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Local Manifestations of a Globalising Donor Regime. 'Good Governance' in a Senegalese Rural Community

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This article is about globalisation and its local impact in a rural community in central Senegal. Following Kloos (2000b) globalisation is here defined as the rise and extension of transnational, ultimately global regimes. A regime can be defined as a more or less formalised constellation of human interdependencies in which implicit and/or explicit principles, rules and decision-making procedures created by actors enable as well as constrain their activities in a given area of activity. A regime becomes transnational once the constellation of human interdependencies transcends state boundaries. We will go into one such transnational regime, the 'donor regime', in which assistance from the west is acquired if southern states meet certain conditions. One such condition is applying 'good governance' by the aid-receiving country.

The centrality of 'good governance' in the approaches of donor institutions dates from the end of the 1980s (World Bank, 1989, 1992, Hyden & Bratton, 1992). Within the donor community the idea took root that liberal market forces linked to political democracy and decentralisation will foster development, in that it will lead to greater efficiency and to broader popular participation; the state has to change its role from centralist and dictating to enabling. As a consequence of this shift in development-thinking during the 1990s many policies and programmes for promoting 'good governance' were initiated, such as decentralisation programmes and donor or NGO projects aiming at 'strengthening civil society'.

It may be queried, however, whether this notion of good governance as a motor of development that is spreading throughout the world as a result of donor interventions will make good its promises once implemented. Critics argue that the paradigm of 'good governance' attends too little to the local context in which this general notion is to be implemented. Thus, as in the past, in many African states the political culture scarcely allows for independent operation of local government councils or local organisations. Fowler (1991) argues that the first priority of the state in Africa is to maintain its hegemony. This is considered more important than providing scope for 'development'. Although 'less state' is followed by a transfer of decision-making authority to local government, state control is maintained. In Senegal, for example, state influence in local rural councils is assured by a vertical system of party patronage, in which local patrons are clients of politicians at higher levels of adminis-

tration. Means of the state are used to keep the system going; people participate in order to get access to these means (Blundo, 1991, 1995, Gellar, 1996, Ribot, 1999).

The introduction of a multiparty democracy aligns with mainstream thinking within the donor community about the prerequisites for development. African rulers, however, often argue that this system is not adapted to the problems southern countries have to face. For India, Kohli (1991) has demonstrated that the introduction of multiparty democracy has resulted in an increase of conflicts at the local level. Political leaders competing to enlist the population into their clientele have invoked not only political but also caste and ethnic arguments. In his view traditional patterns of authority have been undermined by the emergence of competing elites willing to utilise any set of appealing symbols and any available means, including violent means, for political mobilisation aimed at improving their electoral chances. The same has been argued for Africa by many authors (cf. Wunsch & Olowu, 1995, Mohamed Salih, 1999).

Even if violence and conflict do not present themselves, the absence of a political culture of participation and accountability means that multiparty democracy in Africa is likely to remain confined to competition among the political elite only (Buijtenhuis & Thiriot, 1995). For Senegal, for example, it has often been argued that the democratic structures have simply been grafted onto the neo-patrimonial structures (Diop, 1993, Kante, 1994, Diop, 1993). In this context, local elections are frequently dominated by party confrontation and factionalism that centre around patron-client relationships and do not focus on programmes or ideology (Buijtenhuijs and Thiriot, 1995 p. 73, Blundo, 1996 p. 19, Kaag, 2001).

Although 'less state' was followed by more NGOs moving to assist local communities in poverty alleviation and service delivery, in many places in Africa it often proved difficult for NGOs to operate independently, for they regularly become co-opted by governmental or party organisations. Self-help associations, cooperating with NGOs, can become politicised, too. For example, among the Kamba in Kenya, local members of parliament used women's groups for electoral purposes. The MP's strategy was to control the votes of the largest clans. Women, who were engaged in self-help activities, were sent to organise these clans into local women's groups. In exchange for supporting the self-help activities the MP was able to control voting. Women's groups can thus be diverted from serving women's interests to serving the interests of male politicians (Wipper, 1987). As for Senegal, it was found that rural councillors often block peasant leaders seeking to initiate development activities in the community because of factionalism and rivalry (Blundo, 1995, 1998, Ribot, 1999).

In short, the advocates of 'good governance' argue that once procedures and institutions have been formally changed, good governance in the form of accountability and representativeness and consequently administrative efficiency will ensue. Critics, however, argue that the state seeks to maintain its hegemony, endeavouring to keep a continued grip on local communities. Local rulers, by turning decentralisation measures to their own ends, are trying to strengthen their own position. By pursuing self-interest and careerism, they remain unaccountable to the local population. On this view, globalisation, by

imposing western ideas of good governance, will increase political patronage, factionalism and local conflicts by parachuting power, means and responsibilities into a local context.

It is our conviction, however, that both these visions of 'good governance as a motor for development' are too partial. Formal reforms may be necessary for change but are by no means sufficient, for the endeavours of actors to maintain their hegemony or strengthen their power play an important role in shaping the reality of policy measures. However, political patronage does not only mean manipulation and state leverage, but may imply 'development' as well. We shall set out our arguments with reference to an example of a rural community in Senegal. First, we briefly sketch the general changes in governance that have taken place in Senegal during the last 20 years, indicating the influence exerted by the donor regime. We next present the rural community of Kaymor, thereby focusing on the rural council and its interaction with the local community. Then we move on to take a closer look at the women's self-help groups that have sprung up in response to NGO presence in the area. Finally, some conclusions are drawn on the implications of 'good governance' in rural Senegal.

