

## CHAPTER 6

## Rebellion, Representation, and Enfranchisement in the Forest Villages of Makacoulibantang, Eastern Senegal

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In the district of Makacoulibantang in Eastern Senegal (figure 6-1), scores of villages are actively blocking urban-based woodfuel merchants and their migrant woodcutters from working in surrounding forests. Their rebellion is partly to stop the destruction of a resource on which they depend for daily needs, and partly to reap some of the benefits from woodfuel production and commerce. Local villagers cannot enter the woodfuel (firewood and charcoal) trade, since, as it now stands, urban-based merchants employ migrant woodcutters and use state-allocated licenses and permits to control access to urban markets where the woodfuels are sold and consumed. Forest villagers have resorted to blocking direct access to forests, since this is about the only influence rural populations have on the woodfuel sector. However, while villagers can control forest access, without access to markets and forest labor opportunities, they themselves can reap few benefits from forest exploitation. They can keep others out of surrounding forests, but they cannot enter forest commerce themselves. In short, the fact that forest villages can control direct access to forests does not give them access to the benefits that flow from forest commerce.

Most villagers in the area do not want woodfuel being cut from surrounding forests. But despite their objections, some village chiefs, who are usually hereditary powers appointed for life, allow production in village forests. Their decision is based partly on payoffs from merchants, and partly on the social status of merchants, which makes it difficult for chiefs to turn them down. Villagers complain but do not challenge their chiefs' decisions. This schism between chiefs and villagers raises the issue of enfranchisement and accountability of representation in local resource control. Makacoulibantang is an example where control is indeed local, but the results are still negative for the majority of the population since the chiefs make the decisions and reap most of the benefits, while the social and ecological costs of forest

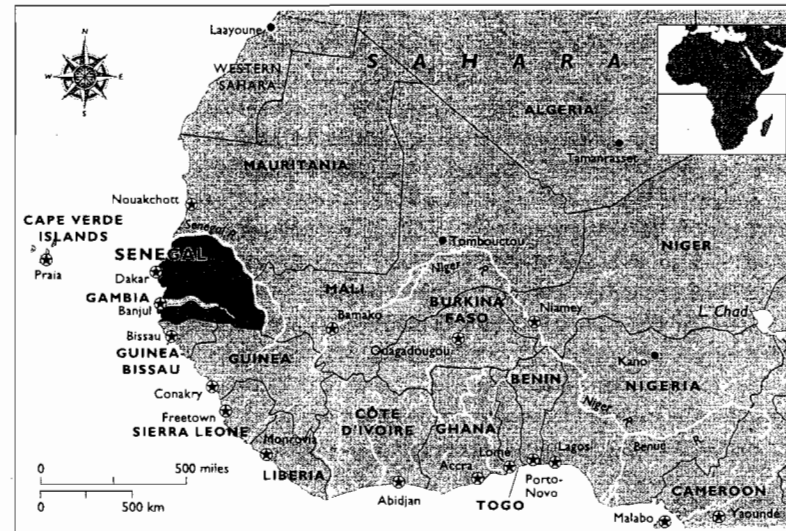


Figure 6-1 Senegal in Western Africa.

clearing are spread over the village as a whole—disproportionately affecting women and poorer households.

The story of resistance in Makacoulibantang illustrates two points concerning justice in local community natural resource use and management. First, without locally accountable representation, *local* control of forests (or of anything else) is not necessarily *community* control (see Ribot 1995, 1996). Villages are highly stratified, and elites—such as village chiefs—often make decisions that are not in the interest of the community as a whole. This is why locally accountable community representation—in the political sense—is an essential part of community participation. Second, community participation involves influence over the disposition of resources (natural, financial, etc.); access to values derived from their use, production, and exchange; and a voice in shaping the larger political economy in which practices and policies are made and contested. Effective enfranchisement requires locally accountable representation with real powers over resources, benefits, and policies. Neither representation without power nor power without representation can be considered community participation.

The story of Makacoulibantang illustrates a third, closely related point: control over forest resources—via property rights, threats of violence, or any other means—does not in itself confer benefits on local populations. Access to markets and labor opportunities are also necessary. Instituting local (or community) property rights, a common prescription in participatory development projects, is not in itself a sufficient policy tool for establishing local or community “participation” in forest benefits. Property rights are often presented as a means of giving communities or individuals

access to the benefits from the resources around them. But property is fetishized to the exclusion of inspecting the many other dynamics involved in the devolution of benefits to local communities (see Ribot 1998b; Ribot and Peluso, in press).

Over the past decade, the idea of local participation in resource management has become popular in development circles (Cohen and Uphoff 1977; Satish and Poffenberger 1989; Peluso 1992b; Banerjee et al. 1994).<sup>1</sup> Participation in forestry often aims to devolve forestry decision making and benefits to rural populations, along with responsibilities for forest management. Such devolution is predicated on a number of assumptions about higher efficiency of local resource management as a result of greater local knowledge, lower transaction costs as a result of proximity to forests, and better decision making as a result of the integration into commercial decisions of opportunity costs (such as the loss of subsistence food, fodder, and game). Equity arguments are also often made. Devolving control of or benefits from forests to local populations, or even just incorporating their labor into forest management, is a complex matter. As this study indicates, transferring control or benefits to local populations must first address to whom that transfer will be made. Second, influencing such transfers requires identifying what exists to be transferred, and from whom and by what means, if meaningful decision-making powers and benefits are to be devolved.

This chapter points to enfranchisement as a core element of community participation in environmental management. It also puts property in place as only one mechanism at work in determining who can benefit from or protect natural resources.

## THE CASE OF MAKACOULIBANTANG

### *Méréto—A New Spirit of Rural Resistance*

I first stayed in the forest village of Méréto in 1986 to study the rural social and ecological consequences of the charcoal trade (see figure 6-2). In this forested area of Eastern Senegal, migrant Fulbe woodcutters from neighboring Guinea have been plying their trade since the mid sixties. They come to cut trees, partially burning them to produce charcoal for sale in the nation's capital, Dakar.<sup>2</sup> When I arrived in the mid eighties, many villagers complained about the woodcutting in surrounding forests, but few did anything about it. The forest villagers were upset, but passive, about having no rights to protect surrounding forests from woodcutters. When asked who owns the forests, they said with resignation, "the Forest Service." Officially, this was true. The forests are "national domain" under forest service management (RdS 1964, 1994). It was the Forest Service that could give licenses and cutting permits, and they gave them to urban merchants and their migrant workers (Ribot 1990, 1995.)

When I returned in July 1994, I found transformed attitudes about who should control and have access to forests. Villagers were complaining about woodcutters, while the woodcutters and their patron-merchants were complaining about village resistance. Villagers, however, were not just complaining about the woodcutters. They described chasing them from the forests and even trying to change the laws to

ban charcoal production—the woodcutting being for charcoal. In short, formerly passive villagers seemed to be taking control of the issues of forest access: they were beginning to take matters into their own hands.<sup>3</sup>

In Méréto, villagers spoke in excited whispers, expressing amazement about how the neighboring rural community of Makacoulibantang had organized and kicked out the woodcutters. They explained that people there had initially succeeded in stopping charcoal production in their area. A series of meetings with the foresters, merchants, village chiefs, and local elected authorities ensued, resulting in the return of the woodcutters, but also in some areas being protected from charcoal production. Villagers were taking control of the forests. These stories put me on the road to Makacoulibantang, some thirty kilometers southeast of Méréto. I spent a week conducting interviews and returned in November 1994 for three weeks after having gathered available documents in Tambacounda and Dakar.

