

# **Women in Pastoral Societies: Applying WID, Eco-feminist, and Postmodernist Perspectives**

*Kristín Loftsdóttir, Ph.D.*

*Assistant Professor, University of Iceland*

In recent decades, various perspectives have emerged that draw attention to the construction of gender and gender inequalities. This discussion examines feminist perspectives in relation to development and development's effects on women in pastoral societies. The article compares the Women in Development (WID), eco-feminist and postmodernist approaches to development and seeks to understand what kind of criticism these theoretical orientations can offer on pastoral development projects. I focus especially on the effects of development on women's bargaining power within the household, using data from my own fieldwork in Niger and records from other pastoral societies. My discussion shows that while WID criticizes the pastoral development as being gender-biased and reducing women's bargaining power within the household, the eco-feminist and postmodernist perspectives would question the development practice itself and attempt to deconstruct the dimensions of power within the field of development.

Keywords: Development, gender, pastoralism, WoDaaBe, Niger

## **INTRODUCTION**

Much criticism has been posed on development in the last few years, some claiming that the idea or project of development should be abandoned altogether (Escobar 1995) while others, even though critical of the practice and roots of development, see the idea as having some merit (see discussion in Little and Painter 1995; Little 1999). My discussion examines several feminist perspectives in relation to development, using these perspectives to analyze development emphasis in pastoral societies and its effects on gender issues. The perspectives employed are the Women in Development (WID) approach, eco-feminist and postmodernist approaches. I will seek to provide an understanding of what kinds of criticism these theoretical orientations pose on pastoral development projects, especially the effects of development on women's bargaining power within the household.

The discussion starts by comparing the main emphasis of these different approaches and then moves towards a review of the literature on pastoral development in Africa in relation to women, although not

ignoring relevant examples of sedentary populations. This general view of pastoral societies will be supplemented with data from my ethnographic fieldwork<sup>1</sup> among the nomadic WoDaaBe<sup>2</sup> Fulani in Niger, exploring how these theoretical insights are useful in understanding possible consequences of mainstream pastoral development emphasis on WoDaaBe society, and in particular on WoDaaBe women. The discussion seeks to be informative regarding the problems relating to issues of women in pastoral societies, as well as demonstrating how different feminist perspectives can be useful in a critical and constructive analysis of development.

### APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT

Ester Boserup's book, *Women's Role in Economic Development*, published 1970, marked a new era in conceptualizing the relationship of women and development. Boserup claimed, contrary to what had previously been assumed, that modernization had marginalized women, making their situations worse rather than improving it. Her work thus challenged the assumption that women's rights and status would automatically improve when modernization took place (Chowdhry 1995:31; Jaquette 1990:54; Tinker 1990a:7). The quality of the argument given by Boserup was significant, but as argued by Jane Jaquette, Boserup's work also gave a powerful argument for redistribution of productive resources to women by pointing out their historical importance in production, thus providing a rationale for changing development policies (Jaquette 1990:54,59). The popularity of Boserup's work can be attributed to some extent to its publication at a time when the feminist movement was gaining political influence in the United States (Jaquette 1990:55).

WID (Women in Development) became a new subfield of development, inspired by Boserup's work. Projects prior to WID had tended to undercut women's economic activities by treating them as mothers, not as economic actors (Tinker 1990b:39). Targeting women had also not been a goal in itself but seen as beneficial because women were considered one of the poorest segments of the population (Tinker

---

<sup>1</sup> The research took place during August 1996–June 1998, and was made possible by financial support from the Nordic Africa Institute and the Rotary International. I am grateful to both these institutions. I also want to thank many individuals from the WoDaaBe lineage I worked with. I am, naturally, responsible for any errors or shortcomings in the text.

<sup>2</sup> The capitalized B and D refer to the glottalized consonants in the Fulfulde language (see Pelletier and Skinner 1981:3).

1990b:35-36; see also AID Policy Paper 1982). Projects for women only, run by women's organizations or church groups, were the earliest response of most donor agencies to WID, but those tended to retain stereotypes about women's domestic roles, thus organizing projects based on unexamined, and often incorrect, assumptions about women's needs, activities and skills. It was, for example, frequently assumed that the targeted women were housewives with a great deal of free time, merely needing money to supplement themselves with food and clothing (Tinker 1990b:37), when conditions faced by many women were in fact completely different.

Most studies conducted for WID have been undertaken for development agencies, and were attempts to influence programs' direction or policy decisions (Tinker 1990a:5). This means that the WID approach has generally not questioned development as an activity, but focused more on advocating for women as active producers and preventing development projects' negative effects on women's status. The starting point of WID is thus, as we will see, very different from the perspectives of eco-feminist and the postmodernist approaches, both of which question the basic premises of development.