By providing an account of the precise impact of a globalising donor regime, we hope to contribute to the study of the dialectics between the local and the global that was one of Peter Kloos' fascinations (Kloos, 2000a, 2000b).

'Good governance' in Senegal

Senegal began to pursue a decentralisation policy relatively early. The first step was taken in 1972, with the creation of rural communities as administrative entities comprising a number of adjacent villages. The administration rests in the hands of the rural council, made up of politically elected locals with a five-year mandate. Its main tasks are land management, via land allocation, and the execution of modest projects. The council has its own budget, supplied mainly from the taxes paid by the rural population. The second step was taken in 1990, when the president of the rural council was given greater authority, to the detriment of higher levels of administration, particularly with respect to budgetary matters. The third stage was set into motion in 1996, when some competencies that had previously been the domain of the central state were delegated to rural communities, which were given greater responsibilities in several areas like healthcare, education and natural resource management.

Since the 1970s Senegal has been a multiparty democracy. In the countryside, however, until recently the government party *Parti Socialiste* (PS) had always ruled as a result of the winner-takes-all system. It was not until the elections of 1996, when this system was abandoned, that other parties like the *Parti Démocratique Sénégalaise* (PDS) and the *Ligue Démocratique/Mouvement Parti pour le Travail* (LD/MPT) gained seats on rural councils, too.

From independence onwards (i.e. 1960) until the mid 1980s the state was the most important agency of development. Regional development organisations promoted and supported peanut and cereal cultivation and the production of cotton. Village cooperatives distributed seed and fertiliser on profitable

conditions and co-ordinated crops sales. Because of unprofitable economic and climatic conditions and mismanagement at all levels, however, this system collapsed. As a consequence of structural adjustment policy in 1984 a New Agricultural Policy was launched, implying the restructuring or abolition of many state development institutions. From then on the cooperatives only supplied seed and fertiliser on credit and only after a large down payment. Henceforth the idea was that the populace itself should take greater initiative. Thus, the government extension service CERP (*Centre d'Expansion Rurale Polyvalente*) no longer contacted the population, but the reverse was now the parole.

Less state was followed by more NGOs in Senegal, as mentioned, owing in part to increased NGO funding by northern governments. There are now many NGOs active in Senegal: in 1994 there were 225 NGOs registered and several dozen more were then on their way.

The government encouraged the population to form associations. Thus, the state extension service and the rural councils recommended the establishment of local groups (*groupements*), which were sometimes rather loose associations without any juridical status. However, the state extension service and the councils also urged the founding of more formal organisations: in particular, *Groupements d'Intérêt Economique* (GIE) for which the *Nouvelle Politique Agricole* of 1984 had paved the way. The GIE allowed people to associate on a voluntary basis in pursuit of a common economic goal: having registered at the Chamber of Commerce and after a large down payment the GIE was eligible for a bank loan.

An important NGO collaborating with local groups is the *Fédération Nationale des Groupements de Promotion Féminine* (FNGPF), a national federation of women's groups, established as an NGO in 1987. The federation, to which the majority of Senegalese women's groups belong, helps organise the annual national campaign *Quinzaine Nationale de la Femme Sénégalaise*, which promotes such issues as family planning, access to land and special projects for women. From day to day it helps organise literacy and bookkeeping courses for the women's groups. The FNGPF uses part of the registration fee for credit purposes. In addition, by being organised as a formal organisation, it hopes to attract donor funding. In 1996 the FNGPF comprised 3600 women's groups with some 400,000 members (MFEF, 1997).

We may conclude that in the past few decades in Senegal a couple of measures in line with donor thinking about 'good governance' have been taken in the form of decentralisation and multiparty democracy. NGOs encourage the organisation of the population in so-called self-help groups in which the population is urged to participate actively in their own development. From a strongly state-led society, Senegal is being transformed into a society in which people are supposed to act as citizens and as agents of development rather than as subjects and as 'assisted'. What is the reality behind all these measures and supposed changes, however? To examine this question we turn to the rural community of Kaymor.

The local context: Kaymor community

The rural community of Kaymor is part of the subdistrict Médina Sabakh. In 1994 it had a population of 10,311, living in 23 villages. Its total area is 195 km², giving a population density of about 60 people per km². Ethnically and religiously the community is fairly homogeneous: most are Wolof (90%) and the remaining are mainly Toucouleur. All Wolof and Toucouleur are Muslim.

The main means of subsistence are agriculture and livestock husbandry. Agriculture is limited to the sandy and alluvial soils, with the (unfertile) laterite soils and depressions and being dedicated to livestock-raising. All families cultivate millet as a food crop. Groundnuts is by far the largest cash crop. In the last decade small valleys and depressions have been frequently cleared for growing rice, maize and vegetables and for tree-planting. These activities usually generate minor but much appreciated additional revenues (Kaag, 2001). A general problem for agriculture is the widespread wind and water erosion.

