



Master in  
Cooperation and development

“Gender inequalities and development: a picture of Fula women in the border area of South-eastern Senegal through a gender analysis”

Giovanna Basso

Supervisor: Ms. Maria Sassi

Co-supervisor: Mr. Santiago Rodriguez

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## **Introduction**

The present thesis originated from a study realized under the framework of a cooperation project in Kolda region, Senegal, implemented by the Spanish NGO AIDA (Ayuda, Intercambio y Desarrollo) and the Senegalese NGO MJPI (Mouvement des Jeunes pour la Paix et l'Intégration).

The present study based on gender analysis has been conceived to acquire better knowledge on women conditions and capabilities, in particular on gender division of labor and women workload and time use, women's access and control on key resources in reproductive, productive and community activities, and specific issues as feminine genital mutilations, violence against women and early and arranged marriages.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objective of the study is to shed light on gender relations in the southern area of Kolda region, on the border line between Senegal and Guinea Bissau, collecting through gender participative analysis tools qualitative data on women's conditions and power relations at household level as well as community and public decision-making level.

This kind of information was not available through secondary sources: if many studies have been produced by Senegalese sociologists and development institutions on women's rights and gender issues, they don't focus on the area of the present investigation, remaining too general to be useful in this specific context, since Senegal presents an extremely diversified population, with important regional differences.

Gender analysis is meant "to reveal connections between gender relations and the development problem to be solved" (March, Smyth, Mukhopadhyay, 1999), in this case a food security problem. In every society, speaking of gender relations means speaking of inequalities, even if these inequalities are so deeply embedded in everyday life and practice, in language and mental categories, that they are very difficult to perceive.

Gender analysis can thus be an useful tool to bring these inequalities to the surface and to the attention of people working in social interventions, to make them more aware of potential bias in outcomes due to unequal distribution of power between men and women, since gender-neutral interventions most likely work for reinforcing existing imbalances.

The general objective of the study is to promote an aware, theoretically based empowerment approach by organizations working in the area, focusing not only on equal participation of women and men in development and fair distribution of its benefits, but also on increasing women's capacity to analyze their own situation and increase their capability to determine their own life choices, at personal as well as political and public level.

The organizations – AIDA and MJPI– should benefit of this study under different dimensions:

- capacity building on working on gender, to mainstream gender approach in every phase of project cycle, improving quality of the present and future interventions through improved awareness by project staff on gender approaches and concepts;
- to be more effective in advocacy activities and information campaigns to promote women's rights and gender equality at local, regional and national level;
- to improve quality and efficacy of specific activities on women rights' promotion and gender equality, and concerning the currently underway project, information campaigns through the two community radios involved in the project;
- the study will be used as support document to justify new interventions in the area, including activities based on the findings of the present study.

### **Structure of the work**

Thesis is articulated in three main chapters. The first chapter introduces to the context of the study – geographic and socio-economic context of the investigation area, Senegalese juridical and policy framework on gender rights, as well as a brief description of the project within which the study has been conducted. The second chapter explains the methodology used to collect information, while the third presents the main results of the gender analysis. Conclusions offer some final considerations on the study results and an attempt of contextualization of gender concepts in historical perspective and in their local interpretation.

## 1. Context of the study

The present study has been conducted under the framework of the project “Soutien au développement rural territorial avec une approche de genre dans la région frontalière du Sud de Kolda (Casamance)”, implemented since April 2014 in 9 villages in the municipalities of Dioulacolon, Salikegne, Guiro Yero Bocar situated in the southern area of Kolda region, in the bordering area between Senegal and Guinea Bissau.

Senegal has a population of 13 million, and despite being classified a “lower middle income” country, hosts 1.8 million people living in extreme poverty (<\$0.50/day), most of which constituted by rural population (65% of rural population and 58% of urban population live below poverty line), and with particularly high incidence in some regions, among which Kolda region.

Kolda region is part of Casamance natural region, the southern area of Senegal separated from the rest of the country by The Gambia. Known for its rich natural resources and the fertility of its land, the Casamance region has supplied the rest of Senegal with an abundance of food for long. However, during colonial rule and into the years following independence in 1960, Casamance resources were used to benefit those in power, while the local population was overlooked and experienced economic disadvantage.

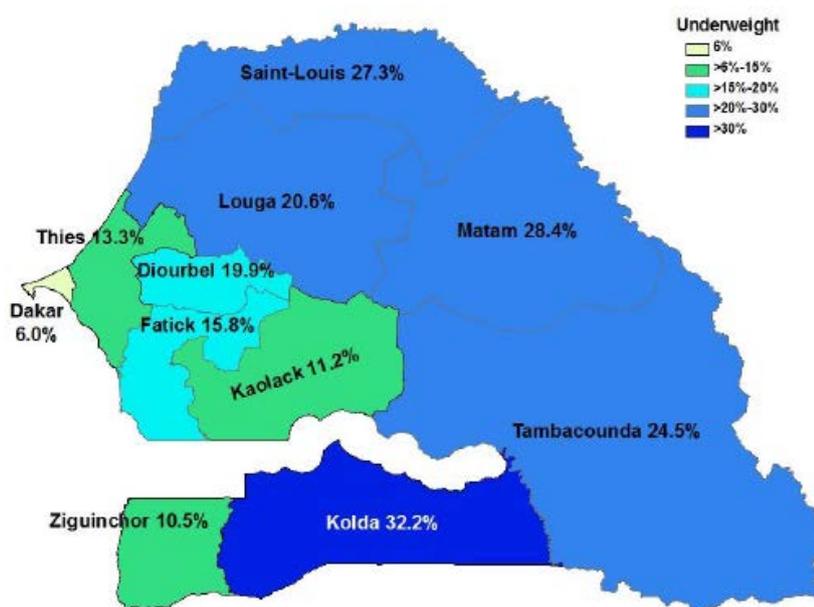
The emergence of an armed rebel movement in the early ‘80s resulted in twenty years of bitter conflict and brutal acts of violence on both sides. This led to the destruction of many villages, the displacement of tens of thousands of people, and the stagnation of a once-vibrant local economy. With the arrival of a new president in 2000 and an exhausted civil society, calls for peace grew, with rural women playing an active role. Negotiations with rebel leaders led to the signing of a peace agreement in 2004.

As peace becomes more established, Casamance women and their families are returning to their villages to revive their communities, recommence agricultural production, heal the wounds of violence, and build links with connecting communities in the Gambia and Guinea Bissau. Rural women in Casamance are developing their own peasant farmer organizations and networks to take advantage of new opportunities, such as the right to own land and a decentralization process that gives more decision-making and resources to rural communities for their own development. Senegal was chosen to sign a Millennium Challenge Account compact with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and this is expected to result in improved road infrastructure in Casamance and increased opportunities for farmers to connect with markets (New field foundation, 2010).

However, Casamance women farmers are constrained by a variety of factors that include the physical danger of mines that have not yet been cleared from their rice fields; increased salination of soil due to rising levels of sea water; heavy domestic workload and illiteracy due to their status as women; lack of access to capital; lack of inclusion in national negotiations that determine the scope and terms of agricultural policies and priorities; and increasing pressure from government and the private sector to adopt commercial farming methods that create dependence on the purchase of high yield seeds and accompanying inputs.

The current situation of rural women in the Kolda region is particularly difficult. According to a 2010 study (New field foundation, 2010), 94% of women are excised, 72% are illiterate and only 5.2% have access to family planning. Moreover, the area has the highest maternal mortality rate in Senegal with 1,200 deaths per 100,000 births, a prevalence of early marriages and pregnancies and the highest HIV rate in the country (2.9% as against 0.7% countrywide).

Also for underweight prevalence, Kolda region presents the worst indicators, with a great difference with other parts of the country: in Dakar underweight prevalence is 6%, while in Kolda it is 32.2% (USAID, 2010).



1. Underweight incidence per region in Senegal. Source: Senegal Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 2005.

This despite the fact that population of Kolda region is mainly rural (urbanization rate is 21%) and employed in agriculture (Senagrosol-Consult, 2012).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At national level, local production increased significantly in the early 2000s following the government's decision to encourage corn production, and thus reduce reliance upon peanuts, but despite this only in years of good rainfall does the country approach self-sufficiency in millet, corn, sorghum and fonio, the main staples in rural areas: Senegal is a net

Main productions are constituted by cereals (rice, millet, corn, sorghum) which constitute also the bulk of the diet (rice and cous cous of corn or millet are the staple food), fruits (cashew, maad, mango, orange and lemon) and legumes (haricots-niebbe) (Agence Régionale de Développement de Kolda, 2013).

Cash crops (groundnuts, cotton, sesame) are mainly cultivated by men through an extensive agricultural system called in Pulaar, the main local language, “*dema ngesa*”.

Also relevant is horticultural production, mainly carried out by women along water points or with the help of wells.

Despite the more and more large extension of land devolved to agriculture, the yields are not sufficient to satisfy food demand of local population and many products are imported. Basic foodstuff is available all along the year on local markets, which the region hosts in large quantity, including some of regional relevance (Mali, Guinée, Guinée Bissau).

However, economic conditions and low purchasing power of most of rural population make it exposed to cyclical food insecurity: the delicate period of “soudure” sees households production over and new harvest not yet available (the area is characterized by one growing season, coinciding with the rainy season from July to October).<sup>2</sup>

In fact, according to a survey we conducted in the intervention area on the food security situation in the “soudure” period (August 2014), in the area of Kolda region along the border with Guinea Bissau, household production of staple cereals (rice, millet, corn) lasts on average 5 months (January-May) but is highly affected by climatic variables: this year consistent rain started very late (mid August) with a considerable reduction of harvests. Still according to the survey, households in the investigation area stay on average 2 days without preparing meals in this period of the year, and the only food eaten is rice with a sauce made of collected baobab leaves powder and palm oil.

