Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI)
Supporting Resilient Forest Livelihoods
through Local Representation

Waiting for Democratic Representation in Africa's Social Forests

Alois Mandondo
Poonam Jusrut

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Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI)
Research Programme

The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is a research and training program, focusing on environmental governance in Africa. It is jointly managed by the Council for the Development of Social Sciences Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC). It is funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The RFGI activities are focused on 12 countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, DR Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. The initiative is also training young, in-country policy researchers in order to build an Africa-wide network of environmental governance analysts.

Nations worldwide have introduced decentralization reforms aspiring to make local government responsive and accountable to the needs and aspirations of citizens so as to improve equity, service delivery and resource management. Natural resources, especially forests, play an important role in these decentralizations since they provide local governments and local people with needed revenue, wealth, and subsistence. Responsive local governments can provide forest resource-dependent populations the flexibility they need to manage, adapt to and remain resilient in their changing environment. RFGI aims to enhance and help institutionalize widespread responsive and accountable local governance processes that reduce vulnerability, enhance local wellbeing, and improve forest management with a special focus on developing safeguards and guidelines to ensure fair and equitable implementation of the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and climate-adaptation interventions.

REDD+ is a global Programme for disbursing funds, primarily to pay national governments of developing countries, to reduce forest carbon emission. REDD+ will require permanent local institutions that can integrate local needs with national and international objectives. The results from RFGI Africa research will be compared with results from collaborators in Asia and South America in order to enhance RFGI comparative scope, and to broaden its geographic policy relevance.

RFGI Working Paper Series Editors' Note

James Murombedzi, Jesse Ribot

and Gretchen Walters

Struggles for control over and access to nature and natural resources; struggles over land, forests, pastures and fisheries, are struggles for survival, self determination, and meaning. Natural resources are central to rural lives and livelihoods: they provide the material resources for survival, security, and freedom. To engage in the world requires assets that enable individuals, households, and communities to act in and on the world around them. The ability to accumulate assets and the ability to access government and market services depends partly on such resources along with the political-economic infrastructure – rights, recourse, representation, markets, and social services – that are the domain of government. Democracy, which both enables and requires the freedom to act, is predicated on these assets and infrastructures. Since the 1980s, African governments have been implementing local government decentralization reforms aimed at making local government more democratic by making them responsive and accountable to citizen needs and aspirations; in many places this has been done through a decentralisation of natural resource governance to local administrations. In order to be responsive to individual, household and community demands, local governments, too, need resources and decision-making powers. There must be a public domain – a set of public resources, such as forests or fisheries, which constitute this domain of democracy, the domain of decisions and services that citizens can demand of government. Natural resources, when decentralized into the domain of local authority, form an important part of the resources of individuals, households, communities and governments, making possible this move toward local democracy.

Natural resources provide local governments and people with wealth and subsistence. While nature is not the only source of rural income, the decentralization of natural resources governance is a core component of local government reform. However, governance reforms have been implemented in a context broadly characterized by an enduring crisis of the Western economic and financial systems, which in turn has stimulated privatization and liberalization in every sphere of life, including nature. The process has deprived local governments of public resources – depriving individuals and communities of a reason to engage, as a powerless government is not worth trying to influence. Privatization is depriving forest-dependent peoples of their access to formerly 'public' or traditionally managed resources. National governments, as well as international bodies such as the United Nations programme, titled the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), further this trend as they collaborate with private interests to promote the privatization of natural resources. The resulting enclosures threaten the wellbeing of resource-dependent populations and the viability of democratic reforms.

The specter of climate change is deepening the crisis of enclosure. A key response to climate change has been the attempt to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through enhancing the capacity of forests in the developing world to store carbon, ostensibly for the benefit of the atmosphere as well as the communities who use these forests. UN REDD seeks to pay communities, through their national governments, to conserve their forests as carbon storage. A plus '+' was added to REDD, forming REDD +, to call for improved ecosystems services, forest management, conservation, forest restoration and afforestation to enhance the capacity for carbon storage. Designed on the basis of similar payments for environmental services (PES) schemes, REDD+ has the potential to inject vast new sums of money into local resource use and governance. In the context of fragile local governments, nascent democracies and powerful private interests, such cash inflows result in the commercialization and privatization of forests and natural resources and the dispossession of local resource users. This financialization of natural resources grossly diminishes the scope for democratic natural resource governance schemes. To be sure, the implementation of REDD+ can also learn from and avoid the pitfalls experienced in these PES schemes, especially if they represent local interests in natural resource governance decision making.

The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is an Africa-wide environmental-governance research and training program focusing on enabling responsive and accountable decentralization to strengthen the representation of forest-based rural people in local-government decision making. Since January

2012, the programme has carried out 33 case studies in 12 African countries, with comparative cases Nepal and Peru, to assess the conditions under which central authorities devolve forest management and use decisions to local government, and the conditions that enable local government to engage in sound, equitable and pro-poor forest management. Aimed at enabling local government to play an integrative role in rural development and natural resource management, these case studies are now being finalized and published to elicit public discourse and debate on local government and local democracy. This Working Paper series will publish the RFGI case studies as well as other comparative studies of decentralized natural resources governance in Africa and elsewhere that focus on the interesction between local democracy and natural resource management schemes. Using the concepts of institutional choice and recognition, the cases deal with a comprehensive range of issues in decentralized forest management in the context of REDD+, including the institutional choices of intervening agencies; the effects of such choices on accountability and representation; and the relationships between local government and other local institutions. The series will also include syntheses discussing the main findings of the RFGI research programme.

Based at CODESRIA, and funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the RFGI is a three year collaborative initiative of CODESRIA, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). RFGI working papers and documents, including the background papers, the RFGI programme description, and the RFGI Methods Handbook, can be found on line at:

- http://www.codesria.org/spip.php,
- https://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/forest/fp_our_work/ fp_our_work_thematic/locally_controlled_forests/lcf_projects_partnership/ responsive_forest_governance_initiative__rfgi__/
- https://sdep.earth.illinois.edu/programs/democracyenvironment.aspx

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The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is an independent organisation whose principal objectives are to facilitate research, promote research-based publishing and create multiple forums geared towards the exchange of views and information among African researchers. All these are aimed at reducing the fragmentation of research in the continent through the creation of thematic research networks that cut across linguistic and regional boundaries.

