



Farce of the Commons: Humor, Irony, and Subordination through a Camera's Lens

Jesse Ribot

Farce of the Commons:

Humor, Irony, and Subordination through a Camera's Lens

Jesse Ribot

RESEARCH REPORT NO 2



Copyright © ICLD 2014

This study has been prepared within the ICLD. ICLD acknowledges the financial contribution to its research programme made by the government of Sweden (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency – SIDA).

978-91-86725-13-6

Printed at Exakta, Malmö 2014.

Cover photo: ICLD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction.....	1
Charcoal in Senegal: Setting the Scene.....	2
From Absurd Reality to Theater: Depicting Democratic Decentralization in Senegal	5
From Research to Film	7
Film as Research	10
Showings – The Logical Illogic of the Legal Illegal.....	11
Aftereffects on Research	23
Effects of Film on Policy and Practice	24
Lessons and Recommendations People Drew from Watching.....	24
Social Life as Theatre.....	25
Post Script.....	27
Annex A: Film Discussion Guide.....	29
Annex B: Film Showing Introductory Statement and Post-showing Research Questions.....	39
Annex C: Spread of Weex Dunx.....	41
Annex D: Organization of Film Showings and Discussions.....	42
Annex E: Dynamics of Charcoal Production and Central Control in Senegal.....	43
Works Cited.....	48

ABSTRACT

In three decades Senegal's forestry policies have changed from colonial-style command and control to participatory, community-driven, sustainable, pro-poor, income-generating, carbon-sequestering, equity-enhancing, gender-conscious, and democratically decentralized. But, continued extraction of wealth from the rural world is upheld under each of these new regimes through repertoires of domination composed of new discourses, interpretations, obfuscations, threats, force, symbolic violence, violence, and other such practices. Donors, foresters, project personnel are constantly enacting change. Substantive change remains elusive. Film is one means of depicting and revealing the acts used to stem change. Writing research into drama, telling, directing, acting, filming and re-seeing magnifies contours of history and power that are not easily visible to the naked eye. Through magnification, everyday moments of domination become unreal, absurd, and yet believable. They are made visible. When detailed as facts of research, the abuses of foresters seem banal, unremarkable. The crushing of local democracy makes perfect sense – why would

the rich and powerful relinquish their wealth and power? But when presented as farce, they appear obviously systemic and intolerable. The repertoire of Forest Service acts of domination is vast. Describing it is tedious. Enacting ordinary moments of domination is a simple eye-opening theatre of the absurd. This report describes the effects of showing of films in Senegal to the people they depict. Showings polarized audiences into 'for' and 'against', 'affirmed' and 'threatened'. They allowed for people to talk of what was 'true' and 'false' – and they served as an effective research instrument since people would recount how things 'really' happened when the films were off target. The film inspired peasant producers to seek a share of the sector's great profits and it inspired women to want to engage in production. The report presents lessons for theory and practice of making and showing comic films on tragic practices.

Key Words: Farce, Humor, Irony, Local Democracy, Representation, Decentralization, Forestry, Film, Senegal, Africa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe thanks to Thierno Bal Seck and Aliou Sane at ENDA-Lead-Africa-Senegal for their work in showing this film and organizing of post-projection discussions. I especially appreciate Papa Faye for his well-documented and diligent interviews that helped inform this report and for his deep knowledge of Senegal's charcoal sector. Discussions with Papa Faye have had a great influence on my understanding of how this sector has evolved in the past five years. Papa also provided constructive comments on this report. John Ben Soileau and April Colette also provided excellent

background research assistance. I owe special thanks to the International Center for Local Democracy (ICLD) in Sweden for generously supporting this project. The project was risky and it came up against several obstacles in its execution. I want to thank the Minister of Environment of Senegal for banning the film *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor* in the first months of this project – I could not have better advertised the film. Above all, thanks go to Jon Anderson for suggesting I turn to theatre.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

- ATEF – Agent Technique des Eaux et Forêts (Forest Service Technical Agent)
- CFA – The Franc of the West African Community (approximately 600 CFA per Euro)
- CIRAD – Centre for Agricultural Research and Development
- CODESRIA – Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
- ICLD – International Centre for Local Democracy (Sweden)
- IREF – Inspecteur Régionale des Eaux et Forêts (Forest Service Regional Inspector – the director of the regional office of the Forest Service)
- ISE – Institute for Science of the Environment at the University Chekih Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal
- NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
- ENDA-TM – Environment and Development in the Third World, an NGO based in Dakar
- GIE – Groupement d’Intérêt Economique (Economic Interest Group – a kind of for profit cooperative)
- PROGEDE – Programme de Gestion Durable et Participative des Energies Traditionnelles et de Substitution (Program for Sustainable and Participatory Development and Substitution of Traditional Energy – a World Bank funded forestry project)
- Qx – Quintal – 100 Kilograms
- RdS – République du Sénégal (The Republic of Senegal)
- RTS – Radio and Television of Senegal
- UI – University of Illinois
- UNCEFS – Union Nationale des Coopératives des Exploitants Forestiers du Sénégal (The National Union of Forestry Cooperatives of Senegal)
- US – United States
- USAID – United States Agency for International Development
- WRI – World Resources Institute, an international NGO based in Washington, DC

PREFACE

The mandate of the Swedish International Center for Local Democracy (ICLD) is to contribute to poverty alleviation by promoting local democracy and local development. In order to fulfill this mandate we offer, decentralized cooperation through our Municipal Partnership Programmes, capacity building programmes through our International Training Programmes and knowledge management through our Centre of Knowledge. The Centre will document and publish key lessons learned from our ongoing activities, initiate and fund relevant research and engage in scholarly networks, organize conferences and workshops and maintain a publication series.

This report *Farce of the Commons: Humor, Irony, and Subordination through a Camera's Lens. Notes on the Showing of the film Semmiñ Ñaari Boor in Senegal 2010-2012* by Jesse Ribot is the second report to be published in ICLD's Research Report series. Ribot argues convincingly that local democracy has a material basis and thus stresses the need for local governments to have both decision making powers and adequate funds to respond to local people's needs. The film *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor* depicts a scenario when the above are not present and elected local authorities

are left delegitimized and demoralized. Despite democratic decentralization of natural resource management, the elected rural councils have little influence over the management of forests or the allocation of rights to lucrative forest activities. *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor* is Wolof for Double Bladed Axe and as Ribot writes refers 'to someone who speaks out of both sides of their mouth, that is, someone you cannot trust'. Senegal's Forest Service is this double bladed axe – by reneging on its promises of decentralization of forest management to the elected local authorities, the foresters make local democracy into a farce.

Ribot effectively introduces film, and more importantly the post-screening discussions, as mediating tool for serious democratic debates. By reading this report you will gain insight into how the screenings allowed discussion to take place in a much contested area, natural resource management, but also how the film itself resulted in increased demands by peasant producers to seek a share of the sector's great profits. Moreover it inspired more women to want to engage in production.

Visby, Sweden February 2014

Maria Åberg
Secretary General

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHY



Jesse Ribot
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign, IL,
USA
Ribot@Illinois.edu

Jesse Ribot is Professor of Geography and Geographic Information Science and Director of the Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy Initiative at the University of Illinois. Prior to joining UI, Ribot was a Senior Associate in the Institutions and Governance program at the World Resources Institute from 1999 to 08. He has been a fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, a Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Fellow, a MacArthur Fellow

at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, a fellow at the Yale Program in Agrarian Studies, lecturer in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT, and has worked for numerous development agencies. He conducts research on decentralization and democratic local government; natural resource tenure and access; distribution along natural resource commodity chains; and vulnerability in the face of climate and environmental change.

FARCE OF THE COMMONS:

HUMOR, IRONY, AND SUBORDINATION THROUGH A CAMERA'S LENS

They give us the head without the tongue.
Soninke saying, Elected Rural Council President,
Tambacounda, 14 February 2006

If you want to participate, please lend in a hand,
do as we tell you and we'll tell you you can.
If you listen, look, learn, and do as we say,
even democratization will be on its way.
We must protect forests from people like you,
So that people with business will have business to do.
Ribot 1997

INTRODUCTION

This report emerged from the showings of two films about democratic decentralization of forestry in Senegal. The first, *Weex Dunx* [Scapegoat] is about how Senegal's Forest Service sidelined the elected Rural Council [the local government] President in 'decentralized' forestry decision making in the fictive rural community of Nambaradougou [Village of Many Problems] in Eastern Senegal. The sequel, *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor* [Double Bladed Axe], shows how lucrative that industry is and how, despite its management having been transferred to the elected Rural Council President, urban merchants and the Forest Service continue to dominate lucrative opportunities. The report presents findings from a study of the effects of showing *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor* to forest villagers, forestry practitioners, forestry officials and development agencies. The study is based on recordings of open-ended discussions after showing of the film to six different audiences and villager interviews before and after village showings. The study also draws on interviews with policy makers, foresters, charcoal makers, merchants, villagers, donors and project personnel, and debates between the filmmaker and foresters and members of Senegal's Forest Service, over the past four years. The focus in this report is on showings of *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor*, nevertheless *Weex Dunx* is mentioned where relevant.¹

After viewing the film *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor*, forest villagers were more concerned with the economic implications of forestry production than with representation. Government and project officials were more concerned with defending their project funding than with local well-being or representation. Forest villagers were informed by the films in ways that made them want a greater share of the benefit from this sector. They saw that the activities in which they are eking out a meager livelihood are highly lucrative to others. They now say they want more of the profits from these activities. Of course, it is impossible to say whether they will try to increase their income now that they know how profitable forestry production can be. If they do try, we cannot yet say whether they will do so through their local democratic institutions or through connections to the black markets in permits and licenses. Perhaps they will try through multiple demands on local authorities; perhaps through protest; perhaps through all of these channels and more; and perhaps they will be pushed back into their subsistence incomes and their exclusion from this lucrative trade will continue – business as usual.

While aiming to inform villagers and foresters, the making and showing of films also turned out to generate valuable research insights. The report describes how making and showing the films informed what we know about the forestry sector and forestry policy's effects on local

¹ For further discussion by the author of *Weex Dunx*, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oi8ZjuTMfRU>.

democracy. We learned that nobody seems to find the circumvention and marginalizing of a democratic leader to be worthy of discussion. Nobody mentioned it and nobody seemed to be concerned about it – despite that it is central to both films. The concerns expressed were divided. Those within the Forest Service primarily worried that showing local people's frustration with forest management and showing the ecological ineffectiveness of management plans might compromise their ability to get project funding from international donors. They were also concerned that the film did not show the economic benefits that their projects had been funded to produce. On the other side, forest villagers were mostly concerned with how lucrative the sector is and how they might get their share. Viewers consistently expressed instrumental economic considerations and did so appearing to have specific audiences in mind. Foresters seemed to talk to donors. Foresters did not want to lose donor support for activities that were neither ecologically necessary nor conducive to democratic practice. Villagers spoke as if they were addressing the forestry administration and projects. They wanted to have access to the profits that the film made visible to them.

Semmiñ Ñaari Boor addresses issues of local democracy and representation, yet, as mentioned, these issues did not emerge in the post-screening discussions. Nevertheless, the struggles over decision-making powers and over income and taxes from natural resources, that were the focus of discussion, have a significant effect on democracy. Local democracy has a material basis. First it is constituted only when representative authorities have the jurisdiction to make significant decisions (including the allocation of rights to land and resources) and when they have the funds from fees and other sources to be able to respond to local people's needs. The other part of the material foundation of local democracy is popular wellbeing. Forest villagers need enough surplus wealth to have the freedom to make demands on and hold to account their leaders. People who are so poor they cannot travel out of their villages or take time off of agricultural, pastoral or forestry activities are not in the best position to act as citizens – to influence those who govern them. Poverty, produced by the extractive practices that

people in this film are struggling against and subordinated to, is anti-democratic.²

For this project, a team composed from the Rural Development Program of Lead Africa based at the NGO Environment and Development in the Third World, ENDA Tiers Monde, in Dakar showed the film *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor* to six audiences and asked open-ended questions about how well it reflected people's experience, where the film was right and wrong, and what was new and most important for them in the film (questions are available in Annex A). They then recorded and transcribed the ensuing discussion. The ENDA team conducted some interviews before showing the film and also conducted interviews two months after the showings. The author also draws on a series of interviews he conducted with rural councilors, foresters, and other officials during past several years. This report recounts the effects of making and showing of these films on research, awareness and perhaps on policy.

The first section of the report, Charcoal in Senegal, provides background on the history of democratic decentralization in forestry in Senegal. The section From Research to Film describes how the frustrating engagement by researchers with practitioners and policy makers led to the development of a skit and then a film as a means of influence. The section Film as Research explains how the film itself generated new insights into the politics within the charcoal sector. This section describes some of the reactions to the film in the post-screening discussions and the effects of the film on aspirations of forest villagers. In the section Effects of Film on Policy and Practice, we draw out some tentative lessons. The lessons remain tentative since the effects of the two films discussed in this report are not expected to unfold immediately. Change takes time.

CHARCOAL IN SENEGAL: SETTING THE SCENE

From World War II to the 1980s, Senegal's Forest Service worked with a group of licensed merchants to supply charcoal to urban households

² See Ribot, Chhatre and Lankina (2008) on representation, citizenship and the public domain as elements of local democracy.

– Senegal's most-lucrative forest trade. These merchants worked only with migrant woodcutters from Guinea, who would cut wood and produce charcoal for their merchant patrons. In 1993, Senegal's Forest Service introduced participatory forestry, attempting to involve local forest villagers in forest management and some charcoal production. Migrant laborers continued to do the work, but under this law they worked for villagers who hired them – villagers having no interest in this kind of labor. Since 1998, Senegal is under a decentralized forestry regime that has legally transferred forest management rights to elected local leaders. These legislative changes have not materialized in practice.

The theatre of decentralization and localism is enacted through legislation and projects performing the empowerment and democratization of Senegal's forest management and use. Each act from the early discourses of forest protection and urban supply to later ones of participation and then democratic decentralization is counter-acted to stop or recapture transfers from central to local actors. The Forest Service and their merchant partners remain in control of the business of sustainable development. Charcoal is a lucrative business. Despite democratic decentralization legislation and plenty of discourse and donor support to this end, forestry in Senegal is neither democratic nor decentralized, it is not about participation, and it is not about forest conservation. It is about business and it reproduces domination.

In attempts to establish local participation in forestry, the foresters and their merchant friends have drawn acts from their repertoires of domination to recapture forest benefits. People who live in and depend on the forests have gained very little leverage or profits. Instead, urban merchants and foresters continue to manage and profit. In the 1980s and 1990s it was more merchants than foresters, but it seems that today the lucrative charcoal market operates well to the profit of Forest Service professionals – who are skimming income from their control of licenses, contracts, and circulation permits that allow the transport of charcoal from the forests to consumers in the capital city of Dakar (P. Faye 2013). In the process, forest villagers remain as labor, forced to sell their product at low forest-edge price to merchants who then freely circulate to Dakar. The

merchants resell the product in Dakar at multiple times the forest-edge price. While rural producer incomes have increased in the last two years the merchant and other intermediary incomes have risen even faster (Ribot 2008a; P. Faye 2013.)

From World War II to the 1980s, the regulatory system was simple. Charcoal merchants organized into cooperatives were given permits by the Forest Service that required them to supply the city with charcoal. Quotas were designed to raise and ensure supply. They did their job and also enabled a few merchants to control a large swath of the market. It was easy to control the market since the only way to get charcoal from the forest to the city was with a quota that allowed licensed merchants to get a transport permit. So, a few big merchants hired migrant laborers in the forests, gave them loans to produce charcoal that the merchants then purchased at low prices. These prices were set through interlocking credit-labor arrangements – producers were obligated to sell back to those who they took loans from, allowing the lender to set the price. The system was classic. It was an oligopsony formed by quotas allocated to merchants by foresters linked to permits that gave merchants control of circulation (Ribot 1998).

In 1993, Senegal introduced a 'participatory' forestry code. This code allowed rural communities to participate in implementing Senegal's forest management plans and to work as labor in charcoal production. But most forest-based communities did not want any charcoal production (Thiaw 2003, 2005). They were against cutting in their forests. So, the foresters gave rural communities incentives. The 1993 code provided two options. Option 1: villagers could work as unremunerated labor implementing management plans and producing charcoal for subsistence incomes. Option 2: business as usual of giving forests to licensed merchants with quotas who hired migrant laborers to cut forests for charcoal. Villagers were required to use management plans. The merchants were not required to use management plans. The new system instituted a form of 'participatory corvée' (Ribot 1996) – villagers could 'choose' to a) work for free implementing forest service management plans and gain subsistence income from charcoal or b) to lose their forests.

Senegal's decentralization laws of 1996 trans-

ferred jurisdiction over natural resources to the elected rural councils. The forestry code was revised in 1998 to conform to this law. Under pressure from the World Bank and other donors, the law included a powerful clause stating that no commercial production could take place in the forests of the rural communities without the prior signature of the elected Rural Council President (RdS 1998; Ribot 2009b). And, Senegal's forestry code placed forests within the jurisdiction of the rural community under rural council authority. This law was very different from Mali, Uganda, Cameroon, and many other countries where local governments were given rights over 'their' forests, but were then given so little of the forests within their territory as to effectively have no forests – and hence no rights. Senegal's 1998 forestry code was the most progressive forestry law in Africa concerning decentralization of forest resources. The law, however, also limited rural council control by requiring Forest Service-authorized management plans before production could take place. In addition, also under donor pressure, just after the promulgation of the 1998 code, the minister circulated a note eliminating the quota system – a measure to prevent the Forest Service from allocating rights back to urban merchants.

But, as Dr. Seuss (1971) said, 'business is business and business must grow' – and it did. Senegal's Forest Service pulled out their discourses of national good – 'these forests belong to everyone, you can't just block their usage...' They pressured the elected Rural Council Presidents for signatures through arguments that they could not block commerce, that they would not be re-elected, that the signature was an obligation and not a right, and also with bribes. And so it was. The quota was not eliminated as announced by the Minister. Quotas kept being fixed and allocated to merchants by the Forest Service year after year. Rural Council Presidents were pressured into signing 20-year management plans that then took control of forests out of their hands for 20 years. No more 'rights' for council presidents to make forestry decisions; they had approved the management plans. While the eliminated quotas continued to be allocated, the Forest Service under World Bank and US Agency for International Development (USAID) projects was developing a new form of management regime that it called

'contracts' (Ribot 2008a).

The contracts were to replace the quotas, giving the Rural Community a right to produce and sell charcoal. But the contracts did not enable the forest villagers to sell charcoal in the lucrative markets. The contracts were turned into quotas under a new name. Marketing rights were now allocated to merchants through new mechanisms. But the contracts had an added bonus for merchants, a fixed price that was less than the migrant charcoal makers were paid and the price included a fee for the rural council. This fee was 'for the rural council' but the Forest Service then required that this fee be spent on forest management. Villagers who did not want to have their forests cut were now in the business of cutting their forests. The contracts required them to manage forests, pay a fee, and sell to a merchant at a low price. Voilà! Democratic decentralization at last – *à la* the market model. The fixed prices were lifted after the first experimental contracts. But the contract system was used to continue to allocate transport and commercial rights to urban-based merchants, not to forest villagers.

Many other struggles overlaid this progression from command and control to so-called 'democratically decentralized' forestry. In 1995, the World Bank launched PROGEDE (Programme de Gestion Durable et Participative des Energies Traditionnelles et de Substitution), translated in project documents as the Sustainable and Participatory Energy Management Project), a project that included the aim of helping forest villagers sell their charcoal at the higher prices available in the urban markets. The first villager-controlled truckload of charcoal under this project did not roll to Dakar until 2005. Finally in lieu of their \$2 per sack of charcoal at the forest edge, a select few forest villagers could make upward of \$12 to even \$20 per sack in sheer profits. One kiln load (filling a 12 tonne truck) could make a villager rich. By 2007, 700 of 7000 trucks rolling into Dakar each year were to the profit of the villagers. This is and continues to be a very positive development. It is a great achievement in decentralized forestry. It is done under the contract system. It is a success story and it is due to the hard work of the World Bank and USAID projects continuous putting pressure on the Forest Service to give villagers market access. So, today it appears that about ten

percent of the profit from charcoal is retained locally. (Ribot 2008a; Larson and Ribot 2008; Poteete and Ribot 2011.) But it is still done by the forest service allocating this privilege to select villagers – not as a right for villagers. It is also still only ten percent of production. In recent analyses it also appears that this income is concentrated among a few forest villagers who are acting as local project-established committee heads (personal communications, Papa Faye, August 2013).