The term eco-feminism covers various kinds of perspectives (Warren 1994:1), all sharing the basic assumption that there is a connection between the domination of "nature" and of women (Davion 1994; Plumwood 1994; Plumwood 1992). Technological "advances" are considered as having strengthened men's power at the expense of women (Plumwood 1994; Shiva 1992), leading to the notion that technology can not be considered to be gender neutral (Mies and Shiva 1994:3). Vandana Shiva attacks the root of development activity itself, stating:

"Development.... became an extension of the project of wealth creation in modern western patriarchy's economic vision, which was based on the exploitation or exclusion of women (of the west and non-west), on the exploitation and degradation of nature, and on the exploitation and erosion of other cultures" (Shiva 1989:2).

Shiva argues that increased poverty due to growing scarcity of water, food, and fuel, is the result of ecological destruction brought about by development activities in the Third World. It has had greater effects on women than on men, because women are usually the poorest segment of the population and are, along with nature, the "primary sustainers of society" (Shiva 1989:5). Shiva argues that both nature and women have been turned into resources and passive objects to be exploited by men (Shiva 1990:191; Shiva 1989:6). Development thus means "destruction for women, nature and subjugated cultures" (Mies and Shiva 1994:2; Shiva 1989:2). Shiva also points out that development activities have

tended to ignore indigenous technologies, classifying them as backward and unproductive (Shiva 1989:12-13).

The label postmodernism, just as the label eco-feminism, covers various kinds of perspectives. What is important in relation to development, in my view, is its formulation of a critique of modernity, with a focus on power and the refusal of metanarratives. According to Jean-François Lyotard, postmodernism questions the belief that modernism with a strong emphasis on rational thought and technological measures, will be able to ensure progress and enlightenment to all humanity. The grand narratives of liberalism and Marxism are seen as products of "privileged discourses," denying and silencing other voices. These universal definitions fail to reveal the complexity of life as a lived experience. Postmodernism argues that previously silenced voices should be recovered and their difference celebrated, i.e., accepting the partial nature of all knowledge (Parpart and Marchand 1995:2). Feminist writers, liberals and Marxists, as well as individuals associating themselves with positivistic science have criticized various claims made by postmodernism. Although aspects of postmodernism have been criticized, many feminists find its focus on issues of power, difference and gender to offer valuable contributions to theories of development (Chowdhry 1995:35).<sup>3</sup>

It can be argued that the postmodernist perspective and the eco-feminist perspective both question the basic assumptions and goals of development. However, these two approaches differ somewhat in their emphases. Eco-feminists' focus on the similarities of women's and nature's exploitation can be seen as a generalizing metanarrative,<sup>4</sup> but they have often been accused of essentializing women in their approach (discussion on that issue is provided by Davion 1994; Plumwood 1992; Buege 1994). Postmodernism has, however, been accused of ruining the bases for women's alliance by overemphasizing difference (Nzomo 1995; Udayagiri 1995). Eco-feminism in general is concerned with ecological destruction, and its effect on indigenous people, while the postmodernists' perspective, generally, could be used to look more abstractly on the structures of power leading to this destruction. I think it can be stated, at least for the purpose of this discussion, that eco-feminist and postmodernist perspectives can be used to provide a similar criticism

---

<sup>3</sup> Others, however, point out that many of the issues raised in postmodern anthropology have previously been raised within the discourse of feminist theory (Mascia-Lees et al. 1989).

<sup>4</sup> Postmodernism could be accused of the same because of its claim that all metanarratives should be rejected, which is in itself also a metanarrative.

of development activity, even though their theoretical orientation in approaching the problem is somewhat different.

Postmodern feminists have criticized WID for seeing women as “victims” and recipients of development, for not recognizing the diversity of Third World women, and for not listening to the “silenced voices” of Third World women (Chowdhry 1995:38-39; Parpart 1995:227-228; Rathgeber 1995:206-207). The GAD (Gender and Development) seeks to correct this bias by focusing on representations of women and by critically evaluating knowledge of women (see; Chowdhry 1995; Parpart 1995). The debate between GAD and WID is not relevant to the discussion provided here, but I want to point out that in my view, some of the criticism of WID by people identifying themselves with GAD does not seem to be fruitful. I find it relatively self-evident that WID would not criticize the basic premises of development because, as an approach, it was centered on criticizing the “invisibility” of women in development programs and not on looking critically on the development activity itself. It can be suggested that WID’s criticisms, aimed at the development paradigm’s tendency to ignore women as well as at its sexism in implementation and design, provided important data and ideological groundwork for criticizing development in general. Jaquette makes the valuable comment that WID should be characterized as a “set of ideas for increasing women’s economic participation at the margin,” rather than a “theory of empowerment” (Jaquette 1990:67). She argues that feminist critiques of women in development scholarship and practice have often ignored the policy context in which the WID arguments are made. A similar point is made by Udayagiri, who maintains that WID “gave a voice to women” and pushed the issues of gender into the center stage in the context of the international aid regime. It thus helped to establish a space for women in academia to engage in feminist work in the Third world as a “legitimate academic activity” (Udayagiri 1995:172).

