TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS IN SÉNÉGAL, WEST

AFRICA

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the effects of: 1) traditional values, 2) parental involvement, and 3) poverty on student performance. Instead of regarding tradition and poverty as obstacles, this paper argues that they can play a positive role in improving the educational quality. This thesis draws on interviews in three communities with administrators, teachers, students, parents, and elders. They show that traditional culture plays an important role in ensuring student motivation, but it is not clear which aspects of tradition will be incorporated into the curriculum, and by whom. My work also shows that parental involvement in schools is largely limited to fund-raising, and there is demand for more engagement. Finally, this project reveals that poverty is a double edge sword: it contributes to the school drop-out problem but also can serve as a tremendous source of personal motivation for students who want to help improve the economic condition of their families.

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To my mother, for her endurance, hard work, and love of her children

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Before the introduction of western education, Africa had its own way of education, sometimes different in terms of settings, programs and means used to implement it; but with the same general objective of providing children and youth with socio-professional values and aptitudes that would facilitate their incorporation into society. As globalization, modernity and new technologies have reached all the parts of the world, Africa included, western education has not only managed to overtake any other form of education in Africa, but it has also become a building block for any developing country to improve its people's living conditions through the valuable and relevant knowledge students can acquire throughout the process.

In the current socio-economic context, developing countries like Sénégal, need an educated population which can understand the mechanisms that govern the global market and skilled labor in order to be more competitive and hopefully reach development at a faster pace. However, it is important to note that the adoption of western style education by African countries has been a direct consequence of colonialism and the introduction of the capitalist system. The French colonial power introduced in Senegal the system of commodity production; peanut growing is a startling example which has resulted in a major shift from subsistence agriculture to cash crops by many farmers. The shift to cash crops has made farmers dependent on money and no longer on the subsistence agricultural production. Therefore, during the long dry season (nine months), the rural people have to move to big cities like Dakar, where industrialization is growing, to work as wage labor. As such, western education was just one part of a whole new political

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economy system imposed by colonization, though it has played an important role in achieving exploitative and alienating goals of the colonizers.

In West Africa, and Senegal in particular, education has always occupied an important place in society. Values of pride, endurance, respect, and hard work, have been passed down from generation to generation to prepare people to deal with life's problems with dignity and ensure one's reputation. Religious beliefs, moral and aesthetic values, social institutions customs and code of behaviors have been part and parcel of the informal and non formal traditional education in Africa and Senegal in particular (Thompson, 1981, p 11-12). On the way to economic, social, and political development education is also an important provision. Modern education, imported from the global West, if appropriately blended with the traditional values listed above can be an efficient driver to development.

Senegal has a population of 12 million, 54% of whom live in poverty (UNDP, 2007). With more than 15 different ethnics groups present in the country, distinct languages, traditions, culture occupy an important place in people's daily lives. Religion is also very important to the Senegalese. 95% of the population is Muslim, with most people belonging to one of the four locally distinct Sufi brotherhoods or Tariqas. Present in Senegal for more than 10 centuries, Islam and Muslim practices are now embedded in the traditional values in Senegal without regard to ethnicity, which increases the cultural and traditional commonalities of different communities. The scarcity of natural resources means the country has long relied heavily on its human resources, sometimes to great success. For example, Blaise Diagne was the first African member of the French parliament. Léopold Sédar Senghor was a prominent poet, novelist, politician and the

first African to be part of the Académie Française. Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar and Ecole Normale William Ponty were the training schools of almost all the Francophone African leaders during the pre and early independence period. This educational heritage helped Senegal occupy a prominent place in terms of formal education in Africa. However, little efforts have been done to exploit this position for economic and social development.

The place and role of education in development has become more prominent with the advent of Human Development Index (HDI) in 1989 as a new approach to measure development. Development is no longer only measured through economic growth but through other factors such basic needs, poverty, sanitation, gender equality, etc. As such, education with both its short and long term benefits plays a paramount role in achieving these objectives.