Livestock is the second economic activity of the area, especially for Fula people (49% of region population<sup>3</sup>, but 92% of the intervention area) traditionally nomad cattle farmers. Nowadays

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food importer, particularly for rice, which represents almost 75% of cereal imports. Peanuts, sugarcane, and cotton are important cash crops, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables are grown for local and export markets (Senagrosol-Consult, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Until now, Senegal has not been able to act with the scale and urgency needed to achieve sustainable food security, so hunger and under-nutrition persist. More than 3 million people in Senegal – ~25% of the total population – suffer from seasonal or year-round hunger, compromising Senegal’s ability to achieve sustainable economic growth. This is the combined effect of longstanding underinvestment in agriculture and high vulnerability to food shocks and external factors. Poor competitiveness of the agriculture sector (68% of labor force, but only 17% of GDP) hinders food security and jeopardizes economic growth (Agence Régionale de Développement de Kolda, 2013).

<sup>3</sup>The rest of population being constituted by being Manding 24%, and Joola 6%.

livestock farming is carried on in a sedentary extensive way, but still by men, of Ndama bovine, sheep, goats, donkeys and to a smaller extent horses.

Some small and medium activities work on the transformation of agricultural and livestock products, in the region, especially milk, palm oil, cashew nut, while industrial infrastructures are constituted mainly by cotton manufactures (SODEFITEX), even if its activity is now reduced (the manufacture of Kolda is works only three months a year) due to the decreasing world prices for cotton, but also to the isolation of the region.

### **1.1 Social organization and gender relations**

According to *Ada*, the tradition, men have a dominant position with respect to women. Fula society is patrilinear and patrilocal, so when a new family is constituted through marriage the women joins her husband family: according to current pulaar terminology, a men “brings in the woman” (*mbo addii debbo*). This affects all subsequent gender relations, putting the woman in the condition of “host” lifelong: she doesn’t have any right to the field she works in, that generally belongs to her mother in law, nor on her children, who in case of divorce will belong to the father’s family.

On the other hand, she must be respectful of her husband through submission to his authority, meaning asking him the permission for any initiative she takes, from selling her own cattle to going to a health center to give birth, and evening informing him if she leaves the house in his absence.

Women have the charge of all domestic activities, to let men do house works, especially sweep the house, is considered a shame not only for the man but also for the woman herself. According to the local cultural representations, in fact, a “good woman” should be able to take appropriate care of the house and of the family, expressed among other things in the quality of meals cooked for her husband: mothers teach how to cook to their daughters since an early age, punishing them (often physically) if the meal is not good enough, in order to make them ready to take proper care of their husbands.

Due to polygyny and partilocality, generally several women share the same household and divide tasks between them, so to lower their workload.

Polygyny is still largely practiced in the Kolda rural area, and according to Islamic religion a man should take as many women as he can sustain and he is supposed to treat them all equally.

In case of serious conflicts, the woman can leave the husband compound and go back to her family, but very rarely this happens, because she would lose any right on her children.

Polygyny is in some cases seen as a good option by women, that, as we saw, can share household life and work with other women, but can also rise serious problems, notably in case of unequal treatment of the wives from the part of the husband.

Divorce, however, is considered a shame for a women, that will be highly stigmatized for not having been able to make the marriage work. A woman alone is considered highly vulnerable and unsecure: one woman told that after her husband died people started thieving her cattle taking advantage of her condition of woman without men in the household and with not grown up children, without any means to make justice. Women without husband are considered not “normal” and marginalized, also through magic-religious arguments as the accusation of sorcery.

According to tradition and Islamic religion, which is professed by almost all the population<sup>4</sup>, men should provide the economic security of the household, point that is also codified in legislation (according to article 375 of the Family Code, household expenses are the responsibility of the husband). But in reality women contribute, in some cases more than men, to the household income through rice production, horticulture and small commercial activities. In any case, men and women keep separately their savings, being women that most of the time take care of the needs of children with their own means.

## **1.2 Women’s rights situation**

Although Senegal has ratified the main international and regional women’s rights protection instruments (CEDAW: ratified in 1985, CEDAW Protocol: ratified in 2000, Maputo Protocol: ratified in 2005), many of their provisions continue to be violated in law and practice. Discriminatory legislation persists, notably in family law, as well as harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, widespread violence against women, limited access to education, employment, decision-making positions, health services and land. Moreover, women remain widely under-represented in public and political affairs.

Concerning laws<sup>5</sup>, despite the adoption of a law amending the Criminal Code in 1999, that defines and punishes previously unrecognized crimes – incest, rape, sexual harassment, excision and

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<sup>4</sup> Some villages, called “maraboutiques”, with the presence of a spiritual leader, the Marabout, are more attached to Islam – the local Islam, that however incorporates s many elements of animistic traditional religion.

<sup>5</sup> Prior to France’s legal influence, the primary source of law was a disparate set of customs which were to a great extent influenced by Islamic laws. Islam was introduced to Senegal in the 11th century, and since then has interacted with local social, political and religious elements within the country. Today, nearly 80% of the population is Maliki Muslim with the minority of the population following indigenous religions or Christianity (Roman Catholic). Hence there exists a very tight interdependence between local and imported Islamic aspects of daily life, and Islam has adopted a particular

domestic violence, remain deeply discriminatory, particular in matters relating to the family. The Family Code of 1972 established that the husband is head of the family with authority over the household and children. Article 277 states that “During the marriage parental authority is exercised by the father as head of the family”. The husband has the choice of family residence; the wife is obliged to live there with him and he is obliged to take her in (art. 153). Moreover, article 3 provides: “Any legitimate child carries the father’s name. Where a child is disowned, he takes the mother’s name”. According to article 4, “A child born outside marriage takes the mother’s name. Where a child is recognized by the father, he takes the latter’s name”.

Within marriage, women are subject to many discriminatory measures. The minimum legal age for marriage is 18 years for men and 16 years for women (art. 111). Women may not remarry until a period of 300 days has elapsed from the date the previous marriage was dissolved (art. 112). The authorization of payment of a dowry by the husband (art. 132) promotes the perception of the wife as the property of the husband. Although article 110 provides that marriage between a brother-in-law and sister-in-law is forbidden, it permits levirate and sororate (traditional practices where a man may marry his dead brother’s widow or his dead wife’s sister) where the marital union that led to the alliance was dissolved as a result of death. Article 133 authorizes polygamy.

According to article 375, household expenses are the responsibility of the husband. Where the dowry system of marriage applies, under the terms of article 385, any property given to a woman when she marries by persons other than her husband and that are subject to the rules of dowry (property, assets deposited at the bank and animals) are handed over to the husband. For as long as the marriage lasts, he manages these as a “good husband and father”.

Furthermore, even when an appropriate legislation exists, reality can be far different for normative principles: is the case, among others, of forced marriages, prohibited under article 108 of the Family Code, and early marriages, still practiced in Senegal. In addition, religious marriages continue to be widely practiced due to ignorance of and lack of access to civil marriage.

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Senegalese form. Such influence is notable in the legal field, as Islamic private law has influenced laws on marriage, affiliation, succession and ownership relations. During the colonial period, France transposed its law, but did not force the disappearance of pre-existing customary laws, and thus both sets of laws were sustained. This is reflected in the current legal system, as Senegal has a mixed legal system: civil law and Senegalese Islamic law. After independence, Senegal, in a bid for modernization, has attempted to reform its laws on family and property matters. It is not that easy, however, to modify through written legal (codified) rules, values in which the people recognize themselves (customary law). The reforms were largely influenced by French law, and did not take into account all existing local customary rules. For example, family law has undergone a number of reforms and is codified since 1973. The Family Code that was drafted passed into law and came into force on 1 January 1973. The Code regulates marriage, divorce, succession and custody with a separate section for Muslim Succession Law. Article 830 of the Family Code abrogates not only the previous provisions contained in the civil code and other legal texts, but also all general and local customs apart from those regulating the formalities of marriage (Legalbrief Africa, 2004). As a consequence, any reference by the courts to customary laws is not permitted. In practice, however, the Senegalese people have not stopped having recourse to local customs, as we will discuss in following chapters.

Even if there is no numerical data on the prevalence of forced marriages in Senegal, according to Tostan in Kolda region 35 per cent of women were married before the age of 15 and nearly all women are married before age 20 (UNICEF, 2008).

This despite the fact that forced marriage is prohibited by the Constitution of Senegal (Senegal 2001, Art. 18) and the family code. According to the family code, "each of the future spouses, even if the spouse is a minor, must personally consent to the marriage," and, as we mentioned, the minimum age to marry is 18 for men and 16 for women (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2013).

During our discussion on this issue with women, many of them said people arrange marriages for their daughters in a early age for fear they will start to have sex for money or because keeping them in the household becomes too expensive. They explained that in Senegal young women who do not marry and whose families have few means often turn to commercial sex work to be able to buy what they want.

But these acts of violence generally do not go through a legal process. Rarely will a victim of early marriage take their case to a judge. They tend to resign themselves.

Many others are the examples of practices that ignore legally established rights of women, as for access to land, to education<sup>6</sup> and health<sup>7</sup>.

