Global Forest Governance and Climate Change: Introduction and Overview

Emmanuel O. Nuesiri

Aim of This Book

Climate change is the most pressing problem facing the world today. The recent devastation experienced by small island states in the Caribbean and the USA, caused by hurricanes Harvey and Irma, has again stirred contentious debates about climate change and the fate of humanity.[1] This comes after US President Donald Trump's announcement that he is pulling out of the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement. The announcement was a significant victory for climate change deniers with strong ties to the president (Davenport & Lipton, 2017, June 3). Nevertheless the rest of the world (and some States in the USA) are moving ahead with the Paris Agreement (Geiling, 2017, July 12; Mohan, 2017, July 9). Article 5 of the Paris Agreement details the role of forests in the global response to climate change, through the reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management

E. O. Nuesiri (✉)
Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, University of Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany

of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation [REDD+]) mechanism (see Climate Focus, 2015; United Nations, 2015). The aim of this book is to assess whether REDD+ is indeed a viable global mechanism for addressing climate change, in which contexts and under what conditions.

The adoption of REDD+ is being supported globally by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations REDD Programme (UN-REDD), and the World Bank through its Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the Forest Investment Program (FIP). However, REDD+ would lead to loss of live-lihoods for many forest-dependent people because it would restrict their access to forests set aside for carbon sequestration (Accra Caucus, 2013; Roe, Streck, Pritchard, & Costenbader, 2013). To address this socio-economic problem, a number of social and environmental safeguards have been proposed by the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank, including the requirement that all REDD+ projects be implemented under the principle of securing the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of affected local people (UN-REDD, 2013). The UN-REDD goes as far as committing itself to strengthening local democracy as a social safeguard against elite capture of benefits packages for local people that may be affected by REDD+ (UN-REDD, 2008).

The implementation of these social safeguards including FPIC is based on the adoption of participatory processes inclusive of local people during consultations, design, implementation, and monitoring of REDD+ initiatives. The underlying assumption being that participation of local people in decision-making spaces about REDD+ will ensure equity and fairness in the distribution of costs and benefits associated with the adoption of REDD+ by developing country governments. This book sets out to interrogate this assumption through case studies that examine participatory forest governance processes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The chapters examine participatory processes associated with ongoing REDD+ adoption initiatives and also examine participatory processes associated with other types of forestry programmes such as Joint Forest Management in India. However, all the chapters interrogate the question of whether participation as currently practised in the case study countries

is sufficient for an inclusive REDD+ responsive to the interests of local forest-dependent people.

Theoretical Arguments: Inclusive and Complementary Political Representation

This book has come about partly as a result of research carried out by the Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI), a three-year research programme jointly executed by the University of Illinois Urban Champaign (U of I), the Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) Dakar, Senegal, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The RFGI was funded by a grant from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Thus six of the nine chapters in this book (Chaps. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10) are in part informed by insights from RFGI research. The RFGI programme held that decision-making about forest resources should be inclusive of, and responsive to, the socio-economic interests of local people (Ece et al., 2017; Ribot, 2016). Responsiveness calls for participation that supports the presence of local people in decision-making, and supports decisions that 'respond to and reflect local needs and aspirations' (Ribot, 2017, p. 3). Representation that is responsive is fundamental to strong effective participatory processes, to legitimacy of decision-making, and to substantive democratic decentralization of forest governance in changing climate.

Inclusion of local people in forest governance does not end with getting local people to attend participatory forums. It is important to pay close attention to power dynamics and asymmetries among the different types of representatives in participatory processes in order to avoid what Cooke and Kothari (2001) term the tyranny of participation. It is often the case that local people are represented in participatory processes, by persons selected on the basis of their local livelihood, with the assumption that a farmer is best placed to speak for farmers and a woman is best placed to speak for women. This type of descriptive representation is indeed welcomed in cases where a group has experienced a long history of marginalization (Mansbridge, 1999; Pitkin, 1967), and the only way their interests

will feature in decision-making spaces is to have an individual that resembles the group present in decision-making spaces. However, descriptive representatives in many cases do not have a broad enough mandate to represent their communities; in addition they often lack experience of engagement in formal deliberative spaces, thus customary authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are often invited to also represent local people and communities in participatory processes.

