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## Environmental Policies and Social Reality in Senegal

*Hans van den Breemer and Gerti Hesseling*

The implementation of policies, governmental or not, is an interesting domain for social scientists, particularly when it concerns developing countries. In these countries, in contrast to countries with a well-established democratic tradition, the political influence of many societal groups mostly concentrates on implementation rather than on legislation and policy formulation which are often processes far removed from their sphere of influence. According to Grindle (1980: 15, 19 cited by Kraayeveld 1993: 22), the implementation comes about in 'the major arena in which individuals and groups are able to pursue conflicting interests and compete for access to scarce resources'. Only in the implementation phase do individuals or groups, not actively represented in the formulation of policy, have the opportunity to promote their interests, and they may do so by interpreting and manipulating the new policies to their own advantage. The question is whether this also applies to the implementation of environmental laws and policies.

In Senegal, as probably in many other countries also, the implementation of environmental policies, by the National Forestry Service (*Les Eaux et Forêts*) has always been surrounded by rumours of external political interventions, thwarting the policy of the forestry service and discouraging its agents. Fortunately, we have available two cases of policy implementation and failure, which are well-documented and analyzed in the literature. These cases are, first, the regulation by the government of charcoal production in order to limit and control deforestation, and, second, the conservation policy with regard to forest reserves, in particular the *Mbegue* reserve (*Forêt Classée*).

The aims of this paper are, firstly, to show the nature and importance of the political interventions according to the authors of the case studies, and, secondly, to argue on the basis of other written sources that these interventions are not detached incidents but are to be considered as inherent in the country's political system and therefore difficult to prevent.

To these ends we will first present a summary of our case studies and the reported reasons for failure. Then we will take an opposite perspective and look at some literature on Senegal's economic and political development. Finally we will try to

explore some of the implications of Senegal's clientelist system for the implementation of environmental policies.

### Governmental policies to control charcoal production

Since the early 1970s the government has been well aware of the process of deforestation. This has resulted in a number of measures to reduce the pressure on the natural forests (alternative fuel; improved stoves; tree-planting, first on a large scale and later small-scale social forestry), all with very limited success (Ribot 1990; Plan National 1989; van den Breemer *et al.* 1993).

Another package of measures concerned charcoal production. The demand for charcoal was and still is predominantly an urban one, as rural households mostly use wood for fuel (Bergeret and Ribot 1990: 144-145). It was realized that this production, although not the principal one, was an important and moreover a very visible cause of deforestation. Therefore, the government tried to evolve a 'rational', that is a sustainable exploitation of the natural forests. This meant that charcoal production had to be regulated to keep it under control. The *Loi sur le domaine national* of 1964 served as the legal basis for this regulation. According to this law, all land that is not used for productive objectives exclusively belongs to the state, together with the forests and trees on it. Moreover, the state owned many forest reserves, inherited from colonial times.

#### *Measures and regulations adopted by the government*

According to Ribot (1990) the governmental policies have been developed step by step. In 1972 the commercial producers of charcoal were obliged to apply for a licence and they were encouraged to organize themselves in cooperatives. From 1980 onwards yearly quotas for charcoal production were fixed and distributed. In 1982 the National Union of Charcoal Cooperatives was created and membership of a cooperative was made a condition for a licence. However, a small number of big enterprises were exempted from this obligation (Bergeret and Ribot 1990: 151).

In 1986 Ribot found a set of measures of which the following are the most important:

1. Every year a national production quota is fixed below the demand for charcoal, in order to raise the consumers' price and to stimulate the use of other energy sources thus saving forests and trees. This national quota is divided among officially recognized production zones.

