

**REBELLION, REPRESENTATION AND ENFRANCHISEMENT IN THE FOREST
VILLAGES OF MAKACOULIBANTANG, EASTERN SENEGAL**

**Paper Submitted to the International Association for the Study of Common Property
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
June 2002**

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Paper to be discussed at the ISACP Bi-Annual Conference in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 17 through 21 June 2002. I am distributing this paper since I will speak at IASCP of follow-up research to the research done for this paper. I expected to have done the fieldwork for my proposed paper for this panel by this date, but that has not come to be. So, I am distributing this paper for purposes of discussion. In the panel I will discuss the past research and the research planned for next winter in Makacoulibantang.

I. Introduction

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

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

The story of resistance in Makacoulibantang illustrates two points concerning justice in local community natural resource use and management. First, without locally accountable representation, *local* control of forests (or of anything else) is not necessarily *community* control (see Ribot 1995; 1996). Villages are highly stratified and elites--such as village chiefs--often make decisions that are not in the interest of the community as a whole. This is why locally accountable community representation--in the political sense--is an essential part of community participation. Second, community participation is about influence over the disposition of resources (natural, financial, etc.), access to values derived from use, production and exchange, and a voice in shaping the larger political economy in which practices and policies are made and contested.

Effective enfranchisement requires locally accountable representation *with* real powers over resources, benefits and policies. Neither representation without power nor power without representation can be considered community participation.

The story of Makacoulibantang illustrates a third closely related point: control over forest resources--via property rights, threats of violence, or any other means--does not in itself confer benefits on local populations. Access to markets and labor opportunities are also necessary. Instituting local (or community) property rights--a common prescription in participatory development projects--is not in itself a sufficient policy tool for establishing local or community 'participation' in forest benefits. Property rights are often presented as a means of giving communities or individuals access to the benefits from the resources around them. But property is fetishized to the exclusion of inspecting the many other dynamics involved in the devolution of benefits to local communities (see Ribot Forthcoming; Ribot and Peluso Forthcoming).

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

This paper points to enfranchisement as a core element of community participation in environmental management. It also puts property in place as only one mechanism at work in determining who can benefit from or protect natural resources. The paper is organized into three more parts. Part II is the story of the struggle over forests in Makacoulibantang. Part III examines the larger economic relations of the woodfuel trade in which the Makacoulibantang struggle is embedded. Part IV concludes.

II. The Case of Makacoulibantang

A. Méréto--A new spirit of rural resistance:

I first came to the forest village of Méréto in 1986 and '87, where I stayed while studying the rural social and ecological consequences of the charcoal trade (see map, 1). In this forested area of Eastern Senegal, migrant Fulbe woodcutters from neighboring Guinea have been plying their trade since the mid sixties. They come to cut trees, partially burning them to produce charcoal for sale in the nation's capital, Dakar.² When I first came to the area in the mid eighties, many villagers complained about the woodcutting in surrounding forests, but few did anything about it. The forest villagers were upset, but passive, about having no rights to protect surrounding forests from woodcutters. When asked who owns the forests they said with resignation "the Forest Service." Officially this was true. The forests are 'National Domain' under forest service management (RdS 1964; 1994). It was the Forest Service who could give licenses and cutting permits, and they gave them to urban merchants and their migrant workers. (Ribot 1990; 1995.)

When I returned in July 1994 after seven years of absence from the area, I found transformed attitudes about who should control and have access to forests. Villagers were complaining about woodcutters, while the woodcutters and their patron-merchants were complaining about village resistance. Villagers, however, were not just complaining about the woodcutters. They described chasing woodcutters from the forests and even trying to change the laws to ban charcoal production. In short, formerly passive villagers seemed to be taking control of the issues of forest access and were beginning to take matters into their own hands.³

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

B. Setting--Administrative and 'customary' authorities:

Makacoulibantang is a Rural Community (a territorial-administrative unit discussed below) at the edge of the largest charcoal production zone in Senegal. Maka is the name of the village which is the capital of the Rural Community of Makacoulibantang. 1 is a map of the zone, showing the main charcoal production areas, the location of the village of Maka, the Rural Community of Makacoulibantang, and the cities where charcoal produced in these forests is ultimately consumed. The

villagers in this area are primarily millet and peanut farmers. Makacoulibantang has no electricity, running water or paved roads. The Regional Capital, Tambacounda, is 80 kilometers away, just over half on paved roads--a formidable distance for villagers to travel.

In official language, the Rural Community is considered the "base community" of rural political and administrative functions of the Senegalese Government. Each of Senegal's 317 Rural Communities is a political-administrative jurisdiction of between ten and fifteen villages adding up to between 2000 and 15,000 people. The next administrative level, the Arrondissement, is constituted of two to seven Rural Communities. Several Arrondissements make up a Department, which are the largest sub-districts of Senegal's ten Regions.

