of interest between upstream and downstream states, unilateral decisions to implement new development projects, armed conflicts and regional instability, consequences of climate change, and the absence of a legal and permanent framework (Mohamoda, 2003).

Unilateral decisions taken by member states either to expand irrigation projects or build dams will weaken the possibility of long-term cooperation (Erlich, 2002; Swain, 2002; Waterbury, 2002). The Egyptian government, for example, has recently embarked on the New Valley project that is intended to bring 200,000 hectares (1 ha = 2.5 acres) under irrigation and settle millions of people. It has been argued that Egypt will likely use that project as a “bargaining chip” for the overall water reallocation and cooperation in the basin (Waterbury & Whittington, 1998, p. 165). Ethiopia, for example, has the intention of constructing micro-dams on the Blue Nile; projects that will further reduce the amount of water reaching Sudan and Egypt (Erlich, 2002). Other countries that have declared plans for the use of the water are Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda (Dinar and Alemu, 2000).

Other than the projected consequences of climate change that will likely affect the variability of rainfall in the basin (Gleick, 1991; Klare, 2001), wars and civil strife also present challenge to cooperation in the basin. Countries such as the Sudan, Ethiopia,

Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and neighboring Somalia have witnessed flares of civil strife that have potential effects on governance and regional cooperation. Another challenge is the absence of a comprehensive agreement regarding the equitable utilization of the Nile waters even if a legal framework is put in place (Collins, 2002). As Collins has remarked, to "...define and agree on what constitutes equitable utilization . . . will be a perilous passage down a long river . . ." (p. 233).

The World Bank Project Appraisal Report (2003) identifies four other constraints at the project level. These include:

[a] too narrow a focus on public information; [b] slow integration of effective participatory approaches due to low trust; [c] credibility necessary for success will be difficult to achieve if civil society 'influences' on programs is not apparent; [d] confidence building will not have desired impact if its program impacts are short-term" (World Bank, 2003, p. 24-25).

Despite these stated challenges, the NBI has recorded a few successes as noted in the World Bank Appraisal Report (World Bank, 2003). At the country level, the NBI has been able to establish project management units to coordinate stakeholder participation. At the regional level, it has supported the creation and widespread formation of the Nile Basin Discourse forums in order to attract stakeholder involvement in the NBI activities.

Project of Focus— Water Resources Planning and Management Project

The Water Resources Planning and Management Project (WRPMP), is among the eight SVP projects being implemented in each of the basin-countries although its regional office is headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The project and its components are coordinated by the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO). The ENTRO is also mandated by the NBI's Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program to coordinate the preparation of investment projects and to implement specific national and tri-lateral project activities that include Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan (World Bank, 2008).

WRPMP Goals and Objectives:

The main goal of the WRPMP is to ensure that water resources of the Nile Basin are “developed and managed in an equitable, optimal, integrated, and sustainable manner to support socioeconomic development in the region” (Water Resource Planning & Management, 2008, p. 1). The project also aims at creating competent, technical and analytical capabilities for integrated resource planning and management. Thus, the capacities of the project are to enhance processes for creating effective national water policies and their implementation strategies, project planning and management skills, and improve communication skills.

The WRPMP outcomes include the following: “1) National water policies and strategies are initiated or improved based on sound integrated water resources management (IWRM) and good practice guidelines in the Nile Basin countries; 2) Nile riparians prepare and implement multicountry projects based on good practice in project

planning and management; 3) The Nile Basin Decision Support System (DSS) is operational and used by riparians to exchange information, support riparian dialogue, and identify cooperative investment projects” (<http://wrpmp.nilebasin.org>)

Project Components:

The WRPMP has three main component projects, plus a secondary one for the coordination at the regional level. The duration of each of the projects is 6 years. Funding for the three components, estimated at a cost of \$US 32.8 million, are provided by the World Bank, the Nile Basin Trust Fund (NBTF), and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) (<http://wrpmp.nilebasin.org>). Following is a brief description of each of these components:

1. ***Water policies Good Practice Guides and Support:*** The main goal of this component is to enable the Nile Basin countries reach a common understanding about the development of sound water policies at the national levels. Thus, one of the primary outputs is an enhanced capacity in policy formulation and implementation. Another is the establishment of a support system that provides advisory services aimed at improving capacity in each of the member countries. Since the effectiveness of a policy can be assessed by the process of its formulation and implementation, the involvement of stakeholders is critical to success. To achieve these goals, the water policy prepares documents, conducts training and workshops, and engages in monitoring and evaluation.

2. ***Project Planning and Management Good Practice Guides and Support:*** The primary purpose of this component is to ensure that each of the members countries have the capacity to prepare and implement multi-country projects using appropriate practices in project planning and management. Such activities include conducting needs assessment and capacity building. Although this component targets only the technical staff, it is also open to NGOs involved in project preparation and implementation. This project component was due to expire by December 31, 2008. (<http://wrpmp.nilebasin.org>).
3. ***Nile Basin Decision Support System (DSS):*** The goal is to enhance analytical capacity in order to support the development, management and protection of the Nile water resources by providing computer-based communication platform for information sharing. The other is to enhance ownership by stakeholders. Hence involvement in the development of the entire process including needs assessment, design, and technical development is a desired objective. Such involvement is expected through a steering committee, working groups, DSS development teams, and task forces.
4. ***Regional Coordination and facilitation:*** This component is meant for coordination and facilitation at the regional level (Eastern Nile Subsidiary

Action Program [ENSAP], 2008; World Bank 2008; Nile Basin Initiative-SVP, 2001). It is excluded from this study because it is not specific to Ethiopia.

The WRPM and Expectations for NGO Involvement

Based on the WRPMP guidelines, NGOs were expected to be involved in all the project components: the Water Policy and Good Practice Guides, Project Planning and Management Good Practice Guides and Support, and Development of a Decision Support System (DSS) for the Nile Basin.

The expected outcome for Water Policy component is the support for water policy development and implementation provided and national capacity strengthened.

Attainment of this outcome could only be possible through the enhancement of NGO skills in project planning and management through trainings. For the Project Planning and Management Good Practice Guides and Support, the expected outcome is enhanced capacity for successful preparation and management of joint projects. For this to be achieved, involvement of NGOs in the task force that reviews country needs and in project preparation, planning, and design conceived essential.

The other component in which stakeholder involvement was expected is the development of a Decision Support System (DSS) for the Nile Basin. The main outcome of the DSS is strengthened institutions and human capacity in the development and application of the system. Although the project was meant for professionals, stakeholder involvement was included in the design protocol because they are part of the end users of the information system.

Assessment of the extent of actual involvement is reflected in the findings of the study and in the conclusion.

Next, this dissertation provides an overview of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia: An Overview

Officially known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the country is bordered by Eritrea to the north, Djibouti to the northeast, Somalia to southeast, Kenya to the south, and Sudan to the West (Figure 3). Ethiopia has an estimated population of 78.2 million (Central Intelligence Agency, 2008). The country is among the poorest in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a per capita income of US\$240 (The World Bank Project Document, Report No. 43400-ET, 2008). The widespread poverty is largely linked to natural resource and environmental degradation. Agriculture, representing 40-45 percent of the GDP and 85 percent of employment, is by and large rain fed. The economy remains vulnerable to climate variability with recurrent droughts and floods.

With that brief geographical profile, next this dissertation 1) examines how the country was impacted by the Nile treaties; 2) identifies the power structures relative to stakeholder involvement; and 3) explores how the power structures have influenced the relationship between the government and nongovernmental organizations, their operations, and involvement in the NBI. Justification for the choice of Ethiopia as the setting of the study is also provided.

The Nile Treaties and implications for Ethiopia:

The Nile treaties, reviewed earlier, had some negative implications for Ethiopia. It is therefore not surprising that Ethiopia and other Nile Basin countries reacted negatively towards the 1959 Nile agreements that bestowed all the water rights to only 20 percent of the riparian members.

Ethiopia, a country that should have been celebrated for indirectly contributing to Egypt's civilization did not have legal access to or benefits from waters within its territory per the treaties (Gabre-Yohannes, 1989; Howell & Allan, 1994). Instead, the Ethiopian highlands provided Egypt with rich alluvial soil on which grains that fed Rome, Athens, and Memphis (today's Cairo) were cultivated (Mohamoda, 2003).

The official denial of Ethiopia, by way of treaties, to use waters within its territory contributed to political animosity between herself and Egypt. Although one of the provisions of the 1959 agreement granted Egypt the right to construct the Aswan High Dam, the completion of that project did not minimize Egypt's suspicion of Ethiopia's ability to obstruct water flow into the dam from the tributaries originating within its territory (Collins, 2002). As Collins (2002) has stated, "Relations between Egypt and Ethiopia . . . have swung between acceptance and [belligerence]. Emotional disputes over religion and territory have erupted from time to time, but the external quarrel was on the Nile" (p. 214). In 1978, for example, a surge of acrimony between Egypt's President Anwar Sadat and Ethiopia's Communist leader, Mengistu Haile Marriam, over the Nile culminated into belligerent rhetoric and rejoinders.



Figure 3: Map of Ethiopia

Source: www.maps.com; MEGALLAN Geographix

Immediately after signing an agreement with Israel, Sadat stated that the only reason Egypt could go to war again is over water (Klare, 2001). Egyptian leaders also

threatened to bomb Ethiopian water facilities if its government attempted to use water from the Blue Nile to cater for domestic irrigation projects. Mengistu reacted by stating,

If Sadat wants to protect the Nile basin because water is life to his people, he must know that the Nile has one of its sources in the Ethiopia he wants to destroy. It is from here that comes the dark blue alluvial soil so dear to the Egyptian fellahin. Furthermore, Ethiopia has a head of state [that] cares for the lives of his people (Collins, 2002, p. 213).

In a rejoinder, Sadat said, “We depend upon the Nile 100 percent in our life, so if anyone, at any moment thinks to deprive us of our life we shall never hesitate to go to war because it is a matter of life and death” (Collins, 2002, p. 213).

Given these exchanges and the reality of mounting pressure from other riparians to have legal access to the Nile, Egypt weighed its options against future water security. With the intervention of the international community and continued negotiations, Egypt acquiesced to a cooperative framework that would ensure continued water supply and at the same time meet the emerging demands of other riparians (Collins, 2002; Mohamoda, 2003). This led to the creation of the Nile Basin Initiative as reviewed above.

In order to fully appreciate how the Nile treaties have impacted on Ethiopia, it is important to understand what power structures are in place and how those structures have or have not opened up opportunities for involvement in decisions affecting Nile water use by the country’s organized groups.

Power Structures within Ethiopia:

One of the power structures that favor broad involvement is pluralism. According to the literature (Newton, 1969; Kim & Bell, 1985; deLeon, 1993), a democratic pluralist society should, at the minimum, exemplify the following attributes: diversified economy, reasonable level of industrialization, diversified and heterogeneous population, strong labor unions, large-sized and autonomous NGOs, competitive party politics, dynamic institutional reforms, decentralized power structures, involvement mechanisms, information accessibility, and policy influence by organized groups.

Ethiopia is a federal republic divided into nine regional states, each with autonomy to determine and identify policy solutions (The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, 2008). These multiple power centers provide for citizen's representation. Given that it has over 78.2 million inhabitants (Central Intelligence Agency, 2008) who speak seventy-three languages, (Smith, 2008) Ethiopia exhibits a pluralist society (Holden, 2006; Bariagaber, 1998).

The economy is less diversified and is predominantly agricultural (Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office, 2006). Manufacturing is minimal and is mainly focused on the processing of agricultural commodities. Although labor unions and NGOs exist, their sizes vary and freedom of operations restricted (Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office, 2006).

Ethiopia's heterogeneity is further exemplified by the practice of different religions (Smith, 2008). In addition, citizens have the right to form trade unions as stated

in Article 42 of the federal constitution. Article 31 provides for the freedom of association and therefore supports the formation of nongovernmental organizations.

The antecedents of these structures and how they have influenced government-NGO relations is discussed next.

Government—NGO Relations

Brief History:

The genesis and growth of NGOs in Ethiopia is a relatively recent phenomenon compared to other countries in the region (Berhanu, 2002). Their emergence and growth can be attributed, on the one hand, to the political environment and, on the other hand, to the wave of famine experienced by Ethiopia (Berhanu, 2002; Rahmato, 2002). This was particularly evident in the latter part of the 20th century during which Africa witnessed a proliferation of NGOs prompted by the void left by colonial experts (Zewde, 2002).

However, their initial growth was impeded by lack of political support. First, was the mistrust of such institutions by the imperial regime of Haile Sellassie (Rahmato, 2002). Second, the subsequent Marxist government of Mengistu Haile Mariam that came into power in 1974, popularly known by its military council name—the “Derg”—was equally hostile to civic organizations. The hostility was partially due to the view that civic organizations were seen as instruments of imperialism and therefore antithetical to the ideals of the revolution. As a result, many of those that existed were deregistered. In 1991, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) overthrew the

Derg (Beshaw, 2001). The new civilian government encouraged active participation by NGOs in the Ethiopian society.

Despite previous restrictions by the political environment, the subsequent emergence and proliferation of NGOs were attributed to two major incidents of famine (Berhanu, 2002; Rahmato, 2002). The first incident of famine that occurred between 1970 and 1974 was so pervasive that the previously skeptical emperor, Haile Sellasie, was forced to allow the operation of some international NGOs. The focus of those NGOs was on relief and poverty reduction (Rahmato, 2002). During that period, the NGOs that numbered less than 25 were concentrated at the capital city of Addis Ababa. They were mainly ecumenical in nature and limited in scope. In 1973, the political freedom provided by the government led to the formation of the first network of Ethiopian voluntary organizations, the Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) (Berhanu, 2002).

The second famine of 1984-1985, driven mainly by draught, violent conflicts, and military dictatorship, presented another opportunity for an active role of the NGOs (Berhanu, 2002). Soon after the fall of the Derg in 1991, a surge in the number of indigenous NGOs occurred (Beshaw, 2001). In 1994, for example, there were 24 indigenous NGOs and 46 international NGOs. By 2000, the number of indigenous NGOs had increased by 925 percent ($n = 246$) while international NGOs went up by 165 percent ($n = 122$) from 1994. In 2004, there were 89 indigenous and international NGOs involved in irrigation and water-related projects in the country (International Water Management Institute, 2004).

Despite an attempt by the government to rationalize the activities of NGOs through the adoption of the 1993 National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management (NPDPM), the way in which that policy was implemented has been criticized for limiting the political space for NGOs operations (Beshaw, 2001). This development marked the beginning of a different type of relationship between the government of Ethiopia and NGOs, a subject discussed next.

Government-NGO Relations:

Before the collapse of the military dictatorship in 1991, the relationship between NGOs and the government could only be described as mistrustful, hostile, and distant (Berhanu, 2002; Rahmato, 2002; Zewde, 2002). Neither Emperor Haile Sellasie's underhanded form of leadership nor Mengistu's Marxist regime encouraged the formation of local NGOs (Zewde & Pausewang, 2002). In fact, those that existed were deregistered during Mengistu's reign because he perceived them as imperialistic and could potentially thwart the intentions of his revolution in Ethiopia.

Even with the advent of civilian government in 1991, the relationship between the NGO sector and the government had been somewhat distant (Berhanu, 2002). As Berhanu (2002) observed, government officials often took charge of the organizations as presidents and board chairpersons and even made major decisions. To survive in such constrained political environment, the NGOs were forced by necessity to maintain good relations with those in power (Berhanu, 2002). The consequence of such relationships limited opportunity for NGOs to participate in the identification of needs, planning, and evaluation of national programs. The only area left open for involvement was the

implementation of policy decisions already made by government authorities (Kassahun, 1994).

The relationship of NGOs to the government of Ethiopia has more recently been determined by their dependence on foreign and government resources and the need to survive under existing policy environment. As Berhanu (2002) has noted, “The lust for controlling and regulating NGO activities dominates the thinking and practice of the government” (p. 127). In many ways, this type of relationship that the policy environment has engendered defines the scope and role of NGOs’ operations in Ethiopia today.

The ability of NGOs to conduct their activities and to participate in policy decisions was largely constrained by the restrictive policy environment. Consequently, the NGOs opted to operate in areas that were acceptable to government such as the rights of children and women (Rahmato, 2002). This view is corroborated by a study conducted by Bonzi (2006), who noted that the stringent institutional and legal constraints, combined with bureaucratic inertia, restricted the ability of NGOs to operate successfully in areas such as conflict prevention. The second constraint, according to Bonzi, was government hostility toward NGOs that focused on advocacy programs through which they could influence policy decisions. The third problem, which still affects local NGOs, is lack of capacity (Bonzi, 2006). This lends credence to the view that many NGOs in the country are still relatively new.

As several authors (Beshaw, 2001; Berhanu, 2002; Rahmato, 2002; Zewde & Pausewang, 2002) have documented, activities of Ethiopian NGOs have been limited to

relief operations and, to some extent, development projects. After 1991, government consultations with the NGOs were more visible in health areas. However, consultations on water-related issues have somewhat slacked (Rahmato, 2002). In many ways, the environment in which the voluntary sector operated in Ethiopia and the manner in which they have been viewed and treated is instructive of existing relationship between NGOs and the NBI.

Involvement in the NBI:

Given this history that distanced the NGOs from involvement and also limited their areas of operation, this study briefly examines the current level of involvement by these organizations in the NBI.

Involvement by the Ethiopian government in the formation and policy initiatives of the NBI has been an active one (Waterbury & Whittington, 1998; Kung, 2003). However, involvement by the country's NGOs has been somewhat marginal (G. Mumbo, personal communication, 2007). One reason for this is the fact that they have traditionally been excluded from the policy process and in many ways inhibited by constraints that this study aims to identify; see the findings in Chapter 4.

Ethiopia has the opportunity to expand its participation in the Nile water issues through the over 3,000 nongovernmental organizations. To ensure that this is feasible, the NBI initiated the Shared Vision Programs (SVP). The SVP has eight regional projects and two subsidiary programs: the Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program (ENSAP) (Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt), and the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP) (includes six countries in the region, Egypt and Sudan) (Mohamoda,

2003). The aim of these programs, described earlier in this chapter, is to encourage partnerships in the NBI projects from which all member states can benefit. However, the implementation of these projects can only succeed if the stakeholders are actively involved in all phases, including decision-making (Arts & Verschuren, 1999; Milich & Varady, 1999; El-Fadel, et al. 2003; World Bank, 2003). Such involvement is expected to enhance support and reduce mistrust.

In an effort to offer additional avenues for involvement, the NBI helped set up the Ethiopian Nile Basin Dialogue Forum (EtNBDF) in 2005 (NBD, 2008). The EtNBDF is a network of NGOs, civic society and individuals committed to the promotion of community participation and active engagement in the development and utilization of the Nile water resources. The EtNBDF offers stakeholders the opportunity to enhance awareness and effective participation, and to serve as a forum for public dialogue, networking and information sharing about the Nile basin development policy and practice. In the long term, the Forum is expected to enhance the involvement of Ethiopian civil society in key decision areas, including program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of NBI's projects. It will also bridge the information gap by ensuring that NGOs become a major source of information about NBI activities in Ethiopia and the basin at large.

As already been stated, the goal of this study is to assess one of the eight SVP projects – the Water Resources Planning and Management Project in Ethiopia.

Study Setting:

This study took place in Ethiopia. The choice of Ethiopia as the setting of this study was based on three reasons. First, it has had a long and tenuous history regarding the allocation and use of the Nile waters (Collins, 2002). Being able to study the perspectives of stakeholders relative to involvement promises to provide useful information that can be used by policy makers.

Second, Ethiopia represents one of the upstream countries with high stakes in the Nile (Mohamoda, 2003) and in which the NBI is attempting to enhance stakeholder involvement in decision-making activities. For example, Ethiopia plans to develop 2.4 million hectares of irrigated land and more than 100,000 Gigawatt Hour (Gwh) of hydropower capacity (Dinar & Alemu, 1998). Therefore, as a major player, Ethiopia's involvement is critical to the future success of the NBI.

Third, since 2005 when the Ethiopian Nile Basin Dialogue Forum (EtNBDF) was established to facilitate networking, dialogue, and participation in the NBI program activities, no systematic study has been conducted to assess either the degree of involvement or the constraints thereof.

The background information was obtained in Uganda, where the Secretariat is located.

Terminology

The following operational definitions of concepts used in this study are provided below.

1. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) refer to organized groups privately instituted and registered by their respective governments that advocate on behalf of their membership and undertake nonprofit development activities to benefit the communities they represent (Salamon, 1999).

2. Stakeholders refer to individuals or institutions interested in and are affected by a policy or program (Creighton, 1981).

3. Involvement is defined in this study as “a process, or processes, by which interested and affected individuals, organizations, agencies, and government entities are consulted and included in the decision-making of a government agency or corporate entity” (Creighton, 1981, p. 3).

4. Participation is a process by which stakeholders voice their opinions so as to influence the outcome (Dalal-Clayton, Dent, & Dubois, 2003). In this study the “involvement” and “participation” are used interchangeably.

5. Decision-making processes refer to the following activities: (a) identifying agency or program goals; (b) developing goal-achieving strategies; (c) developing program alternatives; (d) implementation; (e) monitoring service delivery process; and, (f) assessing program results.

6. Pluralism refers to different interests, values, and diverse perceptions in a particular geographical setting.

7. Pluralist structures are organizational procedures, mechanisms and/or conditions that make involvement by organized groups in the decision-making process possible.

8. Power is a means of securing compliance (Hawley and Wirt, 1968).

9. Power structures, as used in this study, can be understood in terms of two models of explanations: elitist model of power structure that implies centralized decision making; pluralist model denotes diffused power structures that allow decision-making to be broadly shared (Rossi, 1968).

10. Key Informant is an individual identified by peers, co-workers or members of the community as an opinion leader with substantive knowledge and experience about an issue being investigated.

11. Riparian is defined as “relating to or located on the bank of a natural watercourse (as a river) or sometimes of a lake or a tidewater” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, 1977). In this study, the term refers to countries or people of the Nile Basin.

12. Transboundary waters refer to water systems that cross national boundaries and shared by two or more countries.

Organization of the Study:

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the introduction, background and overview of the NBI and Ethiopia. Chapter 2 is a discussion of the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and the procedures used for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings. The final chapter, 5, provides the concluding summary, implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Pluralism: An Introduction

One of the most enduring challenges facing leaders, policy makers, and organizations in democratic pluralist societies is making decisions that are inclusive and effective (Kelso, 1978; Olsen, 1982; Kim & Bell, 1985; Creighton, 2005). Inclusive decisions are those that take into account the views of stakeholders and the processes of which they have been part (Creighton, 2005). Effective decisions are those that are acceptable to the beneficiaries by meeting their goals and objectives (Prescott, 1980).

When decisions are made without the inclusion of stakeholders, the effects can be costly, at times creating conflicts (Creighton, 1981; Bruch, Jansky, Nakayama, Salewicz, & Cassar, 2005; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2005). However, when decisions are inclusive benefits can accrue, including citizen support, enhanced trust, and legitimacy of public programs (Creighton, 2005; Sabatier et al. 2005). Yet, ensuring involvement in the decision-making process, when several options and multiple variables have to be considered, can be cumbersome (Stone, 2002; Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Brewer & Stern, 2005).

An area that policy makers and the general public continue to view with some level of dissatisfaction is environmental decisions, particularly their processes and outcomes (Sexton, Marcus, Easter, & Burkhardt, 1999). This frustration is in part due to lack of fairness in both the process and outcomes. Therefore, it would seem reasonable to suggest better and effective environmental decisions should reflect stakeholder involvement, meaningful participation, and fair outcomes.

Involvement in policy decisions and the relations between interest groups and public decision makers continue to attract a great deal of attention and academic work (Lindblom, 1959; Etzioni, 1967; Balbus, 1971; Kelso, 1978; Olsen, 1982; Browne, 1990; Yishai, 1990; Knoke, 1993; Mattilla, 1994; Sexton et al., 1999; Simon, 2000; Ascigil & Ryan, 2001; Stone, 2002; Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Brewer & Stern, 2005; Bruch et al. 2005; Creighton, 2005). This academic sojourn, regardless of the span, is necessary given the increasing complexity of the environments in which decisions are made. The task is especially arduous when, in the call for global democracy, our institutions are required at the very least to include diverse perspectives in making decisions.

The idea of inclusion, especially of stakeholders in environmental policy decisions (Durant, Fiorion & O'Leary, 2004), is rooted in the epistemology of pluralism as initially conceived by Alexis de Tocqueville, Plato's *Republic*, Robert Dahl, and William James among others (Olsen, 1982; Baghranian & Ingram, 2000; Warren, 2002). Although considered an old model (C. J. Fox, Personal Communication, October 1,

2007), pluralist theory is designed to recognize the existence and competition among multiple organized groups and to grant them a role in policy decisions.

In representative democracies, pluralist studies have focused on the importance of organizational power structures for enhancing involvement in decision-making (Dahl, 1961; Wildavsky, 1964; Aiken, 1969; Alperovltz, 1972; Mann, 1974; Allen, 1977; Krannich & Humphrey, 1986; Browne, 1990; Yishai, 1990; deLeon, 1993; Mattila, 1994; Bowler & Hanneman, 2006). A few of these studies have reported some association between pluralism and (rational) decision-making (Denis, Langley, & Rouleau, 2006). Others have reported links between pluralism and decision-making capacity and outcomes (Underdal, 1973). What then does the concept of pluralism mean in the context of decision-making? And, why are pluralist structures important?

Pluralism, to be explored in detail later in this chapter, is the idea that in any democratic system there are multiple groups and centers of power (Aiken, 1969; Newton, 1969; Browne, 1990). These groups come together when they have shared interest in a public policy issue. To be able to have input in the policy discourse and to influence decisions and outcomes, they compete for information, resources, power, and consequently exert pressure to be included in the process. During this process, these groups try to remain self-governing and autonomous (Yishai, 1990). At the same time, they expect government to be passive and respond to their demands (Dahl, 1961, 1967, 1989; Yishai, 1990; Mattila, 1994).

Organizational structure, as defined by March and Simon (as cited in Scott, 2003, p. 52), is a “nested set of plans for action.” In other words, structures are a set of means

by which goals are pursued and desired outcomes attained. Structures delineate responsibilities among members of an organization and participants involved in decision-making. They also establish power relationships among administrators and stakeholders (Frooman & Murrell, 2005). That relationship is necessary especially when either or both protagonists depend on each other for expertise, information, support or any other mutual benefit. Because structures can limit or influence the behaviors of agency administrators and stakeholders, it can be argued that structures can sway the level of stakeholder involvement in decision-making.

In addition, structures provide participants with the necessary information and resources to carry out their specific tasks (Scott, 2003). Formal structures such as formalization, centralization, decentralization, bureaucratization, and specifically rules, procedures, hierarchies, individual roles and other mechanisms can be used to either restrict or assist the range of decisions made by participants. Contextual factors, the number of stakeholders, and technology can also affect the range of decisions participants may be involved in.

Under the pluralist model, competitive decision-making structure tends to be the norm (Newton, 1969; Yishai, 1990; Mattilla, 1994). These structures include but are not limited to multiple centers of power (decentralization), representation, autonomy, mediation, procedures, and involvement mechanisms (Wildavsky, 1964; Newton, 1969; deLeon, 1993). They provide avenues for involvement (Aiken, 1969; deLeon, 1993; Bowler & Hanneman, 2006). However, designing such structures that embrace pluralist

ideals and are effective is not easy, given the complex environments and multiple policy areas that public administrators must constantly deal with.

As already mentioned, one area in which decision-making is incessantly challenging and complex is environmental management (Brewer & Stern, 2005; DeSombre, 2006). This is because it involves multiple decision variables, including “uncertain and conflicting values, incomplete and uncertain knowledge, long time horizons, high stakes, multiscale management, linkages among decisions, and time pressure” (Brewer & Stern, p. 2). At the same time, the decisions affecting the environmental resources can have far-reaching effects on human welfare. For example, water, without which there is no life, is a resource whose use and allocation decisions can cause conflicts (Giordano & Wolf, 2003; World Bank, 2004). Values attached to water by different societies vary and can range from economic and political security, spiritual, to cultural. In pluralist democratic societies, these values and interests are represented by formal, organized groups. Therefore, any attempt to include or exclude these interest groups in decisions that affect water use, particularly of transboundary waters, can cause either cooperation or conflicts (World Bank, 2004).

In a world where 263 international water basins affect about 40 percent of the world’s population (Giordano & Wolf, 2003), formalized institutions have become favored remedies for engaging stakeholders in the decision-making process (Durant et al., 2004). In democratic societies of the west, and increasingly in the developing world, such institutions are set up through compacts and legislations (Creighton, 2005). These legal mandates often do not spell out the strategies for involving organized groups.

Neither do they provide implementing agencies with theoretical frameworks to guide the process (Giordano & Wolf, 2003). Pluralist framework promises to be a relevant and useful guide for facilitating and analyzing involvement by organized groups.

Historical and Intellectual Roots:

Truman and Latham (Birch, 1993) defined pluralism as “a political system in which pressure groups [however based] compete for influence on the decisions of the national government” (p. 167). An equally robust definition of pluralism was provided by Robert Presthus (1964) in his epic book *Men at the Top*. To him, pluralism is “a sociopolitical system in which the power of the state is shared with a large number of private groups, interest organizations, and individuals represented by such organizations” (p. 10). The idea of pluralism surfaced from democratic political thought as a reaction against sovereignty of the state (Mendus, 2000). This reaction was mainly in the United States where political scholars rose to challenge the adequacy of existing structures for analyzing and understanding existing political order.

The collaborative actions of the pressure groups, identified by Truman (Birch, 1993), characterize various components of a society and thus produce a democratic process of governing (Browne, 1990). On this basis, a nation should be seen not as an independent entity but as a form of association where groups and institutions interact with each other to protect what Rousseau called the “common good” (Hirst, 1989, p. 184). Pluralists argue that a nation state should be partitioned and incorporate coordination rather than rule from a single epicenter (Hirst, 1989). As if to endorse

Hobbes' (as cited in Hirst, 1989) assertion about the evil nature of man, Hirst argues that democratic political systems should “not be judged merely by the ends they serve, but also by the way in which they serve those ends” (p. 193).

Our differences based on nationality, culture, religion, values and interests suggest pluralism. Out of this diversity is the fact that there can be more than one viewpoint to a public policy issue. Emanuel Kant (Baghramian & Ingram, 2000) argued that it is not possible to explain the world without our individual perception of it. As Baghramian and Ingram (2000) have aptly observed,

The pluralist picture of the world enjoins us to recognize that there can be many diverse and incompatible conceptual and moral frameworks, many belief systems and ultimate values, without there being an overarching criterion to decide between them and as to ‘truth’ (p. 1).

O’Shea (2000) and Mendus (2000, p. 107) also recognize the idea that humans live in a society of “disparate and conflicting frameworks.” The pluralism picture also implies that “the natural and normative domains can be conceptualized, described, perceived and evaluated variously and in non-convergent ways” (Baghramian & Ingram, 2000, p. 44). In some ways, there is a semblance of pluralism with postmodernism.

Postmodern theory debunks the one account of the world and instead advances the multiple perspectives of reality (Farmer, 1995; Fox & Miller, 1995). Postmodernism welcomes diversity not only of thought but of values, beliefs and practices. It is fundamentally different from modernism or what Farmer (1995, p. 36) calls the “Festival of Reason” growing out of logical positivism where thinking was dominated by reason,

rationality, and dominance of single truths about the circumstances of our society. The Festival of Reason thus privileged centralization, specialization, bureaucratization, and the use of scientific knowledge under the control of power elites (Fox & Miller, 1995; Farmer, 1997). This control, under the modernist project, has been considered by Jurgen Habermas as unfinished business (Farmer, 1995).

Wise (2002) has identified the core values of postmodernism in terms of “demands for greater social equity, humanization, and empowerment” (p. 556). In the parlance of public policy and administration, postmodernism encourages public participation in decision-making especially by the marginalized, the oppressed, and those on the periphery (Farmer, 1997; McSwite, 1997). In essence, it calls for truth determined not by scientific claims but by consensus. According to Jean Baudrillard, “we have now moved into an epoch . . . where truth is entirely a product of consensus values and where ‘science’ itself is just the name we attach to certain modes of explanations” (Norris, 1990, p. 169). Like cracking nutshells, postmodernism breaks the established boundaries, opens what has been closed by the society, and symbolizes what Derrida (Caputo, 1997) calls the “in-coming of the other” (p. 44). Arguably, the postmodern condition is consistent with pluralist propositions.

Pluralism, therefore, challenges the scientific tradition over the assumption that there can only be one perspective to a problem (Diesing, 1991; Baghrarian & Ingram, 2000). In his argument against “the core perspectivist idea” which privileges specific viewpoints, Pettit (2000, p. 60) suggests multiple perspectives or representation as an attractive alternative because reality is multiple.

Due to its inclusion of multiple interests, pluralism promotes relationships between groups and the government and among the groups themselves. However, there is contention as to the extent to which government can achieve its goals given the conflicting interests exhibited by these groups. While James Madison (Birch, 1993) argued that organized groups or “factions” will always be in conflict if not checked, Dahl (1967) conceptualized them in terms of solidarity. Therefore, by providing organized groups opportunities to participate in policy decisions, the state not only reduces the chances of potential conflicts but improves relationships. The policy outcomes emerging out of improved relationships will also reflect some form of power balance (Baghranian & Ingram, 2000).