### *Setting—Administrative and "Customary" Authorities*

Makacoulibantang is a rural community (a territorial-administrative unit discussed later) at the edge of the largest charcoal production zone in Senegal. Maka is the village that is the capital of the rural community of Makacoulibantang. Figure 6-2, a map of the zone, shows the main charcoal production areas, the Makacoulibantang study area, and the cities where the charcoal produced in these forests is ultimately consumed. The villagers in this area are primarily millet and peanut growers. Makacoulibantang has

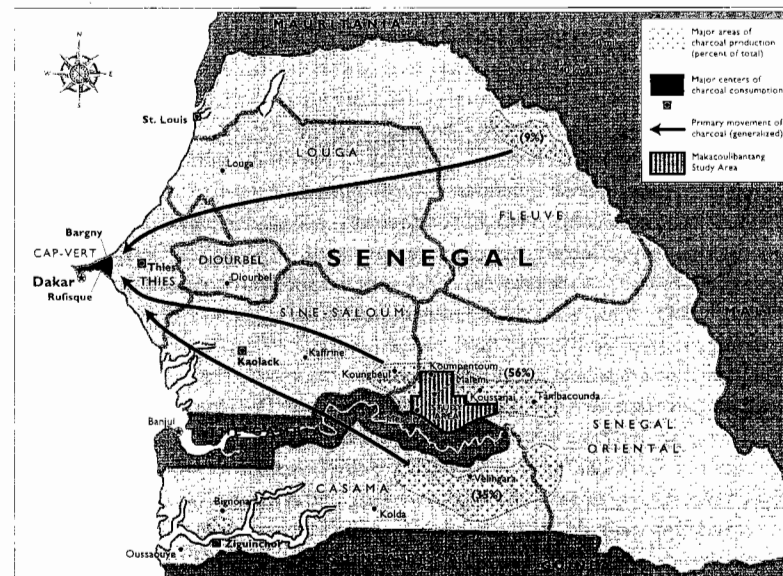


Figure 6-2 Charcoal Production and Consumption Areas in Senegal.

no electricity, running water, or paved roads. The regional capital, Tambacounda, is eighty kilometers away, just over half on paved roads—a formidable distance for villagers to travel.

In official language, the rural community is considered the “base community” of rural political and administrative functions of the Senegalese government. Each of Senegal’s 317 rural communities contains between ten and fifteen villages, and between 2,000 and 15,000 people. Two to seven rural communities are regrouped into arrondissements. Several arrondissements make up a department, and departments are the largest subdistricts of Senegal’s ten regions.

The rural community, Senegal’s smallest unit of local government, is governed by the rural council. Figure 6-2 shows where the rural councils are located in the larger political-administrative scheme. The important official actors at the local level are the rural councils, the subprefect and prefect, the Forest Service, and the Interior Ministry’s Local Development Offices [multipurpose rural extension centers, *centres d’expansion rurale polyvalent* (CERP); see figure 6-2]. The Forest Service, in theory, relates to the rural community through CERPs, which are responsible for rural development,<sup>4</sup> but CERPs play virtually no role in this relationship. At the most local level, the rural councils are the only elected bodies. The prefect and subprefect are administrative appointees of the interior minister, and the Forest Service staff are a professional technical service of the Ministry for the Protection of Nature. The CERPs are constituted of appointees of the various rural services and representatives from the rural councils.

Three-quarters of the representation on the councils of Senegal’s rural communities is made up of members elected by universal suffrage and one-quarter of representatives chosen by a general council of cooperatives (commercial economic interest groups, mostly agricultural) operating within the rural community. Slates of candidates for the council of the rural community are presented by nationally registered political parties for election. The slate with the majority of votes is elected.<sup>5</sup> Once elected, the council chooses a president of the rural community from among its members. Independent candidates *cannot* present themselves for election. The president of the rural council officially represents (and is accountable to) the prefect, who is appointed by the minister of the interior (RdS 1992:4–13). The prefect must approve all decisions of the rural council, hence the prefect officially retains ultimate decision-making powers within the rural communities.

There are also “customary” rural authorities. Each village has a chief. This chief is proposed by the subprefect after consultation with the “heads” of the village’s households, who elect a chief from among themselves. The chief is then named, for life, by a decree from the prefect. The decree must also be approved by the minister of the interior (RdS 1972:968). Officially, the chief works under the authority of the subprefect and the president of the rural council, and is charged with the application of laws, administrative decisions, and decisions of the rural council. The chief also collects a head tax of FCFA 1,000 (US\$2) per year from each adult. The village chief keeps 4 percent and the remainder goes into the state coffers. In practice, most chiefs

gain their position through inheritance via a male lineage traced back to the founding family of the village, to warriors, or to families chosen by colonial powers to replace antagonistic local leaders.

Village chiefs and the rural councils of local state governance structures are frequently assumed to represent rural populations in participatory development and natural resource management projects. Across the West African Sahel, *villages* are the most common unit of social aggregation around which local use and management of woodlands is organized both by local populations and by outside agents. Each village, ranging from less than 100 people to well over 1,000, typically has a chief, and some have specialized chiefs overseeing forest use. There are also other authorities within villages, such as imams, marabouts, sorcerers, non-village-based pastoral chiefs, griots, and heads of certain castes. Colonial rulers, however, relied on village chiefs, disproportionately shifting power to them. While other figures are involved in resource management, most state and outside organizations still privilege chiefs as their primary village interface.

Given the manner in which chiefs are currently chosen, they neither represent nor are they systematically accountable to the village as a whole. Most heads of households are men, and most household compounds have about ten or twelve persons, which means that the chiefs are chosen by a small male minority. They are selected through a process that empowers less than 10 percent of the population and systematically underrepresents women. These facts, plus appointment for life, compromise accountability. Although there can be various local mechanisms of accountability (see Spierenburg 1995; Fisiy 1992), the accountability of chiefs is by no means assured—some are despots, others responsive leaders, depending on the chief’s personality, the specific history of the village in question, and its location in a larger political economy.

### *Building Tension in Makacoulibantang, 1990–1993*

In 1990, villagers in Makacoulibantang and two neighboring rural communities asked their rural council to protect the surrounding forests from migrant woodcutters (called *surga*).<sup>6</sup> The region around Makacoulibantang had been an official charcoal production zone in the late seventies and early eighties. After production in the area was officially closed by the Forest Service in the early eighties, many woodcutters stayed on, working the forests illegally. Villagers always had had a tense relation with the migrant charcoal producers, but they had managed to coexist with only scattered conflicts over the years. In 1990, tensions began to rise. Nothing special had changed within charcoal production itself, but the forest villagers were no longer willing to put up with existing woodcutting arrangements.

The villagers had two sorts of complaints. First were the inconveniences of having migrant woodcutters in their forests. There is a history in this region of woodcutters destroying plants used for food, fodder, medicines, and dyes, as well as wood for house construction and cooking fuel (Bergeret and Ribot 1990; Dia 1985; Niang

1985; Ribot 1990:82–85; Tall 1974). A rural councilor feared that deforestation would inhibit the rains (personal communication, Maka, June 1994; Ribot 1990).<sup>7</sup> Villagers also complained, “Surga chase women who are collecting forest products, they cut areas we use for grazing, and they start bush fires” (villagers of Maka, June 1994). Their complaints were not new,<sup>8</sup> but they were mounting. Second, a new set of complaints emerged. Villagers were asking for a share of the benefit from the lucrative woodfuel trade. They wanted labor opportunities in woodcutting—they wanted permits and quotas that would allow them to cut wood, carbonize, and sell the charcoal. They wanted to touch some of the revenues flowing from the commercialization of their forests.