The rich farmers have large herds of cattle, up to 100 heads, while poor farmers have only a few sheep and goats. Because of the extension of agricultural lands, competition problems between agriculture and husbandry have come to develop over the last thirty years. Cattle farmers are consequently finding it more and more difficult to keep cattle and find themselves obliged to herd their animals at remoter locations. At the end of the dry season some of them now opt to move to the south for several weeks to find food for their cattle.

People live together in groups of patrilineal descent. A ward of a village or a hamlet is composed of families related along the male line. Until two generations ago brothers tended to live together in one compound, but now each adult male prefers to live independently in his own house. However, mutual aid between family members is still common, as exemplified in the obligation to participate in working parties or to help in house-building (Venema, 1978 p. 96-100).

Owing to the pressure on land, borrowing land from family members is no longer an option, and over the last decade a number of families have therefore opted to move to a town or migrate to the less populated areas in the southern Casamance region. In addition, as explained above, it has become far more difficult to obtain groundnut seed on credit. The limited access to these resources has sometimes resulted in tense relations within households and families spilling over into other domains.

In addition to a horizontal organisation based on kinship, Wolof society is highly hierarchical. The founding families of the villages in Kaymor community belong to the class of the freeborn (*diambour*). They had as clients' families from the class of artisans (*nienio*), who made the required farm implements and leatherwork but also practised agriculture as a main occupation. In addition, the freeborn families had slave families (*diam*) who did most of the agricultural work. They worked five mornings a week for their master, using the remaining time to till their own fields. No social class was excluded from entitlement to land. Of the total population of Kaymor community, as in the subdistrict, almost half is freeborn, almost half slave born and about ten per

cent artisan. At the beginning of the 20th century the French colonial government decreed that domestic slavery was to be abolished. In the community of Kaymor the slaves left their masters in the 1930s to become independent farmers, most of them continuing to live in their original village or in a nearby hamlet. People are still aware of these former master-slave relations but they are not discussed in public, as was still the case in the 1970s (Venema, 1978 pp. 124-129). Although it is now taboo to talk about a person's status, class distinctions appear to be a regular cause of friction: the freeborn remain attached to their traditional status, while some of the lower class have achieved influential positions, as a teacher or in a political party, for example.

With regard to the role of women, the dominant norm is that a wife should be a good spouse by obeying her husband. For non-routine activities women always ask the approval of the men, as when joining a women's group, for instance. Because of all their occupations, women appear to be poorly in touch with topical affairs. When an NGO holds an information day, say, most women appear uninformed. Women nevertheless have major responsibilities and in practice they have considerable influence in the household. They buy clothes, ingredients for meals, soap for the laundry and so on, and arrange medical care for themselves and their children. In polygamous families the wife whose turn it is to cook is obliged to add her portion of flour to the meal (*ndollah*). To meet these responsibilities, she has access to a plot to cultivate groundnuts. Because participation in a women's group may provide scope for additional revenue, most men allow their wives to become members.

Few people have received primary education. The level of literacy in French is between 10 en 20% (Kaag & Venema, 1997 pp. 18). Although more pupils have recently been enrolled at the primary schools in the subdistrict, most are boys. The koranic schools (*dahra*) dispersed in the villages are more frequently attended, by both boys and girls. In the last few years, literacy projects have been initiated by a variety of organisations. These are directed mainly towards women.

'Good governance' at the local level: the rural council of Kaymor

The council between higher level administration and the local community – questions of accountability and representativeness

As mentioned above, within the framework of its decentralisation policy from 1972 onwards Senegal has gradually been divided into 368 rural communities, each administered by a rural council. In Kaymor the rural council was established in 1974. At the local level, however, this administrative reform was ill-prepared. At a meeting the village elite were simply told that from now on they were to arrange affairs at their own level and that the rural council was exactly for that purpose. It was consequently the local notables who took a seat in the council. They were seen by themselves and by the population as representing their respective villages. Although most were of freeborn or noble birth, descendants of the village founders, there were also a few descendants of slaves and foreigners, including descendants of slaves who had founded their own

village after manumission and foreigners who had become prominent members of local society by making big money in the peanut business.

Some scholars (Blundo, 1991, 1995, Gellar, 1996, Ribot, 1999) hold that the rural councils are not accountable to or representative of the local population, but accountable merely to the higher echelons of the political establishment. After all, it is the Party that decides on candidacy and to a large extent it is the means provided (or promised) by the upper-level administration and the central state that allow local politicians to bind their clientele.

In part this is true. The Party decides on the candidates for local elections. This is done officially during a meeting of the *section* (the Party organ at the community level). The choice is made under the supervision of a *contrôleur* from the Party, who checks the list before it is approved by the *section* members. In actual fact, however, whether someone is invested or not is decided on by the leaders of the Party at the level of the rural community together with the politicians at subdistrict level. They take into consideration the candidate's influence and esteem in his village, the number of membership cards he has sold, whether he has certain propaganda skills and whether he and his followers can strengthen the position of the party in the rural community. Thus, it is evident that only those candidates who dispose over following and legitimacy at the local level have a chance of being elected.