Premises:

The political theory of pluralism holds that political power in a democratic society is distributed between the government and various organized groups (Truman, 1951; Browne, 1990). In a political system, such as the United States, power structure consists of competing, multiple actors that are organized at all levels and interact to form consensus over policy issues (Manley, 1983). The theory therefore suggests that “citizens can exert significant influence on political decision-making only when they act collectively within voluntary interest associations” (Olsen, 1982, p. 17). This premise contrasts with the classical democratic theory and participatory democracy theory both of which emphasize direct involvement by all individual citizens.

While the classical and participatory democracy theories reject the idea of organized groups as potentially dangerous “factions” that might fulfill their selfish goals instead of the public good (Ricci, 1971), pluralist theory puts faith in organized groups. Specifically, pluralist democracy provides for different centers of power that enable actors to constantly negotiate in order to reach decisions (Newton, 1969). When that occurs, potential conflicts are reduced. According to Dahl (1967), it is this balancing act that made pluralism a theory of power that identifies multiple centers of authority and a means to reducing the powers of central government. Pluralism thus has the potential for creating institutions that can organize political and economic power that encourages citizen involvement in the decision process. It is in this spirit and situation that Alperovltz (1972, p. 35) has called for a “pluralist commonwealth.”

Alexis de Tocqueville (1835), a French legal practitioner and political theorist who visited America in 1827 to study the penal code system and the political process, observed that voluntary associations were part of the American. Tocqueville argued that associations were intentionally created to promote individual liberty and public order. He also noted three other benefits: First, “An association unites the efforts of minds which have a tendency to diverge, in one single channel, and urges them vigorously towards one single end which it points out. Second, is the inherent “power of meeting” (p. 178). This, he argued, enables people with the same interests to create points of action, share their views and come up with strategies of how to address a problem. Thus, Tocqueville claimed that “When an association is allowed to establish centers of action at certain important points of action in the country, its activity is increased, and its influence

extended. Men have the opportunity to see each other; means of execution are more readily combined; and opinions are maintained with a degree of warmth and energy which written language cannot approach” (p. 178). His third argument in favor of voluntary associations was that through such networks, the selection of representatives to policy making body is made possible. Although they not necessarily have the authority to make the laws, they can influence the course of policy direction and events.

Rationale:

The main goal of pluralist theory is to obtain greater citizen involvement in policy decisions and also to ensure that government power is diffused at all levels rather than at the top (Olsen, 1982). Therefore, the primary rationale of pluralist theory is the ability to respond to divergent views and policy preferences of multiple interest groups (Kelso, 1978). By incorporating multiple views, a pluralist approach can be relatively more effective because the solutions reached through competition and bargaining will compensate for the insufficiency of decisions reached by only few actors. At the same time, pluralist solutions can lead to better decisions about complex problems that transcend national boundaries by involving cross-border communities. Hence, stakeholder involvement in decision-making in the NBI is a suitable case for which pluralist theory can be applied and tested for relevance.

The model has also the advantage of empowering groups to question the wisdom and effectiveness of bureaucratic behavior operating under a pluralist democracy (Kelso, 1978). This is because openness to diverse views allows areas of contention to be

scrutinized before compromise can be reached. Pluralism, therefore, yields practical benefits because it is designed to reach a broad range of interest groups, identify solutions, and arrive at desirable outcomes.

The other argument in favor of the pluralist approach is that organized groups have a variety of resources at their disposal (Kelso, 1978; Manley, 1983). These resources include their numbers, skills, knowledge, wealth, and available avenues through which to influence policy. Therefore, Dahl has suggested that organized groups must not be kept away for too long from the bargaining table (Dahl, as cited in Kelso, 1978). Mattila (1994, p. 371), adds that involvement by interest groups can improve “the decision-making capability of public administrators by bringing relevant and essential information to the policy-making process.”

Pluralist theory can also mobilize members of organized groups to acquire skills and experience, become competent citizens, and permit them to exercise influence on policy through a number of channels (Olsen, 1982). At the same time, the theory can, through the mediation process, provide organized groups with the opportunity to unite over policy issues. Mediation also serves as means to acquire and provide information; a way to combine resources for the greater good; a system through which policy makers can access community members and address their concerns; and, a means to bridging the gap between local citizens and the government, which enables citizens to exert more influence over policy decisions. The multiplicity of power centers can enable the government to play an active meditative role and to reconcile incompatible group demands (Truman, 1951). As Robert Presthus (1964) has observed, nongovernmental

organizations “are essential instruments of pluralism” (p. 241) because it is through them that the public are able to influence government policies.

According to Slaughter-Burley (cited in Hisschemoller & Gupta, 1999, p. 153), “regime analysis . . . is compatible with any of the three dominant streams of thought in international relations: realism, pluralism and structuralism.” Therefore, pluralism and structuralism are well suited for the analysis of stakeholder involvement in the international regimes such as the Nile Basin Initiative.

Baghramian and Ingram (2000) sum up the impacts and rationale for involving organized groups in the decision-making process in these words:

Through engaging with each other as bearers of different views and identities, citizens are facilitated to achieve a better understanding of each other in their differences, and appreciation of the transformative character of reasonable debate about values, and, to some degree, a common understanding of the public good (Baghramian & Ingram, 2000, p. 10).

Assumptions and Propositions:

The above stated rationales of the pluralist approach are based on the following assumptions and propositions:

1. Citizens in democratic societies will always form groupings along cultural, economic, religious or political lines. Hence political power should be shared and exercised by a wide range of groups instead of a few (Newton, 1969; Kelso, 1978).

2. Democracy generally involves competition and bargaining among those in power and interest groups. This marketplace-like competition allows for free entry, competition, and bargaining by various groups over policy choices.

3. Organizational structures in pluralist society will prefer stakeholder involvement through organized groups. These groups, often with similar public interests, will attempt to register their competing claims and to influence decision-making through open access and decentralized power structures.

4. Leaders are assumed to represent the values, interests and preferences of the membership regarding the policy issue for which decision is being sought.

5. Political systems, at least in democratic societies, are open, self-regulating and self-correcting. Thus, when one group attempts to prevent others from entering the policy environment or to dominate the weaker ones, the latter can use their unexploited resources, or what Dahl (cited in Kelso, 1978, p. 14) calls “political slack,” to counteract the potential effects of the dominant group.

6. Pluralism is a ubiquitous phenomenon that exists in all democratic countries (Dahl, 1982; Birch, 1993). As Birch (1993) notes, pluralism, as a political theory, is an American export that has spread across the world.

These propositions can only take effect if and when appropriate decision structures are in place (Aiken, 1969; Alperovltz, 1972; Mann, 1974; Browne, 1990; Yishai, 1990; deLeon, 1993; Mattila, 1994; Arts & Verschuren, 1999; Hanneman, 2006). Although this statement assumes unidirectional relationship between pluralist structures and involvement in decision-making, this study is open to the possibility of

multidirectional relationship. As discussed in the final chapter, the findings determine what kind of relationship exists on the ground.

Pluralist Structures:

The impact of the model can be better understood by identifying its structural characteristics (Table 4). The work of Thompson and Tuden (cited by deLeon, 1993), offers a useful guide for determining pluralist structures. These structures can be used to assess the extent to which government institutions have the characteristics to facilitate involvement in the decision process. The authors delineate between four models and identify differences in strategies, structures and other characteristics. The models include Pluralistic Competition, Hierarchical Pyramid, Egalitarian Community, and Atomistic Individualism. The first two are appraised here.

Under a pluralistic framework, majority rule is a preferred method for making decisions and involves competing goals, interests, and values. However, in situations where consensus cannot be reached, compromise, negotiation and bargaining strategies are the best options. DeLeon (1993) posits that strategies used by an organization should help determine the type of structure in place. For example, in the Hierarchical Pyramid model computational and judgmental strategies can be used to address the cause and effect of a problem that is either clear or unclear. In such a situation, bureaucratic or collegial structures are chosen, respectively. The hierarchical pyramidal model is common to institutions that apply Max Weber's ideal-type form of bureaucracy (deLeon, 1993). The model is at times referred to as elitist (Aiken, 1969).

Table 4***Pluralist Structure (Model 1)***

Model	Preferred Structures
<i>Pluralism</i>	<p>Representative: Facilitates input, bargaining, inspiration.</p> <p>Polycentric/Multiple Centers of Power: Opportunity for competition, compromise, coalition building.</p> <p>Autonomy/Faction: Ensures checks and balances.</p> <p>Mediation: System to enable organization to mediate between the ruling elite and stakeholders.</p> <p>Involvement Mechanisms & Democratic Heuristics: To facilitate participation, consensus building.</p>

Note: Developed from Newton, 1969; Kim & Bell (1985); deLeon (1993).

Aiken (1969) identified two criteria for assessing pluralist structures: concentration of power and wide dispersion of power. The two dimensions were thus framed under “diffusion-of-power scale,” defined as the degree to which power is concentrated or dispersed within a community power structure. These two dimensions were also subject of earlier studies by Dahl (1961) and Rossi (1960).

Similar to the work by Thompson and Tuden (cited by deLeon, 1993), Wanton (1969) classified power structures for pluralist decision-making into pyramidal (the least

diffused), factional, coalitional, and amorphous (the most diffused). Although these structures are not explicated here, it should be mentioned that the “amorphous” characteristic was described by Dahl (cited in Newton, 1969, p. 212) as a situation where multiple centers of power exists, with elites having relatively high responsibilities to non-elites. It is now apparent from the studies already reviewed that multiplicity of power centers is central to pluralist structure.

Measurements:

1. Measuring Pluralist Process

Some criteria for measuring pluralist decision-making process have been suggested. Murdock and Sexton (1999), Sexton et al. (1999), and an undated faculty handout from the Southern Methodist University have provided what can be reduced to 5-point criteria: Availability of pluralist structures; Fair representation; Desirability of broader public interest over narrower self-interests; Inclusivity; and Informed participation (Table 5).

In a study of voluntary welfare associations in Israel in which the pluralist and corporatist models were compared, Yishai (1990, p. 215) argued that under the former the government will trade power to obtain legitimacy while voluntary associations will retain their autonomy “at the expense of participation in decision-making.” Under the latter, the government yields to power sharing by giving up some responsibilities to private and organized groups. Based on that study, Yishai suggested the following structural

Table 5
Measuring Pluralist Process

Measurement Criteria (Variables)	Description
1. Availability of pluralist structures	The extent to which government institution has in place pluralist structures that enable multiple interest groups to be included in the decision-making process.
2. Fair representation	The extent to which competing sides of nongovernmental stakeholders are represented in the process of decision-making. This is measured by the number of stakeholders represented in the process. Is the process perceived as fair?
3. Desirability	The extent to which the "larger public interests" prevail over "narrower self-interests" as reflected in policy decisions process.
4. Inclusivity	The extent to which the process of decision-making is inclusive of diverse views.
5. Information	The extent to which stakeholders are informed about policy issue; and empowered to make meaningful contribution.

Note: Developed from Manley (1983); Sexton et al. (1999); Fox, 2008;
Southern Methodist University, Faculty Handout (n/d)

components: (a) autonomy (i.e., the extent to which voluntary agencies are free to conduct an activity without government interference); (b) participation (i.e., the extent to which voluntary associations have access to centers of authority; and, (c) the relationship

between government agency and voluntary associations is clearly demarcated. Under autonomy, the voluntary associations are expected to cater for their own funding without relying on government sources which can compromise their autonomy. At the same time, the choice of leadership in the organizations should be free from government interference. Lastly, the forms of decision-making should mirror wide diffusion of power, with voluntary associations included in the process.

Hoy and Tarter (2004) have provided the following structural arrangements for participation in decision-making: Group Consensus, Group Advisory, Individual Advisory, and Unilateral Decision Structures.

Although the suggested arrangements may not be specific to pluralist decision conditions, some of the structures, by their definitions and applicable situations, are relevant because they advocate inclusion. The authors advise that the structures work best if they are matched to appropriate decision situations. Thus in democratic situations where involvement in decision-making or implementation is mandated, “group consensus” is the ideal structure.

However, in situations of conflict where stakeholders do not share in organizational goals, lack commitment, and involvement is relatively low, “group advisory” is the recommended structure (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). This kind of structure allows for the views of participants to be sought by the administration so as to make final decisions. The group advisory structure is also appropriate in situations involving participants who have a stake in the policy program but lack relevant skills. Although the

views of stakeholders are sought, the administrator has the discretion to make the final decision.

The “individual advisory” structure is another. This is applicable to situations where participants have the skills but are not interested in the policy issue. Hence the administration consults only to get the expert opinion and then makes an independent decision. “Unilateral decision structure” is the last one suggested by Hoy and Tarter (2004). This structure applies to situations where decisions are made without conferring with relevant stakeholders. Therefore, structures take the shape of consultancy.

Shared decision forms the premise of decision structures vis-à-vis participation. This premise is about fairness of representation and about who participates in the process (Murdock & Sexton, 1999). While Stone (2002) has debated at length on what is fair and the difficulty in determining fairness in policy decisions, Murdock and Sexton (1999) suggest that fairness can be assessed by asking questions such as: “[1] Do the dialogues involve all affected parties? [2] Do participants have the opportunity to set the agenda and discuss the issue?” (p. 393). These questions relate to the process and not outcome as already presented in the preceding sections.

Some of the decision structures suggested by the various authors and considered relevant to the pluralist model are summarized in Table 6. These structures can form the basis against which the presence or absence of relevant institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement are assessed.

Table 6*Measurement Summary: Pluralist Structure Variables*

Measurement Criteria (Variables)	Description
1. Degree of diffusion of power	The extent to which policy/decision-making power is diffused ("narrow/pyramidal"-least diffused; "wide/amorphous"-most diffused).
2. Number of centers of power	Decision-making departments, agencies, and regional affiliates.
3. Number of stakeholders (fair representation)	The extent to which competing sides of nongovernmental stakeholders are represented in the process of decision-making. Is the process perceived as fair?
4. Desirability	The extent to which the "larger public interests" prevail over "narrower self-interests" as reflected in policy decisions process.
5. Inclusivity	The extent to which the process of decision-making is inclusive of diverse views.
6. Information	The extent to which stakeholders are informed about a policy issue; and empowered to make meaningful contributions.
7. Group consensus	The extent to which a democratic process for involvement is in place either by legislative mandate or to ensure successful program implementation.
8. Group advisory	Conflictual situations in which participants have stakes but no skills; views are sought; participation as tokenism.
9. Autonomy	The extent to which nongovernmental stakeholders have autonomy by way of funding, recruitment of leadership, and decision-making; free from government influence.

Source: Developed from Manley, 1983; Yishai, 1990; Sexton et al., 1999; Hoy & Tartar, 2004; Fox, 2008.

2. Measuring the Decision-Making Processes using Rational Decision Model

As already been identified above, specific structures can be used to measure the presence or absence of pluralism. However, the purpose of those structures is to enable stakeholders to get involved in the decision-making processes. This section explicates those decision processes as provided by the rational decision-making model.

Popularly known as the classical or economic decision-making model, the rational approach involves several processes (or steps) of making a decision (Allen, 1977; Stone, 2002; Hoy & Tarter, 2004). The first is the identification of the problem. The second involves developing alternative options that can potentially address the problem. The third entails assessing the consequences of each alternative. The fourth requires the decision maker to choose the “best” alternative that optimizes the goals or societal welfare. The final process involves implementation of the decision followed by evaluation. Although the process is sequential, the actual operationalization is cyclical (Figure 4, Model 1). This means that decision-making can be conducted at any stage and not necessarily in sequence. At the same time, different decision activities can take place concurrently (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

Despite its usefulness in assessing the decision-making steps of a policy or project, criticisms have and continue to be labeled against the model for some of its weaknesses.

Stone (2002), for example, has argued against the model’s popular assumption that the decision maker is guided by the criterion of maximum total welfare in order to arrive at the best solution. This is because the reason for which stakeholders are invited

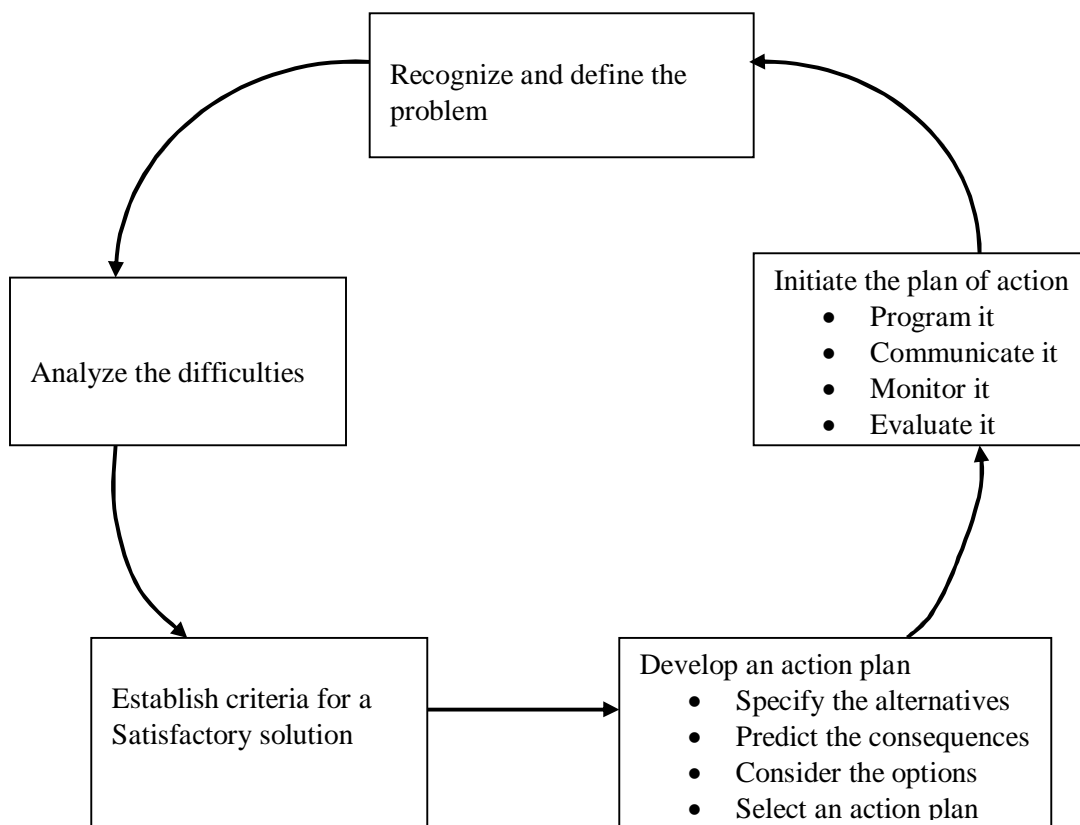


Figure 4 (Model 1): Decision-Making Model

Source: Hoy, W. K. & Tarter, C. J. (2004). *Administrators solving the problems of practice: Decision-making concepts, cases, and consequences*. Boston: Pearson.

to play a part, by and large, is not to arrive at the best decisions but to fulfill the democratic goal of representation.

Herbert Simon's (2000) treatise on the subject called into question the possibility of arriving at the best solution using this model. Simon argued that human limitations, the difficulty of amassing all the relevant information one needs, and the lack of resources makes it impractical to choose the best alternative among several possibilities.

Instead, Simon's (2000) "administrative man" operates within the premise of bounded rationality. Hence the decision maker can only "satisfice" or choose a satisfactory solution (p. 119).

Brunson (cited in Denis et al., 2006) has similarly put a case against the use of a rational decision-making model in pluralistic contexts because the rule of having complete information works to "confuse, enhance uncertainty and promote conflict than generate the commitment needed to produce concrete action" (p. 351).

Justification:

Despite these criticisms, Denis et al (2006) argue that the rational decision approach is not negating to pluralism but positively associated with organizational practice. In fact, studies show that decision procedures common to the rational model are used to support political processes, including contribution to "adversarial debate" (p. 351) and competition.

The decision-making processes provided by the rational model can be useful for assessing the activities in which the stakeholders are to be involved. In typical bureaucratic institutions such as the NBI, which is also a political body, this model is assumed to be the modus operandi for making decisions. Therefore, the NBI is presumed to have some elements of the rational approach at the bureaucratic level and pluralist ones at the political level. Hence a conceptual framework proposed for this study combines these two models as a way of assessing and analyzing the characteristics of power structures of the NBI; see Figure 5.

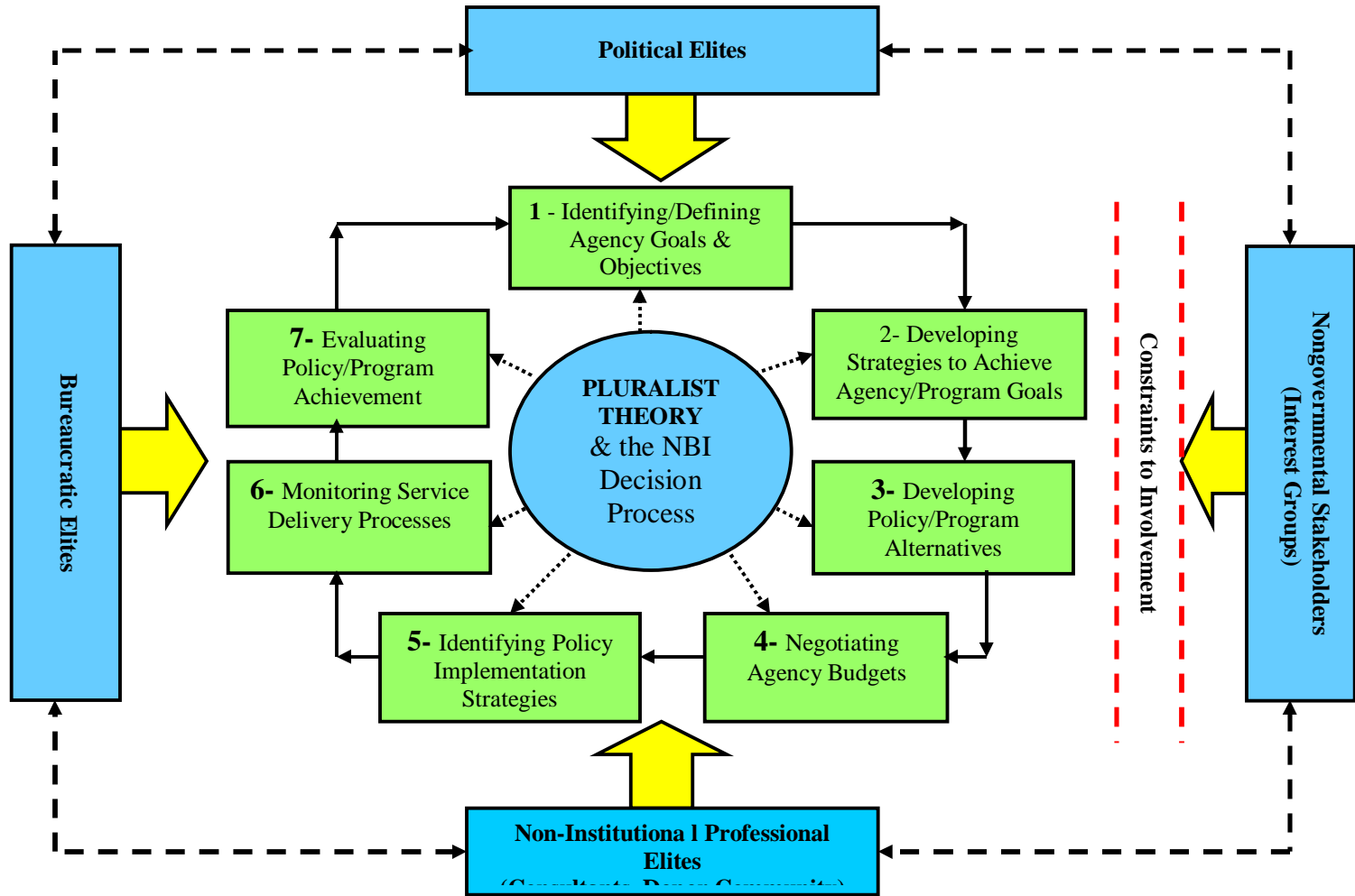


Figure 5 (Model 3): Pluralist Conceptual Framework

The proposed model, Figure 5, which integrates the rational model into the pluralist one, begins with pluralist theory as a guiding lens. Under a pluralist system, in which institutional arrangements favor involvement through groups, division of power structures is open and decentralized. The system not only relies on the traditional decision-making actors such as the political elites, the bureaucratic elites, and the non-institutional professional elites, but also interest groups such as the nongovernmental stakeholders. The latter, by virtue of their positions, are assumed to be equally rational and knowledgeable representatives of the public interest.

The dotted lines connecting these actors denote the desired two-way interaction and partnerships, although this often lacks permanency due to the ever-changing socio-economic and political environment. The model also shows that the direct involvement of interest groups in the decision-making processes, while desirable, is inhibited by unknown constraints. One of the objectives of this study is to investigate what these constraints are.

The model therefore provides a useful tool for assessing the need to include multiple actors in the decision-making processes as shown in Figure 5.

Limitations of Pluralist Theory

Despite the importance of the pluralist framework as a tool for analyzing the extent to which government institutions have power structures that favor involvement in policy decisions, some theorists argue it inadequate in certain aspects.

The first argument is that the theory may not be practical in situations where the majority of a society do not belong to organized groups (Olsen, 1982). However, in cases where they belong to groups, their involvement may be minimal or none. As a result, the organizations cannot bridge the gap between citizens and the government. Similarly, the learning or sharing of information may not be feasible under such circumstances.

The second argument is that being in the status of organized groups does not necessarily translate into commitment to societal values (Olsen, 1982). Pluralist theory, however, assumes that people sharing similar values and interests can, through negotiations, agree over contentious public issues. This is not always guaranteed.

The third case against pluralist theory is that modern societies, regardless of their form of government, intentionally limit what organized groups can do by co-opting them so that they simply serve to endorse what has been legislated (Olsen, 1982). Similarly, in some situations, the organizations can become highly centralized and elitist, thus limiting their ability to educate their members how to influence policy.

The other is that organized groups may lack the techniques with which to influence policy decisions despite resources available to them. Pluralist theory generally suggests that policy makers work together with organized groups because of potential mutual benefits but does not identify practical methods with which to achieve these benefits.

Theodore Lowi (1979), a polyarchical democrat, contended that diffusion of power through the pluralist approach was neither efficient nor effective because it reduced the abilities of government officials to make quick and centralized decisions. He

further argued as false the assumption that a system based on interest group competition yields some kind of equilibrium, possibly a public interest. In a pure pluralist system, in which political factors interact, this kind of equilibrium is not easily arrived at hence access, legitimacy, and equality remain elusive.

Another argument against competition assumed by pluralism is that government programs are often surrounded by specialized factions that are deemed to be “best organized” (Lowi, 1979, p. 63). These factions have the tendency to become oligopolistic thereby weakening popular control and serving the interest of the privileged few. Lowi further questions the assumption popularly held today by pluralists that organized groups are inherently good. This assumption, Lowi contends, is fundamentally deficient when opportunities limit access to those who are not members or associated to the best organized groups. In the same vein, Warren (2002) has observed that oligopolistic behavior thus reduces the link between stakeholders and any democratic self-government.

Pluralist theory is also considered by some as repressive and not quite democratic (Birch, 1993). This argument is premised on James Madison’s conception of factions, which whether they are the majority or minority, can wield the power of tyranny unless restrained by external checks (Dahl, 1956). To control the powers and the effects of factions, Madison suggested dealing with the effects rather than focusing on their causes. Alternatively, Dahl suggested a structural solution that “prevents [government institution] from cramming its policy down the throats of a relatively intense minority” (p. 90).

Relevance of Pluralist Theory to the study:

Despite the limitations stated above, the pluralist approach is useful in this study for the following reasons:

1. It is suitable for analyzing the extent to which water management institutions have power structures that encourage or discourage the inclusion of public interest groups into the decision-making process. By the same token, the model makes it possible to examine whether a particular setting has the conditions that support or suppress pluralist power structures.

2. It is a normative approach by which public interest groups can be brought to the table to help reconcile societal issues.

3. It is a preferred approach because it doesn't require knowledge from the general public but specialized knowledge from those who represent them; hence the decision to interview knowledgeable and influential key informants.

4. It is one of the dominant international relations theoretical frameworks suitable for analyzing environmental issues that cut across national boundaries (Hisschemoller & Gupta, 1999).

5. The Nile Basin countries exemplify at least the minimal form of pluralist democracy one can get in Africa.

In the next section, I review the philosophical foundation and rationale for stakeholder involvement, and the lessons learned from previous studies and other regions of the world. The review strengthens the argument for pluralism as a viable approach to nongovernmental stakeholder involvement.

Involvement: Philosophy and Rationale

Philosophical Foundation:

Rationale and lessons about involvement in public decisions can be appreciated once we take a brief mental flight to ancient Greece and western democracies, the centers of its philosophical foundation. Immediately after the breakup of the Roman Empire, urban artisans in Greek city-states reportedly created formal groups in order to influence matters affecting their work through *Ecclesia* (Roberts, 2004). *Ecclesia* was an Athenian Assembly opened to all male citizens over the age of 18 to participate, with the rights to nominate and vote for magistrates (Zittel & Fuchs, 2007). By recognizing the voices of organized artisan groups, the Greek polis accepted the reality of pluralism.

According to Aristotle, the diffusion of power through pluralism enhanced stability of government. However, the concentration of power in few hands easily sparked a destabilizing revolution because power tends to corrupt in “geometric progression” (Presthus, 1964, p. 15). Though debatable, stability of any government institution is dependent on the balance of all its basic components. To some extent, the Athenian practice of pluralism influenced many thinkers in the Western world.

In his treatise, the *Social Contract*, Jacques Rousseau (Arnhart, 2003) stated that “Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains” (p. 218). He argued that humans were free only when they were allowed to participate directly in the making of laws. To Rousseau, participation through representative democracy was like disguised slavery because the process did not allow people to participate directly. Socrates, through his “gadfly” crusades, alluded to the idea that the Athenian citizens could only achieve the “good life” if they were to freely engage in political discourse; meaning, the freedom to be involved in public affairs. Gadfly is a type of fly that is known to upset livestock and other animals. Farmer (2005) has used this analogy to describe Socrates who believed that he was fated to arouse the Athenian political leaders by his incisive questioning.

Plato had similarly hoped to participate as an advisor to Dionysius II, the political leader of Syracuse (Arnhart, 2003). Through involvement, Plato intended to help shape the Sicilian political life through his Pythagorean philosophy (Plato, 1992), but unfortunately that never came to fruition.

These earlier thinkers had also conceived of the practicality of pluralism and need for inclusion (Scorza, 2006). For example, Plato identified leaders who had the wisdom, soldiers who had the courage, and citizens who had high degree of resilience for civic leadership. Machiavelli (Mansfield, 1985) similarly recognized himself as a pluralist by delineating between the capability of the general, audacity of the soldiers, and dedication to public interest. John Locke argued in favor of toleration of multiple views, including religious diversity (Scorza, 2006). Mary Parker Follet (Scholsberg, 1999) later argued for openness to multiple experiences, especially in the civil society. In 1918,

Follett asked the visionary question: “What is to be done with diversity?” (p. 68). This question continues to be a subject of scholarly interest and investigations.

Laski, a noted believer in human differences, has aptly stated that “we are [simply] bundles of hyphens” (Scholsberg, 1999, p. 53). To Laski, pluralism conjures up the notion that parts are equally meaningful as the whole. Hence decentralized structures are vital elements of pluralist whole. And for Mills (Scholsberg, 1999), vitality of public life is basically empty without diversity.

In the early thirteenth century, the American colonial settlements in Virginia and New England are reported to have championed the Greek type of citizen involvement based on the Magna Carta (Roberts, 2004). For example, the colonists in New England held town meetings permitting property-owning white males to take part in certain decision-making issues. President Thomas Jefferson (Creighton, 1981) is said to have argued that public involvement was an important criterion for satisfying the democratic ideal of public interest, as the following quote illustrates

I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves. And if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion (Creighton, 1981, p. 15).

The concept of public involvement is based on democratic principle that a government derives its power “from the consent of the governed,” and that citizens ought to participate in public decisions that affect them (Creighton, 1981, p.5). As Creighton

has contended, all forms of governments whether monarchy, theocracy or democracy need legitimacy otherwise accountability and public support will be weak.

Lack of involvement can otherwise generate gadfly activities such as questioning or mass action. In the same vein, Calton and Payne (2003, p. 32) consider active stakeholder involvement as a way of guarding against “managerial myopia.” As a result, public involvement has become a reified concept of our time and probably will be into the next century, for both the free and the oppressed. Reification implies the treatment of “social constructions as if they were unalterable natural kinds, as if they were givens” (Farmer, 1995, p. 35).

Despite these theoretical arguments in favor of public involvement, there are some scholars and practitioners who have taken the opposite view. One such view came from President Woodrow Wilson (Thomas, 1993). In his argument for politics/administration dichotomy, Wilson asserted that only “politics [was] the proper sphere for public involvement. Administration, by contrast, was . . . inappropriate arena for public involvement, and best left to professional administration” (Thomas, 1995, p. 16). However, as Thomas further cautions, it is no longer acceptable for policy and administration officials to be solely in control of the decisions that affect the rest of the public. In fact, in a true democracy the views of policy makers, administrators and the general public ought to complement each other.

The wave of public involvement in decision-making peaked in the 1960s in the United States when there was general dissatisfaction with what the government could do well and successfully (Marcuse, 1964; McSwite, 1997). That wave infiltrated public

administration theory and practice, culminating into “New” Public Administration, which focused on social equity and public involvement (McSwite, 1997). The same wave subsequently caught up with the practice of public policy and theory (Peters, 1986; McCool, 1995).