While the desires of the rural population to halt outside commercial producers, to have forests for local use, and to be able to commercialize the forests themselves may appear contradictory, they are not. There is no reason that villagers—who use these forests for many different purposes—cannot include commercial exploitation as one of their uses. They also still value the forests for the other uses and may be able to conserve and exploit them at the same time—something like managed or “sustainable” (whatever that may mean) use. An advantage of the villagers’ carrying out this exploitation, rather than allowing outsiders to do it, is that the contradictions between and within villages concerning the different uses of the forests must be fought and sorted out internally and locally. The local retention of the added income from commercial activities is, of course, another benefit. The situation is very similar to that of India’s Chipko movement, which was highly misinterpreted (see Rangan 1996). Many outsiders saw the women of Chipko as wanting to protect the forests strictly for subsistence uses, but the movement also involved people who wanted to protect local forests from outside producers so that they could cut and sell some of the trees themselves. Just because Chipko was a local and indigenous movement did not mean that it was rooted in some kind of primordial conservationist ethic.

In 1990, the rural councilors joined the rural population against charcoal production in the zone (villagers, rural councilors, assistant to the subprefect, Maka, June 1994). The councilors told the prefect they wanted forests protected for use by the rural population. They also wished to see revenues retained for local development, pointing out that they “couldn’t tax woodcutters and it was only foreigners [i.e., migrants] that were working.” The rural councilors asked to charge a fee on woodfuel production to create a development fund under their jurisdiction.

Makacoulintang’s deputy in Senegal’s National Assembly explained: “Villagers wanted to stop charcoal production in the area. They decided not to give the woodcutters a place to stay in the villages. Villagers wanted to fight woodcutters in the forests. The population wanted to force them out” (Deputy Kabina Kaba Jakhaté, July 1994). Villagers began chasing woodcutters out of the forests and complaining to their representatives. They also began to actively resist charcoal production.

Villagers discussed the issue with their councilors; the president of the rural community went to the prefect in Tambacounda, and in 1990 the prefect signed a decree closing the area to charcoal production (assistant to prefect, Tambacounda, June

1994). Some of the woodcutters stayed in the area in villages more friendly to them, and many left. The tensions subsided. But in 1993 the Forest Service scheduled new production “rotations” in the area.<sup>9</sup> This was normal forest management procedure and it was time again for production in the zone. The Forest Service scheduled production in Makacoulintang for 1 January through 31 August 1993. The regional and departmental Forest Service agents told me that the forests of this region are managed forests in which it was time for the return of production rotations. They explained,

If we did not go to Maka to produce, first the rotation would not be respected; and second, the other regions would react if the production was moved to their forests. Other rural communities would not accept what Maka rejected. We, the Forest Service, are the managers of the forest domain. (Koumpentoum, July 1994)

In early 1993, woodcutters started showing up with permits in hand. Villagers were angry. They thought charcoal production had been banned. The rural council again represented the villagers and demanded that the Forest Service not reopen the charcoal season. Some villagers threatened violence if more woodcutters showed up. But more woodcutters did show up and were installed by their merchant patrons in villages throughout the area. The merchants negotiated with village chiefs, and some chiefs allowed them in. In those villages that allowed the woodcutters to stay, most villagers did not concur with the chief’s decision, but they did not challenge it.

Other villages did not admit the woodcutters. Many villagers cited the prefectorial decree as proof that they did not have to put up with the woodcutters any more. Those that resisted threatened woodcutters verbally, chasing them from the forests. Rural councilors recounted that “one Marabout [Islamic religious leader] refused to give access to the woodcutters. He took out his musket and threatened to shoot anyone cutting within three kilometers of his village.” (No incidences of violence were reported.) Some chiefs and villagers also excluded the woodcutters by not allowing them to stay in their villages. Without village access, the woodcutters had no water, food, or lodging. They could not live and work in the forests on their own.

The result was a scattered pattern of production in the majority of the area’s villages. Nonetheless, as villagers talked among themselves and the movement against the woodcutters heated up, there were more conflicts and more complaints coming into the rural councilors and being passed up the hierarchy through the subprefect and the foresters.

In March 1993, two months after the Forest Service agents’ opening of the season, the Forest Service had the prefect sign a decree reopening the area to charcoal production. This move was designed to help avert the emerging conflict between villagers and the charcoal interests by withdrawing official backing from the movement.<sup>10</sup> Foresters explained (forestry officials, Tambacounda and Koumpentoum, July 1994) that the prefect had no authority to close or open production in the forests that were under the management of the Forest Service. Further, his decree was redundant, since before the Forest Service opened the season, production was officially

illegal in the area anyhow. The foresters went on to explain, "Production rotations have to proceed as scheduled. . . . The forests serve the whole nation. They are needed to provide fuel to the cities. The forests don't belong to villagers."

The prefect did not inform the local population of his second decree. The villagers and rural councilors were upset and continued to fight the decision. The resistance went on and many of the villages whose surrounding forests would have been brought under production were quiet. The situation remained tense.

### *The First Meeting—March 1993*

On 31 March 1993, the subprefect called, and presided over, a meeting in Maka to resolve the tensions. The following discussion draws from the minutes of this meeting, recorded by the director of the regional Forest Service office at Tambacounda. The cast of characters at this first meeting was remarkable. The fifty-four participants included four Forest Service agents and officials, eight forestry merchants (two of whom are powerful officers in the Merchants' National Union), eleven village chiefs, the president of the Arrondissement Council, twelve of Makacoulbantang's rural councilors (including the president), three other civil servants, and thirteen other villagers.<sup>11</sup> The Forest Service members and the forestry merchant delegation were listed at the front of the minutes as the official parties. All others were named in an appended list.

The meeting was opened by the subprefect at 11:00 A.M. After a brief introduction by the subprefect, the head of the Tambacounda Forest Service office, Mamadou Fall, opened by expressing the wish that this meeting would result in "objective" recommendations for a good organization of forest exploitation in the arrondissement. He emphasized "the fact that *forest exploitation is a governmental decision* of which the organization is *entrusted to the Forest Service*." Next he described "the new Forest Code [being written at the time], which anticipates a remittance to Rural Communities that manage exploitation areas," adding "the ministerial decree organizing the exploitation season defines the open regions, and in each of these regions *the Inspector has the right to define the cutting plots, not the administrative or local authorities* [e.g., the prefect, councilors, or chiefs]." The minutes continue, explaining that Mamadou Fall then "insisted on the notion of *national solidarity*, which would permit the exchange of products among the different regions of the country, favoring *socioeconomic stability*"<sup>12</sup> (all italics added).

The foresters' introduction was completed by the regional hunting inspector, Ansoumana Diolla,<sup>13</sup> who said, "The reform [the proposed Forestry Code] has clearly defined the prerogatives of local collectives and [has shown] that the *management of forest formations belongs with the Forest Service, just as the revenues generated belong to the nation as a whole*. This justifies the importance of *national solidarity*" (italics added).

At this point, Yulbe Diallo, one of the most powerful charcoal merchants in Senegal and the president of the Regional Union of Forestry Merchants, stepped in. "He reassured the local representatives that the woodcutters will install themselves

in the area to satisfy the *needs of a whole people* [i.e., the nation of Senegal]. In this manner he invited the participants to express their proposals toward good management of the *common good*, the forest" (italics added).