The Rural Community, Senegal's smallest unit of local government, is governed by the Rural Council. 2 shows where the Rural Councils are located in the larger political-administrative scheme. The important official actors at the local level are the Rural Councils, the Sub-Prefect and Prefect, the Forest Service, and the Interior Ministry's Local Development Offices (Multi-purpose Rural Extension Centers, *Centres d'Expansion Rurale Polivalents*, CERP--see diagram). The Forest Service, in theory, relates to the Rural Community through CERPs, who are responsible for rural development.⁴ But CERPs play virtually no role in this relation. At the most local level, the Rural Councils are the only elected bodies. The Prefect and Sub-Prefect are administrative appointees of the Interior Minister, and the Forest Service staff are a professional technical service of the Ministry for the Protection of Nature. The CERPs are constituted of appointees of the various rural services and representatives from the Rural Councils.

Representation on the councils of Senegal's Rural Communities is constituted by 3/4 of its members being elected by universal suffrage and 1/4 chosen by a general council of cooperatives (commercial economic interest groups, mostly agricultural) operating within the Rural Community. Slates of candidates for the council of the Rural Community are presented by nationally registered political parties for election. The slate with the majority of votes is elected.⁵ Once elected, the council chooses a president of the Rural Community from among its members. Independent candidates cannot present themselves for election. The President of the rural council officially represents (and is accountable to) the Prefect, who is appointed by the Minister of the Interior (RDS 1993b:4-13). The Prefect must approve all decisions of the Rural Council, hence the Prefect officially retains ultimate decision making powers within the Rural Communities.

There are also 'customary' rural authorities. Each village has a chief. This chief is proposed by the Sub-Prefect after consultation with the 'heads' of the village's households--who elect a chief from among themselves. The chief is then named,

for life, by a decree from the Prefect. The decree must also be approved by the Minister of the Interior (RdS 1972:968). Officially, the chief works under the authority of the Sub-Prefect and the president of the Rural Council, and is charged with the application of laws, administrative decisions and decisions of the Rural Council. They also collect a head tax of FCFA 1000 (U.S.\$2) per year from each adult. The village chief keeps four percent and the remainder goes into the State coffers.

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

Village chiefs and the Rural Councils of local state governance structures are frequently taken to represent rural populations in participatory development and natural resource management projects. Across the West African Sahel *villages* are the most common unit of social aggregation around which local use and management of woodlands is organized both by local populations and by outside agents. Each village, ranging from less than 100 to well over 1000 people, typically has a chief, and some have specialized chiefs overseeing forest use. There are also other authorities within villages, such as Imams, marabouts, sorcerers, non-village based pastoral chiefs, griots, heads of certain castes, etc. Colonial rulers, however, relied on village chiefs, disproportionately shifting power to the village chief compared to these others. While these other figures are involved in resource management, most state and outside organizations still privilege chiefs as a primary village contact.

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

C. Building Tension in Makacoulibantang, 1990-1993:

In 1990, villagers in Makacoulibantang and two neighboring Rural Communities asked their Rural Council to protect the surrounding forests from migrant woodcutters (called *surga*).⁶ The region around Makacoulibantang had been an official charcoal production zone in the late seventies and early eighties. After production in the area was officially closed by the Forest Service in the early eighties, many woodcutters stayed on, working the forests illegally. Villagers always had a tense

relation with the migrant charcoal producers, but they had managed to co-exist with only scattered conflicts over the years.

In 1990 tensions began to rise. Nothing special had changed within charcoal production itself, but the forest villagers were no longer willing to put up with existing woodcutting arrangements.

The villagers had two sorts of complaints. First are the inconveniences of having migrant woodcutters in their forests. There is a history in this region of woodcutters destroying plants used for food, fodder, medicines, and dyes as well as wood for house construction and cooking fuel (Bergeret and Ribot 1990; Dia 1985; Niang 1985; Ribot 1990:82-5; Tall 1974). A Rural Councilor feared that deforestation would inhibit the rains (Maka, June 1994; Ribot 1990).⁷ Villagers also complained, "surga chase [as in sexually harass] women who are collecting forest products, they cut areas we use for grazing, and they start bush fires" (Villagers, Maka, June 1994). Their complaints were not new⁸, but they were mounting. Secondly, there emerged a new set of complaints. Villagers were asking for a share of the benefit from the lucrative woodfuel trade. They wanted labor opportunities in woodcutting--they wanted permits and quotas that would allow them to cut wood, carbonize and sell the charcoal. They wanted to touch some of the revenues flowing from the commercialization of their forests.

The desire of the rural population to stop outside commercial producers, to have forests for local use and to be able to commercialize them themselves may appear contradictory. It is not. There is no reason that villagers--who use these forests for many different things--cannot include commercial exploitation as one of their uses. They also still value the forests for the other uses and may be able to conserve and exploit them at the same time--something like managed or 'sustainable' use. The advantage of the villagers doing this exploitation, rather than outsiders, is that the contradictions among and within villagers concerning the different uses of the forests must be disputed and negotiated internally and locally. The local retention of more income from commercial activities is, of course, another benefit. Individuals and the local population will have to sort out priorities within and among themselves. This is very similar to a highly misinterpreted situation in of India's Chipko movement (see Rangan 1996). While many outsiders saw the women of Chipko as wanting to protect the forests strictly for subsistence uses, the movement also involved people who wanted to protect local forests from outside producers so that they could cut and sell some of the trees themselves. Just because Chipko was a local and indigenous movement did not mean that it was rooted in some kind of primordial conservationist ethic.