With respect to the representativeness of the rural council, we observed that the composition of Kaymor rural council had hardly changed in over twenty years; the initial elite still continued its reign. Women, ethnic minorities and youngsters were clearly underrepresented: from the beginning there had been only a single woman councillor, no Toucouleur and no young men. Things changed, however, with the proliferation of factionalism and with the decentralisation reforms of 1996, as we shall see in the next section.

Factionalism: growing local representativeness and growing conflicts

Factionalism has always been a characteristic of Senegalese politics (cf. Barker, 1973, Bayart, 1989, Jacob, 1997). This often took the form of rivalry between two 'clans', or factions, within the PS, and it always concerned access to the resources available at the national level. A strong vertical political organisation was thus built, linking the local to the national, an existing logic from which the newly created rural councils could not escape (see, for example, Blundo, 1998). In the rural community of Kaymor, however, the political 'family' was rather homogeneous and tied to the politician Mahmadou Wade at the national level. Here, factionalism only sprang up at the end of the 1980s, as a result of the 'parachuting' of national politicians in search of clients'. After the local elections of 1990 the division became working reality inside the rural council of Kaymor. From then on the council of Kaymor was divided into *tendance* A (fifteen members) and *tendance* B (seven members) Both factions have relations

with PS politicians at a higher level¹. The *tendances* have nothing to do with political arguments; what seems important is to have good connections to get a share of the 'cake'.

What is interesting is that because of the upcoming factionalism, certain social categories that previously had no chance of having a councillor now for the first time gained representatives because they came to be seen as useful clients in 'the battle of factions'. Thus, after 1990, four Toucouleur councillors took a seat on the rural council.

Representativeness was further increased with the reform of 1996: the winner-takes-all system was abandoned, which gave opposition parties an opportunity to take a seat on the council. In addition the system of appointed councillors was dropped; the council was now to be composed of thirty-two elected councillors. By means of a pro-active national campaign, supported by the large international donors, many women were invested as councillor. After the local elections of 1996 the rural council of Kaymor was composed of: twenty-six councillors for the PS (fifteen for faction A, eleven for faction B), five for the PDS and one for the LD/MTP. Of the thirty-two councillors, twenty were new. There were six young men (under the age of forty) and five women councillors. This implied a major change, be it that most of the leaders of the various categories were still from the old elite: local patrons, wives of notables and youngsters from prominent families.

Thus, factionalism permitted certain social categories to gain a seat on the council, and in so doing it fostered a new dynamic. The phenomenon of *tendances*, however, also leads to rivalries and situations of stalemate and hampers the functioning of the council, either because councillors of the rival faction are kept uninformed or because they boycott the other's policy. In land issues, for example, decisions are often taken in favour of militants of the faction that is in power, leaving the others in frustration. It is no wonder that people of the minority faction often refrain from presenting their case at all. Even when decisions are not taken solely on factionalist grounds, people do perceive it that way.

NGO representatives may decide not to work in a village because of the conflicts between *tendances*. The councillors of the village Médina Sabakh stood in such opposition that an NGO agent decided in 1995 to no longer work in the village but only in other, smaller villages (Bierman 1995 p.51). In 1995, USAID started to prepare a large project on natural resource management in the area in which it would involve the population, other NGOs and the rural council. The idea was for popular participation to be organised within a framework permitting due consideration to be given to the interests of the various groups of actors (PGCRN, 1995 p. 24). In this light the rural council of the day was not considered an apt institution, because, so it was said, the manner of election of the council and its composition do not permit representation of all the different groups of actors present in the rural community

¹ The leader of *tendance* A at the level of the *département* was Samou Toure, a government official who has connections with Moustapha Niassé minister of Foreign Affairs. The leader of *tendance* B was Modou A'Bass Ba, a member of parliament and ex-minister

Consequently, a new institution was created to manage the project (in which only three councillors would have a seat). As this management committee was officially appointed as an assistant body to the council, it was hoped that it would contribute to democratic changes in the rural council and in local society at large, too. In the short run, however, it appeared that the factionalism that had still managed to creep in strongly hampered the cooperation between the rural council and the management committee, as well as execution of the project as a whole. The fact was that from 1996 onwards the rural council was presided over by faction B, while the president of the management committee was a member of faction A. With time, minor conflicts and rumours proliferated and eventually tensions between the two presidents had mounted so high they were no longer willing to participate in meetings together. The project staff said it would have to leave if no solution were found. The two opponents had little alternative but to climb down (Kaag, 2001).

Factionalism also occurs in other elected organisations, such as the cooperative: The chairman of the cooperative of Kaymor occupied this position from the very beginning and because of his long and able record and his age he was a man of high standing. He felt he was growing too old to continue the job, though, and therefore announced that he intended to resign. However, the other members of the board insisted he should continue: if he withdraw, they held, the cooperative would become plagued by conflicts between the two factions. When his intention to resign became known, one of the factions had in fact tried to obtain a majority in the board. For the chairman there was no other choice than to remain in office.

The council budget: fight and 'development'

The rural councils dispose over a budget, generated mainly by rural taxation. The council of Kaymor has an annual budget of between FCFA 5,000,000 and 6,000,000 (about \$30,000)². From the beginning, most investment has been in infrastructure: wells, school maintenance and road improvement and so on.