In the past two years, the charcoal market has witnessed many changes we cannot capture in this report (for a more detailed history see Annex E; Ribot 1999a; Poteete and Ribot 2011). A few are of note. The producer price is going up and it appears that the merchants are losing some local negotiating power over prices. One researcher explained that this is due to a high volume of illegally produced charcoal (P. Faye 2013). Illegal production, however, is not new (Ribot 2006; M. Faye 2003:56-59; PROGEDE 2002:59; MEMI 1995:5; Madon 1987; Leitmann 1987; ESM-AP 1989; RPTES 1994:22).³ The reasons for the changes are still not certain.

As is evident in this short history, the axe of the Forest Service cuts both ways. It reduces the authority and resource decision arena of elected Rural Councils, making them relatively irrelevant, and, while increasing local income a bit, it blocks local producers from rights to significant production volumes and from the markets in which these resources can be transformed into wealth. The double speak, double standards, and contradictory practices of the Forest Service (developed in Annex E) cut down local aspirations. They say one thing but do something else. They make promises that never materialized. Forests are 'decentralized' and relabeled as the Rural Community Forests, but foresters insist forests still belong to the 'nation as a whole'. They talk

of democratic decentralization, but marginalize elected Rural Councils. They talk of forest management, but insist only on production. They talk representation and participation, but offer roles only in labor or work that barely pays. They talk benefits, but barely offer subsistence income. They talk of eliminated quotas, but hand them out liberally (or perhaps illiberally) to urban-based merchants. They talk forest protection, but license the cutting down of the forests. None of these activities are invisible to forest villagers. But, Foresters and forest villagers alike are so accustomed to contradiction that nothing seemed out of the ordinary. As usual, business as usual.

In Wolof a double bladed knife '*paka ñaari boor*', refers to someone who cannot be trusted; someone who speaks out of both sides of their mouth, or says one thing while doing another. The film was titled Double Bladed Axe to bring in the axe of forestry. The film *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor* tells the story recounted in this section through the eyes of some forest villagers enticed into charcoal production by one of the development projects. It is a story of success. The forest villagers are able to produce charcoal and to sell it at high prices in the city. But, they remain frustrated because they are only allowed to sell a small portion (the ten percent) of their truckloads in the lucrative urban market. The rest has to still be sold at low forest-edge prices. The story is one of local democracy in two ways. It is about how the Rural Council President is marginalized in decisions over forests and how the wealth of these forest villages remains limited by a system designed to concentrate wealth in the hands of foresters and the licensed merchants who have long dominated the charcoal trade.

In the next section, we transition from observed practice to film.

FROM ABSURD REALITY TO THEATER: DEPICTING DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION IN SENEGAL

The story of democratic decentralization of forestry in Senegal is somewhat absurd – although quite common. It is a story of democratic decentralization that does not support local democracy and of participatory forestry programs that

³ The logical illogic of the legal illegal is complex and cannot be elaborated here. In short, illegal producers can declare at the Forest Service that they know someone producing illegally. The Forest Service then, on paper, confiscates the charcoal and then resells it to the person who has reported it. The Forest Service does not want to take the time to go to the forest to confirm or to pick up the charcoal. The law states that the charcoal must be sold to a third party. This is gotten around by the person who declares (their charcoal) saying it is someone else. Et voilà – a circulation permit for close to the tax on charcoal (resold confiscated goods are not taxed).

deliver few benefits to local people. This story is outlined in much more detail in Annex E (also see Ribot 1996, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2004, 2002; Larson and Ribot 2008; Poteete and Ribot 2011; M. Faye 2003; 2013; Kanté 2006; Bâ 2006a,b; Boutilinot 2001).

Research on the successes and shortcomings of Senegal's forest-sector democratic decentralization have been presented to Senegal's National Forest Service, the Ministry of Local Government, the World Bank, USAID, the Embassy of the Netherlands who support the World Bank project, and many other government and civil society groups. It has been delivered back to forest villages as well. The material has been delivered the form of articles, policy briefs, and national policy dialogues. It has been delivered in discussions with the Forest Service and discussions with Rural Council Presidents and forest villagers. It did very little because most of these actors know anything we could tell them in these documents. The documents are put away. By some accounts, however, the forestry laws that were developed in 1993 and in 1998 were influenced by research conducted on democratic decentralization and the required signature of the Rural Council President was introduced into law by people who had read some of this research (in particular Ribot 1993a,b; 1995). But, the situation on the ground remains as described – forest villagers are gaining more than before. But, they gain only a small fraction of the profit that is generated by the charcoal trade. Scholarly work does not seem to make headway. So, we turned to humor and theatre.

There is nothing funny, of course, about forest dependent people living with contradictions and faced with constant double speak. There is especially nothing funny about their exclusion from forest benefits and from lucrative markets as they live at a subsistence level. There is nothing funny about Senegal's Forest Service being a hydra-headed vacuum cleaner sucking profits out of the rural world. But that image tells a complex story. It gets the point across – and it is comic (and tragic). Humor, irony and the absurdity of everyday reality are powerful. They are real – more palpably real than cold scholarly analysis. A scholar can lay out how the vacuum cleaner works, but that is not needed. Local audiences already know. Humor works where it states the ob-

vious but unspeakable. A hydra-headed vacuum cleaner might not sound scholarly, but perhaps it is – if conveying what happens in the real world is what scholars are supposed to be doing.

Democratic decentralization of natural resources is an arena ripe for humor and irony. It is a process that asks the rich and powerful to give up some of their wealth and power. Nobody should be surprised that the center holds. Nobody should be surprised that democratic decentralization discourse is often inscribed into laws that, if implemented, would not turn that discourse into practice. Nor should anyone be surprised that local democracy laws are not implemented as specified – no matter how compromised they are to begin with. And, it is not surprising that they are implemented in ways that retain central control over local decision making – especially when it concerns lucrative resources. There is nothing odd about central governments not wanting to give up their power, while being quite glad to shed burdens in the name of local democracy. It is no surprise that when powers are transferred to local authorities they go to local authorities who are upwardly accountable to the center. When local authorities are downwardly accountable to the people, *surprise*, local authorities are deprived of meaningful powers. Neither scenario – power without accountability or accountability without power – reflects decentralization nor democracy.

Local democracy is not impossible to measure, see or report on. It is constituted by locally accountable leaders who have the power to respond to popular demands. So, there have to be mechanisms through which people can hold leaders accountable and they need some powers with which they can respond. This combination of *accountabilities* and *powers* spells democracy (Manin, Stokes and Przeworski 1999). This basic idea of democracy can be nuanced and elaborated. But accountability and power are the basic elements. Of course one can say it is more complicated than that: accountability requires free press or transparency; one can define suffrage in many ways; one can divide up private and public in many different configurations; etc. All of these have big effects on what democracy is and how it operates. But its basic elements of *powers* to respond and means of *accountability* are not mysterious – and they are absolutely necessary, even if not suffi-

cient. Nevertheless, these very elements often go missing in what is called local democracy.

Despite that local democracy can be observed and measured, nobody is surprised that front-line foresters, local line-ministry personnel, donors, project managers and others in the development business also go along with the charade entitled local democratization. Every law or act or program or project called 'democratic decentralization' is reported by donors and practitioners as if it were tantamount to local democracy – even if it involves no shift in powers and no relations of local accountability. Thus is development. Projects that claim to be participatory and democratic are held up as participatory and democratic even when they are evidently and patently imposing external programs in the local arena and mobilizing local people to achieve outside aims. In practice little substantive or meaningful control is transferred to representatives of local people. Local people decide a few details of how to implement programs – like whether to cut trees today or tomorrow or who will cut the trees; but not whether or not to cut trees. There is a vast literature on these shortcomings that anyone can find if they wish to. But most donors and practitioners prefer success stories – and often even manufacture or 'produce' them in the development theatre (Baviskar, 2002; Cooke and Kothari 2001).⁴

In natural resource management experiences the discourse of inclusion, participation, and democratic decentralization is contradicted in every step and every sector. Based on arguments of national good and protection of nature from local people, management remains central. Democratic decentralization or even community-based resource management become 'joint' or 'co' management in which there is no evident boundary between what central agents control and local people are to decide on. The result is local people

being mobilized to implement external resource management agendas – management plans, production plans, and other arrangements in which they get a subsistence income (or are told returns to their labor will come from the fruits of protected nature) while urban merchants control access to lucrative forest or tourist markets and foresters and wildlife authorities get lucrative projects from international donors. It is an ongoing charade at the expense of forest villagers. It does little for the environment and little for local wellbeing or self determination.

What's the mystery? Is it not obvious that empowering a local despot does not add up to participatory development or democratic decentralization? Is it not obvious that perfectly crafted elected local governments with no powers cannot be called local democracy? Is it not obvious that making local government implement centrally mandated programs might not be empowerment? Many analysts and scholars have spent decades studying the design and implementation of local democracy. The author has done so through case studies of local participation and democratic decentralization in forestry twenty-five years in Senegal and through additional comparative case studies of democratic decentralization in forestry in over fifteen countries around the world over the past decade. The scholarship on democratic decentralization in forestry has made some difference in leveraging new rights for local people, in gaining greater benefits for local people, and in helping local representatives to gain a greater role in decision making (Ribot, Lund and Treue 2010; Agrawal 2005, 2001). But the gains are small compared to what is possible, and democratic representation has rarely been one of those gains.

Because democratic decentralization in the natural resource sectors is at an impasse, the project whose film this report is exploring tried addressing policy change through performance and film – with a little humor and irony. The section below recounts the turn to film.

FROM RESEARCH TO FILM

In 2006 The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), World Resources Institute (WRI) and the Centre

⁴ For a 2012 evaluation of a decentralized USAID development program, a skype meeting was held with USAID in Washington and the evaluation team on which I served. The USAID official who is funding the evaluation said 'Congress wants to hear stories about how Fatima can send her child to school.' When I said 'What about stories about how Mamadou now drives a Mercedes Benz?' He was not amused. But in fact, he wants success stories so as to keep funding his programs. This is common. These stories do exist. But they do not tell the whole story and rarely tell of the structural failures in which small successes occur.

for Agricultural Research and Development (CI-RAD) completed a three-year research program on the justice and equity effects of democratic decentralization in forestry in Senegal funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its aim, like the aims of many research efforts on democratic decentralization, was to help foster better representation of local people in forestry decisions and benefits. The program generated a number of articles and working papers; each of which provided policy recommendations (Bâ 2006a, 2006b; P. Faye 2006; Kanté 2006; Boutinot and Diouf 2007). A policy brief was also developed from the program (Ribot 2006).

As with past research on forestry in Senegal, however, these findings did not easily enter the policy arena (Ribot 1993a; 1996; 1998). They did not easily leverage change. The research team presented its findings in 2005 and 2006 to a national advisory group composed of the Director of the Forest Service, the Principal Adviser on decentralization in the Prime Minister's office, a representative of elected rural councils, and the director of the Institute for Science of the Environment (ISE) at Cheikh Anta Diop University. The advisory group did not give substantive feedback nor carry our findings into policy. The advisors wanted us to turn our attention away from the lucrative charcoal sector and toward newly emerging fruit commodity chains that they said the Forest Service had not yet 'mastered' or been able to regulate – not that these markets needed to be regulated. The Forest Service members of the advisory group felt they understood charcoal well enough. The ISE director, *an ecologist*, argued that we should not be looking at the charcoal sector but rather at a new designer fruit (a local fruit that would sell well as 'exotic,' and therefore hip, on the market in Dakar and Europe) the 'ditax' (*detarium senegalense*) that was being harvested and sold in Dakar. He said 'you see all those truckloads of fruit coming into the city, the seeds are all being brought to Dakar, how will the fruit trees reproduce if there are no seeds left in the countryside?' His bizarre statement met with approval of the advisory group. Was he implying that apples will go extinct since so many city dwellers eat them? The Foresters in the room and the international donor, to the surprise of the researchers, all shook their head with approval. I sat in silent shock.⁵

5 I turn to first person given the nature of the narrative.

At the end of the research program CODES-RIA organized a national policy dialogue in Dakar attended by about 80 people – including civil society organizations, rural councilors from the regions we were studying, donors, the Ministry of Local Government, and many Forestry Service officials. Preparing for this meeting we were aware that our recommendations to improve local representation in decentralized forest management and to improve access to forestry product markets for peasant producers would not be easily heard. Despite the new discourse of democratic decentralization, Senegal's Forest Service was entrenched in a long history of command and control forestry. They had heard these messages before and had not reformed in response. Despite that the 1998 forestry code had very progressively transferred responsibility for forests to the elected Rural Council Presidents, all meaningful decisions remained with the Forest Service rather than local representatives. A colleague from USAID suggested to me that we get actors to present our recommendations. So, I set out to find actors and began writing stories they could tell. I found the director Pape Faye (not to be confused with the researcher cited in this report named Papa Faye) and his troop of comic actors through a colleague. We set out together to produce a skit to show the Forest Service the effects of their practices on local democracy. We called the skit '*Weex Dunx and the Quota*'. Weex Dunx in Wolof literally means 'Plucked White'. It translates more accurately as 'scapegoat' or someone who is blamed for everything even if they were not there.

In the twenty-five minute skit Mr. Weex Dunx ('Mr. Scapegoat' in Wolof), the elected President of the Rural Council of Nambaradougou ('Place of Many Problems'), is ecstatic to learn that new decentralization laws have given his council the right to manage and use forests. The council now has the right to decide how much woodcutting will take place in their jurisdiction and who gets to do the cutting and selling. But, when Weex Dunx tries to exercise his new powers he is confronted by incredulous foresters, administrators and merchants who are in shock that he thinks he can make decisions about the forests. He is ultimately exasperated because these powerful notables don't like him if he resists and his people

don't like him if he gives in. Weex Dunx is torn between doing what is right for his community and surrendering to pressures from powerful people whom he does not want to disappoint. This struggle reduces Weex Dunx to the lowly status of a plucked chicken. He pleases nobody. The film depicted the typical feeling of Rural Council Presidents whom we interviewed. They felt like scapegoats since they were blamed from all sides. They did not sign graciously according to the merchants and foresters, and did not protect the forests for their population.

At the national policy dialogue, the actors performed in the morning after an opening presentation by the Executive Director of CODESRIA and Madame Minister of Local Government. The audience roared with laughter. When it was done, however, there was an uncomfortable silence. The foresters realized it was about them. There was a coffee break and then a return to plenary presentation of the findings of each research. One of the foresters during panel discussion made reference to the skit not being serious. The foresters never mentioned the skit again. It seemed to have little effect. But, at lunch and after, while it could not be brought up in discussion, it was the background buzz. People were talking about and could see how forestry practices were frustrating the elected local authorities. Most of all, one rural councilor who came to the meeting came up to me and said 'this is what we experience every day'. Other rural councilors also told me the skit got it right. But the skit was ephemeral – it vaporized in the air after its performance. The foresters could ignore it.

After the meeting, Papa Faye suggested we turn this skit into a film. We filmed for two days and the result is the film 'Weex Dunx and the Quota: Plucking Local Democracy in Senegal' (see www.doublebladedaxe.com or view the film online at <http://www.vimeo.com/9922998> for English, or <http://www.vimeo.com/617574> for French). I immediately asked the Embassy of the Netherlands, who had generously funded our study, if they could support us to show the film in the rural areas. They could not. I asked USAID who had also contributed to our research and the film making, and they too would not fund the showing of the film. I left copies off with the donors and with foresters. The copies sat. I then drove eight hours

out to Tambacounda with colleagues and gave copies to several Rural Council Presidents in the area. I left and figured that nothing would come of it. But unlike talking, film is not ephemeral. It is a public medium. When shown anywhere the viewers know it will be seen by others. It can be repeated and spread. And ultimately it did.

Several months later, after the film was finished, I mailed almost one-hundred copies to people around Senegal (mostly rural councilors and others in the charcoal production areas and various activists and policy makers in the forestry sector in Dakar), but only a handful seem to have made it to their destinations. Nevertheless, almost a year after the film was completed a colleague in an NGO working in the region told me that he had seen Weex Dunx being shown in the Tambacounda Region at a meeting of a group of Rural Council Presidents. The Rural Council President of the Rural Community of Koutiary in Tambacounda Region, Mr. Baganda Sakho, was showing the film all over. He told our colleague that he showed it at least ten times in Paris and in Belgium when he was in Europe visiting Senegalese from his area living abroad. He also had shown it to several groups in Eastern Senegal. The last showing, to our surprise, was to a group of rural councilors who met in the town of Bakel in Eastern Senegal. M. Sakho said that the film sparks excellent discussions. He said that everyone who sees it asks 'why did Weex Dunx sign the papers', and he said using this film was excellent for discussing the responsibilities and pressures on the Rural Council Presidents. It seemed to be having at least an awareness raising effect among elected rural councilors.

Based on this first film the author was funded under a MacArthur Foundation grant to World Resources Institute to make a second film, titled *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor* (Wolof for *Double Bladed Axe*), with director Pape Faye. We told a different part of the story. In this second film, the villagers of Daru Fippu (meaning Place of the Uprising) are empowered to manage their forests by Senegal's decentralization laws. They want the forests for local use, but the Forest Service's Mega Bank project convinces the villagers to participate in charcoal production to make money for local development. The Forest Service says they must cut the forests for charcoal to supply cooking fuel for

the city. The foresters speak of management, but insist only on production. They speak of participation, but the villagers participate only as labor. They speak of development, but foresters block them from lucrative forestry markets. Villagers are only allowed to produce at low prices and sell their charcoal to urban merchants at the forest edge. Foresters refuse to give them production quotas and permits with which they could sell for much-higher prices in the city of Dakar. When the sympathetic project director, Mr. Mbaxan (Mr. Good), tells them they can get ten-times the price (more than five times the profit) selling in the city, the villagers are shocked. Mbaxan tries to help the destitute villagers to profit from their forests, but is stymied by the Forest Service. They make some headway, but not enough. The villagers of Daru Fippu decide to rise up to fight for their rights.

None of the donors who had supported the project would fund the showing of either film in rural Senegal. When showed to USAID in Senegal, they found the films curious and seemed disturbed that they did not show their program in the most positive light. I also showed *Weex Dunx* at the World Bank and at USAID in Washington. The reaction at the World Bank and USAID was to ask, in different ways, 'why can't the film have a happy ending'. These institutions want to show success (see Baviskar 2002). I replied to these queries by saying that the film shows what *is* happening. That was not a good enough answer. They seem to prefer to focus on a hopeful imaginary rather than to evaluate a reality, which, if examined, could perhaps be changed. The films were, despite resistance from donors, already circulating through copies of the DVD that had been given out to relevant parties. So, I proposed the current study – to better understand the effects of new media on policy change in forestry decentralization. This study enabled further showing of the film to select groups in Senegal and it allowed us to study the effects of its showing. This report tells what was learned in the making and showing of *Semmiñ Naari Boor*.

The research presented in this report explored the use of dramatic film as a means of bringing democratic decentralization research results and recommendations to concerned forest-dependent populations, forestry practitioners, forest-

ers, policy makers, and students. If written and published research does little to change policy, if policy dialogues and policy briefs are overlooked, does film have a different effect? The film *Semmiñ Naari Boor* or *Double Bladed Axe*, on forestry decentralization in Senegal, was presented to these various audiences and the audience's reaction was recorded and analyzed. The film explores the struggle of forest-dependent people to be represented by their elected rural council in negotiations with Senegal's Forest Service.

Two distinct periods of learning stood out from the use of film. The first was the learning that takes place by making a film. The second is in the showing. These are distinct domains. Both will be discussed below. There is also the question of policy effect of the showings. Policy effect is more about the showings than the making of the film. The next section discusses film as research. The section after explores the reactions to showings and reflects on potential policy influence.

FILM AS RESEARCH

Film provides insights in its production, showings, and after effects. In its production I, the researcher, was affected by seeing my own observations re-enacted. Seeing the actors enact what I had only heard told to me in interviews was an extraordinary experience. I was seeing, for the first time, moments I had been told about for decades. I was seeing intimate moments between government and peasants enacted by comic improvisational actors. While people I interviewed over the years spoke with passion, anger, delight about their experiences, seeing these scenes enacted relayed simultaneously the affective sense of domination and subordination that peasant farmers and migrant woodcutters live every day.

The comic actors have keen perception of social relations and an amazing ability to reproduce them through acting. Seeing the acting and the film changed the way I hear people recount their lives. It is as if I now have an armature of experience – having seen enactments – to hang people's descriptions on. While many years in villages gave me some of this, my own absence in the scenes being enacted took away the buffering effect of my presence as interlocutor while allow-

ing me to sit back and observe. It was a surprise added dimensions to the insights from using film. The reactions to the showings were also enormously informative and so were the after effects of showings. The films changed people's willingness to talk to me about practices in forestry. In this section the report discusses learning from showings and from post-film discussions. Lastly, the film showings opened doors to public dialogue and policy actors, which will be discussed in the next section.