Rationale for Involvement:

Stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process in matters that affect human welfare has been rationalized in terms of benefits and costs. In a study of the World Bank’s funded projects, Adams and Rietbergen-McCracken (1994) observed that development has greater chance of success if key players “have a genuine stake in the outcome” (p. 36). The same study reports that increased stakeholder involvement has the potential of (a) enhancing commitment to policies and project goals, (b) improving stakeholder willingness to share in the costs of the projects, and (c) humanizing the projects.

Argument in favor of direct stakeholder involvement has also been advanced (Roberts, 2004). First, that direct involvement is beneficial to individuals’ mental health. According to Roberts, involvement is therapeutic and has healing powers for those who have been alienated by the government system. Second, direct involvement enhances protective freedom. As Rousseau (Arnhart, 2003; Roberts, 2004) cogently argued, participation empowers individuals and prevents the situation in which no one lords over the other. Hence, by participating in decision-making, people gain freedom and are able to take control of their personal lives. Michel Foucault (Scholsberg, 1999) similarly

argued that the potential for freedom lies in diversity of views. Thus freedom, as we know it, is limited when decisions affecting everyone are made by selected few.

The third benefit is that direct involvement produces a more responsive policy because it opens doors for consideration of expressed views and values of those who participate. Roberts (2004) concludes that the involvement process provides the necessary platform, power, and mechanisms with which to influence policy changes that are favorable to everyone.

Another rationale for incorporating the views of stakeholders is the enhanced trust it produces among groups with multiple interests and values (Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development [OECD], 2001; Focht & Trachtenberg, 2005; Sabatier, et al., 2005). Trust, in this context, relates to the willingness of stakeholders “to defer to the competence and discretion of others to manage risk on their behalf” (Focht & Trachtenberg, 2005, p. 86). This view is supported by Sabatier et al. (2005) who assert that trust is directly related to the level of participation. Sabatier et al. also hypothesizes that the higher the level of trust among participants the lower the need for direct participation. Alternatively, the lower the levels of trust the higher the need for direct participation. The level of trust also depends on the extent to which stakeholder interests are being taken care of by the management. Typically, in the initial stages of the program, stakeholders tend to defer to the discretion and expertise of policy officials (Sabatier et al., 2005). However, when their interests are not being met the level of trust decreases resulting in the demand for involvement.

Stakeholder involvement can enhance legitimacy (Roberts, 2004; Trachtenberg & Focht, 2005). Legitimacy is defined as a justification of a political system “by showing its consistency with a set of accepted moral principles” (Trachtenberg & Focht, 2005, p. 53). By either giving their consent or views to policy decisions, stakeholders are in essence legitimizing those decisions and the public agency that makes them (Roberts, 2004). This form of legitimacy creates stability within a political community. However, without legitimacy government decisions will attract scrutiny and resistance or even lead to the collapse of the system (Creighton, 1981, 2005).

Involvement in decision-making, especially by those who have a stake in a communal resource, has been shown to reduce conflicts (Wells & White, 1995). This is because involvement improves stakeholder understanding of policy issues, which enhances their support, acceptance (Murdock & Sexton, 1999) and compliance. This is beneficial when involvement occurs at three levels: needs assessment stage, debating areas of contention, and the identification of solutions. Similarly, stakeholders’ knowledge of the local situation ensures that issues of great concern to them are identified and addressed. As a result, involvement fosters a sense of public ownership and facilitates enforcement of regulations that might be imposed by a government agency (Kessler, 2004).

Involvement in decision-making has also been shown to enhance social networks, social capital, strengthens partnerships and commitment to community goals, and reduces alienation. These were the findings in a study conducted by Boehm (2005) to assess the

benefits and risks, if any, of participation of businesses in community decision-making. Therefore to increase involvement, Boehm (2005) suggested 7-point criteria: the selection of participants; identification of the motives for participant selection; areas of participation; the level of participation (local, national or regional); choosing appropriate forum of participation, and duration of involvement

Involvement by stakeholders, such as NGOs, enhances the value of organizational autonomy (Trachtenberg & Focht, 2005). Accordingly, involvement gives stakeholders the opportunity to determine the rules under which they live or are governed. By the same token, involvement promotes social equity. As the Maguire and Lind (2003) study of participation processes used by the North Carolina Division of Water Quality revealed, hastening decisions without active involvement by stakeholders can compromise the final decisions. Of the six conditions tested, fair representation of relevant parties, voice, sound technical basis, fair treatment by decision makers, and absence of bias, fair representation suffered because there was no prior contact with potential participants.

The other often cited rationale for stakeholder involvement in organization theory literature is the enhancement of the quality of management decisions. To validate this, Brody (2003) conducted an empirical study that focused on the relationship between participation and long-term management of ecological systems. The goal was to test the hypothesis that stakeholder involvement and community representation during the planning process led to effective and durable management. The findings confirmed that the presence of stakeholder involvement increased the quality of management.

Specific studies relating involvement to decision-making are documented in the literature. A cursory review of some these studies follows.

Theoretical and Practical Lessons

Theoretical Lessons:

Interest and growth in shared decision-making research spans back to the last half of the 20th century (Creighton, 1981), embracing both private and public sectors. Agyris (1955) and Bass (1981) traced involvement in decision-making to leadership theory and democratic practices. Bass (1981), for example, observed that participatory decision-making is similar to the democratic type of leadership because both approaches attempt to involve subordinates and stakeholders either in the decision process or for the approval of what has been decided by the policy makers. Whereas the Bass (1981) study confirmed that participative leadership increased acceptance of decisions and improved satisfaction, McGregor (1960) argued that it was the nature of the problem, experiences of stakeholders, and the skills of the management that determined the level of success of participative leadership.

The drive to include stakeholders in decision-making in the public sector has been on the increase, particularly with the recent quest for democratic practices on a global scale (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2005). For the most part, that increase is supported by the notion that stakeholder involvement is good business (Glicken, 1999) that can yield win-win solutions for those involved in a policy decision.

Involvement generally improves the quality of decisions, enhances legitimacy, accountability and trust (Kessler, 2004; Focht & Trachtenberg, 2005; Sabatier et al., 2005); reduces conflict (Wells & White, 1995); and “constitutes proper conduct of democratic society” (Glicksen, 1999, p.302). Foltz (1999) has similarly stated the importance of public institutions developing participatory practices that will make them truly democratic. As Foltz further argues, institutions that remain closed mean that the society within which they operate are not truly open. Hence any increase in the level of participation will reflect true democracy and even make those institutions superior.

Some decisions, particularly political ones that attempt to distribute public goods, can generate controversies and conflicts (Stone, 2002). In most cases these distributive conflicts are concerned about equity, an area addressed by Harold Lasswell’s (1958) treatise of “who gets what, when, and how.” As Stone has cogently argued, *equity decision* is a concept that is difficult to operationalize especially when a good is to be shared among people with different goals and expectations. For these types of goods, every decision made is accompanied by a tradeoff. Therefore, distributing equal slices of public goods will tend to create more controversies because beneficiaries will not easily agree on the amount of slice each should get due to different values, goals, stakes, and expectations. Stone (2002) further suggests that the better option is to focus on a fair process rather than the outcome, or what Herbert Simon would call a “satisficing” behavior (Simon, 2000). The potential for conflict and the difficulty in agreeing on equal slices makes it necessary for beneficiaries to get involved in the process. That way the decisions reached will cause minimal or no conflict.

Decisions involving environmental resources, especially where the resource is shared by several communities and countries can be complex (Arts & Verschuren, 1999; Milich & Varady, 1999; Finnegan and Sexton 1999; Yang, 2003; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Complexity, according to Yang (2003), can be defined either by the degree to which the decision process is highly or less structured; the degree to which the problem is stable or less stable over a period of time; and, the extent to which the problem is easy to understand. According to Murdock and Sexton (1999), complexity can be reflected by the multidimensional nature of stakeholder involvement especially where decision on shared resources is concerned. At the same time, those decisions can be made complex by high levels of uncertainty when and where information is lacking, mistrust exists, and the issue at hand is primarily handled by high level political leaders. Finnegan and Sexton (1999) also contend that environmental decisions can be complex because they tend to involve value judgments, varied political, economic and social dynamics, and can be contentious.

Factors that influence decisions can in turn affect the extent to which stakeholders get involved in the process. Situational factors, for example, can influence decision-making in two distinct ways (Yang, 2003). First, the complexity of the problem at hand can determine whether stakeholders need to get involved or not. Second, organizational contextual variables, such as political context and the number of actors involved, can influence the decision-making process. Thus, public managers with the responsibility of engaging stakeholders in the process will need to be cognizant of these factors and strategize appropriately.

Another situational factor that can influence the decision-making process is the agent's disposition to the problem (Yang, 2003). This entails the actor's knowledge and ability to understand the problem; his/her skills and expectations; the personality of the actor relative to ways of thinking and risk taking; and, the perceptions about conflict of interest.

Whether a decision maker uses the rational approach or not (described in Chapter 2), the effectiveness of the decision depends on the adherence to what has been decided. At the same time, it depends on whether the decision made can be rationalized under the existing conditions. In addition, it will depend on whether people with stakes actually get involved and are able to derive benefits from the decisions.

In western democracies where involvement has been recognized as a citizen's right, appropriate legislations have been enacted (Creighton, 1981). These legislations are meant to ensure compliance. In the United States, such legislations can be traced back to the 1960s. However, with or without such legal mandates stakeholders are equally demanding involvement in the decisions that affect their welfare as a democratic right. Consequently, a number of studies have been conducted that justify public involvement in policy decisions and the factors that facilitate or inhibit the process. The following provides practical cases as reported by those studies.

Practical Lessons:

Irvin and Stansbury (2004) examined the potential benefits of increased community involvement in government decision-making. In that study, the researchers

noted that citizen participation had both advantages and disadvantages for the citizens and the government. One advantage was that citizens became educated and improved their technical skills on policy issues. Government also gained by building strategic alliances, reducing mistrust, and enhancing legitimacy over decisions. In addition, the government was also able to achieve the desired goals, realize better policies, and avoid litigation costs.

In a study to examine the relationship between rank-and-file participation in decision-making and social network indicators, Day (1999) found that membership incentives and organizational resources, size, and age were significantly related to grassroots involvement in decision-making. Day was interested in understanding what impact the growth of mass communication technologies has had on the degree of face-to-face contact among members of organized groups and their abilities to participate in decision-making. Day's study also found that interest group organizations can either exhibit democratic practices or the rule by the oligarchs.

Another factor that is important and has implications for stakeholder involvement in decision-making is the political process. How the political process affects decision-making within a public organization was the subject of a study by Yang (2003). After comparing the rational, the practical and the political approaches to decision-making, Yang noted that all organizations are influenced by politics. Decisions made within an organization are inherently political in nature therefore a decision maker needs to assess the political contexts relative to conflicts of interests and power relations (Arts & Verschuren, 1999). The Day study findings were corroborated by empirical research

conducted by Carbral-Cardoso (1996) on technology management. The latter's study confirmed that political variables such as ethics and social justice, both internal and external to the organization, can influence decision-making outcomes.

Therefore, the decision maker (Yang, 2003), viewed as a political actor, will tend to rely on techniques such as "negotiation, bargaining, compromising, pressuring, and sometimes counteracting" (p. 465). These techniques come into play when organized groups are included in the process.

Foltz (1999), one of the proponents of pluralist approach to decision-making, has stated that a proper foundation for active participation will not be possible until a pluralist approach is appreciated and implemented. Foltz made this observation during a study of increased public involvement in setting up science policy in the United States. Upon completion of his analysis, the researcher proposed that "the next step toward increasing public participation in science is the creation of a pluralist decision-making system and the increase in the ability for interest-group participation" (p. 126).

As if they took Foltz's (1999) admonition seriously, Calton and Payne (2003) conducted a study to explicate multistakeholder learning dialogue as a pluralist strategy for making sense of messy problems that sometimes occur within organizations. Messes were defined as "complex, emergent, interdependent problems spiraling near the edge of chaos" (Calton & Payne, 2003, p. 7). These types of problems often compel organizational leaders to work with others, learn new ways of interacting and coping with contradictory demands in a world full of paradoxes. One of the benefits envisaged by the

study was the ability to explore pluralist moral epistemology that includes different power relations, divergent views, values, and interests.

The Calton and Payne (2003) study suggests that there are three ways to design and implement pluralist approaches of decision-making. First, have a good moral *sense making* that incorporates the feminist “ethic of care” within conversations involving stakeholders and the management. This kind of care, the researchers argued, can assist policy makers and stakeholders to develop meaningful relationships. Second, there is need to adhere to the neo-Aristotelian focus on community-based ethical norms. This implies that any decision-making body needs to consider at least local practices and values. Therefore, interactions with community based groups can only work to foster pluralism. This second criterion is also significant when the goal of an international water institution is to foster broad levels of involvement. Hence, it is imperative that such a strategy is contextualized. The third approach is to have communication action based on the work of Harbermas (Calton & Payne, 2003). The Harbermean-type-of-discourse privileges ethics and conversations among participants affected by value-based problems. Although the business sector was the primary focus of Calton’s and Payne’s study, it is evident from their findings that dialogue has the ability to generate power and voice to organized groups.

The foregoing elements are critical to pluralism; the extent of their application at the international level is briefly explored in the next section.

Pluralism and International Water Compacts

In this section, I examine the extent to which international water compacts have made deliberate efforts to include organized groups and various stakeholders in the decision-making process. In each of the cases reviewed, legal mandates seem to be the preferred approach to ensuring involvement. The explicit recognition or use of pluralist solutions is not obvious, but as we are about to learn, pluralism is inherently assumed.

Europe:

The first two case studies involve the Danube River. The Danube River drains more countries than any other river basin in the world (Rieu-Clarke, 2006). The river, which occupies 10 percent of Europe, drains the following 19 countries: Austria, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Moldova and Ukraine, Albania, Italy, Macedonia, Poland and Switzerland. The river is a major source of livelihood for the diverse communities that live by it. To amicably share in the use of the resource, competition and political dynamics that come into play must be resolved, if possible by making the system open to the stakeholders so as to secure their support and to legitimize government actions.

The first case involves a study conducted by Bell and Jansky (2005) on the management of the Danube River, especially on the portion shared by Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Conducted a few years after the collapse of the Soviet satellite states in 1989, the goal of the study was to examine the construction of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros

Dam and how political dynamics that came into play provided a major test of public involvement in policy decisions. The dam was a shared project between the two countries.

Well before its implementation, resistance to the construction erupted in Hungary, largely due to lack of shared information. Only the experts, rather than the general public, were privy to the state information about the project. This resulted in a paradox. On the one hand experts accessed vital information but on the other hand they were unable to use that information to convince the communist regime about the negative effects of the project. That was largely blamed on bureaucratic and political inertia. The consequence was unanticipated as the experts decided to divulge critical information to the public, culminating into widespread coalition among groups opposed to the project. The construction was finally defeated.

The upheaval, however, had positive consequences for the general public. The communist government finally introduced public involvement in public affairs. The study also concluded that “confidence [over environmental policy] is built when the process of setting the rules is perceived as fair and the public feels that its views have been heard” (Bell & Jansky, 2005, p. 111). In the case of Hungary, the opposite was the case; no confidence building took place.

As already noted in the study by Bell and Jansky (2005), the management of the Danube can be complex given the fact that it serves diverse communities, with different interests and values. A separate study conducted by Rieu-Clarke (2006) of Danube River demonstrates how national and international legal mechanisms can be used to incorporate

a broad range of stakeholders in the decision-making process and overall management of a water compact.

To accommodate the diverse interests of those sharing the Danube, the study showed that legal frameworks were instituted by all member states. At the same time, relevant international laws were also incorporated. The main thrust of these laws was how to institutionalize stakeholder involvement in the decision-making activities. That way, win-win solutions could be found, peace fostered, and mutual benefits realized without harming other users. Thus, as Article 14(1) of the European Union (EU) Water Framework Directive (also known as the Directive 2000/60/EC framework) states in part that (Rieu-Clarke, 2006):

Member States shall encourage the active involvement of all interested parties in the implementation of this Directive, in particular the production, review and updating of the river basin management plans.

Member States shall ensure that, for each river basin district, they publish and make available for comments to the public. . . . (p. 84).

Rieu-Clarke (2006) goes on to observe that various other tools were developed to implement stakeholder involvement. One such tool was the creation of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River. It provided for observer status to anyone who had interest in the affairs of the basin. The other tool that was set principally to ensure stakeholder involvement was the Danube River Basin Strategy for Public Participation in River Management Planning 2003-2009. The objectives of the tool were to:

Ensure public participation in the process of implementing the 2000 EU WFD...; facilitate the establishment of effective structures and mechanisms for public participation in the Danube River Basin that will continue to operate beyond the first cycle of River Basin Management Planning; provide guidance to national government on how to comply with their obligation under the 2000 EU WFD by providing them with practical support and guidance in addressing public participation in River Basin Management Planning; and inform other key stakeholders about appropriate public participation activities and structures at the different levels, including the international, national, sub-basin and local (p. 89).

The Danube study offers some useful lessons. First, regional and international laws, such as the European Union Water Framework Directive, can open doors for stakeholder involvement. Second, it is important to strengthen participation laws and make them relevant to national situations with the ultimate goal of encouraging stakeholder involvement. Third, it is necessary to have in place a coordinating body such as the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River to facilitate broad involvement in the affairs of water institutions. Fourth, relevant structural mechanisms must be put in place to facilitate involvement.

North America:

The case of the North American Great Lakes system is equally instructive regarding how stakeholders have been included in the decision-making processes

(Newton, 2006). The Great Lakes system consists of lakes Superior, Michigan, Erie, Huron and Ontario. With the exception of Lake Michigan located in the United States, the other four are shared between the Canada and the United States through St. Lawrence River. Due to shared problem of “point-source” and “non-point” pollution, Canada and the United States adopted two strategies similar to the Europeans. These include legal frameworks and setting up specific mechanisms to encourage stakeholder involvement in decision-making and overall management of the water resources.

Some of the legal frameworks instituted by the two countries include the Boundary Waters Treaty, the International Joint Commission, and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement signed in 1972. The latter agreement expanded public participation by making it mandatory to include diverse communities in the international negotiations and developing solutions that will affect them. The Areas of Concern and the Remedial Action Plan was for example set up to enhance stakeholder awareness.

Asia:

Experience in Asia is equally informative for both theory and practice. Three studies are reviewed here for their relevance.

Kim and Bell (1985), conducted a study in Korea to assess the suitability of the western pluralist model in an emerging industrialized country. This was tested against the prevailing notion in Korea that western conventional theories cannot adequately explain what goes in bureaucracies of emerging nations. After an analysis of the data, the study concluded that pluralist solutions may not be applicable “to the Korean decision-

making arena because of the pervasiveness of an authoritarian political culture” (Kim & Bell, 1985, p. 71). Thus, Korea does not have sociocultural preconditions in which healthy pluralist solutions can be nurtured. The authors further argued that pluralism can at times be dysfunctional in certain political settings and may thus lead to depressed economic growth and development.

Chomchai (2005), in a study of the Mekong River Basin, provides evidence of public involvement in the decision-making process by citing recent initiatives. Supporting the livelihoods of some 70 million, the Mekong River Basin offers a unique case of where the public have been historically involved in environmental conservation. For practical reasons, the author contends that the Integrated Natural Resources Conservation project was initiated solely to expand community participation to help prevent any potential conflicts that might emerge between the local groups and government agencies.

From a theoretical standpoint, the author argues that the growth of modern participatory methods was prompted by the limitations of the top-down theoretical models. This echoes the rejection of the elitist models in 1960s, by both the American scholars and citizens, for failing to provide suitable solutions to societal problems (McSwite, 1997). The rejection prompted the enactments of legislation that embraced public involvement. At the same time, public administration modified its areas of attention through the development of New Public Administration, which focused on equity and involvement in policy decision-making.

In the case of Thailand, the rejection of the elitist model led to the adoption of a constitution that includes participation by civil society; a framework that was pluralistic. Similar initiatives were subsequently launched by members of the basin, including China, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Cambodia. One other action taken by the Mekong River Commission was the institutionalization of a policy that incorporates information gathering and dissemination, consultation and participation. This policy, states in part: “to broaden public participation, and knowledge sharing. . .” (Chomchai, 2005, p. 153)

In another study of the Mekong River Commission conducted by Davidsen (2006), it was observed that structures and mechanisms to facilitate stakeholder involvement are available but have not enhanced involvement across the basin. Instead, the degree of participation has been determined more by the room provided to the civil society in each riparian country. The study revealed that stakeholder involvement in the basin has been slowed down by the Mekong River Commission’s reluctance or inability to respond to the concerns of the civil society. At the same time, most of the NGOs did not want to get involved in the Mekong River Commission’s consensus decision-making for fear of being co-opted by the government and international agencies that claimed to have consulted with stakeholders but, in actual fact, did not. The Mekong situation illustrates that having structures and mechanisms per se do not necessarily lead to stakeholder involvement. Rather, the stakeholders can be the problem.

Africa:

In Africa, several river basins shared by two or more countries are managed through formal agreements and joint institutions. Some of these include the Komati River, River Nile, Pungwe River, and Senegal River. Although the institutions managing these basins are not as old or experienced as those of the Danube and Mekong river basins, their experiences and the contexts in which they operate provide useful lessons. Only the cases of Komati and the Nile are reviewed here.

A study of the Komati River Basin by Dlamini (2006) highlights the level of public involvement in the decision-making processes, structural approaches, the successes and lessons learned. The Komati River Basin is shared between the Republic of South Africa, the Kingdom of Swaziland, and the Republic of Mozambique. The basin is part of the Southern African Development Community, which has a protocol on shared watercourses. The aim of the protocol is to enhance cooperation, peace and development through joint management of the river basin.

Since 1948, when efforts for cooperation were initiated, five treaties and a number of committees and commissions have been signed and operationalized. Of particular relevance to stakeholder involvement was the 1992 Treaty on the Development and Utilization of the Water Resources that set up the Komati River Basin Development Project. The treaty spelled out the rules for water sharing between South Africa and Swaziland, and also recognized the requirements of Mozambique which is not a signatory to the treaty. The Komati Basin Water Authority, a private company, was set up in 1992 to manage the project. Through this, special committees were established and training of

members initiated to ensure that stakeholders were able to participate effectively in the planning, monitoring, and implementation of the project. Dlamini (2006) argued that much of the success of the Komati River Basin Development Project was due to its independence from political forces. In addition, allegiance to formalized treaties and protocols has enhanced legitimacy with the stakeholders.

The River Nile, despite thousands of years of history, is the youngest in terms of experience with joint institutional management. Although formed in 1999, the NBI is still nurturing its institutional mechanisms to ensure stable and effective stakeholder involvement. Although no systematic studies are available on stakeholder involvement in the NBI, various published reports indicate that the Confidence Building and Stakeholder Involvement (CBSI) project and the Nile Basin Discourse (NBD) forums were set up to promote awareness and to get stakeholders involved in various stages of the NBI projects.

Operating at the national levels of each member state, the main goals of the CBSI are to: (a) build relationships among basin countries, (b) share information across the Nile basin, and (c) create a process of involving stakeholders in decision-making (Mumbo, 2005). In addition, the project aim is to increase awareness, enhance confidence, foster basin-wide ownership of the NBI, and improve trust among stakeholders (World Bank, 2003). The CBSI is therefore tasked with facilitating shared learning and involvement in the evaluation of project options. Through this, the following outcomes are envisaged (Mumbo, 2005):

Expanded communications and public information of all groups; enhanced participation in policies and investment decisions; increased formalization

of participation for civil society involvement; increased basin-wide confidence in NBI; increased basin-wide confidence among neighboring countries; and, enhanced trust among riparian countries (p. 20).

Regardless of these initiatives, a report by the World Bank (2003) indicated that the implementation of the CBSI has been hampered by a narrow focus on public information, slow integration of effective participation approaches due to low trust, and credibility over NBI; an institution that has no permanent mandate.

Another effort by the NBI to expand stakeholder involvement was through the formation of the 'Nile Basin Discourse' (NBD), an independent body that represents civil society (Howard, 2005). One of the main objectives of NBD is to promote a broad-based dialogue and sharing views on development within the basin. To achieve this, the NBD has been mandated to create networks at every level in the member states. Unfortunately, due to political inertia, bureaucratic maze, and funding limitations, the NBD has realized limited success (World Bank, 2003; Kamei-Mbote, 2004, Nile Basin Discourse [NBD], 2007).

Description of Variables

Based on the research questions, the review of literature, and the theoretical framework, this dissertation now turns to the description of the main variables. This is appropriate at this juncture because it sets the stage for Chapter 3 that presents the method of the study, how the variables are operationalized, and the research questions answered. The variables include: Characteristics of Power Structures, Prerequisites of

Pluralism, Constraints to Involvement (Independent Variables); Involvement in Decision-Making (Dependent Variable)

Variable 1: Characteristics of Pluralist Power Structures

Characteristics of pluralist power structures are characterized by diffused power structures, accessibility to centers of power, competition and bargaining among stakeholders and public agencies, and autonomy for organized groups (Yishai, 1990; Arts & Verchuren, 1999; Rowe & Frewer, 2005).

Power provided by organizational structures typically defines the relationships among public agency administrators and the stakeholders (Frooman & Murrell, 2005). That relationship is necessary especially when either or both protagonists depend on each other for expertise, information or support. Because structures can limit or form the behaviors of agency administrators and stakeholders, it can be inferred that structures can determine the level of stakeholder influence on decision-making.

Measurement—Characteristics of Pluralist Power Structures

A study conducted by Aiken (1969) attempted to confirm the relationship between pluralist structures and decision-making. That was examined by assessing the effects of varying decision-making structures, specifically the distribution of power, on the ability of a community to mobilize collective action. Aiken applied the distribution of power scale developed by Walton (Aiken, 1969) that classified power structures into pyramidal (least diffused), factional, coalitional, and amorphous (most diffused). That scale was labeled the “degree of diffusion of community power” (p. 79).

By applying the scale to federal programs, Aiken (1969) hypothesized that “the greater the diffusion of community power, the greater the probability of a high level of community mobilization” (p. 80). The hypothesis was justified by citing organizational study results that suggested that decentralized power structures led to more successful implementation of public programs than those under centralized structures. The study also concluded that cities with widely diffused power structures tended to have greater public involvement.

The continuum of the diffusion of power scale suggested by Aiken (1969) and Walton (1966), that is pyramidal (least diffused) to amorphous (widely diffused) power structures, is one way the existing characteristics of power structures can be identified. Another approach is to ask the following questions: To what extent are centers of decision-making centralized or decentralized? To what extent are these multiple centers of power accessible? To what extent are the competition and bargaining to influence decision-making a common feature among organized groups? To what extent are organized groups autonomous in terms of leadership and resources?

Variable 2: Prerequisites of Pluralism

Prerequisites of pluralism are characterized by high level of the following attributes: high level of industrialization; more economic diversity; large number of inhabitants; more social heterogeneity; large number of NGOs; existence of labor unions; high degree of institutional reforms; competitive party politics; and, competition among societal institutions (Lineberry & Sharkansky, 1971).

According to Hawley and Wirt (1968), the presence of the above stated prerequisites are influenced by socio-economic conditions and value patterns in a particular community. Because communities differ in many respects and similar in some, Lineberry and Sharkansky (1971) have aptly reasoned that it is unlikely to find existing power structures or their prerequisites, to be either totally elitist or pluralistic.

Measurement—Prerequisites of Pluralism

Sayre and Kaufman (1960) have suggested two indicators for measuring the prerequisites of pluralism: scale (variety, complexity, multiple decision centers), and competition (many contestants, large stakes, bargaining, no single ruling elite dominates).

Variable 3: Constraints to Involvement

Several studies have confirmed the existence of multiple constraints to stakeholder involvement. Creighton (2005) has identified the institutional constraints and special circumstances as the broad factors that can affect public involvement in the decision process. Specifically, these include the agency's commitment to the process, existence of internal opposition to involvement, resource constraints, and official restrictions on the flow of information.

Diduck and Sinclair (2002) have provided a summary of the constraints to stakeholder involvement. These include information deficiencies, lack of resources, process deficiencies that limit opportunities to participate, lack of impact on final decisions, and lack of motivation or interest or time. In order to verify the existence or nonexistence of these constraints and explain the lack of public involvement in

environmental assessment, the researchers conducted a study of hog processing facility in Brandon, Canada. Through document analysis, mail surveys, and semi-structured, qualitative interviews, the results showed two distinct barriers: structural (e.g., institutional settings, economic arrangements and legislative frameworks) and individual (e.g., deferment to policy makers, lack of knowledge, and character traits such as apathy).

The context in which stakeholder involvement is being implemented and the capacity of the public agency and stakeholders are also important variables that can determine the success or failure of the involvement process. As Kessler (2004) has stated, it is important for a public agency instituting public involvement to consider contextual situations and dynamics such as local history, culture, social, political, economic, gender and how they affect multiple interest groups. At the same time, it is vital to consider stakeholder beliefs, their perceptions and how they may constrain involvement. Finally, the capacity of the agency and of the stakeholders can affect the degree of involvement. Capacity can be defined in terms of resources such as money, time, information, mechanisms, experience and training.

Measurement—Constraints

While there is no standard approach to measuring the barriers to stakeholder involvement, Diduck and Sinclair (2002) applied two techniques in their study of public involvement in an environmental assessment in Brandon, Canada. One technique used was a measurement based on a qualitative, narrative approach in which individual participants were asked to state factors that acted as constraints to their involvement.

This approach was used to assess the views of those who participated in the Maple Leaf environmental assessment project.

In the same study by Diduck and Sinclair, a Likert-type 5-point scale was another technique used to measure the important reasons for not participating in environmental assessment. Points 4 and 5 on the scale were categorized as “important,” point 3 as “neutral,” and 1 and 2 as “unimportant.” The scale was applied to the following variables identified through narrative responses: the ultimate decisions were foregone; participants did not know about the Environment Assessments, interests were represented by others; consultation fatigue; too few opportunities; trusted the government; concerns adequately addressed; too busy; no public hearings; and not interested.

This study relies on the first approach which asks participants to state the factors that hinder their involvement.

The next chapter is a discussion of the methodology, which explicates how the above variables are operationalized. The chapter also presents the methods used to collect data and to analyze them.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Introduction:

This study explored the characteristics of power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative as they relate to stakeholder involvement in Ethiopia. The objective was to analyze how the power structures influence involvement in decision-making by nongovernmental stakeholders and to determine whether the structures are related to pluralism. This chapter describes the study method, including the research design, the selection of research sites, data collection and analysis of strategies, and a discussion of methodology limitations.

Research Method:

In order to explore the characteristics of power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative, this study applied two methods. First, it employed an inductive case study method through which key informant interviews were conducted. Second, the study analyzed archival, geographical, historical and scientific information. These methods enabled the study to assess how the power structures influence involvement, and whether

or not they are related to pluralism. Hence this study addressed the following questions:

Primary:

1. “What are the characteristics of the power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) as they relate to stakeholder involvement in Ethiopia?”
2. “For those not involved in the decision-making process, what constraints prevent them from getting a ‘seat at the table’?”

Secondary:

3. “Do the power structure characteristics in Ethiopia relate to pluralism and, if so, how?”
4. “To what extent are conditions in Ethiopia compatible with the prerequisites of pluralism?”

Research Design:

An inductive qualitative research design was employed in this study. Five reasons guided the preference for this type of design. First, qualitative research enables the participants to reveal “how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, 13). Through the commitment to “an emic, ideographic, case-based position” (p. 16), researchers can obtain rich descriptions of individual views based on their observed experiences. Thus, the participants can describe their experiences by responding to open-ended questions such as “what” and “how.” For example, what are the power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative? How are they related to pluralism? The

aim of these types of questions is to enable the researcher to understand the participants' experiences, knowledge, and perceptions about the subject under investigation.

Second, it is not always easy to understand human actions (e.g., lack of involvement) if their experiences, meanings or perceptions of those actions are not understood. A qualitative design enables the development of an empathic relationship with the participants with respect to the beliefs, assumptions, and meanings they attach to actions and events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Maxwell, 2005).

Third, qualitative research is suitable when the investigation is considered complex and perceptual (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Walshe, Caress, Chew-Graham, & Todd, 2004). Similarly, the design is relevant when the subject of investigation remains largely unexplored (Butterfield, Reed, & Lemark, 2004). This research topic in relation to the setting of the study remains unexplored. Therefore, a qualitative approach was chosen because, as Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest, the design emphasizes "the importance of context, setting, and the participants' frames of reference" (p. 58). By the same token, the design is deemed suitable for understanding the context in which human actions take place and how those actions are influenced by the context in which they occur (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Maxwell, 2005).

The fourth reason for choosing a qualitative design is based on the notion that it provides the framework for testing the applicability of pluralist theory in a developing country context. Through its flexibility, this type of design makes it possible for the research procedure to be modified in order to accommodate unanticipated events and their influences (Maxwell, 2005). The flexibility, for example, can allow non-relevant theory to be discarded and a new

one developed. Likewise, the flexibility of the design can make it possible for the research questions to be reframed.

