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Inclusive Places, Exclusive Spaces

Evaluating Female Councillors' Participation in Municipal Councils in Burkina Faso

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Abstract

Processes of decentralization accompanied by electoral gender quotas have in many African countries increased women's opportunities for political participation at local level. The aim of this thesis is to evaluate to what extent the increased number of female councillors has resulted in women obtaining an efficient participation in the municipal councils.

I have conducted a Minor Field Study in Burkina Faso, where I have conducted interviews with female and male councillors and conducted direct observations in municipal councils. My theoretical framework is mainly based on research on citizen participation. Female councillors' participation is evaluated in reference to the term efficient participation and its criteria on women's presence at different levels of decision-making and their active participation during meetings. I further applied the power cube model to analyse how structural and institutional power relations influence female councillors' participation.

In this thesis I find that women's participation in the council is not efficient. The municipal councils are not neutral spaces, the replication of power relations from other spaces restrains the female councillors' participation. Their participation is reduced both by individual constraints (lack of education and economic resources) and by more informal institutional constraints (values and norms on behaviour).

Key words: Women in politics, quotas, efficient participation, decentralization and power relations

Characters: 68 511

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1 Introduction

"Political spaces belong to all citizens, but men monopolize it"

(UNDP 1995:41)

Women represent more than half of the world's population but hold only 17.2 percent of the seats in national parliaments (IPU 2008). In order to address women's political under-representation an increasing number of countries applies electoral gender quotas. Out of 59 African countries 32 applies a form of quota (Quotaproject 2008). Many of these countries are also following a process of decentralisation which has increased citizens' opportunities for political engagement. The combination of new institutional spaces for citizen participation and the application of quotas has in many African countries led to an increased political representation of women. According to a study covering a large number of African municipal councils, women represent on average 30.1 % of the members in local governments (UCLG 2006).

Burkina Faso in West Africa is a good example of these developments; following the application of a voluntary party quota in the first nation-wide municipal elections in 2006 women gained 35.8 percent of the seats. Considering women's low representation on national level at 12.4 percent the progress on local level is significant (CENI 2006a)(CENI 2007). Judging from these figures women have in numeric terms a considerable participation in the municipal councils. But what if we look beyond the numbers, are female councillors able to influence the decision-making? Or are women as suggested by the title of this thesis formally included in the municipal councils but subject to informal forms of exclusion hindering them from a full participation? In my opinion women's political participation is not an end in itself but a mean for women to gain an actual influence. I therefore find it necessary to take into consideration the qualitative side of their participation.

1.1 Purpose

In a number of studies local governance and quotas are ascribed a positive impact on women's political participation. Much of the research however primarily focuses on the quantitative aspects of women's political participation thus leaving out the qualitative aspects. With this master's thesis my aim is to contribute to the existing research by setting the focus on the quality of women's participation and the identification of possible constraints.

The overall purpose of this study is to *evaluate female councillors' participation in municipal councils in Burkina Faso from a power perspective.*

Burkina Faso is most suited for a case study of this kind. It is a good representative for the ongoing political developments in Western Africa concerning decentralisation and quotas. It is also an interesting case that has not been subject for much research.

The purpose of my study includes both descriptive and explanatory ambitions. My aim is to describe female councillors' current situation in the councils and the difficulties they are encountering. To explain these difficulties I will apply my analytical theoretical framework. In order to realize these ambitions, the following research questions are addressed:

- Do female councillors have an efficient participation?
- What obstacles to female councillors' participation do the women themselves and other actors identify?
- What are the specific institutional and structural power relations causing these obstacles on their participation?

1.2 Delimitations

A number of interesting concepts due to time and space constraints have not been possible to include in this thesis. However two of the frequently applied terms, political participation and political representation require some clarification. According to Philips political participation involves formal equality and equal rights to all forms of political activity while representation concerns substantial equality and the representation of groups' ideas through political presence (Philips 1995:33-35). In this thesis a more restricted definition of political participation is applied which only includes women's participation within formal political institutions. I therefore make no formal distinction between the two terms and instead apply both of them to refer to women's presence in elective bodies. The focus in this thesis lies instead on the distinction between women's passive presence in the councils and their efficient participation. By efficient participation I refer to a meaningful participation where female councillors have an actual influence on the decision-making by occupying positions of responsibility and participating actively in the councils.

The applied theoretical framework, the power cube, will be explained in further detail in chapter three. Briefly, the model developed by Gaventa introduces a dynamic understanding of the intersection of power with processes of citizen participation across the three dimensions; spaces for participation, places and levels of participation and forms of power (Gaventa 2005:11). In this thesis, I link the power dimension to institutional and structural power relations, a terminology that requires further clarification. A clear distinction between the two terms is difficult as they are closely related to each other. In this thesis, by structural relations I will refer to aspects of Lundquist's definition of social structures as the outcome of human action. These structures compromise patterns

of activities and ideas in form of relations and rules (Lundquist 1987:40-41). By institutional power relations I shall make references to the organizational aspects of the definition applied by North where institutions involve both formal constraints (rules, laws, constitutions) and informal constraints (norms of behaviour, conventions, and self imposed codes of conduct) (North 1993).

1.3 Disposition

Following this introductory chapter on purpose and delimitations, the second chapter entails a discussion on methodology. In chapter three the study's theoretical framework is developed. After a brief overview on the existing research on women in politics the analytical concepts are introduced. In this part the concept efficient participation and the power cube model are discussed. The following chapter provides some background information on the decentralisation process and women's political participation in Burkina Faso. The fifth chapter is structured around my three research questions. In the beginning of the chapter I based on my observations and quantitative data address the first research question concerning the efficiency of the female councillors' participation. Following up I discuss the main obstacles for their participation. Then after I analyse the result by applying ideas from the power cube. The last chapter includes a summary of the main findings and some concluding remarks.

2 Methodological Considerations and Review of Material

In this chapter, the methodological considerations of the field study, conducted in Burkina Faso from April to June 2008, are introduced and the empirical material discussed.

2.1 Methodological Considerations for a Field Study

In the conduct of a field study it is important to apply a method suited for the context. A good advice is to start from a well-designed plan but to remain flexible: "What you do in the field- it all depends- but don't lose direction!" (Patton 1990:273). For a greater flexibility in my research I applied a multi-methodological approach including both qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews and direct observations as well as quantitative data and secondary sources. The combination of methods has been chosen according to the information needed in line with the study's purpose and in consideration to resources and time availability (Mikkelsen 1995:231).

2.1.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The method of semi-structured interviews is suggested to optimise knowledge, attitudes and practices of groups (Mikkelsen 1995: 29,75). I found the method useful as it helped me to structure my interviews around a set of prepared questions (see appendix 1 and 2) but at the same time encouraged interviewees to speak more freely.

Most of my interviews were conducted in French without an interpreter. The use of an interpreter involves a risk of information getting lost and was only applied when the interviewees inadequate French skill required so. To facilitate the transcription all the interviews were recorded. In the interviews conducted individually the interviewees are quoted with their name while in the group interviews with councillors reference is made to their municipal council.

The interviewees can be grouped into three groups: mayors, councillors and expert interviews. I conducted interviews with three male mayors and nine female mayors. The over-representation of female mayors results from a strategic selection and the principle of intensity in selection (Esaiasson et. al 2004:287).

The female mayors due to their position of responsibility in the councils had a concentrated knowledge critical for my study. The interviews with 30 female and 20 male councillors were based on their requests mainly conducted in focus groups with four to six participants. There is the risk of influencing the actions and opinion of the individuals in group interviews. But on the other hand the method makes the interviewees more comfortable and additional information as well as insights on social relations may be provided (May 2001:114). Furthermore, through either contacting ministries or organisations directly or by applying the snowball method, where one interviewee would recommend me to another person to contact, I conducted 20 expert interviews (Marsh & Stoker: 1995: 142).

2.1.2 Direct Observations

As a complement to interviews important information can be collected through observations of behaviour and action (Mikkelsen 1995:74-75). With direct observation at four councils meetings I was able to evaluate councillors' participation based upon their actual behaviour. In the selection of the municipal councils criteria on a female representation of 30 percent or above and a representation of both rural and urban municipalities were applied. The selection was limited by the low frequency of meetings, regular sessions are hold once every third month and only occasionally extra-ordinary sessions are called.

2.1.3 Review of Secondary Sources

Even though my study mainly focuses on qualitative primary data, secondary sources have been applied to set the framework for my analysis. Literature and articles on women's political participation were collected from Swedish university libraries and web databases. However, country specific data was collected in the field. Due to few well-equipped documentation centres I had to directly contact ministries, organisations and research institutes for relevant documentation. Even more time consuming was the collection of statistics as few ministries have habits of gathering gender-disaggregated data.