SHOWINGS – THE LOGICAL ILLOGIC OF THE LEGAL ILLEGAL

The film also served as a research instrument when we began to show it to different audiences. The film was informative through the reactions of viewers. In this project we recorded approximately five hours of discussions after film showings. The transcripts of discussions gave us insights into what we had characterized well and poorly, correctly and incorrectly from the audiences' standpoints. The audiences also demonstrated a kind of talk reflecting the audiences they thought they were talking to – officials, donors, each other. But as interesting as the content of their affirmations, correctives and additions were the differences in reactions among audience members and from different kinds of audiences. The film seemed to polarize people into 'for' and 'against' – depending on what they had to gain or lose from the film. These categories were usually consistent with people who felt 'recognized' or 'threatened' by the film.

The first showing of this film was in May 2009 at Douda Seck Cultural Center in Dakar. The Forest Service, forestry merchants, the donor community, many NGOs, and actors were invited to this event. It was a preview of the film. The event was presided over by a Deputy in Senegal's National Assembly (vice-president of the Parliament commission on laws) who was also simultaneously a Rural Council President. We invited the director of the Forest Service as discussant. He could not make it and sent the director of Forest Management and Production Division Colonel Mamadou Fall. The venue was full with over 150 spectators. Among the spectators were many

representatives of the Forest Service, four former Forest Service directors, representatives of the World Bank, USAID, the Embassy of the Netherlands (major supporters of forestry projects and of the Forest Service in Senegal), other donors, many NGOs, a hand full of researchers and the film's actors. The discussion was recorded and used in the analysis below. The subsequent showings were to select audiences for the purpose of obtaining their reactions. These projections and discussions were organized by the environmental NGO ENDA. ENDA staff showed the film and asked a set of neutral questions listed in Annex D.

The six showings in addition to the Douda Seck Showing took place in three forest villages in Eastern Senegal where the audience was charcoal producers and other forest villagers; at the USAID project office of Wula Nafaa (a forest management project) in Tambacounda; with a group of charcoal storage managers in Tambacounda town; and to a group of elected Rural Council Presidents in Tambacounda Region. These were also recorded and transcribed. In addition to these seven recordings and transcripts, the author of this report, who will use the first person from here forward due to the nature of the material, debated the Director of Forest Management and Production of Senegal's Forest Service and the President of the National Union of Forestry Cooperatives on National Television (Radio et Télévision du Senegal, RTS, see RTS 2012 for URL). The transcript of this debate was also used in the analysis. This set of post-screening recordings forms the basis of the discussion below.

Substantive Learning from the Showings – what issues were discussed and what we learned

Various substantive issues were brought up after each showing. In the showings, because I had intended this film to be about the marginalization of the elected rural council president as well as the frustrations of villagers, I was surprised that very few people commented on local democracy issues. Nobody commented on the elected Rural Council President's roles and frustrations. Few mentioned issues of representation. Not even the rural council presidents brought up local representation. The professionals who viewed the film, foresters, urban merchants and donors, were most concerned with defending their pro-

grams and professions. Foresters were interested in defending their role as managers. The union leader for the urban merchants defended urban merchants' rights, as national citizens (equal to the forest villagers), to exploit the forests (in the national Douta Seck showing and on the Television debate, see RTS 2012). Forest villagers were most concerned with income from the charcoal market. The villagers saw it as a lucrative opportunity and felt the film reflected how lucrative it could be. Below are selected observations from seven showings (six recorded by ENDA plus Douta Seck). Rural council presidents, who were unfortunately recorded in the presence of a forester, were concerned with details of management and gave little information of interest. They reflect the range of issues that emerge and that help us to piece together a larger picture of the politics of charcoal production and forest management in Senegal.

Viewer comments were a direct response to what they saw in the film as well as a reflection of who they thought the audience might be. It is evident that the speakers in each showing were talking to particular audiences. One can also hear in the discussions their attempt to address concerns of a given audience. In the first projection at the Douta Seck Cultural Center in Dakar, where the audience was mostly foresters, government people, urban NGOs and donors, the foresters spoke to donors in their replies. In projections in the rural areas organized by the environmental NGO ENDA-TM, villagers talked as if those showing the film were from the Forest Service or a project from which they might receive funds (Reference 2⁶ – note that numbered and lettered references are not in the works cited since they refer to field research notes and interview transcripts; subjects will not be identified). This occurred despite that ENDA explained the objectives of the showing and told audiences who they were prior to the showings (see film showing introductory statement in Annex B). The Foresters and project personnel in these rural projections spoke with a better understanding of ENDA's objectives, but still with some caution since they knew they were

being recorded. Any interpretations of the materials presented below have to be made in the face of the audiences imagined by the speakers.

In reviewing the transcripts of post-film discussions it was instructive to see how the film polarized different audiences. Different audiences reacted differently and audiences were often split between those who thought the film reflected their experience and those who felt it was inaccurate. In the first sub-section here, we give several examples of learning from audience reactions. In the second sub-section below, we discuss the polarization of audiences.

Insights from Film Showings – Some Illustrations

In this sub-section, we present several examples in vignettes that illustrate surprises and insights gained from the film showing discussions. The first illustration shows us first how important management plans are to forestry professionals. This first illustration also shows how corruption is not remarkable for these audiences. The focus on management plans both covered corruption and brought emphasis to the importance of management plans for foresters. Illustrations 2 and 3 provided new insights into strategies used by foresters and projects to prevent forest villagers from gaining access to charcoal production rights and to lucrative forestry markets. It exemplifies the contradictory positions taken by foresters and how those contradictory positions favor the urban merchants. Illustration 4 shows a new and dangerous emerging dynamic in the sector by which foreign migrant laborers are being excluded from production in a way that could cause future conflicts. Illustration 5 shows how urban merchants use their own notions of citizenship to contradict the decentralization laws. Illustration 6 provides additional insights into the ways foresters have blocked the transfer of powers to forest villagers. The seventh and last illustration shows how the foresters feel that participatory and decentralized forest management projects favor villagers against the interest of foresters. They feel that projects turn people against them. While these examples are disparate pieces of the larger story of decentralized forest management in Senegal, they help us understand that story in greater detail.

⁶ References of this format are notes of where in the interview and film discussion transcripts a given quote or interview were found. The full transcripts will not be made publically available as part of the subject protection plan.

Illustration 1: Visible Management Plans and Invisible Corruption

In the first projection at Douta Seck, the biggest surprise was that the foresters, one after the other, about six of them in the period of an hour, criticized the film for its treatment of forest management plans. Yet, the management plans were a trivial part of the film. Indeed, I expected that the foresters would be defensive about the two instances of corruption shown in the film (allocation of forestry quotas along political lines and the bribes paid along the road to Dakar) and would also be defensive about their marginalizing of the villagers and of the Rural Council President. But there was no mention of these justice issues, despite that they appear to be more salient to the filmmakers and audiences outside of Senegal (the films have been shown in numerous venues in Europe and the US). The foresters argued that forest management plans are important and local people liked them.

This focus on management plans in Senegal and in front of this audience makes sense. The audience at Douta Seck included many donors. The foresters brilliantly made this issue central, which seems at first to be a very small part of the film. The film shows the Rural Council President saying that the management plans are nothing more than a means of taking away his rights. The film also shows that the Rural Council President is frustrated since the plans do not reflect local priorities. The focus by foresters at Douta Seck on these plans had two effects. It drew attention away from the corruption and circumvention of the Rural Council President and it defended management plans. This was necessary since the management plans are a major source of income for foresters. Management plans are required by the Forest Service for two reasons. First, they enable the Forest Service to allocate access to the forest resource. Plans serve this role by placing the technical expertise of the foresters at the center of the allocation of rights to use forests. Second, management plans are an excellent lever for donor funding. They are very expensive to develop. They require ecological and social studies and experts. So, the Forest Service is able to claim that they need donor support in order to save the environment – since they need management plans in order to save the forests from the ravages of

charcoal production and abusive forest uses.

There is a caveat here. Management plans have been shown to have no (zero) measurable ecological effect (Wurster 2010). Transect and satellite comparison of World Bank and USAID forest management zones with non-managed illegally cut areas show no differences in the species mixes or in the rates of regeneration. In other words, these management plans have no ecological function; they are little more than means of controlling access to a lucrative resource. They are not instruments of environmental management (although their use is justified as environmental protection). But, they are the key to foresters' ability to allocate access, to charge various rents on that access, and to leverage donor funds that support projects to create management plans, which provide well paid consultancy opportunities and high salaries to seconded foresters as well as providing vehicles and other equipment. It is a lucrative business that requires defense when even marginally threatened in a few sentences by a comic character in a film.

At the Douta Seck showing, one of the directors of the major World Bank forestry project, PROGEDE, stated: '...I saw that the film banalized the management plans. It even caricatured them. I believe that at times one is more at ease, perhaps, with artistic production where one can permit certain liberties because art is also liberty. But I believe that if we return a bit to scientific orthodoxy, I believe that we must recognize that a management plan is a scientific resource-management tool, which is to say that it is able to permit exploitation of the resource without using it up'. (Douta Seck – PROGEDE.) An unidentified woman in the audience later stood up and said: 'In reality there's nothing about management plans seen in this film'. She argued 'The management plans were participatory. It was the people themselves who participate in elaborating these plans. Technically it was the people who delimited the plots and forests. It was they who participated in the inventory that permitted us to establish the plots in which they exploit. But him, he does not speak at all of management plans' (Douta Seck – unidentified). She was right. Almost nothing was said of the management plans in this film.

In the rural showings where Wula Nafaa and PROGEDE project staff were present, these staff

also vigorously defended the management plans. On the one hand they said the plans were as much for creating consensus among rural populations about how to use the resource as they were about techniques for cutting (Reference 5). One Wula Nafaa agent argued that the plans were instruments of training (Reference 6). A few also argued that they were ecologically important, stating that managed areas show greater regeneration – as one said, in the managed areas ‘the plots we cut..., before we even get back to recut them the forest is already regenerated; one has the impression that they were never cut – in less than four years you’d say that the forests have been reconstituted’ (Reference 10). But his statement fails to compare what he is observing to areas without management plans where similar regeneration is seen. It fails to acknowledge what most peasants already know, that there is robust regeneration after woodcutting in this region (Ribot 1999b). Similar testimonies of extraordinary regenerative powers of management plans are made by a PROGEDE agent who was interviewed on National Television in Senegal in response to the film. (RTS 2012.) One project participant also said that you go to the managed areas and you don’t even know they were cut. (Reference 18).

By focusing on management plans, the foresters were able to avoid discussing corruption issues shown in the film. They were then fixated on singing the praises of management plans. Another explanation of the failure of most speakers to mention corruption is that the corruption is so ordinary that nobody really noticed it. It is embedded in everyday life and interaction in Senegal (Blundo and Olivier de Sardan 2001, 2006). The other might be that it is too contentious a topic to discuss. But to my surprise it rarely came up in later one-on-one discussions with foresters (except one interview discussed below), and it did not come up in showings in the rural areas either. Corruption is just not remarkable. Besides, the film does not emphasize corruption. It only shows the tip of the corruption iceberg. Indeed, this sector is much more corrupt than the film shows (P. Faye 2006, 2013; Ribot 1999a, 2008a). This was not an issue that foresters wanted to discuss in public or it may just have been trivial and unremarkable to Senegalese audiences.

The one person who did bring up corruption

was the head of the National Union of Forestry Cooperatives. He said at Douta Seck ‘...when I see the president of the National Union presented as someone who is making deals with the director of the Forest Service, this is too much. ... It did not happen this way. We never sat down with the Forest Service director to do what he is showing’ (Reference 2). The Union director was angry for good reason. The deals do not take place in the office of the Forest Service director. They took place through many back channels we could not represent in a film – out of the office and on the telephone. This scene was a short hand to indicate or represent the relations that exist but are less visible – the Forest Service and the merchants (members of the union) have the power to allocate rights to charcoal production. Here, he was correct that ‘It did not happen this way’. But, fiction is a short hand and so is humor. Nobody else contested that this represents the practice. This is the only scene in the film that took such a shortcut. Ironically, the Union Director threatened to sue the filmmakers for this scene. But he dropped the idea shortly after the showing when he was accused by his union members of stealing \$US 600,000 from the union. In 2013 the figure has gone up to \$US 1.2 million. That battle continues.⁷

Concerning this same scene, one of the former directors of Senegal’s Forest Service called me the day after the public showing at Douta Seck in Dakar. He said to me that there was a scene I absolutely had to edit out. I asked ‘Which?’ He said that the head of the National Union of Forestry Cooperatives ‘would never have entered my office without knocking’. First, this was interesting since he never mentioned the corruption that took place inside the office. He did not ask to edit out the allocation of quotas along political lines, the bribes paid along the road to Dakar or even the insults to the management plans. He also did not mention the concerns of the union leader the day before – since he had been present at the

7 See L’Obe 22 January 2010 http://www.seneweb.com/news/Societe/trois-cents-millions-disparus-des-comptes-de-l-u-n-c-e-f-s-le-minist-re-de-l-int-rieur-fouille-la-gestion-du-pr-sident_n_28453.html; and Sud Quotidien 10/06/2013 http://www.sudonline.sn/la-gestion-du-president-decree_a_14165.html. The title is ‘Three hundred million CFA disappeared from the UNCEFS accounts’.

same showing. Second, it is even more interesting that he felt that protocol was so important. He was concerned with the dignity of the office and the appearance of a separation between the Forest Service and the merchants. He was more concerned also with accuracy. It is true that this scene was invented to show the closeness of the merchants and foresters and to show their dealings – which actually take place on the phone and through the Ministry of Environment's office. Perhaps this factual correction reflects that other things were more accurate and he just could not tolerate inaccuracy. When I asked him why he was so insistent, he told me that 'it was not correct' and that it just disturbed him.

Illustration 2: B locking Villager Access Production Rights

They would say the local people must take this quota, the merchants that one. The local people always exceed theirs because the quota they are given is not enough for them.

WN Producer's Association
Member, Reference 13

Following the current forestry code (RdS 1998), the Rural Council President has the legal right to allocate production rights in forest villages. Hence, villagers, by law, have access to production rights. Following the logic of the forest service's requirements in management plans, a rural community can exploit all of the charcoal that is within the 'ecological potential' of their forests. The Forest Service, however, tells forest villagers that they do not have the capacity to produce the full potential. So, the Forest Service only allows them to produce a portion of the forest's potential. The Forest Service, according to interviewed villagers and rural council members, make the village representatives sign documents that state that they can only produce a portion. The remaining charcoal production allowance, the remaining 'ecological potential', is then allocated by the Forest Service and Regional Council to urban merchants. In this way forest villagers lose a portion of their production potential (along with marketing rights) to the charcoal that is extracted from their forests (Interview, Papa Faye, 2013; Reference 13).

An executive in the USAID Wula Nafaa project

producers association (a committee of producers set up by the project) explained the arrangement as follows:

...if the forest must⁸ supply ten tonnes [of charcoal], the people of Village M have to say that they are able to supply six. Four are left. These four would be allocated to the merchants [Dakar-based charcoal traders]. It would be through a protocol signed by the Regional Director of the Forest Department, the President of the Rural Council [head of elected local government], the President of the National Union of Forestry Cooperatives [the merchants union], and the Inter-Village Committee for Development Management [a non-profit cooperative set up by PROGEDE]. They will say that the villagers have X quota and the merchants have Y. The villagers always exceed their quotas because the quota they are given is never sufficient. (Reference 13.)

However, the number of permits they may have been allocated in accordance with the expected production is then lowered by the forest service. The forest service accuses the forest villagers of illegal production (using the wrong cutting and carbonizing techniques, cutting outside of the legal production season). It is during the forest service annual mid-term assessment that a great amount of the charcoal produced by the forest villagers is confiscated by the Forest Service and reallocated to merchants, and the corresponding amount of permits also reattributed to these merchants (Faye, personal communication, July 2013). So, in short, forest villagers are not allowed to produce and market a large portion of the charcoal that their forests can and do produce. Villagers are often told that they will be given greater quotas when they demonstrate that they are able to produce the charcoal specified under their smaller allocation (despite that they always produce more than they are allocated). But, the villagers often produce a surplus and still do not get supplementary quotas. (Reference 13bis.)

The Forest Service then further tilts the play-

⁸ Here 'must' refers to the amount that the Forest Service determines is the 'potential' production of a forest. This is the amount that 'must' be produced. The rural population does not have the right to harvest less than the 'potential' of the resource.

ing field against the villagers by requiring them to produce only with their own labor. They are not allowed to hire migrant laborers to augment their production capacity. Meanwhile, urban merchants are allowed to produce using migrant labor, enabling them to easily produce any amount they have an allowance for. The fact that villagers cannot hire laborers and merchants is a second strike against villagers. The Minister of Environment decreed that villagers are forbidden from hiring the migrants. This is a privilege reserved for the merchants so as to enable the merchants to engage in production. Villagers are required to do the work themselves – which limits the amount they can produce. So, villagers always produce more than they are allowed and are repeatedly told they are not capable of producing what they have been allocated. Simultaneously, the rest of the potential production in their area – the four tonnes in the story above – is allocated to merchants who hire migrant laborers to do the job on the grounds that the charcoal is need for Dakar and the villagers are not capable of producing it (Interview, Papa Faye 2013.) This story was also recounted more than once in post projection film discussions.

The USAID project staff member at one of the showings where this labor-hiring restriction was discussed explained this inconsistency as follows:

It's very easy to explain [why merchants are allowed to hire migrants]; because the merchants are in their offices in Dakar and they have a quota. They don't go into the forest because they aren't charcoal makers, the guys in Dakar get migrant laborers, present them to the Forest Department, pay the fees to the Forest Department, therefore they have the right to put in place and use migrant laborers.

He continues,

Here [in the villages] they can't have many migrants because each [village] producer has a quota that's very small; it's about three truckloads. This does not require twenty migrant laborers since the villagers have twenty truckloads – per block they have ten villages with fifteen villages per block. It is they [the villagers] who delimit the cutting plots, it is they who

have the quotas and who allocate them among villages, each village has a certain number of plots, four truckloads while producers [merchants] have more quotas. This is why it is they [the migrants] who produce the quotas [for the merchants].⁹

In short the USAID project staff argues that villagers must produce their own charcoal because they are physically present to do so; while merchants are not local and therefore need someone to work for them. Simultaneously, the reason that the merchants have any quotas to exploit charcoal is that the Forest Service argues that villagers are not capable of producing the quantity that they have the legal right to produce. But, villagers are capable of producing the quantity needed and each season they produce more than they are deemed capable of producing. Clearly, were they allowed to hire migrants, the villagers could produce any amount needed. So, the restriction on villagers hiring migrants appears to be aimed at reducing the capacity of villagers to supply all of the charcoal to the markets so as to create a quota for urban merchants to exploit. The allowing of urban merchants to hire migrants then allows urban merchants to exploit the share of production that has been created for them – based on the specious argument that villagers are incapable. It is hard to see this set of arguments as being serious. They seem to be a performance of illogical logic, as if it made sense, to justify the status quo. Villagers are all perfectly aware of this. When they ask for their legal share, this nonsensical argument is repeated to them. This is the illogical logic of the legal illegal.

So, despite that villagers overproduce and could hire migrants to make any amount of char-

9 The logic gets even stranger than this. During the post-showing discussions, one of the village charcoal producers who organize the local producers for a forestry project explained to us that he also supported the rule that forest villagers should not have the right to hire migrant laborers. He said that the rule makes sense because the government and donors have spent lots of money for their training in charcoal production. Therefore the forest villagers have to produce so that migrants can eventually be excluded from production. But when queried further, he explained that he was telling us the argument made by the projects and that he too found it to be a sound argument. However, he also told us that he never made charcoal himself and the he (a villager) hires migrant laborers and local producers to work for him.

coal needed, the laws are stacked in favor of the merchants and require a kind of double talking denial of the obvious to be explained. In practice, despite the Minister's decree, one only has to go out into the forests to find out that many forest villagers continue to hire migrant laborers – and everyone in this conversation knows this. Charcoal is hard and dirty work. It is a caste activity that most villagers do not want to stoop to engaging in. Villagers are changing their attitudes as they see that the activity can bring in significant income. But many still hire migrants. The rules are designed to allow merchants a market share. In addition, the UASID project spends a lot of money training villagers to manage the forests and to make charcoal. So, they want those they train to make the charcoal. But alas, the charcoal is made by the traditional migrant charcoal makers – a frustration to project staff. (Reference 14.)