This also the case for genital mutilations, that still occur in Senegal, despite the already mentioned law of January 1999:<sup>8</sup> according to a 2005 survey, FGM prevalence rate is 28% of all women aged between 15 and 49. However, there are significant differences in regional prevalence, and Kolda region is one of those where FGM is most widespread (94% in Kolda Region), together with Northeastern Senegal (93% in Matam Region).<sup>9</sup> Such areas are mainly inhabited by Fula people. There is also concern about border regions along Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea, where the

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<sup>6</sup> Although the law makes schooling compulsory for children aged 6 to 16 years at free state-run establishments (Law 2004-37 of 2004), statistics show that this provision is not fully implemented. It is estimated that half of all adults (57%) are illiterate, the majority of them women. Financial reasons are partly to blame for non-attendance at school, as young girls are often obliged to work to help support the family. In [http://www.africa4womensrights.org/public/Dossier\\_of\\_Claims/SenegalENG.pdf](http://www.africa4womensrights.org/public/Dossier_of_Claims/SenegalENG.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Access to healthcare, particularly pre- and post-natal care, remains inadequate, partly because of the high costs, as demonstrated by high infant mortality rates (i.e. among children under 5 years), that reached almost 12% in 2007. In [http://www.africa4womensrights.org/public/Dossier\\_of\\_Claims/SenegalENG.pdf](http://www.africa4womensrights.org/public/Dossier_of_Claims/SenegalENG.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> The law modifies the Penal Code to make this practice a criminal act, punishable by a sentence of one to five years in prison. Representatives of Tostan, which follows a basic education and empowerment approach, maintain that the law has made their work much more difficult since it has increased defensiveness among the populations practicing it. <http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/wi/rls/rep/crfgm/10107.htm>

<sup>9</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevalence\\_of\\_female\\_genital\\_mutilation\\_by\\_country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevalence_of_female_genital_mutilation_by_country).

tradition still dominates and could spur recurrences in Senegal, given that the areas share ethnic groups and family networks.

It is usually performed on girls between the ages of two and five, and it's mothers and more often grandmothers who decide on it, sometimes doing the practice in a hidden way if the girl's father is not consentient.

In our discussions with women of Kolda region, however, it seems that the dynamics of the practice have been changing in last decades, especially due to massive campaigns and programmes among which the most widespread and known is the one of Tostan, a local Ngo. Particularly known are the Public Declarations organized since the late '90s by Tostan, along with the UNFPA/UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, where communities formalize through a ceremony and a public declaration the decision to stop performing "female circumcision, forced and early marriages".<sup>10</sup>

Finally, despite the controversial Loi sur la parité approved in May 2010, participation of women in political and public life and in decision-making positions remains formal, due to the just mentioned discriminations in all aspects of their lives.

On the other hand, mainstream development discourse, as represented by the Plan Stratégique pour la réduction de la pauvreté (2002), and the National Strategy for Gender Equality adopted up in 2005 for the period until 2015 - focusing on increasing women's social standing raising their economic status in rural and urban areas - is characterized by a special focus on women, who are seen as the main victims of the economic crisis and classified as one of the most "vulnerable" groups particularly affected by poverty (ibid, 35).

According to the slogan "non development without the women" the state has promoted women advancement as a pillar of its nation-building project and development plan.

The labeling of women as vulnerable group, however, tends to render their own spaces and their active participation in the economic and social processes invisible.

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<sup>10</sup> Tostan's work in the village of Malicounda Bambara in the Thiès region of Senegal led to the first declaration to end cutting in the country in 1997. The women decided to stop the practice to protect the human rights and health of their daughters, and they went so far to announce their collective decision—a breakthrough for Senegal, where cutting was always considered mandatory for girls to marry. According to one study on the effectiveness of Tostan's educational programs (UNICEF, 2008), in villages where Tostan intervened, the percentage of women who approved of FGM decreased from 72% to 16%, and the percentage of girls between the ages of five and ten who had not been subjected to FGM increased from 21% to 49%. Tostan's method of gradually changing attitudes and behaviour through human-rights platform became the model of change in Senegal, which is committed to abandoning cutting by 2015 with the help of the UNFPA/UNICEF joint programme. UNFPA utilizes an holistic approach for its FGM/C abandonment programmes- such legal and policy reform, national capacity building and working at the community level.

The shortcomings of the policy of women advancement are particularly evident in rural areas, where the state developing programs concerning women have focused on constituting groups “for women’s advancement” (Groupements de promotion feminine).

Those GPF are excluded from large-scale national projects and restricted to small projects in market gardening, animal rearing, cattle fattening and handicrafts.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Background of the study**

The present study has been conducted under the framework of the project « Soutien au développement rural territorial avec une approche de genre dans la région frontalière du Sud de Kolda (Casamance) », funded by the Spanish cooperation (AECID) and implemented by the Spanish NGO AIDA and Senegalese NGO MJPI.

The project is aimed at improving food security and women empowerment through increasing production and commercialization of local vegetables. To achieve this objective a system of 9 community production units for women have been set up in 9 villages of Kolda region and trainings on horticulture, transformation and conservation techniques and commercialization have been realized.

In this context the present study on gender relation has been conceived to acquire better knowledge on social and cultural factors governing gender relations and the effects of these on the livelihood of women and men. Particular focus was given to women's access and control on key resources in reproductive, productive and community activities, gender division of labor, and the nature and scope of gender based violence (GBV) in the area, in order to identify entry points to address it within the project framework.

To gather this information,

The participatory approach offers a better way to engage stakeholders to take part and share their ideas through interactive learning and sharing. The key element to facilitate the learning process is to use participatory tools that enable people to visualize and understand issues, to communicate with each other, analyse options.

The aim of participatory analysis was not only to gather first hand information, but also to involve women in identifying problems, expressing their own perception on them, discussing possible solutions. Putting their own experiences and views at the center of this dialogic construction of knowledge was thought also as a way of valuing their own experience, skills, knowledge, and strengths, and increases their self confidence. These are crucial elements of empowerment. Men were also involved in order to understand their views on gender relations and women's situation, but also with the aim of enhancing the visibility of women's capacities and contributions to men's eyes.

If a joint discussion was held at the end of each activity to this aim, single activities were carried on in separate groups of women and men, in order to favour women participation and freedom of expression (women's participation in discussions and decision making is usually limited, and socio-cultural barriers hinder their capacity of expression in front of men).

Specific tools used for this kind of analysis will be discussed in following paragraphs, after an introduction to gender analysis principles and frameworks.

## **2.2 Gender analysis**

Gender Analysis explores and highlights the relationships of women and men in society, and the inequalities in those relationships. Its purpose is to reveal the connections between gender relations and the development problem to be solved.<sup>11</sup>

It is extremely important to perceive that we live in societies that are permeated by gender differences and gender inequalities. There is no country in which the outcomes of public policy are equal for men and women, but the dimensions of these inequalities are often so deeply embedded that they are difficult to perceive. Gender analysis reveals these differences, and the fact that in such a social context any gender interventions that profess to be gender-neutral will in fact reflect and probably reinforce the imbalances that exist. Gender analysis of various kinds is therefore required to bring these inequalities to the surface and to the attention of people who can make a difference, so that their decisions are taken in a manner that is sensitive to and reflects the outcome of gender analysis (UNDP, 2001).

Attention to women's concerns and priorities in development policy and activity has evolved since the early 1970's, when these issues were first discussed, from a focus on projects designed only for women ("women specific") through efforts to integrate women's concerns into projects designed without reference to gender equality (women's component and integration), to the current perspective that attention to women's concerns requires a thoroughgoing re-evaluation of development priorities.

Women specific projects are those exclusively designed for women. Historically, such approaches have been much critiqued, as there was a tendency for women's needs to be analysed as discrete

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<sup>11</sup> "These [gender relations] social relationships between women and men. Gender relations are simultaneously relations of co-operation, connection, and mutual support, and of conflict, separation and competition, of difference and inequality. Gender relations are concerned with how power is distributed between the sexes. They create and reproduce systemic differences in men's and women's position in a given society. They define the ways in which responsibilities and claims are allocated and the way in which each are given a value." (March, C. Smyth, I. Mukhopadhyay, M. 1999, p18).

from those of the rest of society. However, a full analysis of gender relations can indicate the need for women-specific interventions in order to compensate for past inequalities. A fully mainstreamed approach sometimes requires women-specific activities.

There are then projects/activities that provide separate resources and activities for women, called “projects with gender component”. Such an approach is usually based on the assumption that women’s needs are the broadly same as men’s, and can be met through the same intervention. Women still perceived analytically as a discrete social category. Integrated projects, moreover, include women on an equal footing with men in all project activities. This is a further and more thorough implementation of the “add-on” approach. Women’s and men’s situation is typically analyzed in a relational manner, but interventions are based on the fallacy that issues of gender equality can be incorporated into a “business as usual” approach to development, which, unless rigorously interrogated, reflects the gender biases of society at large.

Mainstreamed projects, finally, are based on the awareness of, and commitment to, women’s concerns and priorities that infuse all the processes that determine development agendas. There is a conscious attempt to eliminate gender bias from project activities. All decision-making reflects the outcomes of socio-economic and policy analysis that is fully “gendered”. Analysis focuses on social relations, and particularly on the power relationships through which gender biases are protected and maintained.

### **2.2.1 Approaches**

Attempts by development authorities (colonial governments and development agencies) to understand the specific situation(s) of women progressed during the latter half of the nineteenth century . Initially addressing the welfare of women as if it were external to any other development activity, and as if women made no contribution to development itself, after the 1970s the principal concern became to make development interventions as efficient as possible by taking account of every aspect of the situation to be addressed, including gender roles.

Since the mid-80’s women from developing countries have developed and advocated initiatives based on the rights and priorities of the women concerned, and their ability to control their own lives (empowerment). This progression has not been linear, and elements of all approaches are currently in use.

Welfare approaches focus on poor women, mainly in the roles of wife and mother. This was the only approach during colonial periods, and was favoured by many missionaries.

Equity approaches focus on equality between women and men and fair distribution of benefits of development, while anti-poverty ones see women targeted as the poorest of the poor, with emphasis on income-generating activities and access to productive resources such as training and micro-finance.

Emphasis on need for women's participation for success, effectiveness of development is characteristic of efficiency approaches, assuming that increased economic participation will result in increased equity. Empowerment approach, finally, focus on increasing women's capacity to analyze their own situation and determine their own life choices and societal directions.