As stated above, from 1996 onwards the rural councils have had greater powers in initiating policies in such areas as healthcare, natural resource management, culture and education, land planning and habitat issues. This transfer of competencies was not followed by any substantial transfer of financial means, however, nor by appropriate guidance of how these responsibilities were to be, or indeed could be, executed. This is compounded by the fact that most councillors are illiterate in French while official texts are available in that language only makes it difficult for them to personally access information. As a consequence, the main investments of the council to date have been tangible infrastructure works. Another main reason is that this kind of infrastructure work is most visible to the people, and is as such a means for the rural councillors to attract followers, or reward them for their support during the elections.

² In 1993, 1994 and 1995 the budget was respectively FCFA 5,200,000, FCFA 5,300,000 and FCFA 6,000,000.

Blundo (1998) shows how in another rural community in Senegal the means of the rural council and the rural community are clearly spent according to a factionalist logic. The faction that has gained the majority in the rural council rewards its followers by spending the budget on projects for their militants, with the others having to await another mandate. In our case things seem to be more complicated. In part the budget is spent according to a factionalist logic, providing things for villages of the faction in power. However, funds are also spent at villages with a councillor from faction B or no councillor at all. In such cases, however, the sum earmarked often seems to have 'skimmed off' to serve the councillors of the majority. These practices evidently reinforce animosity and distrust between the two factions. Fights are not generally fought out in the open, but rather by rumour campaigns and threats to inform the *sous-préfet*, the *préfet* or the police. Although this is in fact rarely done, it heightens the atmosphere of animosity in the community.

We may conclude that the councillors are part of the administration and owe a deal of their influence to higher-level political patrons who decide on candidacy and can provide the means for local patrons to gain and strengthen their position. On the other hand, however, the rural councillors are part of local society: they have to listen to their people in order to raise and maintain support. Indeed, only with such support will they be eligible in the eyes of their political patrons.

The emergence of factionalism at the end of the 1980s has increased the dependency of local politicians on their followers. People now have the option of choosing between candidates from different factions. Because of this factionalism and the move to further decentralisation in 1996, moreover, people that had always been politically marginalized, such as Toucouleur, women, and youngsters, now have a chance of taking a seat on the council. The birth of a 'factional mode of governance' (*gouvernementalité factionnelle*, Blundo 1998) seems to have broken down the monopoly of the old elite. The coming men still adhere, however, to local rules as to who is capable and permitted to speak: their leaders are local patrons, wives of notables or youngsters from important families.

Thus, a shift can be discerned towards broader-based representation of different social categories, but this looks set to be a long-term process. In the short term, factionalism is a factor hampering the functioning of the rural council, in that it leads to factional disputes, boycotts, exclusion and favouritism. Development activities do take place, however, the council's budget being used for infrastructure works that are important to the local population.

NGOs, self-help groups and 'real politics'

Self-help groups: new responsibilities and new criteria of access

Caritas, a catholic NGO, and the American Peace Corps have been working in the subdistrict Médina Sabakh since the 1960s. In the last fifteen years several other NGOs and semi-governmental agencies joined in efforts in the subdistrict:

Africare, POGV, PNVA, SODEVA, ISRA, the Norwegian Mission and USAID³. We estimate that, with a few exceptions, all the 104 villages have links with these NGOs and semi-governmental organisations.

The way these NGOs work and interact in local society reminds us of the question Bayart (1996) poses about the usefulness of making a distinction between the state and civil society in Africa. We thus found that local groups set up by the NGOs have become politicised and infiltrated by party politics. We take the example of the women's groups.

Traditionally, women have long participated in women's groups. At the age of about 16 young women join a girl's group (*xamb*). The group assists members in engagement and marriage festivities, helping prepare meals for instance, and also plays a role in village festivals such as wrestling matches (*lambe*). On leaving the girl's group to live with her husband she moves on to the group of married women (*mbotal*), the leader of whom (*yaye mbotal*) is always an important woman, generally of freeborn descent. Here too the members help one another with family ceremonies. They save a little money by collectively tilling a plot. In addition, new *mbotal* members are obliged to pay an entrance fee, provided by their husband. The money is used to buy kitchen provisions such as kettles, bowls and wooden benches, which are used at the family ceremonies. There is also mutual aid in the event of financial difficulty, when some of the savings can be borrowed.

Women join modern self-help groups too. Most of these women's groups are registered at the FNGPF and are then called *Groupement de Promotion Féminine* (GPF). Women mention several motives for having joined a GPF and for registering their group at the FNGPF. They believe that by joining the federation they will eventually be granted a project: receiving credit to buy a millet mill or sheep for fattening, for example. Such credit is available from donors working with the federation or from the federation itself. As a second motive, they say that a group can only ask for financial assistance from the rural council if it is registered. In addition, they mention that only registered groups are visited by the *monitrice*⁴.

The Federation does have certain criteria for membership, however. A GPF must first pay a registration fee of FCFA 22,000 and elect a board. Once it has obtained a project, it must open a bank account. In addition, the main task of the group is to generate income for its members, through gardening, for example, as is urged by the leaders of the Federation and by the *monitrice*.