Fifth, this type of design (Miles & Huberman, 1984) has been presented as “far better than solely quantitative approaches for developing [causal] explanations” (p. 132). Although this view is still contentious in the literature, Maxwell (2004) argues that there is a growing trend in accepting the method for yielding causal explanations. Qualitative researchers such as Denzin (1970), Kidder (1981), and Miles and Huberman (1984) reject the empiricists’ assertion that only experimental designs can yield causal explanations (Light, Singer, & Willet, 1990). Instead, the researchers argue that the multisite data enhances the ability of qualitative methods to develop and confirm causal explanations (Maxwell, 2004).

Method:

A Case study method was used in this study. Three definitions of case study are considered here. Walshe et al. (2004) define case study as a method used to “explore complex phenomena within the context of the case or cases” (p. 677). Creswell (1998) defines it as “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through a detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). By bounded system, Creswell implies a study that is limited by time and place.

According to Yin (2003), case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). From these three,

a working definition can be developed. Thus, case study is a systematic method of investigating an event or events using multiple sources of information to arrive at some understanding of meanings as narrated by the participants or through document analysis within a given context and time.

Some of the distinguishing features of the case study method include its reliance on multiple methods for data collection, often comprised of interviews, document analysis, surveys, observations, and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Another feature of the case study method is that it “can either have an inductive or deductive approach to theory” (Walshe et al. 2004, p. 677).

Walshe et al. (2004) have suggested the following six conditions as ideal for using case study method:

1. When the condition or event is complex and consists of multiple variables.
2. When the context is of primary importance to the study (i.e., how local conditions influence the process and outcome of an intervention, and no manipulating of events);
3. When various perceptions need to be considered.
4. When flexibility is necessary in the study design to address different research purposes.
5. When the researcher needs to connect with all the recipients of study findings through easy-to-understand narratives.
6. When there is no single strong theory on which to base the study.

The subject under study here meets the above stated criteria.

Selection of Research Sites:

The criteria for the selection of study sites were based on the account provided by the literature discussed in chapter 1. According to the literature, there is concern over the low level of involvement in the decision-making process by nongovernmental stakeholders in Egypt, Sudan, Rwanda and Ethiopia. Out of these, Ethiopia was selected for five reasons:

First, Ethiopia has high stakes in the Nile compact arrangement; currently contributes 86 percent to the total Nile water flow but only consumes 1 percent (Collins, 2002; Mohamoda, 2003). Second, involvement by Ethiopia's NGOs has been missing despite the high stakes. Third, Ethiopia's policy makers demand a new framework that will allow for an increase in water use by building dams and to expand irrigation. Fourth, the formation of NGOs and active involvement in policy decisions has historically been discouraged by the previous regimes. Fifth, the decision to select Ethiopia for this study was influenced by the widespread use of English as the second official language after Amharic. The other three countries, although deemed appropriate for the study, were eliminated due to the language barrier for the researcher.

The choice of Uganda as the second site was based on three factors. First, Uganda hosts the NBI secretariat hence it has the resources considered relevant to the study. Second, the NBI officials are considered professionals with institutional knowledge that can serve as key informants for the background information. Another reason was based on the expressed interest in the results of the study by the NBI management.

Data Collection Strategies:

Six steps were followed in order to prepare and collect data. These included: 1) the development of the interview protocol; 2) the approval of the protocol by the University's Institutional Research Board; 3) the pilot testing of the instrument; 4) recruitment of study participants; 5) Key informant interviews; and 6) analysis of archival, geographical, historical and scientific information. Therefore, 1 to 4 are the preparation procedures, while 5 and 6 are the actual strategies used to collect data. Each of these is briefly described below.

1. Development of Interview Protocol

The interview protocol was developed and then reviewed several times by members of the dissertation committee before and after the proposal defense. Because this was a qualitative study, care was taken to ensure that the questions were not only open-ended but general enough to allow the participants to expand on their views. The purpose of the interview protocols (see Appendix H and I) was to enable the researcher to explore the research questions and also gain insight into existing power structures relative to involvement and the constraints thereof.

2. Institutional Review Board Approval

The next step was the fulfillment of the University's requirement concerning human subjects' research. In any qualitative research, such as this one, the investigator must demonstrate that the study is physically possible and ethical (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). At the same time, the researcher needs to show sensitivity to the multifaceted

ethical issues that often accompany qualitative study settings. Ethical issues may arise from the problem under investigation, the procedure, the method of data collection, the people subjected to the study, and the type of data collected (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2000).

To address any ethical issues that might arise during and after the study, the approval of the University's Institutional Research Board (IRB) was sought. The purpose of the IRB is to ensure that the study will not impose any risk, including physical, psychological, social, economic, or legal harm to the participant (Creswell, 2003). Because this study involved interviewing human subjects, the approval was necessary.

The IRB proposal documents were then submitted for expedited review, which were subsequently approved (Appendix A). This was based on the determination that the study involved no more than minimal risk to the participants in either Uganda or Ethiopia.

3. Pilot Interview

In order to test the viability of the approved interview instrument, a pilot interview was conducted with a deliberately selected participant. A first semester Ph.D. student in the Public Policy and Administration program at this university was approached to test the interview instrument. The decision to target this particular participant was based on two reasons. First, the student is a national of Kenya, a member of the Nile Basin Initiative. The student's expressed interest on the subject and the concern about how the water allocation affects his country of origin merited being

considered for the pilot interview. Second, the student's knowledge about water policy issues and other environmental concerns, judged by discussions with the researcher, qualified him for the pilot interview.

Once the student agreed, the pilot interview was conducted in a private office space at this university. At the end of the interview, the student was asked for his comments about the sequencing, clarity of the questions, and relevance to any cultural nuances. The student stated that there was nothing to be amended to the protocol.

In addition to the pilot interview, the questions were perused for their cultural relevance by an Ethiopian professor at the university's School of Medicine. The professor also served as an international consultant to the study as required by the Institutional Research Board. Hence, the protocol was used as originally designed.

4. Recruitment of Study Participants

The population of interest, or sample, was the nongovernmental stakeholders (NGOs) in Ethiopia who are either involved or have interest in the decision-making processes of the Nile Basin Initiative. Once the sample was identified, a comprehensive list and contacts of all registered NGOs in Ethiopia was obtained from Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA). CRDA is an umbrella organization for all registered NGOs in Ethiopia. A similar list of the NBI secretariat officials was obtained from the chief librarian in Entebbe, Uganda, with permission of the NBI's executive director. The combined lists were continually refined by crosschecking with their latest website information. Other sources included published documents such as newsletters, email inquiries, and electronic copies of national newspapers.

The next step involved the actual recruitment of key informants from the lists.

Key Informants:

Key informants are those individuals in an organization or community who are considered well informed and influential (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Within an organizational hierarchy, they are those placed among the upper echelons (Gupta, Shaw, & Delery, 2000).

The use of key informants in case studies has received broad support as a viable methodology for obtaining data that may be collective in nature (Krannich & Humphrey, 1986). This process has been similarly applied to studies that analyze community power structures and processes of decision-making (Hunter, 1963; Lineberry & Sharkansky, 1971).

There are advantages to using key informants. First, their general expertise, knowledge, and influence accord them the privilege to respond more authoritatively to issues being investigated than those who do not possess those attributes (Krannich & Humphrey, 1986). Second, key informants are a better source of “softer” information on variables such as trust, power, and commitment that cannot be obtained through archival literature (Kumar, Anderson, & Stern, 1993). Third, their position and expertise can provide useful information and analytical perspectives on the social, economic and political dynamics and how they relate to the issue being investigated.

Although the main premise of using key informants is knowledge, not all the informants have equal knowledge (Krannich & Humphrey, 1986). Regardless of that limitation, their aggregate judgments on a given issue can represent some “reasonable

accuracy” (Krannich & Humphrey, 1986, p. 477). Hence the decision to use them as sources of information for this study.

To identify the key informants out of the sample lists, the “reputational approach” was used. The approach involves the engagement of a special panel of individuals (or “judges”) to identify the key informants. The method was initially applied by Floyd Hunter (1963) in his study of the community power structure in Atlanta and has been subsequently used in similar studies (Lineberry & Sharkansky, 1971). It is premised on the assumption that carefully selected panel of informants will know who is influential and who is not (Putman, cited in McCool, 1995).

The reputational approach, as applied to this study, involves three major steps:

- 1) Preparing a basic list of 20 influential officials of the NBI in Uganda and another 40 NGO officials in Ethiopia.
- 2) Putting together a short list of panel of informants or what Floyd Hunter referred to as “judges” (1963, p. 12). This panel, consisting of five (n=5) in each country, were individuals of authority determined by either their positions (i.e., “positional approach”) or roles within local, national or regional organizations as reported by official reports and archival information.

The “positional” approach is based on the assumption that leaders of governmental institutions have power, influence, keep good records, and have knowledge of what is going on in the community (Lineberry & Sharkansky, 1971; Putman cited in McCool, 1995). The nomination of the judges was also based on the willingness to serve on the panel. The final list of this panel therefore comprised individuals holding top

positions in the NBI Secretariat, Uganda, the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO), and within selected NGOs in Ethiopia.

3) In the third step, the panel of “judges” in Uganda, consisting of the four senior level program managers and a librarian ($n = 5$), were asked to independently identify 10 individuals out of 20 in the list of those perceived to have “power” and “influence” about the NBI decision-making affairs. In Ethiopia, the same process was repeated with five ($n=5$) judges being asked to identify 20 individuals out of a list of 40.

According to Clelland and Form (1968, p. 83), one’s degree of influence can be assessed by his or her role in “a number of community issues or projects.” In a study of New Haven, Connecticut, Dahl (1961) applied the concept of “relative influence” to identify leaders who had more influence in the community than others. This was accomplished by looking at specific decisions affecting different “issue-areas” and how frequent the influences of specific leaders were on those areas. In this study, one issue-area — the Water Resources Planning and Management Project — and its three component projects in which decisions are made is the focus of analysis.

To assist the panel of judges in their selection of key informants, the following instruction used by Hunter (1963, p. 258) in his study, albeit tailored to this research, was replicated:

Suppose a major project were before the community or organization, one that required decision by a group of leaders whom nearly everyone would accept. Which 10 people out of this list of 20 would you choose to make up this group—regardless of whether or not you know them personally? Please include any other

person whom you think should be on this list and the reasons why. Next, rank order, one through ten. The judges were verbally requested not to share their choices with anybody else.

Once this was completed, the lists from the panel of judges were tallied. Only individuals who had more nominations were selected to serve as the key informants. Tables 7 (Uganda) and 8 (Ethiopia) show checked off (✓) nominations that were subsequently interviewed.

The reputational approach was preferred to others because it is systematic and involves a filtering process, including (Peterson & Valdez, 2005): 1) the identification of a comprehensive list of influential persons, 2) the setting up of a panel of “judges”, 3) the scaling down of a comprehensive list by the panel using a common criteria and question, and 4) selecting only individuals on the list with the most or more nominations.

Table 7				
Key Informant List: Rank Order Nominations - -NBI Secretariat, Uganda				
Position /Organization	Nominations (Votes)		Position/Organization	Nominations (Votes)
Executive Director	5		Regional Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist	3
Regional Program Manager – Socioeconomic Development & Benefit Sharing Project Director	5		Coordinator, Nile Basin Discourse (NBD)	3✓
Senior Program Officer	4✓		Head of Finance & Administration	3✓
Consultant, Strategic Planning & Management (Immediate Former Executive Director)	4✓		CBSI National Project Coordinator - Uganda	3✓
Regional Project Manager, CBSI	4✓		Communication Specialist	3
Program Officer	4✓		Librarian	2✓
Regional Coordinator, GWEPENA	4		Knowledge Management Specialist	2
FAO Water Specialist & Nile Representative	4✓		Regional Coordinator, Global Water Partnership	1
NBI Senior Advisor & Consultant	4		Internal Audit	0
Senior Regional Water Specialist (Regional Project Manager), Global Water Partnership (GWP)	3✓		Finance Officer	0

Sources: Archival Documents - Meeting Records, NBI Website, Email Correspondence, NBI Staff Directory.

Position/Organizations	Nominations (Votes)	Position/Organizations	Nominations (Votes)
Coordinator, Ethiopia Nile Basin Discourse Forum (EtNBDF)	5✓	Head Delegated, Christian Relief & Development Association (CRDA)	3✓
Executive Director, Agri Service Ethiopia Director,	5✓	Country Coordinator, Global Water Partnership, Ethiopia	3✓
Senior Soil Specialist, Food & Agriculture Organization Sub-Regional Office – East Africa	5✓	Director Catholic Relief Services – Ethiopia Program	2
Regional Program Coordinator, InterAfricaGroup	5✓	Director Kembatta Women Self-Help Center	1
Program Manager, Forum for Environment (FEE)	5✓	Coordinator, Amhara Women’s Development Association	1
Lead Specialist. Project Planning & Management (WRPM)	5✓	Director, CARE Ethiopia	1
National Project Coordinator, Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project	5✓	PANE*	1
Local Micro Grant Coordinator, MGP/NTEAP/NBI	5✓	Christian Aid*	1
General Manager, Ethio-Wetlands & Natural Resources Association	5✓	Addis Ababa University*	1
Executive Director, Sustainable Land Use Forum (S.L.U.F)	5✓	Coordinator, Gender Relief, Rehabilitation & Development Association	0
Director, Community Learning & Capacity Development Department, Agri- Service Ethiopia	4✓	Director, Nazareth Children’s Center & Integrated Development	0
Senior Operations Officer, Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO)	4✓	Coordinator, International Committee for the Development of Peoples	0
Executive Director, Ethiopia Environmental NGO (EENGO)	4✓	Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization (EARO)	0
Executive Director, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)	4✓	Coordinator, Ethiopian Muslims Relief & Development Association	0
Senior Water Resources Engineer, The World Bank Ethiopia Country Office	4✓	Director, Food for the Hungry International/Ethiopia	0
Water Resources Specialist, International Water Management Institute (IWMI)	4✓	Director, Ethiopian Social Rehabilitation & Development Fund**	0
Senior Researcher, International Water Management Institute (IWMI)	3✓	Executive Director, PLAN International Ethiopia	0
Head Delegated, Resource Management Department, Christian Relief & Development Association (CRDA)	3✓	Director, Cher Ethiopia – Society for Humanitarian Assistance	0
Committee Member, Nile-TAC Ethiopia	3	Coordinator, Welfare for the Street Mothers & Children Organization	0
Head, Liaison Office, Organization for Rehabilitation & Development in Amhara/ORDA	3✓	Coordinator, Rural Organization for Betterment of Agropastoralists	0
Executive Director, Women-Aid Ethiopia	3	Senior Environmental Officer, U. S. Agency for International Development – Ethiopia	0

* Additions by Judges

**Closed Agencies

5. Key Informant Interviews

Once the panel of judges had completed their selection, the actual interviews were conducted in two stages. The first stage took place at the NBI Secretariat in Uganda, between December 2 and 16, 2008. The second stage of the interviews was conducted in Ethiopia between December 17 and 30, 2008. The actual dates of the interviews are shown in tables 9 (Uganda) and 10 (Ethiopia).

The interview method of data collection has been defined as “a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more, [which] is directed by one in order to get information from the other” (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007, p. 103). The main goal of using interviews is to enable the researcher to have a good understanding of the subject under investigation, especially direct observation of human actions or behavior that cannot be observed directly (Creswell, 2003). The approach allows research participants to give historical information based on their knowledge and experiences. Interviews are also relevant when the goal of the research is to “uncover and describe” the participants’ perspective on the subject of inquiry (Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 110). Interviewing has been determined to be suitable for case studies (Suzuki et al., 2007) such as this one.

Qualitative interviews often employ structured or semi-structured open-ended questions (Creswell, 1998). This format of questions has the advantage of enabling the interviewees to expound on their answers. Interviews also provide the researcher wide latitude to pursue diverse issues and assemble large amounts of data in a short time

(Marshall & Rossman, 1999), while at the same time giving the research participant the opportunity to “shape the content of the interview” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 104).

Table 9 - List of Key Informants and Date of Interview - Uganda

Position/Title	Organization Name/Project Name	Organization Type	Date Conducted	Number Interviewed
Senior Program Officer	NBI Secretariat	Government	Dec. 4, 2008	1
Program Officer	NBI Secretariat	Government	Dec. 4, 2008	1
Librarian / Documentalist	NBI Secretariat	Government	Dec. 4, 2008	1
Coordinator	Nile Basin Discourse	International NGO	Dec. 5, 2008	1
Regional Project Manager	Confidence Building & Stakeholder Involvement Project	Government	Dec. 9, 2008	1
Senior Regional Project Specialists	Global Water Partnership (GWP)	Government	Dec. 9, 2008	1
Immediate Former Executive Director	Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat	Government	Dec. 9, 2008	1
Chief Technical Advisor & Water Specialist	Food and Agricultural Organization Regional Office	U. N. - International Development	Dec. 10, 2008	1
Head	Finance and Administration, NBI Secretariat	Government	Dec. 11, 2008	1
National Project Coordinator	Confidence Building & Stakeholder Involvement (CBSI), Uganda	Government	Dec. 11, 2008	1
Total Interviewed				10

The interviews were open-ended and semi-structured in nature. In the first stage of interviews in Uganda, the purpose was to get background information in order to (a) identify and assess the structural framework currently in use by the NBI to encourage involvement; (b) hear the perspectives of the NBI officials regarding the level of

Table 10 - List of Key Informants and Date of Interview - Ethiopia

Position/Title	Organization Name	Organization Type	Date Conducted	Number Interviewed
Senior Program Officer	Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO)	Government (NBI)	Dec. 17, 2008	1
Head, Liaison Office	Organization for Rehabilitation & Development (ORDA)	NGO	Dec. 18, 2008	1
Regional Program Coordinator	InterAfrica Group	NGO	Dec. 18, 2008	1
Water Resources Specialist	International Water Management Institute (IWMI)	International NGO	Dec. 18, 2008	1
Senior Researcher	IWMI	International NGO	Dec. 18, 2008	1
National Coordinator	Ethiopia Nile Basin Discourse Forum	NGO	Dec. 20, 2008	1
Coordinator	Christian Relief & Development Association (CRDA)	NGO	Dec. 20, 2008	1
Executive Director	German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)	Government/International	Dec. 22, 2008	1
Senior Water Resources Management Specialist	The World Bank Regional Office	U.N. - International Development	Dec. 23, 2008	1
Senior Soil Specialist	Food and Agricultural Organization Regional Office	U. N. - International Development	Dec. 23, 2008	1
Director, Community Learning & Capacity Development Dept.; Executive Director	Agri-Service Ethiopia	NGO	Dec. 24, 2008	2
Country Coordinator	Global Water Partnership, Eastern Africa	International NGO	Dec. 24, 2008	1
Coordinator	NBI/NTEAP – Small & Micro Grant Project	Government (NBI)	Dec. 25, 2008	1
Director	Sustainable Land Use Forum (SLUF)	NGO	Dec. 25, 2008	1
General Manager	Ethio-Wetlands & Natural Resources Association (EWNRA)	NGO	Dec. 25, 2008	1
Executive Director & Project Coordinator	Ethiopia Environmental NGO (EENGO)	NGO	Dec. 26, 2008	1
Lead Specialist	Project Planning & Management, WRPM, Nile Basin Initiative	Government (NBI)	Dec. 26, 2008	1
Program Manager	Forum for Environment	NGO	Dec. 29, 2008	1
National Project Coordinator	NTEAP, Environmental Protection Authority	Government (NBI)	Dec. 30, 2008	1
Total Interviewed				20

involvement, the mechanisms in use, and the constraints thereof; and, (c) to develop, revise, and tailor questions, if necessary, based on the information obtained.

In the second stage of interviews in Ethiopia, the objective was to directly hear the perspectives of the NGOs relative to involvement in the NBI and also to understand the constraints that inhibit their overall participation. It also provided the opportunity to understand what power structures are present in Ethiopia that either facilitate or hinder involvement in decision-making by nongovernmental organizations. Another objective was to learn, both from literature and conversations with the participants, the extent to which the prerequisites of pluralism exists in Ethiopia that can support stakeholder involvement.

All the interviews were recorded on a digital recorder. To ensure privacy, the recordings were downloaded onto a password protected laptop computer and electronically sent to the researcher's university email account. The recorded data were also downloaded onto a password flash drive as additional back-up copy. Further back-up was provided by simultaneously recording into a micro-cassette tape recorder. These were kept in a locked box at the researcher's guest house following the interviews.

The interviews were supplemented with notes taken to record specific attributes that could only be observed from the interviewees.

6. Analysis of archival, geographical, historical and scientific information

Another method that was used to collect data was the retrieval of archival data. The archival data were used to compare and verify information obtained from key informant interviews. By collecting information from archival sources, risk of systematic biases can be reduced. At the same time, it gives the researcher the opportunity to

understand the more nuanced and complex aspects of the phenomenon under study. The review of archival sources has also the benefit of unraveling participants' values and beliefs within their setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). This is possible because the approach is unobtrusive.

Some of archival records that were examined include meeting minutes, newsletters, memos, announcements, and policy statements. These documents were obtained from the resource centers of the NBI Secretariat, the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO), the World Bank regional office in Addis Ababa, and other NGO offices.

In addition to the archival sources, this study accessed geographical, historical, and scientific information from published documents, informants, and practitioners in Uganda and Ethiopia. This kind of information was important in order to understand the conditions in which the NGOs have been operating over time and also to guide the researcher about the issues that may influence the views of the informants. These sources were also important pointers to any politically sensitive issues that could be avoided or reframed.

All of the archival, geographical, historical and scientific information were critical to triangulation. Triangulation is a methodological technique aimed at contributing to the validity of research findings and rigor through the use of multiple sources (Farmer, et al. 2006, Suzuki et al., 2007). This can lead to a complete understanding of the issue being investigated.

Data Analysis Strategies:

Inductive Process:

Data analysis, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999), is the “process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data . . . Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data” (p. 150). In qualitative research, data analysis is an ongoing iterative process that involves continual reflection of results from open-ended questions and modifying them (Creswell, 2003). The iterative activities include data reduction and transforming raw data into meaningful concepts; display of data into organized information that allows logical conclusions to be made; making conclusions by identifying relations among patterns, propositions or causal flows (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, data collection and analysis are concurrent activities in which the researcher is guided by emerging themes, reframes the questions and modifies the analysis as the study progresses (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). This procedure is known as an inductive process.

An inductive process is popular in qualitative research analysis because it permits findings to emerge from the frequently mentioned themes rather than the researcher being guided by a structured method (Thomas, 2003). The main goals of an inductive approach are (p. 237):

1. “To condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format.

2. To establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data and to ensure these links are both transparent [able to be demonstrated to others] and defensible [justifiable given the objectives of the research].
3. To develop [a] model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or process which are evident in the text (raw data) (Thomas, 2003, p. 237).”

Marshall and Rossman (1999) categorize inductive analytic procedure into six stages: organizing the data; generating categories, themes and patterns; coding the data; testing the emergent understandings; searching for alternative explanations; and writing the report. Maxwell (2005, p. 96) classifies the analysis into “reading and thinking” in relation to the interview transcripts, writing observations, developing coding categories, and analyzing the relationships between the categories in terms of contextual relationships.

In this study, the six stages suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1999) have been collapsed into four for ease of analysis.

1. Compilation of Demographic Information

This stage involves the compilation of demographic information about each of the participants. This process enables one to easily assess the characteristics of the study participants and also to retrieve the data during and after the data analysis.

Out of the 30 (n = 30) participants, 23 (76.7 percent) were male, and 7 (23.3 percent) were female, with ages ranging from 21-80. Their education levels were varied with 6 (20 percent) holding PhDs, 21 (70 percent) Masters, and 3 (10 percent) Bachelors' degrees. There were no participants with lower education attainment. All were professionals with supervisory roles. A summary of the demographic data is shown below in table 11.

Table: 11: Demographic Characteristics of Key Informants

Characteristics	Total Informants
Gender (%)	
Male	76.7
Female	23.3
Other	0.0
Age (%)	
Under 21	0.0
21-40	20.0
41-60	73.3
61-80	6.7
Highest level of education completed (%)	
Primary	0.0
High School	0.0
Diploma (post-high school)	0.0
Bachelors	10.0
Masters	70.0
PhD	20.0

2. Transcription of Interview Data

Immediately after the first few interviews, the recorded interviews were listened to in order to assess their relationship to the research questions. After the interviews were completed, I transcribed all the data myself. This was important because I could easily make sense out of the unusual pronunciations by the participants. The notes that I took during the interviews helped fill in the gaps of inaudible portions of the recorded data. This exercise not only helped me get immersed in the data content but also to re-live the actual interviews. Also, by transcribing myself I was able to put them into a more readable format and insert tentative themes next to each phrase or paragraph.

At this stage of the transcription, reflective notes and comments were kept in a separate notebook so as to identify important categories and eliminate irrelevant ones (Creswell, 1998). Colaizzi (cited in Creswell 1998, pp. 280-281), suggests it is here that the researcher needs to begin to formulate meanings from important statements and spell them out in precise words. The wordings of the categories were derived from various sources, including expressions by the participants, the literature, and the researcher. As Merriam (1989) has stated, how the categories are worded is helpful in answering the research questions. The next process involved coding.

3. Development of Codebook

One important element in qualitative data analysis is the “systematic coding of text.” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). According to Rossman and Rallis (1998, p. 17), coding “is the process of organizing the material into ‘chunks’ before bringing meaning

to those ‘chunks’.” It is a process that helps with sorting the text into categories (Creswell, 1998). The main objective of coding is to break the data and rearrange it into categories in a way that will make comparison between variables possible (Maxwell, 2005).

Hence the next step after the transcription was the development of a codebook for each descriptive element (or theme) linked to every research and interview questions. For an open-ended qualitative interviews, the structure of a code book generally includes the code, a brief definition, a guideline of when or not to use the code, and examples of expressions eligible for coding (MacQueen, McLellan, Kay & Milstein, 1996). Thus, codes contain the assumptions and the groundwork on which the research analysis is based.

The codebooks, in tables 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, provide brief descriptions for the five themes, hereafter referred to as “descriptive elements”: Conditions for Involvement, involvement mechanisms, level of involvement, involvement in decision-making areas, and constraints to involvement. The code book was limited to these five descriptive elements because of their relevance to the research questions and, also, five was a manageable number for this study. Creswell (1998) recommends that even though several themes can be generated from the coding process, a manageable number such as 5 or 6 is better.

4. Computer-Based Coding and Analysis

The next process involved loading all the transcribed data as Text File into *NVivo7* qualitative computer software. The software was preferred because it has the tools to manage and synthesize complex and unstructured data to enhance clarification and understanding (Richards, 2002). The tools that *NVivo* provides can help the analyst to (a) record and link ideas, (b) explore patterns of recurring themes, and, (c) to synthesize and integrate ideas of complex data. The software is also useful for testing the research questions in relation to the answers provided by participants.

Once loaded into the *NVivo* computer software, the 123 pages of transcribed data were read and reread. This helped with the clarification of text and also with editing. At this stage, the data was carefully reviewed line by line to identify expressions that were relevant to each of the descriptive element and themes under each. Every time such an expression was identified, it was dragged and pasted under each descriptive element and theme. These themes helped reveal the major findings and commonalities among the expressions by informants.

After the above process was complete, copies of the relevant expressions under each major descriptive element were printed for further reading and analysis.

Table 12: Conditions for Involvement Codebook

Descriptive elements of 'Conditions for Involvement':	Description of elements	Examples of issues/ideas to code:
1. Capacity of the NBI and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability of the NBI and NGOs to carry out activities that enhances stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staffing size and support</i> ▪ <i>Trained and understands relevance of involvement</i> ▪ <i>Availability of Information and system to share</i> ▪ <i>Financial resources</i>
2. History and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ History of a particular country relative to involvement ▪ Cultural context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>History of NGO involvement; vibrant civil society</i> ▪ <i>Political support; openness to civil society involvement</i> ▪ <i>Dynamic culture (receptive or non-receptive to changes)</i>
3. Information availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Availability of information to stakeholders that is easy to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Accessible print and electronic information</i> ▪ <i>Non-technical and easy to understand; timely</i>
4. Involvement is institutionalized value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involvement embedded in the organization goals and mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Part of organization culture</i> ▪ <i>Part of mission and objectives</i> ▪ <i>Staff and employees consider it a inherent value</i>
5. Legal mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involvement is mandated by national government and/or the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>An Act of national government exists relative to civic society involvement</i> ▪ <i>Organization mandate; documented</i>
6. Relevance of issue, potential benefits and immediacy of outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desire to get involved is dictated by relevance of the issue; potential benefits and immediacy of outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Issue meets stakeholder interest and needs</i> ▪ <i>Expected benefits fill a gap</i> ▪ <i>Benefits are immediate</i>
7. Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Space provided by the policy makers to ensure input by stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Defined roles and responsibility for stakeholders</i> ▪ <i>Space in terms of time provided</i> ▪ <i>Inclusion in the agenda at meetings</i>
8. Structure/Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diffused power structures that open windows for involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Decentralized decision making structures</i> ▪ <i>Openness to stakeholder influence</i>
9. Timing of the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emergence of an issue at the right time to attract interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Issue is of great concern at this time</i> ▪ <i>People's needs are being addressed by the issue</i>
10. Type of Leadership and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political or organizational leadership style that is democratic, open and committed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Democratic or authoritarian leadership style</i> ▪ <i>Supportive; human relations style</i>

2. Involvement Mechanisms

Table 13: Involvement Mechanisms Codebook

Descriptive elements of ‘Involvement Mechanisms’:	Description of elements	Examples of issues/ideas to code:
1. Annual Public Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empirical elements ▪ Statements of organized national events in which NGOs are required to involve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Nile Day</i> ▪ <i>National or regional Conferences</i>
2. Effective Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statements pertaining to difficulty of understanding official reports and relevant publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Mention of technical language</i> ▪ <i>Publications in languages other than that of the stakeholders</i>
3. Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statements about the extent to which the NGOs are consulted on policy issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Public hearings, meetings</i> ▪ <i>Solicitation for feedback</i>
4. Involvement Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Framework in place to facilitate involvement ▪ Evidence in official documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Any mention of mechanism or procedure that is lacking</i> ▪ <i>Institutional procedures</i>
5. Localized Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plans adopted by the NBI and the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Community successfully implements projects</i> ▪ <i>Programs easily adopted by local community</i>
6. Media Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coalition of print and electronic media at national or regional level that covers NB I activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Arrangement or consortia of media groups that cover Nile Basin issues; sensitize the public</i>
7. Meetings and trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empirical elements ▪ Statements about meetings, training, workshops and conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Attendance of activities by the NBI, including meetings, training, workshops, conference, annual events</i>
8. Official Reports, Publications and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empirical elements ▪ Statements referring to publications, reports shared and feedback solicited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Newsletters, websites</i> ▪ <i>Solicited feedback on announcements</i>
9. Diffused Power Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mention of diffused points for decision-making at local, national or regional levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Decentralized points for meetings and public hearings</i> ▪ <i>Formalized in the NBI structure</i>
10. Projects and Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Projects and programs on the ground requiring stakeholder involvement to be implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Community based projects with high involvement</i>

3. Level of Involvement

Table 14: Level of Involvement Codebook

Descriptive Elements of ‘Level of Involvement’:	Description of Elements:	Examples of issues/ideas to code:
1. No Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empirical elements ▪ Statements regarding non-involvement by stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>We have not been involved</i> ▪ <i>No NGOs allowed to participate</i> ▪ <i>This is a political issue</i>
2. Low Level Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statements about low level of involvement ▪ Empirical evidence from records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Only few are involved</i> ▪ <i>Actual number of NGO participants compared to government officials</i>
3. Medium Level of Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empirical elements ▪ Statements implying average level of involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Some or moderate attendance</i>
4. High Level of Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empirical elements ▪ Statements about effective influence on decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Equal number of NGO representatives attend</i> ▪ <i>Views considered and acted on</i>

4. Involvement in Decision-Making Processes

Table 15: Involvement in Decision-Making Processes Codebook

Descriptive Elements of ‘Involvement in Decision-Making Processes’:	Description of Elements:	Examples of issues/ideas to code:
1. Defining the problem or setting program objectives/goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholders are invited to be part of problem identification and defining of goals and objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Identified problems ourselves</i> ▪ <i>Invited in the planning for investment projects</i> ▪ <i>Received notification and sent views to the NBI team</i> ▪ <i>Attended meetings, public hearings</i>
2. Developing possible solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholders part of the team that comes up with alternative solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Involved in policy discussions and decision making process</i> ▪ <i>Ideas on course of action shared with policy makers</i> ▪ <i>Ideas taken into consideration in framing solutions</i>
3. Coming up with ways to implement the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholders involved in the planning of project implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Independently or jointly designed how project is to be implemented</i> ▪ <i>Participated in training, workshops, and public hearings relative to project implementation</i>
4. Developing monitoring procedures or tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholders included in developing monitoring procedures and are part of the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Involved in the design of monitoring process</i> ▪ <i>Part of the monitoring team</i>
5. Evaluating the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholders have input in how the project is to be evaluated; are part of the evaluating team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Involved in the evaluation design and process</i> ▪ <i>Part of the evaluating team ; required to send outcome reports</i>

5. Constraints to Involvement

Table 16: Constraints to Involvement Codebook

Descriptive elements of 'Constraints to Involvement':	Description of elements:	Examples of issues/ideas to code:
1. Structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statement indicating extent to which decision-making is centralized ▪ Statements indicating extent to which decision-making is decentralized ▪ Empirical components (extent of interest group/NGO formation and number operating) ▪ Statements regarding existence or non-existence of an involvement framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Diffusion of decision-making power supports involvement</i> ▪ <i>Degree of pluralism: diversity in population, federal or unitary government structure; multiplicity of interest groups presupposes openness to involvement</i> ▪ <i>Open registration of and high number of NGOs is indicative of involvement in government decisions</i> ▪ <i>Institutional framework and mandates can encourage or discourage involvement</i>
2. Mechanisms/Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific statements of procedures used to engage stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Consultations; public hearings; meetings and trainings</i> ▪ <i>Conferences; observations; print and electronic media</i> ▪ <i>Reports – Minutes, memos, newsletters; evaluations.</i>
3. Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of the NBI and NGO ability to carry out activities that would enhance stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staffing size and knowledge limits involvement</i> ▪ <i>Lack of training to understand pertinent issues</i> ▪ <i>Lack of Information inhibits involvement</i>
4. Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resources that are associated with stakeholder ability to get involved in the NBI decision-making activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Lack of finance limits ability to get involved; income, poverty</i>
5. Social/Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social and cultural issues that impact directly or indirectly on one's attitude or desire to get involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Lack of ability to understand issues due to poor education</i> ▪ <i>Cultural norms, practices, language</i>
6. Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empirical elements ▪ Statements regarding the stalemate in finalizing Cooperative Framework and how it affects NBI and stakeholder confidence about the future ▪ Statements relating to political controls of NGOs through registration and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Uncertain status of the Cooperative Framework Agreement leads to low confidence about involvement</i> ▪ <i>Internal political controls restricts areas of NGO activities and involvement</i>
7. Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Negative positions taken by NBI officials regarding role of NGOs ▪ Expressed assumptions about the role of each actors (Government and NGOs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>NBI is a government issue; NGOs/civil society don't make a difference</i> ▪ <i>Anti-NGO mentality; NGOs are ignorant; NGOs always confrontational; Government issue too technical</i> ▪ <i>NGOs don't represent all the people</i>
8. Different Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statements that some issues are given special attention or of higher importance to each of the government and NGO actors ▪ Statements alluding to restrictions imposed by donors and sponsors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>NGOs focusing on water sharing; NBI on benefit sharing</i> ▪ <i>NGOs have own goals and priorities NGOs and national governments have different interests</i> ▪ <i>Donor preferences</i>
9. History of Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statements that lack of experience with NGO involvement acts as a barrier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Stereotyping; NGOs have traditionally been part of policy process;</i> ▪ <i>Window for NGOs is always small</i> ▪ <i>NBI officials come from countries with no experience with NGO involvement</i>
10. Partnering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statements that NBI (or NGOs) lack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>NGOs lack strategic plan</i>

Strategies	<p>appropriate plan for engaging NGO stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statements that the NGOs lack a plan for effective involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>NGOs don't know how to form allies</i> ▪ <i>NGOs are confrontational; Have no facts</i> ▪ <i>Memorandum of Understanding signed; compromise or a window of opportunity?</i> ▪ <i>Roles of NGOs not clarified</i>
11. Unfavorable Timing and Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statements that time and space not often considered when inviting NGOs to get involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Not enough time given between information and meeting</i> ▪ <i>NGOs not given enough time to express views</i> ▪ <i>NGOs not included in the agenda; only given a small window to react or ask questions</i>
12. Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statements that there is lack of trust between the NBI/government officials and the NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Suspicion between the actors</i> ▪ <i>Lack of trust; dishonesty; accusations</i>
13. Information and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empirical elements ▪ Statements that sources of information, print or electronic, are missing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Published materials</i> ▪ <i>Radio; Television; public hearings; public forums;</i> ▪ <i>Conferences; trainings; workshops; meetings</i>

Research Rigor:

Several steps were taken to ensure the methodological rigor of this study. First, various sources were used to collect data, including key informant interviews, the use of secondary data including archival sources and a review of geographic, historical and scientific literature. According to the literature (Yin, 2003), external validity concerns can be eased by applying a theory, especially when it is a single-case study. In this respect, pluralist theory was chosen to guide the study. An attempt was also made to ensure the reliability of the process through the use of study protocol (See Appendices B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I).