### **2.2.3 Analytical frameworks**

Several analytical frameworks for gender analysis are now available, all designed to explore some key issues as the division of labour<sup>12</sup> between men and women in agricultural and in more urban settings (Harvard and Moser respectively), gender mainstreaming in institutions (Levy), gender differentials in the impact of projects at the community level (GAM), assessment of the contribution of interventions in all sectors to the empowerment of women (Longwe), humanitarian and disaster preparedness issues (CVA), refugee issues, based on an expanded approach to the Harvard Framework - (POP), and sustainable development and institutional change (SRA).

The Harvard and Moser frameworks have been extremely important in explaining the sexual division of labour, which is the central social structure that gender analysis seeks to reveal, and the differences between productive and socially reproduction work. Moser introduced the distinction of socially reproductive work in two categories – household work and community management.

According to Moser theorization, productive work is the work that produces goods and services for exchange in the market place (for income). Some analysts, especially those working on questions of equality between men and women, include the production of items for consumption by the household under this definition, even though they never reach the market place, regarding this as consumption of a form of nonmonetary income, and for the present work the concept was used in this terms. Both men and women contribute to family income with various forms of productive

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<sup>12</sup> In all societies, tasks and responsibilities are typically undertaken by either women or men. This allocation of activities on the basis of sex is known as the sexual division of labour, and is learned and clearly understood by all members of a given society, as are the circumstances under which the typical practices can be varied, and the limitations of this variation. Change usually takes place when the society is under some form of stress, for example when migrations occur, and tasks usually taken by men must be undertaken by other members of families (March, Smyth, Mukhopadhyay, 1999; UNDP, 2001).

work, although generally men predominate in productive work, especially at the higher echelons of remuneration. Historically, in most societies, changes in economic structure, and hence in the structure of productive activities, have led to changes in the sexual division of labour and gender relations.

Reproductive work, on the other hand, involves all the tasks associated with supporting and servicing the current and future workforce – those who undertake or will undertake productive work. It includes child-bearing and nurture, but is not limited to these tasks. It has increasingly been referred to as “social reproduction” to indicate the broader scope of the term than the activities associated with biological reproduction. Socially reproductive activities include childcare, food preparation, care for the sick, socialization of the young, attention to ritual and cultural activities through which the society’s work ethic is transmitted, and the community sharing and support which is essential to the survival of economic stress. The fact that reproductive work is the essential basis of productive work is the principal argument for the economic importance of reproductive work, even though most of it is unpaid, and therefore unrecorded in national accounts. Women and girls are mainly responsible for this work which is usually unpaid. The intersection of peoples’ productive and reproductive responsibilities with policy priorities, which has repercussions at all levels of an economy and society, is the principal focus of a gender analysis.

### **2.3 Details of tools**

The activities for gender analysis implemented under the framework of this study have been elaborated from Harvard and Moser frameworks, duly adapted to the local context of rural, illiterate people, to enable them to visualize and understand the issues, communicate with each other, and freely express their views and experiences.

The first two activities were carried out together in common sessions, one for each village (Salikegne, Guiro Yero Mandou, Darou Salam), with two separate groups, one of 10 women of an age ranging from 25 to 60 approximately, and a group of 10 men, the husbands of the selected women. Men were involved in the activities for two reasons: to understand their stance and to compare it with the one of women on the issues raised, and to involve them in a dynamic discussion on gender roles and relations of power, where women work (productive and reproductive) was pointed out and valued, as well as women’s contributions to family wellbeing and community life, with the aim of engaging men also in a reflection about power relations at household level and their own role in alimending and reproducing, more or less consciously, gender roles and unequal relations.

In fact, if the groups worked separately in order to allow participants to express themselves freely (notably women, who have cultural barriers in speaking out in front of men), at the end a joint discussion was held to show and compare results and raise discussion about them.

The team conducting the activities was constituted of 8 people: four women for the groups of women, one animating the activity, one taking notes, both supported by translators, and four men with the same tasks for the groups of men. The three sessions were recorded and data were subsequently processed relying to notes taken during the activities and in some case through

The third activity was held in Aida office with key informants, the presidents of the Comités de gestión of the 9 villages' gardens. The same team as for the women's groups activities animated the meeting, that was entirely recorded and then transcribed in order to make data available for reporting and analysis.

### **2.3.1 Activity profile**

The first activity, called "Activity profile", relies on the tool 1 and 3 of Moser framework, "Gender roles identification" and "Disaggregating control over resources and decision making within households" and on tools 1 and 2 of Harvard framework, "Activities profile" and "Access and control profile" (March, Smyth, Mukhopadhyay, 1999; UNDP, 2001).

We decided to pick concepts and tools from different instruments to adapt them to form a new one, allowing to address together more issues, i.e. the access and control on resources, participation in decision making, and the gender division of labour.

In fact, the aim of this first activity was on one hand to identify the gender roles and activities women and men carry out, and on the other hand who has decision making power on each of those fields of action.

This activity also provided information on access and control on some key resources, i.e. revealing if women have access to resources like land and cattle and who takes decisions on their utilization.

To carry out the activity, we prepared a table with a list of activities and resources divided in reproductive, productive and communitarian fields. For each, a column was to be filled with the answer at the question "who does it?" and another column with "who decides in it?", as shown in the picture.

The image shows two hand-drawn tables on brown paper, one for reproductive activities and one for productive activities. Each table has columns for 'Qui le fait?' (Who does it?) and 'Qui décide?' (Who decides?). The tables are divided into sections: REPRODUCTIVES, PRODUCTIVES, and COMMUNAL.

		Qui le fait?	Qui décide?
REPRODUCTIVES	1. CUISINE	F	F <sub>F</sub>
	2. ENFANTS	F	H
	3. SANTÉ	H <sub>F</sub>	H
	4. GARDER L' ARGENT	H+F	H+F
	5. MAISON	H <sub>F</sub>	H
PRODUCTIVES	1. ÉLEVAGE	H	H
	2. PETIT ÉLEVAGE	F	H
	3. RIZ	F	H <sub>F</sub>
	4. MARAICHAGE	F	F
	5. AGRICULTURE	H	H
	6. AUTRES	H	-
COMMUNAL	1. RÉUNIONS	H	H
	2. VOTE	H+F	H+F
	3. JUSTICE	H+F	H

		Qui le fait?	Qui décide?
REPRODUCTIVES	1. CUISINE	F	H+F
	2. ENFANTS	F	H <sub>F</sub> (NEA)
	3. SANTÉ	F+H	H
	4. GARDER L' ARGENT	F+H	H+F
	5. MAISON	F <sub>F</sub> (NEA)	H <sub>F</sub> (NEA)
PRODUCTIVES	1. ÉLEVAGE	H <sub>F</sub> (Lait)	H
	2. PETIT ÉLEVAGE	F	H+F
	3. RIZ	F	F
	4. MARAICHAGE	F+H (NEA)	F
	5. AGRICULTURE	H	H
	6. AUTRES	H+F	H+F
COMMUNAL	1. RÉUNIONS	H <sub>F</sub>	H <sub>F</sub>
	2. VOTE	H+F	H+F
	3. JUSTICE	EN famille	

2. Tables used for the Activity Profile at Darou Salam. Source: author's elaboration.

The activity has been conducted in 3 villages (Salikegne, Guiro Yero Mandou, Darou Salam), with separate groups of 10 women and 10 men in each village. After an introduction to the activities all together and a break-ice game, the groups were separated in order to ensure women could feel free to express themselves in a space without men.

After the filling up of tables and discussion within each group, a joint discussion with men and women was also held, in order to compare answers from the two groups and raise issues on gender inequalities in workload and in the decision making process.

### 2.3.2 Daily activity clock

This activity is commonly practiced in gender analysis in order to identify gender roles in productive, reproductive and community activities through the different activities they carry on in a



## **2.4 Details of Data Collection**

### **2.4.1 Sample**

The sample chosen for the first and second activity was constituted in each village (Salikegne, Guiro Yero Mandou, Darou Salam) of a group of 10 women, chosen among the beneficiaries of the project, and a group of 10 men, the women's husbands. For the focus group, as already mentioned, the participants were the presidents of the nine Comités de G estion of the collective vegetable gardens set up by the project.

### **2.4.2 Timeline and location**

The activities for the gender analysis were conducted in the months of September and November 2014. The first two activities were conducted together in each village, where the participants gathered at 9am and the activities were explained to them, then the two groups were formed and started working separately for around three hours (in different classes of local schools). After finishing the two activities, a common discussion was held.

The focus group was held in November 2014 in the office of Aida in Kolda.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1 Activity profile**

#### **3.1.1 Reproductive activities**

Reproductive activities are totally conducted by women, while decision making process is more controversial: in general, as we already saw, men's authority covers all the life of the household and his consent is required for taking any decision. However, despite men's formal authority encompasses everything, in everyday practice it's women that in some cases pragmatically take decisions, being those who are involved in doing things.

In addition to that, some issues are considered a women concern, and on those it's elder women that have authority on younger ones. Young women, so, are submitted to the double authority of men and of elder women and are those with less capacity of action and decision making.

#### **Cooking**

Cooking is a women task, and culturally considered inappropriate for men. It's a duty of a woman to take care of households needs, among which cooking has a great importance and takes a huge amount of time to women.

The practices related to preparing food vary along the year according to the seasonality. For example, in the "soudure" period when stocks of cereals are already over and harvest is not yet available, women have the delicate task of ensuring daily meals to their family through an attentive allocation of rice and the search for leaves and palm oil to accompany it. In the harvest season, they spend most of their daytime grinding newly harvested cereals and groundnuts, and preparing food with them.