2. The production season is limited to the dry season (November-July): dry wood gives a higher yield and saves forests, while the soil is less damaged by the large trucks.
3. Only dead trees may be felled.
4. Within each production zone, the annual quota for that zone is distributed among the registered cooperatives and enterprises by a regional committee under the supervision of the governor. Part of the quota is reserved (by way of incentive) for licensees who have used their quota quickly or who have replanted a certain area.
5. Every year all members of the cooperatives and the entrepreneurs must buy a licence for themselves as well as for each of their labourers, who on top of that need a labour licence, valid for forty days; this is the period needed for the production process, from felling the dead trees to filling the bags with charcoal. When the production of one heap is ready, the entrepreneur must buy a licence to transport (*Permis de circulation*), valid for three days, or a licence to stock the produce (*Permis de stockage*). If, later on, he decides to transport, he must buy a licence and pay a certain amount per bag.
6. When the necessary licenses to produce are obtained, the agents of the Forestry Service allot areas of forest to the entrepreneurs or cooperatives. The criteria used for allotting a plot are proneness of the soil to erosion and the presence of sufficient dead trees. When a plot has been exploited a regeneration period of 20 years must be observed before it may be allotted again.
7. The prices for licenses, taxes and the consumer's price must be fixed by the Ministry of Commerce in Dakar, in consultation with the Forestry Service.

When judged in isolation from social reality this policy seems quite coherent and appears reasonable except perhaps for the large number of licences required.

#### *The effects of the governmental measures and regulations*

In reality, however, the ends, namely the reduction of deforestation and the prevention of over-exploitation of the forest, are not realized at all. What has been achieved, according to Ribot, are financial revenues for the state and the Forestry Service. He mentions three short-comings in particular.

First, the production season is not observed. In reality production goes on the whole year round. The employers ask for and obtain a licence to stock at the end of the dry season, without having any stock. In the meantime they carry on with the

production and they gather in the charcoal later under the pretext that it comes from their own stock. The agents of the Forestry Service do not make any inspections in the forest, nor do they verify whether stocks exist or not. They sometimes even give transport permits, when it is obvious that the charcoal has been produced outside the official season.

Second, the production quotas are not respected. Apart from the disregard for the official season mentioned above, there is an unequal access to the reserve quota. The employers who are the first to have used their initial quota, or who have planted trees, are the ones who employ many labourers and are rich. Moreover, they may have connections with ministers or high state officials outside or inside the Forestry Service and use these to acquire additional quotas. This has resulted in the rise of a small group of rich employers in the charcoal sector who consume the reserve quota and a large majority of small employers who to their dissatisfaction never receive any additional quota.

This small minority also has access to a special kind of licence, namely the land exploitation quota (*Quota de défrichement*) for the establishment of big farms. This implies an extra yield of wood and charcoal.

There is another way to escape from the official distribution of quotas. An employer who has used his quota, may order his labourers to start the production of charcoal without any licence, outside the allotted plot. When the production process is finished, the employer himself informs the Forestry Service about this illegal production. The charcoal is then confiscated (in name) whereupon the employer who has reported the illegal production, may buy a receipt (*quittance*) which permits him to transport and sell this charcoal.

Third, the deforestation is aggravated (instead of stopped) because the official policy does not take into account that the villagers in the charcoal production zones need to use products from the forest on a daily basis to earn their living and that they cannot allow the forest the necessary time (20 years) to regenerate. The criteria for the selection of forest areas are physical in nature (soil not prone to erosion and many dead trees), no social criterium being involved. The result is that the plots chosen are nearly always in the vicinity of a village. This is profitable for the employers, for they can lodge their labourers there, and it brings short-term profits to the villagers who receive some money for housing and food. The labourers, however, do not only fell dead trees, they also cut trees with only some dead branches, or they treat the bark of living trees in such a way that they soon die. After some time the vegetation around the villages is largely decimated, so the villagers have to look for wood, leaves, roots and fruits at a greater distance from the village. Their sheep, goats and cattle roam around freely, eating up any natural

regeneration. Thus villages that ever received a large group of labourers will always be surrounded by plains with scant vegetation. By disregarding the needs of the local communities, the Forestry Service exploits the forest in a non-sustainable way.

### *The reasons of failure*

The failure of the government policy on the commercial exploitation of forests for charcoal must according to Ribot be regarded as the result of an interplay of both external and internal factors.