2.2 A White, Young, Western and Female Researcher

In the conduct of a qualitative study it is important to reflect on the researcher's influence on the material. Two often cited problems for direct observations is the risk of the observer to exercise influence on the observed or the observer not being capable of fully understanding his or hers observations (Hedlund 1996:254).

In my field study I would to a certain extent experience both of these problems. During my first direct observation at a municipal council meeting I was surprised to see female councillors occupied with their babies or falling asleep. I realize this cultural confrontation was related to my role as researcher being influenced by my identity as a westernised woman. Combined with limited local knowledge, my ability to understand the interventions due to language barriers and to analyse the councillors' culturally coded behaviour was constrained. I tried to overcome these difficulties by discussing my observations with councillors or an expert. However my different background is not only to be considered a disadvantage as there lays a value in cross-cultural research and being "touched by a different reality" (Scheyvens and Storey 2003:6).

In addition, all interviews, including when applying a semi-structured model, risk involving some interviewer effects where the interviewer intentionally or unintentionally influences the answers (Esaiasson et. al 2004:261-262). I experienced problems in this regard when women in some interviews would give contradicting answers. Either they indirectly felt obliged to answer in a certain way or the fact that they had not earlier reflected on the issues made them nervous. According to Wängnerud it can be difficult for an interviewee to see patterns in an activity that he or she is a part of. In order to be able to analyse a situation systematically it can be necessary to take one step back (Wängner1999:61-62). As an outsider I was therefore able to see patterns in the female councillors' behaviour that they themselves had problems to perceive.

I find the problem of interviewer effects can be reduced if as a researcher I am aware of my own values and norms and I give an account of results which could be the outcome of influence (Mikkelsen 1995:252)(Esassion et al. 2004:293). However, according to my view on research influence from the researcher may never fully be excluded. I agree with Hedlund who claims that in qualitative studies the researcher is the main tool and considering our different experiences a full inter-subjectivity will never be obtained (Hedlund 1996:255). Without taking a positivistic standpoint I therefore argue for an inter-subjectivity in terms of a study to be "re-constructible" for the reader (Lundquist 1993:52).

3 The Conceptual Framework

In this chapter the conceptual framework of the thesis is introduced. The chapter is opened by a brief review on influential scholars and interesting empirical studies on women in politics. Furthermore, the analytical approach based on the concept of an efficient participation is defined. After introducing the three-dimensional power cube, connections between these two approaches will be discussed.

3.1 Women's Political Participation- Included But Still Excluded?

In literature on women in politics a number of arguments for women's full formal political participation are emphasized. Often these arguments are clustered into three main propositions: that women form a political interest that needs to be represented in the decision-making process; that the society will benefit from women's contribution to the formal political sphere; and that the under-representation of women is an offend to the ideals of democracy and justice (Lister 1997:155). Even if most scholars agree on women's right to formal representation the importance of a proportionally equal representation is subject of discussions. Pitkins argues in her influential book "The Concept of Representation", that an over-emphasis on who is present in legislative assemblies draws attention away from the more urgent question of what the parliamentarians actually do (Pitkins 1967:142). According to Pitkins the physical characteristics of the representative is secondary, what counts is if he or she acts in favour of those whose interests he or she is supposed to represent. Philips takes in her book "Politics of Presence" an opposing standpoint as she stresses the importance of taking into account our representatives' social background and acknowledging that men and women's different experiences influence their political work (Phillips: 1995: 44). According to Phillips the chances for women's interest to be considered is higher in decision-making bodies with a more equal gender representation (ibid: 82).

Furthermore, constraints on women's participation in politics are in Young's book "Inclusion and Democracy" discussed in terms of external and internal exclusion. External exclusion is the obvious form of discrimination where people are kept outside forums of decision-making. After obtaining access to these forums citizens often find themselves subject to an inclusive form of exclusion where "people lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to fora and procedures of decision-making" (Young

2000:55). Informal forms of discrimination are thereby suggested to hinder elected women from transforming their presence into political action.

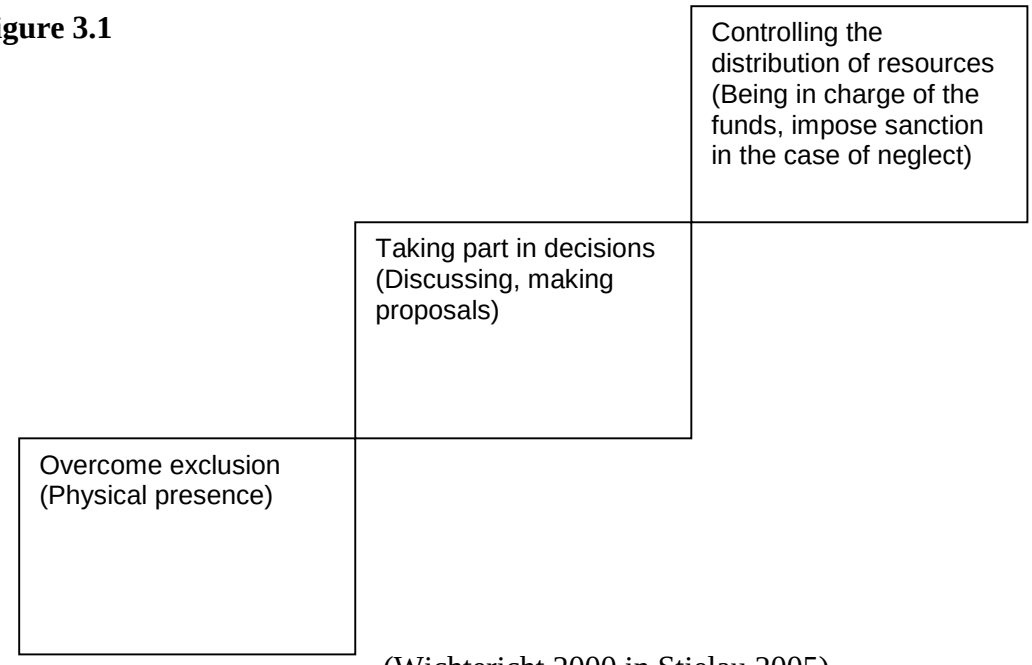
Obstacles women face for their political participation have been further discussed in a number of interesting empirical studies. In a study by Wängnerud (1999) on the Swedish parliament it is argued that the gender balance in governmental bodies has a great influence on the decision-making. Hedlund (1997) stresses in her study on female councillors in a Swedish municipality that the conditions for political participation are far from equal between men and women. In a comparative study based on seven nations by Verba, H. Nie and Kim (1978) differences between men and women's level of political participation is explained by individual and institutional constraints. Women's participation is restrained by individual constraints in the form of lower education and lower political motivation as well as by institutional constraints such as weak affiliation with the political parties (Verba et al. 1978:17-19). According to the same authors women's participation is also limited by external and internal inhibition. Women can externally be restrained from politics by formal or informal rules, but they may also themselves accept the social norms against female participation which leads to a self-restrained inhibition (ibid:254).

Another broadly applied classification of obstacles to women's political participation is the categories of political, socio-cultural and socio-economic problems. First, the political problems involve how the rules of the game in politics often are set by men. Second, women's political role is limited by socio-cultural factors in terms of cultural patterns and predetermined social roles. Lastly, women in politics are subject to socio-economic constraints such as lacking resources and illiteracy (Shvedova 2005:34).

3.2 The Concept of Efficient Participation

The theoretical discussion and the above cited empirical studies suggest that women's presence in political bodies is not automatically translated to an active participation. In order to evaluate the quality of a person's or a group's presence in decision-making bodies a number of models distinguishing different levels of participation can be applied. A well-suited model to evaluate women's participation in the municipal councils identifies three levels of participation (see figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1



(Wichtericht 2000 in Stielau 2005)

The model illustrates that gaining access to a sphere of decision-making is only the first obstacle to overcome. In order to exercise a real influence on the decisions the participant has to play an active role and participate in the discussions. A participant is not considered to have a full participation unless he or she exercises an influence on essential decisions.

Another interesting model to evaluate participation in decision-making identifies five degrees of participation: passive participation, information giving, consultation, interactive participation and finally participation in decision-making (Groverman 2005: 52). What level of participation a participant acquires depends on factors such as the type of organisation, decision-making procedures and the characteristics of the participant.

In academic work on women in politics scholars often attempt to define women's meaningful participation by emphasising on critical aspects of their participation. Jónasdottir (1991) makes an interesting distinction between simple and controlling presence. Simple presence concerns the formal right to participate whereas the controlling presence entails a more far-reaching influence. Many scholars often also refer to the "critical mass", a representation of women above 30 percent, as a requirement for women to be able to influence decision-making (see Lister 1997:163). However Dahlerup (1988) instead stresses that it is not the number of women that counts but instead their "critical actions" that matter. Another well-recognized requirement for women's political influence is their access to positions of responsibility. Unless women are represented at all levels their impact remains limited: "marginal positions will only lead to marginalized opportunities to affect the political agenda" (Wängnerud 1999:47).