Being nutrition heavily related to agriculture and only marginally to market, there is no a real decision making process on diet. When women have money they buy themselves the ingredients they need for preparing the sauce, otherwise they ask money to their husbands.

However, when some variations on the diet occur, it's usually men that take the initiative asking to their wives to cook the fish they provide. Meat is not part of the diet, and only consumed for religious ceremonies and in occasion of a host's visit. Also according to what men said during the

workshops, it's women that cook knowing what their men like to eat, and when they want to eat something different they ask them.

## **Children**

Also the childcare is a task of women, and all activities related to it are carried out by women (not necessarily their mothers), from waking them up and preparing them to go to school, to washing them several times a day, to washing their clothes, to cooking for them, to taking them to bed.

Women said that it's men that take all decision concerning children's life, but again, in everyday life, it's often women that are confronted with children's needs and compelled to act without the intervention of their husbands: when children need something, they always go to ask to their mother, as when they want to eat, when they are ill, when they need a booknote for school, when they are sent back home from school because their parents didn't pay the fees. The fact that children have much more confidence and closeness to their mothers, however, doesn't mean that affective relationships don't exist also with fathers, who spend some time especially with small children and generally in affective terms.

Concerning school, participants said that generally it's the father who decides if the child will attend school or not. Here, as in many other respects, the issue of money availability seem key: as women said, even if their husbands are willing to send children to school, if they don't dispose of money for inscription and fees, it's up to the mother to "look for" it and thus on her falls the responsibility. In this case the issue seems to be the power to act according to one's intentions, more than the power of taking decisions. And, however, men usually dispose of this power more than women.

Women made the example of a man wanting the child to work in fields instead of attending school. If the mother wants him to study, she can go to work at his place and try to convince the husband to let him study, including through friends of him prone to support her position. In any case, an open confrontation is always avoided. The ability of women to reach their objectives always seems to pass through their capacity of persuading their husbands, of negotiating and finding allies.

Concerning marriage of children, especially daughters, participants said it's both parents that decide to whom "to give" ("okkude") the girl. Often the two issues of girls' marriage and school attendance overlap, since marriages are arranged when girls are still very young, and fathers often prefer to make them marry rather than finish school. In case that the mother wants her daughter to keep on attending school, she can find a compromise, as consenting to the formalization of the marriage but postponing the departure of the girl to her husband's house, or agreeing to the

marriage only at the condition that the man will let the girl go to school even once married and established in his house.

However, women affirmed during workshops that arranged and early marriages are no longer widely practiced, girls being now more able to express their own intentions.<sup>13</sup>

Other decisions are taken by men for sons and by women for daughters, as for the rituals of passage, involving a strong symbolic meaning related to the construction of femininity and masculinity.

According to what reported by men's groups in workshops, important decisions concerning the household are discussed in family, but the last word is always to the man – the head of the family, and the inclusion of women consists in informing her of the decision they are going to take.

Others said that while women are in charge of children from birth to 8, men take care of them from 8 to 18.

## **Health**

Women take care of ill people, home as well as in case of hospitalization, where they go to visit ill people and take care of all of their needs (bringing cooked food, washing clothes, etc).

Decisions about what to do with ill people in the family are generally taken by men, who are in general the ones who can pay for hospital visits or traditional healers. The formal approval of the man is required for women even to go to give birth to health centers.

However, it's women that solicit their husband to intervene, being them who are more in contact with children and more aware of their conditions: as one woman said, "if you wait for the man to take the child to the hospital, he will do it when he's already dead!".

Others reported that they have to walk long distances to reach the health center or look for a lift along the road, because their men don't take them.

This is one of the examples of different attitude in answers of women and men: if men are more in line with formal social norms and principles stating that man is the "head of the household" with the charge of each decision, women's stories of everyday life reveal a more fluid reality, where women, being the ones who do things, are pragmatically involved in taking decisions, even though recognizing hierarchies and men's authority.

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<sup>13</sup> Mais dans la réunion avec les présidentes des jardins les récits concernant les mariages des jeunes filles montrent que la possibilité de choisir de la part des filles est encore très limitée.

## **Keeping money**

In general, men and women keep separately their savings, but different cases may occur : men can put their money in the hands of their wives (for avoiding to “eat” it) as well as women can give their savings to husbands, for security reasons, sharing them a room with other women and children, while men have their own room, or for “respect” as every expense she will do will be in any case controlled by her husband.

In cases where a woman disposes of more money than her husband (i.e. after selling a cow), she can give him a part of it to re-establish the social order according to which it’s men that provides the financial means to the family. However, some women said they don’t trust their husband and prefer to keep the money for fear he would not spend it for family needs but for his own interests.

Women also said that rarely they know how much money their husbands have saved, since they tend to hide it to avoid requests from the family members.

Men confirmed it, assessing that women would ask them money for futile expenses like visiting their relatives, buying clothes etc.

An old man stated that even if nowadays there are still some men that keep all the family savings and control all expenses, in general things are changed and everybody tends to keep the money he or she earns, including children who go to work somewhere and when they go back home refuse to remit the money to their fathers.

## **House maintenance**

Women take care of everyday maintenance of the house (cleaning, providing water and wood to make fire, cleaning dishes<sup>14</sup> and washing clothes) and men do the works of entertainment of the house structure and repairing damages (roofs, new buildings, enclosures).

However in some cases women have complained that it’s them that have to undertake such works also, because their husbands take a lot of time to do it: that is the case of a woman that needed a new enclosure for the toilet and since her husband was continuously postponing it, she made it herself.

For important works in the house, men have affirmed that they consult more often their older sons than their wives.

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<sup>14</sup> Some men affirmed never having washed dishes in their life.

### **3.1.2 Productive activities**

#### **Livestock**

Livestock for a population of nomadic herding tradition as the Fula, plays a key role on the economic as well as on the symbolic plan.

A distinction exists between bovine cattle and other smaller livestock (goats, sheep, chickens).

The first one, more prestigious and charged of symbolic connotations<sup>15</sup>, is traditionally carried put by men (but milking is a women's task).

Traditionally women own one or more cow, since they receive a female cow from her husband at the moment of marriage. However, even if women owns it, she needs the consent of her husband to sell it, and he is the one who actually will sell it at the market<sup>16</sup>.

Men underlined that it's impossible for a woman to go to the market to sell a cow, cause nobody would buy a cow from a woman.

Women take care of small livestock, but selling it is still a men's prerogative. Only chicken can, in some cases, be sold by women.

#### **Agriculture**

In agriculture gender roles see women employed in the production of rice and horticulture for domestic consumption, while men grow cash crops (groundnuts, cotton, cashew) and other cereals (millet, sorghum, corn<sup>17</sup>). Still now men grow these products, going to fields for preparing the land, seeding and guard the plants (helped by children). They also harvest and control the money got from the selling of these products (though only groundnuts, cashew and cotton are generally sold, while corn, millet and sorghum are self consumed).

#### **Rice**

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<sup>15</sup> For a fula status was traditionally measured in cows owned, and still now cows hold a connotation of status symbol in addition of their economic value.

<sup>16</sup> When asked the question why, if women owns the cow, is the man that sells it, one woman answered: "women can't sell and save money". Another said "I own the cow, but he owns me".

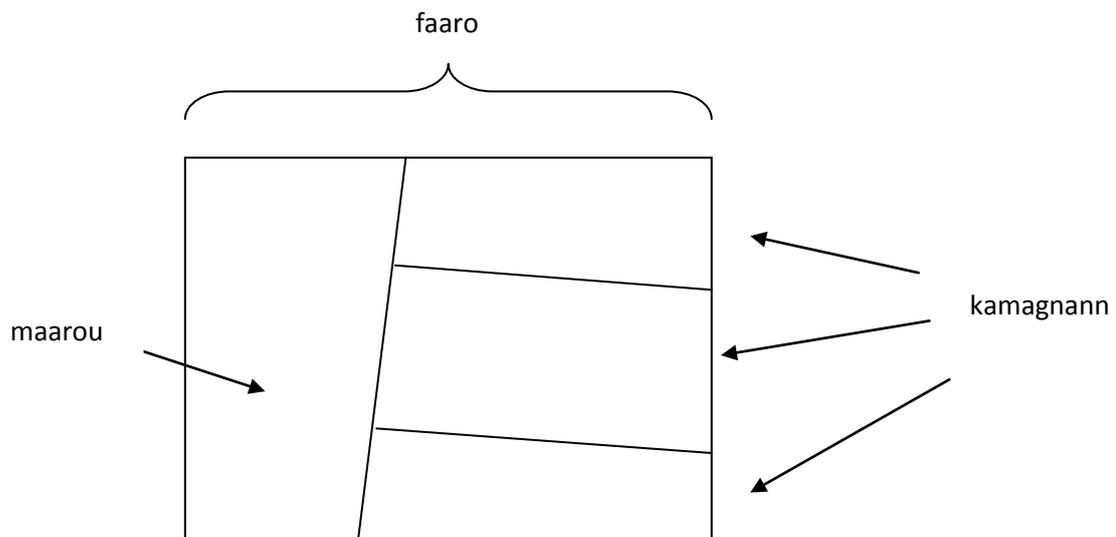
<sup>17</sup> This type of farming is called in pulaar "dema ngesa", and traditionally was carried out by all men of the household in the family fields, which were divided in parcels assigned each to one man working on it for 2 days per week, while working collectively in the common parcel the rest of the week.

Rice farming is carried out by women, who control all the process of production and transformation. Rice fields, though, are not owned by women who work on them: they usually belong to the mother-in-law or the husband family in general. Sometimes they borrow the land or work the land of some relative even if far away (several women of the intervention area went to Guinea Bissau for the rice season).

Women control all the process of rice production, even if during workshop discussion some men argued that once the harvested rice enters the house, they actually have the control of it and its use, holding the head of the household the “key of the granary”.