Great efforts have been made by contemporary authorities to advance education (they devote 40% of the national annual budget to education), and some progress has been made, particularly in terms of access to school for both boys and girls. But it is still the case that only 4% of Senegalese adults have undertaken post high school studies. The high rate of drop out and failures at school exams are the main causes of this phenomenon. For instance, success at high school and university entrance exams has barely reached 25% over the past ten years and is even worse at the university level. For example only 67% of the children who started primary school in 2001 have reached the sixth grade (Rapport PDEF, 2007, p 57); the remaining 23% have either dropped out of school or sent out for bad grades.

The high rate of failure is mostly due to a covert policy meant to limit access to middle and high schools because of insufficient classrooms, teachers and materials. The admission to middle/high schools is contingent on the available number of places; therefore, national exams not been about an assessment and evaluation of students' knowledge, although great efforts have been done in the construction of classrooms and the training of teachers undertaken by the PDEF as the paper will discuss later. Strikes, either from teachers or students, have affected the quality of the country's education or have started to undermine the prominent place Senegal has held in Africa in terms of education. To combat this alarming situation of failure, dropout, strikes, and low level of students' advancement in Senegal, one should try to understand its main causes, and then explore them to find adequate solutions. Considering the great hope this country places on education, it should not only focus on Education For All as advocated by International Institutions and the Millennium Development Goals. It should focus on the quality of such an education, and the difficulties and obstacles learners have been encountering in their studies to find more appropriate solutions to the main challenges of education in Senegal.

1.1. Personal Background to this Study

My experiences both as a student and as teacher in Senegal have heightened my interest in this topic. As a student coming from a modest family in a rural area, I very often went to school without breakfast and my parents could not pay for all my school materials. Most of the time I had to cram all my subjects in one copy book, and I shared books and pens with my neighbors. Most students were in the same situation, and furthermore, the few of us who succeeded in passing the middle school entrance exams

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had to go bigger cities for middle school and high school, and then the to the capital, Dakar, for university studies. Each experience was filled with socio-economic hardships as more advanced levels of school are more demanding in terms of results. They also cost more. Because there was no middle school, high school or university near my home, I was forced to live far away from my parents, with relatives or family acquaintances that actually would provide me shelter. However, they had their own children to take care of which make it difficult for them to provide enough for all of us. My parents often had to find the means to pay for my lodging with friends and relatives in the towns where I attended school after the primary level. This was a real hardship for them, as people of very modest income. In such conditions the only things that can keep you going and motivate you are your determination to get yourself and your parents out of this poverty but also the traditional values of hard work, endurance, faith, pride, etc. of which parents keep reminding their children to encourage them and keep them on the righteous way. I have to say that the traditional values my parents instilled in me played a big part in overcoming the difficulties of attaining education and succeeding in studies.

As a teacher in junior/high school I became more aware of how wealth and traditional cultural values are interconnected in determining success and failure at schools in Senegal. I had a chance to talk with my students and their parents; therefore I could understand their socio-economic background and this knowledge helped me better evaluate and manage them.

1.2. Research Design

This thesis examines the actual impacts of poverty and traditional cultural values on the success or failure of Senegalese students. The project also aims to investigate how

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these factors can be otherwise used as a foundation for academic success. Instead of regarding traditional socio-cultural values and poverty as obstacles, this paper argues that they can play a positive role in reforming Senegal's educational system. Therefore, how they actually affect success or failure in the Senegalese educational system, is worth being investigated. To better examine and understand this issue, this paper explores the following research questions:

- To what degree are traditional values incorporated in the Senegalese educational system and what effects can they have in school success?

- How incorporated are students' parents and families in school life, and how can they impact educational success?

- Can poverty be a source of motivation for students and a factor of educational success?

This research aims to understand, through these questions, the correlations between parents and socio-traditional values and success or failure during exams. In this paper I will explore how socio-cultural background and poverty impact students' success based on the respondents' answers to my questionnaires. Therefore, I suggest that poverty and socio-cultural background can play a serious role in motivating students and should be better explored by educational authorities of Senegal and West African French speaking countries in general. The focus is on West French speaking countries, because, due to the common heritage from the former colonizer, these countries share lots of commonalities in terms of educational system unlike the English and Portuguese speaking countries. In addition these countries share lots of similarities in terms of socio-cultural background.

Traditional culture is a broad term; it includes but is not limited to traditions, customs, beliefs, languages, socio economic organizations, overall it is the objective cultural elements of the social life of a particular group as defined by William Thomas and Znaniecky (1958).