In a study on councillors' participation in a municipal council in São Paulo, Brazil, three fundamental abilities are identified for councillors' substantial participation; personal (the individual's self-confidence), oratorical (the practice of public speaking) and political abilities (ability to act on behalf of the people one represents)(Pozzoni 2002:59-61).

In this thesis women's meaningful participation will be referred to by the term efficient participation. Based on the above cited studies the applied definition has been adjusted to the specific setting of women in municipal councils. My definition of the term is based on three criteria concerning women's presence at the different levels of decision-making in the councils and their participation during meetings (see figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2

Criteria for Female Councillors' Efficient Participation

Physical Presence: Women have a significant representation in the municipal councils.

Positions of Responsibility: Women occupy seats in the executive boards of the municipal councils.

Participation During Meetings: Women participate actively during municipal council meetings, they participate in the debates and they make proposals.

3.3 A Power Perspective on Participation

Citizen's political participation within formal institutional bodies concerns power, power to influence decisions but also the power to hinder others from participating. In order to study institutional and structural power relations' influence on participation I will apply the power cube, an analytical framework developed by Gaventa and the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. The power cube includes three dimensions; spaces for participation, places and levels of participation and forms power.

3.3.1 Spaces for Participation

Spaces for participation can in abstract terms be defined as opportunities for engagement or more concretely as actual spaces animated by citizens (Cornwall 2002:2). The spatial perspective takes into consideration the impact institutional settings and social contexts can have on participation (ibid: 3). Spaces are not considered to be neutral but instead a social production. Prevailing power relations within spaces set boundaries for participation by deciding who may

participate and with which interest and discourses (Gaventa 2006:26). The setting for participation is suggested to differ depending on how the spaces were created. In the model three forms of spaces are identified:

Closed Spaces. Actors behind closed doors make decisions. For example within the state, elites make decisions without any efforts being made to broaden the boundaries for citizen participation.

Invited Spaces. As efforts are made to move away from closed spaces new space more open for citizen participation are created. Within these spaces people are invited by various kinds of authorities to participate.

***Claimed/Created Spaces*.** Spaces claimed by less powerful actors from the power holders, or created more autonomously by them. These spaces are often initiated by the citizens and are the result of popular mobilisation.

(Cornwall 2002:17-19)

By whom or for who spaces have been created is thought to have a direct impact on the dynamics of citizen participation. The opportunities for an efficient participation are considered to be stronger if citizens participate in spaces created on their own initiative than in spaces where others have set the conditions. In addition a stronger citizen participation in an invited space requires a sincere political will of the authorities (Cornwell 2002:17, 24).

3.3.2 Places and Levels of Participation

The place dimension situates the space for participation on a global, national or local level. The settings for participation are suggested to differ between the different levels. According to some scholars the conditions for citizen participation are more favourable on a local level as it is easier for people to engage in spaces closer to their daily life. Citizens are also considered at the local level to be in a better position to resist prevailing power structures and to construct their own voices (Gaventa 2006:28). However literature on decentralisation often underline that the conditions for citizen participation depend on how power is legitimated on national level and how it is shared with the local level (Gaventa 2005:13).

3.3.3 Forms of Power

The form of participation within different space and levels is also considered to be shaped by prevailing power relations. Power relations are considered to be present at all spaces for citizen participation but to take up more or less visible forms depending on the context. The three forms of power applied in the power cube are

based on Luke's three-dimensional view of power (1974). The forms of power closely relate to both institutional and structural power relations.

Visible Power: Observable Decision-making
The most obvious and definable aspect of political power includes institutional factors such as formal rules, the organisation of institutions and procedures of decision-making. The formal rules can be discriminative against certain groups by biased laws or by unrepresentative decision-making structures. These visible inequalities can be addressed by formal measures such as quotas.

Hidden Power: Setting the Political Agenda
Despite measures to address the visible power inequalities certain powerful people can maintain their power by influencing who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. These dynamics exclude and devalue the concerns and representation of other less powerful groups, such as women.

Invisible Power: Shaping Meaning
As an even more subtle form of power it involves aspects of social structural power by its shaping of psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. Competing interests and problems are made invisible both from the agenda and from the participants' consciousness. Through the processes of socialization of norms peoples' self-perception are shaped and they accept their own inferiority or superiority.

(Veneklasen and Miller 2002:47-50)

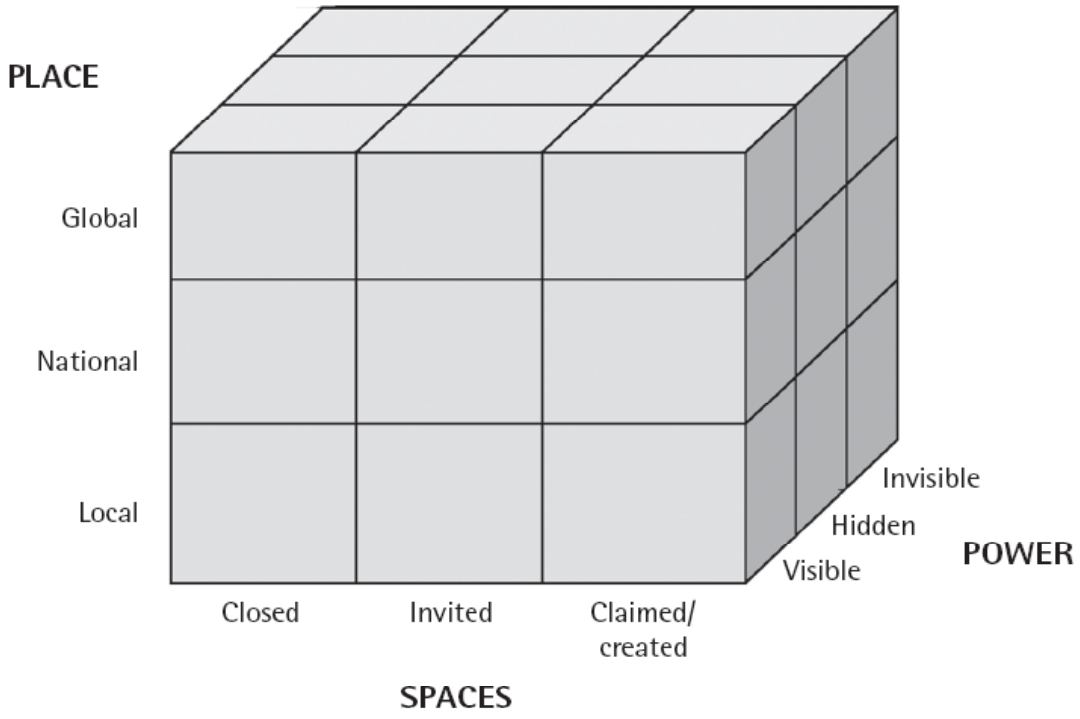
According to the authors a comprehensive analysis requires all these three forms of power to be included. If only focusing on the formal divisions of power the more subtle but in many ways the most influential power relations will be disregarded. Even in new institutional settings hidden and invisible power set boundaries for participation by controlling norms and views and even shaping the participant's self-esteem (ibid:47-50)(Gaventa 2005: 15).

3.3.4 A Three-dimensional Power Cube

Due to the dynamic nature of participation the three dimensions need to be set in relationship to one another (Gaventa 2006:29). Figure 3.3 illustrates graphically how the dimensions are interlinked. The level of participation is suggested to affect the opening of spaces for participation; who creates the spaces will then influence the visibility of power relations. In addition the conditions for an efficient participation within new spaces depends on the citizen's capacities to overcome these less visible forms of power (Gaventa 2005:10). The interaction between the different dimensions is further underlined by the tendency of newly created spaces to be filled with expectations and experiences of social relations from other spaces (Cornwall 2002:7). By consequence a study of newly created

spaces requires that prevailing power relations in other social spaces are taken into consideration.

Figure 3.3



(Gaventa 2006:25)

3.3.5 Limitations of the Power Cube

A number of limitations of the power cube model is underlined by Gaventa himself: “The danger of the ‘matrix’ or ‘cube’ approach is that these boxes become used as static categories, or become a check list of strategies of methods to be applied uncritically in different settings” (Gaventa 2005:19). Instead of these strict categorizing practices Gaventa underlines that his model should be applied as a critical approach to the relationships involved (ibid:19). Furthermore he stresses that the power analysis needs to be used in relationship to a specific context as the differing settings have a large impact. Other scholars who have applied the model in empiric studies also confirm these limitations. In a study discussing the application of the model to evaluate citizen participation in a number of developing projects it was underlined that the model is not universal and it is less suitable to more complex local realities (Guijt 2005:35).