Customary authorities and NGOs are symbolic representatives of local communities; they are able to legitimately stand and speak for local communities because they share similar 'beliefs, attitudes, assumptions' (Pitkin, 1967, p. 99). They also share similar aspirations with their constituents; likewise NGOs working to alleviate poverty share similar aspirations with poor local forest communities and on this basis can make a self-appointed representative claim on behalf of such communities (see Montanaro, 2017; Saward, 2010). Symbolic representatives include self-appointed agents like NGOs and celebrities, and also institutions like customary authorities appointed following cultural norms; these do not have legal obligations to be responsive and accountable to local communities as is the case with elected local representatives like mayors, local government chairpersons, and municipal councillors.

These elected local representatives are formally authorized by local people to speak and act on their behalf. They are obliged to be responsive to local communities they represent because of their constitutional recognition as the third tier of government with resources with which to provide public services to meet the needs of their electorate. When they are not responsive, they can be voted out, and they are also liable to legal prosecution for abuse of authority (Schedler, 1999). They are therefore the substantive representatives of local people. Substantive representation is viewed as morally superior to descriptive and symbolic representation for the formal checks it places on representatives (Pitkin, 1967), making it the preferred mechanism for representative democracy and democratic decentralization (Eaton & Connerley, 2010; Manin, Przeworski, & Stokes 1999; Rehfeld, 2011; Urbinati & Warren, 2008). Consequently, they are essential actors to be included in participatory processes that aim to be responsive to local socio-economic interests. However, elected local governments alone are insufficient to represent the varied interests of local communities.
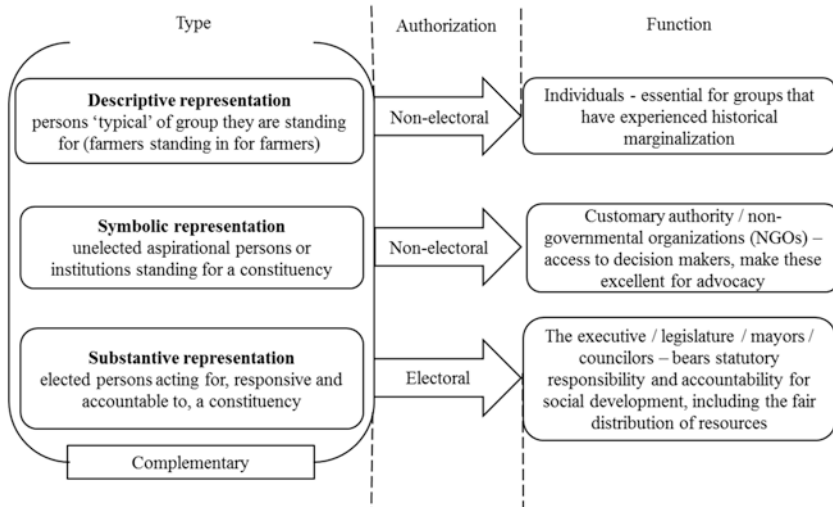
Fig. 1.1 Inclusive and complementary political representation (Source: Author's adaptation based on Pitkin (1967), Young (2000), and Saward (2010))

Inclusive, strong, and responsive representation of local people in participatory processes is more likely when the three types of representatives complement one another (see Fig. 1.1) (Celis, Childs, Kantola, & Krook, 2008; Saward, 2010; Young, 2000). Local interests are varied and differentiated along lines of age, gender, wealth status, and race; this strengthens the case for inclusive complementary representation of local communities in participatory forums (Dovi, 2002, 2009; Mansbridge, 1999; Urbinati, 2000; Williams, 1998; Young, 2000). Inclusive representation strengthens participation, ensures legitimacy of decision-making, and is at the core of initiatives for democratic decentralization of forest resources management.

Chapter Summaries

The chapters of this book are arranged according to their continental location; the African cases come first, followed by the Asian cases, and then the Latin American cases. Following the introduction, Nuesiri in Chap. 2 assesses UN-REDD commitment to strengthen local democracy

as a safeguard against elite capture of REDD+ benefits for local people. He does this by examining local representation during the consultative process associated with the design of the Nigeria-REDD proposal. He finds that local representation was through selected individuals from local communities (descriptive representatives), and through customary authority and NGOs (symbolic representatives); elected local government authorities, the substantive representatives of local people were excluded from the consultative process. He also finds that the exclusion of elected local governments is linked to godfather politics in Nigeria, which enables state governors to unfairly subordinate local government authority and constrain their responsiveness to local needs. In approving the Nigeria-REDD proposal, the UN-REDD reinforced power asymmetries between political godfathers and elected local governments, consequently aiding the subversion of local democracy in Nigeria. He asserts that the UN-REDD would be fulfilling its democracy objectives and protecting local people from elite capture of Nigeria-REDD, if it engages substantively with elected local government authorities, following the benchmark set by the European Union Micro Projects Programme.