In this paper, traditional culture focuses on traditional values, parents, and poverty. With about 20 ethnic groups, different religions and languages, talking about traditional culture in Senegal can be seen as a broad topic so I narrowed down to the Senegalese most common traditional values of *Kersa* (decency), *Fulë* (self respect), *Muǹ* (endurance), and *Jom* (honor, pride, hardwork). The focus on these values named in Wolof does not mean there is one common set of traditional values in such a multi-cultural country as Sénégal, but these values have been identified as shared, used, and understood by the majority of Senegalese in urban and even rural areas like Pout, one of my research sites. Another reason for the choice of these values is that the three sites (Dakar, Tamba, and Pout) despite their socio-cultural background share these values. These words convey a strong message when used by Senegalese in local languages and they can be motivators and sources of success if used appropriately.

Success in this thesis focuses mainly on students' admission to national exams. Other implicit meanings of success can be found throughout this study. As described in the traditional education, success is assimilated to the acquisition of socio-professional aptitudes to become a respected member of the community. Such success is not measured by admission in exams but by the personality acquired throughout the process and the social standing of the individual as a member of a group. From political authorities' standpoint, educational success is mainly based on reaching the goals fixed by the

international institutions. International institutions such as United Nations insist on education and it is now part of the HDI measurement tool and the Millennium Development Goals. As an efficient means of raising awareness and training in different socio-professional skills, education helps a country build a strong human, social, cultural, and economic capital that are indispensable for any country seeking development. Considering the country's poverty and low rate of adult literacy (47%) Senegal needs to improve, both quantitatively and qualitatively, its educational system in order to overcome the great present-day and future challenges that are facing developing countries. In addition to that there is the goal of "forming a genuine Senegalese citizen rooted to his culture and open to the world" as stated in the Senegalese constitution. Parents and the community in general view educational success as finishing school and finding a job, hence the investment and hope on formal education of their children.

1.3. Methodology

In order to examine all the questions raised, in addition to my personal experience, I have collected data and information from a variety of sources during my field study combined with an internship last summer in Senegal.

In July 2010, I started an internship with GEEP (Group for Education and Population Studies), an NGO based in Dakar, Senegal, and working with young students and teachers to raise awareness about reproduction health and sexuality among other issues in schools.   I profited from their expertise, data, surveys, and research already done on the field of education. I also collected data and statistics from the Ministry of Education and UNESCO Senegal. July is an important date in the Senegalese academic year as it coincides with period of national exams for both middle and high schools that

are the focus of this paper. Therefore, starting my research on a project about cultural implications on exams at this period was good for such a project.

The second and most important part of my field work was the interviews I conducted with 50 people (students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and community elders), 10 in each group, in Dakar, Pout and Tambacounda. I chose these 5 different categories of respondents as an effort to involve the whole community in this research and to maximize the diversity of input so as to make the most valuable and reliable conclusions. My choice of the sites was also motivated by the same reason of variety. I chose Dakar because it is the capital city; a modern city with a population of 4 million inhabitants out of the country's 12 million. This city is a social, cultural, and economic hub where one can find rich and poor, and the different cultural identities of the country. Modernity has been gaining more and more ground; therefore, I find it a relevant place to pick interviewees for the issue discussed in this paper. Pout is a rural village, and as rural areas are very conservative in terms of traditions and cultural values, including such a place in my research was helpful and a rich experience. In addition to that, I was born in Pout, I grew up there, and I went to elementary school there, which facilitated my contact and choice of interviewees. Tambacounda, though a city, is totally different in terms of setting and socio-cultural background. Unlike the 2 first sites located in the Western part of the country, Tambacounda is located in the South-Eastern part of the Senegal at 400 km away from Dakar and shares borders with Mali and Guinea. This makes it a culturally diverse place and a key place to include in any research about tradition, culture, and education. Because of the long distance, the difficulties to access this area during rainy season, and my internship duties, I could not move down to

southeastern Sénégal to conduct my interview in Tamba. Therefore, I did some of them through telephone and the others were conducted by a friend of mine who is working in an NGO in Tamba. As any research assistant would, he strictly followed and adhered to the recruitment and interview process as required by the University of Oregon human subject protocol.