In 1990 the Rural Councilors joined the rural population against charcoal production in the zone (Villagers, Rural Councilors, Assistant of Sub-Prefect, Maka, June 1994). The

councilors told the Prefet they wanted forests protected for use by the rural population. They also wanted to see revenues retained for local development, pointing out that they "couldn't tax woodcutters and it was only foreigners [migrants] that were working." The Rural Councilors asked to charge a fee on woodfuel production to create a development fund under their jurisdiction.

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

Villagers discussed the issue with their Councilors, the President of the Rural Community went to the Prefet in Tambacounda, and in 1990 the Prefet signed a decree closing the area to charcoal production (Assistant to Prefet, Tambacounda, June 1994). Some of the woodcutters stayed in the area in villages more friendly to them, and many left. The tensions subsided. But, in 1993 the Forest Service scheduled new production "rotations" in the area.⁹ This was normal forest management procedure and it was time again for production in the zone. The Forest Service scheduled production in Makacoulibantang for 1 January through 31 August 1993. The Regional and Departmental Forest Service agents told me that the forests of this region are managed forests in which it was time for production rotations to return. They explained,

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

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

Other villages did not admit the woodcutters. Many villagers cited the Prefectorial decree as proof that they did not have to put up with the woodcutters any more. Those that resisted threatened woodcutters verbally, chasing them from the forests. Rural Councilors recounted "one Marabout [Islamic religious leader] refused to give access to the woodcutters. He took out his musket and threatened to shoot anyone cutting within

three kilometers of his village." (No incidences of violence were reported.) Some chiefs and villagers also excluded the woodcutters by not allowing them to stay in their villages. Without village access, the woodcutters had no water, no food or lodging. They could not live and work in the forests on their own.

The net result was a scattered pattern of production in the majority of the area's villages. Nonetheless, as villagers talked among themselves and the movement against the woodcutters heated up, there were more conflicts and more complaints coming into the Rural Councilors and being passed up the hierarchy through the Sub-Prefect and the Foresters.

In March 1993, two months after the Forest agents' opening of the season, the Forest Service had the Prefect sign a decree re-opening the area to charcoal production. This move was to help avert the emerging conflict between villagers and the charcoal interests by withdrawing official backing from the movement.¹⁰ Foresters explained (Forestry Officials, Tambacounda and Koumpentoum, July 1994), the Prefect has no authority to close or open production in the forests. The forests are under the management of the Forest Service. Further, his decree was redundant, since before the Forest Service opened the season, production was officially illegal in the area anyhow. The Foresters went on to explain, "Production rotations have to proceed as scheduled. ... The forests serve the whole nation. They are needed to provide fuel to the cities. The forests don't belong to villagers."

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

D. The First Meeting--March 1993:

On 31 March 1993 the Sub-Prefect called, and presided over, a meeting in Maka to resolve the tensions. The following discussion draws from the minutes of this meeting, recorded by the Director of the Regional Forest Service Office at Tambacounda. The cast of characters at this first meeting was remarkable. The 54 participants included: 4 Forest Service Agents and Officials, 8 Forestry Merchants (two who are powerful officers in the Merchant's National Union), 11 Village Chiefs, the President of the Arrondissement Council, 12 of Makacoulibantang's Rural Councilors (including the President), 3 other Civil Servants and 13 other villagers.¹¹ The Forest Service Members and the Forestry Merchant delegation were listed at the front of the minutes as the official parties. All others were named in an appended list.

The meeting was opened by the Sous Prefect at 11:00AM. After a brief introduction by the Sub-Prefect, the Head of the Tambacounda Forest Service office, Mamadou Fall, opened by wishing this meeting would result in "objective" recommendations

for a good organization of forest exploitation in the Arrondissement. He emphasized "...the fact that *forest exploitation is a governmental decision* of which the organization is entrusted to the Forest Service...." Next he described "...the new Forest Code [being written at the time], which anticipates a remittance to Rural Communities who manage exploitation areas," adding "...the ministerial decree organizing the exploitation season defines the open regions and in each of these regions *the Inspector has the right to define the cutting plots, not the administrative or local authorities* [e.g. the prefect, councilors or chiefs]. ... He then insisted on the notion of *national solidarity* which would permit the exchange of products among the different regions of the country, favoring *socio-economic stability*."¹² [Italics added.]

The Foresters' introduction was completed by the Regional Hunting Inspector, Ansoumana Diolla¹³, who said: "...the reform [the proposed Forestry Code] has clearly defined the prerogatives of Local Collectives and that the *management of forest formations belong with the Forest Service, just as the revenues generated belong to the nation as a whole*. This justifies the importance of *national solidarity*." [Italics added.]