CODESRIA publishes *Africa Development*, the longest standing Africa based social science journal; Afrika Zamani, a journal of history; the *African Sociological Review; the African Journal of International Affairs; Africa Review of Books and the Journal of Higher Education in Africa*. The Council also co-publishes the Africa Media Review; Identity, Culture and Politics: An Afro-Asian Dialogue; *The African Anthropologist and the Afro-Arab Selections for Social Sciences*. The results of its research and other activities are also disseminated through its Working Paper Series, Green Book Series, Monograph Series, Book Series, Policy Briefs and the CODESRIA Bulletin. Select CODESRIA publications are also accessible online at www.codesria.org.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

The global climate challenge has spawned a host of projects designed to retain carbon in forests to mitigate climate change. Many of these projects combine this conservation goal with development objectives that they claim to achieve through managing forests in a democratic and participatory manner. The promotion of local democracy through REDD+ interventions faces challenges of both context and project design, and hence the democracy outcomes of these initiatives cannot be expected to be uniform. Drawing from a survey of eighteen researchers investigating eighteen climate-related forest interventions from twelve countries in West, Central, East and Southern Africa, and one case from Nepal, this paper explores which cases were successful or unsuccessful in including local communities through representation. The paper relies on the researchers' assessments of: i) whether project promoters claimed to include local communities through representation; and ii) whether this was actually achieved in practice. While project promoters claim to include local people in most aspects of their climate-related interventions, researchers on the ground note a considerable gap between theseclaims and practice. Only three cases appear to demonstrate substantive representation as taking place whereby local communities have their needs and aspirations responded to alongside functioning mechanisms of accountability. We outline the major elements of 'qualified success' in these three cases while highlighting the factors detracting from effective inclusion in the other cases.

1

Introduction

The search for solutions to the global climate challenge has spawned many market-based conservation projects, particularly in the 'social forests'[1] of the Global South (Landell-Mills and Porras 2002; Wunder 2005; Bond et al. 2009; Wunder and Alba 2008; Chhatre and Agrawal 2009; Balooni and Lund 2014). Some of these projects are small private initiatives while others have been commissioned as part of a large United Nations program called REDD+. There are alsoREDD+ projects funded by the World Bank. REDD+ stands for the program toReduce carbon Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries, with the objective of the 'plus' being to enhance forest carbon stocks(Angelsen et al. 2012). Unlike traditional conservation approaches, REDD+ is a market-based conservation mechanism involving the transfer of funds from developed countries to reward various actors in developing countries, including forest communities, for their conservation efforts (Angelsenet al. 2012). Market-based forest conservation is premised on conditional payments subject to the principles of additionality, permanence and leakage. These principles require that communities deliver conservation gains (additionality) of long-term pedigree (permanence), and that these gains should not result in conservation losses elsewhere (leakage) (Wunder 2005). Most REDD+ initiatives, however, integrate conservation and development objectives that they claim to achieve through promoting local participation and democracy (Ghazoul et al. 2010). This article explores which form of intervention, operating in which settings, holds the best prospects for democratic representation, or situations in which representatives answer and respond to the needs of citizens who are able to hold them to account (sanction or reward them) based on their conduct and performance (Manin et al. 1999; Bovens 2007). Distilling lessons from these initiatives is crucial to inform REDD+ policy, in addition to fine-tuning already existing projects.

Concerns about democracy in the forestry sector are not new and neither are they unique to the REDD+ context. REDD+ represents an evolution from a preceding era of community-based natural resource management programsfrom which lessons have been drawn through diverse approaches across different contexts. For instance, Shackleton et al. (2002)and Ribot (2004) reviewed case studies of decentralized governance of natural resources across a wide range of sectors, focusing specifically on Africa. More recently, Bromley (2013) has examined the huge body of material that has accumulated on natural resource management in Africa over the past three decades to discern lessons intended to inform REDD+ processes on behalf of USAID. Systemic reviews and meta-analyses with a more global scope have also sought to better understand the nexus between people and forests, particularly from the perspective of forest loss (Angelsen and Kaimowitz 1999; Rudel 2007). The common challenge to all these approaches is often the degree of noise that different researchers, with different perspectives and employing different approaches, bring to the primary data. By drawing froma broadset of casesour study provides insights into contextsin whichREDD+ and other forest resource management projects[2] intervene turn out to be successful or unsuccessful in including local communities through representation. We use primary data contributed by a team of researchers involved in an Africa-wide research program that used a common framework to evaluate representation in REDD+-related interventions. This multi-country research initiative focused on common aspects of the design and operationof the REDD+ related interventions.

The research initiative, called the Responsive Forest Governance Program (RFGI), brought on board over 30 researchers workingin 12 countries from west, east, central and southern Africa, as well as Nepal. Of these, this study focused on 18 cases featuring REDD+ and related initiatives at the local level. Its aim was to evaluate contemporary REDD+ and broader forestry-based decentralization initiatives.The RFGI based its criteria of representation on its substantive aspects. In this comparative project an intervention is considered to have substantive representation if it intervened with institutions representing and accountable to local communities;where representation is indicated by responsiveness, and democracy by the presence of popular accountability of these institutions (Manin et al. 1999; Ribot 2003, 2004; Ribot at al. 2008). Participating researchers debated and mutually agreed to consider responsiveness as adopting and fulfilling needs signalled as preferred by citizens (Manin et al. 1999), cognizant of the fact that representatives need resources and decision-making latitude to appropriately respond (Ribot 2007). The researchers also mutually agreed to consider accountability as a 'counter power' or the capacity by the represented to shepherd representatives on their interests, e.g. through various sanctions and rewards (Bovens 2007).

We focused on aspects of interventions associated with conventional project cycles, including project inception, design, implementation, benefit sharing and evaluation. Effective and meaningful citizen representation at each of these stages is more often preached than practiced. For instance, development practitioners often portray many people as participating and benefiting from their interventions because it reflects how successful the intervention is, improving their public image (Mandondo 2000;Rutt and Lund 2014). Hence, most promoters claim to include local people most in project implementation and benefit sharing (Chambers 1993). Yet project implementation often proceeds roughshod even as the requirement that local people be consulted and freely consent to the initiation of the project is ignored or subverted (Nhantumbo and Salomao 2010; German et al. 2014; Mandondo et al. 2014). This flouts the Principle of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) that, though still voluntary, is increasingly becoming an accepted norm in international investment law (Vermeulen and Cotula 2010). Claims that many people are benefiting often mask lop-sided arrangements that get entrenched at the design stage (Vermeulen and Cotula 2010; Bandiaky-Badji 2011). Thus, research indicates that equitable outcomes are more likely when distribution is negotiated in advance (i.e. at the design stage) in an inclusive and equitable manner (Vermeulen 1994).Further, while project evaluation is crucial to signpost future action (Mandondo et al. 2008), the associated responsibilities tend to fall exclusively in the hands of consultants, ostensibly because peasants are presumed to lack the requisite skills (Chambers 1993;Cooke 2003Hayes and Persha 2010;Larson 2010;Thompson et al. 2011). Yet this serves to preclude local people from effectively articulating their needs as future courses are planned.

In light of the above debates, this paper focuses on two entry points to evaluate decentralization in the context of REDD+ interventions. The first concerns outlining which interventions, and at what stage in project implementation, areclaimed to have achieved inclusion through representation, as expressed by the promoters to researchers in person or through project documents. In view of the project implementers'strategic interests, the second entry point is an examination of these claims against the field researchers' own judgment of whether the claims were actually achieved on i) the promoters' own terms and ii) according to the RFGI criteria of democratic participation. We subsequently distil lessons on what key elements of effective representation the various interventions were seen as possessing or lacking. In addition, we consider whether differences in intervention designhad a significant bearing on whether the projects effectively included 'beneficiaries' through representation.