I find the criticism justifiable and aware of the model's limitations I apply it primarily as a critical approach. The advantage with the model is that its three dimensions allow me to approach my research problem from several perspectives.

3.3.6 Summary: Ingrained Power Relations

The two applied analytical approaches in this thesis, the efficient participation perspective and the power cube model, are closely connected. The applied criteria of an efficient participation have implications on prevailing power relations. Women are required to not only have the power to gain access to the council but to also translate their presence into an efficient participation. However this realization depends on what form of power the men will exercise to maintain their influence and control over the decision-making. In addition the fulfilment of an efficient participation also depends on what specific forms of institutional and structural power relations that are established in the councils. Institutional power relations concern the formal division of power between female and male councillors and what influence they exercise on the organization of the municipal council and meeting procedures. Structural power relations relate to what extent less visible forms of power reinforce gender hierarchies and shape different social roles of men and women.

Furthermore, the two approaches complement each other. The application of the concept of efficient participation serves to underline specific limitations of women's participation. These limitations will then be analysed and explained from a power perspective provided by the power cube.

4 Background: Women in Local Politics in Burkina Faso

In order to set the context of my case study this chapter provides a brief overview of the decentralisation process in Burkina Faso and statistics on women's political representation in these newly established institutions.

4.1 Paving the Way to Decentralisation

On the 23rd April of 2006, Burkina Faso held its first nation-wide municipal election. The elections were a critical step in the country's decentralisation process. The purpose and the legal framework of the process are stated in the General Code for Collective Territorial;

> The decentralization enshrines the right of local authorities to their own administration and the freedom to manage their own affairs to promote local development and strengthen local governance. (Law N.055/2004:9)(the author's own translation)

Despite the recent progress the decentralisation process has been drawn-out. Already in the constitution from 1991 decentralisation was pronounced as the principle form of organisation of the local territories (Ouattara 2007:20). The first municipal elections were not held until 1995 and involved only 33 urban municipal councils. In the following elections in 2000 the number of urban municipalities increased to 49. It was not until the elections in 2006 that the whole country was covered as the 302 newly established rural municipalities were added to the 49 urban municipalities and the 8 *arrondissements*[1]. The municipalities are divided into 13 regions. The municipal councillors are elected directly by the population. The mayor and the five other members of the executive board as well as the two regional councillors are elected indirectly (see appendix 4).

Despite an extensive legal framework the realization of the decentralisation process is still faced with a number of challenges. The Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation has identified a number of difficulties for the municipal councils in terms of economic resources, administration and local capacities (MATD 2006:24). The economic constraints are considered to result from the increased responsibilities of the municipalities not to have been followed by necessary economic transfers (Lanser et al. 2006:47). In addition the weak governmental capacities on national level are thought to cause impediments on

[1] Arrondissements are subdivisions of the urban municipalities of the two largest cities.

local level (ibid:47). The local capacity is also severely reduced by the lack of human resources, according to an official study 78,7 percent of the councillors are illiterate (CENI 2006b).

4.2 Decentralisation-Creating Openings for Women's Political Participation

The municipal elections in 2006 were not only acknowledged as a vital step in the decentralisation process but also as an important landmark for women's political participation. In Burkina Faso women and men's equal political rights are stated in the constitution of 1991. But despite a formally gender-neutral legal framework women and men have in practice an unequal political participation. Women in Burkina Faso constitute 52 percent of the population but hold only 12.4 percent of the seats in parliament (CENI 2007). However important progress has been made on local level, following the elections in 2006 women's representation in the municipal councils increased from 20,8 to 35,8 percent (CENI 2006a). The increase is considered to result from the application of a voluntary quota by the party in majority Congress for Development and Progress, CDP. In the elections the party applied the principle of parity in the villages, requiring one of the two candidates to be a woman, and a 25 percent quota on the party lists of the sectors in the cities (CDP 2006). Since a majority of the local party boards respected the quota and the party gained 72,8 percent of the seats the measure resulted in a considerable presence of women in most municipal councils (CBDF 2006b). However despite an increased number of female councillors the number of women in the executive boards remains low. After the elections in 2006 women still only represent 5,6 percent of the mayors (see table 4.1).

In order to address women's difficulty to reach higher positions and to strengthen their capacities a number of non-governmental organisations offer educational programs for female councillors. The organisations have also been lobbying for a quota and since early 2007 a law on a 30 percent gender quota concerning all levels of electoral bodies is under discussion in the parliament. The quota is considered as an important measure to enhance women's political participation but so far no agreement has been found on the formulation of the law (Fasoline 2008)(Sére 2008-04-28).

Table 4.1: Percentage of women in elected in the local elections

Year	Elected women			
	Mayors	%	Councillors	%
1995	3	6,12	152	9
2000	3	5,26	228	20,87
2006	20	5,57	6400	35,80

(CBDF 2006b)

5 Analysis of Female Councillors' Participation

In this chapter the result of the study is introduced and analysed. The analysis is organized on the basis of my three research questions. First, women's participation in the councils is evaluated in reference to the three criteria of an efficient participation. Second, the identified obstacles on their participation are discussed. Then the third question on how these constraints are related to institutional and structural power relations is addressed by applying the power cube.

5.1 An Efficient Participation or Merely a Physical Presence?

5.1.1 Physical Presence- Women's Presence in the Councils Contested

According to the first criteria of an efficient participation women are required to have a significant physical presence in the municipal councils. Due to the application a voluntary quota by the party in majority CDP, women have gained a considerable representation of 35,8 percent in the municipal councils. However, a closer look at the statistics reveals important regional differences, women's representation in the councils varies between up to 52,2 percent to as low as 0 percent (CBDF 2006a). An important factor to this regional disparity is women's poor position on the list of candidates. On 93,9 percent of CDP's lists of candidates during the last elections a female candidate held the second position (CBDF 2006b). Political competition from other political parties can therefore partly explain a lower female representation. However in a number of cases female candidates did not even make it to the lists. The practice of excluding women from the lists was according to a councillor and member of CDP's political board in Ziniaré due to political competition: "We chose in my sector to put two experienced men on the lists. If we had put a woman on the list we would have risked to lose the seat to a competing party" (Compaoré 2008-04-08). The practice of excluding women from the lists is in particular prevalent in the northeast. The mayor of the council of Déou explained the absence of women in his council by socio-cultural factors: "As it was the first local elections ever in this region and as the men did not fully understand what the decentralisation was about they did not want to see their women participate in it" (Yampa 2008-05-17).

The lacking respect of the quota has though not evoked strong reactions from the party on national level. A male councillor in Oursi, a municipal council with only one woman, underlined: ”If the party was serious about the quota they could have disqualified our lists but they didn’t” (Houmidou 2008-05-18) The permanent secretary of CDP rejected this critic: “If the party on local level estimates that the positioning a woman on the lists implies a risk of losing a seat, we cannot force them in doing so. We can’t just give away a seat to another party” (Pooda 2008-04-29).

The statistics indicates that the local party boards in the rural municipal councils have respected the party quota more than the urban councils. The higher respect of the quota is however not suggested to result from a higher acceptance of women’s political participation, but to instead relate to a stronger respect of instructions coming from above in the rural areas (Jacob 2006:26).

A second glance on the statistics thereby indicates that despite a rather high representation on average, women’s presence in the municipal councils is still contested. Thus, if taking into account the regional variations and the practice of excluding women either out of political or socio-cultural reasons the criteria on women’s significant physical presence in the councils is not fulfilled.

5.1.2 Positions of Responsibility- Few Women in the Top

A closer look on the statistics also states women’s under-representation in positions of responsibility in the municipal councils. On average women occupy 13,6 percent of the seats in the executive boards and only 20 out of 359 councils have a female mayor (see table 5.1). In the boards women are most often appointed 2nd deputy of mayor, a position that compared to the other posts involves few responsibilities (Kassé 2008-04-30). A position in the executive board is of great importance as it is the board that sets the agenda for the council meetings and directs the work between the regular sessions. In addition, table 5.2 indicates women’s representation to be even weaker in the regional councils with only 9,6 percent. Not one single woman has been elected president of one of the 13 regional councils (CBDF 2007:4).

Following my definition of an efficient participation women’s low presence in key positions in municipal councils is troubling as it results in them being excluded from important decision-making.