### **THE LITERATURE ON WOMEN IN PASTORAL SOCIETIES AND DEVELOPMENT**

For women in pastoral societies, just as in other societies, the household is an important aspect of their lives, a site where consumption and distribution of resources takes place. A large part of women’s domestic and reproductive labor is, in addition, organized through the household. Therefore, both composition and organization of households have a direct impact on women’s lives, and especially women’s ability to gain access to resources, labor, and income (Moore 1988:55). Children, in general, learn their significance as belonging to a specific gender- as

well as in terms of other social groups- in the household (Papanek 1990:163).

It is common in many African societies that women have a separate income stem (Moore 1988:56). In the Sahel, most farming groups do not have a single household budget in the Western sense. That does, of course, not change husbands' and wives' reciprocal obligations to each other and their children (Claud 1986:29). The nature and relations of the household cannot be assumed for any particular society, but have to be investigated empirically and historically (Moore 1988:59; Moore 1994:87).

The concept of "household" is also a reminder of how the "family" has traditionally been conceptualized in the Western world. Even though the concept of the family and the household do not refer to the same things (Moore 1988:55), their definitions overlap considerably. Moore has pointed out that it is not necessarily useful to ask, "where is the household" but rather to focus on: "what are the significant units of production, consumption and investment in this region/group/people; and what are the major flows and transfer of resources between individuals and units" (Guyer and Peters, quoted in Moore 1994:86). She suggests that economists and social scientists failed to see the internal dynamic of the household as a locus of distribution and allocation of resources because of their idealistic view of the family as an unproblematic union, characterized by cooperation, natural roles and equality (see Moore 1994:86-87). The "bargaining model" has been conceptualized by different theorists of household economics as a useful way to understand the household, capturing the coexistence of extensive conflicts and cooperation in the arrangements of the household (Sen 1990:125). Bargaining power cannot, of course, simply be seen as being determined on individual assets, but has to be seen as affected by a cultural and political membership in a certain group (Moore 1994:87). Bargaining power can also be affected by the perceived interest and perceived contributions of the members in the household, indicating the value of different genders (Sen 1990:125). Sen emphasizes that personal welfare is not simply a question of perceptions, but has a certain objective reality to it (such as malnutrition) and the absence of protest and questioning of inequalities should thus not be taken at face value (Sen 1990:126). Children learn very early in their life about inequalities based on gender and other social categories and thus learn both their place in a family and in the society as a whole (Papanek 1990:163). The economic status of the woman outside the home can affect how much influence she has on household decisions (Senauer 1990:151).

This bias of ignoring household dynamics and women as productive actors is clearly evident in the development programs directed at pastoral people (Warner and Hansen 1995). As my discussion will show, development projects have in general not acknowledged differences within the household. Distribution and allocation of resources have been ignored, and there has also been a general devaluation of women as valuable producers. Claud argues, for example, in relation to farming and pastoral societies, that studies of the Sahelian food system have tended to ignore the dynamics of households by ignoring sex role differences in responsibility for food production, food processing and food distribution (Claud 1986:20). Economists do not, in general, include activities related to food processing, which are almost all done by women, leading to development planning that overlooks these activities, and thus a considerable portion of women's labor (Claud 1986:35,37). Most of women's production is for household consumption, and as a result of ignoring that part of production, women's labor becomes frequently unnoticed by development planners (Grigsby and Ghazanfar 1992:78). Even though some programs are being developed to take into account women's needs, most of the large programs simply ignore women, basing the intervention on the assumptions that all farmers and pastoralists are men, that all decisions are made by men, and that resources belong to men. The consequences are that resources distributed through development projects are given to men. In the case of Africa, this world pattern becomes especially distressing because of the well-documented gender specific division in social and economic roles in African societies (Claud 1986:41; see also discussion in Moore 1988:56). According to Helen K. Henderson's research in Burkina Faso, governmental representatives from livestock and agricultural agencies have practically no contact with the women in the study area, even though activities connected with livestock are very significant to these women's lives (Henderson 1979:50). Claude furthermore argues that the government's program to reconstitute herds lost among Fulani and Tuareg herders as a result of droughts, only replaced the herds for the men by giving animals to the "family head." The lack of understanding of sex roles in control of the resources seriously undermines women's economic and social positions (Claud 1986:34). In general then, men rather than women have been targeted for participation in livestock projects (Arnould and Henderson 1982:21; Warner and Hansen 1995:87), and studies on pastoral people have tended to de-emphasize women (Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980:16,20).

## CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES ON PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN

Most development projects directed at pastoral economies have had the goal of integrating these societies to a greater extent into international markets, with a focus on meat production. This emphasis can lead to diverse kinds of negative consequences for women's status. It is important to note in this context that pastoralism is based primarily upon milk rather than meat production (Galaty 1981:7), requiring milk to support people and young livestock (Holden et al., 1991:36). According to calculations made by Dahl and Hjort, complete dependence on milk is virtually impossible due to the high cow/human ratio needed (Dahl and Hjort 1976). Milk is thus usually subsidized by cereals, which provide higher calorific values. Dairy products are in many pastoral societies sold to buy grain, which, if terms of trade are favorable, permits more people to be supported. The selling of dairy products can, however, result in nutritional imbalances for people, if too much grain and only a small portion of milk is consumed. Also, calves not obtaining sufficient milk can result in slow growth and increase in the rate of mortality, because of their worse physical condition (Franke and Chasin 1980:196; Holden et al 1991:36-37). Clearly there is, therefore, a great need for milk in many pastoral societies, both for the well being of humans and calves and to sell for grain and other necessities

In most Sahelian societies, milk is seen as belonging to women, even though they are generally not in charge of milking the cattle. The control over dairy products provides women with an important source of income and household food, while cattle herding tends to be a male activity (Claud 1986:32; Baroin 1987:153; Dahl 1987:250; Warner and Hansen 1995:78). For Borana women, regardless of their wealth, the selling of dairy products is their major or only source of money. Just as Borana women, WoDaaBe Fulani women are in control of selling milk, while the men are in control of selling cattle (Dupire 1963). For Fulani women in Burkina Faso, milk is their major source of income (Henderson 1979:17). For poor women, the opportunity to sell dairy products can be more important than consuming them (Holden et al., 1991:42). Holden, Coppock and Assefa point out that the selling of milk can have various negative consequences for the nutrition of people and cattle, which could explain why in some pastoral societies the selling of milk has been a taboo. This also, in their view, explains why the sale of dairy products is seen by many as a sign of increased poverty in pastoral economies (Holden et al., 1991:36-37).



A big and fat animal obviously has a higher market value than a skinny one. The projects, therefore, emphasize a limited herd size and a conservation of milk in order to give a few calves good nutrition. This can, however, lead to a negative impact on family nutrition, as well as a considerable reduction in women's possibilities for gaining income from the selling of dairy products (Franke and Chasin 1980:196; Warner and Hansen 1995:84). For example, the commercialization of meat among the Masai has resulted in the reduced redistribution of meat between families and neighbors, leading to great difficulties for poor women who depend much on the generosity of others (Talle 1987:76). In the context of her research in Somalia, Poulsen argues that the production of meat for the market has introduced considerable changes for pastoral Somalian women; among other things, the weaning of young animals in order to save milk for human consumption or selling has largely been abolished (Poulsen 1990:148). The change to meat production also means, according to Poulsen, that the composition of herds changes; they tend to be larger and mostly male animals. The availability and importance of milk in the pastoral economy is thus reduced, which leads to the exclusion of women and girls from its production. Women, as a result, become more dependent on male relatives, being in fact transformed from active producers to domestic servants and passive consumers (Poulsen 1990:148). The reduced possibility of selling dairy products thus has the consequences of diminishing women's bargaining power within the household minimizing their voices in family decision making, and reducing their opportunities to establish social networks through the sharing of labor animals and products in general (Warner and Hansen 1995:84). Women's links to their own kin clearly offer women a degree of bargaining power in their relationship with their husbands (Dahl 1987:265); reducing the possibilities of exchanging work and products with members of their kin can have negative effects on women's relationships with their husbands.

The general assumption of development planners working in the Sahel has been that men own cattle and that women own in some instances goats and sheep. The actual picture is, however, far more complicated. Claud argues that in the Sahel, women usually have title to animals in two different ways: the offspring of bridewealth animals do in some cases go to the woman or her children; dowry animals are usually more directly under the women's control, though still serving the needs of the household and children (Claud 1986:34). In Niger, men have traditionally been responsible for the overall management of the herd, regardless of the ownership of a particular animal (Arnould and Henderson 1982:21). Dahl maintains that "most pastoral societies have

notions of property rights that, if they do not expressly exclude women, are at least clearly biased against them” (Dahl 1987:261). The majority of livestock traders are men, even though West African women are in general very active in trading. It is also worth pointing out that even though women are in many cases the owners of small animals, they do not necessarily have strong rights in the decisions to sell or market those animals (Warner and Hansen 1995:85). Even though agreeing with Dahl’s view that women are in general biased against in livestock ownership in pastoral societies, it has still to be taken into consideration how complicated and diverse different rights to animals are in different societies. This can be seen in the context of WoDaaBe women, as discussed later.