Illustration 3: Blocking Market Access – Circulation Permits and other Fire Walls

In addition to blocking forest villagers from production rights, a number of other games to prevent rural populations from gaining access to urban markets are also being played by the Forest Service. The showing of the film and subsequent interviews revealed some of these. As one of the village association executives for the USAID Wula Nafaa project said:

They try to encourage us but up to now we have problems because there was a Rural Community quota [quota communal] that allowed us to have permits in the same way that we had permits from the initial quota [the national quota allocated annually]. But the Rural Community quota has nothing to do with the national quota. I made the rounds to try to get the Rural Community quota. They told me that the Mayor (of the city of Tambacounda) had to make a request saying that the city needs charcoal. So, it is on the basis of the demand of the Mayor that they will then go to the quota office. So, what they say discourages us. For example, I have a depot [a legally approved storage area from which to sell charcoal] and I can't sell charcoal without having a permit, but where are the permits to be found? This is the problem. [Reference 25]

Being asked to get quotas from Tambacounda is new in the last few years. It is a new way of blocking villagers from lucrative markets. The villagers are told they must go to the small towns to fill demand while the national quota (for the lucrative market in Dakar) is allocated to the urban merchants.

More obstacles have been dreamed up by Senegal's Forest Service. Several villagers were given a national quota (good for sale in Dakar) to exploit. But they were then told that they cannot exploit their national quota until after they clear firebreaks. This means cutting long swaths through the forest to prevent the spread of fire – an arduous task. They are allowed to carbonize wood cut from firebreaks to make charcoal, but this charcoal can only be sold in the city of Tambacounda where the price is very low. These several privileged individuals, local leaders, hire many villagers in particular for this task as merchants do with migrants. After they have done with the firebreaks, others villagers are told they will be allowed to exploit the parcels that have been delimited so as to produce charcoal for the lucrative markets of Dakar. By the time they start the work on their own parcels for Dakar in April or May, the raining season started or they are close to the end of the production season in end of June and are unable to use up their quotas by the deadline. Thus, they are told they do not have the capacity to produce the charcoal in their zone. The remainder of their unexploited quota is confiscated (for reallocation to urban merchants). Yet while they are able to produce enough to fill these quotas and more, they end up fulfilling them late – for obvious reasons. Here is yet another means of ensuring that villagers do not have access to the urban markets. This strategy is being generalized and has now become a requirement for all rural communities – subordinating the forest villagers to the non-lucrative markets (P. Faye 2013).

In sum, in the first instance their national quota is limited by telling them they are not capable. Then they are not allowed to hire migrant laborers. So, they can only produce what they are able to produce with their own labor – and have to compete with merchants who have an unlimited labor supply. Of course, they hire migrant laborers anyhow, but this exposes them to fines and other extortions. Were this not enough, they

are then told they can only exploit their national quota after they cut and carbonize wood in firebreaks. This wood can only be sold to the Tambacounda market where prices are low. But even here, they need to get the Mayor of Tambacounda to request that they produce for them. When they finish the Tambacounda firebreak production, they can then exploit their national quota – which they do late. Clearly they are incompetent. It is no wonder that forest dependent populations are without any savings and have nothing to invest in their own development. It is no wonder they have no means to engage as citizens to request help from their representatives. It is also no wonder that their representatives fight for expanding their market access, but fail again and again. That failure is written up elsewhere (Ribot 2008a).

The last obstacle is the circulation permit. Once charcoal production rights are secured and the charcoal produced, the big challenge is to obtain circulation permits to take that charcoal to the lucrative markets of Dakar. But, here the Forest Service stands as another great obstacle for forest villagers. The individual forest villagers producing without hired laborers have trouble amassing the 400 sacks required for a permit. They are also accused of fraud and permits then denied. The merchants, in contrast, automatically receive circulation permits when they have produced the charcoal on their production permits. With these circulation permits they can bring their charcoal to Dakar. So, there is a selective privileging of the merchants over villagers in the allocation of circulation permits. So, forest villagers often find a merchant to sell to at the forest edge, taking the low forest-edge prices. The merchants then find circulation permits.¹⁰ So, for the charcoal they are allowed to produce that is not earmarked for sale in the local Tambacounda and Kolda markets, the

forest villagers must struggle for the right to bring their charcoal to Dakar. It all makes sense. It's all logical. It's legal but certainly not in the spirit of the law.

Illustration 4: Senegalizing the Sector

In the discussion of using migrant laborers, one of the USAID project association executives said that one cannot get rid of the migrants since they have been in the forests for a long time and many came with their fathers and know nothing else. Indeed, there is another discourse being floated to argue against villagers working with the migrants. They say that these are not Senegalese. They argue that Senegal must 'Senegalise' the market. This is a dangerous and divisive set of arguments that could lead to ethnic conflicts. It further marginalizes an already marginal group, the Guinean Fulbe migrants. This issue came up several times in discussions. Villagers argued that this is the migrants' work and they have a right to continue (Reference 14). They argued that those who were in charcoal before it became lucrative cannot just be thrown out. There was compassion for them – despite them not being liked by most villagers.

But, one of the USAID Wula Nafaa project association executives (the guy who earlier told us he hires migrant laborers) argued that foreigners cannot be part of these charcoal producing groups. One needs a Senegalese identity card to be a member (Reference 18.) This is the law since the 2010 ministerial order. A World Bank PROGEDE project village-level worker, however, said:

The village committees don't accept foreigners because anyone who does not live in the village who comes to cut wood will be sent away by the villagers because they know that the forests belongs to them and they don't want some guys coming and degrading it. There is an agreement that they sign with the Rural Council President. If someone wants to hire a laborer who does not live in the region, the local people refuse to let this happen. While the producers and the farmers, when they [migrants] come [looking for work], may hire migrants, there is a vigilance committee that is on the ground to control the managed forests and help the pro-

¹⁰ Merchants often get circulation permits by going to the Forest Service, telling them that they know of 'illegal' charcoal in the forests. The foresters then 'confiscate' the charcoal on paper and sell it to the merchant at a price that is somewhat above the charcoal tax. The resold confiscated charcoal is, however, tax exempt. The merchant receives a charcoal circulation permit and off to Dakar he goes – paying for confiscated charcoal rather than paying the tax. It is a lucrative operation for all involved – except for the forest villagers. They can also get quotas from other merchants and pay the other merchants for these 'non-transferable' quotas. Then with these quotas they can obtain a circulation permit. Off to Dakar again.

ject staff so that there is no fraud. When they see foreigners that want to enter in the forest and who don't live in the village they intervene and forbid them to cut wood. (Reference 20.)

The discourse and official policy is one of transforming migrant laborers, who have long been accepted in the villages and who have long been the region's charcoal makers, into unwanted foreigners. But in practice, following interviews by the author and by other researchers (personal communication, Faye 2012, Jusrut 2012), most villagers hire the migrant laborers and ignore these rules. The vigilance committees also turn a blind eye – since it is their fellow villagers who are hiring the migrants and because few in the village want to do this very difficult, caste and dirty labor. The situation is creating divisions and marginalizing an already marginal and, due to their lack of formal citizenship, and non-represented group.

Illustration 5: We are all Senegalese

We are Nationals [meaning 'citizens']. We realize that the profession should not only involve the populations around the forests. We have brought in politicians. But a profession is not mastered one day to the next. One is taught, instructed, and formed into it. This is what we have done as an organization, as the National Union.

(Reference 1, Union Leader,
National Union of Forestry Cooperatives)

He [the Union Head] thinks that the state, through the Forest Service, is giving more power to these latter [forest villagers] under the pretext that the local populations must be involved to the detriment of the real citizens (the forestry merchants) who have been exploiting forests as their profession.

(A researcher telling of his interview with the
above Union Leader, 2012, 1 – the
researcher does not want to be identified.)

Villagers are made to work on their own on the grounds that foreigners should not be working in the market. This position is supported by merchants since it enables merchants to marginalize forest villagers – depriving them of supplemen-

tary labor. The merchants then argue that merchants need migrants to do their work – since the merchants need the labor (as outlined above). Allocation of forest production rights were transferred to forest villagers by the decentralization laws of Senegal (RdS 1996a, 1998). Nevertheless, the merchants claim that urban merchants, not just forest villagers, have rights to the forests as citizens of Senegal. They argue that forests do not only belong to the forest-dependent populations. So, the merchants are nationalist when it is convenient for them – when it gets them production rights. The repertoire of mechanisms used to maintain access to lucrative opportunities in the hands of urban merchants, then includes these issues of citizenship and belonging. It involves claims that migrants should be included as their laborers but that they are not citizens – arguing both sides of the fence for their own convenience. It includes claims that citizenship in Senegal infers rights to forests – again stating that the decentralization is a good reform and that forests still belong to 'the nation' and everyone in it.

Illustration 6: More Ways to Block the Transfer of Powers

A former Forest Service Director, who is now a current president of a Regional Council, attended the showing at Douta Seck and explained that the Forest Service and Minister of Environment block the transfer of powers to local governments. He explained that the transfer of powers to local governments is blocked by 'firewalls' thrown up by the Forest Service. He explained that: '...since the publication of the decentralization law, Forest Service agents are contractors to the local governments. That is to say that each year there is a contract¹¹ that ties the Forest Service Agents to the local governments. The contract is signed by the President of the Regional Council and the Governor of the Region. These contracts are supposed to put the Forest Service agents at the disposition of the local governments. He goes on, 'but in practice the Forest Service agents are more at the service of the [centrally appointed] Governor of the Region, more at the service of the Regional Director of the Forest Service'. He then criticized

¹¹ These contracts are called 'conventions types' which are supposed to enable Rural Councils to mobilize regional technical assistance from the forest service and other agencies.

the Minister of Environment for supporting this situation and blocking the transfer of powers to the local governments. In the end, powers are not transferred. (Reference 15.)

Illustration 7: Projects Turn People Against the Forest Service

One USAID project manager made the point that the Forest Service always accuses them of turning the populations against the Forest Service. In the film the project director Mr. Mbaxan (meaning Mr. Good in Wolof) is depicted as helping the population. This forester felt that this part of the film reflected his experience (Reference 3). This insight is consistent with the ongoing struggle that foresters face. They want projects due to the benefits they gain from them – including higher salaries and equipment. However, they feel their authority and roles being eroded away. This reflects the attempts by projects to give rural people a say in the management of their forests. However, the foresters react to this, feeling marginalized, by resisting and ultimately, as is evident in the literature, by recapturing their roles and functions and circumventing local authorities – including the Rural Councils (P. Faye 2006; Ribot 2008a).

Polarized Readings – Film Drawing Differences into Relief

While audiences appeared to have different interlocutors in mind, different people in the audiences also took very different stances with respect to the film. Showing the film threw into relief those for and those against, those affirmed and those threatened by the film. In this section we will just illustrate a few of those positions. We will start with the positions that had a positive reaction to the film and then outline positions of those who objected to the film.

Those in favor

One merchant in a showing in Tambacounda said ‘This film is extraordinary, there are certainly some shortcomings, but the aim was to inform about where the local people were before and where they are now, there is progress and it is this progress that the film wanted to show’ (Reference 1). Clearly he felt the film was positive in so far as it showed that the production system is good for forest villagers – they are now making

more. So, this is a good thing. It was consistent with his sense of progress. An executive in the Wula Nafaa project association, who is also a local charcoal producer, said ‘I think that we are on the second DVD. I think that you should go and make a third one, I think that this series must not stop...’ (Reference 11). The association executive continued to explain that the importance of the film was to show to people the value of charcoal production and also to educate the Rural Council Presidents about it, since the Presidents have an interest as well but they are not aware. This association executive and producer had an interest in engaging local producers and in enlisting the help of the rural councils. Yet a Wula Nafaa project staff pointed out that the film states at the end (post-script text) that 70 truckloads of charcoal go to Dakar but the local people only get 2% of the profit. He said that this was miniscule compared to what is out there. He finished by saying ‘I should have participated in this film since what I saw is beautiful’. (Reference 12) The Wula Nafaa staff is also trying to show the progress the film shows in local incomes and to argue for greater local engagement. So, the film showed and affirmed these actors’ positions.

A few foresters had surprisingly positive remarks about the film. Two high-ranking foresters interviewed together, one who had worked as a forest agent in the PROGEDE project and another who had directed PROGEDE for a decade, said that they felt the film represented exactly what they had experienced. When asked what they thought of the film, one after the other both said ‘we lived this’ (Interview, Aug. 2012, respondent 1 and 2). When asked to elaborate, they said that the film showed ‘exactly what is happening’ (Interview, Aug. 2012, respondent 1). They then explained that the film had not shown enough. These two foresters had spent their careers supporting the forest-village charcoal makers. They both said they believed in the objectives of the PROGEDE project. But they were both punitively removed from the project. The junior of the two was removed for illegal trading in charcoal. But he argues that he was framed and was really removed for defending local people’s rights. The more-senior member of the two, who had been the director of PROGEDE, was removed by the Director of the Forest Service for insubordination – having

refused to fire the younger forester before holding an investigation.¹² The positive remarks by these forests clearly reflect their positions. They had a commitment to promoting forest villagers but this put them up against the forestry administration. They were duly punished. It is not surprising in this situation that they spoke positively of the film. It affirmed their positions.

àos e against

This film has nothing to do with reality.

PROGEDE Project staff in Tambacounda

Exposé by National Television of Senegal

So the situation has changed over more than 5 to 10 years; because... consultants such as Mr. Ribot develop theses that I can only say have nothing to do with reality.

Director of Forest Management and Production, Forest Service of Senegal 2012

Many years ago, in 1990, I gave a copy of my dissertation on the history of Senegal's charcoal market to the Technical Advisor of the Ministry of Environment in Dakar. We discussed it and we talked about problems in the sector. The dissertation showed how different forms of domination had articulated down through the management system from World War II to the late 1980s. The fieldwork had been finalized in 1987, but included many documentary and phone discussions with people up to 1990. The Advisor's first words to me, before even reading the dissertation, were 'but Jesse, everything has changed since 1987'. He explained that my research and arguments were no longer relevant since there were new projects

and new methods for better participation and management.

The historical record, however, shows remarkable continuity over the 40 years leading up to 1990, but the Ministry of Environment's claim was that all had changed in the last few years. Indeed, more recent work shows that little changed in terms of representation or participation up to the 2000s. The argument that 'everything is now different' has always been the narrative regardless of what analysis or recommendations are presented: '*c'est du passé, c'est de l'histoire*' (a line from *Weex Dunx*). In front of a narrative like this it is very difficult to insist that research has any relevance. Donors too reproach research for taking too long. But, things do not change as fast as donors or foresters would like to believe. Today the market is much like it was 60 years ago. Many new and different projects have come and gone. Many improvements have been implemented and diffused into the landscape of the past. But little has changed (Ribot 1999b; P. Faye 2006; Poteete and Ribot 2011).

In the Douda Seck showing of the film there were many high-level donors and government agents. A director of the World Bank funded government PROGEDE project stated 'I am under the impression that this film dates from fifteen to twenty years ago; that in fact this film is an argument in support of what we're doing today'. Several foresters at this same showing followed suite and brought up the same argument. The film was met with a similar response when later shown to project forestry officials and staff. One Wula Nafaa project manager stated 'I am disturbed by the idea of showing of a film that brings people to understand something that is in fact not the reality that may actually be lived elsewhere' (Reference 4). At least in this case the speaker acknowledges, indirectly, that perhaps it is correct in some places. Another similar statement from another Wula Nafaa project manager: 'What we saw doesn't entirely reflect the reality as it is lived in place' (Reference 8). Another Wula Nafaa project staff continued, 'But I say to myself that this film is behind the times with respect to what has happened and what we now are experiencing' (Reference 9). This statement that the film is not about the reality of today is present in the two quotes leading into this section.

12 Like most stories, as in *The Heart of Redness* (Mda 2000), there is a more complex history. In this story the Director of the Forest Service, Mr. X. was the director of PROGEDE 11 years earlier. He was fired for misuse of project funds (a large amount of money was missing). Mr. Z. (respondent 2). was replaced by the person being spoken of in the above story, Mr. Y (respondent 1) – the next and also former director of PROGEDE. Mr. Y's first job as director was to write up a report on the missing funds. His report directly implicated Mr. Z. The first director of PROGEDE, Mr. X. was then rewarded for his corruption by being appointed as Director of the Forest Service. This made him Mr. Y's boss. It took 11 years for Mr. X to find a reason to fire Mr. Y. The occasion for this firing was the refusal of Mr. Y to fire the young forester who had been accused of engaging in charcoal trading without an investigation.

The Forest Service has several interests in arguing against the film. Many of these come out in the examples of what we found in the sub-section of examples on 'Insights from Film Showings'. They have the management plans to defend for donors to support. They also have to show to donors that these programs are participatory – as implied by communities that like the outcomes. They also have an interest in demonstrating the local income-generating successes of their programs. The film shows success of their programs – but it is qualified success. Management plans are not loved by all. Local people are not happy. Corruption is illustrated. Denying the film's current relevance makes room for them to argue to the donors that there is greater progress than the film shows.

Interpreting the Split

Appreciation of the film splits clearly along lines of viewers' positions and interests. Those who claim it to be inaccurate or outdated are almost all working for the Forest Service or for projects. Those who express its accuracy and utility are almost all in the field trying to make a living from charcoal production. Some project personnel and some foresters fell on the positive side of this split. But the majority split along these distinct lines with foresters and merchants on one side and forest villagers on the other. Those trying to access the market from forest villages say the film tells their story. Those trying to regulate it or those profiting from upstream commerce argue that it insults their efforts. Those affirmed support the film and those threatened seek to undermine its credibility.

The film, near the very end of this research program, was shown on Radio and Television of Senegal (RTS), the national television channel. It was preceded by a debate between the author, Commandant Mamadou Fall who is the Director of Forest Management and Production of Senegal's Forest Service, and Mr. Abdoulaye Sow, who is the Director of the National Union of Forestry Cooperatives of Senegal (the urban-based merchants union). This debate, quoted in the sections above, was no exception. The forester and union leader talked of how everything is now different, how the film was inaccurate, and they explained that they are 'scientific' and the filmmaker is not.

(See RTS 2012.)

While I, the filmmaker, who is being criticized in these discussions, cannot credibly attest to the correctness or the inaccuracies of the film – other than claiming legitimacy as a researcher who has observed this sector for 25 years – it is clear that all positions and opinions expressed after the showing have to be viewed with circumspection. They must be interpreted in a broader context. Those who claimed the film is reflective of their experience all had specific interests affirmed by particular aspects of the film. The foresters who were happy with the film have become forestry outsiders – they were foresters who, while they know the Forest Service well, also have an interest in revealing the darker side of forestry. They were hurt by the underside of forestry dealings. They are motivated to reveal this underside. The foresters who stated that this film portrayed a bygone era, or events that never happened, all had an interest in fending off criticism of their bread-and-butter projects. Indeed, in the debate on National Radio and Television of Senegal, the Forest Service representative even said he was concerned that the film aimed to sabotage their project funding from the World Bank.¹³ While the film was not intended to do so, it is clear that they feel any criticism of forest management threatens their funding.

Of course, expressed positions are strategically tailored for perceived audiences and are not always easy to interpret. The same forest villagers said one thing to the ENDA team after film showings and something else on National Television. An interview with some forest villagers who had been featured on a Radio and Televisions of Senegal exposé (RTS 2012) illustrates this point. The interviewer working with the ENDA team asked a forest villager who leads one of the local project

13 Starting at minute 30:15:14 of the debate the Forest Service Director of Production states that in the film:

"Today, what can we say all that Jesse has tried to show to the finance institutions? There are even attempts to sabotage the projects we were negotiating – we saw it in the case of the World Bank – to say they should not fund the second sustainable development project, etc." What the forester did not know is that this author had written some of the original documents that justified the funding of this project and that the author had recently argued with the World Bank to fund the second phase of the project. The author was consulted concerning the evaluation of phase I and the plans for Phase II of this particular project.

forest management committees about his contribution to the exposé. He told the interviewer that: 'It is all I could have said because I need to get access to permit and be able to work. What would happen if I had said the contrary of what they want to hear? But I knew what to say and I talked to other participants within our forest. I told them to just say that we benefit from management efforts and our situation was really improved'. The interviewer noted that 'If you listen to them, none did criticize the film, they only focused on the benefits they gained'. He also said, look at the forest villagers in the RTS (2012) exposé; 'they are not ordinary local people. In the case of Village M., all of them were leaders or rich compared to the masses. So having them profiting from management efforts is not surprising at all; they captured benefits of the project using their economic and/or social capital'. (P. Faye, Personal Communication July 2013).