External factors are the conditions under which the Forestry Service must carry out its duties and which are outside its control. The main task of the Forestry Service is the sustainable exploitation of the state forests. In reality, however, a contradiction has become manifest between the duty to protect the forests and the obligation to provide urban households with charcoal. Moreover, the last task brings financial revenues to the Forest Service which is in constant lack of means, while the protection of the forests only costs money.

Other external factors are the growing urban demand for charcoal, the lack of foreign currency to buy gas or petrol as a substitute for charcoal and the limited rural interest in social forestry or improved domestic stoves. The Forestry Service may try to fix the national quota below demand in order to raise the consumer price and to encourage the urban consumer to use alternative fuels and save energy, but as soon as shortage or price increase threaten, the urban and national politicians immediately protest strongly to the Forest Service management. Thus, determination of national quotas and urban prices is not feasible for political reasons.

An internal factor in this failure, which is probably somewhat more under the control of the Forestry Service, is the lack of social criteria in the allotment of forests areas for felling. The remit of the Forestry Service is to manage forests for the state and to provide cities with charcoal in an orderly and efficient way. They forget to take into account the use that rural communities make of the surrounding forest resources, thereby neglecting a real partner in sustainable exploitation.

Another internal factor for which according to Ribot the Forestry Service is accountable, concerns the policy of reserving a part of the national quota for employers who have used up their quota quickly or who have replanted a certain area. In practice, this means that the rich employers are privileged at the expense of a large majority of small employers. In this way the Forestry Service helped to create a small group of rich employers who have a quasi-monopoly in the charcoal sector. The members of this small group have connections with important officials at all levels of society and they use any means at their disposal, that is money or social

relationships, to get access to extra quotas. At the local level, they are permitted, by means of bribes or by the intervention of powerful friends, to produce charcoal where and when they want, without being penalised by the Forestry Service agents. At the regional or national level, they have an important influence on the distribution of quotas, in direct contact with the relevant authorities or indirectly by means of ministers or *marabouts* (Muslim spiritual leaders). Many ministers and officials at all levels of the bureaucratic system are *talibé* (followers) of an important *marabout*.

### The national conservation policy and the Mbegue reserve

Since the long dry period in 1972-1974 the Senegalese government has been acutely aware of environmental problems. Many efforts were made to reduce the pressure on the natural forests, to limit the production and consumption of charcoal and to plant forests and trees for timber, fuel, fodder, etc. (van den Breemer *et al.* 1993, 1995). A considerable number of social forestry projects has been undertaken since that time (Guèye *et al.* 1994), involving grants from foreign donors. Gonzalez, in his review-study of 1992, reports that in the period 1973-1992 the international donors invested 215 millions of US dollars and the Senegalese government 4.3 billion Frs CFA, in 18 completed and 29 current natural resources projects.

Against the background of all these efforts, the decision of the government in early 1991 to concede 45, 000 ha of the sylvo-pastoral reserve of *Mbegue* for commercial agriculture (groundnut cultivation) came as a complete surprise. Schoonmaker Freudenberger (1991) and Gillot (1992) shed some light on the conservation policies in Senegal since early colonial times and the events in 1991 with regard to the *Mbegue* reserve.

#### Conservation policies

The concern of the government for forests, trees and soils dates back to the colonial period. Although happy at the enormous expansion of the groundnut cultivation, especially through the Muslim Brotherhood of the *Mourides*, the government was already worried about the ill effects of that expansion for the marginal areas and for the agro-pastoralist Fulbe (Schoonmaker 1991: 5-6). It was decided to keep the commercial groundnut cultivation away from the vulnerable soils of the higher areas by reserving these areas for the pastoralists. They were allowed to graze their cattle there and to lay out fields for their own use. They were believed not to disturb the

environment too much, as they maintained the soil fertility with the manure of their cattle. And so, in 1936, the forest of *Mbegue* was declared protected. It was given the status of a sylvo-pastoral zone in 1952, and covered an area of 73, 000 ha (Schoonmaker 1991: 11). In 1949 a water-hole was drilled in the centre of the reserve at a point called Khelkhom to provide water for the agro-pastoralists.

After independence, the protection of the *Forêts Classées* and sylvo-pastoral zones was continued. In the 1970s, following the long dry period and the encroaching desertification, the Forestry Service started to make life harder for the agro-pastoralists by imposing more restrictions and fines on their use of the natural resources.