³ Africare is an American NGO POGV stands for 'Projet d'Organisation et de Gestion Villageois' and is funded by IFAD PNVA stands for 'Programme National de Vulgarisation Agricole', financed by the Senegalese government and the World Bank ISRA is the 'Institut Senegalais de Recherches Agricoles', funded by the state and foreign donors 'La Mission Norvegienne' is a Norwegian NGO, funded by a Norwegian protestant church and the Norwegian government

⁴ There seem to be no financial restrictions on membership when asked, the women say that poor women can be members, too What counts is whether they are willing to work Poor women were indeed members of the women's groups Group membership costs an initial CFA 250 300, with say CFA 100 250 being paid once or twice a year to buy seed or pesticides If the entrance fee proves problematical, though, a solution can always be found, for example by paying later (cf Smetsers 1986)

Some groups have decided to organise these activities within new groups, others to combine them with the usual activities of their *mbotal*. The latter is the case in the hamlets and in large villages where wards are populous enough to have a group of its own. Of the ten groups researched, five were organised according to ward or hamlet and in these cases there was an overlap with the *mbotal*. However, because not all women participate in a GPF as they do in the *mbotal*, members are sometimes recruited from different wards, causing absence of overlap with traditional groups.

Status group membership is a topic not discussed in public, neither does it arise in relation to women's groups. Of the ten groups, five were organised on a ward basis and, as a consequence, had members belonging to the same status group. According to the *présidente* of the FNGPF and the staff of the CERP, status differences have no relevance for access to women's groups. They claim that motivation is the crucial criterion for access: those with ambition are welcome. Even the *présidentes* of the local groups bring forward this view. Indeed, five groups have mixed membership.

In practice, however, differences in status do constitute a problem. In Sonkorong, for example, because of outside interference there is now only one women's group, although the women are from three different status groups. The freeborn women say they are not at all keen to cooperate with the artisan women. Neither the wives of the village head nor the majority of the women of the ward of the freeborn have joined this new group. In the other mixed groups, too, there were rumours of frictions between women from different status groups. Here they argued, however, that lack of discipline was more important in organising work efficiently than differences in status. Although there is no conclusive evidence, there are indications that having women of different status working together in the new groups hampers efficient cooperation.

Income-earning opportunities and access to land

The women argue that their main reason for joining a new self-help group is that it creates new economic opportunities. Programmes set up by NGOs and parastatals often involve the introduction of labour-saving and income-generating devices, such as millet mills and groundnut presses, with attendant funding of literacy courses so that the women can manage the equipment obtained. To date, twenty-two women's groups in the subdistrict have received a millet mill on credit.

Most millet mills are able to generate profits, which are distributed among members. Of the nine mills researched, seven were making profits while two were still paying off their loans. The profits were divided among the members, after part had been put aside as a fund from which loans could be taken during the rainy season. If a member is in trouble she can normally borrow money funds serve as a tide-over in difficult times.

Women also grow vegetables or millet on collective plots. Of the ten women's groups, eight had a garden plot. These plots varied in size between 2000 and 3000 m², with membership varying between seventeen and eighty.

In addition, five groups had a collective groundnut or millet plot of between ½ and 1½ ha.

It is generally one of the local farmers who provide the group a plot of land. The plot may be reclaimed by the landholder at any time, without reason, which makes income generation by such groups a rather precarious business. Women's groups are beginning to gain other forms of access to land, however. The land tenure rights of the thirteen collective plots were as follows: one group rents a 1½ ha plot; one has bought a 1½ ha plot; two have obtained land from the council, and the women say the land now belongs to them; nine have received a plot in usufruct in the traditional way. Under pressure from donors and NGOs, as well as the FNGPF, women's groups are starting to ask for official allotment of land, a trend that is also reflected in our particular subdistrict (Kaag, 2001).

This access to land should however be seen in a context of the worsening conditions the women are having to face. In the rural community of Kaymor, as elsewhere, women have their personal plot in usufruct, often a different plot each year. Because all fertile land is now occupied and population pressure is on the rise, women are obtaining smaller plots and some heads of households are no longer in a position to give their wife or wives a plot. In such cases a woman turns to her family members for help, but often to no avail. Increased population pressure has thus left women with mounting concerns. Engaging in horticulture is one of the avenues women use in endeavouring to overcome this structural problem.

Women becoming gradually more informed

In addition, membership of a women's group allows women to be better informed, because they have access to new information. At information meetings to which the women's groups are called by the subdistrict officer, the women are informed by NGO staff or the *monitrice* about nutrition, healthcare, family planning, textile painting or new types of stoves. Child vaccination appeals organised by the Ministry of Health are also directed at the women's groups.

As stated above, eight NGOs or semi-governmental organisations were working in the subdistrict, where they were in contact with almost all the villages. Seven organisations work with women's groups, most of them registered as a GPF or a GIE (on one we have no information). Thus, being organised in a women's group means that the women are in direct contact with an NGO operating in the area and become involved in development activities.