Finally, as Henderson has discussed, development projects not only fail women by not noticing them, but also on a broader level by ignoring the project’s responsibility to the targeted people. Henderson was carrying out research on strategies that would be useful to increase women’s productivity in livestock management in Burkina Faso, but after the first stage was completed, USAID decided not to continue with the project, a decision having nothing to do with the project itself, but instead made because of institutional aspects within USAID. Henderson argues that projects must have some responsibility to the communities they are targeting. The representatives should at least be required to explain to the local community what has happened and how unfinished issues raised by the project will be handled. Henderson argues that, “accountability to local population must be an integral part of project design and implementation” (Henderson 1986:151).

### WODAABE WOMEN

The WoDaaBe are nomadic pastoralists, a majority of whom are located in Niger. As other pastoral societies, WoDaaBe aim toward producing milk and selling young bulls on the market to buy corn. Cattle are only slaughtered during special ceremonial events, such as for name giving ceremonies and marriage. In the Sahel droughts during the 1960s and 1980s, many WoDaaBe herders lost most of their animals, and have attempted to slowly rebuild their herds. Many herders today still do not have animals for their basic subsistence, making the WoDaaBe pastoral economy extremely marginal (see for example; Loftsdóttir 1997; Loftsdóttir 2001). The following discussion will briefly demonstrate the importance of milk for WoDaaBe women as a source of their bargaining power within the household. Milk is important for WoDaaBe women, but their access to it can only be understood through looking at resource allocation within WoDaaBe households.

When commenting on WoDaaBe women's access to livestock, Dupire points out that different categories of cattle, classified according to how they were brought into the household, have various kinds of rights associated with them, and differ in who has the right to use their milk, who should look after them, who should have the right to sell them and who should inherit them (Dupire 1963:81). The WoDaaBe have two kinds of marriage, *kobgal*, arranged by parents when the couple is very young and *tegal*, the marriage of adults with their mutual consent. These different marriage institutions lead to different rights to resources. When a *kobgal* marriage is initiated, the wife gains rights to cows given to her husband by his parents (these are given to him while he is a young boy and are called *suka'e* cows). The *kobgal* wife has the right to milk these cows, and the milk belongs to her. The rights of a *tegal* wife are much weaker because she does not, strictly speaking, have a right to milk from these cows. Her husband can attribute those cows to her that he has bought himself or acquired through other means. It seems that in practice the *kobgal* wife must frequently share her cows with the *tegal* wife, especially if these constitute the majority of the herd. Some men said that the *kobgal* wife has to leave some cows for the other wives if they have children as well, and that the number of cows for each wife would thus depend on the number of children that she has.

Because women have generally few cattle, these milking rights constitute an important access to livestock. WoDaaBe women more often own smaller animals such as sheep, goats or donkeys. When a woman brings her own cattle into a marriage, the husband keeps her cattle with his animals. He cannot, however, sell the cattle without his wife's permission, but she also needs to obtain his permission if she wants to sell her own cattle. Women have more economic independence in regard to smaller stocks, and can do whatever they want with those animals (Dupire 1963:76). In many cases, the man has more control over his wife's animals, and many women thus prefer to keep their animals within the herd of their father long after they have been married. Loofboro points out that among the Fulani in Dallal Bosso, during difficult times when there is not enough to eat, women's animals are the first ones to be sold (Loofboro 1993:32).

WoDaaBe women are in general in control of milking the cows but WoDaaBe do not consume other kinds of milk. The woman lets the cow start sucking its mother in order to stimulate the milk flow, then pushes it away and milks the cow. After milking, the calf is left to suckle its mother. Women often help each other with milking cows that struggle and are hard to milk. One woman milks the cow while the other gently strokes its genitals to calm it. The cows become used to specific people

milking them, and a stranger could not approach most cows without putting himself at risk. People also get used to the animals, learning how to handle them in a more efficient way. WoDaaBe pastoral economy thus involves an intimate and efficient knowledge of the animals, especially the cattle. This relationship is further demonstrated by the practice of giving fodder and water at the house to newborn animals and those that are weak and old. Cattle have personal names, which are known not only within the domestic family but also by other WoDaaBe families (Loftsdóttir 2000).

While men control the sale of cattle and other animals in WoDaaBe society, women control the milk products. Milk products not consumed within the household can be traded by the woman to other ethnic groups (called *sippal* trade). The items which women trade are mainly milk and butter in addition to tobacco (*taba*). The butter is extracted from the milk (then called *pendidam*) before it is sold and mixed with water. The butter is formed into several palm-sized cakes that are stored within the milk. The tobacco grows in the bush and is used mostly by Tuaregs, even though a few WoDaaBe have taken up this habit as well. A woman can receive money on the market for her products or she can exchange it for millet with households in the area. Two units of milk are usually exchanged for one unit of millet. The milk trade<sup>5</sup> only takes place with households outside the WoDaaBe economy. Within the WoDaaBe society, milk is shared without compensation. The money that the woman receives from the milk trade belongs to her. One can speculate that smaller herds, less milk, and fewer opportunities to participate in milk trade have decreased women's bargaining power within the household. When milk production was abundant, women controlled the milk consumed in the household, and they also contributed some millet, which they had received from the milk trade. It is possible that tobacco has become more important in the milk trade today due to reduced availability of milk.<sup>6</sup> Elderly women also report that in the past women more frequently exchanged milk for millet instead of selling it at the market. Thus, through the milk trade women earn income and contribute food for the household.