#### The concession of the Mbegue forest and its environmental effects

In January 1991, President Abdou Diouf signed an agreement (*Contrat de mise-en-culture*) with the General Khalifa of the *Mouride* Brotherhood. By this agreement the Khalifa was allowed to use 45, 000 ha of the *Mbegue* forest for commercial groundnut cultivation, while the legal status of this sylvo-pastoral zone was not officially abolished (Schoonmaker 1991: 11).

On April 3, 1991 a group of agro-pastoralists, alarmed by rumours, sent a letter to the president requesting him to protect their rights and to preserve the forest for them (Schoonmaker, 1991: 14), but without avail. They also wrote to the opposition journal SOPI, but, according to Schoonmaker (1991: 17) its editors did not react for fear of the power of the *Mouride* Brotherhood.

On April 25, a general appeal was made on the radio to all *Mourides* in Senegal to come to Khelkhom with their machetes and axes to cut trees. Over a period of three weeks 45, 000 ha were stripped of trees and shrubs. To control this mass operation assistance was given by several governmental services: ambulance, police, fire-brigade and even the Forestry Service.

About 6, 000 Fulbe pastoralists, with some 100, 000 head of cattle, took refuge in the eastern part of the reserve (28, 000 ha), that had been maintained as a sylvo-pastoral zone, but there were no permanent water sources (Schoonmaker 1991: 14).

Groundnut cultivation demands that trees and shrubs be removed. The groundnut plant extracts many nutrients from the soil, and at the harvest the whole plant is pulled up from the soil, the nuts as well as haulm being used or sold, resulting in hardly any organic material being left behind in the soil. If no other manure is available, the soil will soon be exhausted and irreparably damaged, certainly in this marginal area. In the eastern part of the reserve the risk of over-exploitation is high, given the large number of people and cattle expelled from the

western part and given the already existing safety-net function for the pastoralists from more distant zones. Thus, from an environmental point of view this large-scale operation must be considered a failure of the conservation policy. There are rumours, however, that under pressure of international attention efforts at sustainable land use are being made (Gillot 1992).

#### *The reasons for the failure of the conservation policy at Mbegue*

Schoonmaker gives a predominantly historical explanation, in which the structural actors and factors may be discerned. She argues that the events in *Mbegue* are not isolated incidents but that they are the last of a whole series of clashes. From early colonial times onwards the government as well as the leaders of the *Mouride* Brotherhood were both interested in raising commercial groundnut cultivation for export. The increase in production took place on the basis of extensive land-use and thus implied migration to sparsely populated areas by groups of young Mourides, the *daara*. In this migratory process they came across groups of agro-pastoralists. From about 1930 onwards this regularly resulted in conflicts involving bloodshed. The colonial courts mostly decided in favour of the Mourides and when this was incidentally not the case, the Mourides came in overwhelming numbers and appropriated the land. Subsequently this was tacitly tolerated by the government. One example is the forest of Deali. In 1951 the government drilled a water-hole there, for the benefit of the pastoralists and their cattle. A few months later the Mouride leaders demanded territory near the water-hole. The Forestry Service refused the demand but higher authorities agreed. And so, in January 1954, a large group of followers (*talibé*) appeared, who cleared 1, 200 ha within three days, while treating the pastoralist Fulbe aggressively. The government did not intervene. In 1966 the Mouride leaders managed to acquire 10, 000 ha of the forests of Deali and Boulel, and some years later another 19, 000 ha. In 1971 they obtained 80, 000 ha of the forest at Doli. Between 1977 and 1990 they claimed and received a large part of the Bakedji district, at the expense of the agro-pastoralist Fulbe. In 1991 it was the turn of the forest of *Mbegue* (Schoonmaker 1991: 7-10). Thus the events in *Mbegue* must be regarded as yet another conflict between the groundnut growing, expanding Mouride agriculturalists, predominantly Wolof, and the agro-pastoralist Fulbe, under the auspices of a government who offered tacit agreement.