In addition, the following steps and procedures suggested by Maxwell (2005) and Marshall and Rossman (1999) were considered to ensure overall rigor of the study design, methodology, and findings: (a) adherence to prepared semi-structured interview protocol; (b) using multiple sources of information to arrive at convergence of evidence; (c) recording the interviews into a digital voice recorder to ensure that information

provided by the participant was not lost; (d) transcription of the text verbatim; and (e) using qualitative QSR NVivo computer software to assist with coding, identifying emerging themes and relating them to the research questions (Richards, 2002).

Methodology Limitations:

There were a few limitations related to the methodology of this case study. Foremost, was a limitation in the use of the “reputational approach” (Hunter, 1953) to identify the initial list of the most influential persons as study informants. For instance, once the list was compiled and given to the judges to scale down, it was discovered that some of the names were not current. Hence individuals no longer with their agencies were removed from the list and replaced with those recommended by the judges. This implies that the reliance on the reputational approach as the only means to identify key informants is not perfect due to the researcher’s inability to get the most up-to-date information. To find replacements, the snowball method was used.

Another limitation was on the selection of the “judges.” Once identified, using the positional approach, the judges were contacted directly about their roles. Unfortunately in both Uganda and Ethiopia, two prospective “judges” could not participate in the selection of the final list of informants for reasons beyond the researcher’s control. Therefore, in the case of Uganda a judge had to be replaced by a less influential individual but highly recommended by colleagues. This also points to the potential weakness of relying solely on the positional approach to identify the judges.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

“This is a government thing”

- Anonymous source, Uganda

“We cannot invite NGOs to the management meetings of the Secretariat. There is no way.”

-Participant # 7 (Anonymous), NBI, Uganda.

“The issue of the government is not the issue of the civil society.”

-Participant #21(Anonymous), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Introduction:

The findings of this study are explained in three main sections: 1) pluralism in Ethiopia; 2) the NBI and its Activities in Ethiopia; and 3) findings concerning NGO involvement. The subsequent section discusses the constraints to involvement and the chapter concludes with a presentation of a conceptual model of the findings. First is a brief summary of the findings.

Summary of the Findings:

The findings of this study show that 1) the characteristics of power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative in Ethiopia are both pluralistic and elitist; 2) the level of involvement in the Water Resources Planning and Management Project by nongovernmental stakeholders is low; 3) the framework for involvement is limited and restricted to invitations to selected meetings in which the role of the NGOs is that of the observer; 4) political factors are the major constraints to involvement, followed by lack of capacity of the NGOs and the NBI, structural limitations, and lack of information and awareness.

These findings are further discussed in terms of pluralism in Ethiopia, the NBI and its activities in Ethiopia, and findings concerning NGO involvement.

1. Pluralism in Ethiopia

From the analysis of the literature, the archival, geographical, historical, and scientific information, combined with limited key informant interviews, the findings on pluralism in Ethiopia are explained in terms of two concepts: prerequisites to pluralism and pluralist structures.

Prerequisites to pluralism:

The prerequisites were assessed using the following attributes recommended by Newton (1969), Kim & Bell (1985), and deLeon (1993): decentralized power structures, a diversified and heterogeneous population, strong labor unions, large-size and autonomous NGOs, a diversified economy, a “reasonable” level of industrialization, competitive party politics, and information accessibility. The findings on some of these attributes are presented in this section, while others are discussed under “pluralist structures” in the subsequent section.

Ethiopia’s political structure is federal, as provided for by the constitution adopted on December 8, 1994 (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, 2008). The constitution provides for nine autonomous regional states: Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, Somalia, Benshangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Harari, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. This political pluralism, set up by the current EPRDF government, has its roots in the ethnic-based movement of 1974 (Zegeye, Tegegn and

Toggia, 2008). The ethnically divided regional states provide equitable representation in the federal government. Although the constitution mandates fragmented structures, the central government still dominates the policy-making process and outcomes (Zegeye, Tegegn and Toggia, 2008).

In terms of the heterogeneity of the population, Ethiopia has seventy-three ethnic groups (Smith, 2008) that speak different languages, and practice different religions. In addition, employees in the private and public sectors have the right to form trade unions as stated in Article 42 of the constitution. But although labor unions and NGOs exist, their size and freedom of operation are restricted. As one of the informants in Ethiopia stated, “I don’t know if labor unions are active at all in this country. They are at the margin. The labor unions, the regional unions, the teacher unions, and others don’t have much weight here.” A study conducted by Zegeye, Tegegn and Toggia (2008, p. 98) confirm this situation by stressing that “free labor unions and peasant associations are suppressed.” Other comments obtained by this study further confirm that pluralist actors, such as the NGOs and labor unions, do not have the latitude to freely function in the decentralized power structures of the country.

Another prerequisite is the existence of large-sized, autonomous NGOs. Article 31 of Ethiopia’s constitution provides for the freedom of association and the formation of nongovernmental organizations. While the size of NGOs was found to vary, evidence from key informants indicates that their autonomy is compromised. The government is restrictive and distrustful of organized groups. Although this situation has historical

precedence, as discussed in Chapter 1, NGOs that work on advocacy activities are reported by informants to be constantly monitored, controlled, and harassed.

The economy is less diversified and is predominantly agricultural (Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office, 2006). Manufacturing is minimal and is mainly focused on the processing of agricultural commodities. Competitive politics is also guaranteed by the federal constitution. However, the literature and media reports show that political parties are harassed (Taye, 2009).

Access to information is limited. The first reason for this is the geographical size of the country and disparities in the presence of communication infrastructure. Second, the print media is subject to censorship or self-censor to avoid harassment by the government (Nebiyu, 2008), while the electronic media were mentioned by informants to be limited in scope and very parochial. According to a participant in Ethiopia, “the media lack the freedom. As a result [they] refrain from writing [about] certain issues [such as] the Nile.” This view was shared by another NGO official who explained that “In Ethiopia, there is inadequate participation because of insufficient information..., we have a very parochial media giving more attention to political and less to development issues.”

Another reason is that the frequencies available for radio and television are limited and concentrated in the capital city of Addis Ababa. As one participant stated, “In Ethiopia there are only two FM radio stations and two TV channels; the latter is limited to Addis Ababa, the capital city. At the same time, these channels only air

government programs and commercials.” Satellite TV channels are available but only accessible to those able to pay for the service.

Legal mandates also limit access to who can receive or disseminate information. For example, the recent passage of the “Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 00/2008” legislation restricts access to information by organized groups. For instance, one of the provisions of the new law states that the printing of and distribution of information in the interest of an unlawful charity (i.e., NGO) is punishable by a fine or imprisonment. An unlawful charity is defined as an organization that has not been formally registered by the government.

Pluralist structures:

The presence of pluralist structures or lack thereof was assessed not just for the country of Ethiopia but also for the Nile Basin Initiative as an institution in that country. The power structures were explored by assessing: the extent to which they are diffused, representative, autonomous, meditative, and avail involvement mechanisms (Newton, 1969; Kim & Bell, 1985; deLeon, 1993; Manley, 1983; Sexton, 1999; Fox, 2008).

The findings show that the power configurations in Ethiopia are a mixture of pluralist and elitist structures (Zegeye, Tegegn & Toggia, 2008). The federal system of government generally is based on diffused structures at the regional and local level. This characterizes Ethiopia as pluralistic. This means that the structures provide for representation in the policy-making processes at the national and regional levels. Similarly, the bureaucratic structures have meditative roles and provide for involvement mechanisms. However, the space and autonomy for organized groups to use these

mechanisms are limited. The findings further show that the presence of pluralist structures does not necessarily guarantee involvement by stakeholders.

Elitist structures exist alongside pluralist ones. This means that structurally the system is pluralist but when it comes to decision-making, only a few at the top make decisions with limited consultation or involvement by organized groups. As Zegeye et al (2008, p. 97) have observed, “The political pluralism exist side by side with elements of dynastic politics, where it has always been the central government that shapes the policy of the country.” And according to one informant in Ethiopia, “the NBI is highly centralized...” As another NBI official stated, “You have all these [NBI] programs hatched at the highest level involving the World Bank and UNOPS without bringing on board the people who are supposed to consume the product at the end of the day.”

2. The NBI and its Activities in Ethiopia

As described in Chapter 1, the Nile Basin Initiative has eight major projects under the Shared Vision Program: the Applied Training Project; the Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP); the Nile Basin Regional Power Trade; the Confidence-Building and Stakeholder Involvement Program; the Socioeconomic Development and Benefit Sharing Project; the Water Resources Planning and Management Project (WRPMP); and, the Shared Vision Program Coordination Project. It is through these activities that the riparian countries, such as Ethiopia, get involved and hope to achieve long-term benefits.

In addition to the above projects, the NBI supports about two dozen micro-grant projects throughout Ethiopia. These are varied in scope and area of focus. Only the community based organizations that receive these grants have the privilege of getting involved in decisions affecting project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. As one informant in Ethiopia stated, “involvement by NGOs is largely concentrated in the micro-grant projects, [and less on others].”

Other NBI activities with visible presence in Ethiopia and that provide opportunity for stakeholder involvement and long-term benefits include the Nile Basin Trust Fund committee and media networks. The presence of these projects in Ethiopia was mentioned by 26.7 percent of the informants.

3. Findings Concerning NGO Involvement

As stated earlier, the focus of the study was the Water Resources Planning and Management Project (WRPMP). For each of the three WRPMP components (i.e., the Water Policies Good Practices Guides and Support; the Project Planning and Management Good Practices Guides and Support; and the Nile Basin Decision System), the informants were asked about their level of involvement in the following rational decision-making processes: problem or goal identification, development of strategies for action, coming up with alternative programs or solutions, identification of implementation strategies, and ways to monitor and evaluate the projects.

Findings are summarized under the following headings: a) Involvement in the rational Decision-Making Processes; b) Level of Involvement in the Decision-Making Processes; and, c) Involvement Mechanisms.

a) Involvement in the rational Decision-Making Processes:

The informants were asked to identify which decision-making processes they have or have not been involved in with respect to the WRPMP's three component projects listed above. As can be seen in Table 17, sixty-four expressions were coded under this descriptive element #4, "involvement in decision-making processes."

Table 17: Involvement in Decision-Making Processes

Tree Node/Theme #4 Decision-Making Processes	# of Informants Making Expressions N (%)	Total Expressions n (%)
Defining the problem or setting the program objectives/goals	15 (50.0)	18 (28.1)
Developing possible solutions	13 (43.3)	18 (28.1)
Coming up with ways to implement the project	11 (36.7)	13 (20.3)
Developing monitoring procedures or tools	14 (46.7)	15 (23.4)
Evaluating the project		
TOTAL NUMBER OF INFORMANTS	30	64
TOTAL EXPRESSIONS		

Overall, the informants expressed mixed views about the degree of involvement in each of the decision-making processes affecting the WRPMP's component projects. As one senior manager in Uganda observed, the Nile Decision Support System (DSS) project predominantly involves government and external experts. On the Policy, Good

Practices and Support project, the same informant noted, “I think the [policy] formulation has been to a large extent done by professionals.” Another informant expressed that the absence of a window for participation at each of the decision levels was due to the misperceptions about who has the right to get involved. An informant in Ethiopia commented,

The government [thinks] like they are the ones that have the mandate to make decisions. The NGOs could participate in giving feedback or comments but not the decision-making process. There is this kind of mentality within the NBI. And because of this we are not involved in the decision-making process of the NBI.

The exclusion of nongovernmental stakeholders in the decision-making processes in the component projects was corroborated by a WRPM official as follows: “We principally work with the government. [In] the second phase of the project, I believe, we will attempt to work with NGOs as much as possible... I don’t think we have realized the benefits of what we are doing until NGOs get involved.”

A fair number of the NGO leaders interviewed directed most of their comments to decision-making processes affecting the micro-grant projects and not the WRPMP, the issue-area of primary interest in the study. As noted above, this was because the WRPMP officials have not made the necessary effort to include NGOs in their activities.

In developing possible solutions for the WRPMP components, NGO informants indicated their lack of involvement. As one noted, “In bringing solutions there was still no involvement by the NBD.” This was confirmed by an official of the NBI in Uganda who stated that “the level of involvement [in this area] is still low because once the projects have been identified we hire consultants to do the designs. Once that is done,

possible solutions are developed by the technical officers such as the Nile-Technical Advisory Committee (Nile-TAC).”

Views were also mixed about the degree of stakeholder involvement in project monitoring. Some informants stated that this was predominantly the role of the donors and the NBI project managers. One informant was of the opinion that the relationship between the NBI and the NGOs, with respect to project monitoring, is quite hierarchical. Thus, “when it comes to monitoring of projects it is [a] boss/supervisor relationship. The NBI lords it over [the NGOs].”

There was agreement among the informants that evaluation of projects was dominated by the NBI officials and the donors (see sample quotes, Table 18). The extent of NGO involvement was mainly limited to answering questions during the process. As an official of the NBI in Uganda admitted, “When it comes to evaluation of the projects, it is more of a role for the donors and not the NGOs... I have not seen NGOs ... being involved in the mid-term reviews. Usually it is the program manager, senior program manager, and a team of officials from the World Bank conducting these reviews.” Another official added, “We have developed what we call ‘results-based monitoring and evaluation.’ This still centers at the corporate level.”

From the views expressed, it is evident that the decision-making processes with respect to the WRPMP issue-area are still dominated by government experts and consultants. For the micro-grant projects, however, the responses were mixed. Nevertheless, the majority of those interviewed in Uganda and Ethiopia agreed that involvement of NGOs is mainly concentrated in the implementation of projects stage.

Sample quotes related to the above element are provided in Table 18.

Table 18: Themes and Quotes: Involvement in Decision-Making Processes

Theme	Sample Quotes	Informant
Defining the problem or setting the program objectives/goals	“It [is] the government that has been involved in the planning and the development of these projects.”	#11: NBI, Ethiopia
	“In the project identification level there [has been] no involvement of the NBD.”	#13: NGO, Ethiopia
	“There is no clear or genuine participation from the very beginning.”	#14: NGO, Ethiopia
	“The goals and objectives of the Water Resources Planning and Management [are] not fully shared; the modalities of operation not known to us.”	#16: NGO, Ethiopia
	“I think NGOs get more involved in the formulation stage, but after that there is limited involvement.”	#3: NBI, Uganda
	“At the level where we are, there is some involvement in defining the project objectives but not so much because what I see is the planning by government officers who are in the steering committees. The steering technical committee comes with the ideas and then these are taken down to the people.”	#5: NBI, Uganda
Developing possible solutions	“None of them. The project was put together and delivered for implementation mainly by the World Bank team that works on the Nile issues.”	#10: NBI, Uganda
	“In developing possible solutions, the level of involvement is still low because once these projects [are] identified, we hire consultants to do the designs and some of the consultants do not know how to involve stakeholders... But what we have done in the CBSI project is that we have been adding into the terms of reference of consultants the importance of people’s involvement.”	#5: NBI, Uganda
	“The NGOs that we collaborate with are not part of the decisions made.”	#8: NBI, Uganda
	“In bringing solutions, there was still no involvement by the NBD... The NBD’s intention is to propose certain alternatives or complimentary solutions for the NBI projects after commissioned studies... [Practically] speaking, there is no involvement of the NBD in the four stages.”	#13: NGO, Ethiopia
Ways to implement a project	“All the implementers of these micro-grants are NGOs and CBOs.”	#19: NGO, Ethiopia
	“When some international donors want to launch and implement a project, they consult with us and they involve the local NGOs and civil society.”	#21: NGO, Ethiopia
	“We are responsible for implementing the project together with local communities and local authorities.”	#25: NGO, Ethiopia
	“None of them. The project was put together and delivered for implementation mainly by the World Bank team that works on the Nile issues.”	#10: NBI, Uganda

Table 18: Continued

	Sample Quotes	Informant
Developing monitoring procedures or tools	“Monitoring is done by the regional project officials together with [the NGOs] at the site.”	#1: NBI, Uganda
	“In monitoring and evaluation, there was no involvement of the NBD.”	#13: NGO, Ethiopia
	“When it comes to monitoring of projects it is [a] boss/supervisor relationship. The NBI lords it over.”	#29: NGO, Ethiopia
	“We are of course monitoring what is happening and reporting it back to the micro-grant office through quarterly reports. People from the NBI also come for the monitoring purpose. We are all involved in this.”	#25: NGO, Ethiopia
Evaluating the project	“Monitoring and evaluation is done by the regional project officials together with the [NGOs].”	#1: NBI, Uganda
	“Evaluation on the other hand is done by the World Bank team.”	#29: NGO, Ethiopia
	“When it comes to evaluation of the projects, it is more of a role for the donors and not the NGOs... I have not seen NGOs participate or being involved in the mid-term reviews. Usually it is the program manager, senior program manager and a team of officials from the World Bank conducting these reviews.”	#3: NBI, Uganda
	“We are not involved as part of the team that does the mid-term reviews but we are visited and interviewed by them.”	#4: NGO, Uganda
	“We have developed what we call ‘results-based monitoring and evaluation.’ This still centers at the corporate level.”	#5: NBI, Uganda

b) Level of Involvement in the Decision-Making Processes:

After expressing their views on involvement in the decision-making processes, the informants were invited to share their assessment on the level of involvement using the following scale: “low,” “medium,” “high,” or “no involvement.” This question was also asked in connection with the WRPMP’s three component projects.

Thirty-eight expressions were coded under this descriptive element #3, “level of involvement.” As can be seen in Table 19, forty-three (43.0) percent of the informants said the level of involvement is low; 33 percent – no involvement; 13 percent – high involvement; and 3 percent – medium.

Table 19: Level of Involvement in the Decision-Making Processes

Tree Node/Theme #3 Degree of Involvement	# of Informants Making Expressions n (%)	Total Expressions n (%)
No Involvement	10 (33.3)	13 (34.2)
Low Level of Involvement	13 (43.3)	16 (42.1)
Medium Level of Involvement	1 (3.3)	2 (5.7)
High Level of Involvement	4 (13.3)	7 (18.4)
TOTAL NUMBER OF INFORMANTS	30	38
TOTAL EXPRESSIONS		

This situation at “low involvement” and “no involvement” were attributed to several factors as narrated by the informants.

Low Involvement:

Nearly half of the informants (43.3 percent) expressed the view that involvement in decision-making is low. This low level of involvement was attributed to four identified factors. Each of these is briefly explained below.

i) ***Attitudes and misperceptions:*** Some of the NBI officials expressed that the institution and its various entities belong to the government. Hence all the decisions must be made by the NBI and public officials. As a senior official attached to the NBI Secretariat explained, the NBI is “purely a government thing,” from its formation to the way it is managed. That is the general attitude. An NBI official in Ethiopia observed that the low involvement can also be attributed to lack of interest by the NGOs in areas that are considered technical. For example, the informant mentioned lack of involvement in water quality management programs considered technical by the local stakeholders.

ii) Size and influence of the NGOs: Other informants noted that involvement is dictated to some extent by the size or influence of a nongovernmental organization. Another important variable is the availability of project areas in which they can get involved. For example, the bigger NGOs were said to have better leverage in terms of resources and capacity. Hence they are involved in many activities while the smaller ones are not. An informant in Ethiopia explained this situation as follows: “From the projects that I know, the small NGOs are not involved but the large NGOs are.” Similarly, some NGOs noted that they were not included in any activities conducted by the NBI’s Water Resources Planning and Management (WRPM) project due to lack of formal arrangements such as a memorandum of understanding. Such an arrangement tends to favor only the larger NGOs. A Nile Basin Initiative official in Ethiopia confirmed that they only work directly with the government, even though they recognize the importance of working with the NGOs.

iii) Core value: Informants also claimed that involvement by stakeholders is not a core value of the NBI. As a Uganda-based official stated, “The NBI itself must enshrine participation as the core value and without that there is no philosophical basis to engage the society... If you have an environment in which participation has not been part and parcel of their daily operations, it will be unfair to expect that the Nile Basin as a system within a bigger socio-economic system can take forward a principle such as participation on its own.” The consequence of this at the national level is reflected in the restricted registration processes and limited areas in which NGOs can get involved. Based on the historical realities reviewed in Chapter 1, lack of this intrinsic value in

Ethiopia has worked to limit the political space for NGO involvement in the NBI projects.

iv) Technical nature: Several participants at both study sites also stated that involvement is low because of the technical nature of the projects. As one NBI official explained, water management and investment issues require technically savvy individuals like engineers, investment experts, and experienced policy makers. Therefore, the level of involvement in decision areas will largely be determined by the degree to which the project issues are either technical or non-technical. As an official of the NBI in Uganda claimed,

The ones that have low involvement are the ones that are technical projects which people do not understand... These [include] electricity transmission and big infrastructure projects. But we have seen a situation where [with] simple projects like flood management, water and sanitation, agricultural projects—there is high level of participation.

Equally responsible for low involvement is the technical language used in the official documents distributed by the NBI. One senior manager with the NBI acknowledged that the language used is a bit technical and therefore not user-friendly. This has the potential to stifle interest of individual NGO leaders whose knowledge is less technical.

Other reasons attributed to the low level of involvement are: 1) failure to include NGOs from the beginning of project formulation; 2) lack of a permanent involvement framework (i.e., currently involvement is on ad-hoc basis); 3) the misperception that planning and decision-making is predominantly a government function; and 5) the NBI structure does not encourage involvement.

No Involvement:

Of the thirty informants, 33.3% expressed that there was no NGO involvement in the decision-making process, particularly in the issue-area examined in the study; the Water Resources Planning and Management project and its components. As an Ethiopia-based informant stated, “The Water Resources Planning and Management staff [don’t] want to go an inch away from what the government is thinking. They don’t want a confrontation with the government.” This view was corroborated by one official of the NBI Secretariat who commented, “... as far as I know [the WRPM] does not involve the civil society; [they are only] informed later about the projects ...” A similar view was expressed by a senior official at the NBI who noted that most NBI regional projects involve only the officials of water ministries in each of the member countries. Efforts to integrate the stakeholders in the project design and formulation at the national and regional levels have not been successful.

Summary quotes related to each of these categories are provided in table 20.

Table 20: Themes and Quotes: Level of Involvement

Theme	Sample Quotes	Informant
Low Involvement	Attitude and misperception	
	“They were not involved from the very beginning. This was purely a government thing.”	#10: NBI, Uganda
	“We seem to be having currently an ad hoc kind of involvement of stakeholders... and perceiving it to be the holistic perception... of some kind of stakeholder.”	#4: NGO, Uganda
	“The perception of the government on NGOs is that they are there to provide service delivery [and] not engaging in policy advocacy or providing input.”	#14: NGO, Ethiopia
	Size and influence of NGOs	
	“From the projects that I know, the small NGOs are not involved but the large NGOs are.”	#27: NGO, Ethiopia

Table 20: Continued

Theme	Sample Quotes	Sample Quotes
	“You know the majority of our staff is here because of their technical expertise. So when it comes to communicating to the general public it may not be easy for the public to understand.”	#6: NBI, Uganda
	“The Nile Basin issues are complex, highly technical and specialized. [Consequently], they are simply not effective.”	#4: NBI, Uganda
	General	
	“...Their involvement as far as I know is very low... and the capacity to influence decision is also very limited.”	#20: NGO, Ethiopia
	“Involvement in the NBI is very limited...”	#11: NBI, Ethiopia
	“On external perspective, the level has been very low. I think this is one of their weakest points... So, participation of civil society is weak.”	#6: NBI, Uganda
No Involvement	“As far as I know [the NBI] does not involve the civil society... The civil society is informed later on about the projects, about the benefits and whatever.”	#11: NBI, Ethiopia
	“Involvement? Not at all. Because I consider the NBI to be the main department of government. The Water Resources Planning and Management or the ENTRO don’t want to go an inch away from what the government is thinking. They don’t want confrontation with the government.”	#14: NGO, Ethiopia
	“There is no clear or genuine participation from the very beginning.”	#14: NGO, Ethiopia
	“The Water Resources Planning and Management have not been involving the NGOs... We principally work with the government.”	#30: NBI, Ethiopia
	“It is still a very government thing... If the Nile-COM members don’t say ABCD, then ABCD won’t be done... [It is] just a weird way of working.”	#10: NBI, Uganda
	“The Nile Decision Support System is still a central place mostly involving governmental experts and other experts.”	#5: NBI, Uganda
	“[At] the macro level we are trying to work with the regional population so that there is understanding of the NBI. A large extent here has been mostly the government stakeholders—ministers of water... [At] the micro level where we actually implement programs such as the Eastern Nile and Equatorial Lakes regions, I would say that we have not done so much.”	#5: NBI, Uganda
Medium Level of Involvement	“In some countries there is involvement by the media, civil society, etc. In some countries it depends on the type of government.”	#1: NBI, Uganda
High Involvement	“High involvement was visible mainly at the grassroots level.”	#21: NGO, Ethiopia
	“The Project Planning and Management component at the moment has a higher level of involvement and this is because of deliberate attempts... by the Eastern Nile programs... to [work] with people to identify projects, plan implementation.”	#28: NBI/ENTRO, Ethiopia
	“We provide them, the NBD, the platform as permanent invited guests. There is involvement. What I am telling you are the facts.”	#28: NBI/ENTRO, Ethiopia

c) *Involvement Mechanisms:*

Another set of concerned mechanisms that the NBI has put in place to facilitate involvement in various projects, including the Water Resources Planning and Management Project. Responses to this question were essential for assessing whether the presence and types of mechanisms or the lack thereof, explains the extent of involvement by NGOs in Ethiopia. Mechanisms in this study are defined as procedures or processes that are used to facilitate involvement in the decision-making activities of the Nile Basin Initiative either at the secretariat, local, regional or national levels.

As shown in Table 21, 45 expressions were coded under this descriptive element #2, “involvement mechanisms.” One third (33.3 percent) of the informants identified meetings and trainings as the mechanisms used by the NBI to engage nongovernmental stakeholders in its activities. Other mechanisms cited were projects and programs (26.7 percent), diffused power structures (13.3 percent), use of official reports, publications and feedback (10 percent), and consultations (10 percent). Mechanisms such as annual events, localized plans, and involvement frameworks were each mentioned by three percent of the informants.

i) *Meetings and trainings:* Of the thirty informants interviewed, 33.3 percent mentioned meetings and trainings as the most visible and frequently used mechanisms for involving nongovernmental stakeholders in different NBI activities. Workshops and conferences are included under this theme.

According to those interviewed, the meetings and workshops are used to sensitize participants on new programs and projects, to enlist new NGO membership and involvement and, to train NGOs on project implementation and monitoring skills.

Table 21: Involvement Mechanisms

Tree Node/Theme #2 Involvement Mechanisms	# of Informants Making Expressions – n (%)	Total Expressions n (%)
Meetings and trainings	10 (33.3)	19 (42.2)
Projects and programs	8 (26.7)	8 (17.8)
Diffused power structures	4 (13.3)	5 (11.1)
Official reports, publications and feedback	3 (10)	3 (6.7)
Consultations	3 (10.0)	3 (6.7)
Media networks	3 (10)	3 (6.7)
Effective communication	1 (3.3.)	1 (2.2)
Annual public events	1 (3.3)	1 (2.2)
Localized plans	1 (3.3)	1 (2.2)
Involvement framework	1 (3.3)	1 (2.2)
TOTAL NUMBER OF INFORMANTS	30	45
TOTAL EXPRESSIONS		

Despite the importance of meetings in providing an opportunity for involvement in decision making, the findings from the archival sources such as memos, minutes, and official reports, indicate that nongovernmental stakeholders have been historically excluded from attending, with a few exceptions. The representatives of the Nile Basin Discourse have been invited not as participants in the decision process but as observers. Also, as the matrix (Table 22) shows, evidence of actual NGO involvement in the

Table 22: Meeting Attendance Record. **Sources:** Minutes and Meeting Records. The Nile Basin Library, Entebbe, Uganda. 2008

DATE	TYPE OF MEETING	LOCATION	PARTICIPANT				
			Government/ NBI	Donors/ International Consultants	NGOs	Total #	NGO %
July 21-22 2008	16th Nile Council 08 Ministers	Kinshasa, DRC	10	1	4	15	27
May 2-3 2006	3rd Annual Nile Basin Trust Fund Committee	Bujumbura, Burundi	1	10	1	12	8
Dec 5-9 2005	7 th Negotiation Committee	Entebbe, Uganda	9	0	0	9	0
May 2-6 2005	6 th Negotiation Committee	Entebbe, Uganda	10	0	0	10	0
Feb 7-11 2005	5 th Negotiation Committee	Entebbe, Uganda	10	0	0	10	0
Sep 20-24 2004	4 th Negotiation Committee	Entebbe, Uganda	10	0	0	10	0
May 31-Jun 4 2004	3rd Negotiation Committee	Entebbe, Uganda	10	0	0	10	0
March 8-12 2004	2nd Negotiation Committee	Entebbe, Uganda	9	0	0	9	0
Dec 7 2003	11th Meeting of the Nile Basin Council of ministers	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	8	0	0	8	0
July 30-Aug 1 2001	2nd Transitional Committee	Entebbe, Uganda	9	2	0	11	0
Aug 4-5 2000	8 th Annual Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Water Affairs	Khartoum, Sudan	10	2	0	12	0
May 12-13 1999	7 th Annual Meeting of the council of ministers of water affairs	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	9	3	0	12	0
March 2-4 1998	6 th Meeting of the TECCONILE	Arusha Tanzania	8	0	0	8	0
Feb 22-25 1996	4 th Meeting of Ministers of Water Affairs	Kampala, Uganda	7	0	0	7	0
Feb 20-23 1997	5 th Meeting of the Council of Ministers responsible for water affairs	Cairo, Egypt	6	0	0	6	0
Feb 9-11 1995	3rd Meeting of Ministers of Water Affairs	Arusha Tanzania	7	0	0	7	0
Jan 18-20 1994	2nd Ministerial Meeting of Ministers of Water Affairs of the Nile Basin Countries	Cairo, Egypt	9	7	0	16	0

selected sample of meetings occurred in the “Third Annual Nile Basin Trust Committee” meeting that took place May 2-3, 2006, in Bujumbura, Burundi. The second instance of involvement is the “Sixteenth Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM)”, July 21-22, 2008, in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Another forum to which NGOs are involved is the Nile Day celebrations. The celebrations are conducted every year on February 22, concurrently in each of the nine countries at the national level and in one country at the regional level. However, such events are meant to celebrate the activities of the NBI, share information, and to sensitize citizens about Nile cooperation. Therefore, they do not provide avenues for NGO participation in decision-making processes.

ii) Projects and Programs: Mentioned by 26.7 percent of the informants, projects and programs are the most visible mechanisms through which the stakeholders are called upon to either assist with their implementation or to engage in policy-related discourse. Examples of these include the Water Resources Planning and Management project and its components, the Confidence Building and Stakeholder Involvement (CBSI), the Nile Trans-boundary Environmental Action project (NTEAP) and the Nile Basin Trust Fund committee, and media networks. As several informants testified, involvement can only occur if projects from which the community can benefit are in place.

iii) Diffused power structures

Some of the participants, especially those affiliated with the NBI in Uganda and Ethiopia, commented that the NBI regional programs and projects are diffused at the regional and national levels not only to bring tangible benefits to the communities but to

bring closer the opportunities for involvement by those affected by the programs. For example, in Ethiopia some of the NBI projects are considered decentralized at the level of implementation but the majority are concentrated in the capital city at the policy-making level.