Traditionally the rice field, *faaro*, belonged to the whole family, and man farmed one part (*maarou*) while his wives the others (*kamagnan*)<sup>18</sup>.

The harvest takes place in December and the rice harvested is stocked and consumed during on average 3 months,<sup>19</sup> so it’s never the case for women to get a surplus for commercialization.



**4. Traditional model of rice land allocation. Source: author’s elaboration.**

## Horticulture

Horticulture is carried out by women, usually in small parcels surrounding the compound, with precarious enclosures. In some cases women also put themselves together and ask the chief of the village a piece of land with a water source to make up a collective vegetable garden<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> The same division in *maarou* and *kamagnan* held for *ngesa* fields, for the farming of all other products.

<sup>19</sup> Data taken from the Survey on food security carried out in the framework of the project.

Vegetables mostly grown are onion, chili, *jaxatu*, okra (*kanje*), sorrel (*follere*), tomatoes, cabbage.

The all process of horticultures is controlled by women, from the choice of seeds, the growing, conservation and selling of surplus, as well as management of money earned from it.

### **Other sources of income**

Both men and women in the area under analysis are engaged in informal sector income generating activities, especially in the dry season when agriculture activities are over (except from horticulture), as reparation of bikes and other items, selling wood, fish, groundnuts, cashew, cotton, sesame). Men have more mobility than women and often move to the northern areas to undertake small commercial activities.

Women also are involved in informal commercial activities, especially of horticulture products.

### **3.1.3 Community activities**

#### **Community meetings**

Both women and men can attend to community meetings, that can be of different types: meetings only addressed to women (i.e. sensitization campaigns) or only to men (decision making among traditional authorities and men heads of household of the village, i.e. in Daru Salam meetings held in the chief of the village house are reserved to men).

Even when women have the right to take part to community meetings for decision making, it's men that take decisions.

With respect to this issue some controversy arose, between what said by groups of men and groups of women and between different groups of women. Men tended to give less weight to women participation to community meetings, arguing that even when they are open to women also, it's men that represent their household and take any decision.

On the other hand, women of Guiro Yero Mandou argued being able to participate and express themselves in all kinds of meetings. However, during joint discussion with both men and women, women also agreed that they actually have freedom of expression only in meetings reserved to them (mainly sensitizations and campaigns of Ngos), and that they can participate only after the consent

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<sup>20</sup> The experience of the present project started with a similar process, after requests of women to the local ngo MJPI.

of husbands. In some cases women need this consent also for accepting charges, as for example reported a vice-president of the Comité de gestion of one of the community gardens.

Another example is offered by one of the presidents who joined the focus group we held on FGM and early marriages, that before starting speaking greeted everybody and thanked her husband “because without his consent I would not be here today”.

### **Vote**

Both men and women affirmed participating at election through their vote, even if many women affirmed to vote according to their husband’s suggestion.

### **Justice**

Women affirmed they have the possibility to go to the chief of village (Jarga) for solving a problem with their husbands, while in the past this was not possible. However, some man argued that they don’t let their wives go alone to meet the Jarga, for fear she gives a partial version of the story.

If the problem is not solved by the Jarga, women can then address themselves to public justice, even if this is extremely rare due to high social pressure to keep the conflict inside the house walls in order not to tarnish social image and reputation of men but also of women.

So conflicts are generally solved within the family, with family meetings and the intervention of influent, usually elder, family members. In particular, women, that after marriage leave to join their husband village, usually have a referent person of their family in that village, that is supposed to watch over her and intervene in case of maltreatment from the part of the husband or his family.

Divorce is last option, requiring however the consent of both the husband and the father of the woman, who has to pay back the dowry (except in case of manifest violence from the part of the husband).

### 3.2 Activity clock

As we saw in the methodology section, the second activity carried on for the gender analysis was aimed to produce information on the way men and women use their time daily, and discuss about the differences.

This activity was also conducted with two separate groups, one of women and one of men, and both groups were asked to tell us how men and women spend their time in everyday life. The answers were marked on a table where two clocks were represented, so each group produced two clocks. Then we compared the clocks produced by women and those produced by men in a common discussion.

Information given in the three villages about daily activities are quite coinciding, and show that on average men and women spend the same amount of time in productive activities (7 hours for women and 8 hours for men) but the remaining time is employed in quite different ways: women spend on average 7 hours for reproductive activities and 3 hours for leisure and rest during the day (excluded sleeping at night), while men don't spend any time in domestic works and have on average 9 hours for leisure, rest and social activities.

As the participants pointed out, usually women and men wake up between 5am and 6am (in the "maraboutique" villages for praying the *subaka* at 6am), women start sweeping the courtyard and the house, then doing other house works according to the period of the year. In the rainy season, they fetch water to clean the children and give them something to eat, usually the remaining of the day before dinner. They then prepare breakfast, usually rice with baobab leaves in the rainy season, but cous cous made of other cereals in the rest of the year. This implies manual grinding of the cereal (corn, millet and sorghum) that requires hours.

Men sit near the fire with children waiting for breakfast, which is taken at around 8am.

After washing dishes and tidying up the house, some of the women go to their different occupations: during the rainy season and the collect season women go to rice fields and during the dry season to the vegetable garden, where they spend several hours. They go back home for lunch and rest. Other women go to the pasture for the milking of cows.

Other women stay home preparing lunch (again implying a long process grinding and sifting of cereals and of groundnuts for sauce), taking care of children, washing clothes.

In fact, usually in a compound there are several women: due to virilocality, men live together with their brothers and their wives join the compound, and on the top of that, some of them have more than one wife. So women usually organize themselves dividing their tasks: one prepares breakfast, one lunch and one dinner and in the rest of time she goes to take care of rice fields or garden.

Men during the rainy season go to fields very early (between 6am and 8am) and in some cases don't go back home for lunch but are served it on the field. Generally they go back for lunch and rest.

In dry season they spend a lot of time in the house, talking with other men and drinking tea. Some men take care of vegetable gardens, others look for some income through small trades (of gasoline, sugar, soap, and other small things). Even those who sell, do it in a very intermittent way and still spend a lot time home or hanging out with other men.

They also sporadically go to look for wood or straw for making roofs and enclosures, prepare bricks for construction of new buildings, take the cattle to pasture.

Lunch is taken between 1pm and 2pm, then some time is dedicated to, rest, chatting, braiding and ablutions and *al ansaara* praying in maraboutic villages.

During rainy and collecting season around 3 or 4pm they go back to fields up to the sunset (between 6 and 7pm), when everybody goes back home. Women wash children and prepare dinner, men stay prepare the fire and wait for dinner sometimes taking care of children.

After dinner men sit together to talk and drink tea, some women join them while doing also other things like putting children to bed, peeling groundnuts for the day after sauce, putting the newly collected rice on the fire to dry and then spreading it on the floor with other cereals for the night.

Women go to sleep between 9 and 10pm, leaving the fireplace earlier than men, who go to bed between 10 and 12 pm.

## **Final discussion**

After working in separate groups, women and men joined for discussion of outcomes. Some issues were raised, in particular the domestic workload of women and the total absence of men in some activities.

Their comments make reference to poverty and tradition: men acknowledge that women burden is extremely heavy but don't feel responsible for it, seeing poverty as the problem: the only possible way to change the situation seems to be to marry more than one women in order to allow them to share tasks, or to hire a servant if it were possible, while involving men in house activities is never taken into consideration.

In fact, gender roles are strictly defined by tradition, according to which men are supposed to take home the means of leaving and women to take care of the household and reproduction. Women themselves affirm that even if their husbands accepted to participate in domestic activities, it would be a shame for them to let them do things like sweeping: it would imply that they are not good

wives. To underline the concept, one woman told that there is a spread belief according to which if a woman lets her husband sweep, she will die before him.

Many women also share the thought that their husbands don't help because of poverty, not because of a lack of willingness to make their lives better. They never put under discussion gender roles, simply asking for the work related to their role to be less heavy.

### **3.3 Focus group**

The focus group with the nine presidents of the *Comités de gestión* of the community vegetable gardens was thought as a space to let women discuss among themselves about more relevant problems that women face in their communities, and to explore the perception of participants about issues at the center of development discourse, as female genital mutilations (FGM), early marriages, violence against women, addressing them in a smaller group and more familiar context.

In fact, these issues were not raised by participants in the way they are articulated by development discourse. MGF are viewed as matters of the past, no longer relevant for discussion, while violence against women is declined in a different way with respect to focus on physical violence and maltreatment. Early marriage, finally, is not much perceived as a problem but as a solution, to avoid early pregnancies and commercial sex from the part of young girls.

At the beginning, however, participants were let free to express themselves on the main problems they perceived as affecting women in their communities, and most of them spoke about problems related to marriage (and polygyny), access to land, and poverty as main cause of women's distress.

#### **Marriage**

Problems related to marriage were at the center of the speeches of all participants, declined in different aspects. Many spoke about the absence of their husbands in the care work, especially of children, seen as a responsibility women have to carry on their shoulders alone.

Women feel the burden of providing to everyday needs of their children alone, in conditions of restricted economic means ("hay huunde yonaani", "no this is enough"), starting from food: one woman reports that she has to struggle everyday to find something to cook to accompany rice, since her husband leaves her only white rice at morning, then complaining if the meal is not good enough. They feel alone with their worries on children health, school attendance, controlling the sexuality of young girls, complaining that husbands "don't care at all about children, just use marriage for sex".

No matter how hard marriage can be, interrupting it is hardly a possible way out: divorce is highly socially stigmatized and a woman leaving her husband is always seen as the responsible of conflict and rupture, thus considered a “bad woman”. Participant also noticed that to leave the husband house a woman needs his consent, that will hardly be obtained. And leaving without it would make her even more subject to social critique and pressure to stay. Finally, deciding to break up would much likely mean for a woman to abandon her children, since they belong to the father’s kinship. So they end up enduring everything, including physical violence, helped by the belief that “if you bear difficulties life will reward you with a positive event”.