At this point Yulbe Diallo one of the most powerful charcoal merchants in Senegal and the President of the Regional Union of Forestry Merchants, stepped in. "...he reassured the local representatives that the woodcutters will install themselves in the area to satisfy the *needs of a whole people* [i.e. the nation of Senegal]. In this manner he invited the participants to express their proposals toward good management of the *common good, the forest*." [Italics added.]

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

- . Oussouby LAYE, President of the Local Union of Cooperatives [mostly agricultural coops], feared that reforestation actions would not come to compensate the losses engendered by forest exploitation. He also mentioned risks of worsening rain shortfalls.... Then he expressed his wish for the creation of an intermediate treasury in Maka for revenues [presumably for reforestation efforts].
- . Ousemane BA [Rural Councilor] found a contradiction in the fact that forest management would be entrusted to the Forest Service and that of lands to the Rural Council.
- . Yancouba LAYE [Rural Councilor] hoped that the populations would take a substantial profit from the exploitation of their forests.
- . El Hadji Saré DIA [Chief of the a village of Boulimbou] affirmed that the populations are obligated to bow before the decision of the government, but asked that the agricultural zones be respected by the [forest] exploitation.
- . Fodé BA [Rural Councilor] of the village of Manigui Colibasso, was only distressed about the border zone which must not be opened for exploitation due to the risk of creating problems between Senegal and The Gambia.
- . Mamadou SOW, Chief of the village of Yérodoundé, declared that his village will not accept to lodge woodcutters.
- . Kael DIALLO, The president of the Rural Council of the Arrondissement, argued that no person present at the meeting is responsible for the decision to open the zone of Maka to exploitation, rather this decision

emanates from the peak of the administrative pyramid. From this position, he wished for good harmony in view of a good organization of exploitation by channeling the woodcutters into precise zones, while reserving for the populations the forests from which they satisfy their daily needs for forest products, and for the animals the pasture areas for the rainy season.

. Soppata KEITA [villager from Coulibantang] then declared that the decision by the authorities to open the zone of Maka to exploitation will triumph despite the disapproval of the population.

. Finally, El Hadji Bourang DIALLO, the president of the Rural Community of Maka, related the strategic importance of the Forest of Bokko for the population and animals and wished that it would be respected so that the populations could continue to exercise their usage rights on which their survival rests. He also announced that he was the author of the petition addressed to the authorities.

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

They seemed to be fighting for a bit of "participation" in decision making over and the benefits from their forests. What is remarkable is how close to the cutting edge of thinking on environmental management and integrated rural development the articulated needs and desires of the rural actors are. In sum, they requested: 1) Protection of the Forest of Bokko for village usufructuary and pastoral uses; 2) Protection of a band along The Gambian frontier; 3) Channeling of woodcutters into specified areas; 4) More reforestation; and 5) Benefits for the rural population.

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

. Burum GORKATI and Soppowo YIMBE, both forestry merchants, then took the floor to *calm the doubting spirits of the people*.

. To all the questions posed, the Director of the Forestry Sector of Tambacounda responded very clearly, which permitted the tension to drop.

Then the President of the Regional Union of Forestry Merchants asked the representatives [Rural Councilors] to provide a list of villages of in which they wish not to have woodcutters. [Thirty-three villages were then cited in the minutes.]

. Regarding all these villages Yulbe DIALLO [the Regional Union Leader] agreed to move out all woodcutters so that they can be relocated in other areas ready to welcome them.

. The last word came from the Sub-Prefect who thanked the participants for the success of the meeting before closing the meeting at 3:00PM. [Italics added.]

End of First Meeting

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

stepped in to resolve the problem.

E. Second Season, Second Meeting--March 1994:

On the fourth of February 1994 the Prefect in Tambacounda established a commission composed of four Forestry Agents and Officials, a rural extension agent, the president of the Arrondissement council, the President of Makacoulibantang's Rural Council, the local cooperative union president, and two high officials from the National Union of Forestry Merchants,¹⁴ to resolve the charcoal production problems that had developed during the 1993 season. At the first meeting of the commission, on 5 March 1994 in Maka, the Sub-Prefect explained: "...the Prefect asked for the creation of a commission to resolve all the problems linked to charcoal production. Concerning Maka, the commission is to determine the zones to exploit, decide the production locations of quota holders, to make an exploitation plan, and to assure the control of woodcutters through the establishment of files and I.D. cards." [All of these already being normal functions of the Forest Service.]

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

- 1) The Forest of Bokke would be closed to production, "...in taking count of the wishes of the people";
- 2) Lists of the woodcutters along with their photos would be dropped off at the Sub-Prefect's office, the chief of the concerned villages, and at the Forest Service Office, to help control woodcutters;
- 3) A four to five kilometer band would be maintained between The Gambian border and production zones, to avoid problems; and
- 4) 17 through 19 March 1994 the commission would tour the area to implement the commissions decisions--they would diffuse information on their decisions. Any woodcutters not following the commissions deadlines established on their tour would later be fined.