Most interviews were conducted one-on-one and consisted primarily of open-ended questions. Each interview took about 30 minutes to one hour. Sometimes with the help of my colleague teachers I randomly recruited teachers, students, and school administrators. Some others l met during my internship at GEEP. The remaining students were recruited randomly during the exam revision period at different schools in Pout, Thies (a major city near Pout), and Tamba. I recruited parents in Pout based on their socio-economic and cultural background to have different perspectives; in Dakar and Tamba they were recruited randomly. I received an oral or written consent from all respondents to digitally record the interviews and take some pictures to be used in future presentations about my paper. For confidentiality concerns I coded the interviews by numbers and the place they occurred. Though, my analysis of the interviews will not focus on the geographic, gender, and age aspects of the respondents; I tried to diversify as much as possible my choice of people to be interviewed considering those aspects listed above, in order to collect the opinion of the different socio-economic layers of the country and to have a more holistic view of the issue.

Since most of the interviews were conducted in French or Wolof I had to transcribe then to translate them into English before the analysis. I translated most of the interviews literally to keep the actual message, emphasis, and humor of respondents.

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

Throughout this paper, I present my findings about the level and effects that more incorporation of traditional values and parents can have in the educational system, and the impacts of poverty on school success. This is preceded by a brief overview of the background about Senegalese traditional values, social responsibility, and educational system.

Following the introduction, Chapter II provides a literature review concerning western education and local traditional values in Africa and in Senegal in particular. This discussion will start with an overview of traditional education, how it was conducted and its expectations, turning Western education in Senegal and Africa, before ending with an analysis of some writings about the needs and examples of integration of local knowledge in Western education in West Africa. Chapter III presents an overview of the Senegalese socio-economic background with a focus on the general poverty of the country and Senegalese social connections, children's responsibilities, and what is expected from them. It also provides a brief overview of the educational system in Senegal with a focus on historical evolution, teachers' recruitment and training, the national curriculum, the students' parents association, the PDEF (a decennial plan for education and training), exams and the high rate of failure, and some challenges facing the system. Chapter IV explores the findings about the main causes of educational failure. Chapter V presents what I found in my research about the actual place of traditional values in the educational system in Senegal, the relevancy to incorporate them in the system, and the effects such incorporation might have on the educational success and reform. Chapter VI provides an analysis of participants' responses about parents' involvement in the system and the

effects on children's school work. Chapter VII discusses the research's findings about poverty and its positive and negative impacts on children's educational success.

This paper concludes with a summary of the findings and responses to the research questions. It also addresses lessons learned from the research and provides some recommendations about the ways in which traditional values and parents should be integrated for a better educational system in Senegal as well as the role of poverty in school success or failure.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This research is highly relevant because few scholars have looked at the positive impacts of traditional cultural values and poverty on education in Senegal and West Africa in general. Professionals in education and development should consider this aspect in order to work out the most appropriate approach to education. Finally, by giving voice to different actors involved in the educational system, so that students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and community elders can express their opinion about the issue, this research project provides new and different insights into the challenges of the Senegalese educational system, and how to map out future possibilities for better results in terms of development process in which human capital occupies a place of paramount importance.

1.6. Limitation

Considering the broad significance of socio-cultural background, this paper will focus on the traditional values of *Jom* (honor, pride, hardwork), *Kersa* (decency), *Fulë* (self-respect), and *Mu* (endurance), the religious beliefs and customs inherited from ancestors in Senegal and discussed later in this paper. Parents and poverty are very

important in Senegal and I choose to focus on them to have an idea of the impacts of socio-cultural background on student educational success in Senegal.

The focus on middle/high school also is another limitation, as it might have been more ideal to explore all educational levels. I justify this selection because the failure rate is higher in these educational stages and children are aged between 12 to 20. This makes them an interesting group to study, as it is the age when they build their identity and acquire the sense of responsibility that will be determinant in the rest of their lives. However, the paper will sometimes discuss some issues in primary school and university related to the topic.