The sample quotes related to the themes discussed above are shown on Table 23.

Table 23: Themes and Quotes: Involvement Mechanisms

Theme	Sample Quotes	Informant
Meetings and trainings	“Meetings at the national level are commonly used... However, it differs from project to project.”	#1: NBI, Uganda
	“Another means is through workshops where they air their views to the Nile TAC, and then the Nile-COM approves or disapproves the project.”	#3: NBI, Uganda
	“NGOs are trained on monitoring and implementation.”	#7: NBI, Uganda
	“We invite the Nile Basin Discourse to come and observe.”	#7: NBI, Uganda
	“We avail them [i.e., NGOs] platforms to address the Nile Basin Trust Fund committee.”	#28: ENTRO, Ethiopia
	“Initially in 2006 and 2007, we have been collaborating with the NBI particularly with ENTRO here in Addis. [This] means that we are attending the workshops, seminars, [and] conferences which are organized by the NBI... Conversely, the [NBI] in Ethiopia has been attending our seminars; so we have actually been collaborating... In these, they inform us about the projects’ components, implementation, status, and future plan...”	#13: NGO, Ethiopia
Projects and Programs	“Involvement by NGOs is largely concentrated in the micro-grants projects and the environment, education, and awareness [program]...”	#20: NGO, Ethiopia
	“NGOs together with NTEAP staff sit to discuss yearly plans, to monitor and evaluate programs... Our organization is selected as one of the committee members of the Oromiya region through the Nile Basin Discourse Forum.”	#20: NGO, Ethiopia

Next is a discussion of the constraints linked to NGO involvement.

Constraints to Involvement

One of the primary research questions of this study related to the constraints to getting a ‘seat at the table’ with respect to the NBI’s decision-making processes in Ethiopia. The findings on these constraints are presented here.

From the interviews, three hundred and seventy-two expressions were coded with this descriptive element #5, “constraints to involvement.” Thirteen themes were coded as shown in Table 24.

As can be seen in the table, the top six constraints are politics, capacity, structure, information awareness, economic, and (negative) attitude.

1. Politics

The majority (90 percent) of the informants mentioned political factors as a major hindrance to involvement in the decision-making processes. Six emergent issues were identified under the political factor: *the NBI is a “government thing”*; *legal mandate*; *different political situations*; *misperceptions*; *rotational leadership*; and *support*.

NBI is a “government thing”:

Many informants, including representatives of the NBI Secretariat in Uganda and NGOs in Ethiopia, mentioned that the NBI is a “government thing.” This implies a dichotomy between the roles of the government and that of civil society. As mentioned by more than half of the informants, this role distinction gives the government the mandate to *own* or *control* the decision-making processes, including goal setting, planning, finding

Table 24: Constraints to Involvement

Tree Node/Theme #5 Constraints to Involvement	# of Informants Making Expressions N (%)	Total Expressions n (%)
Politics	27 (90.0)	82 (22.0)
Capacity	21 (70.0)	63 (16.9)
Structure	19 (63.3)	54 (14.5)
Information and Awareness	19 (63.3)	44 (11.9)
Economics	18 (60.0)	34 (9.1)
Attitude/Motivation	12 (40.0)	27 (7.3)
Mechanisms/Procedures	11 (36.7)	24 (6.4)
Different Priorities	9 (30.0)	14 (3.8)
Partnering Strategies	7 (23.3)	15 (4.0)
Trust	3 (10.0)	3 (0.8)
History of Involvement	2 (6.7)	5 (1.3)
Unfavorable Timing & Space	2 (6.7)	4 (1.1)
Social/Cultural	2 (6.7)	3 (0.8)
TOTAL NUMBER OF INFORMANTS	30	
TOTAL EXPRESSIONS		372

alternative solutions, implementation processes, and how a program is to be monitored and evaluated. Government in this context refers to the political decision-makers in different agencies as well the NBI bureaucracy.

The view of government's ownership of decision-making was also extended to governance. As a NBI official explained, NGOs can "participate" but not get "involved"

in the decision-making area that hinges on governance. This is purely an area outside the NGO mandate.

The informants reiterated the view that the NBI tends to control how policies are made and formulated. The same was observed of the Ethiopian government. As an informant in Uganda explained, "... to a large extent most of the decision-making organs in the Nile projects are government officers... In Ethiopia, public participation is not very much encouraged by a government that is a bit high-handed. Involvement of nongovernmental organizations is still very low, and the few that are there still operate under very stringent procedures."

To others, this level of dominance in decision-making has only contributed to their decision not to get involved with the NBI at any level. According to Ethiopia-based informants, decisions are dominated by the government officials and the donors. There is also the tendency of the government to think that the NGOs have no role in such decisions. As one informant summed it up, "the issue of the government is not the issue of the civil society." This implies an entrenched belief in the distinction between the roles of the government and that of the NGOs.

Legal Mandate:

Informants mentioned that in some of the member countries the registration process of new NGOs is cumbersome and slow. In some countries like Egypt and Ethiopia, the process of registration tends to be lengthy and takes an average of two years or more. In Ethiopia, for example, an informant said that there is so much scrutiny and

suspicion that it tends to delay the process. It has been over two years since the Nile Basin Discourse Forum submitted their registration papers and so far they have not been approved by the government. According to the informant, because the issue of the Nile is considered transboundary in nature, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has to get involved in the process of the Forum's registration. This delay in the registration inhibits the ability of the NGOs to get involved early in the NBI affairs.

From the interviews, it was also learned that the delay in the registration is not unique to Ethiopia but also exists in other riparian countries. For example, in Egypt the registration of its Nile Discourse Forum is pending and temporarily hosted by a large and established NGO, the Arab Office for Youth for Environment. As a representative of the Nile Basin Discourse in Uganda explained, "In [Egypt], registration of NGOs takes say about three years [due to bureaucratic inertia]."

The other legal aspect that tends to slow down involvement is the delay in signing a permanent Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA). The delay means that the NBI cannot institute structures that enable it to fully operate in each of the member countries. As an official of the NBI in Uganda commented, "The secretariat itself doesn't have much mandate. Yet [one] would expect that the secretariat should be at the forefront of such kind of engagement because if there is value in trust, it is held by the executive office." Another NBI informant expressed hope about the level of stakeholder involvement once the CFA is signed. Thus "once a legal framework is established it will be easier to work together and collaborate with the NGOs."

Different Political Situations:

Informants also expressed the view that involvement by NGOs was to some extent dictated by different political situations and contexts. Different laws govern the rules of the game in each country. In some of the riparian countries, the political systems are somewhat open to NGOs' involvement while in others the window for involvement is small, a mere token. In the latter situation, NGO activities are strictly controlled by the government. As some of the informants explained, this seems to be the case in Ethiopia. In Kenya, according to another participant, "people can even go to the streets and throw stones; in Ethiopia you will have to be very careful to get into that."

Another argument presented to explain the constraints to involvement is the different types of governance in each of the countries. This makes it difficult for the NBI to develop a template for stakeholder involvement that will fit in all the different political contexts of the basin. For example, some of the governments are more open and easy to work with while others are closed and politically controlling. The hierarchical stewardship by the NBI was also singled out as a deterrent because it is not people-friendly. As one informant in Ethiopia commented, "most of the time decisions are dictated [by the NBI]—do that [and] do that."

Misperceptions:

The views expressed by the informants pointed to some popularly-held misperceptions about NGOs by the officials of the NBI and the government of Ethiopia. For example, the NGOs are assumed to be confrontational, enemies of the government, spies of external donors, and corrupt. Unless these stereotypes are abandoned, the

possibility of opening wide the window of involvement will continue to be limited. As an informant with the NBI in Uganda observed, “The development challenges are enormous; government could use any help it could get.” The informant further observed that the riparian governments view NGOs as competitors. A senior NBI official noted that these misperceptions about NGOs are pervasive and can be found within the NBI secretariat as well.

The confrontational attitude was similarly mentioned as a characteristic of the Ethiopian government. This attitude has the potential to scare off the NBI officers from opening up to NGO involvement. For instance, the government is suspicious of the NGOs and tends to link them up with seditious activities, such as spying on behalf of external donors that might destabilize the current regime. According to an informant in Ethiopia, “I think the government is not confident and somehow fear that NGOs would destabilize government.” This suspicion of the NGOs can be traced back to the 2005 elections during which the political parties were accused of having received funding from foreign donors and governments. Even before that election, the country’s political history was punctuated by hostility between the NGOs and the imperial and the Marxist regimes (See Chapter 1).

According to a senior NBI official in Ethiopia, the government is not the only one to blame. Some NGOs are controlled by intellectual activists and therefore are highly politicized. This attracts government’s attention. As the informant explained, “Civil society, for example, is sometimes hijacked by the educated lot who tries to redefine the

roles of the civil society... In some of our countries, civil society criticizes government and wants to topple it in order to institute itself.”

Another form of misperception relates to the roles and responsibilities of the NGOs. In Ethiopia, as explained by an informant, the role of the NGOs is assumed by the government to be limited to service delivery without any advocacy activities. The uncertainty about which activity is considered advocacy and which is not has caused some of the NBI offices to distance themselves from the NGOs. As an informant commented, “The NBI’s Water Resources Planning and Management Project don’t want to go an inch away from what the government is thinking. They don’t want a confrontation with the government.”

It was similarly argued by an informant that the misperception about roles and the apparent abrasive relationships are the reasons the NGOs have been kept at bay on the Cooperative Framework negotiations. As one NGO official commented, “There is a common belief, especially in the government, that involvement by the NGOs would damage the negotiation process [of the Cooperative Framework Agreement].”

The misperception and suspicion of the NGOs by the government have recently taken a different dimension with the passage of a controversial law on January 6, 2009. The legislation is premised on two lines of argument. First, that the NGOs are suspected of misusing donor fund; and second, it is alleged that these funds are used for sinister political purposes, such as supporting NGOs to undermine the government. Consequently, the legislation was proposed and passed that puts a ceiling of 10 percent on the amount NGOs can receive from outside donors. These lines of arguments were

explained by an official of the NBI as follows: “On the one side, the civil society wants to take money from unsuspecting sources for their own advantage and not for the poor. On the other side, the government is a bit too sensitive about how and for what purposes the money is used.”

Rotational Leadership:

Another issue mentioned is that the leadership setup of the Nile Basin secretariat limits innovation, effectiveness, and is therefore a recipe for failure. According to an informant with the NBI secretariat, the rotation of the office of the NBI’s executive director is short and unprecedented. According to the informant, “You have a leadership that rotates every two years over these ten countries. Two years is not enough time to make any meaningful changes.”

Support:

Lack of political support was equally cited by the informants as a deterrent to involvement. In the words of one informant in Ethiopia, “There is no support from the government because their perception of NGOs is wrong. The perception of NGOs by this government is that [we] are mainly in relief efforts. If an NGO is critical of [the government’s] policies then it is not favored.” Another informant felt that the level of government control on the activities of voluntary associations was a bit excessive.

2. Capacity

Sixty-three expressions were coded under this descriptive element, “capacity.” This element was expressed by 70 percent of the informants. Based on the interviews, the study revealed that lack of capacity was a problem within the NGOs and the NBI.

The NGOs:

Informants described the NGOs as young, weak, poorly formed; lacking specific milestones; passive; understaffed; lacking skills to develop promotional strategies and to coordinate networks; possessing limited knowledge to engage in feasibility studies and analysis; and lacking financial resources.

Some of the NGOs interested in the activities of the Nile Basin are young and were just recently formed following the launch of the NBI’s regional projects and programs. As an informant in Ethiopia commented, “[our] organization is kind of young so there is a capacity gap.” As a Uganda-based informant confirmed, “... civil society organizations came into the whole process when it had been finalized. They had basically baked the cake and we were serving it.” Hence it is not easy for the civil society to contribute effectively when they enter the process late.

Limited human resources is another problem related to capacity. Most NGO informants mentioned that they do not have adequate staffing. Consequently, they cannot effectively develop promotional strategies, form partnerships, conduct outreach and coordinate activities in a country as large as Ethiopia. For instance, an informant in Ethiopia mentioned that “there are not many environmental NGOs in the country. This is

because there [are] no proper promotional strategies... At the same [time] there is lack of competent staff.” Understaffing also undermines the NGOs’ ability to develop and implement outreach activities. In this regard, an informant in Ethiopia said, “I think it is important that we attempt to reach the majority of the stakeholders. But doing so is difficult due to limited staffing.” The extent of this problem was elaborated on by another NGO informant when he stated, “We have one coordinator for the Ethiopian Nile Basin Discourse Forum, and [hence] the capacity of that office is very low.” The Forum is an umbrella organization for all the NGOs in Ethiopia interested in working with the NBI.

A closely related problem is the capacity of coordination. According to one informant in Ethiopia, “...there is the problem of coordination and networking on the part of the NGOs. It is only the Discourse that is trying to establish a network of citizens and the NGOs to enhance involvement in the NBI’s decision-making. However, this networking is not strong enough to influence the NBI.” This is particularly true given the large size of the country, lack of resources, understaffing, and the failure to empower the Forum through registration.

The ability to form partnerships was also mentioned as a constraint related to capacity. The NGOs’ ability to exploit existing partnerships or develop new ones is hampered by lack of technical and managerial skills. As an informant with the NBI noted, “We have what we call the Nile Basin Discourse, which is a network of NGOs in the basin. But the Discourse is faced with [a] capacity problem. We have entered into a memorandum of understanding [with them] to allow involvement of nongovernmental

stakeholders in the decision-making process but because of low capacity this is not happening.”

In terms of fact-finding skills, an informant in Ethiopia conceded that, “The critical issue for us is to go to the actual source and do some investigation or conduct some field survey[s]. But [we] don’t have that capacity to negate or to see the limitation of a project under discussion.” The problem is pervasive, at least in the view of an NBI official. As the informant noted, “In most of the countries, the problem we have is that [the NGOs] don’t have the capacity even to develop [a] proposal. In such cases the NBI system helps by hiring consultants.” These consultants prepare the proposals, the NBI provides the money, and the NGOs implement.

Lack of technical skills also limits the NGOs’ capacity for involvement and influencing policy. A representative of the NBI assessed the situation this way: “If you want to be heard, if you want your research to contribute to policy change, you have to think through whether that kind of information will be useful; will be recognized [and] will stand the test of time.” Another NBI official put the situation in the following context: “My experience working with government [is] that if you have the facts they listen to you, but if you don’t have the facts you are seen as a noise maker and the next time the door will be shut in your face. This is the weakness that is facing the NGOs.”

The capacity of the NGOs vis-à-vis the complex and highly technical issues of the Nile is another area of concern. As one informant suggested, this technicality is a deliberate approach by the bureaucrats to avoid political interference. The consequence of

this is that it makes it more difficult for the NGOs, who have limited technical knowledge, to get involved. As one informant in Uganda acknowledged,

[The] Nile basin issues are complex, highly technical and specialized. That technicality and specialization, in fact, is evasive; it is a way technocrats run away from political intricacies, and they simply make things technical. They choose to address issues such as data that is empirical. It is difficult to disagree on data. But this is what they choose and avoid the bigger picture which is political.

Given the above limitations, an informant summed it up by stating that the “NGOs are simply not effective. Rarely do they have comprehensive knowledge of the situation... I haven’t seen any NGO which is capable of influencing any policy... [In addition, they] don’t understand their interest in the Nile basin...”

The Nile Basin Initiative:

The Nile Basin Initiative was also mentioned as lacking in capacity. Some of the participants noted that the agency is relatively young; understaffed; needs internal capacity-building to change the misperceptions of its staff; has poor leadership; and creates expectations that it cannot deliver due to resource limitations.

Another informant with a nongovernmental organization observed that “the main constraint is the fact that the NBI is an infant institution. It needs to work more on confidence building and enhancing trust. With [the] existing arrangement, it is difficult to reach all the agencies and the regions of Ethiopia... I think it is important that we attempt to reach the majority of the stakeholders. But doing so is difficult due to limited staffing.” This problem is evident with the micro-grant program which has only one staff member responsible for coordination in the whole country. As one informant in Ethiopia

observed, “The NBI micro-grant office lacks [the] ability to monitor and provide feedback. There is only one staff member. We recommend additional staff if they are to effectively serve the NGO clients. I think the same problem of staffing affects the NTEAP program [as well].”

One informant in Uganda admitted that the perceptions held by some of the NBI staff are negative. For example, some of the officers are resistant to NGO involvement because of the assumption that they will oppose the NBI projects. Hence some expressed the need for internal capacity-building to change these existing misperceptions.

3. Structure

Fifty-four expressions were coded under this descriptive element, “structure.” The expressions were obtained from 63.3 percent of the informants.

From the interviews, it was noted that the decision-making structures were highly centralized. This means that the decisions are made by the NBI officials while the NGOs act only as the implementers of those decisions. The centralized structure also tends to keep issues of the Nile secret. Questioning the decisions is viewed as tantamount to sabotaging government plans and projects. Second, some informants felt that there is a mix of centralized and decentralized decision-making structures, although this varies by project type. Third, it was mentioned that the NBI structure is complex and has a narrow window for participation. Fourth, the structure was viewed as bureaucratic and only served to slow down the decision process, including the release of funds to micro-grant

projects. Other informants, however, felt that the framework for involvement was not in place at all.

An informant in Ethiopia felt that “the NBI is highly centralized and secretive.” As one informant in Uganda commented, “You have all these programs hatched at the highest level involving the World Bank and UNOPS without bringing on board the people who are supposed to consume the product at the end of the day.” The other effect of the centralized structure involves the flow of information from the top to bottom. An official of a nongovernmental organization in Uganda mentioned that requests for specific information from the NBI head office are hardly responded to. For example, “We have made so many requests to the Nile Council of Water Ministers to make the Cooperative Framework documents available to the public. However, this has been ignored.”

Efforts by the NBI to decentralize have been slow as the major decisions are still made by the high officials. As a senior NBI official disclosed, “We are more inclined to a centralized decision-making with all sincerity. As much as we are still struggling to decentralize we are very much centralized.”

Another related problem is the variation of decision structures among projects. As an informant in Ethiopia explained, “... structures also vary from project to project. Some are open and some are closed. It [also] varies from officer to officer. Some project officers are very open and frank and willing to work with stakeholders [and] NGOs and some are not.”

A few of the informants felt that the structure of decision-making was both centralized and decentralized. It also depends on the context and nature of the project. This was the view of one informant in Uganda who stated the following: “In some countries [it] is top-down and in others the process is bottom-up, but with constraints. In the aggregate there are situations where it is believed that people should be involved and in others government decides what is good for you.” As another explained, “In Ethiopia... decisions can be made at the lower or regional level and then [go] up to the federal level. The NTEAP, for example, involves the community at the planning level. However, when it comes to the major decisions it is the role of the Nile-Council of Ministers.”

Concerning the degree to which decentralized structures guarantee involvement, a senior NBI official in Ethiopia contended that “decentralized structures are not helpful in societies if [the] units down are resource-less and still depend on the central authority for survival.” In the view of another informant in Ethiopia, “decentralization by itself is not a success if it does not engage people.”

The centralized decision structure was also stated as complex. This works to make involvement much more difficult, as one informant in Uganda explained. Thus,

The NBI has a complex structure ... You have the Shared Vision Program that has eight programs and the Subsidiary Action Program. And then they are broken into little projects, multiple coordination that does not have one focal point. There are a lot of information centers that are dispersed and scattered all over the basin. It means that to engage with the NBI you also have to be split across all points of action which also require[s] massive infrastructure across all the ten countries.

Another structural issue mentioned by the informants is the bureaucratic nature of the NBI. For example, an informant in Ethiopia stated that, “One of the major problems is the existence of bureaucracy that slows down things. Often there is [a] problem with the release of money on time. When that happens we have to borrow... It is a problem of hierarchy.” This was confirmed by an informant in the Uganda office who commented that “The NBI is more set within the structure of the government and follows certain bureaucratic approaches. The structure of the NBI also provides for a system of leadership of the Secretariat that is rotational every two years...Two years is not enough time to make any meaningful changes... That [indirectly] makes it difficult for the NBI to engage the civil society.”

4. Information and Awareness

Forty-four expressions were coded under this descriptive element, “information and awareness.” Some 63.3 percent of the informants expressed their views on this descriptive element.

To some of the participants, information about the NBI and its activities was either inaccessible or too technical; to others the information was distributed late and therefore gave them very little time to analyze it and contribute effectively in the meetings. Inaccessibility to information was also due to the technical nature of the NBI reports.

As a representative of the NBD explained, “We are not saying that there is no information. There is a lot of information but it is very technical and is provided in very

scientific kind of formulae... [It] needs to be broken down; simplify the information and package it in such a way that is consumed by the intended recipients when disseminated.”

The use of technical language also affects the level of involvement in specific projects.

As a senior manager in Uganda explained, “The ones that have low involvement are the technical projects which people do not understand. And that is a challenge of how we communicate. [The] majority of our staff [is] here because of their technical expertise.

When it comes to communicating to the general public, [they may have difficulty understanding].” As the same informant admitted, “the language we use is too technical, a lot of jargon. One needs to be a hydrology engineer to be able to understand. [For example], my project... is responsible for information dissemination but sometimes technical terms are used by our officers which may not be appropriate.”

There were also concerns about lateness in distributing information for those on the NBI mailing list. Because of the delay in receiving information, the NGOs cannot work out plans to attend functions or to give feedback that might be required at a certain time. As a senior NGO official remarked, “Quite often, as an outsider, you get the information at the meeting place... Access to information in a timely manner can help us organize better and participate effectively.” These limitations all contribute to low awareness levels about the NBI. As a senior official of the NBI explained, “I think what is hampering involvement is lack of awareness. Although the Nile issue has been there for a long time still many people do not know about the existence of the Nile Basin Initiative other than [within] the confines of the ministry of water.”

Limited media capacity and the rules that govern it also affect the flow of information that might be available to the stakeholders. For example, in Ethiopia, the informants expressed that the media tend to be parochial in their approach to news coverage, in addition to being censored. As a representative of an international NGO articulated, “In Ethiopia there are only two FM stations and two TV channels; one of the latter is limited to Addis Ababa. At the same time, these channels only air government programs and commercials. Furthermore, the media also lacks the freedom. As a result, the media refrains from writing [about] certain issues [such as] the Nile.” This view was shared by another NGO official who explained, “In Ethiopia there is inadequate participation partly because of [insufficient] information... [Also], we have very parochial media giving more attention to political and less to development issues.”

5. Economics

Thirty-four expressions were coded under the descriptive element “economic.” Sixty (60.0) percent of the informants expressed that economic factors such as inadequate funding and poverty act as barriers to involvement.

Most NGOs rely on external funding as a major source for their fiscal stability. Because these sources are not stable, the organizations lack resources to conduct community needs analyses so that they can have the facts with which to influence the NBI policies. Another related problem is the restrictions imposed by the donors on how these funds can be used. For example, these funds do not provide for line items such as outreach and internal capacity building.

Another related problem expressed by the informants is the implications of the new legislation passed in January 2009, relative to funding. The legislation puts a ceiling of no more than 10 percent on the amount indigenous NGOs can receive from external donors. NGOs that receive more than this towards their annual budgets are not allowed to engage in advocacy activities. Another problem is that some donors do not directly fund NGOs. For example, according to an informant with a Uganda-based NGO, “the World Bank has said that they will not fund the civil society because they are funding the governments. We approached [them] for support to the NBD but they said that their funds go to the governments—[which] are representative enough.”

It was also the view of the interviewees that limited funding limits their capacity to form or engage in the NBI activities. As a manager with the NBI articulated, “[the] presence of the [NBD] network in each country depends on the level of funding available.”

Some informants in Ethiopia expressed fear that they will soon be forced to close down due to poor funding. For those still able to operate, their ability to conduct outreach is limited because of shoestring budgets. One manager whose NGO is hardly surviving had this to say: “Sometimes we cannot be involved in all their activities because of [funding] limitations. For example, [we] lack ... adequate staff and resources to attend the workshops or even to access information. We cannot be expected to go out and inform other NGOs about the NBI projects with these limitations.”

Concerning the amount of funds given to micro-grant recipients, a manager with one of the NGOs in Ethiopia noted that the level of funding does not enable them to

produce expected outcomes and to operate efficiently. In essence, the level of funding affects their leverage with respect to involvement in decision-making.

6. Attitude and Motivation

Twenty-seven expressions were coded under this descriptive element, “attitude.” Forty (40.0) percent of the informants expressed their views on how attitude affects the level of involvement by non-governmental stakeholders.

More generally, those who expressed their views on the effects of attitude said that there is a feeling among government officials that the issue of the Nile is one of governance. Hence only the government has the responsibility to make decisions affecting the Nile. Others expressed the view that there is no interest on both sides regarding stakeholder involvement. Thus, on the one hand, some felt that there was a lack of interest on the part of the NBI in getting stakeholders involved. On the other hand, there was a feeling that it was the NGOs that lack interest in getting involved. This ambivalence has, by and large, weakened the involvement process.

Similarly, some of the NGO informants believed that their work is not appreciated hence there is no need to get involved.

7. Mechanisms/Procedures

Twenty-four expressions were coded under this descriptive element, “mechanisms/procedures.” Of the total informants, 36.7 percent expressed their views on the relevance of mechanisms on stakeholder involvement. The following four

mechanisms were identified: Observer/ad-hoc roles, workshops and meetings, memoranda of understanding, and structural frameworks.

According to the informants, one of the forums availed to them is “observer status.” Other than that they are invited to witness the launching of programs or to endorse what has already been decided by the policy-makers. As a senior NGO official in Uganda explained,

Our status on those meetings organized by the NBI is observers. Usually there has been positive response to our comments. The problem is that the work plans are presented at the meetings for endorsement and the processes they have taken to reach that stage are not known to us. And therefore we participate in a process that has already been decided upon.

This view was affirmed by a senior manager with the NBI as follows: “We invite the Nile Basin Discourse to come and observe [the] Council of Ministers and the Nile-TAC [meetings]. The last time we had our meeting in Kinshasa the Nile Basin Discourse was invited in this regard.”

Another mechanism is meetings or workshops. Invitations to either of these forums are inconsistent. According to an informant in Ethiopia, “They have several meetings in which decisions are made. I don’t think we get involved in those ones. Therefore we have to find a way to get involved at the top level; at the grassroots we have no problem... Our involvement is mainly to listen.”

A memorandum of understanding (M.O.U.) is another mechanism. The Nile Basin Initiative has this formal arrangement with the Nile Basin Discourse (NBD) (Nile Basin Discourse, 2009). The MOU involves i) cooperation in all fields related to the development of the Nile River basin to enhance equitable and mutual benefit of the

riparians; 2) exchange of information related to planned and existing programs, projects and other development activities; 3) collaboration in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects and activities of any nature in the basin; and, 4) invitation of each other on observer or other status to each other's meetings in order to foster joint action (Nile Basin Discourse, 2009). Despite these noble goals, the MOU has neither expanded NGO involvement nor provided a formal partnership in Ethiopia.

Informants also feel that procedures to formally require NGOs to get involved in the decision-making processes are not in place. Such procedures need to specify the roles of the NGOs in the process. As an informant in Ethiopia stated, "...we do not currently have any kind of [procedures] for involvement where each party has duties and responsibilities. There is a component for their involvement but no strategy for inviting NGOs." This view was shared by an NGO official in Uganda who commented, "It is true that the NBI is attempting to involve stakeholders but I think the core principles of involvement are not being adhered to... In this case, I find that the mechanism for involvement is not really streamlined."

Table 25 provides sample themes and quotes relative to the constraints highlighted above.

Table 25: Themes and Quotes: Constraints to Involvement

Themes	Sample Quotes	Informants
Politics	“There is a feeling that this is a government issue.”	#11: NBI, Ethiopia
	“Because the Nile is a political issue, no one really tries to discuss it openly; the issue of government is not the issue of the civil society.”	#21: NGO, Ethiopia
	“... When you talk about government, this is high level. We have the ministers, the technical committee and the secretariat. We cannot invite NGOs to the management meetings of the secretariat. There is no way.”	#7: NBI, Uganda
	“The NBI needs to have genuine interest to involve NGOs and the civil society in real issues.”	#22: NGO, Ethiopia
	“The government feels like they are the only ones that have the mandate to make decisions.”	#13: NGO, Ethiopia
	“The perception of the government on NGOs is that they are there to provide service delivery, more of charity, handouts, not engaging in policy advocacy or providing critical input...”	#14: NGO, Ethiopia
	“Government is afraid of NGOs because they may be used for [sinister] political purposes by outside sponsors.”	#17: NGO, Ethiopia
	“The government here is not quite supportive of NGOs. The NGOs are very much controlled... and somehow fear that NGOs would destabilize government.”	#19: NGO, Ethiopia
	“The NBI secretariat itself does not have much mandate.”	#6: NBI, Uganda
	“The NBD is kind of young so there is a capacity gap.”	#13: NGO, Ethiopia
Capacity	“They didn’t have the necessary capacity to influence the design of these projects.”	#11: NBI, Ethiopia
	“Both the NBI and the NGOs are weak and lack the capacity.”	#22: NGO, Ethiopia
Structure	“The civil society in the basin is very weak and poorly formed.”	#6: NBI, Uganda
	“The NBI is highly centralized and secretive.”	#29: NGO, Ethiopia
	“With existing arrangements, it is difficult to reach all the agencies And the ... regions in Ethiopia.”	#20: NGO, Ethiopia
	“There is arrangement for involvement but the question about real involvement remains. The council of African ministers of water makes the major decisions.”	#23: NGO, Ethiopia
	“Decentralized structures are not helpful in systems or societies if units down are resource-less and still depend on the central authority for survival.”	#28: NBI, Ethiopia
	“The NBI has a complex structure... That makes it difficult to participate within the NBI.”	#6: NBI, Uganda

Table 25: Continued

Themes	Sample Quotes	Informants
Information and Awareness	“The awareness promotion was not done adequately by the NBI.”	#14: NGO, Ethiopia
	“One of the biggest barriers to active involvement is information...; information is not shared.”	#21: NGO, Ethiopia
	“We expected that once the regional discourse forum was established we would be able to get information at the grassroots level from the NBI. Unfortunately that is not happening because of funding.”	#25: NGO, Ethiopia
	“In Ethiopia there is inadequate participation partly because of inadequate information. These people did not know how and what was needed to participate.”	#28: NBI, Ethiopia
	“The information is either coming in pieces or given out at the last minute.”	#4: NGO, Uganda
	“The ones that have low involvement are the ones that are technical projects which people do not understand. And that is a challenge of how we should communicate.”	#5: NBI,, Uganda
	“The other constraint which is linked to the information is the language we use is too technical, a lot of jargon”	#5: NBI, Uganda
Economics	“The donors for NGOs are limited. You don’t have the money to go and assess the impact of a new project.”	#14: NGO, Ethiopia
	“Another constraint is the economic status of the people. People are poor.”	#19: NGO, Ethiopia
	“We have not been participating in various projects because we don’t have access to funds.”	#24: NGO, Ethiopia
	“Sometimes we cannot be involved in their activities because of some limitations. For example, lack of adequate staff and resources to attend the workshops or even to access information.”	#25: NGO, Ethiopia
Attitude	“NGOs are there to provide service delivery...not engaging in policy advocacy or providing critical input.”	#14: NGO, Ethiopia
	“The other challenge is the attitude of the decision-making organs. They still see the issues of the Nile as technical and there is very little knowledge outsiders can bring and therefore only the technical staff can handle them.”	#5: NBI, Uganda
Mechanisms	“Some still think of the NGOs in the seventies when the NGOs were confrontational in approach... out to oppose everything.”	
	“Government considers NGOs are enemies [and not allies].”	#9: NBI, Uganda
	“There are no mechanisms for them to involve especially in terms of decision-making.”	#11: NBI, Ethiopia
	“We do not currently have any kind of mechanism for involvement where each party has duties and responsibilities.”	#13: NGO, Ethiopia
	“We seem to be having currently an ad-hoc kind of involvement of stakeholder.”	#4: NGO, Uganda
	“Our status on those meetings organized by the NBI is observers.”	#4: NGO, Uganda

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction:

The purpose of this final chapter is to relate the findings of the study to the whole body of the dissertation.