Results show the promoters of many of these initiatives claiming to include local people across most stages of their projects, particularly in implementation and benefit sharing. While confirming some of these claims were actually achieved, researchers note considerable variance between claims and practice, with the variance largest where claims are highest. Nevertheless, only three of the cases delivered on some modicum of substantive citizen representation. Ingredients of success appeared to include the alignment offorest resource-related interventions with already existing democratic forms of governance, including elected local government, that are vested with adequate funds and discretionary power. Inclusion turned out to be weakest wherethese ingredients appeared to be missing, being further accentuated byi) the subversion of representatives by fundersii) lack of the power to respondiii) elite capture andiv)lack of proximity of the project designers to citizens. In view of these largely adverse outcomes we strongly argue for the revision of notions of perpetual 'consent' implied in the Principle of Free Prior Informed Consent[3] to those that leave local communities with the latitude to review and reconfigure consent based on their aspirations at meaningful inclusion.

The next section provides an overview of the case studies, including their geographical distribution, intervention type and design, and their social and ecological settings. We subsequently describe the procedures and instruments through which the field data was captured. We organize our findings along the study's objectives. The last section discusses the study's contribution to the lesson-building agenda and options for REDD+ policy refinement.

2

Background

The RFGI program focused on areas where REDD+ and REDD+-related initiatives were under preparation or already being implemented. In-country researchers conducted the studies across most sites based on prior familiarity with the sites. The three geographical regions in which RFGI researchers worked in Africa featured cases that reflected a diverse mix of interventions (Table 1). The projects studied included Payment for Environmental Service Schemes (PES) in which communities planted trees or conserved forests to conserve watersheds, protect habitats, conserve biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions in return for cash rewards. They also included REDD+ schemes, which primarily focus on reducing emissions either through planting trees or the protecting forests. Other projects beyond PES and REDD+ schemes included sustainable forest management under decentralization, with all variously cast across customary, elected local government or co-management settings. The range of projects was completed by artisanal logging operations within communal areas and a protected area buffer zone in which the state was re-asserting central control at the expense of local communities.

The West African RFGI research cluster contributed six cases, with these drawn from four countries including Burkina Faso, Ghana and Senegal. The case from eastern Senegal's *sahel* region involved groups of local villages organized around the rotational management of forests used for charcoal extraction. The local level forest management structures are placed under democratic local government, thus sharing some similarities with the REDD+-related case from east-central Burkina Faso, where the institution representing groups of villages is closely associated with municipal authorities. Meanwhile, the intervention at a site in Senegal's west-central coastal region involves a village group in the co-management of a protected mangrove ecosystem. Both the Ghana cases, one from the west and

another from the southwestern part of the country, promote carbon forestry interventions, with the institutions representing tree-planting smallholders being headed by customary chiefs.

The east and central Africa cluster provided seven cases, similarly exhibiting diverse foci and set-ups. The two cases from Cameroon are community forestry initiatives. The country's 1994 Forestry Law entitles communities to the benefits of the commercial exploitation of the community forests, from which they also draw resources for their subsistence needs, subject to management plans. Carbon forestry interventions promoted at village level under a grazing management plan that appears technically driven provides the main focus of projects operating at two sites in South Sudan's Equator Province. PES interventions are the main focus in both the eastern and western Uganda cases. Institutions formed to represent communities in both interventions largely stand mismatched with all levels of the country's five-tier local governance structure. This appliestoanother intervention in the southwest of the country, where village-level afforestation activities come with conflict over tenure. Conservation does not appear to be the main goal in the Bikoro Territory case in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Equator Province, which combines commercial logging with community development goals, although the site is earmarked for a REDD+ project. The other initiative from that country's Isangi region also patently lacks a conservation goal: it is an artisanal logging concession in which the holder aspires to bring on board the interests of host communities. The case from Kenya's south coast is a carbon forestry initiative operating at the frontier between the commercial interests of a landed elite and diverse groups of communal smallholders, some of whoare considered 'squatters' by government. It covers five villages located in a wildlife corridor between two big national parks. Some notion of movement towards including communities is entailed in all except one of the cases considered in our study: thenortheast Tanzania case. The eco-tourism and biodiversity conservation activities promoted in this prime tourism area come on the back of the retraction of forest management rights hitherto bestowed upon local communities. In other words, the forest was re-gazetted for protection,notwithstandingofficial claims that the communities would still be involved.

Two cases were drawn from southern Africa: one from central Mozambique's Sofala Province and another from a coastal site located in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. The South African case is a co-management initiative that is evolving in a coastal forestland under the country'spolicy of returning communal land to those from whom it was colonially expropriated. In this case the land being restituted was formerly protected, and communities are being drawn into

co-management partnership with the state conservation authority through the formation of Land Trusts. The central Mozambican case is a carbon forestry initiative in which the promoting company interfaces with communities through a committee that is entitled to royalties from all commercial entities operating on or adjacent to the community's territory. The committees are the sole democratically constituted entities that are broadly encompassing of all within territories that roughly coincide with chiefdoms. There is no elected rural local government in Mozambique. The Mozambican case bears similar design features tothe sole case drawn from beyond Africa: the Nepalese case from the country'sGorka district. In this case Forest User Groups perform the role played by committees in Mozambique, and similarly operate in a setting where there is no elected local government.

Table 1: Characteristics of Interventions Studied under the Responsive Forest Governance Initiative

Country and Research Site	Type of project	Major resource	Scale	Size of research area (ha)	Population of research area	Size of intervention area (ha)	Population of intervention area	Proportion of unitsstudied, e.g. villages
Eastern Senegal (Case 1)	Rotational blocks for charcoal	Forests	Groups of villages	18,659	37,000	18,656	4,762	20/85
Eastern Senegal (Case 2)	Carbonforestry, PES	Forests	Group of villages	-	30,000	42,706	11,342	–
West-central Senegal case	Co-managingforests	Mangroves	Village	7,000	13,000	7,000	13,000	3/3
East-central Burkina Faso	REDD+ related, treeplanting	Forests	Groups of villages	-	18,691	-	77,618	16/23
Southwest Ghana case	Carbonforestry	Plantedtrees	Groups of villages	-	7,000	-	17,500	5/5
Western Ghana case	Carbonforestry	Plantedtrees	Village	3,500	8,000	9,200	15,000	7/19
Southwest Cameroon case	Community forestry	Forests	Village	600	650	600	650	1/11
Southeast Cameroon	Community forestry	Forests	District	400,000	14,000?	400,000	14,000	6/16
Equator Province case, South Sudan	Carbonforestry	Land Grazing-resources	Village	40,000	20,000	900,000	70,000	70/470
Southwest Uganda case	Afforestation	Forests	Village	-	19,456	210?	38,495	4/33
Western Uganda case	PES	Forests	Local to district level	5,735	343,618	1,928	236,168	19/40