Samndong in Chap. 3 studies REDD+ in two pilot sites in Equateur province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He specifically interrogates community participation through information collected from household questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. He found that community participation in REDD+ in DRC is mere 'tokenism'. The communities were consulted and informed about REDD+ but did not achieve managerial power and influence over the REDD+ project. The decision for the communities to join REDD+ was not democratic and the information provided during the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) process was not sufficient for the communities to make informed decisions to join REDD+. Community participation in the REDD+ project does not go beyond labour supply in activities and attending meetings for per diems. The institutional arrangement to enable full and effective community participation is weak and excludes women. He argues that effective community participation might be difficult to achieve if social inequalities and local power relations are not acknowledged and addressed in DRC national REDD+ programme.

Mbeche in Chap. 4 examines institutional choice and substantive representation of local people in carbon forestry in Uganda. He notes that carbon forestry programmes are expected to build-in social safeguards to help ensure accountability, participation, transparency, and legitimacy in resource governance. These safeguards promise inclusion of marginalized groups and forest-dependent people in decision-making around resource governance—so that their interests can be represented. He queries to what extent this rhetoric of representation is reflected in the design and implementation of carbon forestry programmes in Uganda? He finds that despite espoused intentions of having an 'inclusive' involvement of communities and in particular local actors, all the three interventions he studied chose to work through experts or via institutions that required individuals to be members (such as community-based organizations, NGOs, etc.) if they were to benefit. He observes that the effect of these arrangements has been exclusion of the wider community, co-optation, contestation, conflict, unequal benefit sharing, lack of accountability, or selected institutions being accountable to donors as opposed to communities. He argues that mere articulation of social safeguards for forest governance are not sufficient—they have to be backed with conditions that make it necessary for broad public accountability and responsiveness to occur. He provides recommendations on how to broaden accountability and responsiveness in carbon forestry in Uganda.

Lord, in Chap. 5, interrogates displacement, power, and REDD+. She shows how top-down decision-making can undermine the legitimacy of REDD+ project. Donors assumed the long-standing experience of a conservation NGO, working in a remote, Tanzanian dry Miombo woodland, legitimized the symbolic representation of local people by that NGO, and therefore decided to implement a REDD+ project in the Miombo woodland through that NGO. Donors' choice ended up reinforcing the historical exclusion of migratory pastoralists from forest governance, undermined substantive representation of local people by their elected village authorities, and worsened land tenure conflicts. The results of this study demonstrate, at a fine grain of detail, how forest conservation was locally contested through democratic decision-making in the village general assembly. The politically legitimate consensus decisions of the village assembly were subsequently overruled by the NGO

and project consultants, acting as their own fields of power and authority, unaccountable to the village assembly. Furthermore, REDD+ technical knowledge requirements and neoliberal rollback of the state influenced NGO choice of local actors to work with; this created unhealthy competition between implementing groups that undermined the legitimacy of the REDD+ project. This case study examines the politics of blame and responsibility in relation to climate mitigation, and highlights how power asymmetries does not only apply to the dominance of local elites and governments but likewise to the civil society experts and consultants that simplify the perceptions and expectations of local legitimate stakeholders in the application of evidence-based policy.

Akwah-Neba et al., in Chap. 6, examine the drivers of representation, which influences the quality of representation in participatory processes. They note that participation has been the principal focus for operationalizing inclusion in environmental conservation and development initiatives in the past 30 years, while representation through legitimately recognized individuals or institutions has been a key criteria of participation. They argue that while the quality of representation is principally evaluated by the relations of accountability between representatives and their constituency, it can also be evaluated by whether it is supply or demand driven. They posit that representation is supply driven when the stimulus is from society seeking to represent their interests, and demand driven when the stimulus is from governments and donors requiring representation in their projects. Focusing on civil society organizations in Cameroon, Ghana, Hungary, and Nepal, they use their conceptual lens to examine how the drivers of representation impact on the quality of public participation in forest conservation initiatives including REDD+. Based on their findings, they identify five key factors which can influence the quality of civil society organizations' representation of local communities.

