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CURRENT INFORMATION DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

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Confronting the development dilemma: Decentralized cooperation, governance and local responses to neo-liberal reform in rural Senegal.

Publication Number: AAT 3133977

O'Bannon, Brett R. Ph.D., Indiana University, 2004, 175 pp. Advisor: Furniss, Norman.

This dissertation explores the implications of political and economic reform for local scale governance, defined primarily in terms of conflict management. A decade of neo-liberal reform in Africa has revealed a fundamental dilemma; regime threatening conflict is associated with, and perhaps made more difficult to manage by, the very reforms deemed essential to sustained political and economic development. My research in Senegal demonstrates that some resolution of this dilemma involves local-international linkages which provide resources for the constitution of power essential to effective governance. More often, however, the required linkages are not established and local actors decry reforms intended to transfer power to newly designed local institutions as akin to having received an "empty envelope". Indigenous governance structures, presumed to be part of the solution to problems caused by the state's withdrawal, often prove inadequate. The work begins with an analysis of Senegal's 2000 presidential election, which constitutes the capstone of one of Africa's most celebrated cases of democratic capitalist transition. Following that, I draw on fieldwork in two rural sites to construct a decentralized cooperative model for local governance. The dynamics between political and economic reform, local resource-based conflict and the weakness of local self-governance all have profound implications for the constellation of local identities and conflicts associated with them. The type of conflict I explore in this research is that between herders and farmers, one well known throughout Sahelian Africa. Subnational variation in the ability of local actors to execute greater mandates for self governance, and thus manage herder-farmer conflicts, is explained by the varied presence of international actors, and their resources, at the local level. This variation across locale is, partly at least, a function of historical processes of state development that have been characterized by their unevenness.

Community empowerment through capacity-building in the face of the global economy: A case study of Iran.

Publication Number: AAT NQ89278

Yazdani, Nasser, Ph.D., University of Guelph (Canada), 2004, 342 pp. Advisor: Filson, Glen.

The present thesis is an investigation of sustainable rural community development in the face of the global economy. It aims to develop a framework for capacity building, leading to the empowerment of rural communities in developing countries in response to restructuring and adjustment policies as the key elements of globalization. The thesis begins with an explanation of the process of globalization and its core element, restructuring and adjustment policies. It demonstrates that remedies to the impacts of these policies, in particular on the rural life, is not sufficiently addressed in the literature. Then it outlines the impacts of these policies on rural communities in developing countries. It then builds a theoretical framework for capacity

building. It is argued that developing the institutional, intellectual, physical and environmental capacities in rural communities can be actualized only through a participatory rural organization, as the most important element in a capacity building model. Using this framework, the capability of the Farmers' Agricultural Producer Co-operatives is investigated as a foundation for capacity building and people's empowerment, using the case of rural Iran. It argues that these organizations have the potential to become an appropriate participatory institution for people's empowerment. The empirical findings from the field research, mainly focusing on a number of FAPCs in Hamedan Province of Iran, suggested successful performance of these organizations in some economic, social, technology, educational and training areas. It was demonstrated, however, that these organizations should undergo a range of reforms and improvements to be adapted to the requirements of a genuine capacity building model. The most essential improvement should be made in the government approach to these organizations. The government approach should evolve and shift from managing and controlling these organizations to being merely supportive. In other words, it should shift from government to governance by the rural people. This should be accompanied by adopting new legislation on the operation of these organizations, so as to accommodate for the changing situation in the era of restructuring. Another important proposed reform is one of promoting and training of the co-operative members to participate in the cooperative related decision-making process. At the same time, these organizations are a means toward people's empowerment to confront the negative impacts, and using the opportunities, of restructuring policies. As a result, there should be more emphasis on education and training about the impacts and mechanisms of these policies. Finally, the economic objectives should not compromise the social and environmental considerations. As the impacts of restructuring policies are multidimensional, the responses should also be multidimensional.

Common ground between crafts collectives and conservation: Protecting natural resources through artisan production.

Publication Number: AAT 3157871.

Wilhoit, Jennifer Jade. Ph.D., Antioch University/New England Graduate School, New Hampshire, 2005, 161 pp. Advisor: Watts, Heidi.

The formation of collectives that focus on crafts production is a survival strategy for artisans in remote areas both domestically and abroad. In many cases crafts-artists are influenced by their rural environment and use images of and resources from nature in their work. Some of the cooperatives are situated near protected areas with local residents as members; others draw membership from a larger regional area and have no strong tie to a protected area. Yet in a number of crafts cooperatives in developing countries, members have incorporated a formal environmental agenda into the cooperative's bylaws. This research explored crafts collectives in the United States in order to learn how crafts-artists understand conservation in this country. I conducted my study with members of the Gallery Shop in rural Pennsylvania and the Southern Highland Craft Guild's Folk Art Center in North Carolina. My inquiry focused on the artisans' perceptions of their work, the collective and their community in regard to conservation. The results showed that individual artisans place a high value on, and are very knowledgeable about, their local ecology but do not take formal environmental action as a collective. In response to the findings, I propose a model for integrating the ecological, economic and sociopolitical actions of artisan members. The implications of this research for those concerned about crafts and ecology are significant; there is potential for collaboration between artisans and conservationists.

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