This study attained its objectives, including exploring and obtaining information relative to the following research questions:

- 1) What are the characteristics of the power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative as they relate to stakeholder involvement in Ethiopia?
- 2) For those not involved in the decision-making process, what constraints prevent them from getting a 'seat at the table'?
- 3) Do the power structure characteristics in Ethiopia relate to pluralism and, if so, how?
- 4) To what extent are conditions in Ethiopia compatible with the prerequisites of pluralism?

The stated questions were answered by analyzing the results from three qualitative approaches to data collection. These methods included semi-structured, open-ended interviews with key informants in Uganda and Ethiopia; retrieval and analysis of archival data (i.e., official memos, reports, and meeting minutes); and, use of

geographical, historical, and scientific information obtained from various publications, reports, and individual accounts.

Concluding Summary

Overview of Significant Findings:

The following is a summary of the main findings in relation to the research questions. A matrix of this summary is in Appendix J.

1. What are the characteristics of the power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative as they relate to stakeholder involvement in Ethiopia?

Evidence from both the archival and interview data show that the Nile Basin Initiative in Ethiopia is characterized by two power structures: decentralized and centralized.

i) Decentralized power structures: The Shared Vision Projects and the Subsidiary Projects are diffused at the regional and national levels. The purpose is to bring these NBI activities closer to the riparian members and hence involve stakeholders. The findings show that the presence of these diffused structures in Ethiopia has, by and large, enhanced awareness about the NBI projects. And to some extent, these structures have provided some opportunity for involvement. For example, about two-dozen community based organizations have benefited from micro-grant projects. Through these projects, they have been able to participate in some decision-making processes, such as project identification, implementation, and to some extent, in the monitoring and evaluation activities. However, such a level of involvement was found to be quite low or

missing in the three project components of the Water Resources Planning and Management Project—the issue-area investigated in this study.

Examples of the diffused structures in Ethiopia are mainly in the form of the following projects: The Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office and the Water Resources Planning and Management Project. Both, with headquarters in the capital city, Addis Ababa, coordinate a series of projects, some of which are being implemented at local levels.

ii) Centralized power structures: The actual decision-making processes were found to be highly centralized. This was the dominant view of the informants in Uganda and Ethiopia. As a senior NBI official confirmed, “We are more inclined to a centralized decision-making with all sincerity... If you look at projects supported by UNOPS the decision[s] [are] still centered with the project managers. If you look at the organs like Technical Advisory Committees ... the level of openness here is still low.” Another informant in Uganda observed that “It is still a very government thing. It is a bureaucratic kind of institution. If the Nile-COM members don’t say ABCD, then ABCD won’t be done... Not that I am questioning the capacity of the politicians but it is just a weird way of working.” These views attest to the bureaucratic and hierarchical characteristics of the NBI discussed in chapter 1.

These elitist power structures were therefore found to be dominant within the NBI bureaucracy. While the national programs in Ethiopia have diffused power characteristics, the decisions affecting project identification, alternative solutions, program implementation, and monitoring and evaluation relative to the WRPMP were

highly centralized. Only the WRPMP, government officials, and other designated NBI officials were involved in making the decisions. NGOs were not part of the process; in fact those invited came in only as observers.

2. For those not involved in the decision-making process, what constraints prevent them from getting a ‘seat at the table’?

i) Political factors: Mentioned by 90 percent of the informants, political factors were the most important constraints to involvement. In particular, the NGOs decried the lack of political space and support. The delay in the registration process, as in the case of the Ethiopian Nile Basin Discourse, further inhibits the ability to engage in the decision-making processes.

The political actors also claim that decision-making is solely a government prerogative. As one senior NBI official eloquently stated, “When you talk about government, this is high level. We have ministers, the technical committee and the secretariat. We cannot invite NGOs to the management meetings of the secretariat. There is no way.”

NGOs are viewed by the NBI officials as confrontational and hence must be treated as enemies rather than as allies. This has consequently led to an “us” versus “them” attitude which further strains the relations between the NGOs and NBI officials.

ii) Capacity: NGOs were found to be lacking in capacity. The flow of information is limited and affects the level of awareness. Consequently, the NGOs have adopted negative attitudes towards the government and the NBI agencies in Ethiopia.

Unfortunately, channels of information sharing with civil society are still inadequate. Similarly, the NBI's apparent faith in its website as a means of keeping the stakeholders informed was said to be presumptuous because rural-based NGOs in Ethiopia do not have internet access. Even the NGOs based in the capital city lack the resources for internet access. Some of the information distributed to the nongovernmental stakeholders were mentioned as too technical and not user friendly. In Ethiopia, the NTEAP office has embarked on translating a NBI newsletter into the local Amharic language.

Lack of funding further impedes involvement. Most of the NGOs interviewed stated that they operate on shoestring budgets. This affects their ability to attend the regularly scheduled NBI activities or to enhance their technical capacity critical to effective involvement.

iii) Structure: Although involvement structures are available in the form of projects, the loci of these activities tend to be concentrated in the capital city. Therefore any NGO outside Addis Ababa must have the resources and time to come and participate in decisions, if and when they are invited. The hierarchical decision structures, however, still limit involvement by those NGOs based at the capital.

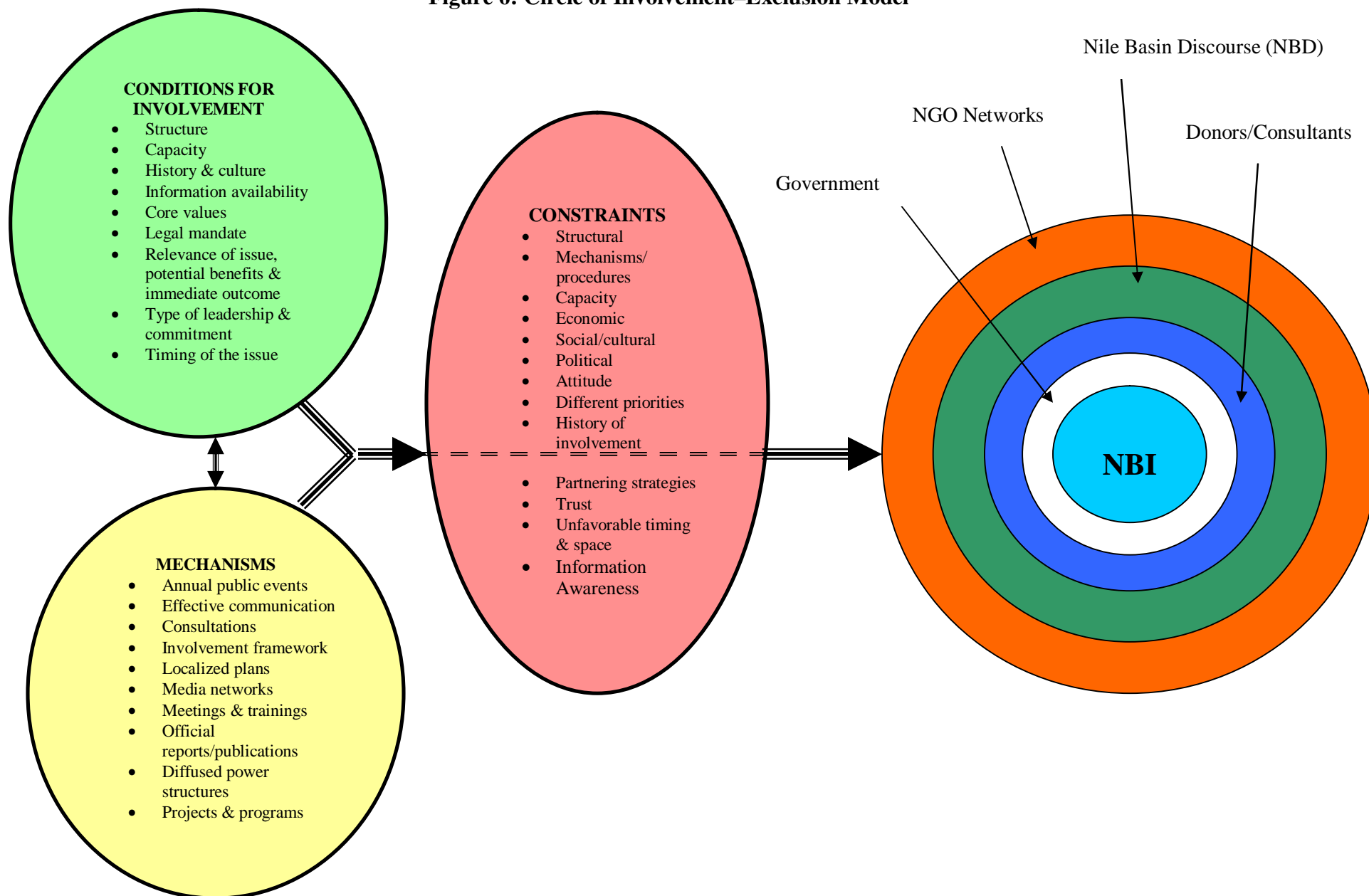
Another related structural problem is the lack of involvement framework that is inclusive of the stakeholders. Currently, the framework provides for direct involvement by bureaucratic elites (NBI professionals), political elites (government officials), and non-institutional professional elites (consultants, donors) as explained below.

The model in Figure 6 depicts five concentric circles, each representing types of actors. In the inner circle is the NBI Secretariat where all the decision agendas are formulated

and finalized. Closer to the NBI is the government that consists of the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM) and the Technical Advisory Committee (Nile-TAC). Next are the donors and consultants. Outside that circle is the Nile Basin Discourse, an umbrella organization presumed to represent the interests of other NGOs with interest in the activities of the Nile Basin Initiative. On the outermost circle is the NGO network with interests in the Nile.

As revealed by this study, the nearer one is to the NBI Secretariat the more likely is direct involvement in decision-making processes. Similarly, the farther one is from the inner circle the less likely is direct involvement. Given the restrictive nature of the current framework, the model has been dubbed the “Exclusion Model.”

Figure 6: Circle of Involvement–Exclusion Model



3. Do the power structure characteristics in Ethiopia relate to pluralism and, if so, how?

In order to answer this question, the following framework initially applied by Wildavsky (Hawley & Wirt, 1968), albeit tailored to this study, was adopted:

a) If it is found that the same group, the NBI or the NGOs, exercises direct influence in most or all the decision-making processes of the WRPMP's project components, then it can be concluded that a power elite structure exists.

b) If involvement overlaps and varies from issue to issue, and from one decision process to another, then we can conclude that a pluralist structure exists.

According to Dahl (1961) and Wildavsky (Hawley & Wirt, 1968), this conclusion is arrived at when no one group dominates influence in all decision-making areas.

The findings indicate that two diametrically opposed power structures exist in Ethiopia: elitist power structures and pluralist power structures.

a) Elitist structures: Based on the archival data (Table 22) and evidence presented by the informants, the meetings have been chiefly attended by the NBI and government officials, hence they have dominance over the decisions and influence on the final outcomes.

The informants confirmed that involvement in each of the decision-making processes of the WRPMP has been predominantly the affair of the consultants, the NBI policy makers, and the technocrats. A senior NBI official in Uganda stated that the Nile

Decision Support System (DSS) component predominantly involves government and external experts. On the Policy, Good Practices and Support project component, the same informant said, “I think the [policy] formulation has been to a large extent done by professionals.”

Exclusion of stakeholders in the decision-making processes of the component projects was confirmed by a WRPMP official as follows: “We principally work with the government. [In] the second phase of the project, I believe, we will attempt to work with NGOs as much as possible... I don’t think we have realized the benefits of what we are doing until NGOs get involved.”

Guided by Wildavsky’s framework for assessing the presence of elitist structure, the evidence indicates that the same group, consisting of the NBI and affiliated officials, have direct influence in most or all of the WRPMP’s decision-making processes. Stated differently, the NGOs exert little or no direct influence on the Nile Basin Initiative activities. A small number of political notables (i.e., Council of ministers of water affairs, the NBI technocrats, international donor representatives, and consultants) dominate the WRPMP’s decision-making processes and hence influence policy outcomes. Therefore, this study confirms the existence of elitist power structures within the NBI and in Ethiopia.

b) Pluralist power structures: This study has also established as well the presence of pluralist power structures in Ethiopia, in relation to the NBI’s WRPMP and its component projects.

In order to verify this presence, Wildavsky's second guide was applied. That is, "If involvement overlaps from issue to issue (e.g., from one project component to another) and from one decision process to another, then pluralist structure can be claimed to exist."

The NBI's WRPMP project components were generally found to be structurally decentralized with respect to implementation, and less so for project identification, coming up with alternative solutions, and project evaluations. Pluralist structures are evident in the policy, water resources planning and management, and the DSS project components through provision of representation and involvement mechanisms. These are some common characteristics of pluralism (Newton, 1969, deLeon, 1993).

The study findings indicate that there is some overlap in terms of involvement from project component to another and from decision process to another. For example, on the one hand, the NGOs are involved in the implementation stage of the Water Resources Planning component at local levels in Ethiopia. On the other hand, decision stages such as program formulation, finding program alternatives, and evaluation are dominated by the elites (consultants and NBI and government officials). This overlap, although limited, allows me to conclude that pluralist structures exist.

Two inferences can be made from the above findings: First, pluralist power structures exist alongside elitist structures in Ethiopia. Pluralist power structures exist through various projects, and these projects have provisions for representation and decentralization, and involvement mechanisms. These provisions and mechanisms are part of pluralist structures (Newton, 1969, deLeon, 1993).

The second inference is the apparent contradiction between structures and functions. On the one hand, Ethiopia's federal constitution mandates pluralist structures that enable organized groups to form and operate. On the other hand, however, the functions of these structures are equally restricted either by mandates of the same government or by negative attitudes and misperceptions of the NBI bureaucracy.

The bottom line regarding this dualism is that the expectations for involvement are laid down by the structures but in practice the structures function differently, thereby restricting the level of involvement by stakeholders.

4. To what extent are conditions in Ethiopia compatible with the prerequisites of pluralism?

Information about whether conditions in Ethiopia are compatible with the prerequisites of pluralism was obtained from the literature, with some additional comments from the key informants.

According to the literature (Newton, 1969; Kim & Bell, 1985; deLeon, 1993), a democratic pluralist society should, at the minimum, exemplify the following attributes: diversified economy, reasonable level of industrialization, diversified and heterogeneous population, strong labor unions, large-sized and autonomous NGOs, competitive party politics, dynamic institutional reforms, decentralized power structures, involvement mechanisms, information accessibility, and policy influence by organized groups. On most of these dimensions, Ethiopia meets the basic prerequisites of a pluralist system albeit varied in degree, as highlighted in the previous chapter.

Briefly, Ethiopia's political structure is federal. This means that the nine regional states are autonomous and have equal representation in the State and Federal governments. The country is heterogeneous in nature, with seventy-three ethnic groups (Smith, 2008) that speak different languages, practice different religions, and have the right to engage in different forms of economic activities. In addition, organized groups can form and operate as nongovernmental organizations.

Although labor unions and NGOs exist, their size and freedom of operation are restricted. As one of the informants in Ethiopia stated, "I don't know if labor unions are active at all in this country. They are at the margin. The labor unions, the regional unions, the teacher unions, and others don't have much weight here."

According to comments provided by the informants in Uganda and Ethiopia, diffused power structures are evident in Ethiopia but the actors such as NGOs or labor unions do not have the latitude to use them freely. This undermines competition and bargaining which are vital elements of a well-functioning pluralistic society. From both the literature and the views expressed by informants, it is evident that the government of Ethiopia is restrictive and distrustful of organized groups. This situation has historical precedence, as discussed in Chapter 1, beginning with the imperial regime, the Marxist Derg regime, and by the current democratic government.

By January 2009, the federal parliament had passed new legislation that ostensibly restricts the operations of NGOs. Because of the importance of this legislation with respect to the prerequisite of pluralism, a brief analysis of some of the provisions and how they will impact NGO involvement is presented below.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 00/2008:

1. Section 1, Article 2, Sub Article 4: “Charities or Societies of Ethiopian Residents” shall mean those charities or societies whose members reside in Ethiopia, more than 10% of whose total revenue originates from foreign sources and that are formed under the laws of Ethiopia.

According to the Development Assistance Group - Ethiopia and the Governance Technical Working Group (Technical Analysis of Second Draft Proclamation, 2008), “the delineation between Ethiopian and Foreign Charities and Societies (ECS) based solely on their source of income will limit incentives for Ethiopians to organize and assemble, given that the gross majority of [the NGOs] rely on over 90 percent of their funding from external sources.” The organizations also contend that “the 10 percent threshold would constrain ECS in building effective partnerships for mobilizing resources and receiving capacity building support. This could reduce the resources available for ECS from donors and potentially impact related components under government programs.” Given that the Ethiopian Nile Basin Discourse Forum (EtNBDF) is under the Nile Basin Discourse umbrella, which is funded solely by a Canadian agency, involvement in the NBI by its local NGO networks is likely to be affected.

2. Section 7, Article 93: Sub Article 1: Where any officer of a charity or society does not meet any of the requirements provided for under Article 71 of this Proclamation the [overseeing federal] agency shall order the appropriate body of the charity or society to remove and replace by another. Sub Article 2: The agency shall order the suspension of the officer referred to in sub article above pending the appointment of a replacement.

The potential impact of this provision, according to an international consortium of NGOs, is that it will allow the federal agency the discretion to replace NGO officials or agents. This undermines the autonomous operation of civic organizations and potentially

opens the doors for abuse by the federal agency (Technical Analysis of Second Draft of Proclamation, 2008). As explicated in Chapter 2, autonomy is one key element of pluralist structures. Being able to influence the leadership of an NGO robs it of the powers ordained under democratic pluralism.

3. Section 10, Article 107: Any person who prints, publishes, displays, sells or expose for sale, or transmits information through the post or any electronic media, in the interests of any unlawful charity or society shall be punishable with a fine not less than Birr 3,000 and not exceeding Birr 5,000 and by a simple imprisonment of not less than 3 years and not exceeding 5 years, provided the criminal code does not prescribe a more severe penalty. Any book, periodical, pamphlet, poster, newspaper, letter or any other document or writing in respect of which the person is convicted shall be confiscated. [2008 Exchange Rate: 1 U.S dollar = 10 Birr]

Unlawful organizations, according to the new law, include unregistered NGOs. In this respect, the Ethiopian Nile Basin Discourse Forum—currently not registered but continues to work with the Nile Basin Initiative on outreach and implementation of community-based investment projects—may be affected.

Although the ratification of the legislation was still pending at the time of the field study (December, 2008), some informants expressed their trepidation about the objectives and long-term effects of the law. A senior NBI official in Ethiopia commented, “the government wishes to control NGOs, particularly those whose areas of operation include human rights and governance... At the core, government wants to be sure that these NGOs receiving external funding are not spies... Civil society is perceived as a problem; it is better to deal with them by the book.”

Brief Concluding Analysis:

Even though, to a large extent, the prerequisites of pluralism do exist in Ethiopia, at least as set out by the constitution, internal pluralism is simply the style of government. But because the NBI is an extension of government within Ethiopia's power structure, the question that must be asked is, "whose kind of interest is being represented?" In the pluralist view, right now only the interests of government leadership are being considered as the evidence presented by the informants clearly attests.

Another strand of argument related to the existence of pluralistic structures vis-à-vis involvement is that, substantively it is not democracy when those procedures are not translated into inclusion of the stakeholders. Similarly, the viability of Ethiopia's pluralist structures is further put to test by the new legislation that disenfranchises NGOs who have the real stake. Real democracy should give voice to stakeholders (C. J. Fox, Personal Communication, April 3, 2009).

In addition, the so-called Charities and Societies Proclamation law potentially restricts political structures in Ethiopia, both in terms of government and society. It limits the ability of interest groups to organize internally, thus crippling the NBI and NGO functions.

Given the above findings, the question that this study poses is: how would involvement been improved to achieve the stated outcomes of the Water Resources Planning and Management Project components? Improvement relates to equity, openness or efficiency. Based on previous studies and democratic theory of pluralism, achieving equity requires a democratic system of management that promotes and ensures

representation of all those who have a stake in a public issue (Dietz & Stern, 2008).

However, public institutions such as the Nile Basin Initiative functions with different political environments not directly controlled by its management. As one of the participants stated in Ethiopia, the WRPMP officials do not include stakeholders in the process for fear of a possible confrontation with the government.

In situations where the national governments have less open rules to participation by organized groups, it seems reasonable to expect the NBI, as an international body, to intervene directly on behalf of organized groups and its national institutions if outcomes of funded projects are to be achieved. Therefore, enhanced involvement in the WRPM components will be determined, to a large extent, not on the question of institutional efficiency but on the practical application of equity, fairness, and democratic openness (Habermas, 1970; Creighton, 1981).

Derived Hypotheses:

Generating hypotheses from qualitative studies involves “collecting interview data from research participants concerning a phenomenon of interest, and then using what they say in order to develop a hypothesis” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 8). In a qualitative study, such as this one, two types of hypotheses can be generated: deductive and inductive.

Since this study was guided by pluralist theory, we can link deductive reasoning to the theory and hence derive a deductive hypothesis (Polit & Beck, 2008). Under this circumstance, the researcher must ask: “If the theory is valid, what are the implications

for a phenomenon of interest? (p. 96).” If relevant, then certain results can be anticipated. For example, if the data are found to be compatible with predicted outcomes then the theory’s viability is reinforced. According to Polit & Beck, hypotheses generated from a theory will tend to be “directional because theories explain a phenomenon, thus providing a rationale for expecting variables to be related in a certain way” (p. 99). This is not necessarily true with inductive hypothesis.

Inductive hypothesis is a “generalization from observed relationships” (Polit & Beck, 2008, p., 95). Generally, inductive hypotheses are derived from the knowledge already established in the literature. However, the experiences of interview informants or observations of human behavior, over a period of time, are also important sources of an inductive hypothesis. The prediction is also enhanced by a critical analysis and logical reasoning about the experiences of the informants. As opposed to the deductive, inductive hypotheses will tend to be non-directional.

Based on the above rationale, the following hypotheses were derived from the study. These can be tested through future research.

Hypothesis 1: The presence of pluralism does not lead to inclusion of organized groups in the policy-making process.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between the exercise of pluralism and the degree of democratic openness that exists among the political leadership at any given time, whether a centralized or decentralized system.

Hypothesis 3: The practice of pluralism is linked to the practice of elitism, where pluralism recognizes the presence of organized groups and elitism takes the responsibility over decision-making.

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between centralized power structures and decision-making process of the NBI in Ethiopia.

Hypothesis 5: A system that has the prerequisites of pluralism does not increase the likelihood of involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders.

Hypothesis 6: The degree of NGOs' involvement in the decision-making process is related to multiple factors, including politics, structure, capacity, economics, information, history, attitude, and culture.

Implications:

Public Policy:

The findings of this study have some significant public policy implications. First, they show that the level of involvement in decision-making by nongovernmental organizations is low. With this information, policy makers seeking to increase involvement can determine what needs to be done to reverse the trend.

Second, the study's identification of the constraints to involvement can help the NBI policy makers, donors, and member governments, who currently sponsor the secretariat, to understand the reasons for low involvement. In the same vein, they can begin to address those constraints by coming up with viable remedies.

Third, this study highlights the importance of including organized groups into policy negotiations and subsequent governance of shared water resources. As the Water Resources Planning project shows, mistrust can heighten if all the actors are not included in the initial stages of planning for how a public project is to be implemented and managed. The calculus of sharing in the management of a transboundary water resource can be intricate and highly political.

Finally, the study has identified important variables relating to the conditions, mechanisms and constraints to involvement of the NGOs in the NBI's decision-making processes. Since this was an exploratory study, these variables offer important base line data that can be used in future studies, specifically empirical ones.

Public Administration:

The findings of this study have significant implications for public administration theory and praxis in the following areas:

1. Politics/Administration tension

First it relates to the tension between the roles of the public administrator and that of the civil society over matters affecting the Nile basin. As one senior official of the Nile Basin Initiative characterized this distinction, "the issue of the government is not the issue of the civil society." This role distinction mirrors the politics/administration dichotomy proposed by Woodrow Wilson in 1887 (Downs, 1967). Whereas the dichotomy has been the subject of intellectual discourses for a while, including the Minnowbrook Conference and to some extent the Blacksburg Manifesto (McSwite,

1997), its manifestations in the case of the NBI is no surprise. The challenge of this rather persistent dichotomy, even in the management of shared water resources, is how concepts of social equity can be integrated into the definition of pluralist framework. As H. George Frederickson enunciated at the Minnowbrook Conference in the 1970s, a shift toward 'democratic pluralism' is necessary so that multiple perspectives can be included in the policy process (McSwite, 1997).

Second, the challenge for public administration is to address how the dichotomy between politics and administration can be reconciled, especially when it impacts negatively on praxis. As Charles Goodsell argued at the Blacksburg Manifesto (McSwite, 1997), bureaucratic legitimacy is not only reflected in its ability to implement policy programs but also in the role it plays in policy making. Michael Lipsky (1980) has affirmed the same in his treatise – *Street-Level Bureaucracy*. Hence, the demystification of these bifurcated roles will remain one of the biggest challenges to public administration theorists.

2. Tension between centralized and decentralized structures

The second implication is the tension between centralized and decentralized structures. As was revealed by the data obtained in this study, both structures are in place within the NBI and in Ethiopia. However, their co-existence is a source of tension between the organized groups and the NBI management and policy makers. On the one hand, voices from pluralist centers of action want space in the decision-making tables located in the centralized NBI power structures. On the other hand, those in the centralized systems reject the inclusion of those voices assumed to be lacking in technical

knowledge and likely to disrupt or slow down the decision process (Lowi, 1979). While these tensions will continue, public administrators are well placed to lead the discourse about which structure is practical in managing shared resources.

3. Efficacy of the Pluralist Model

From the pluralist perspective, the findings of this study demonstrate that the model has an impact on functions. In the first place, there is a difference between pluralist structures and pluralist functions. It is possible to establish pluralist legal structures with laws that permit certified organized groups to get involved in the public policy process. Hence, a government that succeeds in having these laws in place can rightly argue that they have met the pluralist requirement. However, the problem is that it doesn't function that way even if it exists on official documents. As pluralist theorists would argue, the existence of a structure is not enough. Instead, what is important is whether those pluralist structures are functioning.

Pluralism is a procedural theory (C. J. Fox, Personal Communication, April 24, 2009) about the process and how it works. This means that the structures have to specify the functions. As will be recalled from the interview findings, the informants mentioned the need to have involvement frameworks that specify roles and responsibilities of the NGOs within the NBI. This was found to be missing.

Given the missing link between pluralist structures and real involvement, the onus on public administration is how to bridge the gap between the two.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations relating to capacity, structure, and governance are offered with respect to enhancing involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders in Ethiopia.

1. Capacity

Additional resources need to be directed to enhance the capacity of the NGOs and the NBI. The informants representing NGOs in Ethiopia decried the lack of human capital, financial resources, and training. Consequently, they are thinly staffed and cannot finance colleagues for exposure workshops and trainings. They also lack technical skills for effective and efficient management of the projects for which some of them are funded. This includes the micro-grant projects currently benefiting approximately two-dozen local NGOs.

The NGOs are also lacking in information and awareness. The information that is received from the NBI is often too technical. I recommend that additional resources be made available to enhance the information flow. At the same time, technical assistance is needed to simplify the contents of the published reports. In Ethiopia, one NBI newsletter is translated in Amharic, the national language. This will need to be replicated in other parts of the basin so as to increase awareness.

Although the NBI receives direct funding for all its activities from donors and member governments, it was mentioned that the use of such resources is restricted and cannot be used discretionally to enhance the capacity of NGOs. As some of the

informants stated, if they are expected to implement the NBI projects effectively and to support various initiatives, the donors need to factor in their technical capacity.

According to one donor official, NGOs need to have knowledge about the long-term benefits of their funded activities. This cannot be realized if their training, awareness and ability to access information are not addressed.

2. Structure

In addition to the multiple programs and projects at the regional and national level, the NBI should strive to further diffuse the national projects to the community levels. This will require the opening up of supportive offices at those levels. In a country as large as Ethiopia, these additional points of action should enhance the opportunity for stakeholder involvement. Presently, the NBI offices are concentrated in the capital city of Addis Ababa. NGOs far in the rural communities find it difficult to travel to the capital due to lack of financial resources.

There is a need to design a framework for involvement in which all actors, the political elites, the bureaucratic elites (technocrats), the interest groups (NGOs), and the non-institutional professionals are part and parcel of the decision-making process—from the identification of program objectives, finding alternative solutions, developing ways of implementing a project, and coming up with ways to monitor and evaluate the project. The framework's blue print should also delineate each of the actors' roles and responsibilities. However, structure alone is not enough. Emphasis should be on their efficiency and effectiveness.

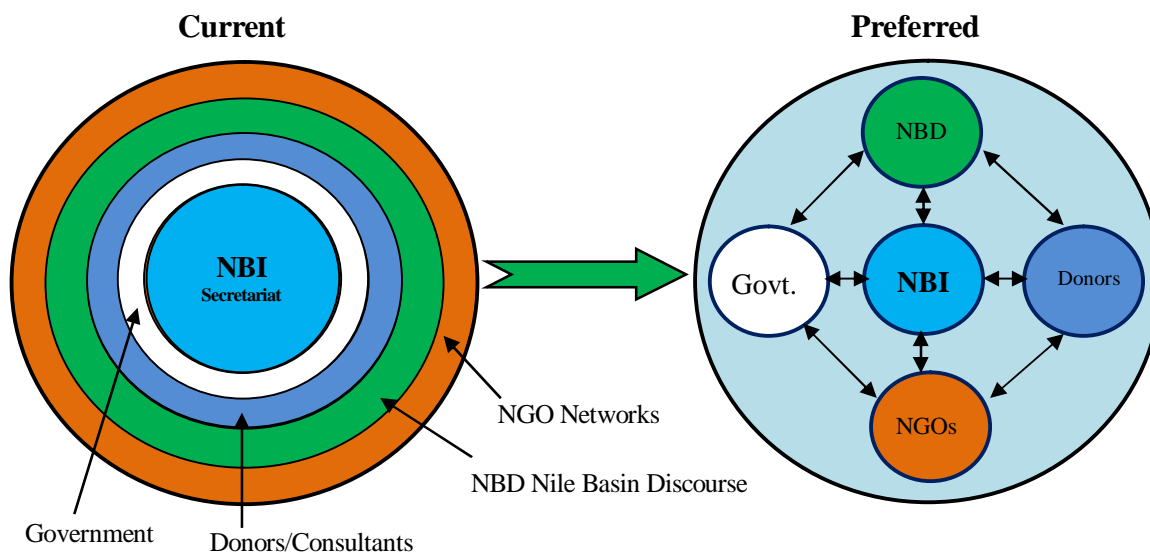
3. Governance

Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) stated that pluralism has three potential benefits: the ability to unite the efforts of unlike minds; the creation of points of action and action strategies through the power of meetings; and enabling the actors to select representatives to influence public policy. Many centuries before Tocqueville's time, Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas (Klosko, 2002) viewed political community as an entity whose sole responsibility is to provide for the common good. Thus, the logical thing for those in a leaking boat is to combine resources to fix the leak before it sinks. In order to translate pluralist theory into practice, the following aspects of governance will need to be addressed so that the missing involvement can be remedied:

First, more education is needed to help change the attitude of the NBI officials who believe that the NGOs are confrontational and must therefore be treated as enemies rather than allies. This should also help address the misperception that the NBI belongs to the government hence only appointed officials can be part of the decision process. With Ethiopia's large and diverse population, stake, and the sensitivity of the Nile water issue to many Ethiopians, the ideal approach is to begin to treat NGOs as allies in development rather than as enemies. This can be achieved through increased meeting forums in which invitations are extended to all those with interest and not necessarily the registered members of the Nile Basin Discourse.

Further recommendations are to include NGOs as a part of the inner circle, instead of keeping them on the outer circle (Figure 7) — allies that jointly address the

Figure 7: Circle of Involvement–Inclusion Model



NBI issues that face them. This would help eliminate the artificial barriers created by each concentric circle. The figure thus illustrates the current framework of involvement and the preferred change; the inclusion model.

Second, the NBI needs to be more open and to operate without secrecy, especially with respect to the negotiations of the permanent Cooperative Framework Agreement, which only works to heighten mistrust. In Ethiopia, some of the informants said they suspect Egypt is controlling the direction of the agreement and that is why it has not been signed. Others stated that the agreement would have been signed if the majority of the citizens were sensitized by the civic organizations. Right now, some people oppose it because the issue is not open for public discourse.

Third, more effective governance will require nurturing relationships with the NGOs. This can involve partnering through a memorandum of understanding. An

informant in Ethiopia commented that their lack of involvement in the Water Resource Planning and Management was due to the absence of any formal arrangement. A memorandum of understanding is one mechanism that allows partners with unlike minds, as Tocqueville envisioned, to share views and to come up with strategies supported by both parties.

With increased calls for a democratic form of governance, the donor communities that want to see the amicable resolution of conflicting water rights need to apply pressure to institutionalize democratic processes, structures, and mechanisms both within the NBI governance and in Ethiopia. Being oblivious of the political realities on the ground and working directly with unsympathetic governments only enhances hostilities by the organized groups that represent the voices of the general public.

