

# OSTROM WORKSHOP RESEARCH SERIES

## Cathryn Johnson

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“Why Women in Rural Burkina Faso  
Participate More in Local Politics than  
Women in Rural Mali”

**Wednesday, OCTOBER 10, 2018**

12:00–1:00 PM • Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park



Why do we see variation in local political participation among women in a border area of rural Mali and Burkina Faso? The decentralization process transformed the associational space in each country. With the creation of local government, international organizations sought local associations with whom they could implement development projects. Official registration of associations became a prerequisite to receive funding from international partners. Not all associations pursued registration, but women’s local-level associational activities in Mali and Burkina Faso, particularly in savings and credit associations, increased. In Burkina Faso, participation in these associations facilitates women’s local political participation to a greater extent than in Mali. Based on immersive field research in a rural border area, this paper explains how savings and credit associations shape women’s participation differently and underlines that the creation of local democracy facilitated important changes in the lives of rural women through the mediating context of the associational space.



[Cathryn Johnson](#) is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at Indiana University. With support from the Ostrom Workshop and a Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council, Cathryn conducted dissertation research in Mali and Burkina Faso. Cathryn’s research interests are in local political and civic participation, gender and politics, and colonial legacies. Before beginning her studies at IU, she supported West Africa programs at the National Democratic Institute.

Presentations are open to the public (see our website for papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon ([sturgeon@iu.edu](mailto:sturgeon@iu.edu); 812/855–3151).