ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

ENGENDERING EXCLUSION IN SENEGAL’S DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION: SUBORDINATING WOMEN THROUGH PARTICIPATORY NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Solange Bandiaky

MAY 2008

Submitted to the faculty of Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies

And accepted on the recommendation of

Dianne Rocheleau, Ph.D.
Chief Instructor
ABSTRACT

This dissertation demonstrates how external agency participatory programs with village committees and how multi-party competition and rivalries have undermined women's decision making and access to forest resources and land in a rural Senegalese community. Using a participatory approach based on “village committees” in Malidino Biodiversity Reserve, the World Bank and Senegal forest service have bestowed discretionary power on traditional leaders and on local elected officials. This transfer of powers to actors with questionable democratic legitimacy exacerbated divisions among political parties, consequently intensifying ethnic, kinship, and gender cleavages. In Dialakoto Rural Council, multi-party competition combined with the electoral system, party system, political culture, and cultural norms, have encouraged factionalism and petty rivalries while suppressing important issues such as gender equity, accountability, and responsiveness.

Participatory programs and local government institutions have converged in a manner that undermines women’s abilities to collectively address their interests. While the two entities appeared to be opposed to each other or in antagonistic relationships, both have had the same effects on women’s political voice and resource access.
The gendered participation and representation in village committees and the Rural Council and their gendered outcomes in decision making and access to forest resources and land are measured using qualitative and quantitative methods through participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and questionnaire survey. Feminist theories on participatory approaches and feminist political science each contribute to theorize gendered participation and representation. In this case, these theoretical perspectives have helped link gender, local electoral politics, and natural resource management, drawing from feminist political ecology and feminist environmentalism.

Participatory approaches have served to reproduce inequity and exclusion by privileging the social and cultural rules and codes through which power relations operate in the rural communities surrounding the Malidino reserve. They have reproduced and deepened extant social hierarchies. In Dialakoto Rural Council, the gendered distribution of voices and decision making is skewed. Women have very low representation in the council and do not occupy any key positions; rather they are relegated to secondary roles. Their environmental, political, and economic needs and interests are not taken into account in the rural council budget and agenda.
These two institutions have their own “democratic” structures, processes and practices, yet they each have the same non-democratic effects on the status of women. They both claim to serve women’s interests and to aim for equity and equality; on the ground, the reality is different. In spite of the failure to date, I suggest more explicit use, and even transformation, of decentralization by women, as an opportunity to influence policy and decision makers. Decentralization offers institutionalized and legal spaces and opportunities for gender equity even though it has not yet achieved it and does not guarantee it in the future. Decentralization may simply be a necessary but not sufficient condition for women’s full participation in resource governance and equal access to forest resources in Senegal and beyond.
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DEDICATION

To my father Patrice Bandiaky and to the memory of my mother Marie M’Pamy, for their prayers, support, love, and the education they have given me.
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ABREVIATIONS

AJ/PADS: And Jëf/ Parti Africain pour la Démocratie et le Socialism ; And Jëf/ African Party for Democracy and Socialism

ARD: Agence Régionale de Développement

CBR: Community-Based Reserves

DPN: Direction des Parcs Nationaux/ National Parks Department

GIE: Groupement d’Intérêt Economique

IMVC: Inter-village Committee for Development Management/ Comité Inter-Villageois de Gestion et de Développement (CIVGD)


MARP: Méthodes Actives de Recherche Participative/ Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

MFEF: Ministère de la Femme de l’Enfant et de la Famille/ Ministry of women's affairs

NDI: National Democratic Institute

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NKNP: Niokolo Koba National Park

NRM: Natural Resource Management

PCR: Président de Communauté Rurale/ Rural Community President

PDS: Parti Démocratique Sénégalais/ Senegalese Democratic Party

PROGEDE : Programme de Gestion Durable et Participative des Energies Traditionnelles et de Substitution/ Environment/Poverty-Alleviation Energy Program (SPEM)

PS : Parti Socialiste/ Socialist Party

VMC: Village Management Committee

VMDC: Village Management and Development Committee/ Comité Villageois de Gestion et de Développement (CVGD)

UPS: Union Progressiste Sénégalais/ Senegalese Progressive Union