Lastly, it is important to recognize that the NBI is a multinational body. This is critical to the whole analysis of stakeholder involvement vis-à-vis the NBI's role in regional politics. The NBI may have the ability to intervene in each of the member countries where involvement has been lagging due to policy inertia. Perhaps, only then can real positive change in NGO involvement take place in countries such as Ethiopia.

Recommendations for Future Research:

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations for future research are proposed:

- 1) An empirical assessment of the effectiveness of each of the mechanisms for involvement used by the Nile Basin Initiative. This can help the NBI determine which

mechanisms are most effective and efficient in bringing stakeholders to the table and occupying the seats of influence.

2) Studies to empirically test the significance of each of the constraints found in this study.

3) A comparative study based on the same questions to understand how contextual factors affect stakeholder involvement. This could be a comparison between the upper and lower riparian countries.

4) The impact of Ethiopia's new NGO legislation on the degree of involvement in the NBI decision-making activities.

5) Country-specific studies to document the perceptions of the organized groups or citizens about their level of understanding of the Nile issue relative to national interests.

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Appendix A University IRB Approval Letter



Office of Research Subjects Protection
BioTechnology Research Park
BioTech One, 800 E. Leigh Street, #114
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, Virginia 23298-0568
(804) 828-3992
(804) 827-1448 (fax)

DATE: November 25, 2008

TO: Susan T. Gooden, PhD
Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
Box 842028

FROM: Elizabeth Ripley, MD, MS
Chairperson, VCU IRB Panel B
Box 980568

RE: VCU IRB #: HM11916
Title: A 'Seat at the Table:' Exploring the Relationship between Pluralist Structures and Involvement in Decision-Making – The Case of the Nile Basin Initiative

On November 25, 2008, the following research study was approved by expedited review according to 45 CFR 46.110 Categories 6 and 7. The approval reflects the revisions received in the Office of Research Subjects Protection on November 21, 2008. This approval includes the following items reviewed by this Panel:

RESEARCH APPLICATION/PROPOSAL: None

PROTOCOL (Research Plan): A 'Seat at the Table:' Exploring the Relationship between Pluralist Structures and Involvement in Decision-Making – The Case of the Nile Basin Initiative, received 10/31/08, version date 10/21/08

- Interview Protocol: The Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat – Uganda (Appendix C), received 10/31/08, version date 10/29/08
- Interview Protocol: Nongovernmental Stakeholders – Ethiopia (Appendix H), received 10/31/08, version date 10/29/08

CONSENT/ASSENT:

- Research Subject Information and Consent Form, received 11/21/08, version date 10/21/08, 3 pages [attached]

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS:

- Recruitment Letter – Panel of "Judges;" received 11/21/08 [attached]
- Recruitment Letter – Key Informants, received 11/21/08 [attached]
- Email Follow-Up Script for "Judges" (Appendix E), received 10/31/08, version date 10/29/08 [attached]

(Continued...)

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Conditions of Approval:

In order to comply with federal regulations, industry standards, and the terms of this approval, the investigator must (*as applicable*):

1. Conduct the research as described in and required by the Protocol.
2. Obtain informed consent from all subjects without coercion or undue influence, and provide the potential subject sufficient opportunity to consider whether or not to participate (unless Waiver of Consent is specifically approved or research is exempt).
3. Document informed consent using only the most recently dated consent form bearing the VCU IRB "APPROVED" stamp (unless Waiver of Consent is specifically approved).
4. Provide non-English speaking patients with a translation of the approved Consent Form in the research participant's first language. The Panel must approve the translated version.
5. Obtain prior approval from VCU IRB before implementing any changes whatsoever in the approved protocol or consent form, unless such changes are necessary to protect the safety of human research participants (e.g., permanent/temporary change of PI, addition of performance/collaborative sites, request to include newly incarcerated participants or participants that are wards of the state, addition/deletion of participant groups, etc.). Any departure from these approved documents must be reported to the VCU IRB immediately as an Unanticipated Problem (see #7).
6. Monitor all problems (anticipated and unanticipated) associated with risk to research participants or others.
7. Report Unanticipated Problems (UPs), including protocol deviations, following the VCU IRB requirements and timelines detailed in VCU IRB WPP VIII-7:
8. Obtain prior approval from the VCU IRB before use of any advertisement or other material for recruitment of research participants.
9. Promptly report and/or respond to all inquiries by the VCU IRB concerning the conduct of the approved research when so requested.
10. All protocols that administer acute medical treatment to human research participants must have an emergency preparedness plan. Please refer to VCU guidance on <http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/guidance.htm>.
11. The VCU IRBs operate under the regulatory authorities as described within:
 - a) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Title 45 CFR 46, Subparts A, B, C, and D (for all research, regardless of source of funding) and related guidance documents.
 - b) U.S. Food and Drug Administration Chapter I of Title 21 CFR 50 and 56 (for FDA regulated research only) and related guidance documents.
 - c) Commonwealth of Virginia Code of Virginia 32.1 Chapter 5.1 Human Research (for all research).

[010507]

Conditions of Approval:

In order to comply with federal regulations, industry standards, and the terms of this approval, the investigator must (*as applicable*):

1. Conduct the research as described in and required by the Protocol.
2. Obtain informed consent from all subjects without coercion or undue influence, and provide the potential subject sufficient opportunity to consider whether or not to participate (unless Waiver of Consent is specifically approved or research is exempt).
3. Document informed consent using only the most recently dated consent form bearing the VCU IRB "APPROVED" stamp (unless Waiver of Consent is specifically approved).
4. Provide non-English speaking patients with a translation of the approved Consent Form in the research participant's first language. The Panel must approve the translated version.
5. Obtain prior approval from VCU IRB before implementing any changes whatsoever in the approved protocol or consent form, unless such changes are necessary to protect the safety of human research participants (e.g., permanent/temporary change of PI, addition of performance/collaborative sites, request to include newly incarcerated participants or participants that are wards of the state, addition/deletion of participant groups, etc.). Any departure from these approved documents must be reported to the VCU IRB immediately as an Unanticipated Problem (see #7).
6. Monitor all problems (anticipated and unanticipated) associated with risk to research participants or others.
7. Report Unanticipated Problems (UPs), including protocol deviations, following the VCU IRB requirements and timelines detailed in VCU IRB WPP VIII-7:
8. Obtain prior approval from the VCU IRB before use of any advertisement or other material for recruitment of research participants.
9. Promptly report and/or respond to all inquiries by the VCU IRB concerning the conduct of the approved research when so requested.
10. All protocols that administer acute medical treatment to human research participants must have an emergency preparedness plan. Please refer to VCU guidance on <http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/guidance.htm>.
11. The VCU IRBs operate under the regulatory authorities as described within:
 - a) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Title 45 CFR 46, Subparts A, B, C, and D (for all research, regardless of source of funding) and related guidance documents.
 - b) U.S. Food and Drug Administration Chapter I of Title 21 CFR 50 and 56 (for FDA regulated research only) and related guidance documents.
 - c) Commonwealth of Virginia Code of Virginia 32.1 Chapter 5.1 Human Research (for all research).

[010507]

Appendix B
Recruitment Letter - Panel of “Judges”

Dear _____,

I am a doctoral student in the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University. As part of the requirements for my Ph.D. Degree, I am conducting a dissertation research on involvement in the decision-making process of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) by nongovernmental stakeholders. The aim of this dissertation is to gain insight into the factors that prevent active involvement in the decision making process in the NBI projects in Ethiopia. To accomplish this project, I will be interviewing key informants representing nongovernmental stakeholders.

To accomplish this process, I would like to request that you serve as a member of panel of “judges”. The role of judges is to scale down a list of prospective key informants provided by the researcher. The criteria for scaling down the list include individuals you consider to be “knowledgeable” and most “influential” of the NBI affairs. Those you identify will be paired with the list scaled down by others and only the names that have the most nominations will be interviewed as key informants in the study. I prefer that these names you select not to be shared with anyone else. I will similarly keep these names confidential. Enclosed is the list with a brief instruction. It will take no more than 15 minutes to complete the selection. I ask that you email back to me the names of those you select.

This dissertation research and its findings are important to the management of the Nile Basin Initiative, stakeholder community within the Basin, funding agencies, and researchers. As there are only a few individuals who meet the criteria to be serve as panel of “judges”, your participation is extremely important to me.

Should you have any question about the study or its process, please feel free to contact my supervisor:

Susan T. Gooden, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Programs
Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
Virginia Commonwealth University
P.O. Box 842028
923 W. Franklin St. #301A
Richmond, VA 23284-2028
Phone: 804-828-7078
Fax: 804-827-1275
e-mail: stgooden@vcu.edu

Should you like to contact me directly about this study, my office telephone number is (804) 828-9018; Cellular Telephone: (804) 868-6218. My email address is okothsh@vcu.edu.

I am very grateful for your assistance with this research. I look forward to getting to know you and working together on this project.

Regards,

Simon Okoth

Enclosure: Basic List of Prospective Key Informants

Appendix C

Basic List of Prospective Key Informants - Uganda

Instruction:

I would like to get some ideas from you about the nature of leadership in the Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat (NBI) and its affiliated agencies in Uganda. Suppose a major project were before the community or organization, one that required decision by a group of leaders whom nearly everyone would accept. Which top 10 people out of this list of 20 would you choose to make up this group regardless of whether or not you know them personally? Add other people who meet the criteria and give reasons why.

Table 8			
<i>Rank Order Nominations: Key Informant List-NBI Secretariat, Uganda</i>			
Position /Organization	Organization	Position/Organization	Organization
Executive Director	NBI Secretariat	Regional Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist	NBI Secretariat
Regional Program Manager – Socioeconomic Development & Benefit Sharing Project Director	NBI Secretariat	Coordinator	Nile Basin Discourse (NBD)
NBI Senior Advisor & Consultant	NBI Secretariat	Head of Finance & Administration	NBI Secretariat
Consultant, Strategic Planning & Management	NBI Secretariat	CBSI National Project Coordinator - Uganda	NBI Secretariat
Regional Project Manager, CBSI	NBI Secretariat	Communication Specialist	NBI Secretariat
Program Officer	NBI Secretariat	Librarian/Documentalist	NBI Secretariat
Regional Coordinator, GWEPENA	GWEPENA, NBI Secretariat	Knowledge Management Specialist	NBI Secretariat
Technical Advisor/ Water Specialist	Food & Agriculture Organization, Nile Basin	Regional Coordinator	Global Water Partnership (GWP)
Senior Program Officer	NBI Secretariat	Internal Audit	NBI Secretariat
Water Resources Specialist (Regional Project Manager),	Global Water Partnership (GWP)	Finance Officer	NBI Secretariat
Sources: Archival Documents - Meeting Records, NBI Website, Email Correspondence, NBI Staff Directory.			

Appendix D

Basic List of Prospective Key Informants - Ethiopia

Instruction:

Suppose a major project were before the community or organization, one that required decision by a group of leaders whom nearly everyone would accept. Which people would you choose to make up this group-regardless of whether or not you know them personally? Select 20 out of 40 and rank order. Add other people who meet the criteria and give reasons why.

Names/Titles	Organization	Names/Titles	Organization
Head Delegated	Christian Relief & Development Association (CRDA) (coordinating body for all NGOs)	Executive Director	Sustainable Land Use Forum (SLUF)
Senior Operations Officer	Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO)	Coordinator	International Committee for the Development of Peoples
Executive Director	CARE-Ethiopia	Coordinator	Ethiopia Muslims Relief & Development Association
Coordinator	Ethiopia Nile Basin Discourse Forum (EtNBDF)	Director	Action for Development, Addis Ababa
Director	Catholic Relief Services –Ethiopia Program	Director	Agric-Service Ethiopia
Executive Director	Agri-Service Ethiopia	Director	International Committee for the Development of Peoples
Director	Food & Agricultural Research Management in Africa	Director	Catholic Relief Services – Ethiopia Program
Coordinator	Gender Relief, Rehabilitation & Development Association	Director	Ethiopian Environmental NGO (EENGO)
Head, Liaison Office	Organization for Rehabilitation & Development Organization in Amhara /ORDA	Chief Officer	Ethiopian Muslims Relief & Development Association
Coordinator	Kembatta Women Self-Help Center	Director	Food for the Hungry International/Ethiopia
Director	Nazareth Children's Center & Integrated Development	Director	Ethiopian Social Rehabilitation and Development
Executive Director	PLAN International Ethiopia	Senior Soil Specialist	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Director	Cher Ethiopia (Society for Humanitarian & Development Assistance)	Program Manager	Forum for Environment
Coordinator	Welfare for the Street Mothers and Children Organization	Lead Specialist	Project Planning & Management, WRPM/NBI
Senior Water Resources Engineer	World Bank Ethiopia Country Office	Executive Director	German Technical Co-operation (GTZ)
Committee Member	Nile-TAC, Nile Basin Initiative Ethiopia	Regional Program Coordinator	InterAfrica Group
Water Resources Specialist/Researcher	International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Nile Basin & East Africa	Snr. Project Coordinator	Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP)
Social Development Officer	Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO, NBI Regional Program)	Coordinator	Local Micro-Grant, MPG/NTEAP/NBI
Executive Director	Ethiopian Environmental NGO (EENGO)	Country Coordinator	Global Water Partnership
Director	Rural Organization for Betterment of Agropastoralists	General Manager	Ethio-Wetlands & National Resources Association
Executive Director	Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization (EARO)	Coordinator	Amhara Women's Development Association
Senior Environment Officer	U.S. Agency for International Development – Ethiopia	Executive Director	WaterAid Ethiopia

Sources: Developed from *Directory of Institutions* (2004, June). Prepared by International Water Management Institute (IWMI) with financial support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Email correspondents with Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO); Official web site sources.

Appendix E
Recruitment Letter - Key Informants

Dear _____,

I am a doctoral student in the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University. As part of the requirements for my Ph.D. Degree, I am conducting a dissertation research on involvement in the decision-making process of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) by nongovernmental stakeholders. The aim of this dissertation is to gain insight into the factors that prevent active involvement in the decision making process in three NBI projects in Ethiopia. To accomplish this project, I will be interviewing selected officials and key informants of government and nongovernmental organizations.

The purpose of this letter is to request your participation in this study. You have been identified as a key informant based either on your observed role, knowledge and influence in broad range of Nile Basin Initiative decision activities in which Ethiopia is part.

I would like to set up a meeting with you so that I can ask you a few questions about your knowledge or perceptions on the extent to which nongovernmental stakeholders of Ethiopia are involved in the decision making processes of the Nile Basin Initiative. Also, to share with me any information that you may have regarding the barriers to involvement by these organizations. All your responses will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone else except my study supervisor. I anticipate that the interview will take less than one hour. I will contact you within the next few weeks to schedule the interview.

This dissertation research and its findings are important to the management of the Nile Basin Initiative, stakeholder community within the Basin, funding agencies, and researchers. As there are only a few individuals who meet the criteria to be interviewed, your participation is extremely important to me. Therefore, I will make every effort to ensure that we meet only at a time and place that is convenient to you.

Should you have any question about the study or its process, please feel free to contact my supervisor:

Susan T. Gooden, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Programs
Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
Virginia Commonwealth University
P.O. Box 842028
923 W. Franklin St. #301A
Richmond, VA 23284-2028
Phone: 804-828-7078

Fax: 804-827-1275
e-mail: stgooden@vcu.edu

Should you like to contact me directly about this study, my office telephone number is (804) 828-9018; Cellular Telephone: (804) 868-6218. My email address is okothsh@vcu.edu.

I am very grateful for your assistance with this research. I look forward to getting to know you and working together on this project.

Regards,

Simon Okoth

Appendix F
Email Follow-Up Script for “Judges”

A few weeks ago I mailed a letter to you informing you about my proposed study. You may recall, if you received the letter, that I am interested in understanding the extent of involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders in the decision-making process of the Nile Basin Initiative in Ethiopia. In particular, I would like to know how the conditions and mechanisms in place make it easier or difficult to participate.

In order to help me determine whom to interview, I have developed a basic list of prospective key informants based on newspaper accounts and official reports. You may or may not know some of them personally. However, based on your experience and position, you may be able to know who or the organizations that exert significant influence in the community decision issues. The purpose of this email is to ask if you can be part of the panel of five “judges” that will help me narrow the list to a desired number. This will take no more that ten minutes of your time.

Please let me know within the next one week or so if you agree to be part of the panel. The choices that you make will not be shared with any one else. I am also pleased to inform you that the Nile basin policy makers have expressed interest in knowing the views of the participants as this will help them improve the strategies for increasing stakeholder involvement.

I look forward to getting to know you personally and to work with you on this important research.

Yours truly,

Simon Okoth

Appendix G
Email Follow-Up Script for Key Informants

A few weeks ago I mailed a letter to you informing you about my proposed study. You may recall, if you received the letter, that I am interested in understanding the extent of involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders in the decision-making process of the Nile Basin Initiative in Ethiopia. In particular, I would like to know how the conditions and mechanisms in place make it easier or difficult to participate.

The purpose of this email is to ask if you would be willing to be one of the participants whom I can interview. Your name came up from newspaper accounts and other official reports as one of the most knowledgeable and influential individuals in your community. This was also supported by a panel consisting of top officials of the Nile Basin Initiative.

Please let me know within the next one week or so if you agree to participate. The information that you provide will be kept confidential and no names will be used in the study report. Hence no statement will be attributed to you directly or indirectly in the report. Only the combined views of the participants will be reported.

I look forward to getting to know you personally and to work with you in this important research. From your views, policy makers will be able to learn and find best ways to improve participation levels of stakeholders in the decisions affecting the Nile basin projects.

Yours truly,

Simon Okoth

Appendix H
Interview Protocol
The Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat - Uganda

Introduction

I was hoping that you could help me to understand broadly the extent of involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders in the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) projects, the mechanisms used to facilitate that, and the constraints. I am also going to interview NGOs in Ethiopia on the same issues. I am wondering if you can help me understand what you know about the situation there so that I can get better prepared. It is my hope that the findings from these interviews will enable the NBI to better understand what is going on and to find strategies to improve involvement. Results of the study will be presented in an anonymous form and therefore you will not be identified either directly or indirectly by what you say.

PART I

A. Level of Involvement

1. One of the tasks of the NBI is to ensure that there is support for the basin projects and involvement by various stakeholders. Would you please enlighten me on what “involvement” means to the NBI?
 Probe 1: What are essential for active involvement?
 Probe 2: Of the things you mentioned, which ones are in place and which ones are not?
 Probe 3: How has the level of involvement been?
 Probe 4: Please tell me some more

2. Which projects require involvement and which ones do not?
 Probe 1: Who are involved in these projects?
 Probe 2: How about those who are not involved? Can you tell me more about why they are not involved?

3. I would like you to help me understand about the level of involvement in Ethiopia based on the information that you have. Generally, how is involvement in the NBI projects there?
 Probe 1: How about the level of involvement in the following projects that are currently being implemented there? Please look at the list of the projects on these cards, and tell me which ones report more involvement than the other(s) and why.
 - A. Water Policies Good Practice Guides and Support
 - B. Project Planning and Management
 - C. Nile Basin Decision-Making Support System (DSS)

Probe 1: For those who get involved, do people easily agree on the decisions or do they sometimes disagree?

Probe 2: Where disagreements occur, how are they resolved?

4. Based on your knowledge, which areas of the decision-making do the nongovernmental stakeholders effectively participate in? If this is not clear, perhaps the following aspects that I came up with may help. Please look at the cards and tell me which ones in relation to the three projects we just talked about.
 - A. Defining the problem or setting program objective
 - B. Developing possible solutions
 - C. Coming up with ways to implement the project
 - D. Developing monitoring procedures or tools
 - E. Evaluating the project

Probe 1: For the decision areas with minimal or no participation, can you tell me the reasons why that is so?

B. Mechanisms/Structures for Involvement

I would also appreciate if you can help me to understand two other issues about involvement. In particular, I am interested in knowing where most of the decisions affecting the projects are made, in terms of geographical location. Secondly, I would like to know about the mechanisms or procedures in place for facilitating the process.

1. People quite often talk about “decentralized” versus “centralized” decision-making. How would you define decentralized decision-making? How about centralized?

Probe 1: Based on the definition you just provided, which one best describes how the NBI decisions are made?

Probe 2: How would you describe where decisions are made for the NBI projects in Ethiopia?

Probe 3: How about other areas of the Basin?

Probe 4: What are your assessment about the extent of openness of these centers to stakeholder involvement?

C. Constraints

Based on what I have read about stakeholder involvement, there appears to be some challenges that hinder increased involvement. Please look back for a moment on some of the decision activities of the NBI. Can you talk about some specific challenges to involvement?

Probe 1: Which ones do you consider most critical? Why?

Probe 2: Which ones are specific to Ethiopia?

Probe 3: How should these constraints be resolved?

D. General

1. Things we have talked about bring to mind the importance of good working relationship between the stakeholders and government agencies such as the NBI. How would you describe the NBI's overall relationship to nongovernmental stakeholders in the region and specifically Ethiopia?
 Probe 1: What factors influence the relationship you just described?
 Probe 2: How does that relationship affect stakeholder involvement?
 Probe 2: How about on the basin-wide cooperation?
2. Is there anything I didn't ask that you consider important?

PART II

Demographics

Before we close our discussion, I would like to ask you some personal information. I need to be able to validate my final report of this study by accurately recording whom I interviewed and some information about the agencies they represent. All the information that you give remain confidential, and can only be divulged upon your approval.

1. Position/Title in Organization
2. Gender: Male Female Other
3. Highest Level of Education: PhD Masters Bachelors Diploma (post-high school) High School Primary
4. What is your age group? Under 21 21-40 41-60 61-89

Code No: _____

Date of Interview _____

Place of Interview _____

Appendix I
Interview Protocol
Nongovernmental Stakeholders - Ethiopia

Introduction

I was hoping that you could help me to understand the extent of involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders in the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) projects. The responses that I get from you and other organizations will hopefully influence policy makers to actively find better avenues to involve agencies or individuals who are interested. In general, I would like you to help me better understand the level of involvement, mechanisms for involvement, and the constraints. Results of the study will be presented in an anonymous form and therefore you will not be identified either directly or indirectly by what you say.

PART I

A. Level of Involvement

1. The NBI has been talking about stakeholder “involvement” for a couple of years now. I will be talking as well about this subject. Can you tell me what your understanding is of the word involvement?
 Probe1: What do you think are necessary for involvement?
 Probe2: Of the things you mentioned, do any of them reflect how decisions are made by the NBI here in Ethiopia?

2. What NBI activities have you been involved in?
 Probe 1: Who else was involved?
 Probe 2: Which ones did you support and which ones did you oppose? Why?
 Probe 3: Are there any other projects that you have been involved in or know of? Which ones are they?

3. I would like to seek your views on certain NBI projects currently being implemented here in Ethiopia. Please look at the list of the projects on these cards, and tell me which ones you have been involved in.
 - A. Water Policies Good Practice Guides and Support
 - B. Project Planning and Management
 - C. Nile Basin Decision-Making Support System (DSS)
 Probe 1: Which one(s) was the most important to you and the least important?
 Probe 2: Can you explain more?
 Probe 3: Which one(s) did you oppose and why?
 Probe 4: Who else opposed it and why?
 Probe 5: How did your position on the issue or that of someone else influence the final outcome?

Probe 6: Of the issues that you participated in, who else was involved? Please give me the names of at least two organizations that were represented.

Issue No _____

4. I would like to talk more about the project (s) that you participated in. Can you tell me what aspects of the decisions you were involved in? If this is not clear, perhaps the following aspects that I came up with may help. Please look at the cards and tell which ones you were involved in.

Issue(s) _____

- A. Defining the problem or setting program objectives
- B. Developing possible solutions
- C. Coming up with ways to implement the project
- D. Developing monitoring procedures or tools
- E. Evaluating the project

Probe 1: For the area(s) you did not participate in, what was the reason?

B. Mechanisms/Structures for Involvement

I would like you to help me understand two other issues about involvement. In particular, I am interested in knowing where most of the decisions affecting the project(s) you were involved in are located. Secondly, the mechanisms or procedures that enabled you to participate in the decisions.

1. For the project decisions that you participated in, can you tell me where they were made?

Probe 1: People talk about “decentralized” versus “centralized” decision-making. How would you define decentralized? How about centralized?

Probe 2: Based on the definition you just provided, which one best describes how the NBI decisions are made?

2. What are the things that you consider essential for making involvement by you and others easier?

Probe 1: Can you tell me more about these?

Probe 2: Which ones are currently available to you and which ones are not?

Probe 3: Why is this so?

C. Constraints

You just mentioned some things that are essential for your involvement. Looking back at the projects that you participated in, can you talk about what the challenges have been?

- Probe 1: Which ones do you consider most critical to your involvement? Why?
 Probe 2: How should these constraints be resolved?

D. General

1. Things we have talked about bring to mind the importance of good working relationship between the stakeholders and government agencies such as the NBI. How would you describe your (organization) relationship with the NBI affiliated agencies/offices here in Ethiopia?
 Probe 1: How does that relationship affect your involvement?
 Probe 2: How about on the basin-wide cooperation?

3. Is there anything I didn't ask that you consider important?

PART II

Demographics

Before we close our discussion, I would like to ask you some personal information. I need to be able to validate my final report of this study by accurately recording whom I interviewed and some information about the agencies they represent. All the information that you give remain confidential, and can only be divulged upon your approval.

1. Position/Title in Organization
2. Gender: Male [] Female [] Other []
3. Highest Level of Education: PhD [] Masters [] Bachelors [] Diploma (post-high school) [] High School [] Primary []
4. What is your age group? Under 21 [] 21-40 [] 41-60 [] 61-80 []

Code No: _____

Date of Interview _____

Place of Interview _____

Appendix J: Derived Hypotheses Matrix

Research Questions	Evidence	Derived Hypotheses
<p><i>Primary:</i></p> <p><i>1. What are the characteristics of power structures of the Nile Basin Initiative as they relate to stakeholders involvement in Ethiopia?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pluralist structures, as they presently exist in Ethiopia, do not strongly support involvement. Organized groups thrive but are controlled. ○ Decisions are primarily made by the elites: the Nile-COM, Nile-TAC, the Secretariat officials, and international donors and professionals ○ Decentralized programs and projects at the regional and national levels provide opportunity for selected NGOs to implement investment projects but this does not guarantee the right to get involved in the decision-making processes. 	<p>Hypothesis 1: Pluralist and elitist models can co-exist and be applied simultaneously, at least in a developing country context, with the former recognizing the presence of organized groups and the latter taking charge of policy decisions.</p> <p>Hypothesis 2: The exercise of pluralism, at least in a developing country context, will depend on the degree of democratic openness that exists in the political leadership at any given time, whether in a centralized or decentralized system.</p>
<p><i>2. For those not involved in the decision-making process, what constraints prevent them from getting a 'seat at the table'?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Political factors:</i> restrictive policies; control, lack of support ○ <i>Misperceived roles;</i> lack of legal mandate ○ <i>Lack of capacity of the NGOs:</i> poor technical and managerial skills; poorly formed and weak ○ <i>Structural:</i> centralized decision-making keeps out NGOs ○ <i>Information and Awareness:</i> inadequate information; available information too technical ○ <i>Economic:</i> lack of funding and poverty inhibit NGOs' abilities to attend NBI activities or to enhance their internal capacity ○ <i>Attitude:</i> NGOs viewed as confrontational; enemies rather than allies ○ <i>History of Involvement:</i> Ethiopia has poor history of involvement; involvement not integrated within the NBI as a core value 	<p>Hypothesis: Stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process will be influenced by multiple factors, including political, structural, capacity, economic, and access to information.</p>

Appendix I: Continued

Research Questions	Evidence	Derived Hypotheses
<p><i>Secondary:</i></p> <p>3. Do the power structure characteristics in Ethiopia relate to pluralism and, if so, how?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representation through meetings, trainings and workshops—not “Fair”; Memorandum of Understanding mechanism—not effective ○ Framework for involvement does include NGOs; no formalized roles and responsibilities ○ Decentralized power structures exist in form of regional and national programs and projects ○ Decision-making is based on centralized power structures; key decisions made by donors, consultants, bureaucratic and political elites based on hierarchy 	<p>Hypothesis 1: The presence of pluralist structures, at least in a developing country context, will not necessarily guarantee inclusion of organized groups into the policy-making process.</p> <p>Hypothesis 2: Centralized power structures will predict decision-making process of the NBI and its projects in Ethiopia.</p>
<p>4. To what extent are the conditions in Ethiopia compatible with the pre-requisites of pluralism?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Decentralized power structures:</i> federal, decentralized by regions ○ <i>Heterogeneous population:</i> 73 ethnic groups, different languages and religions ○ <i>Large sized and autonomous NGOs:</i> over 3,000; size varies. Controlled, areas of operation restricted; 2009 NGO legislation puts further restrictions. ○ <i>Strong labor unions:</i> less vibrant, at the margin and controlled; Article 31 of the federal constitution supports freedom of association. ○ <i>Diversified economy:</i> less diversified; predominantly agricultural ○ <i>Information accessibility:</i> print media; electronic media (TV) limited channels; frequencies concentrated at the capital. 	<p>Hypothesis: Conditions in Ethiopia and the NBI, as they presently exist, will predict decreased level of involvement by nongovernmental stakeholders.</p>

VITA

SIMON H. R. OKOTH

Office: 921 W. Franklin Street, P. O. Box 843065, Richmond, VA 23284. • 804-828-9018

Email: okothsh@vcu.edu

EDUCATION

PhD in Public Policy and Administration

L. Douglas Wilder School of Government & Public Affairs
Virginia Commonwealth University

Richmond, VA, US
November 2009

Dissertation: **A ‘Seat at the Table’: Exploring the relationship between pluralist structures and involvement in decision-making—The Case of the Nile Basin Initiative**

Dissertation Advisors: Prof. Susan T. Gooden (Chair), Dr. Avrum J. Shriar
Dr. Clifford J. Fox & Prof. Blue E. Wooldridge.

Certificate in Community Environmental Studies

Tufts University
School of Professional Studies

Medford, MA, US
December 1997

Master of Public Administration

Murray State University
~Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Political Science and Legal Studies

Murray, KY, US
December 1984

Bachelor of Arts in Economics
Berea College

Berea, KY, US
May, 1980

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Comparative Public Policy & Politics, Civic Engagement/Public Participation, Public Management, Policy Analysis, Environmental Policy and Conflicts, Governance and Institutional Strengthening, Public Administration Theory

HONORS & AWARDS

- Leigh Grosenick Award** for Best Doctoral Paper: “Bureaucratic Pendulum: Striking the Balance.” 2005
Virginia Commonwealth University
- Pi Alpha Alpha**, the National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration 2008
Virginia Commonwealth University Chapter
- The National Scholars Honor Society**, U.S. 2004

LANGUAGES

Fluent in English, Swahili & Luo

MEMBERSHIP

- Association for Public Policy & Management (APPAM)** Since 2007
International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Since 2007
Public Administration Theory Network-PATNET Since 2007

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

“Identification of future stressors to the Nile Basin Initiative: Will the framework float or sink?”
Sixth Annual Conference on Social Equity and Leadership, “Social Equity: Putting Solution into Practice.” National Academy of Public Administration, February 15-17, 2007, Richmond, Virginia.

“Postmodern Bureaucratic Discretion: An Approach to Public Administration Reforms in Africa.” Conference of the Association of Southern African Departments of Public Administration and Management (ASSADPAM), Polytechnic of Namibia, Windhoek, Namibia, May 30-June 1, 2007.

“The Impact of U.S. Immigration Policy on HIV Prevalence among immigrants from Africa: A Case study.” Presented at the 29th Conference of the Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management, November 8, 2007, Washington D.C.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant

Community Health Research Initiative, Virginia Commonwealth University 2005-2009
Coordinated Needs Assessment/Client Satisfaction Surveys
Provided technical assistance to agencies in Central Virginia funded by Federal Ryan White HIV/AIDS programs
Participated in the Virginia Dept. of Health Peer Reviews of HIV/AIDS funded programs

Associate Peace Corps Director, Small Enterprise Development/Information Technology

1998-2003
U.S. Peace Corps, Nairobi, Kenya
Supervised Volunteers’ community projects
Awards: ~Peace Corps Cash Award for Initiatives in Gender and Development/Information Technology

Cultural Affairs Assistant

U.S. Information Service, Embassy Nairobi, Kenya 1988-1996
 Developed & implemented exchange programs
Awards: ~American Embassy /State Department Merit Award for Sustained Superior performance of official duties.

Planning Officer

Ministry of Education, Nairobi, Kenya 1985-1988
 Authored annual reports, prepared budget estimates, conducted data analysis, and evaluated donor funded projects

TEACHING EXPERIENCE**Adjunct Faculty****Instructor**

POLI 341 - History of Political Thought (Undergraduate) Spring 2009
 Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia

Instructor

POLI 452 - Seminar in the Politics of Developing Areas (Undergraduate) Fall 2009
 Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia

Instructor

POLI 109 - Comparative Politics (Undergraduate) Fall 2009
 Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia

Graduate Teaching Assistant/Substitute Teaching – Virginia Commonwealth University

PADM 607 Public Human Resource Management (GTA) Spring 2009
POLI 365 International Political Economy (Sub) Spring, 2009
POLI 356 African Government & Politics (Sub) Spring 2009
PADM 625 Public Policy Analysis (GTA) Fall 2008
PADM 681 Governmental Decision-Making (GTA) Spring 2008
PADM 601 Principles of Public Administration (GTA) Fall 2007