In short, showing the film threw into relief different positions and stakes of different groups in the forestry sector. In doing so, it helps us understand the interests and dynamics and politics of the sector.

AFTEREFFECTS ON RESEARCH

Showing the film also had an aftereffect on later research in three ways. First, people talked to me differently having seen what I know of the sector. After the public film showings, people in the Forest Service began talking to me in new and more open ways. In private, for example, one forester told me 'you're right that there is a lot of corruption, but you barely know how much there is'. He then began recounting to me in great detail all of the pathways by which illegally harvested charcoal was 'legalized' to bring into the city. In 25 years of working in Senegal, few people had recounted this directly to me in such detail. I, and other researchers, knew of most of these pathways. But now they were telling me directly and in detail – not only how, but where, when and who was involved.

The second aftereffect on research was that officials who viewed the film saw the film as something they had to react to because film is public – it is not a private event like a conversation. Over

the past decades when I presented the results of my research to foresters and other government officials, they would react with knitted brows and some concern, they would say 'it is not longer like that' and they would smile and thank me for my insights. Film is different. Even in a private showing it is seen as a public media. Foresters and government officials as well as front-line foresters in the field reacted strongly to the film. They argued against each and every aspect they found threatening and worked to place the film as 'fiction' and as 'out of date'. They worked to show which details were wrong. This engagement has generated many new insights illustrated above and ongoing.

The third aftereffect on research is that showing of the film may have closed some doors for future researchers. The researcher Papa Faye recounted (Personal Communication, June 2013) that 'the former Chef de Secteur in Tambacounda [the head of the Tambacounda Regional Forest Service Office] did not trust me and asked for an official introduction letter from the National Forest Service and his argument is that they are militarized and one [their superiors] could ask them why they give official data without permission'. He added they have already experienced that with a film on the charcoal chain. However, it should be noted that I too was asked to have official letters from the Forest Service director since the mid 1990s. In the 1980s, I was simply ignored (being too young) and never given data by foresters. So, being refused interviews with foresters is not new.

So, it is not clear what effect the showings have – although it is likely that they make the Forest Service less forthcoming with data and interviews. Faye recounted that a Tambacounda with a PROGEDE World Bank forestry project facilitator 'asked one of my key informants, also president of an inter-village committee, to be cautious when discussing with me because I was the source of all the problems in forest management in the area'. Nevertheless, Faye explains, this informant recounted everything and said, 'I know that it is because you've been fighting so that forestry can be brought back into the hands of the population and to the Councils [elected local government]'. And them, they don't want any of that. Actually, this is why they were fighting against Mr. Z [a forester who had defended rights of the local popu-

lation] and myself now speaking to you.' So, while the film may have closed access to some sources it may also have opened others by letting them know that the researchers were not spies of the Forest Service and that research may support forest villagers' efforts.

EFFECTS OF FILM ON POLICY AND PRACTICE

There's a team of researchers who look for things that are irregular, ever since I've known Papa Faye with Jesse Ribot, since I've known their work, which they do correctly. It's exactly what happens between Walfadjri [opposition news paper] and the Government of Senegal. They do nothing but quarrel and speak badly to each other. Sometimes I think that this is bad, but it resolves problems at the same time. What they want is to be able to speak frankly and sincerely about what's happening. What they are doing is not for themselves, but is for the people. They've done their analyses and agreed on what had to be done to make things work better.

A Wula Nafa production association executive (Reference 19)

Film can have an effect on policy by informing people who then mobilize to demand changes. It can have an effect on policy by informing policy makers of changes that might be useful. It can inform the public, embarrassing policy makers into changing policies. Film may also inform people in ways that shape practice, and changed practice can have an effect on policy later down the road as practice informs people and creates new visions and new demands.

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS PEOPLE DREW FROM WATCHING

The forest villagers at film showings seemed to draw a few relevant lessons from the film. They saw that the business of charcoal was much more lucrative than they had known and women, in particular, saw that they too could work and profit in this profession. These were repeated themes.

One local charcoal producer and head of a project-based producer's association observer was inspired by the notion of organizing (Reference 22). He felt it was important for rural producers and forest villagers to organize and that such organization needs to be among the merchants, both local and from the city, and with the workers so that they can not only profit from their work, but also can regulate production. He noted that the merchants need the workers to make sure that the whole system is regulated – this, he said, is necessary because the laws to ensure this will never be enforced. Lastly, producers were struck by the prospect of bringing their charcoal to Dakar themselves and having more control over and access to the Dakar market (Reference 23). In short, rural people found the prospect of working in charcoal and in selling it in Dakar to be inspiring and they also liked the idea of organizing to try to better their own situation.

The relevance and lessons of Semmiñ Ñaari Boor and of the previous film, Weex Dunx, for local democracy are not direct. Semmiñ Ñaari Boor did not inspire discussions of the role or marginality of the rural councils or the Rural Council Presidents – despite that it showed how they were pushed aside. This was a surprise. The lesson we draw is that marginality of elected local government authorities in Senegal is so normal that it is not noticed. Nobody remarked. Clearly, local people need to learn more about the powers that their representatives hold and they also need to learn more about representation and how it can serve their needs and aspirations. This learning will not come through 'awareness raising' programs. It will come by councils becoming strong enough to deliver some goods to their people – when they have powers relevant to those they ostensibly represent. Otherwise, they will remain as irrelevant as they now are in a context where years of awareness raising have clearly done little.

But the film Weex Dunx, which circulated in 2007, had a different effect. Rural councilors themselves found the film interesting. They made copies of it and began giving and showing it to each other. They used the film as a basis for discussion of their marginality in forestry. We did not set out to study the effects of this first film, but Weex Dunx featured the Rural Council President more centrally, showing how he was subor-

minated and made irrelevant. These are processes that rural councilors recognize immediately. The spread of Weex Dunx is described more fully in Annex C.

A last lesson from this set of showings of *Sem-miñ Ñaari Boor* is that the acts within the repertoires of domination used by government and commerce – who are clearly working closely together (see RTS 2012) – include a set of speech acts that place criticism in the past and discredit their opponents. Those who dominate can repeat nonsense phrases and state contradictory arguments one after the other with impunity. They are not challenged. They fend off criticism through denial or discredit, while continuing to impose their patterns of extraction through the repetition of key arguments that justify their exploitative practices. In the context of a film showing and a set of public debates, they use denial and displace the film from themselves by calling it out of date. In rural areas they just impose their arguments – no matter how nonsensical – since nobody can challenge them. There seems to be a need for the foresters to perform argument and reason, but no need to really be engaged in an argument or to have reason when speaking. The theatre of state continues. It is not a democratic performance – not yet. It remains a performance of the logical illogic of the legal illegal – it is legal as long as it cannot be challenged.

SOCIAL LIFE AS THEATRE

The presentation of self in everyday life is a performance. The presence of the state in everyday life is a performance. It is theatre.

James Scott 2012

In the 18th *Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx (1852) quotes Hegel as saying ‘that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice’. Marx notes that Hegel forgot to add: ‘the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce’. Domination in rural Senegal first appears as the colonial tragedy – the pain of a civilizing mission. The second time around, dressed in language of participation and democracy, it is a farce, a poor modern reproduction of colonial-style rule under the name of inclusion, justice and democracy.

Thinly masked support for the constant processes of stratification and the reproduction of a narrow elite. Dramatizing such a farce in film creates a dialogue.

Erving Goffman saw social life as performance, where performance is a presence before observers who are influenced by that presence (see Branaman 1997:lxiv). Poteete and Ribot (2011) have used this notion of influence in speaking of ‘repertoires of domination’, by which actors at the top of the hierarchy of power exert influence through a set of planned and improvised discursive and symbolic acts. The elements of performance include ‘the front, dramatic realization, idealization, expressive control, misrepresentation, and mystification’ (Branaman 1997:lxv). Most interesting for us in Goffman’s work is this struggle between true and false performance. Goffman saw ‘that the distinction between a true and false performance concerns not the actual performance as much as it does whether or not the performer is authorized to give the performance in question’ (Branaman 1997:lxv; also see Douglas 1985). In reaction to a film that revealed the incoherence of forestry practice and discourse, the foresters struggle was to maintain their authority in response. They did so. They did not lose any support from their backers in policy, public media, journalist or international development circles.

Authority is a key struggle in performances. Challenges to authority in this set of film showings and discussions were challenged back. The protection of authority was a great concern of many of those viewers in positions of power. They protected the scientific authority of their management techniques and their own command over the forestry sector. So, two questions that emerge are: How does authority maintain itself in the face of obvious inconsistency between what is said, what is written, what is done, and what is observable and even obvious? And, how do narratives that contradict observed and obvious practice maintain credibility? Film provides a lens into these questions. Authority defends itself by asserting its credibility and discrediting its opponent in public. Authority defends its domain outside of the broader public eye in the rural arena by merely imposing itself. Thus is domination. The fact that foresters can just make arguments and walk away is the proof that they are in a dom-

inant position. There is use in challenging them. Their contradictions are visible to the people their arguments affect. But the local visibility of contradiction is immaterial. This rude imposition is their exercise of power. Imposition is symbolic and constitutive of their power. This is partly how authority defends itself and, in so doing, defends and maintains domination (its power and authority) and the presentation (as true) of a visibly false depiction of the world.

Why do rural people tolerate contradictory authority – and why is performance still used when contradiction becomes so common that performance seems unnecessary? To protect their shows, performers, according to Goffman must maintain ‘dramaturgical loyalty’, ‘dramaturgical discipline’, ‘dramaturgical circumspect’. Loyalty refers to the protection the team’s secrets; discipline is about staying within the techniques of staging a believable performance, and circumspect is the act of planning through foresight and design so as to best carry out the show. In addition, performers must have ‘tact regarding tact’ such that they attend to the audience’s tacit playing along by tracking the audience and adapting their performance in response. (Branaman 1997:lxvi.) Clearly the audience in rural Senegal is complicit – because withdrawal (à la Scott 1976) is the path of least resistance? Because playing along gets them some project and government allocated benefits versus getting none? These are areas to explore.

State and market side, the performance goes on. ‘As social beings...individuals are concerned with living up to the many moral standards of the social world. But as performers, they are “concerned not with the moral issue of realizing these standards, but with the amoral issue of engineering a convincing impression that these standards are being realized”’ (Branaman 1997:lxvii). So, what happens when social beings are performers – they tack back and forth between the moral and immoral worlds. This seems to be the drama of politics. In the arena of the national Doua Seck Cultural Center performance, the foresters assert that ‘standards are being met’. In the performance of domination in the rural areas foresters do not seem to have as much pressure to convince. They simply act as if standards are met. The rural audience did not make the standards. Yet they know they are expected to comply. The rural audience

enacts compliance – while also performing their own resistant counter acts of hidden non-compliance – to appear to perform the standards.¹⁴ The urban audiences who do not have to live under the rules and regulations imposed upon rural actors do set these standards and seem to believe they are being met. They are the other (distant) audience complicit in the rural performances.

On honesty and inconsistency, it is not clear that there is any dishonesty in the arguments and performances of foresters and merchants. Žižek (2009:3.), quoting Kierkegaard, points out that ‘we humans cannot ever be sure that we believe: ultimately, we only “believe that we believe.”’ The formula of a régime which “only imagines that it believes in itself” nicely captures the cancellation of the performative power (“symbolic efficiency”) of the ruling ideology: it no longer effectively functions as the fundamental structure of the social bond. Perhaps there is a policy lesson here: continued poking into the contradictions may move people away from believing what they believe toward only imagining that they believe their own stories. In this moment, the theatre’s illusion collapses. Change is possible.

So, perhaps this is the policy use of alternative media. It can use humor and irony to speak the unspeakable – that the forester has no clothes; that the narratives are contradictory; that harm is being done in the name of good; that extraction drives participatory development interventions; that in the rural world democracy is still a farce. Film can foment curiosity and questioning. It can point out contradictions. But it also has other functions. By depicting people to themselves – something we can do through film – they can affirm or challenge our visions of them. They can also see themselves anew. In this process they can see that we see (or that we do not see) and can then engage us on their grounds and the grounds of what we have depicted. In this process, film goes from informing to the creation of dialogue. It goes from being an instrument of diffusion to one of research and engagement. It is just one more route into politics.

14 As Peluso (1992) shows, each means of domination is counter-acted by means of resistance, acts and counter-acts). Senegal’s forest villagers resist by disrespecting technical prescriptions while feigning compliance, ignorance and incompetence.

Conclusion

In Senegal, democratic decentralization of natural resources had the opportunity to provide a material basis for local democracy. Instead, powers devolved were recaptured and donors chose to work through committees rather than elected local authorities. Local democratic authority was delegitimized and demoralized. The local arena in many countries is, in this manner, fragmented into interest and identity-based groups where a more cohesive democratic polity could have emerged. Elected local authority could have had powers over something that mattered to local people – like the forests. Instead local democracy remains part of the world of pretend.

Revealing contradictions undoes the illusions that shroud injustice. While revelation may not lead directly to change, it is a first step toward querying the machinery of inequality – the repertoires of domination at work. Seeing past illusion enables us to develop counter-acts to target the generative basis of inequality. It allows us to go beyond the micro performances that cover and support it. We do not only want to be affirmative, merely acknowledging the patterns of inequality in order to recognize and promote those who are marginalized. We want to be transformative by constantly training attention back to the generative structures of inequality and injustice, the material and discursive processes of wealth extraction upheld by and creating these injustices. These, as Nancy Fraser (2008:692008) has noted, call for a politics of redistribution focused on dismantling the generative structures of injustice. Inequality is material *and* discursive, but material inequality reproduces all inequalities over time.

People do not so easily forget the past. Commons of the developing world are embedded in the remnants of extractive colonial hierarchies that have reproduced themselves. The shadows of history are always present. The second time back they are farce, not because they repeat themselves in the attempt to change, but because they change guise in an effort to repeat themselves. Domination takes many forms, with many acts in its repertoire. These acts become absurd as they become transparently obvious means of maintaining privilege in the name of change. They become absurd when they are means of continued extraction in the name of enfranchisement and emancipation.

What is remarkable about these ‘changes that don’t change’ is that they are enacted by actors – bureaucrats, foresters, merchants – who have the best of intentions and most of whom believe in the discourses of change and improvement they are located in and propagate. So, by depicting the commons ‘as they are’, we can try to reveal the farce of repetition, and in revealing it, perhaps open some spaces for change. Using humor is one good way to do this. As Bakhtin observed, laughter ‘remained outside of official falsifications’. (Bakhtin 1981: 236).

POST SCRIPT

President Abdoulaye Wade’s Minister of Environment, Djibo Ka, banned the film *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor* in 2011. So my co-director Pape Faye (not to be confused with the researcher Papa Faye) threatened to show it on an opposition channel. The Minister then, after some negotiation, agreed to show it if we would preface it with a debate between myself, the Director of Production of Senegal’s Forest Service (Commandant Mamadou Fall) and the President of the National Union of Forestry Merchants (El Hadji Abdoulaye Sow). We agreed. RTS recorded the debate in December 2011.

Due to uncertainties about presidential elections in Senegal, Ka kept putting off the showing. Then President Wade lost the election. The week before he left office due to the fall of President Wade’s Regime (March 2012), Ka allowed the showing of the film. By showing it, I think he was trying to exit looking critical of his own dead regime so as to gain favor with the incoming regime. The debate and film were aired in April 2012 on Senegal’s National Television channel along with the film. This showing was repeated three times in about ten days at evening prime time – repeated by popular demand.

With the change of regimes came the change of ministers. The new minister El Ali Haidar (Ecology Party), had his assistant write to me on 27 June 2013 asking for copies of the film *Semmiñ Ñaari Boor*. He wrote: ‘I am contacting you concerning the film in subject. You may be aware that the current administration has placed his activities under good governance principles. The Minister

wanted to have copies of the film for large diffusion in all the TV stations in Senegal'. I learned through the grape vine that Haider was having a fight with the Forest Service and the National Forest Merchants Union. I sent him copies of both films right away.

Then there was silence for a month. I heard nothing of the film being shown. I waited and wrote the assistant to the minister. All I learned was that the Minister of Environment El Ali Haider was removed from the post of minister and placed in charge of fisheries – no more influence over forests. I met with El Ali Haider in January 2014. He confirmed that his battle with the charcoal merchants cost him his post. It is dangerous to confront the logical illogic of the legal illegal from the villages or from above. 'Business is business and business must grow, regardless of crummies in tummies you know' (Seuss 1971). The Minister confronted the foresters and merchants, *et voilà* – he's gone fishing.

ANNEX A: FILM DISCUSSION GUIDE

Questions for Audiences After the Viewing of *Semmiñ ñaari boor*

INTRODUCTION

This document is a discussion guide for the film *Semmiñ ñaari Boor*. It was developed from observation of showings of the film in Senegal and in the US and Europe. Different audiences have different interests in the film. Some audiences, such as university students, are interested in broad issues of environmental justice; donor audiences such as the World Bank or US Agency for International Development and audiences of policy makers and practitioners, like Senegal's Ministry of Environment and Forest Service or forestry project staff are most interested in defending their investments and programs; large-scale urban forestry merchants are also interested in defending their territory. So, the reader of this document should gauge your use of discussion questions based on your reading of the audience you face. The questions, however, are not divided by audience and are primarily aimed at a broad public or donors and not at policy makers, elected local officials, or practitioners. Yet, with a little tact, these same questions could be posed to start discussions with policy makers, elected officials and practitioners.

The title *Semmiñ ñaari Boor* is Wolof for Double Bladed Axe. The title is borrowed from the Wolof idiom *paka ñaari boor*, literally 'double bladed knife', referring to someone who speaks out of both sides of their mouth, that is, someone you cannot trust. The substitution of an axe for the knife is a reference to forestry. The mistrust is about the double-talk of the Forest Service. They say one thing and do another. The situation in Senegal's forestry sector, especially in the management of the lucrative charcoal production industry, is filled with contradictory discourses and behaviors. These contradictions are peppered through the film.

In the film, foresters' words cut both ways. The villagers of Daru Fippu are empowered to manage their forests by Senegal's decentralization laws. They want the forests for local use, but the Forest Service's Mega Bank project convinces the villagers to participate in charcoal production to make money for local development. The Forest Service says they must cut the forests for charcoal to supply cooking fuel for the city. The foresters speak of management, but insist only on production. They speak of participation, but the villagers participate only as labor. They speak of development, but foresters block them from lucrative forestry markets. Villagers are only allowed to produce at low prices and sell their charcoal to urban merchants at the forest edge. Foresters refuse to give them production quotas and permits with which they could sell for much-higher prices found in the city of Dakar. When the sympathetic project director, Mbaxan, tells them they can get ten times the price selling in the city, the villagers are shocked. Mbaxan tries to help the destitute villagers to profit from their rich forests, but is stymied by the Forest Service. They make some headway, but not enough. The villagers of Daru Fippu federate to fight for their rights.

The forester is called Mr. Mbaxan since he is trying to do good. This name and character was chosen since there are many well-meaning foresters and project staff who believe in their mission and fight hard for local rights and wellbeing. Mbaxan in Wolof means 'do-gooder'. The Rural Council President, Mr. Weex Dunx, goes by this name, which means scapegoat, since he is always feeling like he can do no right – he cannot please the forest villagers, but as in an earlier film featuring President Weex Dunx, he also does not make the administration or merchants happy. Daru Fippu is the name of the village where the film takes place. Daru Fippu means village of the uprising. Here the villages decide to organize. This

did happen, but it was only one council member from the Rural Council who tried to form a regional federation to protect their right to collect taxes. The federation has not yet gotten off the ground. While these terms are used to reflect different aspects of the situation, the film itself is based on considerable research. Most of what is depicted did take place. Many of the phrases spoken were phrases brought into the film from interviews. The film aims to transmit an overarching picture of forest villagers' struggles for representation and their struggle to increase their meager incomes from forest production.

This guide is divided into three sections. The first outlines some of the main messages of the film including some background needed to understand issues depicted (since the film was originally made for a Senegalese audience). The second organizes some questions that can be asked to draw viewer's attention to issues of justice and representation and to the contradictions that constitute many environmental interventions. Last is a list of punctual questions that follow from the above sections but can just stand alone to provoke a discussion.

WHAT ARE THE FILM'S MESSAGES?

This film tells several stories relevant to the social study of rights, recourse and representation under environmental management interventions. There is a vast literature on natural resource management and society. Semmiñ Naari Boor brings into question several assumptions behind natural resource management efforts:

What Drives Extractive Forestry Activities?