What followed were proposals and concerns from the rural population. The minutes read:

- Oussouby Laye, President of the Local Union of Cooperatives [mostly agricultural coops], feared that reforestation actions would not come to compensate the losses engendered by forest exploitation. He also mentioned risks of worsening rain shortfalls. . . . Then he expressed his wish for the creation of an intermediate treasury in Maka for revenues [presumably for reforestation efforts].
- Ousemane Ba [rural councilor] found a contradiction in the fact that forest management would be entrusted to the Forest Service and that of lands to the rural council.
- Yancouba Laye [rural councilor] hoped that the populations would take a substantial profit from the exploitation of their forests.
- El Hadji Saré Dia [chief of the a village of Boulimbou] affirmed that the populations are obligated to bow before the decision of the government, but asked that the agricultural zones be respected by the [forest] exploitation.
- Fodé Ba [rural councilor] of the village of Manigui Colibasso, was only distressed about the border zone which must not be opened for exploitation due to the risk of creating problems between Senegal and The Gambia.
- Mamadou Sow, chief of the village of Yérodoundé, declared that his village would refuse to lodge the woodcutters.
- Kael Diallo, president of the Rural Council of the Arrondissement, argued that no person present at the meeting is responsible for the decision to open the zone of Maka to exploitation; rather this decision emanates from the peak of the administrative pyramid. From this position, he wished for good harmony in view of a good organization of exploitation by channeling the woodcutter into precise zones, while reserving for the populations the forests from which they satisfy their daily needs for forest products, and for the animals the pasture areas for the rainy season.
- Soppata Keita [villager from Coulibantang] then declared that the decision by the authorities to open the zone of Maka to exploitation will triumph despite the disapproval of the population.
- Finally, El Hadji Bourang Diallo, president of the Rural Community of Maka related the strategic importance of the Forest of Bokko for the population and animals and wished that it would be respected so that the populations could continue to exercise their usage rights on which their survival rests. He also announced that he was the author of the petition addressed to the authorities:

These proposals by the rural population certainly look like (1) integrated ("sylvagro-pastoral") environmental management, (2) rural benefit retention, and (3) disapproval that the authorities were not taking the people's wishes into account. The



seemed to be fighting for a bit of “participation” in decision making over their forests and the benefits derived from them. What is remarkable is how close to the cutting edge of thinking on environmental management and integrated rural development the articulated needs and desires of the rural actors are. In sum, they requested (1) protection of the Forest of Bokko for village usufructuary and pastoral uses, (2) protection of a band along the Gambian frontier, (3) channeling of woodcutters into specified areas, (4) more reforestation, and (5) benefits for the rural population.

Mixed in with these management proposals, some strong disapproval of production in the region was voiced. The merchants’ and foresters’ responses followed the proposals and apparently threatening concerns. The minutes go on:

- Burum Gorkati and Soppowo Yimbe, both forestry merchants, then took the floor to *calm the doubting spirits of the people* (italics added).
- To all the questions posed, the director of the Forestry Sector of Tambacounda responded very clearly, which permitted the tension to drop.

Then the president of the Regional Union of Forestry Merchants asked the representatives [rural councilors] to provide a list of villages that do not wish to have woodcutters. [Thirty-three villages were then cited in the minutes.]

- Regarding all these villages, Yulbe Diallo [the Regional Union leader] agreed to move out all woodcutters so that they can be relocated in other areas ready to welcome them.
- The last word came from the subprefect who thanked the participants for the success of the meeting before closing the meeting at 3:00 P.M.

After this first meeting, there were few changes. Tensions remained high. Some villages kicked the woodcutters out, others let them stay. Discontent among peasants was widespread. Even in those villages where woodcutters were staying, everyone I spoke with did not want them. A year later, at the opening of the next season, tensions were still high. The merchants had not yet moved their woodcutters, and the Forest Service had not stepped in to resolve the problem.

### ***Second Season, Second Meeting—March 1994***

On the fourth of February 1994, the prefect in Tambacounda established a commission composed of four Forestry agents and officials, a rural extension agent, the president of the arrondissement council, the president of Makacoulintang’s rural council, the local cooperative union president, and two high officials from the National Union of Forestry Merchants,<sup>14</sup> to resolve the charcoal production problems that had developed during the 1993 season. At the first meeting of the commission, on 5 March 1994 in Maka, the subprefect explained, “The prefect asked for the creation of a commission to resolve all the problems linked to charcoal production. Con-

cerning Maka, the commission is to determine the zones to exploit, decide the production locations of quota holders, make an exploitation plan, and assure the control of woodcutters through the establishment of files and I.D. cards.” (All of these were already the normal functions of the Forest Service.)

The subprefect opened the meeting, handing the floor to the Forest Service inspector from Tambacounda. After introductory remarks about the importance of the commission, the inspector announced several concrete actions he had decided to take:

1. The Forest of Bokke would be closed to production, “in taking account of the wishes of the people”;
2. Lists of the woodcutters, along with their photos, would be dropped off at the offices of the subprefect, the chiefs of the concerned villages, and the Forest Service, to help control woodcutters;
3. A four- to five-kilometer band would be maintained between the Gambian border and production zones, to avoid problems; and
4. On 17 through 19 March 1994, the commission would tour the area to implement the commission’s decisions and would diffuse information about them. Any woodcutters not following the deadlines established by the commission on this tour would later be fined.

The inspector ended by saying that the commission would rapidly evict the woodcutters still working in areas restricted from the previous season, reinstalling them in authorized zones. The merchants then expressed their pleasure with the plan, agreeing to move their woodcutters.

At the end of the meeting, the president of the rural council spoke. He inquired about “financial resources that the community could derive from woodcutting.” The subprefect flatly responded that “forest exploitation escapes the jurisdiction of the rural council. Like mines, it’s a domain reserved for the state to whom the taxes accrue.”

The subprefect then closed the meeting, thanking “the inspector, his collaborators, and other participants.” He said, “We have done useful work since we have deliberated in the interest of the country and her children. The prefect places much hope in the commission—we must not disappoint him.” (This was the end of second meeting.)

### ***Outcomes and Implementation***

These official pronouncements made the Forest Service, the merchants, and some village chiefs happy. Rural councilors and other villagers, however, insisted that they were still not in agreement. Villagers throughout the area insisted that they still did not want charcoal produced in their forests. One villager pointed out that nothing was done to enable villagers to work in charcoal production themselves. (When asked why labor opportunities and quotas were not discussed in the meetings, the villagers insisted that they had been discussed in the meetings and with the Forest Service agents. These discussions were not recorded.) Rural councilors were unhappy that none of

the revenues would fund local development. The rural councilors said the “solution” was imposed: it was simply not an agreement. “The big patrons (Soppowo Ba and Yulbe Diallo) and the Forest Service (Inspector Fall from Tambacounda) made the population understand that it is the right of the State to carbonize and dispose of the trees as they like” (rural councilor, Makacoulibantang, June 1994).

In sum, two of the requests made by rural populations in the first meeting were granted at the outset of the second meeting: (1) the closing of Bokko, and (2) the protection of the border area. In addition, foresters promised that woodcutters would be tracked more closely. However, the rural council and villagers were not granted two other important requests: (1) access to revenues from charcoal production, and (2) access to labor opportunities. They were given neither permits nor quotas nor the right to charge a fee for the Council. The official outcomes looked on paper like a sound, although imposed, management plan for the area. However, in practice, even these plans and promises were never implemented.<sup>15</sup>

As late as November 1994, eighteen of the thirty-three villages that had originally requested the expulsion of woodcutters still had charcoal producers working in surrounding forests (rural council president and subprefect, Makacoulibantang, November 1994). Production continued in the “closed” areas. The rural councils continued to complain about this illegal production, claiming that no one was enforcing the agreement. The few concessions that the Forest Service had made were not upheld. Little seemed to have changed, except that many of the villages that originally complained were no longer saying anything.

The resulting production pattern after all these meetings was a mix of villages that resisted the charcoal producers and villages that hosted charcoal producers both inside and outside the protected areas. This outcome followed much more from what individual villages decided to do than from any rules laid down by the Forest Service or pleas made by rural councils and the populations for whom they spoke. However, the decisions of individual villages were not decisions of the villagers themselves, who, on the whole, continued to oppose charcoal producers. Rather, the chiefs were making decisions in a space between villagers and charcoal merchants.