Table 5.1: Percentage of Women in the Executive Board of the Municipal Councils

POSITION in Municipal Council	Number	Men	Women	%
Mayor	*359*	*339*	*20*	**5,57**
1st Deputy of Mayor	*359*	*321*	*38*	**10,58**
2nd Deputy of Mayor	*359*	*259*	*100*	**27,85**
Chairman of Commission of General, Social and Cultural Affairs	*359*	*321*	*38*	**10,58**
Chairman of Commission of Economic and Financial Affairs	*359*	*305*	*54*	**15,04**
Chairman of Commission of Environment and Local Development	*359*	*316*	*43*	**11,67**
TOTAL	***2154***	***1861***	***293***	**13,60**

Table 5.2: Percentage of Women in the Regional Councils

POSITION in Regional Council	Number	Men	Women	%
Regional Councillors	*718*	*649*	*69*	**9,6**
President of Regional Council	*13*	*13*	*0*	**0**
TOTAL	***2154***	***1861***	***293***	**13,60**

(CBDF 2007)

5.1.3 Participation During Meetings- Women's Passivity in the Councils

In order to evaluate women's level of participation in the councils I conducted direct observation of four municipal council meetings. In my observations I took into account both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the female councillors' participation.

The quantitative data indicates that women considering their numeric representation in the councils are less active in the debates than expected. Women represented on average 39,8 percent of the councillors present at the meetings but according to the records I took of the councillors' interventions women only counted for 8,9 percent of the interventions (see table 5.3). As the representation of women in the councils was rather equal I found the small differences in women's level of activity to relate to other surrounding factors such as the settings of the meetings. In the largest council, Ziniaré, the 91 present councillors were seated in rows and it was mainly male councillors seated in the front rows who participated in the discussions. The women were all seated on one side of the room. A few in the back were asleep. These women would later explain that they were exhausted after travelling long distances. Other women had brought their babies and during the meeting they were occupied taking care of them. In the *arrondissement* Boulmigou the seating arrangement with 28 councillors seated around a conference table was more favourable to a broader participation. The discussions were lively but few women took part of the discussions. The conditions for participation were less favourable in the two rural municipal councils, Kiembara and Bakata. These councils do not have access to a meeting hall and as temporary solutions meetings were held in schools or other public buildings. In both of the councils a group of men led the discussion while the women mostly sat quietly in the back of the room.

In my observations I also took notice of qualitative differences in men and women's interventions. Councillors can either address the council in French, the official language, or in one of seven national languages. Even if a majority of the interventions were made in a local language male councillors would to a larger extent speak in French. Women's interventions were often short and in the form of brief comments whereas men more often made longer commentaries. Women had a particular low participation in discussions concerning land issues. According to many of the mayors women's participation is also often weak during discussion on more technical issues such as the budget. Other scholars also underline differences between female and male councillors' speaking patterns. In a study conducted on municipal councils in the north French-speaking men were found to dominate the debates. In addition female councillors were observed to occasionally intervene on issues outside of the question addressed which the author explained by their lower level of education and limited understanding of the meeting procedures (Ouedraogo 2007:11).

By consequence both the study and my observations describe a participation of the female councillors that is not comparable to an active participation.

Table 5.3 Record of Interventions

Municipality	Number of Female/ Male Councillors	Percent of Female Councillors	Interventions Made by Female / Male Councillors	Percent of Interventions Made by Female Councillors
Bakata (rural)	9 / 20	**31,0**	3 / 40	**6,9**
Boulmigou (urban)	9 / 18	**33,3**	7 / 79	**8,1**
Ziniaré (semi-rural)	40 / 50	**44,4**	3 / 21	**12,5**
Kiembara (rural)	10 / 15	**40**	8 / 76	**9,5**
Total	68 / 103	**39,8**	21 / 216	**8,9**

5.1.4 Summary- Women's Participation Not Satisfying

Both my quantitative and qualitative data from the municipal councils indicate that the female councillors' participation does not correspond to the criteria of an efficient participation. Women's physical presence in the municipal councils is still contested in some regions, women are still under-represented in positions of responsibility and their participation during meetings is limited. In order to better understand these restraints on women's efficient participation a broader discussion on the obstacles they encounter in the council is needed.

5.2 Obstacles to Female Councillors' Participation

In interviews with female councillors as well as with male councillors, mayors and experts, a number of factors impeding the participation of female councillors were identified. In accordance to an often applied classification the obstacles are grouped in terms of political, socio-cultural and socio-economic problems.

5.2.1 Political Problems

Lacking Political Experience

A majority of the female councillors underlined that they had no earlier political experience prior to assuming position as councillor. Many of them also stated that

they had not decided to present themselves but had instead been asked in doing so either by their husbands or by a political party. The lack of political motivation among the female councillor was by a female regional councillor suggested to hamper their participation: “The women have been asked to present themselves in the elections and they think that going and just sitting at the meetings is enough” (Bonkoungou 2008-04-09). According to a male councillor the selection procedure also limit women’s autonomy as councillors: “If you have not decided to present yourself in the elections out of your own political conviction the risk is that you will only follow the instructions of the person that put you in office or appointed you” (Diallo O. 2008-04-11).

Political Procedures

Female councillors described several situations where they had been excluded from nomination procedures. A female regional councillor said: “The executive board had been arranged in forehand by the men and we women could do nothing but to approve it”(Bonkoungou 2008-04-09). The use of informal networks was criticised to result in closed nomination procedures where candidates are selected more based on their contacts than on their merits (Kassé 2008-04-30). According to the female mayor of Kiembara these undemocratic procedures lead to the selection of less capable women: “The party has not let the people chose their own candidates instead they impose candidates on them. That is why it is not the most dynamic women who are elected” (Niamoukara 2008-05-27).

Political Culture

A number of women described the political climate within municipal council to at times be harsh. The mayor of Kiembara explained how she in her campaign for mayor was confronted with both personal attacks and sexual assaults: “My adversary told the villagers during his campaign that as long as there are men in this village no woman will be elected mayor” (Niamoukara 2008-05-27). The political struggles do not only discourage women from running for higher positions but may also even deter them from engaging in politics: “Many educated women prefer even stay out of politics in order to keep their name clean” (Bonou/Tianou 2008-05-28).

5.2.2 Socio-cultural Problems

Gender Roles

Female councillors underlined how their participation is constrained by social norms that set boundaries on how and on what issues they are expected to intervene. A number of female councillors said that they didn’t intervene when land issues were discussed as by tradition men handle these questions. Further the women felt that it wasn’t socially acceptable for them to talk as much as men: “Men are chatterboxes they can talk for ages but it would not be socially acceptable for a woman that talk like that” (Bakata A 2008-05-20). In some cases women would explicitly say that they didn’t speak in the council out of fear of

their husbands: “We are afraid to talk because if we talk too much we can get into trouble with our husbands back home in the village”(Ziniaré A 2008-04-08).

Lacking Self-confidence

Female councillors also stressed that their lacking self-confidence cause problems for their active participation. Many of them said that they were afraid to talk and expressed doubt if they would even be listened to: “I am not only a women, I also come from a remote village, the men wont listen to me”(Ziniaré A 2008-04-08). According to a female councillor who herself hesitated before assuming her positions as 2nd Deputy of Mayor women’s weak self-confidence also makes them reluctant to assume higher positions: “It is hard to appoint women to positions of responsibility. First you need to have the skills and secondly many women don’t want to assume responsibility. Women are afraid of being in charge and of taking the lead” (Ouédraogo 2008-05-08).

Dual Burden

The female councillors also underlined that their engagement in the council is constrained by their family obligations. To find the time for political work without making it interfere with the domestic tasks was stated to be even more difficult for women in higher positions: “As a female mayor you are not only faced with the work load and the expectation from the community you also have the expectations and the tasks from the household” (Ilboudou 2008-04-29).

5.2.3 Socio-economic Problems

Lacking Education

The most cited problem for women’s participation in the council was their low level of education. Due to inadequate French skills women depend on interpretations of official documents and interventions made in French. Many female councillors complained on the interpretations being insufficient. Unable to take notes during the meetings women said that it was difficult for them to correctly transfer information back to their villages. Illiteracy is a widespread problem and according to an official survey 78,7 percent of the municipal councillors are illiterate (CENI 2006b). That illiteracy touches more the female councillors was indicated in my study as well as in a study covering municipal councils in the southeast where female councillors only represented 17,9 percent of the total number of literate councillors (GTZ 2007:86).

Financial Constraints

Female councillors underlined that the compensation on 2.000 CFA[2] per meeting was not enough to cover the costs involved for attending meetings which includes transportation and in some cases food and accommodation. Many said that they lacked means of transportation and long distances travelled by foot or bike

[2] The equivalence of about 30 Swedish kronor

resulted in arriving exhausted or it refrained them from coming. Furthermore, the economic costs often involved with campaigning for the mayor position was also underlined to deter women from racing. The mayor of Pa estimated that she during her campaign spent more than 2,5 million CFA[3] (Bonou/Tianou 2008-05-28).