Many programs to protect forests assume that local people are over-exploiting their forests and that they need help protecting and managing this valuable resource. But, the drivers of forest extraction are usually distant and often take place against the interest and will of local people. In this case the local people do not want their forests cut. Meanwhile migrant laborers from Guinea are licensed by the Forest Service to cut the forests to provide fuel to the cities. These migrants are brought to the Forest Service by urban merchants and then given permits by the Forest Service.

The Forest Service then steps in to help the local people to manage their forests. But, rather than helping them to stop the extraction – which was the initial preference of the villagers, the Forest Service wants them to engage in it. The Forest Service wants to help organize extraction. Indeed, the driver of extractive forestry is the Forest Service and their urban merchant allies. Villagers are not initially happy with extraction.

Why are Forest Villagers For or Against Forest Cutting?

Forest villagers are depicted in the literature either as the culprits of deforestation or as natural protectors of the forests – since their indigenous knowledge makes them the best placed to make decisions and preserve the biodiversity that they ostensibly value.

In this case, however, the villagers are against woodcutting and extractive activities because they are not happy that they are not allowed to cut forests to profit from them while foreigners hired by merchants are benefitting. They are angry that villagers are not getting any of the income. As soon as they see that they can profit from it, villagers become interested. Historically in this area villagers were not allowed to cut forests. This activity was reserved for migrants who worked for urban merchants and held permits given to them by the Forest Service. The projects are of interest to local people since they are able to cut and profit now from the forests. So, they are not 'naturally' or *a priori* against woodcutting.

Their interest in the forests, however, is more than extractive woodcutting for charcoal production. The forest villagers see the forests as a source of many goods – game, honey, medicines, fiber, etc. They are interested in a balanced use. But, their knowledge and desire to use the forests for their own interest is still blocked. They are forced to engage in extractive charcoal production by projects that claim to be helping them to manage use for their own good. So, their will is excluded from this participatory pro-

ject – they get to participate in the work that the Forest Service allows them to do to continue supplying the cities with fuel. Their interests are lost. Despite being subject to ‘participatory’ forestry projects and under a decentralized democratic forestry regimes, there is no influence by local people and no room for local preferences or for local knowledge.

Forest villagers are not conservationists or extractive users. They are users whose use is shaped by their own needs and by what they are allowed and forced to do by the Forest Service. Despite being ‘represented’, their interests still do not enter into the final decisions on forest management. They are also happily driven by the profit motive. This profit motive is not about managing and investing in sustainability, it is interest in mere profit. That profit is going to a new rural elite – Mr. Salimou is now a local merchant. He is very happy and the migrants and other villagers now work for him.

Is Deforestation Really a Problem? Will Management Plans Cure it?

This question is not a focus of the film, but it is essential for understanding the gravity of what one sees in the film – oppressive control justified by the need for environmental management. Many viewers of this film come with preconceptions about the nature and causes of environmental problems. What is a problem? What is an environmental problem? Is there an environmental problem in Nambaradougou? These are all key questions. Most of the viewers that watch this film, especially university students and your average European or US viewers, think that there is a problem of deforestation and that the woodcutting by villagers is a factor in causing this problem. Because of this assumption, they may assume that forest management plans are necessary and the problem of deforestation is driving the Forest Service and the forestry projects. But in this region, natural regeneration after woodcutting is robust. While the forests are being cut and the people who live in them are inconvenienced by the cutting, it is not clear that these forests are being deforested. Perhaps they are just being mowed like a lawn, and they will grow back like a lawn. The viewers will also assume that the forest management plans are protecting the forests from woodcutting and are reducing the problems that people have with the forest exploitation.

Neither assumption is correct. The problem is not deforestation and the management plans are not ecologically effective at improving the forest ecology. In short, there are changes taking place in these forests. Species mixes are changing. But, there is evidence that managed and non-managed areas are changing in the very same ways. Natural regeneration after woodcutting and species mix does not differ between areas under World Bank or USAID managed forests and illegally cut forests nearby. No ecological difference is discernible.

What is the problem? For whom? The problem in these forests is twofold. For forest villagers the problem is a long history of them not being allowed to cut their forests to sell for income. The cutting has always been allocated to urban merchants who bring in migrant laborers to cut forests and make charcoal. So, there are conflicts between villagers and merchants. But the villagers do not complain that the woodcutters are deforesting or destroying their forests. The villagers are angry that they are not allowed to profit. It is only recently that forest villagers have been allowed to enter this trade. That is what the film is showing. In entering the trade the forest villagers’ problem with migrant laborers changed. The laborers became workers who were laboring for the forest villagers. The problem was solved. Well, solved at a certain level. There are now many migrants cutting illegally as well and this cutting is a problem for some forest villagers. For others it is a benefit. The illegal cutting is undermining the urban-merchant oligopsony over the market. Thus rural prices are going up. Villagers are happy with this outcome.

The second problem in these forests is supplying Dakar with charcoal so the city-dwellers can cook their meals. This is the problem that the Forest Service is faced with. In the process of meeting urban demand, the management plans are all about production of charcoal and never about conservation. So, despite that the Forest Service and projects that support them are arguing for project support and management plans on the grounds of environmental protection, the motive for intervening is urban supply. Shortages in the city would be politically very damaging. City dwellers would be very angry with their politicians and the politicians fear this. The Forest Service must keep the supply up. Hence, the problem is not one of ecology, but one of urban supply.

It is important to start a discussion with questions about viewer's assumptions on what the presenting problem is in Nambaradougou and about whether environmental protection is needed. The viewers will see that this is a film about justice and not about ecology.

Once the viewers understand that there is not an ecological crisis in this area, then you can ask 'What is the real problem this film depicts?'

A Minor Problem, Solutions that Won't Fix it – Great Success.

We are looking at a problem that is not as acute as claimed, and solutions, like forest management plans, that have no ecological implications. So, why is this ecologically irrelevant system of forest management so vigorously defended? Because it is a system that allows a) a lucrative urban-based forestry industry to flourish, b) it allows the Forest Service to profit handsomely from fines, bribes, and from donor funds that support the development and implementation of management plans. These plans hold the system of control in place. This set of democratically decentralized forestry policies is a great success – for merchants and foresters.

Where is Democratic Decentralization?

The film is ultimately about representation. While subtle, the point is simple. The elected rural council president in Senegal has the right to make forestry decisions for the forests within his jurisdiction – the forests of the 'ural community' (the most local level of elected local government). The Rural Council President has two rights given by the 1998 forestry code: a) the right to authorize any and all commercial use of the environment, and b) the right to decide how rights to produce will be allocated. But, these rights are more easily point to in the law than implanted in practice. The Rural Council Presidents are pressured to sign forest management plans so that charcoal production is allowed in their area. They are told they are not allowed not to sign (also see Ribot, 2007 film *Weex Dunx*). In Semmiñ Naari Boor, the president made the mistake of signing a management plan – it was a 20 year management plan – and by this act, the Forest Service claimed that he could no longer make decisions over the use of local forests. So, why did he sign? He signed because:

- He risked losing his place on the party list and might not be able to run for rural council again
- He believed the Forest Service when they talked about all of the forest uses that the villagers had expressed an interest in, but he ultimately found that the plan really focused on production of charcoal.
- The foresters claimed that forest management is a technical problem and that villagers cannot make these technical decisions – despite that the forest management system they have in place is unscientific and ineffective for ecological ends.
- He was caught between merchants and foresters on one side who pressured him and asked him not to block production and the forest villagers on the other side who did not want it. He gave in to the merchants and foresters.

Democracy in Senegal's forests ends there. These stories are told in great detail in articles listed at the end of this note.

Whither Profits?

As we see in the film, this is a very profitable sector. But, forest villagers have been kept out of it by being denied quotas. Not even the development project officer could help. The Forest Service locks up the forest and allocates it to urban merchants. They use the quota system, they only allow villagers to produce for local non-lucrative markets, they tell villagers that they are incapable of producing enough charcoal and so they allow the urban merchants to extract from the village forests. Through these many channels the film shows that forest villagers are kept from increasing their income. But they do increase their income. In fact, the quotas won for forest villagers by the World Bank and the USAID projects in this area are very significant. They have enabled forest villagers to increase their income significantly. This is not a trivial point. But, forest villagers still only get a very small fraction

of what is a highly profitable sector. Were they allowed to freely sell in the city, they would certainly profit much more than today.

An Overdetermined Outcome – Repertories of Domination

The Forest Service uses technical arguments and coercion to push aside local democracy. They use technical requirements and a shell game with quotas and contracts to keep forest villagers out of the lucrative urban markets. In the process the foresters are denying forest villagers the material basis of democracy. The rural councils make few decisions over forests and gain little income from it (although their tax income from forestry is going up). The rural people are also only barely increasing their overall income, which would be necessary for them to engage as citizens to try to influence those in decision-making positions. The result is that the rural council president has nothing to offer and therefore is barely legitimate. The people remain very poor and have little surplus time and resources to invest in influence.

A caveat on the increased tax revenues is that the Rural Council is now told by the Forest Service that they must invest revenues from forestry back in forestry. But the laws specifically allow fees and taxes from all sectors to be pooled. Here, the Forest Service is now requiring the rural council to use the funds from forestry to implement the management plans imposed by the Forest Service upon them. They are forced in this manner to pour their labor and their funds into priorities set by the Forest Service. This requirement is against the spirit of democratic decentralization.

Are Conditions Improving?

Yes. Things are getting better in this set of forest villages. They have more income and rural councils have more tax revenues. This is a good thing. But it is only a fraction of what should be expected from integration of rural populations into the charcoal industry. Nevertheless, it is an improving situation. An interesting discussion to have is whether it is a great achievement to improve rural incomes by a few percent when they could be tripled.

Double Edged Reality – Digging into the Title

Where in the film do you see this two faced behavior? When asked what the film's title meant, one forest villager responded: 'For me, I think that it's at the moment in the office of the Director of the Forest Service when he signs the contract. He refuses on one side. When the guy from the National Forestry Merchants Union comes in he approves. But in his approval there is ambiguity. He said to one that there are no more quotas and he then makes arrangements [to allocate quotas] to an other'.

The axe of the Forest Service cuts both ways. It reduces the authority and resource decision arena of elected local councils, making them relatively irrelevant, and, while increasing local income a bit, it blocks local producers from rights to significant production volumes and from the markets in which these resources can be transformed into serious wealth. The double speak, double standards, and contradictory practices of the Forest Service cut down local aspirations. They say one thing but do something else.

- They made promises that never materialized. Forests are 'decentralized' and relabeled as the Rural Community Forests, but the foresters insist they still belong to the 'nation as a whole'.
- They talked of democratic decentralization, but marginalized elected local authorities.
- They talked of forest management, but brought in only production.
- They talked representation and participation, but offered roles only in labor or work that barley paid.
- They talked benefits, but barely offered subsistence income.
- They talked of limited quotas, but handed them out liberally (or perhaps illiberally) to outside merchants.
- They talked forest protection, but licensed the cutting down of the forests.

These issues emerge thorough the film. The questions in the next section will be of use in bringing these kinds of everyday contradictions into the conversation.

OPEN-ENDED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This section contains a set of questions and some potential answers. There are, of course, many more possible questions and answers than can be listed here. These questions are designed to get a discussion started on particular issues that emerge within the film. The answers are only suggestive. Allow the audience to take the lead and only use the 'answers' to spur on discussion if the audience does not easily express its own way of relating to the messages of the film.

Below you will find list of research articles that provide background to the film. See the film web page www.doublebladedaxe.com for updates to this list. These articles discuss the role of the elected councils in representing local people and analyze the role of the council and the roles of a broader set of laws in shaping the distribution of income from forests. Please write to the filmmaker at Jesse.Ribot@gmail.com to suggest additional questions to add to the list below. Please also write to the filmmaker about your experience in showing the film. What do different categories of viewers find resonates with their experience? What do they find unconvincing? What do they feel they have learned from the film? Your comments and observations will help improve the list of questions and will help us to learn more about film and its uses as a means of mobilization and learning.

Neutral Opening Questions

- 1 Does this film reflect your experience here? Does it tell stories that you think are relevant to your own experiences? What are those stories? How are they relevant to your experiences?
- 2 What is occurring in your area that the film does not cover? How is your experience different from what is happening in Senegal's forests?
- 3 What lessons do you take away from the film?
- 4 Can you use these lessons to make improvements here?
- 5 What would you recommend after seeing this film?
 - a To rural populations?
 - b To the Rural Council?
 - c To the Forest Service?
 - d To the Legislature?
 - e To International NGOs (environmental or otherwise)?
 - f To International Donors?

Of course, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to these questions. The important question to ask any audience members is 'why' they react as they do – what is the basis of their feeling or thoughts about the film and the justifications and reasoning behind their comments. Ask them to be specific and talk about what in the film struck them, how it struck them and why. Ultimately, these answers can also be used to explore the assumptions and preconceptions that viewers bring to their interpretations of the film.

Specific Discussion Questions and Answers

What are the central messages of the film?

Some Potential Answers:

- a Despite democratic decentralization of natural resource management, the elected rural councilor has little influence over the management of forests or the allocation of rights to lucrative forest activities. The elected council president is ignored, discursively beaten down, talked into cooperating with the Forest Service and project, tricked and ultimately circumvented – the democratic authority is sidelined as is local democracy.
- b There is great wealth in the forests & very little of that wealth remains with local forest-dependent populations.

- c Peasants are allowed to work as wage laborers, but not allowed to engage in lucrative market transactions. These lucrative market activities are reserved for urban-based merchants.
- d The way forest dependent people are blocked from lucrative activities includes:
 - i Policies that favor urban commercial interests
 - ii Collusion between the foresters and the merchants
 - iii Systematic circumvention of elected local authorities – who cannot represent their constituents in ‘decentralized forest management’

Why did the elected rural councilor have such trouble defending the needs of his constituents?

- e His signature was required before the Forest Service could implement a management or production plan:
 - i He was not consulted in the elaboration of the plan
 - ii He was then pressured into signing it
 - iii He trusted the foresters but was tricked
 - iv The plan stated that its validity was 20 years – so the foresters did not allow him to have a say after he signed the plan
 - v The council president is faced with wanting the project to stay and wanting there to be lucrative activities for the people. But, he also knows that the people are not convinced that these activities are going to be good for them.
 - 1 The people want management for beekeeping (for honey), wildlife (for hunting), watershed management, etc. But the plans are oriented toward commercial production to supply the cities with fuel. The rural council president is under political pressure (not shown in the film) to help supply the cities with fuel.

What is ‘double bladed’ in the film?

Some Potential Answers:

- f Broken promises – The director of the Forest Service says that in 2 months the peasants will have papers for production, but they come 5 months later.
- g Pressuring people to go along with the Forest Service project: Peasants ask to stop production but are convinced to participation in production.
- h Double standards – Director of Forest Service gives 20 truckloads of charcoal to merchant (on phone), the union leader gets 50 truckloads, but he is only willing to give 5 to villagers
- i Bilked of public rights – The elected rural councilor has the right to sign off on any commercial activities and management plans, but signing the management plan takes this right away from him for 20 years
- j Double talk – Final scene points made by peasants:
 - i Isatou: They talk of ‘participation’, but it’s only participation in their project – we work for them
 - ii Isatou’s Husband: They talk of development, but it is only profit for the merchants.
 - iii Rural council President: Management plan that is called ‘management’ but is only a ‘production’ plan
 - iv Rural council President: They talk of management, but it is only production for the market – local objectives and conservation are ignored
- k Tricked into working for wages rather than profit: The peasants take up charcoal production with the promise of being able to profit. But they are just gaining a subsistence wage as labor. They are not allowed into the markets. They have to fight to gain access to the market where the real lucrative activities are. When they do they are blocked at every step. Even with help of the project they are beaten back. When they increase their share to 10% of what they could be making, they are already rich. Were they to gain a greater share (the 90% remaining still being under merchant control), they would be truly wealthy.

Do you see such double standards in the way your own forest service or environmental service operates?

Do double standards occur in other sectors? What are the double standards? How do they work? Who is favored by the system, the policies, the social relations in your area? How are they favored?

- l Open ended discussion.

How is discourse used in this film?

- m Scientific forestry: The notion of forest management being scientific is evoked by the foresters to justify it as the obvious and superior way of doing things despite that it is absurd to the peasants.
- n Anarchic: The activities of the peasants and other woodcutters are called 'anarchic' by the forester as a way of de-legitimizing their claims and concerns.
- o Quota versus contract – the language is changed from Quota to Contract in the ways that rights to production and to marketing of forest products are managed by the Forest Service. But, the actual function of the contract is exactly the same as the function of the quota. 'The quota is dead, long live the quota, now we will call it a contract'.

Based on what you saw, can you explain the structure of access to profit in this sector?

- p Who profits?
- q What enables each group to profit?
 - i Peasants? They are enabled by their connection to the project 'Manage the Forest'. Without protection of the project, they would gain nothing.
 - ii Merchants? They are enabled by the licensing, permits, quotas, protections by the Forest Service. They are enabled by their personal relations with foresters.
 - iii Foresters? They are enabled by petty corruption – the informal taxes taken along the road, the collusion higher up.

How is profit distributed in a sector you know in your own country?

- r Who profits – peasants or others?
- s How do policies play a role in the distribution of profits that you observe?
- t What other factors play a role – collusion, knowledge, social relations, social identities, access to capital, access to markets?

Can you describe political-economic or social hierarchy in this sector?

Who dominates? Who call the shots? What are the political functions of quotas?

How does the lucrative activity of production change relations within the village?

- u The peasant leader, Salimou, starts out angry and against the migrant laborers for cutting the forests. By the end of the film, he becomes a relatively wealthy élite (he is bossing people around, better dressed .). Other villagers are less well off. The migrants are working for him. He is transformed from a poor peasant into a mini-patron.

What policy recommendations might you make? To whom?

There are no right answers here. Discuss, however, who needs to do what for change to happen. You can ask who will carry this recommendation forward? Is it practical? Is it socially and economically sustainable?

How would you guarantee your recommendations would be implemented in this context?

Ask your audience whether anyone in the situation is capable of promulgating and implementing new policies. What challenges will they face? Who might resist their efforts? Who might support them?

FURTHER READINGS TO ACCOMPANY *SEMMIN ÑAARI BOOR*

The articles by Poteete and Ribot 2011 and Larson and Ribot 2007 are the most recent and directly relevant to Semmin Ñaari Boor. Historical background can be found in Ribot 1999a? and 1998. Ribot 1999b gives some background on the ecological data that exist on natural regeneration in Senegal's forests. The film Weex Dunx, also listed below is a prequel to Semmin Ñaari Boor. It tells the story of the marginalization of the Rural Council President, Mr. Weex Dunx. Other educational material and periodic updates are available on the author's film web page, listed below.

Select Scholarly Articles that Inform this Film

- Chhatre, A. 2008. 'Political Articulation and Accountability in Decentralization: Theory and Evidence from India', *Conservation and Society* 6(1): 12–23.
- Bandiaky, S. 2008. 'Gender Inequality in Malidino Biodiversity Reserve, Senegal: Political Parties and the "Village Approach"', *Conservation and Society* 6(1): 62–73.
- Faye, P. 2006. 'Décentralisation, pluralisme institutionnel et démocratie locale : Étude de cas de la gestion du massif forestier Missirah/Kothiary (région de Tambacounda, Sénégal)' Working Paper of program Pour une gestion décentralisée et démocratique des ressources forestières au Sénégal co-organized by the Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD), and World Resources Institute (WRI) available on line at WRI and CODESRIA.
- Poteete, Amy and J. Ribot. 2011. 'Repertoires of Domination: Decentralization as Process in Botswana and Senegal' *World Development* Vol. 39, No. 3. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2010.09.013>.
- Resosudarmo, I. A. P. 2005. 'Closer to People and Trees: Will Decentralization Work for the People and Forests of Indonesia?' in J. C. Ribot and A. M. Larson (eds) *Democratic Decentralization Through a Natural Resource Lens*. New York: Routledge, pp. 110–132.
- Ribot, J., Thorsten Treue and Jens Friis Lund. 2010 'Democratic Decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Its contribution to forest management, livelihoods, and enfranchisement'. *Environmental Conservation* Vol. 37. http://journals.cambridge.org/repo_A78zD0cJ.
- Ribot, J. 2009a. 'Access over Authority: Recentralizing Benefits in Senegal's Forestry Decentralization' *Development and Change*. Vol. 40, No. 1.
- Larson, Anne, and J. Ribot. 2007. 'The Poverty of Forestry Policy: Double Standards on and Uneven Playing Field'. *Journal of Sustainability Science*. Vol. 2, No. 2. http://pdf.wri.org/sustainability_science_poverty_of_forestry_policy.pdf.
- Ribot, J. 1999a. 'Decentralization and Participation in Sahelian Forestry: Legal Instruments of Central Political-Administrative Control', *Africa*, Vol. 69, No.1.
- Ribot, J. 1999b. 'A History of Fear: Imagining Deforestation in the West African Sahel', *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, Vol. 8.
- Ribot, J. 1998. 'Theorizing Access: Forest Profits along Senegal's Charcoal Commodity Chain', *Development and Change*, Vol. 29, No. 2.