### **Violence against women**

Participants reported innumerable stories from their villages related to violence against women, as part of everyday life: “the day before yesterday a man beat his wife because he was jealous. Even if she spoke with somebody, he gets jealous”.

However, physical violence is perceived as less hurting than other forms of violence : “if a man beats you, you will hurt for some hours and then recover, but if he tells you mean words you will hurt forever”

Il y a les violences physiques et les violences verbales. Je préfère que mon mari me batte qu’il me dise des mots que je peux pas oublier : si on te batte, tu cries, quelqu’un va peut être vous séparer, mais avec les violences verbales c’est seulement toi et ton mari dans la chambre, il te dis des paroles que tu vas jamais oublier.

When asked if violence against women is a reality in their villages, most of the participants reported types of violence not physical, mostly related to unequal treatment among wives and discrimination, generally of first wife/ves in favour of the newly married one, despite Islamic religion asserting that a man should take as many women as he can sustain and he is supposed to treat them all equally.

J’ai vu des violences, parce que un homme avait amené deux femmes et il a pris une troisième. L’autre femme allait dans sa chambre mais il ne faisait pas son travail. L’autre aussi allait dans sa chambre, mais il la laissé comme-ça. Elles sont allées voir les vieux, qui ont appelé l’homme, mais il a refusé de changer.

La deuxième femme était jeune, et comme le mari ne rentrait pas dans sa chambre, elle est partie ailleurs et elle est tombée enceinte.

Le mari a dit que c'était pas lui qui l'avait enceinte, et ils sont allés voir encore les vieux. Ils ont dit que l'enfant c'est à lui, parce que tu n'as pas eu des rapports avec elle. Il a dit oui, parce que la femme ne vient pas dans ma chambre. Elle a dit qu'elle peut pas parce que depuis qu'il a marié la troisième femme il habite dans la même chambre avec elle. Ils ont amené cela jusqu'à la maison du Jarga, pour essayer de régler la chose. La femme était partie dans sa maison, mais elle est revenue avec le mari. Elle a trouvé que la 3eme préparait le petit-déjeuner, le déjeuner et le dîner et la première femme croisait le bras sans rien faire. Elle voulait diviser les nuits mais il a refusé.

Maintenant le grand frère de la femme est allé voir l'homme et dit si tu aimes encore ma sœur, donne lui ses deux jours. Mais il n'as pas changé. Elle a voulu le divorce mais il voulait garder les enfants, mais elle les a amené. Il a dit c'est bien, amène-les, moi je peux avoir cent autres enfants !

As the story shows, being neglected by one's husband, who doesn't eat what she prepares and doesn't sleep with her, is considered a shame for a woman, a failure of her role of good wife, that also defines her as good woman.

When asked about sexual harassment and violence against young girls, participants reported many cases and showed a great concern about impunity of those acts : it seems that in many cases, after sexual violence occurs, parents prefer to impose to the perpetrator to marry the victim, instead of prosecuting him:

Il y a un homme qui avait violé une jeune fille. La communauté a dit il faut qu'on l'amène à la gendarmerie. Le papa de la fille a dit non, je ne vais pas l'amener à la gendarmerie, mais il va donner deux vaches, et il a donné un mâle et une femelle. Mais il a pas dit qu'il épouse la fille, mais il va payer.

Je connais quelqu'un, qu'on lui a dit que puisqu'il a enlevé ta virginité, il faut le marier. La fille a honte de sortir, parce que tout le village sait qu'il l'a violée, elle reste deux mois dans la maison sans sortir. Si la mère l'envoie acheter quelque chose elle va refuser par honte. Il a fallu qu'elle reste un ou deux ans chez sa sœur dans un autre village avant qu'elle puisse revenir.

### **Early marriage and pregnancies**

Early arranged marriages are still largely practiced, as shown by stories reported by women :

Mon frère a donné en mariage sa fille à son neveu, mais la fille a dit qu'elle ne voulait pas. Le père a dit que qu'elle le veuille ou pas, elle va se marier avec son neveu. La fille voulait

apprendre. Depuis un an elle n'a pas encore rejoint son mari, mais son père a dit qu'il va pas donner un autre homme, que c'est son neveu qu'elle va marier.

Un homme a donné sa fille a son cousin, elle a dit qu'elle ne voulait cet homme, mais un autre qu'elle avait choisi, mais le père a dit c'est à lui que je t'ai donné. Elle allait à l'école, maintenant elle ne va plus y aller.

However, it is not much perceived as problem affecting girls' lives and capability to choose, but rather as a solution to preserve girls' honor and family reputation, preventing them to get pregnant and practice commercial sex. Even though women generally recognize that girls should go to school and get a minimum of instruction before marrying, they see school also a place of threats:

On dit que une fille de 12 ans, tu dis que elle est encore mineure et si qqn demande sa main tu dis que non, que ta fille est encore mineure et doit aller à l'école pour réussir. Mais tu ne sais pas que ta fille est en train de prendre une grossesse à coté. Parce que si elle te dit que elle a des classes de 8h à midi, tu ne sait pas si c'est vrai, peut-être elle a classes jusqu'à 10h mais au lieu de revenir elle est dans la chambre de qqn, et elle tombe enceinte. C'est pour cela que maintenant, une fille de 12 ans ou 13 ans, si qqn la demande tu la donne : c'est pour éviter la honte.

Women affirm that early marriage is a safe way to prevent girls to make resort to commercial sex for satisfying her needs, and that an alternative solution to preserve their virginity and thus family reputation could be more communication and better education from the part of mothers, especially sexual education, in a logic of re-establishing good social norms and "costumes" of the elders:

Ils disent que les temps ont changé, mais si tu le respectes, jusqu'à présent le soleil se lève à l'est et se couche à l'ouest, les coutumes sont là, il faut communiquer avec ses enfants !

Si une fille a besoin de quelque chose, comme un cahier, elle va demander aux hommes. Si tu dis à l'homme je n'ai pas mangé, il te donne 500f. Après tu lui dit je veux aller linger mes habits, il te donne 1000f. mais troisième fois, si tu viens, il va te proposer le lit !

Les parents ont une partie de responsabilité aussi : les mamans ne parlent pas avec leurs filles ! la communication c'est seulement : prends le balaye, vas balayer la chambre ! Prends le seau, vas au puits ! prends le mil, vas préparer le manger !

Mais il faut leur dire que dès qu'elles voient ses règles il faut faire attention aux hommes !

Si un homme te propose quelque chose, il faut crier ! Si un homme te donne 50f, il faut pas les prendre !

Chaque fois que un homme te parle viens me rendre compte !

C'est comme-ça qu'on éduque une fille. Il faut surveiller aussi ses vas-et-viens, les familles qu'elle fréquente. Nous les mamans il faut qu'on surveille ça.

Mais quelque fois les femmes surtout dans les villages, quand un enseignant vient dans le village, elles envoient leur fille pour balayer sa chambre, laver ses habits, lui amener la nourriture.

Et si c'est un enseignant con ? Qui n'a pas sa femme là-bas, et qui veut faire la fille ?

Si tu vois ta fille avec un paquet de mèches de 1500f, et tu lui as pas donné, son père non plus, son oncle non plus, tu dois lui demander où tu as pris l'argent ?

Si une fille amène un rouge à lèvres, une crème, un slip que tu lui as pas acheté, il faut lui demander où elle l'a trouvé !

As emerges by these speeches, responsibility is totally addressed to women : to girls and their mothers, faulty of a lack of control on their daughters' sexuality.

Only one woman mentions contraceptive methods as a possible way to deal with early pregnancy, stating that only girls that have luck can go to health centers for planning and receiving contraceptives.

### **Female genital mutilations (FGM)**

All women point out before starting speaking that this practice belongs to the past, that now everybody is aware of risks and consequences of female circumcision, arguing that circumcision practitioners stopped working following sensitization campaigns as those mentioned before undertaken by the Ngo Tostan within a UNICEF/UNFA campaign, which seems to have had a large impact in Kolda region.

Kambua, for example, is one of the villages that signed a Public Declaration to abandon FGM and early marriages, that seems to work thanks to social pressure mechanisms, as the representative of Kambua said:

Si un enfant dans la maison pleure quand elle va aux toilettes, le chef du ménage va demander à sa femme ce qu'elle a fait. Et avec les téléphones tu n'oses pas le faire parce que le Jarga et le président de la communauté rurale ont signé.

Toutefois il y a des femmes qui continuent à exciser leurs filles, même si moins nombreuses que avant, Une autre femme, âgée, affirme que ses filles ont été excisées aussi, mais se justifie en disant « elles sont grandes, quand je les ai excisées on savait pas encore ».

Despite such an emphasis on change, FGM still occur, and some of the participants themselves affirm having circumcised their daughters : one, an elderly woman, justifies herself saying that at the time she did it, long time ago, she was not aware it was a dangerous practice, and the other, quite young, said she had to do it to comply with her husband will.<sup>21</sup>

According to women reports, if it's true that many village don't have any longer a circumcision practitioner, it's also frequent that women take daughters to villages where they can find one, especially in Guinea Bissau where FGM are not banned:

Il ya des gens qui vont en Guinée Bissau, en disant qu'ils vont voir un parent, mais elles vont juste pour exciser et revenir.

What is sure, is that now it has become a more subterranean practice, and if in the past it was an important ritual of passage accompanied by celebrations with all the community, now it is carried on underground.

### **Access to land**

In general land is not conceived in terms of private property, but rather in terms of use: in each village community land is given by the traditional authority to people for all their life, and can be transmitted as heritage to male children. However, being not a person's property, conflicts on the control of land can arise and rights on it can be withdrawn, notably if the person who has it in use doesn't exploit it properly.