5.2.4 Summary: A Cobweb of Constraints

The female councillors are entwined in a cobweb of constraints constituted by intertwined threads of traditional values, weak self-confidence and economic restraints. Many of these problems relate to the individual level and female councillors' lacking abilities. However women's lack of capacity in terms of education and economic resources are at the same time related to the institutional level and an unequal access to public institutions and resources. The distinction between individual and institutional constraints ads another dimension to the analysis as it implies that women's political, social and economic status both inside and outside of the council needs to be considered.

5.3 Analysing the Power Relations

Following the explanatory ambitions of my study the next step is to apply the power cube to analyse how the identified obstacles to female councillors' efficient participation is related to institutional and structural power relations. The analysis is based on the three dimensions: spaces for participation, level and places of participation and lastly forms of power.

5.3.1 Municipal Councils as Spaces for Participation

The space dimension sets focus on how the conditions of an efficient participation depend on the origin of the space for participation. Following the distinction between closed, invited and claimed spaces I find the municipal councils to be an invited space where the authorities have set the conditions for participation. The chances for citizens to develop an efficient participation are suggested to be higher when they have been part of creating the settings for participation (Cornwell 2002: 17). Thus women's lower participation in the councils could partly be explained by their lack of involvement in gaining their seats. Few of the women assumed their position as councillor out of political motivation but were instead asked to present themselves in the elections. Furthermore, a strong political will of the authorities was earlier underlined to be of importance for an effective participation to emerge in an invited space. The suggested lack of

[3]The equivalence of about 37 000 Swedish kronor

political will among the political elite in CDP to make sure that the quota is respected could hence constitute an impediment for the realisation of women's efficient participation.

According to Cornwall, it is not enough to simply invite citizens to participate to ensure his or her efficient participation. Attempts to create new institutional space with an equal participation may instead be hampered by organisational structures and social relations serving as means of domination and control (Cornwall 2002:7). The idea of organisational structures to impede participation was partly confirmed in my study by the seemingly uneven impact from meeting procedures and seating arrangement on female and male councillors' participation. An equal decision-making is also suggested to be complicated by the replication of power relations from other spaces (ibid:7). The level of a citizen's participation depends on his or her capacity to counter these prevailing social relations (Gaventa 2006:29). Applied to my study women's identified lacking individual capabilities in terms of self-confidence and education reduce their ability adapt to the prevailing settings.

The spatial dimension thereby underlines how women's lower participation partly can be explained by how the municipal councils as places for participation were created, how the women entered the councils and what capabilities they brought with them.

5.3.2 Participation at a Local Level

According to the place and level dimension citizen's political participation will be stronger at a local level closer to their daily life (Gaventa 2006:28). Considering the geographic closeness and the valorisation of local knowledge, local governments could in particular be favourable to women's participation. However as underlined by scholars of decentralisation the division of power between national and local level will influence the conditions for participation (ibid:28). The weaknesses of the decentralisation process in Burkina Faso in terms of transfer of resources and local capacities are therefore troubling. Considering the impact the setting have on citizen participation councillors will not be able to fulfil their role unless the administration of local governments functions effectively. An efficient participation of either men or women in the municipal councils in Burkina Faso is thereby not possible until the functions of the local institutions are strengthened.

5.3.3 Forms of Power Present in the Council

Formal Power- Need to Look Beyond the Number

Formal power concerns institutional aspects of power such as formal rules, the organisation of institutions and procedures of decision-making. These institutional factors may be discriminative to one group either by an unequal representation or by biased rules (Gaventa 2005:17). The voluntary party quota applied in the

municipal elections in Burkina Faso is an example of a measure intended to address an unequal formal power division. Following the elections women gained a representation above the critical mass in the majority of the councils. However as underlined in the efficient participation analysis there are strong regional differences and the quota has not succeeded to address women's under-representation in higher positions in the councils. My direct observations further indicate that women even in councils with a rather strong numeric representation were constrained by less visible power relations. Thus, even if women's increased representation signifies an adjustment of formal power imbalances other forms of power need to be included in order to explain the restraints on women's actual participation in the councils.

Hidden Power- Hinders to Advance within the Structures

Men's over-representation of positions of responsibility signifies the exercise of hidden power, defined in terms of how certain groups maintain their power even after adjustment of the formal power by influencing who gets to decide and what gets on the agenda (Gaventa 2005:17). Men's dominance of the municipal councils is thereby suggested to relate to their preferential status in other important networks. In 2005 women were only estimated to represent 9,13 percent of the members in the executive boards of the five largest political parties (CGD 2005:16). In cases where women hold higher positions they are often assigned deputies positions or as responsible of mobilising female voters (ibid:17)(Nana 2004:49). Men's preferential status in the political structures and their access to formal and informal network is thought to give them a number of advantages. For example it makes it easier for them to get elected and nominated for higher positions in the municipal councils (Diallo A. 2008-05-07). Biased nomination procedures were for example confirmed in the female councillors stories of exclusion from the appointment of executive boards. Further the systematic poor positioning of female candidates on party lists also suggests men's control of nomination procedures.

Women's under-representation in higher positions in the municipal councils is also suggested to relate to the political culture and the prevailing mentalities. A survey in a master's thesis states that the social acceptance for women's political participation is strong as long as low positions of responsibility are concerned but when it comes to higher positions the acceptance is lower (Nana 2004:84). Hence these mentalities explain political structures tendencies to not favour female candidates for the position as mayor.

The hidden power approach applies well to my study as it relates women's problem to advance within the councils with men's exercise of less visible forms of power and how they through their positions in formal and informal networks often control nomination procedures.

Invisible Power – Women Putting Constraints on Themselves

The invisible form of power is exercised through the shaping of norms and values (Veneklasen and Miller 2002:47). Applied to my study the invisible power relations influence participation in municipal councils by setting norms for

participation which the councillors both consciously and subconsciously adapt to. When people enter a new formal sphere they tend to bring with them social patterns from private spheres and power relations risk to replicate (Cornwell 2002:7). In my study a number of examples were given of the reproduction of social behaviour. First, women felt that due to social norms it was not socially acceptable for them to address issues that are traditionally handled by men. Secondly, men's domination in the debates and the priority ascribed to their opinions indicate their higher status in the council. Lastly, women's retiring manners and their tendency to during meetings sit in a group in the back of the room suggest a female submission. These practices point towards a replication of traditional social rules from the villages which reinstate ideas of gender division of tasks and male domination of decision-making.

The replication of women's social roles in the council was further confirmed by a female mayor: "Since our childhood we have seen how women are inferior to man. It is the man who decides everything in the place of the woman. Being raised with this mentality it takes time to change behaviour" (Drabo 2008-04-30). The quote underlines how traditional mentalities persist despite women's higher representation and a seemingly increased acceptance for their political participation. The persistence of norms on women's inferiority partly explains their difficulty to assume higher positions or to fully participate at the same level as men.

Furthermore, women's lack of self-confidence is underlined as an important obstacle. According to the invisible power perspective women's low self-confidence relates to how the internalisation of norms and values influences a person's self-perception and may lead to the person accepting his or her inferiority (Veneklasen and Miller 2002:48). Due the female councillors' tendency to underestimate their own importance the first step to enhance their participation is to bring awareness of the problems caused by their lower participation. This idea has further been learned from formations of female councillors: "The first step is to make the women themselves see the inequalities in the councils" (Kassé 2008-04-30).

Hence, an important contribution from the invisible power perspective is to through the internalisation of values and the replication of power relations explain why female councillors seems to accept and adapt to a lower participation.

5.3.4 Summary: Connecting the Analytical Parts Together

The application of the power cube showed to be most useful as the two other analytical parts of the chapter; the efficient participation approach and the categorization of identified obstacles in a fruitful way were connected to its three dimensions. First, the space dimension relates female councillors' lower participation to their weak role in gaining their seats. By underlining the connection between newly created formal spaces social relations from more informal spaces the dimension connected women's socio-cultural and economic difficulties with their constrained participation in the councils. Furthermore, the

space and level dimension underlined how the limited capacitates of the local administration stood in the way for the councillors' efficient participation. Lastly, the power dimension and the formal form of power underlined the insufficiency of only focus on women's numeric representation. Despite a rather equal division of formal power in the councils women are still subject to restrains by less visible forms of power. The hidden form of power explained women's difficulty to assume higher positions by referring to men's control and domination of nomination procedures and political networks. The invisible form of power further relates women's inefficient participation to how the replication of power relations reinforces social patterns of male domination and female subordination. Further the internalisation of values helps to explain why the women themselves tend to accept these boundaries on their participation.