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

At the end of the meeting the President of the Rural Council spoke. He enquired about "...financial resources that the Community could derive from woodcutting." The Sub-Prefect flatly responded, "... forest exploitation escapes the jurisdiction of the Rural Council. Like mines, it's a domain reserved for the State to whom the taxes accrue."

The Sub-Prefect then closed the meeting thanking "the Inspector, his collaborators and other participants." He said "we have done useful work since we have deliberated in the interest of the country and her children. The Prefect places

much hope in the commission, we must not disappoint him."

End of Second Meeting

F. Outcomes and Implementation:

These official pronouncements made the Forest Service, the Merchants and some village chiefs happy. Rural Councilors and other villagers, however, insisted that they were still not in agreement. Villagers throughout the area insisted that they still did not want charcoal produced in their forests. One villager pointed out that nothing was done so villagers could work in charcoal production themselves. [When asked why labor opportunities and quotas were not discussed in the meetings, they insisted that they had been discussed in the meetings and with the Forest Service agents. They were not recorded.] Rural councilors were unhappy that none of the revenues would fund local development. The Rural Councilors said the "solution" was imposed: it was simply not an agreement. "The big patrons (Soppowo Ba and Yulbe Diallo) and the Forest Service (Inspector Fall from Tambacounda) made the population understand that it is the right of the State to carbonize and dispose of the trees as they like" (Rural Councilor, Makacoulintang, June 1994).

In sum, two of the requests made by rural populations in the first meeting, were granted at the outset of the second meeting: 1) the closing of Bokko, and 2) the Protection of the border area. In addition foresters promised that woodcutters would be kept better track of. But, the Rural Council and villagers were not granted two other important requests: 1) access to revenues from charcoal production, and 2) access to labor opportunities. They got neither permits nor quotas nor the right to charge a fee for the Council. The official outcomes looked on paper like a sound, though imposed, management plan for the area. But, in practice, even these plans and promises were never implemented.¹⁵

As late as November 1994, 18 of the 33 villages who had originally requested the expulsion of woodcutters, still had charcoal producers working in surrounding forests (Rural Council President and Sub-Prefect, Makacoulintang, November 1994). Production continued in the "closed" areas. The Rural Councils continued to complain about this illegal production. They said no one enforces the agreement. The few concessions that the Forest Service had made were not upheld. Little seemed to have changed, except that many of the villages originally complaining were no longer saying anything.

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

decisions in a space between villagers and charcoal merchants.

G. Pulleys in the Forest Well:

The Councilors explained that after the last meetings they advised chiefs not to accept the agreement--or, for that matter, the charcoal makers. But, according to the Councilors, the merchants went to the village chiefs paying off the chiefs with sacks of rice. As the Rural Council President said: "the merchants bought the villages."

Similarly, Foresters explained, "When the [Forest Service] decree [opening the production season] was made," they said "certain village chiefs, pastoralists and Rural Community representatives did not want the charcoal makers." But, "village chiefs accepted kickbacks and the villagers accepted afterwards."

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

Patrons [merchants] give advances to the village chiefs [these are subsistence advances for the woodcutters].

The chiefs work with the means provided by the patrons with an agreement that if they are caught [by the Forest Service] not to say who they work for.

There was a problem in Maka in that there were fraudulent charcoal makers. Village chiefs had surga [woodcutters] carbonizing for them. Village chiefs were already involved. They take a percentage of the profits. The villagers asked the Sub-Prefect what percentage they could have. The Sub-Prefect said they don't have any right to any percentage. The villagers asked for the right to tax the surga.

Patrons agreed that they should be able to assess them of the 1000 FCFA (U.S.\$2) per year head tax that village chiefs collect on villagers.

Both villagers and the rural councilors acknowledged that now they were able to levy a head tax on the migrant woodcutters.

This agreement did not come up in the meetings but was mentioned by other villagers.¹⁶

Deputy Kabina Kaba Jakhaté painted a picture in which the Foresters in addition to the Merchants come into the area and install their own woodcutters in the villages. "Villagers wanted to fight them [woodcutters] in the forests. The population wanted to force them out. But, the Forest Service comes with the woodcutters and pays FCFA 5000 each [to the Chiefs]. Tambacounda's Forest Service has their own woodcutters." He said, "The chief is only a pulley--he facilitates but has no authority." (Dakar, July 1994.)¹⁷

H. For the National Good

In the Makacoulibantang story, state representatives--foresters and Prefects--often evoke the role of forests in the 'national good', in order to over-ride local needs. This is a strategy as old as Jeremy Bentham's notion of "the greatest good for the greatest number for the longest time"--something that sounds suspiciously similar to notions of 'sustainable

development'. "The forests serve the whole nation...", cutting the forests is to "satisfy the needs of a whole people," and for these reasons "...the management of forest formations belong with the Forest Service, just as the revenues generated belong to the nation as a whole." The officials also evoke "the common good," "national solidarity," "socio-economic stability," and "...the interest of the country and her children" as reasons that rural populations should allow their forests to be exploited by outside commercial interests.