A closer examination is required of the three main protagonists and their inter-relationships: the colonial and post-colonial government, the Brotherhood of the *Mourides* and the agro-pastoralists.

The policies of the colonial government were dominated by the aspiration to further the commercial cultivation of groundnuts. As early as the colonial period, it had found a local partner in the *Mouride* Brotherhood who realised on its own initiative an enormous expansion of groundnut culture. The agro-pastoralist Fulbe, on the contrary, were often an obstacle to Mouride expansion, while their cattle husbandry made no significant contribution to the national economy. The result was a government policy of tolerating the behaviour of the Mourides towards the agro-pastoralists. After political independence the economic orientation of the new government found its expression in the land law (*Loi sur le domaine national*) of 1964. According to this law the state owns all land and is authorized to transfer usufructuary rights to all its citizens on condition that the receiver uses them in an economically useful way (the principle of *Mise-en-valeur*, i.e. adding economic value). According to this criterium the land-use of the agro-pastoralists is considered as non-productive, as not adding any value (Schoonmaker 1991: 19; Gillot 1992). Moreover, the government started to accuse the agro-pastoralists of degradation of the environment, disregarding the fact that so much of the pasture land had been withdrawn from them.

The second actor, the Brotherhood, was founded at the end of the 19th century. According to their ideology a personal relation of the adherent (*Talibé*) with a Muslim spiritual leader (*Marabout*) is regarded as indispensable for personal salvation. Loyalty to the religious leader is fundamental. One expression of this is physical labour for the *Marabout*. The resulting strong, religious work ethic focused on the main economic opportunity in the early colonial period, the growing of groundnuts. This religious work ethic was the driving force behind the migration to distant, isolated areas and the expansion of the groundnut cultivation there. The loyalty to the religious leaders and the work ethic made the brotherhood an important pillar of the colonial state, in an economic as well as a political respect (Schoonmaker 1991: 2-5). The colonial government could not afford to disregard the views and needs of the religious leaders. After political independence their influence was strengthened. They acquired a position of quasi-monopoly in public transport and they were supported by large groups of migrants in the U.S. and Europe. With the introduction of universal suffrage, the principle of loyalty to the religious leader resulted in a political block of about two million voters. The leaders of the Brotherhood have always given their support to the government and the dominant socialist party (*Parti Socialiste*, P.S.). To maintain this indispensable electoral support, government and party in turn have to meet some of the wishes of the religious leaders. Within the context of this mutual support, the head of the State, who was at

the same time the leader of government and P.S., signed the agreement by which the religious leaders received free access to the greater part of the *Mbegue* reserve.

The third actor, the agro-pastoralist Fulbe, has in the course of time fallen into an antagonistic inter-relationship with the Mourides. Moreover, although originally used as a buffer against the Mouride expansion to marginal areas, they were more and more regarded by the government as obstacles to economic development, as economically worthless, and finally also as destroyers of the environment. No wonder that in *Mbegue* again they were the losers, when confronted with the powerful alliance between the Mouride leaders and the government and party (Schoonmaker 1991: 18-19).

### The economic and political developments in Senegal

Up to now two case studies have been summarized: one in which the governmental policy did not achieve the intended goals, and another in which the government infringed its own policy and rules. In both cases political interventions are indicated as one of the main causes of failure. These firm conclusions in both case studies suggest a closer look at the economic and political development in Senegal in order to see whether the political interventions in our case studies happen to be incidental or structural in nature. An interesting source on this subject is Boone (1994), a summary of her earlier book published in 1992.