Before marriage, women farm their mother's lands, but they don't inherit land from their mothers, but from their husband's mothers. At the moment of marriage the husband traditionally has to give to his wife a plot of land for rice culture, and if his family doesn't have land available he is supposed to borrow some land. In case of divorce the woman loses any right to that land, and if she goes back to her family she can be given a new plot of land there.

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<sup>21</sup> The woman reporting it is Mandinga, while all the others, Fula, affirm that is elder women that decide on female circumcision, while men decide on boy's circumcision.

The land distribution process is conducted by the Jarga and the elders. In some villages there are no problems of land scarcity and many lands are still unexploited, but in other villages where fertile lands are more scarce competition for access to them is high, and in such cases families who remain without land may leave the village to settle down in another site (that takes the name of “Sinthian” followed by the name of the head of the family who first settles there).

According to data collected through the survey for the already mentioned Food Security Analysis, it seems that in the investigation area land is unequally distributed: there are families owning more than 10 hectares of land, not managing to exploit it all, while others don't own even one hectare and have to borrow lands for the growing season (De Labra, 2014). Always according to this study, women have access to 19% of family lands.

In fact, women are discriminated in the process of land distribution. Women participating in the focus group stated that in case of a man and a women asking the same land, the man will have it first, and will have better lands and closer to the village. This discrimination also holds for the rice fields, that are more likely given to men even if they don't farm rice (but they generally use them for growing fruit trees).

Despite the existence of a legislation conferring the same rights to property of land to men and women (Art. 15 of Senegalese Constitution, Loi 64-46 of 1964 sur le Domaine National, suppressing all customary practices on land distribution), customary norms and practices still remain the main way of land distribution, and decisions about land are still taken by the traditional authorities. Requests by women for the legalization of lands are almost inexistent (Association des Juristes Sénégalaises, 2010).

## Conclusions

### 1. Final considerations on Gender Analysis results

#### Access and control over resources

Women play a pivotal role in supporting and sustaining livelihood interventions at household level. They are not, however, in a position to enjoy access to or control over valuable livelihood resources that the household has at its disposal, with the exception of horticulture, where women control every phase of the *filière*, from choice of seeds (that they usually save from previous plants, and more rarely buy) to the management of income gained from the sale of vegetables surplus. Vegetable production appears to be the only economic resource that women enjoy full access and control over.

Rice production is also an activity conducted and managed by women, but control over harvested rice is controversial: as we saw, in some cases (village of Darou Salam), once the crop is harvested and stored, the man takes full control on it.

Depending on the economic status of the household resources include livestock, various agricultural and other tools used for production, seed, land, cash, and household assets, on which women don't have control, even when such resources formally belong to them (i.e. cows).

Women and girls are discriminated again when it comes to access to, ownership of and control over land. This not only disadvantages them economically, but also reduces their social recognition and compromises their rights to food, physical security, access to credit and extension services, while also constricting their space to participate in decision-making.

Land is important not only for growing food or as a place to build a home. Land is also a resource that can be used to generate other forms of livelihoods, a place to belong to, and an identity.

Control over land defines power. Politically, land is used as a tool for securing and exercising political patronage; economically, wealth generated from the land and land-based resources confer on the person who controls that land the ability to secure control over other resources; and socially, the controllers of land and natural resources head family and social structures and take a lead in decision-making (Actionaid, 2013). Thus, there seems to be an intrinsic relationship between women's access to and control over land and their process of empowerment.

The only household resources that women in the study area have complete access to and control over seems to be kitchen utensils and, in some cases, poultry. Anyway it is considered culturally inappropriate for women to be involved in the purchase or sell of livestock, including in some cases poultry, and of any other valuable resources.

If women lack of power in decision making regarding family, they also have limited exposure in public activities including participation in meetings and have more limited social interaction with respect to men.

The gender-based division of labour is skewed to the disadvantage of women - as we saw, especially young women - and strongly tied to power imbalances between men and women, who juggle through multiple roles as in the management of the household, involvement in agricultural activities and participation in community based undertakings as religious ceremonies.

The gender division of labour is one of the major barriers to women's participation and their empowerment. It needs to be addressed /challenged to bring about improvement in poor people's livelihood and in particular the status of women and girls in the study area.

The findings have shed some light on how inequalities in gender relations impact negatively on people's livelihood opportunities, capacity to access and benefit from education, and general quality of life in terms of health and nutrition, freedom from violence and achieving participation in community affairs.

## **2. Time passes, things change ?**

Inequalities we have been discussing all along this work don't have to be seen as a set of immutable cultural constructions of a static society out of historic processes. In fact, as many Senegalese intellectuals pointed out (Diaw, 2011, Sarr Sow, 2014), in some cases in pre-colonial societies (Saloum, Rip, Waalo) women's social and political role was highly recognized (i.e. the Linguère):

Au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, la reine Ndatté Yalla a régné dans la région du Waalo. Nous étions plus en avance que la France à cette époque-là ! C'est la colonisation qui a chassé les femmes du pouvoir au Sénégal mais aussi l'islamisation du pays. Historiquement, les femmes gouvernaient au Sénégal. Les modèles coloniaux et religieux sont des modèles patriarcaux. (...) Notre stratégie est de nous adosser à notre culture et notre civilisation. Ndatté est un modèle pour toutes les femmes (Fatou Sarr, 2014).

Aujourd'hui, ce qui veulent les femmes, c'est être rétablies dans leurs droits. (Sow Sidibé, 2011).

According to these authors, it is colonialism that brought in the relegation of women in the domestic space:

Au moment des indépendances, la littérature autour de la femme africaine l'a présentée comme étant confinée au foyer. Ce cadre est devenu sa sphère principale d'évolution, alors que ce n'était pas le cas avant cette situation politique. (Fall-Sokhna, Thiéblemont-Dollet, 2009).

If it's true that the colonial system contributed to reinforce gender inequalities, i.e. involving men in education and administration posts, and committing to them cash crops as groundnuts, it also true that even before Islam and colonization gender inequalities existed in the Fula societies, highly hierarchical structured on the axis of gender but also age and castes.<sup>22</sup>

This discussion about the origins of gender inequalities in Senegalese societies helps us to focus on the dimension of change affecting every social structure, including gender relations of power.

In fact, all along the present work, women involved in the gender analysis underlined how things are now different from the past, in terms less strict authority of men and elders on the rest of the people and of less restrictive norms on women's behavior. As a woman said during the focus group on women's problems: "With the Government of Macky Sall women now work, they can go to the rice field, cook dinner, but also work. In the past, women's strain/suffering<sup>23</sup> was too much. Now they can speak, while before only the elders could speak and all the rest of people had to obey. Now all my children go to school, even girls".

Not only access to education for girls has improved, but also other dimensions of women's rights have been positively affected by social change, as participation of women in administrative and political positions (also thanks to the already discussed Loi sur la Parité) or the reduction of female genital mutilations. The positive effects of these achievements were recognized even by the women from the rural areas participating to the present work.

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<sup>22</sup> In the Fulakunda societies two castes existed: *rimbe*, the nobles, and *ji'aabe*, the slaves. The *dioma galle* had the authority over all the people of his household (his younger brothers, sons and their wives and children). He was the one who organized people's work in the common fields (*maarou*), who decided about marriages and controlled all the household resources (women controlling only kitchen utensils).

<sup>23</sup> The woman used the Pulaar term *tampere nde*, indicating both the physical effort and a condition of social suffering.

### **3. Putting gender relations in perspective: reflecting on categories and concepts**

Gender analysis usually takes for granted western categories as the one of “gender equality”, as shown in some gender analysis reports’ conclusions and recommendations: “Although this capacity to affect gender roles and power relations in the short term, we can put in place mechanisms and create an environment that favours their access to information, expression of opinion, and involvement in decision-making processes”.

But women who participated to the realization of this study never put under discussion gender roles or power relations, looking rather for an improvement their conditions within the existing gender structure. As Nadine Sieveking argues in her paper on local reinterpretation of development concepts by Senegalese women (Sieveking, 2007), women ask for the acknowledgment of their workload, duties and responsibilities, but still accepting that those duties and moral responsibilities should be different from those of men.

In fact, gender roles and values associated to them are interiorized by women, as those that want them in charge of the domestic life, subjects to their husbands’ authority and excluded from decision-making processes. Women of the rural area of Southern Kolda region, even young girls, generally see in marriage and reproduction the major achievement of their life. They ask, though, their work to be recognized and their contribute to family wellbeing to be more valued. What they seem to ask to their husbands to fully perform their role as head of the household, properly providing for the family: as we saw especially when discussing the focus group on women’s problems, women’s complaints about their husbands focus on their inability or unwillingness to contribute to children’s needs and household needs. In fact, culturally and according to Islam, the husband has to satisfy household need even if the wife is rich (Goudiaby, 2014).

To their eyes, such roles and ideals represent expressions of culture, tradition and religion, and to put them under discussion would imply defying and undermining traditions and ancestors’ untouchable heritage.

Anyway, if this is the view of peasant women in the area under analysis, Senegalese women are not all the same: intellectuals and militants underline that taking care of practical needs and improving everyday life doesn’t give long term results and improvements for women’s position:

A ceux qui pensent qu’il faut d’abord s’occuper des questions de santé et d’éducation des filles nous rappelons que “Monsieur Forage” (Abdou Diouf) et “Mme Moulin” (Élisabeth Diouf), pendant 20 ans, se sont attelés à régler les besoins pratiques des

femmes. Mais comme l'explique l'analyse genre, ce sont les intérêts stratégiques qu'il fallait viser et cela passe par la présence massive des femmes à l'Assemblée Nationale. (Sarr Sow, 2014).

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