In Dakar, the Minister for the Protection of Nature explained to me that if they had given a choice to the villagers in Makacoulibantang, the villagers would not allow any charcoal production. This would cause problems for urban supply. He explained that villagers don't want to produce charcoal. I then related to him that villagers have repeatedly expressed their desire to make charcoal--"if they could get quotas and permits."

Indeed, there are whole villages asking for the right to make charcoal. I added that these villagers were asking to take control of their forests so that they could profit from the charcoal trade. He then mused that "Senegal is a large and diverse country and what villagers may want in Maka does not reflect what they want elsewhere." He spoke of the Makacoulibantang story as a dangerous set of events that could spread--they had to be kept in place. "If villagers were given control of the forests," he said, "there would be fuel shortages in Dakar."¹⁸

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

I. Chiefs and Merchants:

Ultimately, it is the Chiefs who mediate direct access to forests. While they cannot sell without the merchants, they can withhold the forests from the merchants and woodcutters. They can withhold by threatening the woodcutters with violence and by keeping them out of the village. Woodcutters need village access in order to work. The merchants also need village roads to get into the forests to evacuate the charcoal to market. It is

through the threat of violence and control of village infrastructure that chiefs control the forests. It is also through the loyalty of villagers that the chiefs can prevent villagers from independently admitting or acting against the woodcutters. But, what chiefs do with their control of forest access depends on their relations with merchants and with forest villagers.

While chiefs control forest access, merchants control access to markets and labor opportunities. Merchants, who are mostly urban based, are licensed by the Forest Service. The Forest Service allocates charcoal production quotas to licensed woodfuel merchants. With a license and a quota in hand, the merchants can hire laborers and obtain production permits for them to work under their license and within their quota. They prefer to hire migrant Guinean Fulbe woodcutters--rather than local villagers.¹⁹

So, while chiefs control direct access to forests through control of village infrastructure and the threat of violence, merchants control access to markets and to labor opportunities through licenses, quotas and permits. Merchants and Chiefs must negotiate with each other if either is to benefit from commercial forestry.

The merchant-chief relation is critical in explaining where and when production takes place. Historically, in Senegal's charcoal trade, merchants would come to the village chief and ask permission to install their producers in the area. This is an old practice to avoid conflicts between villagers and woodcutters. In the early 1970s, the Forest Service informally required charcoal merchants to strike an agreement with chiefs before beginning work in village forests. Today an agreement is often worked out by a trusted charcoal producer working for the merchant. The usual arrangement involves the payment of FCFA 5000 to 10,000 (U.S.\$10 to 20) per truckload of charcoal taken from the forests around a given village. Making these sorts of "arrangements" with chiefs is normal practice (Ribot 1990; 1995).

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

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

The authority of chiefs, it is often argued, rests on their control over access to land (Downs and Reyna 1988; Watts 1993; Fisiy 1992) Here it also rests on their control over access to forests. The attempt by the Rural Councilors to intervene in forest access may not be welcome by village chiefs. Indeed, anything that legitimizes the existence of the Rural Council may be a threat to the village chiefs, since the Councils are an alternative form of governance to the Chieftain system. The Council system derived some of its administrative powers from the domain of chiefs. For the Rural Councilors this conflict, where the rural population was united and the chiefs were split, presented an opportunity to speak for the rural populations. In so doing the Council could booster its legitimacy in the rural arena. But, as the results of this conflict show, the villagers and the Rural Councilors were pushed aside. They were marginalized in a process that was primarily among the Forest Service and merchants (who act in each meeting as a unified voice) and village chiefs. While Rural Councils are the official structure of enfranchisement of the rural populations, despite the un-democratic structure of electoral codes, they have no voice.

Villagers often don't feel that the Rural Councils represent them. The lists of candidates presented for elections are composed by parties based in urban areas and out of the range of their influence. In addition, villagers do not feel that the cooperatives, who appoint 1/4 of the Council's members, represent them. (Lack of representation in cooperatives is not new. For an example in agricultural cooperatives see Cruise-O'Brien 1975.)

The Councilors interviewed felt that, because of the way they were chosen, they were not viewed as legitimate, which undermined the little power they had. An other issue is that of jurisdiction and powers, called "competence." The Councilors feel that part of their lack of legitimacy stems from the fact that they have so little power and so few resources that they are

unable to perform even the smallest of duties. One pined "...we have nothing to offer the people we represent." An other said "all we do is marriage counseling."