### *Pulleys in the Forest Well*

The councilors explained that after the last meetings they advised chiefs not to accept the agreement—or, for that matter, the charcoal makers. However, according to the councilors, the merchants went to the village chiefs and paid them off with sacks of rice. As the rural council president said, “The merchants bought the villages.”

Similarly, foresters explained, “When the [Forest Service] decree [opening the production season] was made, certain village chiefs, pastoralists, and rural community representatives did not want the charcoal makers,” but “village chiefs accepted kickbacks and the villagers accepted afterwards.”

The Regional Forestry Merchant Union president, one of the most powerful merchants in the market, recounted:

Patrons [merchants] give advances to the village chiefs [these are subsistence advances for the woodcutters]. The chiefs work with the means provided by the patrons with an agreement that, if they are caught [by the Forest Service] they are not to say who they work for. . . . There was a problem in Maka in that there were fraudulent charcoal makers. Village chiefs had *surga* [woodcutters] carbonizing for them. Village chiefs were already involved. They take a percentage of the profits. The villagers asked the subprefect what percentage they could have. The subprefect said they don't have any right to any percentage. . . . The villagers asked for the right to tax the *surga*. Patrons agreed that they should be able to assess them for the 1,000 FCFA (US\$2.00) per year head-tax that village chiefs collect on villagers.

Both villagers and the rural councilors acknowledged that now they were able to levy a head tax on the migrant woodcutters. This agreement did not come up in the meetings but was mentioned by other villagers.<sup>16</sup>

Deputy Kabina Kaba Jakhaté painted a picture in which the foresters in addition to the merchants come into the area and install their own woodcutters in the villages. “Villagers wanted to fight them [the woodcutters] in the forests. The population wanted to force them out. . . . But the Forest Service comes with the woodcutters and pays FCFA 5,000 each [to the Chiefs]. Tambacounda's Forest Service has its own woodcutters.” He said, “The chief is only a *pulley*—he facilitates but has no authority” (Dakar, July 1994).<sup>17</sup>

### *For the National Good*

In the Makacoulibantang story, state representatives—foresters and prefects—often evoke the role of forests in the “national good” in order to override local needs. This is a strategy as old as Jeremy Bentham's notion of “the greatest good for the greatest number for the longest time”—something that sounds suspiciously similar to notions of “sustainable development.” “The forests serve the whole nation,” cutting the forests is to “satisfy the needs of a whole people,” and for these reasons “the management of forest formations belongs with the Forest Service, just as the revenues generated belong to the nation as a whole.” The officials also evoke the common good, national solidarity, socioeconomic stability, and the interest of the country and her children, as reasons why rural populations should allow their forests to be exploited by outside commercial interests.

In Dakar, the minister for the protection of nature explained to me that if they had given a choice to the villagers in Makacoulibantang, the villagers would not have allowed any charcoal production. This would have caused problems for urban supply. He explained that villagers do not want to produce charcoal. I then related to him that villagers have repeatedly expressed their desire to make charcoal—“if they could get quotas and permits.” Indeed, there were whole villages asking for the right to make charcoal. I added that these villagers were asking to take control of their forests so that they could profit from the charcoal trade. He then mused, “Senegal is a large and diverse country and what villagers may want in Maka does not reflect

what they want elsewhere." He spoke of the Makacoulibantang story as a dangerous set of events that could spread—they had to be kept in place. "If villagers were given control of the forests," he said, "there would be fuel shortages in Dakar."<sup>18</sup>

This is the response I got at the end of the line of authority. For the time being, it appears, urban merchants will be allowed to exploit the forests in the name of rational management and the national good, while forest villagers will have to suffer the temporary, but socially and economically problematic, ecological consequences. In the end, the discourse of national good and environmental protection—used to justify the very existence of the Forest Service—serves neither. The forests are cut by merchants and protected by foresters to maintain a continuous supply of fuel to the cities. Villagers are left with a small amount of resources to protect their subsistence needs derived from forests, and with few resources to invest back into the local rural economy. Ironically, the only shortages that Dakar has ever seen were organized by merchants to protest infringements by policy makers on their privileged state-supported control over forestry markets. Forests, and villagers happy to cut them, are not in short supply.

### *Chiefs and Merchants*

Ultimately, it is the chiefs who mediate direct access to forests. While they cannot sell without the merchants, they can withhold the forests from the merchants and woodcutters by threatening the woodcutters with violence and by keeping them out of the villages. Woodcutters need village access in order to work. The merchants also need village roads to get into the forests to evacuate the charcoal to market. It is through the threat of violence and control of village infrastructure that chiefs control the forests. It is also through the loyalty of villagers that the chiefs can prevent villagers from independently giving woodcutters access to the forest or acting against them. But what chiefs do with their control of forest access depends on their relations with merchants and with forest villagers.

While chiefs control forest access, merchants control access to markets and labor opportunities. Merchants, who are usually urban based, are licensed by the Forest Service, which allocates charcoal production quotas to licensed woodfuel merchants. With a license and a quota in hand, the merchants can hire laborers and obtain production permits for them to work under their license and within their quota. They prefer to hire migrant Guinean Fulbe woodcutters rather than local villagers.<sup>19</sup> So, while chiefs control direct access to forests through control of village infrastructure and the threat of violence, merchants control access to markets and to labor opportunities through licenses, quotas, and permits. Merchants and chiefs must negotiate with each other if either is to benefit from commercial forestry.

The merchant-chief relationship is critical in explaining where and when production takes place. Historically, in Senegal's charcoal trade, merchants would come to the village chief and ask permission to install their producers in the area. This is an old practice to avoid conflicts between villagers and woodcutters. In the early

1970s, the Forest Service informally required charcoal merchants to strike an agreement with chiefs before beginning work in village forests. Today, an agreement is often worked out by a trusted charcoal producer working for the merchant. The usual arrangement involves the payment of FCFA 5,000 to 10,000 (US\$10 to \$20) per truckload of charcoal taken from the forests around a given village. Making these sorts of "arrangements" with chiefs is normal practice (Ribot 1990, 1995).

The relationship between merchants and chiefs is more complex than can be developed here. The village chiefs are embedded in various relationships with the charcoal merchants. Whether they work for the merchants or are just paid off by them, their decision to take on charcoal producers is a matter of both the social influence of merchants, and the revenues charcoal production can bring a village chief and other villagers. Some chiefs are bought off by the merchants. Others capitulate, given the high social status of many of the merchants, who are often political or religious leaders, or who are closely associated with important social figures such as powerful politicians, Forest Service officials and agents, the prefect, or Islamic religious leaders. Village chiefs find it difficult to turn down the request of these powerful personalities, particularly since they may depend on them in hard times or for labor opportunities that are secured through social relationships stretching from the village to the cities where villagers often migrate for work.

The chiefs' relationships to other villagers are also important. Most villagers were clearly against the woodcutters' presence. Yet, without the compliance of the villagers, chiefs would have trouble making decisions with which villagers tend to disagree. In this case, however, by accepting charcoal producers in their villages the chiefs were going against the tide of popular opinion. Why did villagers allow village chiefs to compromise their wishes? Villagers probably did not challenge their chiefs' decision, although they complained about it, because of the legitimacy and powers village chiefs still enjoy. Further, the alternative, the rural councils, are an administrative creation of the central government. Because the councils are seen as representing party politics and other notables, and because they have very limited decision-making powers, they are yet to have much local acceptance. Indeed, the attempt by councilors to establish a forest fee and a development fund is part of their struggle to gain some basis for local legitimacy.