Murthy et al., in Chap. 7, review the experience of participatory forest management in India, observing that the government is responding to the global climate change problem in several ways. India has a long-standing National Forest Policy (NFP) with a goal to bring 33% of its geographic area under tree cover. The country's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) includes the holistic ecosystem conservation

plan termed the Green India Mission (GIM). It is Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions plans to sequester 2.5–3 billion tonnes of CO_2 equivalent by 2030 through forestry activities. The government is currently finalizing its REDD+ strategy, which includes forestry activities that contribute to achieving its NFP, GIM, and NDC targets. Murthy et al. note that the participation of local communities in REDD+ is integral to its success, but community participation in India's Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme shows has not been very successful. This is due to ineffective implementation and enforcement of laws, failure to ensure inclusive representation of local people, and inequity in the distribution of benefits. Thus, for successful REDD+ implementation in India, Murthy et al. recommend respect for environmental laws by powerful actors, especially government, stronger social and environmental safeguards, formulation of community-friendly and accountable forest benefits sharing mechanisms, and resolute government commitment to community participation in REDD+ in India.

Höhne et al., in Chap. 8, interrogate REDD+ and its effect on the reconfiguration of public authority in the forest sector in Indonesia and Brazil. They start from the observation that since the 1980s, most central governments have decentralized forest management to local governments and assume that financial incentives associated with initiatives like REDD+ could motivate central governments to attempt to recentralize forest management. Höhne et al. examine to what extent central governments have rebuilt capacity at the national level, imposed regulations from above, and taken up activities that interfere in forest management by local governments. They find that while REDD+ has not initiated large-scale recentralization in the forestry sector, it supports the reinforcement and pooling of REDD+-related competences at central government level. In Brazil, where sub-national states are at the forefront of REDD+ activities, this has resulted in regulatory struggles between the state governments and the central government; while in Indonesia, where the central government is at the forefront of REDD+ activities, the provincial governments have followed the central government's lead and the district governments have mostly abstained in the process.

Špirić, in Chap. 9, explores the legitimacy of Mexico's REDD+ readiness process. She examines the normative and organizational characteristics of the most important multi-stakeholder forums articulated to design the national REDD+ strategy, and how legitimate these forums are, according to their participants. The results show that there are two groups of actors with contrasting perceptions of the multi-stakeholders forums' legitimacy: the supporters and the detractors. The supporters consist of government, academia, and large international and national NGOs. These find the REDD+ decision-making process in Mexico all inclusive, and favour indirect representation of local people through NGOs. The detractors, mainly peasant and indigenous peoples' organizations, some national NGOs, and academics, consider that the Mexico's REDD+ process lacks transparency and representativeness and are demanding more direct participation of local people. In response to the detractors, the Mexican government plans to improve procedural legitimacy of the national REDD+ process by directly consulting local people representatives on the national REDD+ design.

Burga, in Chap. 10, investigates how communities in the Peruvian Amazon are engaging in REDD+ for access to potential economic benefits from carbon sales and land titling to secure tenure. Based on interviews in two villages, her study sheds light on what people actually gain or lose through their engagement with REDD+ and highlight the need for social protections to avoid negative effects on the most vulnerable. Burga shows how these communities are using existing governance structures and mechanisms for representation and participation in decision-making including negotiating benefit distribution in REDD+. She also shows that where representation is not democratic, there are real risks of REDD+ reproducing and worsening exclusion, inequality, and elite capture. Burga's study shows clearly that REDD+ initiatives that fail to support democratic representation end up legitimizing non-democratic practices, deepen inequalities in income distribution, and end up putting local people at risk of losing entitlements associated with citizenship and belonging in their communities.

Discussion: Towards Responsive Global Forest Governance Under a Changing Climate

What do the contributing authors to this book add to our understanding of global forest governance and climate change, as they interrogate representation, participation, and decentralization? Firstly, operationalizing participation is the primary mechanism through which governments, donors, international organizations, and NGOs seek to include local communities in decision-making spaces over forest resources. However, participation of local communities is still viewed as getting local community members, NGOs, and national governments into the same room for deliberations. Power asymmetries are still rife in forest governance, and this still manifests as non-local actors, including national governments, donors, and NGOs, holding stronger voice and influence over community members in participatory processes. Samndong (this volume) based on his research in DR Congo has labelled current participatory processes to include local people in governance of forest and climate change initiatives like REDD+ as mere tokenism, falling far short of empowering local people, especially women.