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

There are many ties between the Forest Service and Merchants--aside from the links formed through policies that regulate merchant activity, such as licenses, quotas and permits. While the Prefect and Sub-Prefect played a facilitating role in the meetings, both of the meetings take a form in which the Forest Service and the Merchants come in as a dominant and unified voice. They lead off by telling the participants what their rights are and are not and moralizing about the 'national good.' They then listen to the 'other participants' concerns. Even the minutes reflect this hierarchy since the two official delegations listed up front are the Foresters and Merchants, while all 'other participants' are named in an annex. In the second meeting, the Forest Service agents come in and dictate the agenda. The merchants then give their approval. When concerns are raised by a Rural Councilor, they are dismissed. The relation between foresters and merchants is not simply collusion against the rural populations. Rather, it derives from the Forest Service's role in maintaining the cheap supply of woodfuels to the urban areas. For the foresters, facilitating the merchant's access to the forests is an essential part of meeting their mandate. In addition, foresters have their own (formal and informal, legal and illegal) interests in forest commerce. For rural populations and Rural Councilors, this alliance presents itself as a brick wall.

J. Shifting Control and Power in Makacoulibantang

The Rural Councilors attempted to support a movement in which the rural population was turning against the charcoal merchants and their woodcutters, and the village chiefs were split. In appealing to higher authorities--the Sub-Prefect, the Prefect, the Forest Service, their Deputy and the Minister for the Protection of Nature--the Rural Councilors were trying to break the merchant-chief relations that were frustrating local populations wishes to stop charcoal production in their area. In response, the Forest Service returned and asserted the rights of merchants to work charcoal in the zone, backing the merchants' claims. The merchants deflected the Rural Council with the Forest Service and went on doing business with village chiefs willing to work with them. Forest Service agents and officials represented themselves as upholding the law and serving the national good. On the surface a compromise management plan was established. In practice, the old patterns of merchant-chief relations continued to serve as the basis of forest access in Makacoulibantang.

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

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

Ironically, with one hand in the forest, the Forest Service and Minister for the Protection of Nature are smothering what looks like a great example of a spontaneous participatory integrated resource management movement. With the other in Dakar, they are waving their new 'participatory' forestry code--to be implemented over the next few years.²⁰

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

Forests take on a new importance as control over agricultural lands becomes less important. While the Councils are attempting to enter the realm of forest control--for profit and for their power--village chiefs are taking it back, slowing the erosion of their power by widening their base beyond the fields into the forests. Chiefs and councils struggle with each other over this control as the balance of real economic powers becomes more and more concentrated in the hands of urban elites.

Devolving powers--or even small fragments of control and benefit--to local populations necessarily plays into the struggle between chiefs and councils. It also, of course, plays into the relation between merchants and the local political economy: a relation within which merchants can use the local splits to their advantage by choosing the local authorities with whom to conduct their business.

III. Forest Commerce in Senegal: Putting Makacoulibantang in Context

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

As is seen in this case, villagers use threats of violence and control over village infrastructure to leverage their tiny share of the commercial profits from the forests: villagers can

exclude merchants, hence the merchants are obligated to pay them off. This ability to exclude is analogous to holding title or owning the forests, but it only brings them a small portion of the benefits that forests produce. Migrants and venders maintain access to labor opportunities through the cultivation of relations with their patron merchants. Merchants maintain access to benefits from the forests by access to labor opportunities and by controlling access to exchange. They do so through a mix of policy supports, credit arrangements, collective collusive action, knowledge and social ties. Wholesalers maintain access to urban markets through credit arrangements, the cultivation and maintenance of a clientele, control of vending outlets, and knowledge of the urban markets.

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

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

IV. Conclusion: Participation, Enfranchisement and Local Control

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

Through the issue of representation, there is an explicit link between environmental change²¹ and enfranchisement. If there is no locally accountable representation, then *who* participates in community resource management? To whom can control of forests or of the benefits that flow from them be

transferred? Devolution of control into the hands of locals who are not locally accountable will not achieve the efficiency or equity goals that participatory policies espouse--that is, they will not necessarily internalize social or environmental costs nor improve distribution. If there is no system of locally accountable representation in place, then participatory approaches have no appropriate object of local concern with which to interact. They may devolve access control to some local person--a village chief or some other elite--but they cannot effectively devolve access control to the community as a whole.

Means by which devolution is affected are equally important.

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

Control of access to things does not confer control of benefits from those things. The focus of many participatory approaches on property rights as the primary tool for devolving control to local communities is therefore not sufficient. It is certainly not sufficient when there is no locally accountable community representative to devolve such rights to. But it is also not sufficient since property rights--or any other forms of direct resource control--do not confer benefits from forests on local populations unless they also have access to markets and labor opportunities.

Justice--both distributive and procedural--in the context of participatory natural resource management is about *what* is devolved to *whom*. *'What'* must include the devolution of powers over the disposition of forests, of means to garner financial resources to operate with, of access to labor opportunities and to markets, and access to political processes. All are essential parts of what communities must participate in if they are to have effective control over the disposition of and benefits from resources around them. *'To whom'* is about the problem of representation. Indigenous or local do not necessarily mean representative or fair. Some process of inclusion or some form of accountable representation must be constructed if the notion of community--which is always a stratified ensemble of persons with different needs and powers--is to have a collective meaning.

This story brings into question whether chiefs really do *'represent'* their villages in any accountable sense. It brings up the question of whether new natural resource policies should place powers in chief's hands, strengthening this particular

local--but not necessarily representative or just--institution.