Another advantage enjoyed by women's groups is that board members have access to training, in literacy or bookkeeping, for instance. It used to be the councillors who managed the millet mills, acquired through donor funding or financed by the rural council budget. They controlled the revenues, which soon resulted in a backlog of maintenance. Between 1974 and 1988 the three rural councils and donors together distributed seventy-two millet mills to women's groups in the subdistrict, which then were monopolised by council members. In 1988 only sixteen of these were still in operation (CERP 1994). The mills

managed by the women themselves operate better. They have followed a course in bookkeeping and have opened a bank account. Profits are distributed among the members and not pocketed by the '*responsible*', discussed below, as was the case when the mills were managed by men.

State retreat and absence of technical assistance to self-help groups

At Médina Sabakh is the government's *Centre d'Expansion Rurale Polyvalente* (CERP), whose staff provides technical development support. The head, specialised in agriculture, is backed up by a veterinary agent, a forestry agent and a *monitrice*. Apart from the head, there is also another field worker for agriculture attached to the CERP, but he is on the staff of a programme funded by the World Bank. Two staff members are lacking: a health worker and an agent for assisting local cooperatives. A staff of five thus has to serve a population of some 33,000.

In addition, until recently the CERP had a chronic lack of means for contacting the population. Up to 1996, it had only one old car and a mere 600 litres of fuel per annum to go out in the field; it was consequently unable to visit the villages. Since the arrival of a USAID project the situation has improved and now a second car is available, although officially it may only be used for activities related to said project.

However, women's groups generally need help with the bookkeeping of the revenues of their millet mill or groundnut press, with cultivating their gardens and so on. Formally, they can count on the assistance of the *monitrice*. In fact, it is her job to assist in the aforementioned tasks, as well as to organise meetings to inform the women on such topics as family planning and nutrition in the three women's centres of the subdistrict. Apart from the latter, the *monitrice* occupies herself with two women's groups in the village Médina Sabakh and assists three women's groups in other locations, where a World Bank project has financed three millet mills and literacy courses. Her activities are thus rather limited, which she attributes to her lack of transport facilities. She prefers to wait for an opportunity to be driven in the CERP car. In short, the *monitrice* is not able to properly assist the women's groups in the subdistrict and there is in fact an organisational vacuum.

Political interference

As argued above, from the point of view of the women, formation of a women's group is a rational course of action. Because the government extension service is unable to support the women's groups, however, they become dependent on men. The women's groups generally have a male representative to assist them, a person they call the *responsible*. It is these *responsables* who actually establish the women's groups. They ensure a board is elected and money collected to pay for the entrance fee, after which they register the group at the FNGPF. Of the ten women's groups, eight have a *responsible*; so only two operate independently. Rumour has it that the *responsables* pocket some of the fee money, although we found no cut-and-dry cases. It seems unlikely that very

much is pocketed, because of the close relationship of the *responsable* and the *présidente* or *trésorière*, often being their husband or son. Women's groups appear to be very dependent on the *responsable*, as the following example shows.

In Médina Sabakh two new groups were founded in 1996: Bokk Xalaat and Jamm ak Salam. Both are run entirely by the *responsable*. When a female researcher interviewed the *présidente* of the Bokk Xalaat group, she soon proved unable to answer several questions. For example, she did not know whether the group was registered at the FNGPF. She soon decided to call the *responsable*, who immediately took over the discussion: the group was apparently registered and he could tell a lot more. The *présidente* said that next time she should address her questions directly to him, because he was the *responsable*.

The same happened when she interviewed the *présidente* of the group Jamm ak Salam, who had invited two other members of the group along. When asked for the name of the group, the three women started a long discussion. Later they called for the *responsable*, in fact her son. From that moment on the women were silent: the floor was for the *responsable*.

It appeared that the women's groups have become connected to party politics through the *responsable*. In five of the eight cases the *responsable* proved to be a rural councillor affiliated to a political party. The women argued that they prefer to have a councillor as *responsable*, as this improves their chances of access to rural council funds. The *présidentes* of the women's groups do not themselves lobby within the council because they do not feel in a position to do so. From the connection between politics and women's groups leadership, it follows that they will hardly receive any council funds if their *responsable* belongs to a minority on the council.

Rumour has it that the councillors take a portion of the council budget for their own private funds and some women did not deny this, having to pay a substantial 'gift' in order to obtain funding. In contrast, money coming from NGOs, through FNGPF or otherwise, is often paid directly to *présidentes*, making male misuse less feasible, although here too a 'gift' sometimes has to be paid.

From the political connection it follows that the positions of *présidente* and *responsable* are affirmed in local elections. After the elections there are endeavours by district politicians to replace local leaders depending on the polling results. Replacement is quite frequently resented, resulting in the schisms within women's groups⁵.

In Kaymor there was one GPF with a *responsable* and *présidente* both connected with PS faction A. However, after the 1990 elections there was a schism and there is now a second group with a *présidente* and a *responsable* from PS faction B. When the *présidente* of the new group was asked why there were now two groups she said that in every large village you could find more than one group. At the end of the discussion, though, it appeared that within the group there had been dissatisfaction about the way in which

5 Of the 54 women groups researched in the subdistrict, 38 were connected to PS faction a, 12 to PS faction B and 4 to PDS

the accounts were kept. A councillor of PS faction B exploited this fact in order to create the second group, which was then also registered. When, after the local elections of 1996, the *présidente* of this second group opted to support faction A again, this councillor created a third group in 1997 with a *présidente* from faction B

As a conclusion, we argue that women's groups are affiliated to the political parties through their *responsables*, most often rural councillors. Women accept this because it gives them access to the council budget, funds from which they very much need. However, they resent the fact that councillors (are held to) pocket council funds. Things become worse if women are affiliated to a minority party in the council: they will not receive much help because the money is channelled to the majority faction or party.

