

## **Politicizing Indigeneity as Groups' Strategies in Local Electoral Processes**

Sita Zougouri<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Ouagadougou, Sociology, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

sita\_zougouri@yahoo.fr

This paper focuses on communal elections organized under decentralization process in Burkina Faso in 2006. It highlights two important aspects of local contexts which experienced this new institution and political structures. First it shows how local actors in rural areas elaborate their electoral system based on their own rules and references; and second it underlines that the most powerful electoral strategy used during electoral processes is indigeneity, precisely the politicization of indigeneity. We can observe indeed that more than ever the claim and use of the concept of indigeneity is back in interactions and people construction and conception of what should be the commune for them. Very often the affirmation and use of the indigeneity come up during political moments and particularly when interests of the whole group are in threatened. In this sense it is also interesting to grasp how the new concept and sentiment of citizenship is experienced by people in the new rural communes. We choose to grasp democratization and decentralization through the expressions of local population and local powers in elections processes in the districts of Bougnounou and Yamba (Burkina Faso). How people feel, participate and construct strategies during these processes are key elements important to understand actual local governance where “traditional” institutions and new communal institutions collaborate hardly in these cases.