Secondly, forestry and climate change initiatives such as REDD+ are reinforcing these power asymmetries, and in some cases increasing these power asymmetries between non-local actors and local people. This has resulted in displacement of local people from forest areas in which they obtain livelihoods in Tanzania (Lord, this volume) and has also resulted in uncertainties over REDD+-related forest policy activities due to policy tug of war between national and sub-national governments in Brazil, and indirectly supported the strengthening of the central government in the forestry sector in Indonesia (Höhne et al., this volume). International organizations like the UN-REDD and World Bank which are supporting the adoption of REDD+ in developing countries are aware of these governance shortcomings, and more importantly local people and local authorities are fighting back against their subjection, as the Nigerian (Nuesiri, this volume), Tanzanian (Lord, this volume), Ugandan (Mbeche this volume), and Mexican (Špirić, this volume) case studies reveal.

What can be done about this? At the global level, Nuesiri (this volume) calls on the UN-REDD to learn from the European Union whose Micro Projects Programme in Nigeria substantively engaged with elected local government authorities to deliver social development projects in local communities. This is not an endorsement of the European Union engagement as best practice, but a pointer to an international organization that has taken local engagement seriously; their successes and failures will be fertile learning ground for the UN-REDD on how to improve local engagement. At the national level Murthy et al. (this volume), based on their India study, make recommendations that are relevant for developing country governments including respect for environmental laws by powerful actors, stronger social and environmental safeguards, community-friendly and accountable forest benefits sharing mechanisms, and resolute government commitment to community participation in REDD+.

Still on what can be done about ensuring responsive forest governance, Neba et al. (this volume), based on their multi-country study, provide a novel conceptual lens through which we can empirically interrogate representation such that we are able to intervene to improve the quality of representation. They ask that we interrogate the drivers of representation, whether it results from stimulus within society (supply-side representation) or results from stimulus from governments and donors (demand-side representation). This would enable a better understanding of the action of the local representative in participatory processes and guide the kind of intervention that is necessary to improve the quality of representation.

In addition, conceptual insights, based on a critical review of the theory of representation, reveal that no single type of representation (descriptive, symbolic, substantive) is sufficient to represent the varied interests of local people and communities. These different types of representation complement one another to yield inclusive representation. Having different types of representatives standing, speaking, and acting for local communities in participatory processes strengthens the quality of representation of local communities. Lastly, Lord (this volume) calls for a multidisciplinary and multi-scalar approach to the design and implementation of forest and climate change initiatives like REDD+. The multidisciplinary team must be committed to forest governance approaches that

are responsive to local needs, and therefore opened to REDD+ design and implementation based on knowledge co-production at the local. This would thus favour REDD+ projects with flexible adaptive management as opposed to projects with rigid technocratic guidelines and requirements as is the case at present

Conclusion

The aim of this book is to assess whether REDD+ is indeed a viable global mechanism for addressing climate change, in which contexts and under what conditions. Based on its case studies, it is obvious that governments in developing countries are expending a lot of resources to design national REDD+ programmes that will deliver verifiable carbon emissions, with the support of bilateral and multilateral donor organizations including the World Bank and the UN. The big sore point is whether international and national REDD+ initiatives are transferring the cost of addressing the climate change challenge to local people and communities in developing countries, who are least responsible for the climate change problem. This is an even bigger issue, when it is considered that the USA, a major polluter and contributor to the climate change problem, is unwilling to cooperate with the rest of the world in implementing the 2015 Paris Agreement on global strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The book shows that local people and local decision-makers (village community-based organizations and local authorities) are indeed finding that REDD+ is leading to a reconfiguration of national governance arrangements, which might further deepen the subjection of local people to the interests of powerful actors (governments and NGOs) at national and global levels. However, local people and authorities are contesting their subjection under new governance arrangements due to adoption of REDD+. What this top-down reconfiguration of governance and bottom-up contestation will bring about, is open to debate. This volume's major contribution is to call on researchers, policymakers at global and national levels, and non-state actors with powerful influence on decision-making, to choose inclusive and complementary representation of local

communities in participatory processes associated with the adoption of REDD+. Inclusive representation ensures that the varied and multiple interests of local people are represented in decision-making spaces; it also ensures that elected local representatives with a mandate to respond to local needs are part of REDD+ decision-making. Inclusive representation strengthens participation, ensures legitimacy of decision-making, and is at the core of initiatives for democratic decentralization of forest resources management.

Notes

1. See Knowles (2017, September 17) *Why Hurricanes Harvey and Irma won't lead to action on climate change.*

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