

Does Community-Driven Development Improve Inclusiveness in Peasant Organizations? – Evidence from Senegal

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Summary. — Using panel village census data from Senegal, we assess the impact of a decentralized agricultural development program—the *Programme de Services Agricoles et Organisations de Producteurs (PSAOP)*—on membership and assortative matching in community-based organizations (CBOs). We find that channeling agricultural assistance through CBOs makes these organizations more inclusive in the sense that several tradition-bound assortative matching patterns are broken: homophily in ethnicity and wealth are reduced. Traditionally marginalized groups such as men of nomadic background, women with small landholdings and little education and those residing in female-headed households become CBO members whereas the position of previous CBO leaders is not reinforced. Similarly, those households that received services from a CBO before the PSAOP was in place are less likely to stay. This leads to more heterogeneous CBOs and is in line with the terms and conditions of the program. On the other hand, the likelihood of CBO membership is reduced in project villages, with significant differences between men and women. Women disproportionately drop out of CBOs which receive PSAOP benefits. We conclude that for grassroots-level development projects to be successful, contextual factors need to be integrated into program design and implementation, since they shape local participation. Understanding local power relations and the potential for changing preferences due to external support are key to inclusive participation and development at the local. © 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Key words — community-based organizations, community-driven development, dyadic regression, elite capture, gender differences

1. INTRODUCTION

Development programs designed to build capacity among community-based organizations (CBOs) have experienced a revival in recent years due to the repeated failure of many top-down initiatives. Institutions such as the World Bank have implemented community-driven development (CDD) programs as a response to mounting criticism of the negative impacts of structural adjustment programs. This has triggered interest in participatory approaches. In CDD projects, service delivery is decentralized and local governments and beneficiaries are directly involved in the design and implementation of the development program, thus fostering acceptance and local appropriation (World Development Report, 2004). CDD programs build on local structures, are demand-driven, and allow for local stakeholders to identify with the project (Binswanger & Nguyen, 2007). As a consequence of their participatory nature, CDD programs are supposed to increase the accountability of the providers of development assistance to the needs of the poor and vulnerable and involve the local beneficiaries directly in the monitoring process.

However, already in 1991, Drèze and Sen (1991) voiced serious concerns regarding the functioning of participatory, decentralized development projects as even in a unit as small as a neighborhood or village hierarchical structures exist and local leaders often dominate community decision-making. The desiderata of the local elites do not automatically coincide with those of marginalized and vulnerable groups (Conning & Kevane, 2002; Humphreys, Masters, & Sandbu, 2006). Women are particularly likely either to be excluded or to engage in *pro forma* nominal participation (Agarwal, 2001; Cornwall, 2003; Das, 2014). Similarly, within CBOs a leadership circle evolves that defines the goals of the group. These goals are not necessarily shared by all group members, and often merely represent what is closest to the hearts of the

leaders. Moreover, high levels of poverty and inequality at the local level perpetuate elite capture and corruption and have the potential to undermine the functioning of CDD programs (Jütting, Kauffmann, Donnell, Osterrieder, Pinaud, & Wegner, 2004).

We contribute to the knowledge base on CDD by assessing how membership patterns in CBOs are altered due to external support that is channeled through the groups. We use village census data from Senegal, collected in 2003 and 2008 for a set of 177 villages, in most of which there are several CBOs (average = 2.41). We exploit the panel structure of our dataset to answer a simple yet important question: are membership and assortative matching in CBOs affected when these organizations are used as conduits to deliver development assistance? In other words, what are the characteristics of CBO members and to what extent are they reshaped due to a CBO-based intervention? We will assess gender imbalances, the possibility of disrupting existing social structures and capture by CBO leaders.

Arcand and Fafchamps (2012) have already examined the household characteristics associated with membership in the

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Senegalese CBOs at hand using the cross-sectional data from 2003. They present evidence that on average the more fortunate members of rural society belong to the groups. In their cross-sectional analysis they show that landownership is an important criterion for CBO membership and that individuals assortatively match by physical and ethnic proximity, wealth, and household size.¹ Our analysis builds on this study and extends it further by assessing the impact of the *Programme de Services Agricoles et Organisations de Producteurs* (PSAOP)—a national agricultural program in Senegal—on membership and assortative matching in community-based organizations. To the best of our knowledge this is the first paper that quantitatively analyzes the responsiveness of CBOs and their membership dynamics to development assistance in the form of agricultural training and support. In social terms our research question translates into asking whether CBOs that receive program benefits become more inclusive or more exclusive as a result. This allows us to provide an answer to one of the main criticisms of CDD programs since CBOs have been repeatedly blamed for aggravating elite capture and social exclusion along the ethnic, economic, and gender dimensions (Dasgupta & Beard, 2007; Hailey, 2001; Hildyard, Hegde, Wolvekamp, & Reddy, 2001; Platteau & Gaspard, 2003b). Thus, our analysis sheds further light on possible channels along which inclusive participation can be strengthened by decentralized interventions and how these channels can be reshaped for efficient and inclusive service delivery.