WoDaaBe women gain primary access to means of production through their milking rights. A development project with a primary focus on meat production would automatically exclude women. If WoDaaBe society increased its concentration on meat, thus having more male animals and feeding them better (by feeding the male calves more milk),

---

<sup>5</sup> I refer to *sippal* as milk trade even though items other than milk are traded.

<sup>6</sup> My research did, however, not include any economic data for tobacco.

women's bargaining power and status within the society would likely be reduced.

The case of WoDaaBe women demonstrates the risks inherent in traditional development project approaches and their focus on meat instead of milk production. The loss of independent access to means of production has been so dominant in development projects directed at women farmers that it has been identified as a major factor in developments marginalization of women (Claud 1986:43). It is important to examine the kinds of effects development projects focusing on the production of meat for markets in pastoral production have on women's access to the means of production. The major means of production are, of course, the livestock, in addition to water and land. As a result of women having access to livestock through milking rights, it seems likely that when the production focuses on meat but not milk, that ownership of the cattle, usually in hands of men, will control who benefits from selling cattle for meat. The pattern of development agencies contacting men rather than women would likely reinforce the men's control over the animals. The access to the means of production and their role in production are clearly important in determining women's status in society (Moore 1988:34).

## DISCUSSION

As a general conclusion of development projects' effects on women's status in pastoral societies, it has to be concluded that projects, in general, have tended to ignore the existence of women, devalued women's work in the household as well as the women themselves as producers, ignored women's rights to resources and tried to implement projects that are likely to affect women negatively in various ways. It is likely that production of meat for the market results in an increased dependency of women and a loss of their active role in production. It is worth mentioning, although beyond the scope of this paper to explore in any detail, that these projects will be likely to have negative effects on children's nutrition and on the possibilities of reconstructing the herd after droughts; that they will cause class inequalities to be emphasized; and that they will cause "traditional" activities that play a role in managing the risks associated with pastoral production to be undermined. If we look at development projects in relation to women's social identities, it can be pointed out that work is important not only in relation to survival and autonomy, but also for individuals' conception of their own worth in society. Pushing women out of production can lead to an increased devaluation of women by themselves and by men. Recall Papanek's observation that children at an early age recognize that they

belong to a specific gender, which carries certain obligations and rights, but which also indicates their worth in the society (Papanek 1990:163). In this context, it is also important to keep in mind that with reduced participation in production, women's contribution in the household is seen as lessened, and thus their bargaining power within the household is likely to decrease (see Senauer 1990:151).

All the research referred to here, which criticizes the effects of development on women, can be seen as constructed in the frame of WID, meaning that they do not really question the bases of the development activity itself, but focus more on women's treatment in the development projects. To the best of my knowledge, no systematic research has been conducted from postmodern feminists' or eco-feminists' perspective on women in pastoral society. Using these theoretical orientations, one could draw the conclusion that development projects in pastoral societies in general have been on the wrong track (just as WID claims), but unlike WID, these perspectives question the development practice itself. Eco-feminist perspectives point toward the way these development projects transform women and animals into passive objects of production. Pastoral societies are often based on a special relationship that evolves between humans and animals in pastoral production, where animals become dependent on certain humans and like to be handled by them. Besides the emotional gratification, this intensive relationship can lessen the labor involved in herding; the cows respond to their names and are moved to return on their own to be milked (Dahl 1987:250-252). Using an eco-feminist perspective, it can be pointed out that these relationships between humans and animals, and especially women and animals, could be replaced with a focus that would not see the animals as living creatures but as a resource to be exploited to the maximum. In addition, intensification of production could make women's knowledge of the animals irrelevant to the "production" process. The conclusion from the analysis of the effects of development on women in pastoral societies would support the eco-feminist claim that women have systematically been excluded from productive activity, as well as their claim that women and nature have been seen in Western culture as passive objects to be exploited by men (Shiva 1992).