With political independence in 1960 power was taken over by a government under the supervision of Senghor and his party, the then U.P.S. Within the government several ideological and interests groups were represented. Senghor tried to manage this diversity in consultation with the religious leaders of the *Mouride* Brotherhood and other rural elites. This alliance between government and Mouride leaders dates from colonial times. These rural leaders had economic power and they were able to mobilize important electoral support (Boone 1994: 169, Fatton 1987: 65-67). In the first years of his government Senghor regularly had troubles with the young, reform-oriented intellectuals in his government and party. They tried by the movement of the *Animation rurale* to change the political relations in the rural areas and to limit the power of the rural elite among whom were the *Marabouts*. In 1963 Senghor felt obliged to remove these reformists from his government. He did not want to jeopardize the alliance with the leaders of the Mourides. This crisis had two main effects: the rise of the one-party state and the reinforcement of the alliance with the Mouride leaders. The rise of the one-party state implied that, in a situation of

weakening parliamentary control, the important administrative posts were occupied by party-members. More than ever before they allocated state resources for party or personal ends. They distributed subsidies, jobs, contracts, credits, licences and favours in such a way that political dissidents were attracted to commit themselves to the party or to their faction (*tendance*) and groupings around rivals of Senghor were splintered (Boone 1994: 170, Fatton 1987: 73). At the same time the rural elites were allowed to take leadership positions in the state cooperatives, that means they were allowed to profit by the distribution of agricultural inputs and by buying the groundnuts from the farmers (see also van Hoven 1995: 44-55). They could enjoy this privilege on condition that they successfully took care of two things: first, that their subordinates voted for the party or a certain candidate, and second, that the producer's price for the groundnuts remained low so that the government could make the maximum profit in the international market. So the party members in the government distributed state resources among their clients as did the rural elite and the *Marabouts* among the rural population. In short, clientelism and cooptation had become the means of staying in power and of consolidation.

The government acquired its financial resources predominantly from commercial transactions and taxes on commercial activities. In 1960 the government established a state monopoly on the buying-up and the export of groundnuts. To this end a special government organization was formed, the *OCA* (Boone 1994: 172). Exclusive control of the groundnut trade was considered necessary for appropriating the maximum returns from export and for gaining the allegiance of the rural elite and through them the rural population. This *OCA* became a powerful source for the system of patronage.

The establishment of the state monopoly was a serious blow to the French and Lebanese commercial firms, who abruptly retired from the rural areas. Although the government gave them a certain protection against potential competitors, it imposed on them many levies and taxes, while potential opposition groups were split up by selectively according favours to certain commercial firms.

With the withdrawal of the foreign trading houses from the rural areas, opportunities arose for Senegalese traders. So, until the *OCA* was operational on a national scale in 1968, the government selected 1000 traders every year, to undertake buying-up the groundnuts. To get a trading licence, allegiance to the party or to a certain candidate was obligatory.

In the import trade also, the government started, from 1963 onwards, to create more room for Senegalese traders who were allied to the party. However, in order

to raise its revenues, the government decided to establish another state monopoly on the trade of a number of imported goods, among which was rice. To this end a national body was created, the *SONADIS*, to buy these goods from French importers and sell them in state shops or to privileged traders.

The banks which were still exclusively in French hands in the 1960s had no confidence in the Senegalese traders and made no credits available to them. So their only source of credit was the government. They had to negotiate with the government to be selected and to obtain licences and credits. The same holds for Senegal's industrialists. The government had issued protectionist measures on the one hand and a large number of licences and permits on the other. All these licences and rules invested the state officials with great power to apply these, or give exemptions, at will. Like the traders, the industrialists had to negotiate with the government to obtain licences, contracts, exemptions, subsidies or favours. This created entrepreneurs who were not primarily interested in investment in productive activities but who had to give priority to acquiring profits from the government and maintaining their privileged position. Moreover, government officials and politicians also appropriated favours for themselves, whether or not using men of straw. In this way then, after 1963 an elite of rich Senegalese businessmen appeared for whom the main way to wealth was through party and government and not through investment in productive activities.

In 1968 another political crisis broke out (Boone 1994: 176-180). France was obliged by the European Community to abolish the subsidy on groundnuts, which resulted in a 20% decrease of the producer's price in Senegal and in political unrest in the groundnut basin. In the urban zones students and labourers protested against the power monopoly of the party and the neo-colonial policy of the government who had protected French commercial firms and had left the French banks untouched. In this pandemonium 2,600 Senegalese traders joined in a new organization (*UNIGES*), which claimed the privatization of the groundnut and the rice trade. The government managed to divide the organization by offering personal advantages and privileges to a number of rich traders and to persuade these to create an alternative union of traders (*COFEGES*). Many members of this alternative organization already had connections with the party and some had important functions in the *OCA* or *SONADIS*. The alternative union officially expressed its loyalty to the government but insisted, nevertheless, on access to foreign capital and credit for Senegalese traders. The government promised to create credit facilities and succeeded in realizing a fusion of the two organizations into one (the *GES*). However, when this organization, in 1970, requested the abolition of the state monopoly on the

groundnut trade the government refused, bribed the important leaders and engaged them in the clientele network, and dissolved the organization.