Representation must also be scrutinized in the Rural Councils. If the electoral codes are not re-worked to make them locally accountable, then devolving natural resource management to them will result in the strengthening of an other non-representative institution. Chiefs and councils are both already deeply shaped by state law. Chiefs are officially elected and then appointed by the Minister of the Interior, just as are Rural Councilors. Who can be a candidate for the Rural council is party controlled. Reshaping the laws that govern their appointment is simply one entry point into national/local politics. Here it is the politics of potentially more equitable, more representative local empowerment. It is the politics of enfranchisement. Delving into electoral and administrative law and practice--that is the politics of representation and control--is one important way to bring politics explicitly into the emerging field of political ecology.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Susanne Freidberg, Pauline Peters, Mathew Turner and Charles Zerner for their constructive insightful comments on this paper.

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Endnotes

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

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

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

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

5. As one villager put it: "the Councilors are chosen by Deputies in the National Assembly. Deputies choose people based on those who support them in their elections. The list is made by the Deputy. The Councils are chosen by the parties." (Koumpentoum June 1994.)

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

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

8. In surveys and interviews in Daru Kimbu and four other nearby villages in 1986-7, women recounted that before the arrival of charcoal producers, firewood had been available just outside of the compounds, whereas after the first two years, firewood had to be gathered at distances of several kilometers taking from a couple of hours to half a day to collect. More than half of the women saw the distancing of the firewood resources as a direct result of charcoal

production; many expressed resentment. They also explained that charcoal production led to the disappearance of game birds and animals, and the destruction of fodder (cf Niang 1985:83; Tall 1974:68). (Ribot 1990; 1995.)

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

Villagers, charcoal makers and foresters also recount numerous conflicts between villagers and charcoal producers. Some have been violent (also see PARCE 1983:17; cf Freudenberg 1993:63 on conflicts over gum Arabic collection). In most cases, the villagers wanted the charcoal makers to leave or to pay debts they had incurred, and fights broke out. In instances I witnessed, underlying tensions emerged over issues such as theft and adultery.

In the early seventies, according to forestry officials, frequent conflicts between charcoal makers and villagers led the Forest Service to adopt an informal policy obligating charcoal *patrons* to gain the consent of the village chief before carbonizing in the area surrounding a village.

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

10. Arrêté No. 010/D.TC of 1 March 1993, re-opening the area.

11. In addition to the Sous Prefect, the minutes listed as "registered" participants: 1) from the Forest Service (Eaux et Forêts et Chasse) the Director of the Forest Section Office of Tambacounda, the Assistant to the Forest Service Inspector of Tambacounda, the Head of the Regional Hunting Division, the Head of the Forestry Brigade of Koussanar (the neighboring arrondissement), and the Head of the Forestry Brigade of Maka; 2) a delegation of forestry merchants [in this paper *exploitant forestiers* is translated as *forestry merchants*] composed of the President of the Regional Union of Forestry Merchants of Tambacounda, the President of the Regional Union of Forestry Merchants of Kaolack, and six forestry merchants. At the end of the minutes were appended a list of participants. These included forty people from the arrondissement's villages: the President of the Council of the Arrondissement, the President of the Rural Council of Maka, 11 Rural Council members, 11 village chiefs, 3 civil servants (health clinic staff, school director and agricultural extension agent), and 13 persons named without titles.

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

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

14. More precisely, the commission included: the Local Forest Service Inspector, the Forest Service Sector Director, the Forest Service Koussanar Brigade Director, the Assistant to the Director of the Maka Forest Service Brigade, the Director of the Rural Extension Committee of Maka (CERP), the President of the Council of the Arrondissement, the President of the Rural Council of Maka, the President of the Local Cooperatives Union, the President of the Regional Union of Forestry Merchants, and the Vice-President of the National Union of Forestry Merchants.

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

16. The Deputy in the National Assembly for this region indicated that today only between ten and twenty percent of the tax ever gets collected (Jakhaté, Dakar, July 1994). There us a general tax strike across rural Senegal. In any event this would not be a great benefit since only four percent (8 cents) remains in the village as a salary for the chief.

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

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

19. The earliest merchants in the market were noble Fulbe from upland Guinea. They worked charcoal with their former serfs, also migrants from upland Guinea. This was a convenient arrangement since charcoal was looked on as a dirty and lowly activity, usually done by a caste of blacksmiths. Further, when conflicts emerged between charcoal producers and villagers, the migrant charcoal producers were more tied to their merchants than to the village chief. In addition, migrants don't have competing labor demands on them and can be moved from place to place as the forests become exhausted.

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

21. In Eastern Senegal, the most important environmental problem caused by

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

Place map of Senegal in this box--type in Makacoulibantang, Maka
and outline Rural Community

Figure 1: Senegal--Research Cite, Charcoal Production Zones and Consumption Areas

SOURCE: RDS 1993b:3.

Figure 2: Location of the Rural Community and Rural Council in Senegal's Political-Administrative Structures