Both eco-feminists and postmodern perspectives would, in my view, be critical of why the emphasis on market production was seen as desirable in the first place. Postmodernist analysis would not see women's increased participation or simple technical solutions as being the solution to the empowerment of women, and of pastoral societies in general, but would look at how power and identity interact in both subordinating women and the status of the pastoral society itself in the

context of a global world. Postmodern theorists would also not see it as sufficient to look at the pastoral society itself, but would turn the gaze at those representing these societies, and the ways in which power, politics, and identity of those representing affects how pastoral societies and women in pastoral societies are represented. Postmodern theorists would look critically at the development institutions and ask why women in pastoral societies have received so little attention in the anthropological literature (see Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980:16). A postmodern perspective points toward questions such as: Who wants the pastoral societies to become more integrated into the world economy? Whose voices are we listening to- the developers or, perhaps, an agent of the nation-state? Is it the pastoral society itself that wants to be more integrated into the market, and what does such integration then mean for different actors? What are the different voices within the pastoral society itself? My general conclusion would hence be that these theoretical perspectives could be used to criticize development from various angles. The WID approach has helped us to identify the inherent gender bias in pastoral development projects, while the eco-feminist approach can be used to place this gender bias in the framework of exploitation of women in western society. The postmodern emphasis on identity, however, can be used to question not only women's role in development, but the practice of development in general and the different dimensions of power that are reflected in its actions and discourses. If development projects really want to take women and cultural identity into consideration, if they actually want to benefit those who are most in need in any society, the deconstruction of dimensions of power within the field of development itself is a crucial issue to be explored.

#### REFERENCES CITED

- AID Policy Paper.  
 1982. Women in Development. Unpublished Document. Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination. Washington: U.S. Agency for International Development.
- Arnould, Eric J. and Helen K. Henderson.  
 1982. Women in the Niger Republic. Working Paper #1. Women in Development Program. Office of Council for International Programs. Unpublished Document. University of Arizona.
- Baroin, Cathrine.  
 1987. The Position of Tubu Women in Pastoral Production: Daza Keshherda, Republic of Niger. *Ethnos*. Special Issue. 1-2:137-155.
- Buege, Douglas J.  
 1994. Rethinking Again: A Defense of Ecofeminist Philosophy. *Ecological Feminism*. (ed.) Karen J. Warren. London and New York: Routledge.

- Chowdhry, Geeta.  
1995. Engendering Development? Women in Development (WID) in International Development Regimes. *Feminism/ Postmodernism/ Development*. (Ed.) Marianna H. Marchand and Jane L. Parpart. London and New York: Routledge.
- Claud, Kathleen.  
1986. Sex Roles in Food Production and Distribution Systems in the Sahel. *Women Farmers in Africa: Rural Development in Mali and the Sahel*. (ed.) Lucy E. Creevey. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Dahl, Gudrun.  
1987. Women in Pastoral Production. *Ethnos*. Special Issue. 1-2:246-279.
- Dahl, Gudrun and Anders Hjort  
1976. *Having Herds: Pastoral Herd Growth and Household Economy*. Stockholm: University of Stockholm.
- Davion, Victoria.  
1994. Is Ecofeminism Feminist? *Ecological Feminism*. (ed.) Karen J. Warren. London, New York: Routledge.
- Dupire, Marguerite.  
1963. The Position of Women in a Pastoral Society (The Fulani WoDaaBE, Nomads of the Niger). *Women of Tropical Africa*. (ed.) Denise Paulme. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Dyson-Hudson, Rada and Neville Dyson-Hudson.  
1980. Nomadic Pastoralism. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 9:15-61.
- Escobar, Arturo  
1995 *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Franke, Richard W. and Barbara H. Chasin.  
1980. *Seeds of Famine: Ecological Destruction and the Development Dilemma in the West African Sahel*. New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld Publishers
- Galaty, John G.  
1981. Introduction: Nomadic Pastoralists and Social Change, Process and Perspectives. *Change and Development in Nomadic and Pastoral Society*. (eds.) John G. Galaty and Philip Carl Salzman. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Gefu, Jerome.  
1992. *Pastoralist Perspectives in Nigeria: The Fulbe of Udubo Grazing Reserve*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Grigsby, William J. and S. M. Ghazanfar.  
1992. Expanding Women's Role in Rural Development: The Case of West Africa Sahel. *The Journal of Social, Political and Socialist Theory*. 17(1):77-88.
- Henderson, Helen Kreider.  
1986. The Grassroots Women's Committee as a Development Strategy in an Upper Volta Village. *Women Farmers in Africa: Rural Development in Mali and the Sahel*. (ed.) Lucy E. Creevey. Syracuse University Press.
1979. Women's Role in Livestock Production: Final Report: Village Livestock Project, Upper Volta. Unpublished document. Consortium for International Development, Logan, Utah.
- Holden, Sarah J., D. Layne Coppock, and Mulugeta Assefa.  
1991. Pastoral Dairy Marketing and Household Wealth Interaction and Their Implications for Calves and Humans in Ethiopia. *Human Ecology*. 19(1):35-59.
- Jaquette, Jane S.  
1990. Gender and Justice in Economic Development. *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*. (ed.) Irene Tinker. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.