One of the effects of this crisis was that the government had become well aware of the interests of the traders and tried to create more opportunities in the commercial sector but always in such a way that the sources for the patronage system remained intact. Another effect was the reinforcement of what Boone calls a 'rentier' class: wealthy businessmen, *marabouts*, politicians and state officials, who benefitted from their allegiance to the party or a faction within it, and who used their profit, not to invest it in productive activities, but to maintain the favouritism and the non-competitive market conditions which brought them wealth. They invested their profit in political relations as far as they did not use it to buy urban or rural estate or transfer it to banks abroad. Around 1980 the official import trade was mostly 'Senegalized' that means in the hands of a small group of favourites of the government and party.

There was another group which claimed its share during the crisis of 1968-1970, namely the rural elite and in particular the leaders of the Mourides. They sought compensation for the decreasing groundnut prices and they found this in large-scale smuggling with The Gambia. They escaped from the state monopoly on the groundnut trade by transporting their produce to The Gambia where higher prices were paid. Also the extent of the smuggling of imported goods from The Gambia soon increased enormously, as there were fewer and lower levies and taxes in that country. Touba, the capital of the Mourides, became in fact a duty-free zone inside Senegal. The leaders of the Mourides protected the smugglers against penalties by the government. The government accepted the losses as the price for electoral support. In the meantime an exodus had started from the groundnut basin to the urban areas. So the government needed the *Marabouts* even more, to keep also their urban followers under control. The price for all this was the tacit acceptance of the smuggling practices, also in the cities.

Mainly on the basis of this kind of data Boone speaks of a 'pervasive clientelism', that has permeated all sectors of political and economic life, also for instance the cooperative movement before and after independence (van Hoven 1995: 44-55). In the same vein Goulon (1988: 16) sees patronage or clientelism as 'the backbone of contemporary Senegalese political culture'.



### Conclusion: Clientelism and the conservation of nature and natural resources in Senegal

Clientelism in Senegal is thus characterized as the backbone of political culture and as permeating all sectors of political and economic life. The question remains what are the implications of the dominance of clientelism for the conservation of nature and natural resources?

First a few theoretical remarks on clientelism or patronage (Flynn 1974, Fatton 1987, Boone 1994). Inherent in a clientelist organization are two forms of interdependence, that is two forms of mutual dependence and thus partition of power. One of them exists at the top of the organization between a small number of persons and factions that are interdependent in the sense that they need the help of other persons or factions to safeguard together the vital access to the economic resources of the State. In order to maintain this access, they are forced to make agreements and alliances with at least some of the other factions involved. However, mutual rivalry and suspicion are constantly present in the background. Attention is strongly focused on the behaviour of the other factions in the centre.

The other form of interdependence is a vertical one between individuals or groups who are unequal in power. The parties are not only mutually dependent in certain respects but they are forced to maintain this interdependence by a regular exchange of goods or services. Ministers, officials and politicians at the top distribute the state resources to less powerful persons or groups in return for electoral support and they must continue to do so if they want to keep this support. The clients, in their turn, use these favours for personal ends among which the expansion of their political influence must figure first. However, for the maintenance of their position toward rivals, they constantly need new favours from their patron. In this mutually needed exchange both parties have a certain power. When a patron does not receive sufficient political support in return for favours given to a client, he may look for other clients (of other patrons) who will reward him more. On the other hand, when a client receives too limited favours, he may look for another, more powerful patron. The results are a ceaseless process of negotiations and endless discussions about real or potential changes of alliances within the clientelist pyramid, what monopolizes all attention. In other words, investment in productive activities does not have high priority for entrepreneurs-clients.