The authority of chiefs, it is often argued, rests on their control over access to land (Downs and Reyna 1988; Watts 1993; Fisiy 1992). Here, it also rests on their control over access to forests. The attempt by the rural councilors to intervene in forest access may not be welcome by village chiefs. Indeed, anything that legitimizes the existence of the rural council may be a threat to the village chiefs, since the councils are an alternative form of governance to the chieftain system. The council system derives some of its administrative powers from the domain of chiefs. For the rural councilors, this charcoal conflict, where the rural population was united and the chiefs were split, presented an opportunity to speak for the rural populations. In so doing, the council could boost its legitimacy in the rural arena. However, as the results of this conflict show, the villagers and the rural councilors were pushed aside



They were marginalized in a process that primarily involved the Forest Service and merchants (who act in each meeting as a unified voice) and the village chiefs. While rural councils are the official structure of enfranchisement of the rural populations, despite the undemocratic structure of electoral codes, they have no voice.

Villagers often do not feel that the rural councils represent them. The lists of candidates presented for elections are composed by parties based in urban areas and out of the range of the villagers' influence. In addition, villagers do not feel that the cooperatives, which appoint one-fourth of the council's members, represent them. [Lack of representation in cooperatives is not new. For an example in agricultural cooperatives, see O'Brien (1975).] The councilors interviewed feel that, because of the way they were chosen, they are not viewed as legitimate, which undermines the little power they have. Another issue is that of jurisdiction and powers, called competence. The councilors feel that part of their lack of legitimacy stems from the fact that they have so little power and so few resources that they are unable to perform even the smallest of duties. One pined, "We have nothing to offer the people we represent." Another said, "All we do is marriage counseling."

In the case of Makacoulibantang, the councilors may have good intentions or just strategic ones. It is difficult to separate out the structural position they occupy—which is disempowered, and selected by political parties outside of the villages—from their personal attributes or their social and political ties and aspirations. The councilors I spoke with were frustrated by having no powers and little legitimacy. While the parties they work for might favor merchant activities (some of the merchants being powerful party members), they themselves live within the communities they ostensibly represent. They would like to do something for their fellow villagers but have no powers and no voice. So, while the councilors take up the local cause, they make little headway. Whether they do it out of an identification with the local population, to try to garner some legitimacy for themselves and their parties, or both, is a difficult question. In the end, their expressed goals are not achieved.

There are many ties between the Forest Service and merchants—aside from the links formed through policies that regulate merchant activity, such as licenses, quotas, and permits. While the prefect and subprefect played a facilitating role in the meetings, both of the meetings took a form in which the Forest Service and the merchants came in as a dominant and unified voice. They began by telling the participants what their rights were and what they were not, and by moralizing about the "national good." They then listened to the concerns of the "other participants." Even the minutes reflect this hierarchy, since the two official delegations listed up front are the foresters and merchants, while all "other participants" are named in an addendum. In the second meeting, the Forest Service agents dictated the agenda. The merchants then gave their approval. When concerns were raised by a rural councilor, they were dismissed. The relationship between foresters and merchants is not simply collusion against the rural populations. Rather, it derives from the role of the Forest Service in maintaining the cheap supply of woodfuels to the urban areas. For the foresters, facilitating the merchant's access to the forests is an essential part of meet-

ing their mandate. In addition, foresters have their own (formal and informal, legal and illegal) interests in forest commerce. For rural populations and rural councilors, this alliance is like a brick wall.

### *Shifting Control and Power in Makacoulibantang*

The rural councilors attempted to support a movement in which the rural population was turning against the charcoal merchants and their woodcutters, and the village chiefs were split. In appealing to higher authorities—the subprefect, the prefect, the Forest Service, their deputy, and the minister for the protection of nature—the rural councilors were trying to break the merchant-chief relationships that were frustrating the local population's desire to stop charcoal production in their area. In response, the Forest Service returned and asserted the rights of merchants to work charcoal in the zone, backing the merchants' claims. The merchants deflected the rural council with the Forest Service and went on doing business with village chiefs willing to work with them. Forest Service agents and officials represented themselves as upholding the law and serving the national good. On the surface, a compromise management plan was established. In practice, the old patterns of merchant-chief relationships continued to serve as the basis of forest access in Makacoulibantang.

In this struggle, the rural council was trying to change the structure of forest access control. They were trying to (1) tap into revenues from commercial forestry, (2) retain some of these benefits for the rural population as a whole (and certainly as a resource for the council and councilors—whether for public and political or for personal consumption), (3) gain access to labor opportunities for the local community, and (4) gain more control of decision-making balance of power and legitimacy between themselves and the village chiefs via forest control. In the process, they did support changes in the patterns of forest access, by speaking for what they perceived to be the needs of the rural population as a whole. But they did not change the broader set of political-economic structures and relationships now shaping the overall patterns of access to the flow of income and profits from Senegal's forests. They did not produce a devolution of benefits now captured by the merchants and by the migrant labor they hire.

What looked like a movement for local participation in integrated resource management policy wound up with business as usual. However, some gains were made. Under ordinary conditions, almost all villages would have hosted charcoal producers. In Makacoulibantang, it was only about half. So far, the movement has been partly successful. With all the agreements made, however, the villagers and rural councilors still feel that little has changed.

Ironically, with one hand in the forest, the Forest Service and the minister for the protection of nature are smothering what looked like a great example of a spontaneous participatory integrated resource management movement. With the other in Dakar, they are waving their new "participatory" forestry code, to be implemented over the next few years.<sup>20</sup>

The Makacoulibantang rebellion can also be read as a struggle over the dwindling basis of local rural power. Chiefs gain their power from land allocation. This power, however, has been eroded over the years by the shift in the rural economic base from agriculture toward more diverse sources of income, including urban migration and labor opportunities in nonagricultural production (e.g., charcoal making). These latter sources of power are in the hands of urban merchants. While the councils officially arbitrate over land disputes—part of an attempt in the 1970s to transfer some basis of local political power to the councils—few disputes are brought to them. Most are resolved within the villages [see Hesseling (n.d.)]. Now the councils are trying to gain a bit of leverage through forestry.

Forests take on a new importance as control over agricultural lands becomes less important. While the councils are attempting to enter the realm of forest control—for profit and power—village chiefs are taking it back, slowing the erosion of their power by widening their base beyond the fields into the forests. Chiefs and councils struggle with each other over this control as the balance of real economic power becomes more and more concentrated in the hands of urban elites. Devolving powers—or even small fragments of control and benefit—to local populations necessarily plays into the struggle between chiefs and councils. It also, of course, plays into the relationship between merchants and the local political economy, a relationship within which merchants can use the local splits to their advantage by choosing the local authorities with whom to conduct their business.

### FOREST COMMERCE IN SENEGAL: PUTTING MAKACOULIBANTANG IN CONTEXT

The story of Makacoulibantang is only a small part of a very complex set of relationships in which the local dynamics described here are embedded. Enormous profits are generated in the production and exchange of woodfuels from Senegal's forests. The profits that chiefs are reaping in exchange for village forests represent only a small percentage of the total profits derived from commercial forestry. Villages (villagers and chiefs combined) reap only 2 to 3 percent of the total profits from the woodfuel trade. The rest is concentrated among migrant laborers and urban vendors who make a living wage, and merchants and urban wholesalers who together derive approximately 70 percent of all profits (gross income minus all costs and living expenses) reaped in the charcoal sector. Some of these traders make over US\$100,000 per year. Each of these actors depends on different means, structures, and tactics for maintaining access to their share of the income and profit stream (see Ribot 1998b).

As is seen in this case, villagers use threats of violence and control over village infrastructure to leverage their tiny share of the commercial profits from the forests: villagers can exclude merchants, hence the merchants are obligated to pay them off. This ability to exclude is analogous to holding title or owning the forests, but it

brings them only a small portion of the benefits that forests produce. Migrants and vendors maintain access to labor opportunities through the cultivation of relationships with their patron merchants. Merchants maintain access to benefits from the forests by having access to labor opportunities and by controlling access to exchange. They do so through a mix of policy supports, credit arrangements, collective collusive action, knowledge, and social ties. Wholesalers maintain access to urban markets through credit arrangements, the cultivation and maintenance of a clientele, control of vending outlets, and knowledge of the urban markets.