Case	Activity	Resource	Scale	Col5	Col6	Col7	Col8	Col9
Northeast Tanzania case	Eco-tourism, biodiversity	Aesthetic values, biodiversity	Groups of villages	1,700	450,000	107,825	1,000,000	6/56
Central Mozambique case	Carbon forestry	Planted trees, forest blocks	Group of villages	20,000	6,000	20,000	6,000	4/40
Eastern Cape case, South Africa	Co-managed park	Forests, ecotourism, biodiversity	Villages	17,386	14,720	17,386	14,720	5/7
West Equator case, DRC	REDD+ related	Timber	Village	-	6,500	-	-	3/15
Isangi Region case, DRC	Artisanal logging	Timber	Arrondisement	-	-	-	5,000	16/100
Eastern Uganda case	PES	Forests	Local to district level	200	500	200	-	16/100
Gorkha District case, Nepal	REDD+ pilot, Carbon forestry	Forests	District	1,900	24,599	103,000	92,388	6/31

3

Methods

Since our study is a synthesis of researchers' opinions on the eighteen cases, we elaborate the procedures and instruments through which the primary data was collected. We requested the researchers to fill in a questionnaire at the end of their own fieldwork and analyses. We designed the questionnaire to capture data on the inclusiveness, focus and orientation, as well as the structure of the interventions.

The researchers collected inclusiveness data across salient phases of the project operation: inception, design, implementation, benefit sharing and evaluation. The modes of including local populations in the forest-related interventions were assessed through the questionnaires administered in study sites in the respective countries. The questionnaire surveys covered both participation and representation. With the focus of the RFGI being on the responsiveness of forest governance, we used the concept of representation as our primary analytical lens. Arnstein's (1969) typological framework of participation offers gradations in participation through a'Ladder of Citizen Participation'. Participation encompasses broad notions of inclusion that we operationalized through representation:

> Representation is a form of participation, but participation is a much broader concept including many non-representative, non-democratic engagements. Participation often includes many activities that simply engage local people in outside agendas by integrating them into project activities. Participation also often includes forums in which local voices are heard. But their voices are not binding in decision making.
> (Ribot 2011:12 RFGI Handbook).

Hence our study hones in on representation as being linked to participation: representation holding the potential forshaping participation and its outcomes. We mirrored our analyses of representation on the study's objectives. The first

concerns analysis of the data regarding whether promoters claimed to achieve representation at each stage of the project or not as expressed to the researchers in person or through project documents. The second concerns reconciling the promoters' claims of representation against researchers' opinions on whether such claims were actually achieved in practice. And the last involves reconciling the promoters' claims with criteria of substantive representation. Our analysis of geographical differences in inclusion through representation mostly proceeded by way of simple case by contextual and design variablestabulations. The researchers' justifications of the manner in which they rated respective interventions provided the basis for deriving lessons, mostly through inductive analysis.

Project design and implementation data mainly concerned the identity and location of the designers, funders, implementers as well as the principals to whom the implementers report. To enable comparison, we standardized and weighted the identity and location data into governance-related variables. The first infers each of the above actors' proximity to citizens. The second relates to the extent to which it is publicly constituted. An actor at the local level was assigned a score of 6 (indicating closest proximity to citizens), with the scores decreasing with increasing scale through to the international level, which received a score of 1 (indicating farthest proximity from citizens). Similarly, entirely publicly constituted actors (such as elected authorities) received the highest score of 3, with the scores decreasing to 2 for actors constituted through a mix of elections and administrative appointments (e.g. central and district government). Actors entirely not publicly constituted (such as non-governmental organizations, corporations, contractors or private individuals) received the lowest score of 1.

4

Findings:
Democratic Representation – Reality or Mirage?

The claims laid by projects about including local people at each stage of their intervention are assessed at two levels: i) inclusion through participation in project activities and ii) inclusion through political representation. Findings here pertain to representation. The first questionconcerns the mechanisms and the aspects of the projects through which the promoters claim representation is achieved most or least.

Variations in Mechanisms through which Projects Claimed to Represent Local Communities

Virtually all the projects stated that they were representing local communities through the creation of new institutions, as stated in project documents and verified by the researchers.The institutions that the promoters claimed to establish at the community level are commonly referred to as 'committees'[4]. The Mozambican initiative claimed to represent communities through committees created under the country's land law. Mozambique's land law vests land rights upon land committees elected by all within a territory that roughly equates with a chiefdom. The carbon forestry project expediently adopts these committees as natural resource management committees (NRMCs). Both the southeast and southwest Cameroon cases claimed to achieve representation through a two-tier system of committees. These include a Communal Committee (the commune being the mostlocal level of local government, grouping several villages) at the level of the arrondissement (a local jurisdiction regrouping several communes) and a Resident Committee at the level of the village, both of which consist of representatives chosen through consensus or elections. These committees are established with the

country's Community Forestry Law. Similarly conceived committees are referred to as community forest management (CFM) groups in the southwest Uganda case and forest management committees (FMC) in the eastern Senegalese case. In South Africa's Eastern Cape case such bodies are referred to as Trusts, while they are referred to asforest management organizations called GGFs in the east central Burkina Faso case, peasant development organizations (OPD) in the DRC's west Equator Province case, community forest user groups (CFUGs) in the Nepalese case and community resource management committees in both the southwest and western Ghana cases.

All of the above bodies, except the GGFs of the east central Burkina Faso case, are created in the name of representation. The GGFs are only intended to secure community participation through a decentralized organ (the municipality) from which they receive directives on forest management. The Burkinabe case appears to bear close resemblance to the northeast Tanzania case, which makes absolutely no pretence at inclusion through representation. Instead, the existing model of management emphasizes participation based on restricted access to resources whose extraction is considered not harmful to the environment, e.g. collection of dead wood.

The new institutions reflect considerable variation in their scale, coverage and how they are made to relate to existing forms of authority e.g. customary chiefs, mayors and elected local governments. Mayors and municipal authorities appear to hold sway, directing the activities of community level natural resource management bodies, in both the Cameroon cases and the east central Burkina Faso case.In contrast, both the southwest and western Ghana cases place chiefs at the centre of community natural resource management committees that represent various interest groups (e.g. hunters, grazers, extractors) within a community resource management area (CREMA). The CREMAs are also groups created by law in Ghana. Meanwhile, the elected local government (the Rural District Council) features prominently in the eastern Senegalese case where it represents the interests of resource users who are organized into forest block management committees. Community-level natural resource management bodies in the west central Senegalese case represent the interests of segments of the community (mostly women mangrove users).

Community-level bodies created in the southwest and western Uganda cases similarly cater solely to the interests of tree growers and forest owners, respectively. These bodies do not representall the people within broader administrative areas. Neither are they in any way linked with customary authorities and the country's five-tier system of local government. Customary chiefs and elected local government

also appear not to have been factored in to the creation of the NRMCs in the Mozambican case and Trusts in the South Africa Eastern Cape case. There is no elected local government in Mozambique, making the committees the sole elected bodies at the level of chiefdoms. Unlike the Ghana cases in which committees are placed under chiefs, the chiefs in the Mozambican case play a much diminished if inconsequential role as ex-officio but non-voting members of the committees. The South African case presents an extreme set-up in which customary authorities appear to have been effectively shut out in the creation of Trusts.