Also, because of insufficient time and means, the research involves only the Western and Southern part of Sénégal. However, the geographic choice reflects to some degree different cultural identities of the country, even though some ethnic groups and regional identities are not represented in the study. To me, those differences can not greatly affect the findings of the research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. West Africa's Traditional Education

Like the other regions of Africa, the Western part of the continent has a distinctive way of educating its people, particularly the young, which has been based mainly on the transmission of socio-professional aptitudes, skills and knowledge from generation to generation in order to perpetuate the social values of communities. Considering the multitude of ethnic groups and communities present in the region, traditional education has been performed through different channels depending on the group's beliefs, social organization and values. However, such education systems share some commonalities, such as the paramount place of elders in the system. From birth, Africans are immersed in a cultural setting that values the authority of elders and emphasizes practical knowledge. Elders embody wisdom and knowledge, as in Hampathe Ba's equation of the death of an elder African man to the burning down of a library. In the southern part of Senegal, for instance, the most important part of the education process is performed through a two to three month initiation period during which young people, generally boys, are gathered and hidden in sacred places of the forest and trained in different aspects of life. Training is the exclusive province of elders, who make sure younger generations know the history, secrets, values and skills of their community so as to ensure their perpetuity. Such practice is also common in Mali, Guinée, Burkina Faso, Niger Nigeria, Guinea Bissau, the Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and other West African countries.

Story telling is also an important part of the traditional educational system. Full of moral values, storytelling, in addition to its entertainment and educative value, is an efficient way to denigrate flaws and vices and to encourage communal living, respect, humility, endurance, hardship, and other socially healthy values. In Senegalese stories, for example, the hare generally embodies the good example to follow, while the hyena is the anti-hero as depicted in *Les Contes d'Amadou Coumba*, Birago Diop (1958).

Through the family, too, children learn how to become responsible fathers and hard workers, or good wives. The skills learned through the family include cooking, dressing, and appropriate interaction within the community. Here the role of the educator lies not only with the parents but also with the whole family and with neighbors. Full right is given to any member of a family or neighbors to correct, harshly if need be, children who are misbehaving. The journey from childhood to adulthood is a hard and rich process through which the child learns how to become a responsible adult by acting according to the laws and guidelines of a specific community.

In the Senegalese community organization, mothers bear whole responsibility for their children's socio-economic failure or success. The in-law family and the whole community put the entire blame on a mother whenever one of her children fails to find a job or, a "good" husband, or becomes a wrongdoer such as thief, prostitute, drug addict, etc., or simply fails an exam. On the other hand it is her pride whenever one of her children succeeds in any field of life. For this reason, Senegalese mothers feel great responsibility and concern for the education of their children. Furthermore, most of mothers are housewives and stay at home while the fathers are out for reasons related to work. Thus, mothers spend more time with their children at home and therefore know

better their strengths and weaknesses, talents and flaws, so as to bring the appropriate improvement or remedy needed to tailor a good member of the community. Even in places like Dakar or other big cities where mothers go to work, it's up to the other women in the house such as grandmothers, aunts, sisters, and nieces to play the maternal role.

Unlike traditional Senegalese education, western education is conducted differently and has different objectives. The role of elders and mothers' as educators has been transferred to younger, technically trained people who might come from different communities. The locations have shifted from houses and the bush to schools built on the European model; the medium of teaching is no longer local languages and coded messages but French. Children are no longer educated to become responsible community members but to find a job other than farming in most cases; and, above all, the contents of what is taught has thoroughly changed. Traditional values and socio-economic skills transmitted from fathers to sons, elders to youth, and mothers to children are replaced by general-knowledge teaching, specific knowledge such as mathematics, sciences, grammar, etc. and skilled knowledge basing more on foreigners' culture, history and economics. The changes that accompany the Western educational system have had major impacts on different aspects of West African life.

2.2. The Impacts of Western Education in West Africans' Cultural Traditions

In traditional Africa, education occupies an important place in the social organization of African society. It is very different from the Western model, as it includes aspects such as initiation, endurance, and individual and social responsibility, performed through songs, story-telling, ceremonies, rituals and family life as mentioned above. The

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settings, materials, processes and procedures are all "informal"; there is no classroom as designed in the Western model, no officially written program, syllabus or curriculum, and no trained teachers. It is mainly a transmission of knowledge, skills, values, and secrets, through families, ethnic groups, and age groups, generally by elders. There is no expectation for learners to get a job after this process; however, they should know the values of their society and live by them.