6 Concluding Remarks

In this thesis I have aimed to evaluate female councillors' participation in municipal councils in Burkina Faso. In this chapter I will discuss my main findings and how they relate to existing theories as well as their implication on further research.

First, female councillors' participation was studied by evaluating my qualitative data of direct observations and semi-structured interviews to the applied definition of an efficient participation. Due to the women's under-representation in executive boards and low participation during meetings their actual participation did not fulfil the set criteria. In accordance to the concept of inclusive exclusion, developed by Young, these councillors even if formally invited on equal terms experience strong informal constraints on their participation.

These constraints on female councillors' participation were further explored in the second part of the analysis as I addressed my second research question. By categorizing the problems in political, socio-cultural, and socio-economic problems, the complexities of these constraints on women's efficient participation was underlined.

To answer my third question on how these constraints could be explained by specific institutional and structural power relationships the power cube was applied. By applying the three dimensions; spaces for participation, places and levels of participation as well as forms of power the analysis generated several interesting findings.

First of all, no space for participation is neutral. The creation of municipal councils does not mean that men and women assume their positions as councillors under equal conditions. Social behaviour and power relations from other spaces are at risk of being replicated and resulting in an unequal decision-making. Norms restricting the socially acceptable behaviour for women as well as men's domination of key positions in network's inside and outside of the councils are two examples of how the setting for participation in the councils is biased to the favour of men.

Furthermore, the social acceptance for women's full participation in the councils is still not fully there. Women's increased representation is first of all the result of a quota imposed from above and not primarily a sign of changed mentalities in favour of women's political participation. The lack of acceptance is stated both in the actions aimed to hinder women's access to the councils and to restrain elected women from assuming higher positions.

In addition, women's numeric representation does not automatically translate to an efficient participation. As stated by the title of my study women even if formally included in the municipal councils may still through informal constraints

be excluded from a full participation. Women's ability to translate their participation to an actual influence of the decision-making does not only depend on their own capabilities in terms of education and economic resources. Institutional and structural power relations will for example through norms of behaviour, persisting mentalities, meeting procedures and informal networks reduce women's chances for an efficient participation. Therefore, if only considering the numeric aspect of women's participation, their presence in the council risks to remain merely symbolic.

Lastly, despite the defaults of too much focus on women's numeric representation the important achievement of the government in Burkina Faso to increase the number of women in the municipal councils needs to be recognized. However in order to make sure that women are able to fully take advantage of their positions within the councils, it is vital to closer evaluate what possible constraints they are experiencing. This study has therefore underlined the importance of going one step further and addressing the qualitative aspects of female councillors' participation.

As indicated, several interesting conclusions can be drawn from my thesis. The question is however to what extent my finding applies to other settings. In favour of generalizing I could argue that many of the identified difficulties for the female councillors bear many similarities to the obstacles underlined in other studies. Secondly, my selected case is not unique, Burkina Faso is a good example of the political changes many other African countries in the region are experiencing in terms of decentralisation and quotas. However considering that the conditions for women's political participation to a large extent are defined by local structural and institutional power relations the possibility of generalization should not be over-emphasized. By consequence even if my study can give some indications of findings of a more general character it needs to be complemented by additional case studies.

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List of interviewees

Group 1 (Female and Male Mayors)

Bonou/Tianou Christine. Female mayor of the municipal council of Pâ
2008-05-28

Bouda/Toé, Marie Hélène. Female mayor of the municipal council of Bakata
2008-05-12e

Drabo/Ouedraogo, Zénabou. Female mayor of the *arrondissement* Bogodogo
2008-05-02

Ilboudou, Asséta. Female mayor of the municipal council of Loumbila
2008-04-24

Ilboudo, Jacqueline. Female mayor of the municipal council of Komki-Ipala
2008-04-21

Kabré, Joanny. Male mayor of the municipal council Ziniaré
2008-04-11

Kone Aissita, Female mayor of the municipal council Kassoum
2008-04-23

Niamoukara, Joséphine. Female mayor of the municipal council of Kiembara
2008-05-27

Ouedraogo, Séraphine W. Solange. Female mayor of the arrondissement Boulmiougou
2008-04-30

Sanou/Traoré, Aïcha. Female mayor of the municipal council of Kougny and 3rd deputy president of AMBF and in charge of question concerning women (Association of Burkinabé Municipalities in Burkina Faso).
2008-04-21

Yamoa Mamoudou , Male mayor of the municipal council Déou
008-05-17

Zounkata A. Tunia. Male mayor of the municipal council Yaho
2008-05-31

Group 2 (Female and Male Councillors)

Individual interviews

Bonkoungou Giséle, Female Regional councillor of Plateau Central
2008-04-09

Compaoré, Alexis. Male Chairman of Commission of Environment and Local Development of the Municipal council of Ziniaré
2008-04-08

Diallo Ousmane. Male Chairman of Commission of Economic and Financial Affairs
2008-04-11

Houmidou, Issa. Male councillor in the Municipal council of Oursi
2008-05-18

Kongo Yabré, Juliette. Female Regional councillor of Plateau Central
2008-04-09

Ouédraogo, Antionette. Female 2nd Deputy of Mayor of the Municipal council of Ziniaré
2008-05-08

Sawadogo, Jean Baptiste. Male President of the Regional council of Plateau Central
2008-05-07

Group interviews

Bakata. A Group interviews with female councillors
2008-05-20

Bakata B. Group interviews with male councillors
2008-05-20

Boulmigou A. Group interviews with female councillors
2008-04-24

Boulmigou B. Group interviews with male councillors
2008-04-24

Kiembara A. Group interviews with female councillors
2008-05-27

Kiembara B. Group interviews with male councillors
2008-05-27

Ziniaré A. Group interviews with female councillors
2008-04-08

Ziniaré B. Group interviews with male councillors
2008-04-08

Group 3 (Representatives of Ministries and Organisation)

Abelkerim, Ahmat Hassan. Progam Officer, Maison de Cooperation Centralisé
2008-05-06

Diallo, Abdramane. Program supervisor, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)
2008-05-07

Engman Carina, Program supervisor Human rights and Democracy SIDA regional office in Ouagadougou
2008-04-14

Jacob, Jean-Pierre. Researcher at IRD Ouagadugou and Institut Universitaire d'Etudes du Développement (IUED)
2008-05-07

Kassé, Aminata. Resident Director of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), a nonprofit organization
2008-04-30

Koutoun, P Mamadou. Deputy Secretary General at the Association of Municipalities in Burkina Faso (AMBF)
2008-04-18

Loada Augustin. Director of Centre Gouvernance Democratique, CGD
2008-05-08

Ouattara Zango, Mari. Directrice Régionale de la Promotion de la Femme du Plateau Central
2008-04-10

Ouandaogo, Delphine. Program Officer UNDP, Ouagadougou
2008-05-14

Poda/Gaba Isabelle. Responsable à la communication RECIF/ONG, Résaou de Communication d'Information et de Formation des Femmes dans les ONG au Burkina Faso
2008-05-16

Pooda, Anicet. Permanent Secretary of Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès (CDP)
2008-04-29

Reikker, Andrea. Program Officer at the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, GTZ
2008-05-18

Sagogo/Okoko Enertine. Conseillère en Renforcement des capacities SNV, Netherlands Development organisation
2008-04-22

Sidibie Sadou. Secretary General, Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)
2008-04-16

Sedga, Zénabou. Program supervisor, Reseau Marp Burkina
2008-04-16

Sére, Saran. President of Commission concerning a national quota in the National Assembly
2008-04-28

Sirima/Fofana, Mariam. Coalition Burkinabé Droites de Femmes (CBDF)
2008-04-14

Somé, Awa. Program supervisor, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)
2008-04-10

Tiendrebego, Alice. Director of the Forum for African Women Educationalists *(*FAWE*)*
2008-06-10

Vokouma, Jocelyn. Secretary General at the Ministry for the Promotion of women
2008-04-14

8 Appendixes

Appendix 1- Interview Guide for Councillors and Mayors

Background questions

Name of respondent

Age

Education/Occupation

Earlier political experiences

Position in the municipal council

The work as municipal councillor

1. Why did you decide to present yourself in the municipal elections? /Why did you present yourself in the election as mayor?
2. Can you read and write in French?
3. What expectations did you have of the work as councillor/mayor before the elections? What challenges did you foresee?
4. In relation to your expectations could you describe your work as councillor/mayor?
5. Is there something in the organisation of the municipal council that you would like to change?
6. Could you describe the relation between the councillors and the executive board?
7. Do you find the council able to executive its projects or are there any obstacles hindering the council from conducting its work?