- Little, Peter D.  
1999. Recasting the Debate: Development Theory and Anthropological Practice. *NAPA Bulletin no. 18*. The Unity of Theory and Practice in Anthropology: Rebuilding a Fractured Synthesis. (eds) Carole E. Hill and Marietta L. Baba. Pages: 119-131.
- Little, Peter D. and Michael Painter  
1995. Discourse, Politics, and the Development Process: Reflections on Escobar's "Anthropology and the Development Encounter." *American Ethnologists*, 22(3):602-616.
- Loftsdóttir, Kristín.  
2001. A Difficult Time: Migrant Work and the WoDaaBe in Niger. *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Fall:40-43.  
2000. *The Bush is Sweet: Identity and Desire among the WoDaaBe in Niger*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Arizona: University of Arizona  
1997. Hoping for Rain: Life of the WoDaaBe of Niger. *ICEIDA Newsletter*. 8 (September):13-15.
- Loofboro, Lynne.  
1993. Tenure Relations in Three Agropastoral Villages: A Framework for Analyzing Natural Resource Use and Environmental Change in the Arrondissement of Boboye, Niger. Discussion Paper no. 4. Madison, Wisconsin: Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Mascia-Lees, Frances E., Patricia Sharpe, and Colleen Ballerino Cohen.  
1989. The Postmodern Turn in Anthropology: Cautions from a Feminist Perspective. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 15(11):7-33.
- Mies, Maria and Vandana Shiva.  
1994. *Ecofeminism*. London and New Jersey: Zed Books.
- Moore, Henrietta L.  
1994. *A Passion for Difference: Essays in Anthropology and Gender*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.  
1988. *Feminism and Anthropology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Nzomo, Maria.  
1995. Women and Democratization Struggles in Africa: What Relevance to Post-Modernist Discourse? *Feminism/ Postmodernism/ Development*. (Ed.) Marianna H. Marchand and Jane L. Parpart. London and New York: Routledge.
- Papanek, Hanna.  
1990. To Each Less Than She Needs, From Each More Than She Can Do: Allocations, Entitlements, and Values. *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*. (ed.) Irene Tinker. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Parpart, Jane L.  
1995. Deconstructing the Development "Expert": Gender, Development, and the "Vulnerable Groups." *Feminism/ Postmodernism/ Development*. (Ed.) Marianna H. Marchand and Jane L. Parpart. London and New York: Routledge.
- Parpart, Jane L. and Marianne H. Marchand.  
1995. Exploding the Canon: An Introduction/ Conclusion. *Feminism/Postmodernism/Development*. (Ed.) Marianna H. Marchand and Jane L. Parpart. London and New York: Routledge.
- Pelletier, Corinne A. and A. Neil Skinner.  
1981. Adamawa Fulfulde: An Introductory Course. African Studies Program. Madison: University of Wisconsin.

Plumwood, Val.

1994. The Ecopolitics Debate and the Politics of Nature. *Ecological Feminism*. (ed.) Karen J. Warren. London and New York: Routledge.

1992. Feminism and Ecofeminism: Beyond the Dualistic Assumption of Women, Men and Nature. *The Ecologist*. 22(1):8-13.

Poulsen, Ebbe.

1990. The Changing Patterns of Pastoral Production in Somali Society. *From Water to World-Making: African Models and Arid Land*. (ed.) Gisli Palsson. Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.

Rathgeber, Eva M.

1995. Gender and Development in Action. *Feminism/ Postmodernism/ Development*. (Ed.) Marianna H. Marchand and Jane L. Parpart. London and New York: Routledge.

Sen, Amartya K.

1990. Gender and Cooperative Conflicts. *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*. (ed.) Irene Tinker. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Senauer, Benjamin.

1990 The Impact of the Value of Women's Time on Food and Nutrition. *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*. (ed.) Irene Tinker. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shiva, Vandana.

1992. The Seed and the Earth: Women, Ecology and Biotechnology. *The Ecologist*. 22(1):4-7.

1990. Development as a New Project of Western Patriarchy. *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

1989. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. Zed Books.

Talle, Aud.

1987. Women as Heads of Houses: The Organization of Production and the Role of Women among Pastoral Maasai in Kenya. *Ethnos*. Special Issue. 1-2:50-80.

Tinker, Irene.

1990a. A Context for the Field and for the Book. *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*. (ed.) Irene Tinker. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1990b. The Making of a Field: Advocates, Practitioners and Scholars. *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Udayagiri, Mridula.

1995. Challenging Modernization: Gender and Development, Postmodern Feminism and Activism. *Feminism/ Postmodernism/ Development*. (Ed.) Marianna H. Marchand and Jane L. Parpart. London and New York: Routledge.

Warner, Judith and Ellen Hansen.

1995. Livestock Management. *Gender and Agricultural Development: Surveying the Field*. (ed.) Helen Kreider Henderson. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

Warren, Karen J.

1994. Toward an Ecofeminist Peace Politics. *Ecological Feminism*. (ed.) Karen J. Warren. London, New York: Routledge.