We extended our analysis to the stages of the project in which the promoters claimed to include local people most. The promoters staked the highest claims at including local people through the above bodies inbenefit sharing (67% of the projects), project implementation (55%) and project evaluation (50%) (Table 2). Markedly fewer projects claimed to include local people through representation in the preliminary stages of whether or not to proceed with the project (38%) and designing the projects (38%) (Table 2).To what extent did researchers see project promoters as actually doing what they were claiming?

The Gap between Claims and Action

Researchers noted considerable variation between what project promoters claimed and what actually happened in practice, and in terms of outcomes. For instance, the inclusion of interest-based groups invariably yielded fragmented and contested forms of representation. In the western Senegalese mangrove case only the presidents of the women's groups and eco-guards ended up effectively included in the project. Even village chiefs were not considered as the interest-group-based committees were created on this project. Though the Mozambican natural resource management committees encompass the interests of all within a chiefdom, meaningful representation did not ensue from their mere creation. In practice, project promoters used the committee as a conduit for entrenching their interests. Although village and communal level committees are indeed set up as per statute in both the southwest and southeast Cameroonian cases, these ended up being politically subverted. The committees are constituted by nomination and co-optation of those pliant to the mayors' designs. The mayor in that country's southeast case has created an additional tier of pliant committees in order to deepen and extend his political influence. In the east-central Burkina Faso case mayors do not wield effective control over community-level natural resource management bodies by subverting these bodies as in the Cameroonian cases. The Burkinabe GGFs are solely created 'to support the municipality in

the management of the forests'and not to democratize forest management. The researcher on the southwest Uganda case similarly implies that the project deployed structures through which it claimed to represent communities mostly for conservationrather than for democratic ends.Insufficient consideration to the democratic ends or aspects of equitable access has contributed to these structures accentuating the marginalization of poor groups[5]. These marginalized groups included women, the youth and the elderly. Though democracy goals are implied in the creation of a private forest owners' association, in the west central Ugandan case members of these associations perceive the associations as serving the interests of NGOs that created them and not community representation. They are also not broadly inclusive of all within the given area, which engenders resource use conflicts within the communities. Only the eastern Senegalese case and the Nepalese case fared better in terms of the variance between claims, practice and outcomes. The management committee in the eastern Senegal case is a mixture of elected local authorities and leaders of forest block committees, with the president of the management committee being a member of the elected local authority. Though no elected local government exists in the Nepalese case, its community forest user groups are democratically constituted, inclusive of all within a given area, although they still remain susceptible to interference and manipulation by moneyed development agents.

The researchers' assessments of what promoters claimed to achieve at each stage of the project invariably turned out lower than what they actually achieved in each case. The variance between what projects claim and what they actually did in practice was widest for benefit sharing (29%) and project evaluation (28%). The variance declined slightly for the project design (22%) and project implementation (22%) stages. The claims appeared least inflated for the initial stage of whether or not to proceed with the project, for which the variance was (11%) (Table 2). But which project fared better or worse than others on all these counts?

Variations in Inclusiveness through Representations Across Different Stages of the Project

A classification of responses on how researchers perceived the extent to which local communities were actually included in the context of cases they researched on yielded four classes of cases (Table 2).Wenext outline these classes and will later separately consider the researchers' justifications for the classifications. The first class included cases where researchers felt the promoters failed to include local communities through representation on all counts: from consent to design,

implementation, benefit sharing and evaluation. This class consisted of cases from diverse regions, including the Isangiand the west Equator Province cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the eastern and southwest Uganda cases, the central Mozambique case, the west-central coastal Senegal case and South Africa's Eastern Cape Province case. It also represented a diverse mix of initiatives, including: REDD+ or carbon forestry in the west Equator Province case of DRC, the eastern Uganda case, the southwest Uganda case and the central Mozambique case; co-management in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province case and the west-central coastal Senegalese case; and the artisanal logging concession under the Isangi case in the DRC.

The second class consisted of cases where researchers considered promoters to successfully meet their claims on only one or two counts, more in the mid-stream implementation phases than in the crucial consent and design phases (Table 2). Similarly, this class defied contextualcompatibility and reflected a diverse array of initiatives including REDD+ and PES in the western Uganda case and the southeast Cameroon case, and ecotourism and biodiversity preservation under an expanding conservation frontier in the northeast Tanzanian case. SouthSudan's Equator Province case involving carbon forestry under a seemingly technicist grazing management initiative also fell into this class.

The third class comprised initiatives that researchers considered successful in meeting their claims on all, or on all but two or less, counts. These cases were exclusively from westAfrica and entailed either REDD+ or PES, albeit from diverse ecological settings such as the moist forests in Bache in southwest Cameroon, mangroves in the western Senegalese case, and the relatively drier forest formations in the western and south western Ghanacases. The southwest Ghana case and the east central Burkina Faso cases were considered to have fallen short at the crucial consent and design phases, respectively. The west Senegal case was considered successful on all but one count; it wasrated as falling short of meeting its claims at the project design phase (Table 2).

All the above three classes were, however, rated as falling short of the RFGI criteria of representation: responsiveness with accountability.Only three cases comprising the fourth class were rated as meeting thesecriteria. These included the geographically and socio-ecologically divergent cases of PES in Nepal's Gorkha region, rotational blocks for charcoal extraction in Senegal's *Sahel* region and carbon forestry in the southern Kenya case. What lessons can we discern from the researchers' explanations of why they considered thecases successful or unsuccessful?

Table 2: A Mapping of the Geographical Distribution of Substantive Inclusion across RFGI Cases

Project evaluation	Benefit sharing	Project implementation	Project design	Deciding whether or not to start the project	Was representation actually achieved in?
Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Gorka District case, Nepal
Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Eastern Senegal case
Y	Y	Y	N	N	Southern Kenya case
N	N	Y	Y	Y	Southwest Cameroon case
N	Y	Y	Y	N	Southwest Ghana case
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Western Ghana case
Y	Y	Y	N	Y	East Central Burkina Faso case
Y	N	N	N	N	Western Uganda case
N	Y	Y	N	N	Southeast Cameroon case
N	Y	N	N	N	Northeast Tanzania
N	N	N	N	N	Equator Province case, South Sudan
N	N	N	N	N	Isangi case, DRC
N	N	N	N	N	West Equator Province case, DRC
N	N	N	N	N	Eastern Uganda case
N	N	N	N	N	Southeast Uganda case
N	N	N	N	N	Central Mozambique case
N	N	N	N	N	Western Senegal case
N	N	N	N	N	Eastern Cape case, South Africa
10/18 (55%)	12/18 (67%)	9/18 (50%)	7/18 (38%)	7/18 (38%)	Percentage claiming to achieve representation
5/18 (27%)	7/18 (38%)	7/18 (38%)	3/18 (16%)	5/18 (27%)	Percentage actually achieving representation
(28%)	(29%)	(22%)	(22%)	(11%)	Percentage variance between claims and actual achievements

Mirroring Cases against the RFGI Criteria of Representation

The cases fell into two groups based on ratings of success using the RFGI criteria: 15 were rated unsuccessful, with only three rated as meeting these criteria. We next attempt to synthesize the criteria on which the researchers based their ratings. We start with 'success' stories before highlighting factors that appeared to attenuate inclusive representation in the 'unsuccessful' cases.