Moreover, investment is risky and may not result in political followers, which means that the favour relationship with the patron is at stake. In addition, the returns of an investment are highly dependent on the influence of rival factions and changing alliances in the clientelist network. Finally, successful investment may

imply the rise of an entrepreneur or a group who are independent of any patron or faction, which is an outright threat to the clientelist structure and will be punished by allowing favours to economically less successful competitors

So under clientelist conditions the government cannot really be interested in stimulating productive investment, for this may mean undermining the basis of its own power. The very fact that enterprises or organizations function independently from clientelist relations, is regarded as a potential danger. It contravenes the principle of the national leaders of encapsulating all important groups in vertical interdependency relations.

Independent horizontal organizations at the national, regional or local level, as soon as they gain momentum, are regarded as threats to the political basis of a patron or faction, and they may be thwarted by new rules or conditions, or they may be divided by assuring personal advantage to some of their leaders; or marginalized by creating an alternative organization; or paralysed by forceful integration of state officials into the board of the organization (see Drijver and Zorge 1995).

Such a system may imply several obstacles to whatever environmental policy is employed. We will explicitly present six of them:

1. In a situation of pervasive clientelism, the government and party leaders are predominantly interested in economic resources as 'fuel for the patronage-machine', as Boone calls it, in order to expand and consolidate the basis of their power. Apart from the commercial circuits and foreign loans and donations, *nature and natural resources, as soon as they represent a certain financial value on the international or domestic market, also belong to those state resources which may serve to establish clientelist relationships.* The forest of Mbegue and the quotas for the charcoal production are examples. The patrons see to it that their clients acquire additional quotas; that they get access to a protected forest zone; that the forestry agents do not apply any sanctions for infringement, and that the transgressors are immediately liberated from prison and may go free.
2. Regimes based on clientelism will not encourage entrepreneurs to invest in productive activities, for this would mean providing a stimulus to give up their dependence and to create potential opposition groups. The entrepreneurs, on the other hand, are well aware that the returns from long-term investments depend on many rules and conditions which can be manipulated by patrons at will. *Obviously, also long-term investments in reforestation by private persons are improbable under such conditions.*

- 3 *The socio economic destiny of very many people depends on the access to vital resources by the clientelist channels.* This means that changing alliances within the clientist pyramid absorb nearly all attention. At governmental as well as village level many people are profoundly engaged in daily discussions on real or supposed changes. *This is a priority for them, obviously not without reason. Agriculture counts for less, let alone sustainable environmental management.*
4. Where clientelism covers many interest groups in a country, this may result in a certain political stability as long as economic resources are sufficiently available (Fatton 1987: 61-63). However, this stability is realized at the expense of an effective and coherent economic policy. This policy is characterized by incoherency and improvisation resulting from the fact that the interests of so many clients must constantly be taken into account. *Where clientelism is dominant, environmental policies will also be characterized by inconsistencies as the case of Mbegue demonstrates.*
5. By its vertical relations of interdependence, clientelism disrupts the horizontal organization of less powerful groups in order to prevent their empowerment and their potential development to an opposition group. *In such a context, local initiatives to rural development and conservation of nature and natural resources, as soon as they get any economic or political weight, may be thwarted by state officials and politicians.*
6. Under conditions of pervasive clientelism, public resources are silently allocated to private ends. Unlawful and illicit practices are inherent to clientelism. Public means are tacitly diverted and selectively distributed by the patron in such a way that the returns safeguard his access to the public means. These practices corrupt social life and create political cynicism (Fatton 1987: 64). *By these practices, clientelism displaces any notion of the common good or the general interest, and stimulates the unbridled search for private advantage. Thus, it creates a moral context for the tragedy of the commons.*

All these problems relate to government policies in a clientelist system. Therefore nowadays solutions are sought in a decentralized, participatory management of nature and natural resources, small-scale projects, empowerment of local groups and support for non-governmental organizations. One may wonder whether this local resource management will be able to remain free of political interventions and to resist the forces of patronage or clientelism.

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