Policy Briefs Related to Democratic Decentralization of Forestry in Senegal

- Ribot, J. 2009b. 'Analysis of Senegal's Draft Forestry Code: With Special Attention to its Support for Decentralization Laws'. Report to International Resources Group (IRG), Washington, DC, For USAID, Senegal, October 2009.
- Ribot, J. 2006. 'Analyse de la filière Charbon de Bois au Sénégal: Recommandations' Policy brief based on

the Senegal Dutch research program 'Pour une gestion décentralisée et démocratique des ressources forestières au Sénégal', 30 September.

Ribot, J. 2008. *Building Local Democracy through Natural Resources Interventions: An Environmentalist's Responsibility*. A Policy Brief. Washington: World Resources Institute. <http://www.wri.org/publication/building-local-democracy>.

Ribot, J. 2004. *Waiting for Democracy: The Politics of Choice in Natural Resource Decentralizations*. Washington: World Resources Institute. [Published in French in 2007.] <http://www.wri.org/publication/waiting-democracy-politics-choice-natural-resource-decentralization>.

Ribot, J. 2002. *Democratic Decentralization of Natural Resources: Institutionalizing Popular Participation*. Washington: World Resources Institute. [Also published in French and Spanish in 2004.] http://pdf.wri.org/ddnr_full_revised.pdf.

Other Films

'Weex Dunx and the Quota: Plucking Local Democracy in Senegal'

Co-directed by Pape Faye and Jesse Ribot **Synopsis: 'Weex Dunx and the Quota: Plucking Local Democracy in Senegal'**, (Twenty-four minute video—Wolof with English and French subtitles). Synopsis: Mr. Weex Dunx (Mr. Scapegoat), the elected President of the Rural Council of Nambaradougou (Place of many problems), is ecstatic to learn that new decentralization laws have given his council the right to manage and use forests. The council now has the right to decide how much woodcutting will take place in their jurisdiction and who gets to do the cutting and selling. But, when Weex Dunx tries to exercise his new powers he is confronted by incredulous foresters, administrators and merchants who are in shock that he thinks he can make decisions about the forests. Exasperated because these powerful notables don't like him if he resists and his people don't like him if he gives in, Weex Dunx is torn between doing what is right for his community and surrendering to pressures from powerful people whom he does not want to disappoint. [The research for this film is presented in Ribot 2009 article in the journal *Development and Change* in the list of Articles above.] Film available at www.doublebladedaxe.com.

Supporting Webpages

The web page www.doublebladedaxe.com gives background information on the making of the film Semmiñ Ñaari Boor and Weex Dunx. The web page also provides educational materials and links for purchasing the films. However, if you prefer to view the films in lower quality on line, they can both be viewed at:

- -Semmiñ Ñaari Boor (English subtitles) [<http://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/play/7645/Semmin-Naari-Boor--Double-Bladed-Axe->]
- -Weex Dunx and the Quota (English subtitles) [<http://vimeo.com/9922998>]
- -Weex Dunx et le Quota (French subtitles). [<http://vimeo.com/617574>]

Discussion of Weex Dunx Film by Author. For a discussion of the film by the author on the Television Program 'Dialogue' of the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington, DC, please see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oi8ZjuTMfRU>.

An Ode to the Lorax, 'àe B usiness of Sustainable Development: An African Forest Tale', This is a farcical telling of the story of forestry in West Africa. It is a story for children and select adults with illustrations by Senegalese artist Mor Gueye. For a reading of the poem with the images please see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Li_taFYxA6s. A discussion with the author of this story can also be seen on the television program 'Dialogue' of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. See http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=dialogue.thismonth&dialogue_id=132287.

ANNEX B: FILM SHOWING INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AND POST-SHOWING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The film preamble and discussion questions were meant to be as neutral as possible. We hoped that this would allow audiences to view the film and to bring out whatever aspects they felt were pertinent. Below are the statement read to viewers before each showing and the questions posed to them after the showing. The post-showing discussions were recorded and analyzed for this report.

PREAMBLE TO FILM SHOWING

This film showing is part of a research program organized by ENDA Tiers monde and the University of Illinois. ENDA is a research NGO in Dakar dedicated to environment and development issues. University of Illinois is a large research university in the United States. We are conducting research on the effectiveness of the film Semmin Naari Boor in communicating findings and recommendations to different groups.

We are showing you this film because we want to learn about how films like this one are of use in communicating research findings and recommendations to different groups. We are also interested in learning whether you think the researchers understood the situation they have depicted in the film. In this sense we want to learn more about the accuracy of our research. We want to discuss with you after the film whether the film is of use to you in understanding your own situation. We also want to ask you whether you think the film has accurately depicted the situation in forestry management. Does it reflect your experience? Did the researchers understand the situation? If so, please let us know after. If not, what did the film misunderstand and misrepresent? We will ask these and similar questions after.

We want to tape record the discussion after the showing of the film. If you do not want us to, we will not record the discussion. Please let us know with a show of hands if anyone objects to a recording of the discussion after the film. If anyone objects we will not record the discussion. We will just discuss the film with you.

Viewing the film is entirely voluntary. Staying for the discussion is also entirely voluntary. At the end of the showing we will leave a few minutes for people who would not like to participate in the discussion to leave. Also, your names will not be used nor will the name of this village be mentioned anywhere in our work. The recordings will be destroyed after they are written down some time in the next three weeks. No names will be written down. So, you will not be identified in the research in any way. Of course, we cannot guarantee that your friends and colleagues in this room will not talk with each other about what you say – but, of course, you know that.

If you have any questions about our research program, please contact us at ENDA in Dakar. You can call us any time at 77 526 2876. That's my number, Thierno Bal Seck. Anyone who wants a copy of my card, please ask me after. I'll have also left copies on a table near the door.

The film is 49 minutes long and we hope to discuss it for forty-five minutes to an hour after the showing.

OPEN DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS AFTER SHOWINGS

- Are there any comments or questions?
[Give a lot of time for this question. Allow open discussion and encourage a dialogue for at least 20 or 30 minutes (allow it to continue if people are excited and conversing). After this first discussion stops or slows down, ask the questions below if they were not answered. The discussion should last about one hour in total. Answer questions the best you can. If you do not know the answer, please ask if anyone else in the audience can answer the question.]
- Is what you saw what you experience in real life?
- Is this what the situation in charcoal making and marketing is really like?
- What, if anything, in the film strikes you as new or surprising?
- What did you learn, if anything, from the film?
- Is this film of use to you? Please explain how.

ANNEX C: SPREAD OF WEEEX DUNX

The following are the author's field notes on the spread of the film *Weex Dunx* (January 2009).

Film's Effects—Weex Dunx and the Quota used by Rural Council President

The film *Weex Dunx* and the Quota had had great circulation and is being used in a number of places as an educational tool and as a basis for discussion and organizing. The film has been used at Boston University, New York University, University of Michigan, Yale University, Berkeley, University of Colorado, Copenhagen University, Wageningen University in the Netherlands, University, and Uppsala in Sweden and many other places. Professors are using it to discuss the problems that forest villagers face in claiming rights that have ostensibly been transferred to them and to discuss issues that decentralized elected local authorities face when they try to exercise their new powers.

The film is also being used by an NGO in Senegal called ENDA Thiers Monde. The Lead Africa program based at ENDA is taking the film around the country, showing it to groups of rural councilors and other development practitioners in order to provoke discussions that help enable rural authorities to effectively exercise their role as representatives. ICLD, the International Center for Local Democracy in Sweden, had used the film in trainings of local government authorities.

The film has also been taken up by at least one local elected official. One of the copies we sent to the rural councilor of Koutiary in the Tambacounda Region of Senegal, Mr. Baganda Sakho, has been showing the film all over. He told us that he showed it at least ten times in Paris and in Belgium when he was in Europe visiting Senegalese living abroad. He also has shown it to several groups in Eastern Senegal. One showing was to a group of rural councilors who met in Bakel, another city in Eastern Senegal. Sakho explained that the film sparks fantastic discussions. He said that everyone who sees it asks 'why did Weex Dunx sign the papers' and he explained that this is an excellent way of discussing the responsibilities and pressures on the Rural Council Presidents.

ANNEX D: ORGANIZATION OF FILM SHOWINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first film screening was May 2010 at Douda Seck Cultural Center in Dakar. 150 people attended. These included several donors, numerous forestry department officials, four former directors of the Forest Service, rural councilors, a deputy in the national assembly, researchers, journalists, and the actors and their families.

Six research film screenings took place from 5-11th May 2011 in the Tambacounda Region. Three took place in forest villages. The three other showings were to: Charcoal producers, USAID's Wula Nafaa Project, and Rural Councilors (joined by a Local Forest Service Officer, just making the responses less viable). Moderators for all of these six discussions were: Main moderator: Papa Faye (researcher at Bern University); Co-moderator: Thierno Bal Seck (Researcher, LeadAfrica, ENDA Tiers Monde); and Interpret & technical issues: Aliou Sané (Technician, LeadAfrica, ENDA Tiers Monde).

One debate about the film was recorded for Radio and Television of Senegal (RTS) between the film maker Jesse Ribot and Commandant Mamadou Fall, the Director of Production and Management of Senegal's Forest Service and Abdoulaye Sow of the National Union of Forestry Cooperatives. The debate was recorded in December 2011. This debate is available on line (see RTS 2012). The debate was recorded to accompany the showing of the film in March 2012 on national television. The debate and film were shown four times at prime time. The debate can be viewed at See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp9t91rwBCo>.

ANNEX E: DYNAMICS OF CHARCOAL PRODUCTION AND CENTRAL CONTROL IN SENEGAL

This annex is included to give the reader more in-depth background for understanding the actors, the policies, and the struggles in Senegal's forestry sector today.

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION IN SENEGAL'S FORESTRY SECTOR

This section goes deeper into the story of double standards applied by government to forest villagers under decentralized charcoal exploitation in Senegal. In 1998, as described above, set of well-crafted fair laws to decentralize forestry decisions to local elected councils were legislated. But then they were mis-implemented in practice. Little decentralization was achieved. Democracy over forestry decisions was thwarted. Forest control and market access remain concentrated with the Forest Service and large-scale or urban-based merchants. In this case it was double standards in forest access and in market access that prevented forest villagers from being represented in forestry decisions and prevented them from benefiting from forest management. These double standards are part of a broader repertoire of domination exercised by the Forest Service over rural subjects. In the end, Senegal's Forest Service makes decisions, urban-based merchants and foresters profit. Elected rural councils sit on the sideline. It was from this case, informed by numerous case studies, that the films discussed in the report were developed. These double standards inspired the title of the second film, 'Double Bladed Axe' (referring to double standards), which is the focus of this report. Material for this section is selected from Larson and Ribot 2008 and Poteete and Ribot 2011.

Senegal: Rural Councilors and the Charcoal Quota

'There is a certain complicity of the Forest Service—
it is not against us, it is for the interest of the patrons'.
Elected Rural Council President
in discussion 14 February
2006 at Tamba Atelier with
four Rural Council Presidents

Until 1998, the system of forest management in Senegal remained highly centralized—orbiting around the system of licenses, permits and quotas allocated by the national Forest Service. A national quota for charcoal production was fixed by the Forest Service each year. Forest Service officials and agents claimed this quota was based on estimates of the total national demand for charcoal and the potential for the forests to meet this demand. But these estimates were neither based on surveys of consumption nor on inventories of forest productivity. Indeed, there was (and still is) a persistent gap between the quantity set for the quota and the much-higher figures from statistics on consumption (M. Faye 2003:56-59, 2013; PROGEDE 2002:59; MEMI 1995:5; Madon 1987; Leitmann 1987; ESMAP 1989; RPTES 1994:22). In practice, the quota is based on the previous year's quota, which is lowered or raised depending on various political considerations. Over the past decade, the quota was lowered almost every year—regardless of demand, thus increasing illegal production (since demand was always met) (Ribot 2006).

Prior to the new decentralized forestry laws, the nationally set quota was divided among some 120 to 170 enterprises—cooperatives, economic interest groups (GIE) and corporations—holding professional

forest producer licenses delivered by the Forest Service. Allocation of quotas among these entities was based on their previous year's quota with adjustments based on whether or not the enterprise had fully exploited its quota and had engaged in positive forest management activities, such as reforestation. Some patrons did plant trees by the side of the road to demonstrate such efforts—they called these plantations their '*chogo goro*' or bribes—since these helped them get larger quota allocations from the Forest Service. During this period, new professional licenses were also allocated most years (enabling new cooperatives to enter the market).

Each year after the allocation of quotas, the Forest Service and ministry of environment held a national meeting to 'announce' the opening of the new season. They passed a decree listing the quotas for each enterprise and indicating in which of the two production regions, Tambacounda or Kolda, these quotas were to be exploited. Soon after, the Regional Forest Services then called a meeting in each regional capital to inform the recipients of the location they would be given to exploit their quotas. Sites were chosen based on standing wood. The forest agents organized the zone into very loose rotations and chose sites by eye, such that some areas that were considered exhausted would be closed, while others that had not been official production sites for a time would be re-opened. There was no local say in the matter.

Progressive legal changes giving the rural populations new rights occurred under decentralization reforms in the late 1990s. Senegal's 1996 decentralization law gave Rural Communities (the most-local level of local government) jurisdiction over forests in their territorial boundaries. The Rural Council (the elected body governing the Rural Community) is transferred jurisdiction over 'management of forests on the basis of a management plan approved by the competent state authority' (RdS 1996a:art.30), and the 1998 forestry code (RdS 1998) gives the council the right to determine who will have the right to produce in these forests (art.L8,R21). Further, even the more general framing law of the decentralization gives the council jurisdiction over 'the organization of exploitation of all gathered plant products and the cutting of wood' (RdS 1996b:art.195). Finally, the forestry code states that 'Community Forests are those forests situated outside of the forested domain of the State and included within the administrative boundaries of the Rural Community who is the manager' (RdS 1998:art.R9). The forested domain of the state consists of areas reserved for special uses and protection (RdS 1998:R2), and most of Senegal's forests are not reserved. In short, under the new laws most Rural Communities control large portions of the forests—if not all of the forests—within their territorial boundaries.

To protect the rights over these forests, the forestry code requires the Forest Service to obtain the signature of the Rural Council President (elected from among the Rural Councilors) before any commercial production can take place in their forests (art.L4;R). For their part, Rural Council President presidents play an executive role and cannot take action prior to a meeting and deliberation of the council whose decisions are taken by a majority vote (RdS 1996b:arts.200,212). In short, the new laws require a majority vote of the rural council approving production before anyone can produce in Rural Community forests.

The radical new 1998 forestry code changed everything—at least on paper. The amount of production would be based on the biological potential of each Rural Community's forests rather than by decree in Dakar and the regional capital. The enterprises to work in a given forest would be chosen by the rural council rather than the National Forest Service in Dakar. If implemented, the new system would empower rural councilors to manage their forests for the benefit of the Rural Community. The law allowed a three-year transition period from the quota system to the system based on rural council involvement. The quota system was to be entirely eliminated by 21 February 2001 (RdS 1998:art.R66).

But despite all the new Rural Community rights, as of 2006 little has changed. The Forest Service continues to manage and to allocate access to the forests via centrally allocated licenses, quotas, and permits. The biggest change is the requirement of the Rural Council President's signature. Even this point is still largely meaningless, however, as will be seen below.

The Rural Council's new rights to decide over forest use are being attenuated by double standards concerning forest access and market access. These attenuations are not built into the policies but rather emerge in implementation. The new laws give the Rural Council President rights over forests, but the Forest Service refuses to transfer the powers. Rural populations in Senegal lose out due to two key double

standards: access to forests and access to commercial activities are both skewed against them. These are discussed below.

Double Standards in Forest Access – Beating back Elected Local Authorities

The Rural Council President has the legal rights to access forests, but foresters do not allow him to exercise his prerogative. Foresters argue that villagers and councilors are ignorant of forest management and that national priorities trump local ones. They treat the Rural Council President's signature as a requirement rather than as a transfer of powers or change in practice.

The Forest Service has deeply entrenched biases against implementing local forest management as required by current laws. The Regional Forest Service deputy director was asked, 'Given that the majority of Rural Council Presidents do not want production in the forests of their Rural Communities, how do you choose their Rural Community as a production site?' He replied with a non-comprehending look on his face, 'If the Rural Council Presidents have acceptable reasons, if the local population would not like...?' He then stated, 'the resource is for the entire country. To not use it, there must be technical reasons. The populations are there to manage. There is a national imperative. There are preoccupations of the state. This can't work if the populations pose problems for development'. (Interview, Deputy Director of the Regional Forest Service, Tambacounda, 3 December 2005.)

Nevertheless, the deputy director did understand the law that he was breaking every day. When asked to explain the function of the Rural Council President's signature, he replied, 'the Rural Council President signature must come before the quota is allocated, before the regional council determines which zones are open to exploitation'. In short, Rural Councils are asked for their signature, but not allowed to say no. Their argument—that the population they represent opposes production—is not respected or even understood. The foresters simply expect rural councilors to decide based on the same criteria that they use, and on the assumption that production is necessary.

One sub-prefect told me how he convinced a Rural Council President to sign: 'I told him "If you stay in the law, you run no risk. When you step out of your legal jurisdiction [*competence*], you can be crushed. A judge can condemn you"'. I asked him to explain what he meant. He said, 'Let me give you an example of a marriage certificate. If a couple comes with all the necessary papers, I must sign; it is my job to sign! Same with the production order [the paper the Rural Council President must sign before production is allowed]. Patrons and the foresters come with papers. It is the right of the patrons to produce; it's their profession'. When I asked if this meant that it is illegal for the Rural Council President not to sign, he nodded his head yes. This perverse interpretation of the law reduces the council and Rural Council President to administrators, contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1996 law of decentralization and the forestry code of 1998.

In the four Rural Communities where the World Bank and USAID have set up forest management projects, the new forestry laws are being applied—albeit selectively. In project areas rural people have the opportunity to participate in forest exploitation, but only if they engage in forest management activities required by the Forest Service. The ecological evidence indicates that few measures are necessary since natural regeneration in the zone is robust (Ribot 1999b). Forest villagers know this and do not see the need for most management activities. Nevertheless, to be allowed to manage their own forests, rural communities must use management plans created by the Forest Service. In addition, villagers are required to produce charcoal using the ostensibly more-efficient Casamance kiln (which most producers do not believe is more efficient and do not like using), rather than traditional kilns. Merchants are not required to have their workers use this new kiln. That is, whereas urban-based merchants install migrant laborers in non-project areas where they use traditional kilns and have no management plans, villagers wishing to engage in charcoal production must do so under strictly supervised and highly managed circumstances. (Even in these project areas, most of the Rural Council Presidents and councilors did not want production, but were forced to sign off under pressure from the Forest Service—similarly to Rural Council Presidents in non-project areas) (Ribot 2008a).

By creating a spatially limited implementation zone for existing policies, the projects serve as an ex-

cuse not to implement the laws more generally. They are showcase areas. Foresters have argued that the projects represent cutting edge practices that are being tested before expanding to other sites. This argument, however, did not justify prohibiting forest villagers outside of the production areas from producing charcoal while allocating their forests to the migrant woodcutters of the urban-based merchants.¹ Villagers should be allowed to produce if merchants are allowed to produce – without any management regulation. In fact, the project areas serve as a decoy. When donors come to visit the forests, they are shown project areas where management—rather, the labor to implement management obligations imposed by the Forest Service—is ‘decentralized’. They do not see the rest of the forests where Forest Service activities have barely changed since colonial times. The project in this case reduces the progressive 1998 forestry laws to a territorially limited showcase experiment.

In the past few years this practice has changed some. Since 2008, all charcoal is said to come from the managed areas. The new configuration of non-implementation appears now to be the pathways of circumventing regulation altogether – the many alternative means for bringing the illegal-legal charcoal to Dakar. P. Faye (2013) have just completed a study of these pathways.