5

Lessons from the 'Successful' Cases

Evaluations suggesting some initiatives did achieve substantive representationinvariably came with qualifications. This means none was an absolute success. Emerging lessons therefore combine 'successes' with their respective riders.

Choosing Locally Accountable Institutions that are Adequately Empowered and Resourced is Key!

The southern Kenyan case involved institutional reform that unravelled in tandem with constitutional reform aimed at creating devolved local government structures. The project was initially promoted through location development committees and elected local councillors who were upwardly accountable to a local government administration. These bodies were further hamstrung by lack of meaningful decision-making authority and riddled with ministerial interference, corruption, nepotism and political party manipulation in the election of the councillors. The initiative switched to interfacing with communities through elected location carbon committees (LCCs),each of which is partnered with a community-based organization for technical, administrative and accounting support.Local carbon committees also take on board chiefs and councillors from the previous local government administration but mostly as ex-officio and non-voting members. The major lesson from this case is that bestowing community resource management institutions with discretion and the power to respond are key elements for effective representation to occur. Additional ingredients of success included the investiture of committee members through regular and credible elections and the regular hosting of forums through which ordinary people hold their representatives to account. Hence, the LCCs by far outperformed other local institutions such as the local development committees, chiefs and councillors in terms of local perceptions of representation. Local people viewed the LCCs as much more accountable in terms

of regularity and credibility of elections, financial reporting, availing of platforms for voicing concerns and documentation. The researcher argues that the LCCs should ideally be placed under the devolved county governments envisioned in the new constitution so that they include all within broader local government areas.

Strengthening Democracy where it Already Thrives – Another Key!

Behind a backdrop where no democratic local governmentexists, the researcher on the Nepalese case lauds the decision to have implemented the project through democratically constituted community forest user groups, CFUGs. Her assessment carries two riders. The first is that implementing the initiative through democratic local government would have been better, in the absence of which democratic forest user groups proved the best available option. The second is that this option could work even better wereit sufficiently inclusive of the poor. 'By choosing CFUGs'she argues, 'the project promotes the most democratic local institution currently available because elected local government does not exist'. She further asserts thatthe CFUGs have long established traditions of public leadership selection, leadership terms of office, etc.She, however, observes the initiative's major challenge is that it entrenches elite interests while marginalizingthe poor: 'The leadership selection process is not really open to all. In most cases only the most educated will be selected, excluding many illiterate members'. The major lesson from this case is that making power amenable to public control and inclusivity over the control of such power are crucial to democratic citizen inclusion.

Again, Locating Community Representation within Elected Local Government Appears Key!

The charcoal-based rotational forest management initiative of eastern Senegal drew its success from intervening with local communities through an elected local government. Whereas local governments are intended for broader representation, implementation at the local level is achieved through block management committees consisting of locally elected representatives. Hence, the researcher notes that 'by partnering with democratically elected government and by creating new forest management institutions which [the project] made to function under the authority of the Rural Councils (elected local government), the project can claim that it contributes towards fostering representation of local communities'.She however cautions that a culture in which the represented effectively hold their leaders to account is still to evolve. She felt that the existing mode of representation stems from dutiful adherence to some formalities and procedures of democracy (e.g. regular and scheduled elections and reporting). It is not fully driven by the desire of the represented to hold their leaders to account.

6

Lessons from the 'Unsuccessful' Cases

Substantive Representation Cannot Occur Without Local Capacity

Although projectsaim to implement practices considered to be inclusive, the institutional arrangements they supportremain insufficient for establishing effective representation. Democratic institutional arrangements do not evolve into substantive representation when the culture, tradition, skills and wherewithal do not exist. Lack of capacity was thus the most resonant basis on which researchers considered projects unsuccessful. The researcher on the central Mozambique case most aptly captures the world of difference between what appears on paper and what happens in practice.The structure of representation in local natural resource management committeesas laid out in officially endorsed constitutions is impressive. These include clear delineation of roles, sharing of power, checks and balances among the committees' organs and monitoring and review arrangements. But in this area literacy is at single digit levels, the required skills close to non-existentand transport is largely on foot. Consequently, leaders on these committees lack the knowledge and means to respondwhile local people's capacity to hold these leaders to account is extremely weak. Hence, other leaders and ordinary people on this case are reported to simply make up the numbers at the meeting without making meaningful contributions less still hold the president of their committee to account because they stand in awe of his educational background which intimidates them. The president boasts secondary education and formerly worked for an NGO (GTZ) while the rest of the committee leaders and ordinary people either did not go beyond the third grade or did not attend school at all, which makes trainingdirely needed.

Project interveners across most of our cases similarly claimed to include local people in their activities, most of which require considerable technical sophistication, an issue also raised in several RFGI studies (Faye 2014;Rutt et al. 2014;Scheba and Mustalahi 2014). The fact that these claims are made as researchers note a near total absence of the knowledge and skills to participate in these projects indicates that most of them leave some major unfinished business: training and enabling communities to meaningfully engage in the projects. The question of capacity however needs to be treated with caution. Governments often withhold transferring meaningful powers to local communities under the pretext that such communities lack capacity. Ribot (2004) therefore argues that the question of capacity should be considered only after people have been given meaningful powers to exercise, a scenario that appears to have been achieved in the Mozambican case. Here, land and resource rights have been devolved to democratically elected natural resource management committees vested with discretion and entitled to significant royalties from prospective investors. Lack of capacity to hold representatives to account therefore sticks out among factors that detract from meaningful representation on this initiative, with this in turn accentuating elite capture.

Committees Inclined to be Upwardly Accountable to those who Create and Fund Them

Much as natural resource management committees are created to represent local people, some end up being upwardly accountable to organizations that create and fund them. The committees may also end up accountable to higher-level officials (e.g. mayors) that the projects recognize to supervise them, as also reported by Faye (2014). Hence, the researcher on the western Uganda reports the leaders of private forest owners associations (PFOA)as being more upwardly accountable to sponsoring NGOs than to their members.Close allegiance to the NGOs comes with individual benefits such as allowances for meetings, preferential access to inputs such as seedlings as well as increased social and political influence. In consequence, the ability of the leaders to hold the NGOs to account on behalf of their members is severely compromised. A similar scenario is reported from the southwest Uganda case where the project promoters 'do not recognize elected leaders as stakeholders'. The project instead harnesses the leaders to mobilize communities and to enforce project rules.