Women's presence in the councils

8. According to you why did the number of female councillors increase in the municipal councils? Why are there more women on local level than national?
9. Do you think that is important that women are present in the councils?
10. What do you think about the cooperation between the female and the male councillors?
11. Do you think that men and women in the council have the same opportunity to influence the decision-making? Do they participate in the same way and in the same areas?

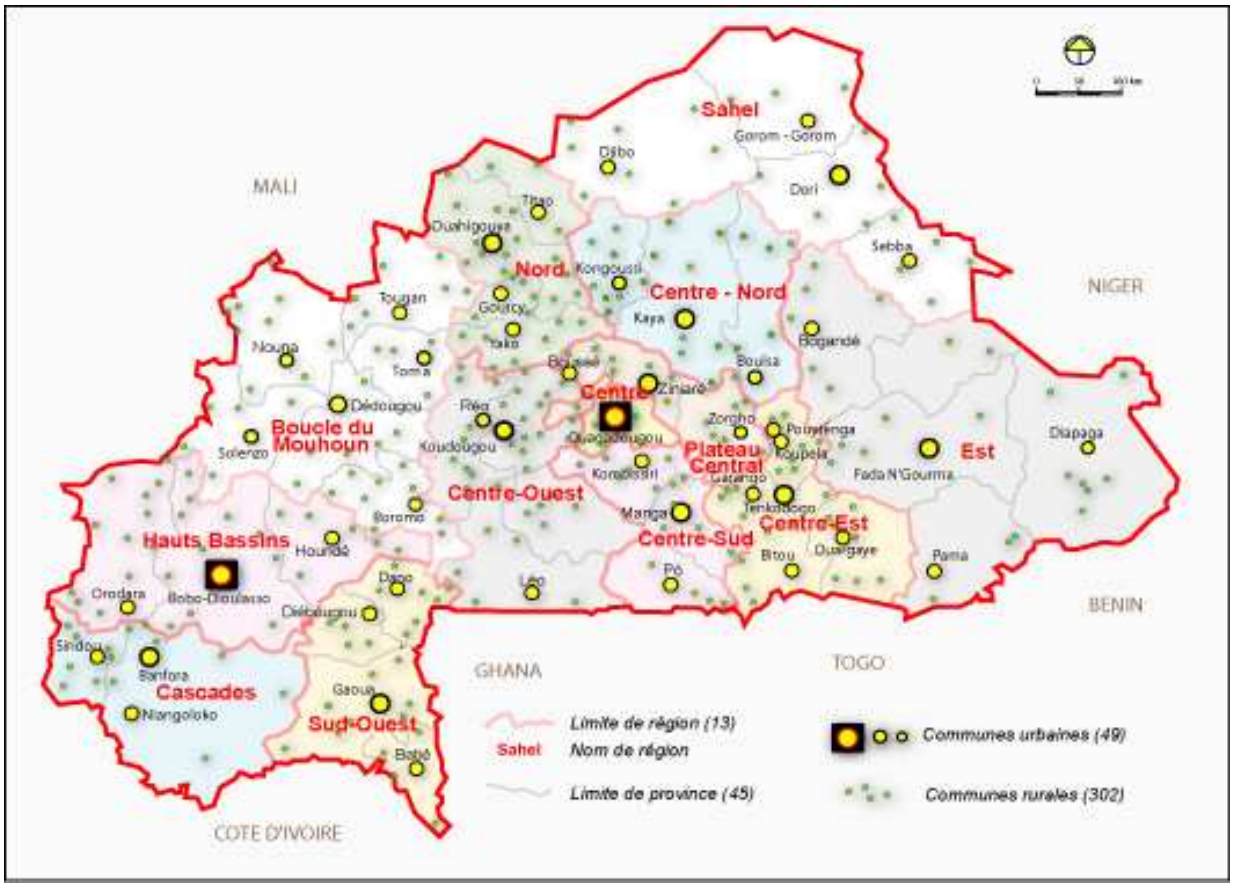
Participation in the council

12. Do you feel comfortable to speak during meetings? Are the other councillors taking into account your opinions?
13. What is your greatest achievement in the council? Have you made any proposals?
14. Have you as a female/male councillor experienced any specific advantages or obstacles?
15. According to you, do the female councillors have an efficient participation?
16. Are there any qualifications that you lack which hinders your from having an efficient role in the council? Have you received any formation by an NGO?

Appendix 2- Interview Guide for Organisations and Ministries

1. According to you why has the number of female councillors increased in the municipal council? Why are there more women on local level than national level?
2. Do you think that men and women in the council have the same opportunities to influence the decision-making? Do they participate in the same way and in the same areas?
3. Do you think that the female councillor experience any specific advantages or obstacles?
4. According to you, do the female councillors have an efficient participation? If not what qualification are the female councillors lacking?
5. Has your organisation/ministry organised any formations for the female councillors?
6. What do you think about the decentralisation process, what challenges are the municipal councils facing?

Appendix 3- A Map of the Decentralised Administration



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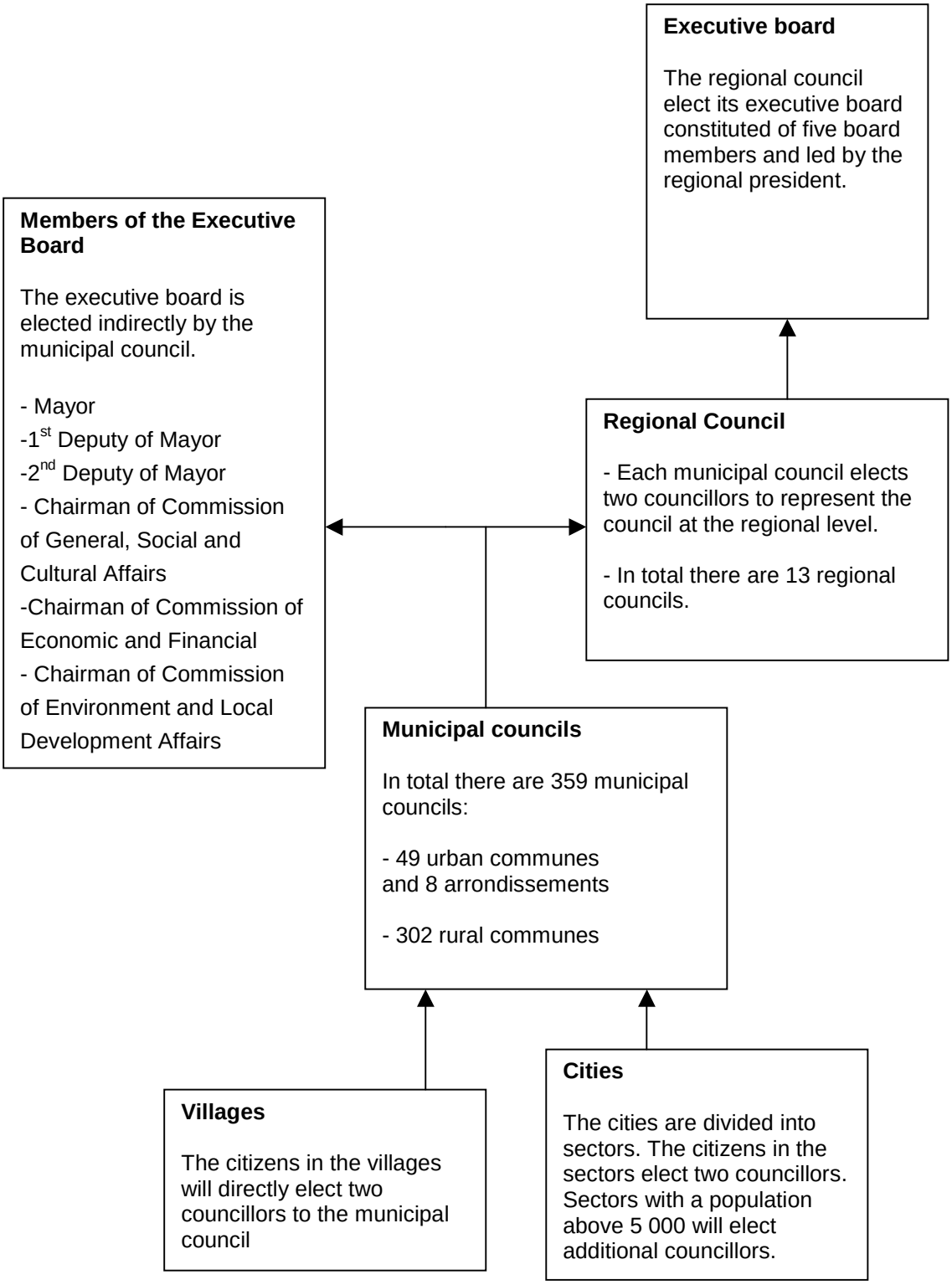
Appendix 4- The Organisation of Municipal and Regional Councils