In the mid 19th century, as discussed by Hazemann (1987), "*L'Ecole des Otages*" (The School of the Hostages) was implemented by colonial authorities in addition to schools run by the Catholic clergy and Muslim religious leaders. Students were recruited by force among the local chiefs' children in order to teach them French values. The term "hostages" referred to the idea that the students were kept away from the chiefs and from their families, language and culture. This was a way to change them culturally. Later on those students started to become the new local elites, the rest of the population became seduced by the Western style of education and Africans started to send their children to Western schoolhouse, which has become a great pride, hope and success for parents and their children. Gradually, the pride gained through hard work on farms was replaced by degrees earned at school. The importance degrees have gained in the "modern" African society is discussed in many African novels. In *Double Yoke* (1982), Buchi Emecheta raises this issue of young African students who resort to unsavory means to earn their degrees. The example of the main character in the novel, Nko, who has an affair with a professor in order to get her degree, is sometimes cited by African traditionalists to criticize Western education, which they accuse of being a source of depravity and loss of traditional values.

In fact, Western schools are perceived by some Africans as being the main cause of current African moral and job issues. Girls are sharing the same schools, classrooms and even seats with boys, which according to some traditionalists, is a path to perversion leading to these "new diseases like AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases which are devastating Africa" (Emecheta, 1982). As for boys, they no longer want to work the farms, and every student is expecting that the authorities will provide them with jobs. In most of the cases, though, governments cannot satisfy the employment market and these young men, often, opt to stay in the cities where they had come to continue their studies and do not return to work the land. Hence, the complaint of many African elders who see in Western education only the main cause of laziness.

However, one can't deny the paramount importance of Western education on the current global scene. Africans, through this type of education, can now find within their populations all the competence they need to better their agriculture, exploit and transform their own resources, understand international relations, fight for their rights, and work and walk towards development. Women are now participating in this process and thanks to their formal education they are reinforced in their role as educators and caregivers of children and youths, as Western education provides more knowledge about child caring and reproduction health. Regardless of these positive benefits, it is still important that traditional values be included alongside Western-style education as Africans, and even the world in general, can only benefit from traditional values. Going to Western schools should not mean one has to behave or dress like Westerners. Hard-work, dignity, respect for elders, and girls' modesty are great values which African youth have to learn and

protect in order to show the rest of the world that they possess cultural pride and resiliency.

Western-style education is also a major threat to African languages. It is conducted in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, the former colonizers' languages, to the neglect of Africans' local languages. Considering that language and culture are inseparable, learning through a foreign language leads to learning the culture it is a vehicle of; and being permanently exposed to a culture leads to an unconscious adoption of that culture (Negash, 2005, p 7). African leaders and elites can be examples of cultural assimilation, as they, culturally, are often far from ordinary Africans since they generally dress, speak, eat, and behave like westerners.   Western languages are, now, embedded in local African ones which are gradually becoming a mixture of French, English, Spanish, etc., and their mother tongue, which will soon result in the loss of many African languages and cultures alongside them. Negash Ghirmai (2005, p7-8), in the same vein, argues that "Indigenous African languages are largely eliminated and marginalized from use. Instead of investing in and using their linguistic, cultural, and human potential, African governments and elite still continue to channel away their energy and resources into learning imperial languages whereas African languages could be the most critical element for Africa's survival and cultural, educational, and economic development."

The foreign/imperial languages do, in some areas, play a regulatory role as neutral language that different ethnic groups can learn in a same school without any risk of ethnocentrism; it is high time African leaders contemplated introducing their local languages into the educational system for the sake of culture and identity preservation. Human beings are generally the "product of their education", as Negash says, so an

ongoing Western education process will definitely lead to a westernization of young Africans. Therefore, the use of French as language of instruction in Senegal may lead to an adoption of French values and ways of life while helping authorities to find a balance between the different local languages.