We estimate a logistic regression model of membership to derive the *direct* program effect of the PSAOP on CBO participation. In addition, we assess the *differential* effect of the intervention on membership patterns by interacting treatment by the PSAOP program with household characteristics. Moreover, we extend the dyadic regression framework introduced by Fafchamps and Gubert (2007) to panel data and estimate a dyadic difference-in-differences model. Our results complement the existing literature in four ways. First, we find a negative impact of the program on participation in CBOs, with significant differences between males and females. Women disproportionately drop out of CBOs which receive PSAOP benefits. At first glance this finding suggests that the elite capture argument is compelling. However, the potential capture by the elite needs to be evaluated within the broader context of CBO dynamics since, second, the empirical evidence shows that as a consequence of treatment the groups become more inclusive by including men of nomadic background, women with small landholdings and low levels of education and those residing in female-headed households. Third, since CBOs in treated villages become more heterogeneous we assess the capture argument in greater detail and find evidence that previous CBO leaders are not reinforced in their positions due to the PSAOP program. Similarly, those households that received services from a CBO before the PSAOP was in place are less likely to stay in the CBO after the start of the program. Fourth, the dyadic regression results suggest that homophily among female members along the ethnic and landholding dimensions is mitigated by treatment. Our findings suggest that the agenda of the PSAOP was broadly respected and that the terms and conditions of the program concerning the targeting of marginalized groups were carried out by the groups.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces Senegalese CBOs and the PSAOP program. Section 3 revisits the literature on decentralization, community participation and elite capture. Section 4 describes

the empirical strategy. In section 5 we describe our data and present the results. Section 6 concludes.

2. CONTEXT: THE ROLE OF CBOS IN SENEGAL AND THE PSAOP PROGRAM

CBOs are a pervasive element of society in Francophone West Africa. In rural areas, these organizations are created by the peasants so as to render services to the members of the group; they play an important role in the daily lives of peasants because of the manifold (economic and social) activities they are involved in and the manner in which they extend a peasant's social network beyond the family (Bernard, Collion, de Janvry, Rondot, & Sadoulet, 2008; DeJanvry & Sadoulet, 2004).²

Senegalese CBOs have been in existence since the pre-independence period (Ba, Ndiaye, & Sonko, 2002; Faye & Ndiaye, 1998). After independence in 1960, the Senegalese government has further supported rural peasant organizations in order to modernize farming and increase agricultural output. In the mid-eighties peasant organizations negotiated a law that allowed them to organize themselves in small cooperatives, which facilitate access to agricultural inputs, credit and marketing channels for their products. In 1993, the *Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux* (CNCR) was founded, a national confederation of CBOs with substantial political influence representing the interests of the peasants to the government.

The definition of a CBO adopted here corresponds to the term *groupement* commonly used by the villagers and builds on the concept of membership; these are formal groups with a president, a secretary, and a treasurer. The activities of the CBOs under study have been classified into five broad categories (DeJanvry & Sadoulet, 2004): (i) assistance to income-generating activities such as petty commerce, irrigated agriculture, and the production of garden vegetables; (ii) management of common property resources such as forests, grazing land, water, and fish stocks; (iii) provision of social cohesion, redistribution, and insurance such as cereal banks, collective fields, and *tontines* (Rotating Savings and Credit Associations); (iv) support with training and information dissemination; and (v) external representation within local development committees or higher level confederations of CBOs. The CBOs can be classified according to the different services they provide but also along two other dimensions, namely (i) membership regulations and (i) eligibility for services. Along these two dimensions the groups can either be exclusive, i.e., only accept and provide services to members with certain individual or economic characteristics such as merchants, or inclusive, i.e., being open to everyone in terms of membership and services such as mutual insurances and publicly available village infrastructure. Focusing on membership regulations, 43% of the village groups are exclusive.

The importance of CBOs for the villagers can be further seen from analyzing the trends in CBO creation and membership. We know that in the twenty years before our baseline survey the number of villages with CBOs steadily increased from 9.4% to 65.1% of villages with at least one CBO. We observe a considerable increase in the number of newly founded CBOs starting from the late 1980s. This trend is uninterrupted until 2003, especially for CBOs organizing special interest groups, such as households and individuals being engaged in income generating activities. Similarly, the average number of CBO members per village increased from below 20 to over 150. Thus, there is considerable evidence that at the

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