Though not upwardly accountable to project promoters, the arrondissement and village committees in the southeast Cameroon case are upwardly accountable

to municipal actors (under mayors) recognized as the superintending authority. In this case the representatives are not subverted through material benefits but through political manipulation. The mayor co-opts committee representatives based on political and ethnic affiliation. These co-opted players usually become more upwardly accountable to their benefactor than to the arrondissements and villages they represent. That funding compromises the independence and effectiveness of representatives is more forcefully argued in the western Ghana case. Here, the committees that receive external funding are 'rarely accountable to the people but to the funding institution'. On their own side the funders are concerned about whether their project goals are met. Most of these goals have little or nothing to do with democratic representation. Thus, the creation of local committees in the name of community representation is no guarantee that democracy is taking hold in Africa's social forests. The fact that most of the committees end up accountable to their funders confirms the adage that 'he who pays the piper calls the tune' as apt for respective cases.

Without Resources, Representative Authorities Lack the 'Power' to Respond

The east central Burkina Faso case fell short of the RFGI criteria despite being judged 'successful' on all but one count of what its promoters conceived as inclusion through representation. Lack of resources to respond to people's needs was the basis on which the researcher felt the respective authority could not deliver substantive representation. So, as Ribot et al.(2008)argue, they observed that without power no authorities are worth influencing, even if they can be held accountable. The argument implies that no single condition of substantive representation is sufficient on its own. And as the researcher notes, all the conditions necessary should be present for substantive representation to be established, but in her case,'Concerning responsiveness, although there is support and allocation of materials to the municipality, these were not sufficient for the commune to satisfy the needs of the populations'. The idea that insufficientpower constrained substantive representation was also expressed in the western Ghana case, which alsoexploreswhy power was insufficient in the first place. But the notion of 'power' that the Ghana case implies is different: it denotes discretionary powers and not resources.

Without Discretionary power Representative Authorities are Reduced to 'Hollow Shells'

Despite meeting representation on all the terms conceived by its promoters, the western Ghana case still fell short of RFGI's actors, powers and accountability criteria. First, the community resource management authority lacks discretionary powers. It does not have the latitude to make decisions without overbearing control from higher-level authorities. The local authority remains subordinated to a set of higher-level institutions that have the power to approve even the most mundane of decisions or actions; even those that the authority would be capable of doing on its own. As the researcher argues, this reduces these authorities to something akin to empty shells serving no other purpose than as implementing agents for higher-level authorities (what Resosudarmo (2005) called 'co-administration' rather than democratic decentralization).

> The power and resources that are transferred to the community institution are very limited, so the representatives are not able to respond to people's needs. For instance, there are different institutions that a person has to approach to legally hunt and trade. The DA [District Administrator] gives trading license. The Forestry office gives the hunting license. And the Police gives out the gun license). So what are the actual powers of the CREMA [Community Resource Management Authority] if it is a devolved resource management authority of its own? These institutions like CREMA merely serve as conduits of information sharing between the local people and what the intervening agency envisioned (Resosudarmo 2005).

The ability of local resource management institutions to make decisions without overbearing control from levels above is crucial. If they do not have discretion, they do not have the power to be responsive; hence, they cannot be representative.

Marginalization of Democratic Local Governments Subverts Substantive Representation

Researchers in Uganda reported that the Uganda PES case had no democratic inclusion. Inclusion practices did not meet its promoters or the RFGI criteria for democratic representation. The initiative privileged interest-based groups while sidelining democratic local governance institutions. The duplicity of the project's promoters was visible through the exclusion of elected local government actors from benefits while being inclusive of them with regarding to costs. The local authorities were shut out when benefits were involved, but opportunistically 'included' when problems ensued. When they realized that they were being taken advantage

of, elected local authorities devised ways of avoiding costs while appropriating benefits. In response, the promoters revised their stance byrecognizing a role for local authorities;not by tapping into the strength of representation but by co-optingpolitical gatekeepers. As the researcher notes,

> The government at the parish and sub-county level were deliberately left out of the project. They were not even informed about the project, which undermined it in terms of public fealty. The community elicited the support of local leaders, some of who created their own groups to access the funds too. However, later, the community-based organizations (CBOs) faced challenges of non-payment, sabotage and infighting. In the end, when the CBOs and project proponents faced many challenges they sought the support of the local government leader (Resosudarmo 2005).

Thus, aspirations at fostering representation through accountability, responsiveness and discretionary powers may not be realized if these are not understood within the framework of existing power plays. In this instance, the researcher calls our attention to a strategic or self-interestedstance ofan intervening powerbroker, the project,whose power also needs to be strategically confronted if substantive inclusion is to take root. How such power works is more fully understood by seeing whether and how those over whom it is exercised respond to it. This response indicates where openings exist for reinforcing their ability to exert counter-power in order to achieve accountability.

Appropriation of Control and Benefits by Actors Recognized by Projects

Actors recognized by projects to supervise or represent communities receive power (control) and benefits from the projects as much as they actively appropriate these from local communities. The loci and strategies for appropriation of control vary from one case to the other. In the case of the REDD+ preparedness initiative in southeast Cameroon, state-appointed officials (mayors) recognized by the project to supervise communal and village committees end up usurping power from the committees. The policy under which the initiative operates (joint executive decision 076 of June 2012) stipulates that these committees should be democratically constituted. In practice, the process is subverted by the mayor who, through prior consultations, designates his social and political acquaintances as the representatives on the committees.

An examination of minutes of the natural resource management committee recognized by the carbon forestry project in the central Mozambican case showed

more subtle patterns of appropriation of benefits. The minutes reflect that the committee deliberatedin detail on demands made by those they represent, who mandated them to buy a grinding mill and lorry for the community. Thus, on face value the minutes would suggest the committee is responsive i.e. deliberating on and adopting policies preferred by citizens. But a closer physical examination showed that although these items were bought, they were registered under the names of committee executives. Loans that appeared not to have been initially demanded by the people were further advanced to these executives and those closely associated with the company promoting the project.

In some instances, actors recognized by projects sidelined major segments of the communities they were supposed to represent. This issue is flagged as a significant rider to Nepal's otherwise well rated Gorkha District case's carbon forestry project. The initiative is restricted to members only, which in some areas amounts to the exclusion of the poorest, and with the condition that the leadership selection process is not really open to all; in most cases, only the most educated will be selected, excluding the many illiterate members. Further, particularly where Nepal's CFUGs [Community Forestry User Groups] have a significant income, competition becomes fierce and leadership positions are known to be dominated by local elites. If ordinary people lack the means to hold leaders to account as is evident in most of these assessments, then well-meaning facilitators should expect to spend more time working to empowercitizens than their current projects probably allow. We next consider whether variations in intervention design had a bearing on which initiative researchers perceived as meeting or failing to meet the RFGI criteria of representation.

Effects of Variations in Intervention Design?