However, one cannot deny some positive aspects of Western education in West Africa. Countries like Nigeria with over 250 ethnic groups (www.cia.gov) would find it difficult to come up with one or even a few languages as the medium of education and the national official language. Therefore, the adoption of English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish, depending on who the colonizer was, has, in some West African countries, been a social regulator for the prevention of ethnic or community misunderstandings and possible wars. In addition, West African communities in general, are hierarchical, with a caste system that denied some people the right to learn skills other than those assigned to their castes, social groups, or to mingle with other social groups or occupy certain positions of authority. Western education accepts any person, without taking into account their social, historical or cultural background. This is how one can find Muslims, Christians, Ibos, Hausa, Yoruba, etc., sharing the same schools and learning equally and peacefully. Considering the permanent tension that exists between these different groups in Nigeria, maybe Western education can serve as an alternative to overcome the ethnic friction that is undermining Nigeria and other African countries' socio-economic development. Thus, such education can not only be a factor in national identity and nation-state building, but can also allow anyone to gain knowledge, dignity, money and respect.

Furthermore women, who as shown above actually occupy a paramount role in educating children in the traditional way, are enjoying more diverse opportunities thanks to Western education. West African women are more and more empowered and some stereotypes related to the occupations they should or should not take are ceding the ground to the modern-committed women who are as efficient as men in almost all parts of life. The first woman to become president in Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, is from Liberia, and only a couple of months ago the Senegalese parliament adopted parity imposing an equal share of seats between men and women in all political decision making areas. For the particular case of Senegal, although there has been an increase in number of educated women and their competence and expertise, such measures are generally motivated by political interests meant to seduce bilateral and multilateral donors but also to secure the votes of women who make up more than 50% of the Senegalese population.

Owusu-Opoku (2000, p.16) argues that when females are educated a nation is more likely to reach development at a faster pace as educating girls and women contributes to lower birthrates, improves family nutrition, increases life expectancy, and increases economic gains for the family and for the nation in general.

However, though such traditions should be adapted to the modern, global world, they should first be understood, because none of them was meant to undervalue African women; then the reform process should be handled carefully and wisely, to avoid any frustration and allow every single African, man or woman, to benefit from whatever is good in the foreign ways and values. This won't be an easy task considering the complexity and controversy of some traditions. Still with a bottom up debate about the

issue, involving the different socio-cultural layers of a specific community, people will agree at least on a set of traditions worth being kept and perpetuated, other that need to be adapted, and others that need to be buried.

On the other hand, Western education as it is designed and implemented excludes almost all African knowledge and practices, from which it could have benefited in the efforts to efficiently push West African countries towards development, if such education is really meant to do so. Actually, Western education, as argued by Locraft Lauren (2003, p.22) in his paper, has an overt and a covert mission. If the overt one is to provide with tools for development, the hidden part of it is to maintain a domination and hegemony.

2.3. The Need for Incorporation of Traditional Cultural Values in the Current Educational System

"At present our pupils learn to despise even their own parents because

they are old-fashioned and ignorant; there is nothing in our existing

educational system which suggests to the pupil that he [she] can learn

important things about farming from his [her] elders. The result is that

he [she] absorbs beliefs about witchcraft before he [she] goes to school,

but does not learn the properties of local grasses; he [she] absorbs the

taboos from his [her] family but does not learn the methods of making

nutritious traditional foods. And from school he [she] acquires knowledge

unrelated to agricultural life. He [she] gets the worst of both systems!"

-Julius Nyerere, first president of Tanzania. (Semali&Ami, 1997, p.1)

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As discussed in this quote, there is an ongoing shift of focus and objectives in the way African learners are being taught through Western education.

In West Africa today, "modern" education - the formal, Western-style educational system currently in place -, is associated with Western thought and is perceived by Western-oriented educators as better than indigenous knowledge, which is typically associated with folk knowledge and hence considered "inferior" as discussed by Ladislaus Semali and Amy Stambach (1997). However, there is no doubt that every single community in the world, no matter how different it might seem, has acquired valuable knowledge that helps it survive. As such indigenous traditional knowledge and practices should be included in western pedagogical practices to make up valuable and skilled human resources that can ensure an adequate and relevant local development argued the same authors. Education and culture being closely linked and interrelated, the former be it modern or traditional, western type or indigenous, should consider cultural diversity and pluralism of knowledge to promote "welfare, civic and social advancement, the progress of democracy and respect of human rights, the building of peace,…" and also train individuals, both men and women, to take full part in the development of their society while keeping alive essential values (UNESCO, 2000).