Double Standards in Market Access – Recentralizing Authorization via Quotas, Licenses and then Contracts

The Forest Service requires all those wishing to trade in the charcoal market (called charcoal patrons) to be members of a registered cooperative, economic interest group (GIE) or a private enterprise in order to request from the Forest Service a license (Carte Professionnelle d’Exploitant Forestier) in the name of their organization (See Bâ 2006a). Despite the elimination of the quota in 2001, production and marketing remain impossible without quotas, since permits are still only allocated to those with quotas.²

Upon receipt of a professional card, the member’s organization is allocated a portion of the national quota in the annual process of quota allocation. In 2004, the national quota of 500,000 Qx was divided into 462,650 Qx initial quotas and 37,350 Qx of encouragement quotas (7.5%) (RdS 2004d:11-12). In a process described by Bâ (2006a), the initial quotas are allocated at the beginning of the season and the encouragement quotas are allocated at the discretion of the Forest Service and minister later in the season.

Each year new cooperatives and GIE (economic interest groups—a kind of for-profit collective business) have been added to the market. In 2005, there were 164 organizations (RdS 2005), up by 18 new organizations from 147 organizations in 2004 (RdS 2004d:12). The number of organizations rises each year, yet all of the peasant cooperatives we have spoken with who have requested professional cards have been refused.

Nevertheless, the quota per patron is shrinking, and many patrons believe that new licenses are being allocated to relatives and political allies. ‘The registration of new entities is due to the officials: the president of the national union and the state. Most of the entities are family businesses—brothers and sisters’. P. Faye (Personal Communication, July 2013) now also says he has observed cooperatives established for the current patron’s wives and sons. In particular, they are the brothers, sisters and wives of other already registered patrons. According to older patrons, some of the new organizations do nothing but resell their quotas to others (Patron2 25 Dec 05). As one patron told us in disgust, ‘most of the large quota people are new entrants into the market’ (Interview AMD, Cooperative president, Patron Charbonnier, Tamba, 26 December 2005).

In recent years, the Forest Service, upon recommendation by the director of the national union, has been allocating licenses and quotas to women (Interview, union leader, Mr. X.S., 22 Feb 2006). This is a new phenomenon.³ In an interview with one such woman, we learned that she was the wife of an established patron. Forming her own cooperative appears to be a strategy to increase her husband’s quota

1 In fact, there is no reason to believe that the migrants’ methods are any better than no management at all. There is also no evidence that the ‘management’ used in project areas is better than no management or the migrant woodcutter practices.

2 Like the quota, the license too is illegal under Senegal’s current laws (see RdS 1995, Decree 95-132).

3 In the 1980s, the only woman merchant in the market took over the business after her husband had died (Ribot 1990).

(Interview by Salieu Core Diallo Feb 2006). Other patrons are not happy with this. One told us ‘X.S. [the national union president] was given a supplementary quota [officially called an “encouragement” quota]. They give quotas and supplementary quotas to women. These women are behind X.S.’ (Interview, Rural Council President at 14 February 2006 workshop).

Over the past several years, rural councilors and other rural community members have requested licenses so that they could get quotas.⁴ In one case a rural GIE president went to the Director of the Forestry Service in Dakar to request the card. He explained: ‘We put together a GIE in 1998 with its own forest production unit. We filed our registration papers at Tamba [the regional capital]—it went all the way to Dakar. I saw the dossier at Hann [National Forestry Office]... We asked for cooperative member cards and for a quota. We were discouraged. We went to Hann and to Tamba. In Dakar, they wanted to give us quotas as individuals. I said “no” in solidarity with the rest of my colleagues with whom I was putting together the GIE’ (Interview, elected rural council member, Tambacounda Region, 22 December 2005). A similar story was recounted by a GIE president in Missirah (Interview, December 2005).

The forestry service explains their refusal to give professional cards to local GIE by saying ‘they need to be trained’ and explaining that ‘if we let them produce, they will learn the bad techniques of the surga [migrant woodcutters]’ who work for the current patrons (Interviews, 2 IREF officials in Tamba December 2005 and three ATEF). First, the community has to be organized into village committees and trained to manage and survey forest rotations and to use the Casamance kiln [these are all requirements within project areas but not requirements under the law]. Meanwhile, however, the Forest Service continues to admit new cooperatives that have no knowledge of production whatsoever and to hand out quotas to patrons who are producing without any training or management within managed and non-managed zones.

After the initial and encouragement quotas are allocated, illegal production and transport fill in the gap between legal supply and actual consumption. But these illegal activities can only be done by those who hold licenses and quotas—since license and quota holders can use their licenses to obtain supplementary permits and can hide extra charcoal with their legal loads. This is how the gap between the quota and consumption is filled. The market—legal and illegal—is tied up in the hands of a small privileged group of elite well-connected patrons. (Ribot 2006; 1990.)

For more historical information on Senegal’s forestry sector laws, see Ribot 1999a.

4 ‘The Rural Council Presidents organized to demand their own quotas. Patron X was our point man. E&F said no, because decentralization is for protecting the forests, not to exploit them.’ (Interview, President of UNCEFS, 9 July 2004).

WORKS CITED

- Agrawal A (2005) Environmentalism: technologies of government and the making of subjects. Duke University Press, Durham.
- Agrawal A (2001) The regulatory community: decentralization and the environment in the Van Panchayats (Forest Councils) of Kumaon. *Mountain Research and Development* 21:208-11.
- Bà ED (2006a) Le quota est mort, vive le quota! Ou les vicissitudes de la réglementation de l'exploitation du charbon de bois au Sénégal. Environmental Governance in Africa, Working Paper no. 19, World Resources Institute, Washington, D.C.
- Bà ED (2006b) La réglementation de la filière du charbon de bois à l'épreuve de la décentralisation: entre discours, lois et pratiques. Conseil pour le développement de la recherche en sciences sociales en Afrique.
- Bakhtin, M (1981). 'Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel'. In *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: Univ. Texas Press.
- Baviskar, A (2002) 'Between the micro-politics and administrative imperatives: Decentralization and the watershed mission in Madhya Pradesh, India'. Paper presented at the World Resources Institute Workshop on Decentralization and the Environment, Bellagio, Italy, 18-22 February.
- Blundo, G. and JP Olivier de Sardan (with N. B. Arifari and M. Tidjani Alou) (2006) Everyday Corruption and the State. Citizens and Public Officials in Africa, London: Zed Books.
- Blundo G. and JP Olivier de Sardan (2001) La corruption quotidienne en Afrique de l'Ouest. *Politique africaine*, 2001/3 N° 83, p. 8-37. DOI : 10.3917/polaf.083.0008
- Boutinot, L and CN Diouf (2006) Quand certaines approches participatives engendrent des formes ambiguës de mobilisation de la société civile. *Quelques exemples à propos de la gestion des ressources naturelles au Sénégal*, dans Bertrand, A, Karsenty, A & P Montagne (dir.), *L'Etat et la gestion locale durable des forêts en Afrique francophone et à Madagascar*, Paris, Éditions L'Harmattan.
- Boutinot L and CN Diouf (2007) Les linéaments de la politique forestière dans les normes de régulation institutionnelle de la filière du bois énergie au Sénégal, *Afrique contemporaine*, 2007/2 n° 222, p. 57-82. DOI : 10.3917/afco.222.0057
- Boutinot, L (2001) De la complexité de la décentralisation. Exemple de la gestion des ressources forestières au Sénégal. *Bulletin de l'APAD* [En ligne], 22 | 2001, mis en ligne le 15 décembre 2005, Consulté le 20 juin 2013. URL : <http://apad.revues.org/52>
- Branaman, A (1997). Goffman's social theory. In: Lemert, C., Branaman, A. (Eds.), *The Goffman Reader*. Blackwell, Malden, MA, pp. xlv-lxxxii.
- Cooke, B and U Kothari (2001) *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London: Zed Books.
- Douglas, Mary. 1985. *Risk Acceptability According to the Social Sciences*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- ESMAP (1989) Senegal Household Energy Strategy. Report no. 096/89, Joint UNDP/World Bank Energy Sector Management Assistance Program, Activity Completion Report.
- Faye, M (2003) Deuxième enquête sur les flux de combustibles ligneux. Rapport Provisoire, PROGEDE, Composante Demande. Réalisée avec l'assistance de Koffi Akakpo and Latif Guy Armel Dramani.
- Faye, P (2013) Analyse de la filière charbon de bois en zones USAID-Wula Nafaa – Programme Agriculture/Gestion des ressources naturelles. Marges et parts des acteurs de la filière charbon de bois. Report prepared for The World Resources Institute, Washington, D.C., May 2013. Faye, P (2006) Décentralisation, pluralisme institutionnel et démocratie locale : étude de cas de la gestion du massif forestier Missirah/Kothiary, région de Tambacounda, Sénégal. Dakar: CODESRIA, 2006.- 48p. (available at <http://www.wri.org/publications?page=13>)
- Faye, P. (2006) 'Décentralisation, pluralisme institutionnel et démocratie locale : Étude de cas de la gestion du massif forestier Missirah/Kothiary (région de Tambacounda, Sénégal)' Working Paper of program Pour une gestion décentralisée et démocratique des ressources forestières au Sénégal co-organized by the Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD), and World Resources Institute (WRI) available on line at WRI and CODESRIA.
- Fraser, Nancy (2008) 'From redistribution to recognition? Dilemmas of justice in a "postsocialist" age.' In K. Olsen (Ed.), *Adding Insult to Injury Nancy Fraser Debates Her Critics*. London, Verso.

- Kanté, AM (2006) 'Décentralisation sans représentation: le charbon de bois entre les collectivités locales et l'Etat', Working Paper for World Resources Institute, CIRAD-Foret, and Conseil pour le Développement de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales en Afrique. Dakar: CODESRIA. Larson A and JC Ribot (2008) *Democratic Decentralisation through a Natural Resource Lens*. London: Routledge.
- Larson, A and JC Ribot (2007) 'The Poverty of Forestry Policy: Double Standards on and Uneven Playing Field'. *Journal of Sustainability Science*. Vol. 2, No. 2. http://pdf.wri.org/sustainability_science_poverty_of_forestry_policy.pdf.
- Leitmann J (1987) Draft report on household energy strategies for Senegal, World Bank (unpublished).
- Madon G (1987) Note sur le contrôle des flux de charbon de bois. Report ENERDOM/SEN/87, DE-MIDA/World Bank, DEFC-MPN.
- Manin, B, Przeworski, A. and Stokes, C. (1999) Elections and representation. In *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, ed. Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marx, K (1994) *The Eighteenth Brumaire Of Louis Bonaparte*, International Publishers, New York.
- MEMI-Ministère de l'Energie, des Mines et de l'Industrie (1995) La consommation de Dakar en combustibles ligneux. L'Observatoire de Combustibles Domestiques 5:7-8.
- Peluso, N (1992) *Rich Forests Poor People: Resource Control and Resistance in Java*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Poteete, Amy and JC Ribot (2011) 'Repertoires of Domination: Decentralization as Process in Botswana and Senegal' *World Development* Vol. 39, No. 3. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2010.09.013>.
- PROGEDE (2002) Enquete nationale aupres des ménages sur la consommation de combustibles domestiques. ECODOM. PROGEDE, Composante Demande. Juin 2002.
- RdS-- République du Sénégal (2005) Arrêté fixant les modalités d'organisation de la campagne d'exploitation forestière 2005. République du Senegal, Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature.
- RdS (2004a) Protocol d'entente entre le conseil rural de Suutu Yuro, représenté par son président Mr. Bassory Cisse et L'Union Nationale des Cooperatives des Exploitants Forestiers du Senegal (UNCEFS) Dont le siège est à Pikine Tally Boumack Parcelle No 3204 bis, représentée par son président Mr. Abdoulaye Sow. République du Sénégal, Région de Tambacounda, Département de Tambacounda, Arrondissement de Suutu Yuro, Communauté Rurale de Suutu Yuro. No date on document, but document was signed in 2004 for 2004-2005 production season.
- RdS (2004b) Convocation No. 05/CRTC/Rural Council President. République du Sénégal, Région de Tambacounda, Conseil Régionale de Tambacounda, Tambacounda, 04 Mar. 2004.
- RdS (2004c) Compte rendu réunion de notification des quotas de la campagne d'exploitation forestière 2004. République du Senegal, Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature, Direction des Eaux, Forêts, Chasses et de la Conservation des Sols, Inspection Régionale de Tambacounda.
- RdS (2004d) Convocation No. 000550/MEA/DEFCCS. Arrêté fixant les modalités d'organisation de la campagne d'exploitation forestière 2004, Ministère de l'Environnement et de l'Assainissement, République du Sénégal, 8 February 2004.
- RdS (1998) Code Forestier. Loi no. 98/03 du 08 janvier 1998 et Décret no. 98/164 du 20 février 1998. République du Sénégal, Ministère de l'environnement et de la protection de la nature, direction des Eaux, Forêts, Chasse et de la Conservation des Sols.
- RdS (1996a) Loi portant transfert de compétences aux régions aux communes et aux communautés rurales. République du Sénégal, Dakar 22 mars.
- RdS (1996b) Loi Portant Code des Collectivités Locales. République du Sénégal, Dakar 22 mars.
- RdS (1995) Décret 95-132 du 1^{er} février 1995, Portant libéralisation de l'accès à certaines professions, République du Sénégal.
- Ribot, J. (2010) 'Semmiñ Naari Boor'. Film. See www.doublebladedaxe.com.
- Ribot, J (2009a) 'Access over Authority: Recentralizing Benefits in Senegal's Forestry Decentralization' *Development and Change*. Vol. 40, No. 1.
- Ribot, J (2009b) 'Analysis of Senegal's Draft Forestry Code: With Special Attention to its Support for Decentralization Laws'. Report to International Resources Group (IRG), Washington, DC, For USAID, Senegal, October 2009.
- Ribot, J (2008a). 'Authority over Forests: Negotiating Democratic Decentralization in Senegal', Representation, Equity and Environment Working Paper Series (formerly 'Environmental Governance in Africa' Working Paper Series) Paper No. 36. Available at: http://pdf.wri.org/wp36_ribot.pdf [Available in French at: http://pdf.wri.org/ribot_french_wp36.pdf]

- Ribot, J (2008b). *Building Local Democracy through Natural Resources Interventions: An Environmentalist's Responsibility*. A Policy Brief. Washington: World Resources Institute. <http://www.wri.org/publication/building-local-democracy>.
- Ribot, J. (2007) 'Weex Dunx and the Quota: The Plucking of Democracy in Senegal'. Film. See WWW.doublabledaxe.com. Also viewable with on Vimeo.com.
- Ribot, J (2006) Analyse de la filière charbon de bois au Sénégal: recommandations. Policy brief based on the Senegal Dutch research program "Pour une gestion décentralisée et démocratique des ressources forestières au Sénégal," 1 September.
- Ribot, J (2004) Waiting for democracy: the politics of choice in natural resource decentralization. World Resources Institute, Washington, D.C. Ribot, JC (2002) *Democratic Decentralization of Natural Resources: Institutionalizing Popular Participation*. Washington: World Resources Institute. [Also published in French and Spanish in 2004.] http://pdf.wri.org/ddnr_full_revised.pdf.
- Ribot, J (1999a) Decentralization and participation in Sahelian forestry: legal instruments of central political-administrative control. *Africa* 69.
- Ribot, J (1999b) A history of fear: imagining deforestation in the West African Sahel. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 8.
- Ribot, J (1998) Theorizing access: forest profits along Senegal's charcoal commodity chain. *Development and Change* 29.
- Ribot, J. (1997). 'An Ode to the Lorax: The Business of Sustainable Development, An African Forest Tale', *Africa Today*, Vol. 44, No. 2. Reprinted in *Lokayan Bulletin* (New Delhi), Vol. 13, No. 3, 1997. Reprinted in *Medicine and Global Survival*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1998.
- Ribot, J (1996) 'Participation Without Representation: Chiefs, Councils and Forestry Law in the West African Sahel', *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Fall 1996, pp. 40-4. (Reproduced as a signature piece in *Encyclopedia Perseus Africana*. New York: Perseus. And republished in 'The Participation Reader' London: Zed Books. 2011.)
- Ribot, J. (1995) 'From Exclusion to Participation: Turning Senegal's Forestry Policy Around?' *World Development*, Vol. 23, No. 9.
- Ribot, J. (1993a) 'Forestry Policy and Charcoal Production in Senegal', *Energy Policy*, Vol. 21, No. 5.
- Ribot, J. (1993b) 'Le Marché du Charbon: obstacle à la foresterie au Sénégal?', *Environnement Africain*, No. 33-36, Vol. IX/1-4, special issue: 'des forêts et des hommes: vers un gestion populaire du patrimoine commun'.
- Ribot, J. (1990) Markets, States and Environmental Policy: The Political Economy of Charcoal in Senegal. Dissertation: University of California at Berkeley, Energy and Resources Group.
- Ribot, J., A. Chhatre and T. Lankina (2008) Introduction: Institutional choice and recognition in the formation and consolidation of local democracy. *Conservation and Society*, 6(1), 1-11.
- Ribot, J., T. Treue and J.F. Lund (2010) 'Democratic Decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Its contribution to forest management, livelihoods, and enfranchisement'. *Environmental Conservation* Vol. 37. http://journals.cambridge.org/repo_A78zD0cJ.
- RPTES (1994) Etude du secteur des énergies traditionnelles: Senegal. Examen des politiques, stratégies et programmes dans le secteur des énergies traditionnelles, World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- RTS (Radoi and Television of Senegal) (2012). Interview of Jesse Ribot, Commandant Fall and El Hadj Abdoulaye Sow on the program *Espace-Nature* by Ibrihima Fall Jr. Feb. 2012. See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp9t91rwBCo>. Or go to YouTube and search 'Ribot Senegal'.
- Scott, J. (1976) *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Seuss, Dr. (1971) *The Lorax*. New York: Random House.
- Thiaw, S. (2005) 'Les conseils ruraux dans la decentralization de la gestion des forêts au Sénégal' Draft working paper for the Programme WRI – CODESRIA – CIRAD sur la Gestion Décentralisée et Démocratique des Ressources Forestières au Sénégal. Dakar, August 2005.
- Thiaw, S. (2003) 'Rôles et représentativité de deux institutions locales de la gestion des forêts au Sénégal: le chef de village et le conseil rural. Article préparé pour l'Atelier: Equité, représentation et accountability des institutions de la GRN, Bamako, 17-21 novembre 2003.
- World Bank (2006) Strengthening forest law enforcement and governance: assessing a systemic constraint to sustainable development. Report No. 36638GLB. World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- World Bank (2002) A revised forest strategy for the World Bank Group. World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- Wurster, K (2010) Does management matter? Assessing the effects of charcoal production and management on woodland regeneration in Senegal. Ph.D. thesis, University of Maryland, USA.
- Žižek, Slavoj (2009) *First As Tragedy, Then As Farce*. London: Verso.

ICLD PUBLICATION SERIES

ICLD Working Paper series

No 1, *Governance Dilemmas of Sustainable Cities*, Joakim Öjendal & Anki Dellnas

No 2, *Limits to Local Democracy: The Politics of Urban Governance Transformations in Cape Town*, Marianne Millstein

No 3, *Perspectives on Decentralization*, James Manor

No 4, *Sanctions, Benefits, and Rights: Three Faces of Accountability*, Merilee S. Grindle

No 5, *Choice, Recognition and the Democracy Effects of Decentralization*, Jesse C. Ribot

No 6, *Where Is Local Government Going in Latin America? A Comparative Perspective*, Andrew Nickson

No 7, *Engaging Civil Society to Promote Democratic Local Governance: Emerging Trends and Policy Implications in Asia*, G. Shabbir Cheema

No 8, *Citizen Engagement, Deliberative Spaces and the Consolidation of a Post-Authoritarian Democracy: The Case of Indonesia*, Hans Antlöv & Anna Wetterberg

No 9, *Real Democratization in Cambodia? – An Empirical Review of the Potential of a Decentralisation Reform*, Joakim Öjendal & Kim Sedara

No 10, *Participatory budgeting and local governance*, Harry Blair

No 11, *Decentralizing for Development: The developmental potential of local autonomy and the limits of politics-driven decentralization reforms*, Leonardo G. Romeo

ICLD Policy Briefs

No 1, *Proceedings of the Workshop: State of the Art of Local Governance – Challenges for the Next Decade*, Bent Jørgensen, Anki Dellnas & Joakim Öjendal

ICLD Research Reports

No 1, *When Local Government Strikes It Rich*, James Manor

No 2, *Farce of the Commons: Humor, Irony, and Subordination through a Camera's Lens*, Jesse Ribot

IICLD Swedish International
Centre for Local Democracy

Visiting address: Hamnplan 1, 621 57 Visby, Sweden

Postal address: P.O. Box 1125, SE-621 22 Visby Sweden

FAX: +46 498 29 91 60

www.icld.se

ISBN 978-91-86725-13-6