This political connection results in the drawback that *responsables* and *présidentes* are replaced depending on the polling results. Because leadership of women's groups has become dependent on local elections, effective leadership has become undermined because political criteria have become more important than technical and organisational skills. This is clearly resented by the women.

Before 1996, there were only two female councillors in the subdistrict of a total of sixty-three. The current vogue to have women as candidates on party lists led to fourteen women being elected in the local elections of 1996. This means that more women's groups will be able to operate without a male *responsable* beyond the two groups who currently do so.

Women's groups have come co-opted by party-politics, which is hampering their operation. At the same time, though, these women's groups are able to create scope for income generation by their members. Since the appearance of women's groups on the scene, many millet mills are managed by the women, where they were formerly appropriated by councillors. Projects like collective tillage of a garden or millet field are far less remunerative because of problems of labour organisation and lack of technical assistance. In any case, these small projects cannot do away with the fact that the women feel frustrated at losing access to their traditional farmlands.

The pressure of the 'donor regime' on decentralisation and the creation of women's groups thus offers a mixed balance, opening new opportunities but at the same time increasing dependency.

Conclusion

In this article we have examined 'good governance' as an expression of a donor regime that is evolving worldwide. By applying the criterion of 'good governance' to third-world countries, donors contribute to a condensation of the global network. Here, however, we have considered the other side of the global-local continuum: a Senegalese locality where the consequences of implementing 'good governance' are felt, but also where such governance gains a content and dynamic of its own. On this basis we may conclude that implementation of 'good governance' measures does not necessarily or only lead to greater efficiency, democracy and peace (as those in favour of 'good gover-

nance' might predict), but neither solely to greater conflict and exploitation (as critics might argue).

Decentralisation measures in the form of installation of a rural council with its own budget has created a local arena that can be contested using local means. It has also led to greater local influence of the PS, the national ruling party, by creating a more directly vertical connection between the local and higher levels of administration. Because of this connection, at the end of the 1980s factionalism within the PS, always present at the national level, descended to the local, community level of Kaymor.

This factionalism proved to be an obstacle to proper functioning of the rural council, in that it led to factional disputes, boycotts, exclusion and favouritism. On the other hand, as a consequence of this factionalism and of the new rules of participation introduced by the decentralisation of 1996, minorities such as ethnic minorities, women and youngsters got a chance to become elected to the council. Within these categories, however, local norms and values are still operative: those elected are local patrons, wives of notables or youngsters from prominent families. Thus, there appears to be a shift towards broader-based representation of the various social categories, as urged by the advocates of 'good governance'; it is an inch-meal process, however.

The presence of NGOs is another result of the quest for 'good governance': 'less state' and greater grassroots participation. We saw that NGOs brought resources to the local level and fostered the creation of new forms of cooperation and organisation such as formal women's groups. These groups can provide income, land, prestige and a feeling of security to the women who participate. We saw also, however, that potential access to funds also attracts male politicians. In assisting women's groups in bureaucratic and organisational matters and in contacting NGOs they are often able to acquire a share in the funds. Thus, in the case of the women's groups, too, the input or promise of input of funds provided by the presence of NGOs often leads to politicisation and conflicts and to fights over the means and power available. Most frequently, women are the dependent party.

Nevertheless, we can discern a process of women becoming more informed by way of literacy and bookkeeping courses. The economic power they gain through their activities also contributes to their gaining more influence. It must be added, though, that women have less access to the traditional farmlands. Women's groups collectively tilling millet, groundnut or vegetables plots is simply one means of attempting to overcome this crucial problem.

We may conclude that decentralisation and the presence of NGOs, promoted in order to arrive at 'good governance', initiate and reinforce different processes at the local level. There is the acute struggle over means, reinforcing conflict and factionalism, which in the short run often leads to stagnation in the council and in the functioning of women's groups. There are slower processes of emancipation. There are direct profits; however, these are not distributed evenly among the population but generally accrue to the followers of the ruling faction. In other situations, men skim off the product of women's work. Nevertheless, these profits do contribute to the economic development of the community.

What we have tried to show is that the idea of 'good governance' is neither a magic formula for development nor a nonsense concept of no use. Formal changes in organisations and procedures are certainly not sufficient to arrive at better governance. Political factors play an important role. Political power relations are not fixed, however, and may change partly as a result of formal changes. What is factually important is that the 'global' idea of 'good governance' acquires its own content and dynamic at the local level, in the empirical reality of specific local circumstances. It is more useful to unravel this process, and in so doing learn more about how the local and the global interact and as such enable as well as constrain actors' activities and strategies, than to simply state that implementation of 'good governance' will or will not lead to 'development'.

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IV

Confrontations between Globalisation from Above and Below