After examining who benefits from the forests and how, it becomes clear that there are multiple layers of social aggregation and nodes of authority at which control of access to forest benefits is concentrated. The users of the forest are not only the forest villagers; they include various and well-organized user groups such as the merchants and wholesalers, and their dependent vendors and migrant laborers. These user groups are related to each other in hierarchical and interdependent ways. In West Africa, this multilayered, multi-user-group forest commons appears to be very widespread. The single-user-group commons that the common property literature has so carefully searched out (e.g., Ostrom 1990) may be a delightful and easily studied find, but it is rare. The most evident form of collective action governing the forest commons of the West African Sahel is the collusion of layered and interlinked merchant organizations and networks, as they are shaped by selectively implemented state policies. Villages—as stratified as they are—also often act collectively to exclude others from the forests in their area (cf. Rangan 1995, 1996; Peluso 1992b), but other, nonvillage groups act collectively to exclude villagers from markets in which they could reap the commercial benefits of the resources under their direct control. In the Makacoulibantang case, direct control of forests renders little profit. It is through control over markets that profits accrue.

It is in this larger context that any attempt to increase local participation in the benefits from forests must be evaluated.

### CONCLUSION: PARTICIPATION, ENFRANCHISEMENT, AND LOCAL CONTROL

Participatory forestry is often presented as a solution to social and ecological problems. But what are rural populations to participate in, and who will participate? What will be devolved to whom in order to constitute community participation in natural resource management?

Through the issue of representation, there is an explicit link between environmental change<sup>21</sup> and enfranchisement. If there is no locally accountable representation, then *who* participates in community resource management? To whom can control of forests or of the benefits that flow from them be transferred? Devolution of control into the hands of locals who are not locally accountable will not achieve the efficiency or equity goals that participatory policies espouse—that is, they will no

necessarily internalize social or environmental costs, nor will they improve distribution. If there is no system of locally accountable representation in place, then participatory approaches have no appropriate object of local concern with which to interact. They may transfer access control to some local person—a village chief or some other elite—but not to the community as a whole.

Means by which devolution is affected are equally important. For example, this story shows that direct control of access (whether through threats of violence, legal title of ownership, or other means) does not necessarily confer benefits. So, transferring property rights, a frequently proposed measure, may not resolve this problem. Other means for establishing local access to forest benefits must be explored—such as supports for market entry, the local ability (of some representative body) to tax, labor opportunities, and so on. Indeed, if there is really an interest in transferring benefits and decision-making powers to forest villages, policy analysts should be inquiring into who controls the markets and labor opportunities (and how they control them), rather than focusing solely on who controls forests.

Control of access to things does not confer control of benefits from them. The focus of many participatory approaches to property rights as the primary tool for devolving control to local communities is therefore not sufficient, particularly when there is no locally accountable community representative on whom such rights can be conferred. But it is also not sufficient because property rights—or any other forms of direct resource control—do not confer benefits from forests on local populations unless the populations also have access to markets and labor opportunities.

Justice—both distributive and procedural—in the context of participatory rural resource management is concerned with *what* is devolved to *whom*. The *what* must include the devolution of powers over the disposition of forests, of means to garner financial resources to operate with, of access to labor opportunities and markets, and of access to political processes. All are essential parts of what communities must participate in if they are to have effective control over the disposition of and benefits from resources around them. The *whom* involves the problem of representation. *Indigenous* or *local* does not necessarily mean representative or fair. Some process of inclusion or some form of accountable representation must be constructed if the notion of community—which is always a stratified ensemble of persons with different needs and powers—is to have a collective meaning. This story brings into question whether chiefs really do “represent” their villages in any accountable sense. It brings up the question of whether new natural resource policies should place powers in chiefs’ hands, strengthening this particular local—but not necessarily representative or just—institution.

Representation must also be scrutinized in the rural councils. If the electoral codes are not reworked to make the rural councils locally accountable, then devolving natural resource management to the rural councils will result in the strengthening of another nonrepresentative institution. Chiefs and councils are both already deeply shaped by state law. Chiefs are officially elected and then appointed by the minister of the interior, just as the rural councilors are. The parties control the se-

lection of candidates for the rural council. Reshaping the laws that govern their appointment affects only one entry point into national/local politics. Here it is the politics of potentially more equitable, more representative local empowerment. It is the politics of enfranchisement. Delving into electoral and administrative law and practice—that is, the politics of representation and control—is one important way to bring politics explicitly into the emerging field of political ecology.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to Susanne Freidberg, Matthew Turner, and Charles Zerner for their constructive, insightful comments on this chapter.

## NOTES

1. Notions of participatory management have recently gained tremendous popularity in the Sahel (Freudenberger 1993:68,75; CILSS and LTC 1993; Ribot 1996; cf. Vedeld 1992 for pastoral systems; cf. Cleaver and Schreiber 1992 for agriculture).

2. Ninety percent of the charcoal is consumed in Dakar and 10 percent in other smaller urban centers. The woodcutters are also called lumberjacks and charcoal makers in other articles.

3. What caused these dramatic changes in local attitudes toward the forests is difficult to say. I suspect it was a combination of effects, including the fall of the Berlin Wall (which ushered in changes in international attitudes and funding, weakening African governments; it was also a symbol of the triumph of an important democratic movement; and it inspired such events as the 1991 Malian revolution); the revolution in neighboring Mali where foresters were violently chased from the rural areas; and the excitement around the elections in South Africa. Villagers were following these events through radio and word of mouth. In addition, national discussions of democratization were reaching the rural areas. This phenomenon is not specific to eastern Senegal. In Mali’s 1991 revolution, foresters were the target of rural protest—some being killed in the process. After Mali’s revolts, in a National conference to reconstitute the government, peasant representatives’ first request was the elimination of the Forest Service (along with the *Commandant de Cercle*). In Niger, merchants are upset because they can no longer get access to certain forests that local populations are claiming for themselves (interviews, July 1994). Changes such as this seem to be taking place across the West African Sahel. There are contagious hopes and expectations popping up in the forests.

4. Senegal’s Forest Service was set up by the French under colonial rule in the 1930s when the predecessor of today’s forestry code (law) was written. At independence in 1960, the rules, regulations, and institutions were maintained much as they had been under colonial rule. Most of the same laws and institutional arrangements are still in place today (Ribot and Cline-Cole, in press).

5. As one villager put it, “The councilors are chosen by deputies in the National Assembly. Deputies choose people based on those who support them in their elections. The list is made by the deputy. The councils are chosen by the parties” (Koumpentoum, June 1994).

6. The three rural communities, Makacoulibantang, Endoga Babakar, and Kahane (all in the arrondissement of Makacoulibantang) were against exploitation in their region. Maka was simply the capital where the meetings and my interviews occurred.

7. Note that whether deforestation is temporary or not is still an open question. While some of the studies cited indicate changes in species composition, all show that forest regeneration occurs. Woodcutters and villagers whom I interviewed in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger all claimed that regeneration occurred after woodcutting.

8. In surveys and interviews in Daru Kimbu and four other nearby villages in 1986 and 1987, women recounted that before the arrival of charcoal producers, firewood had been available just outside the compounds, whereas after the first two years, firewood had to be gathered at distances of several kilometers, requiring anywhere from a couple of hours to half a day to collect. More than half the women saw the distancing of the firewood resources as a direct result of charcoal production; many expressed resentment. They also explained that charcoal production led to the disappearance of game birds and animals, and to the destruction of fodder (cf. Niang 1985:83; Tall 1974:68; Ribot 1990, 1995).