We employed two dimensions of intervention design to explore whether each of these broadly had a bearing on the inclusion of local people through representation. The first dimension related to the proximity ofproject designers, the local implementing institutions and fundersto citizens. The second dimension concerned the 'publicness' of project funders and institutions that the projects report to at the national level. Almost all of these characteristics did not show a discernible patternwith whether or not any case effectively included local people through representation. Lack of proximity of project designers to citizens appeared to be the only factor that works against people being represented (Table 3). This feature, distance, appears in sites where researchers judged that representation was not achieved at any stage of the project cycle.These sites included South Sudan's

Equator Province case, the Isangi case in the DRC, the Equator case of DRC, the eastern Uganda case, the southwest Uganda case, the central Mozambique case, the western Senegal case and the South Africa's Eastern Cape case. Lack of proximity of project designers to citizens therefore appears to predispose projects to outcomes that are far from inclusive in terms of substantive representation, even after consent has been secured (Table 3). Well-meaning efforts to include communities in downstream phases of projects may thus count for little when exclusion has been entrenched in intervention design through lack of inclusion in the design of projects conceived from afar.

Table 3: A Mapping of Nuances of Intervention Design across the Study Cases

Proximity of funders of institution representing communities to citizens (1-6)	Proximity of project designers to citizens (1-4)	Proximity of local implementing institution to citizens (0-6)	Publicness of funders (1-6)	Publicness[6] of institution reported to at national level (1-3)	Was representation actually achieved in?
High	Low	Med	Low	High	Ghorka District case, Nepal
High	High	Low	High	Low	Central Senegal case
					Southern Kenya case
-	High	Low	High	High	Southwest Cameroon case
Low	High	Med	High	High	Southwest Ghana case
NA	High	Med	Med	High	Western Ghana case
Low	Low	High	Low	Low	East Central Burkina Faso case
NA	Low	Med	Low	High	Western Uganda case
Low	High	Med	High	High	Southeast Cameroon case
Med	-	Med	High	High	Northeast Tanzania case
Med	Low	Med	Med	High	Equator Province case, South Sudan
Low	-	High	Low	NA	Isangi case, DRC
NA	Low	Med	Med	Low	Equator Province case, DRC
Low	Low	Med	Low	High	Eastern Uganda case
NA	Low	Med	High	High	Southwest Uganda case
High	Low	High	Low	Low	Central Mozambique case
NA	Low	Low	High	High	Western Senegal case
High	Low	Med	High	High	Eastern Cape case, South Africa

7

Discussion

Are forest-based initiatives like REDD+ that are geared towards overcoming the global 'climate challenge' resulting in representation and meaningful inclusion of citizens? The answer appears to be far from affirmative based on the field observations of RFGI researchers. While forestry projects and policy promoters claim that they aim to establish substantive inclusion of local people in decision making, inclusion is neither achieved according to researchers nor even in the promoter's own terms of what inclusiveness should be. Researchers find that while inclusiveness does appear healthy in the downstream phases of project implementation, it is patchy in the upstream consent and bargaining phases, which are the phases that scholars suggest matter most (Hanlon 2010; Nhantumbo and Salomao 2010; Leach and Scoones 2013). The room to bargain is key. Without it, communities partake only as price takers or subjects, being included on pre-set and often involuntary terms.

More meaningful participation in the upstream stages of consent and bargaining matters deeply. This is where local people could influence the returns they agree to. The benefits offered under these schemes, however, are seldom adequate to offset the costs that communities incur. The situation is worse in the common cases where the rewards are uncertain and erratic (as in our southwest Uganda, eastern Uganda and central Mozambique cases). Under REDD+, the outsider with whom local communities engage know the income they will make from these interventions. They will sell the intervention to a carbon credit market. Or, they will be paid by government to manage the payments to villagers. The villagers do the labour and bear the risks as shifts in their access to resources. Yet up front they are pushed into these projects without adequate up-front negotiation. They are asked to consent or are merely consulted. They are not given the power or a position from which to bargain.

By consenting, communities in climate forestry projects are tacitly committing to the principles of additionality, permanence and leakage on which these projects are based. These principles require that communities deliver long-term conservation gains, and that these gains should not result in conservation losses elsewhere (Wunder 2005).And yet, as the southwest Uganda case and other cases indicate, communities are not being correspondinglyassured of long-term rewards. They are not assured that they will accrue incomes over and above what they used to realize before intervention inception. Further, the elites who take the income are often not those whose labour sustains these projects. Hence, negotiations would need to ensure that upstream payments are true signals that downstream payments will arrive and that those who work are those who will be remunerated.

These shortcomings are best addressed through policies that view consultation and consent as continuous processes and not one-off events. The strength of a process approach to consultations lies inbestowing communities with the freedom to review and reconfigure consent based on parity between social and ecological additionality and permanence. In other words, justice is not achieved through approaches that perpetually assure benefits to one side while the other side remains exposed to the vagaries incurred in sustaining such benefits. Further, agreements must fully share risks among the beneficiaries: carbon cowboys, governments, international donors all need to be as or more exposed to risk than the forest villagers for whom risk implies disaster.

A resonant theme in the RFGI researchers' arguments is that no sole condition proves sufficient on its own to deliver democracy or the combination ofresponsiveness and accountabilitythat a democratically representative system requires. These are goals that appear best achieved when sets of factors combine to operate in mutually reinforcing fashion. The many factors involved do imply that achieving representation iseasier said than done. This is partly because responsiveness and accountability are twosides of the same representation coin, with little evidence to show that there is any natural sequence for establishing them. A core set of conditions does appear crucial though. The well-informed opinion of the researchers on the ground suggests that authorities representing local communities should be bestowed with sufficient power and the latitude to respond to the needs of those they represent without overbearing control from levels above.Further, accountability mechanisms must be in place and citizens must be empowered to use them. Substantive inclusion can also be fortified if the institutions through which the projects interface with local communities workthrough or are subordinated to democratically-constituted local governinginstitutions in which decisions and resources are under public control.

Notes

1. The 'social forest' is any aggregation of trees, however spaced and wherever located, from which local people obtain a variety of products (Nhira and Fortmann 1993).
2. Projects modeled on integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP) and Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBRNM) while REDD is based upon experience with payment for environmental services (PES) initiatives.
3. The Principle of Free Prior Informed Consent encompasses the protection of local people's rights to land under international law by obliging project promoters to obtain local people's free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources (UNREDD+ 2013).
4. Committees are structured units consisting of villagers from the local populations. Committees can be created by projects and, depending on specific project plans, might possess similar powerstoother formal institutions. The user committees as described in Crook and Manor (1998) can function in parallel to already established institutions or could just be functioning to carry out project plans with a minimal degree of overlap in powers. The powers bestowed on these committees varies from country to country and the degree to which they run parallel to other types ofinstitutions also varies. The direction of accountability and type of relations with other institutions as well as legal status are also different from case to case. State-mandated (or state-prohibited), parallel structures/committees may also be approved or even endorsed by the local government such as in the eastern Senegal case.
5. Overlooking the needs and rights of local communities, even if the projects claim to be conservation initiatives, is not the preferred approach due to cases of unsatisfactory performance of fortress conservation.
6. As outlined under the methods, 'publicness' is a measure of citizen participation in the creation of an authority, ranging from entirely publicly constituted (formed through elections), to those created through a mix of elections and administrative appointments (e.g. some District Councils), to non-elected private authorities such as NGOs.

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