Village women complained that the presence of migrant charcoal producers drew down the wells, creating water shortages and water quality problems, causing tensions in the village. Villagers recounted how heavy truckloads of charcoal evacuated from the villages during the rainy season—outside the legal production season—tear up and rut the dirt roads so badly that villagers cannot negotiate them by horse cart, car, or minibus. It is thus difficult for them to take their products to market and to bring back the products they need. They also spoke of charcoal producers leaving with debts unpaid, fighting with women gathering firewood, and “chasing women” in the forests. Other researchers report similar problems around Senegal—including scarcity of useful species and commodities—associated with charcoal production (Dia 1985:43; Bergeret and Ribot 1990). Well over half the women interviewed wanted the charcoal makers out of their village and out of their forests, so that their forests could grow back. As one woman commented, “They will leave when there is no more wood. That will be soon.”

Villagers, charcoal makers, and foresters also recount numerous conflicts between villagers and charcoal producers. Some have been violent (also see PARCE 1983:17; cf. Freudenberger 1993:63 on conflicts over gum arabic collection). In most cases, the villagers wanted the charcoal makers to leave or to pay the debts they had incurred, and fights broke out. In instances I witnessed, underlying tensions emerged over issues such as theft and adultery. In the early seventies, according to forestry officials, frequent conflicts between charcoal makers and villagers led the Forest Service to adopt an informal policy obligating charcoal *patrons* to gain the consent of the village chief before carbonizing in the area surrounding a village.

9. Arrêté ministériel no. 15411/MDRH/DEFCCS of 21 December 1992, organizing the 1993 season.

10. Arrêté no. 010/D.TC of 1 March 1993, reopening the area.

11. In addition to the subprefect, the minutes listed the following as “registered” participants: (1) from the Forest Service (Eaux et Forêts et Chasse), the director of the Forest Section Office of Tambacounda, the assistant to the Forest Service inspector of Tambacounda, the head of the Regional Hunting Division, the head of the Forestry Brigade of Koussanar (the neighboring arrondissement), and the head of the Forestry Brigade of Maka; (2) a delegation of forestry merchants (in this paper, *exploitant forestiers* is translated “forestry merchants”), composed of the president of the Regional Union of Forestry Merchants of Tam-

bacounda, the president of the Regional Union of Forestry Merchants of Kaolack, and six forestry merchants. A list of participants was appended at the end of the minutes. These included forty people from the arrondissement’s villages: the president of the council of the arrondissement, the president of the rural council of Maka, eleven rural council members, eleven village chiefs, three civil servants (health clinic staff, school director, and agricultural extension agent), and thirteen persons named without titles.

12. The minutes state here, “He ended by evoking the deplorable image of trucks parked on the national highway near Koussanar and Koumpentoum, which, in a certain measure, had pushed technicians responsible for the organization and control of exploitation to propose to the prefect of Tambacounda that he sign a decree permitting exploitation in Makacoulibantang.” It is not clear whether he is trying to evoke the national good that is suffering when the villagers make all these merchants sit and wait, if he is saying that he was forced to do this by the commercial interests, or both.

13. I have changed the names of all but high-level officials discussed in this story.

14. More precisely, the commission included the local Forest Service inspector, the Forest Service sector director, the Forest Service Koussanar Brigade director, the assistant to the director of the Maka Forest Service Brigade, the director of the Rural Extension Committee of Maka (CERP), the president of the council of the arrondissement, the president of the rural council of Maka, the president of the Local Cooperatives Union, the president of the Regional Union of Forestry Merchants, and the vice-president of the National Union of Forestry Merchants.

15. The one forester in the area was stationed in Maka. When I woke him at 9:30 one weekday morning to ask about the situation, he referred me to his superiors in Tambacounda.

16. The deputy in the National Assembly for this region indicated that today only between 10 and 20 percent of the tax ever gets collected (Jakhaté, Dakar, July 1994). There is a general tax strike across rural Senegal. In any event, this would not be a great benefit since only 4 percent (US\$0.08) remains in the village as a salary for the chief.

17. At the level of the National Assembly, there are different factions with different interests in the charcoal market. The president of the National Union of Forestry Merchants is a deputy in the National Assembly. He is a member of the ruling Socialist party. The deputies from the Casamance have been against woodcutting there for a variety of political reasons, not the least of which is a secessionist movement in their region. Charcoal production has indeed been banned in some parts of the Casamance as a result of local protests combined with political fears that conflicts would flare up and spread.

18. Urban woodfuel shortages would be a political disaster for the minister and for the Forest Service. However, in fact, the only threat of shortages comes from merchants who withhold charcoal as leverage for policy changes they would like. The threat of woodfuel shortages in Senegal has nothing to do with the limits of the forests (e.g., deforestation leading to a woodfuel crisis). Indeed, forests are not even close to exhaustion, and regeneration after woodcutting is quite robust. It also has nothing to do with rural populations stopping the flow. Merchants have threatened in the past, and continue to threaten, the ministers and the Forest Service with shortages to eke out quotas and to keep the policy environment-friendly to their interests. The threat of shortages is a political tool of the merchants, not a matter of supply and demand. Urban woodfuel shortages are purposely created by merchants to get what they want.

19. The earliest merchants in the market were noble Fulbe from upland Guinea. They worked charcoal with their former serfs, also migrants from upland Guinea. This was a convenient arrangement since charcoal was looked on as a dirty and lowly activity, usually done

by a caste of blacksmiths. Further, when conflicts emerged between charcoal producers and villagers, the migrant charcoal producers were more tied to their merchants than to the village chief. In addition, migrants do not have competing labor demands on them and can be moved from place to place as the forests become exhausted.

20. See Ribot (1995) for an analysis of the new forestry code.

21. In eastern Senegal, the most important environmental problem caused by woodcutting appears to be temporary. While the forests appear to regenerate after woodcutting, the forest villages are faced with difficulties in gathering woodfuel, food, and fodder during the period between cutting and regeneration (see Ribot 1995, 1996; Bergeret and Ribot 1990). There are also many social problems that arise from hosting scores of migrant woodcutters in a village. These problems concern harassment of women in the forests, the exhaustion of the village well from the extra water demand, the failure of migrant workers to pay their debts, and the destruction of roads from the wood trucks.

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## CHAPTER 7

### The Damar Agroforests of Krui, Indon Justice for Forest Far

*Geneviève Michon, Hubert de Foresta, Kus  
and Patrice L*

The modern history of forests in Indonesia merges with a history of a co process of land and resource appropriation by the state at the expense of forest people, through a fair amount of ideological imperialism and a conveyance of legal and technical instruments as well as a touch of power abuse. From the beginning of the Indonesian archipelago's history, the forest has represented a large field for demographic, agricultural, economic, and geopolitical expansion as well as the major instrument by which to attain wealth and power. While forest appropriation or control in the past have occurred predominantly among equivalent groups of forest users and warriors, they presently involve a tension between the state and its political or economic elite on the one hand and local communities on the other (figures 7-1, 7-2, 7-3).

In spite of the important contribution of wood industries to national development, the ecological, economic, and social damages related to forest management in Indonesia can no longer be concealed. Cases of resource exhaustion, violation of local populations' basic rights by forestry projects, and reports of ongoing discontent are being publicized more and more through the local and national media. However, even though the discourses of policymakers at the highest levels speak of new objectives of social and environmental justice in forest management, development and conservation projects are still constrained by laws and regulations that still prevent the recognition of local people's practices and rights.<sup>1</sup> Actual local utilization and management of forest resources are seldom encompassed in a critical and nonpartisan way. The value of customary systems for controlling forest management practices is either underestimated or misunderstood. Mechanisms for acknowledging local people's rights over forest lands and resources remain dramatically underdeveloped.