Modernity as opposed to tradition is considered as a major driver to development through urbanization, industrialization, capitalism, and secularization (Barker, 2005, p 444) and therefore, it should be implemented in poor countries to foster development. However, as it is perceived and implemented in West Africa it contributes to widening the gap between youth and elders in many rural African contexts, and, as Semali and

Amy (1997) argue, it "perpetuates a false perception that modernization is a unidirectional process". Western education is undeniably the main vehicle of Western "modern" culture. Therefore, traditionalists who totally disagree with some forms and aspects of modernity promoting children's rights, inciting rural exodus, and favoring change of behaviors and dress, might be reticent to bring their kids to schools, and if nothing is done to set this misunderstanding straight West Africa will never reach the Education For All (EFA) goal that the countries of the world committed to achieve in Jomiten Thailand in 1990. Most Western educational curricula, as they are currently developed and implemented, divide "indigenous" knowledge from "modern" knowledge. I remember that from my primary school to my graduation at the university in Sénégal, I had never been taught through my language or about my traditions or customs. Programs focus most on French literature, history, geography, and literature. I can tell the different stages of European history, I have read almost all the writings of Moliere and Hugo but I can tell you little about Senegalese or African history, I have barely read about Senghor or Cheikh Anta Diop and less still have I read from other African novelists. Some of the results are that young Africans, like me, who have been educated through the Western model since early childhood, dress like Westerners, eat and drink like Westerners, think like Westerners, and behave like Westerners which most of the time creates misunderstandings between different age groups. There are limited topics such as family and traditional issues I can discuss with my mom. Since she never attended Western school we think she is disconnected to the current world whereas she feels pity for my sisters who can't make the traditional couscous or for me dressing traditionally only on Fridays. Even worse, development theories and practices like structural adjustment

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programs have been made up according to which copying and pasting Western models is the only way out of "poverty" to "development".

Such education based on such programs and curricula according to Semali and Amy (1997) "fails to teach students about the unique cultural patterns by which people develop and advance their social worlds, and ignores the ways in which – modern - cultural beliefs and practices drawn from indigenous ways of life." This shows the ongoing hegemony and engineered practices used by Westerners to maintain dominance over the former colonies and the Third World countries in general. Education can only be relevant if it provides individuals with the intellectual tools, moral values, and skills needed to cope with the changing world situation imposed by globalization. Classroom knowledge and curricula should be tailored to suit African students' socio-cultural context to maximize its success.

Traditional values of hard work, endurance, dignity, and modesty, just to name a few, which are common to almost all West African countries, can only be beneficial in the process of raising up a responsible citizen appropriately prepared to face any life situation, good and bad, hard and sweet.

The colonial educational system has managed to overtake other forms of education in West Africa. However, since independence, there has been a desire and great efforts made by local authorities and some elites to include indigenous knowledge and practices in the system (Ndiaye, 2010). More recently, UNESCO has joined the battle for insertion of African values and knowledge into the teaching of African children. Through the African Regional Framework of Action, which took place in Dakar, UNESCO calls for "community involvement in school-decision making and administration; employment of

teachers in their own community of origin; curriculum reform toward locally relevant subjects; use of mother tongue as language of instruction; the use of schools as community learning centers" (UNESCO, 2000). However, the program called for was limited to younger children, from birth to age eight.

Alicia Soudee provides in her article "Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and Practice into ECCE,"(2009) three relevant examples of integrating cultural traditions in the education of young children in three different West African countries: Sénégal, Mali, and the Gambia.

In the case of Senegal, President Abdoulaye Wade announced, during the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, the idea of a *case des tout-petits* or "children's hut." The program started in 2004; in partnership with UNESCO and other partners, the National Agency for Children's Hut (ANCTP) has built up many *cases* throughout the country, particularly in rural areas. This type of school is close but different to pre-school as it is less formal and it does not depend on the ministry of education. It focuses also more on local realities.

The building is designed in a hexagonal form with a mother's room and kitchen; a diagonal bar structured from the ground to the roof symbolizes a rooting in the local culture and reaching out to others (ANCTP, 2007). In addition to the architectural design, which is based on local pattern, the *cases* provide schooling, health and nutrition, and community education, which focus on children from birth to age six, and their parents as well (http: //www.case-toutpetit.sn). The program focuses on accessibility and integration of traditional culture with modern pedagogical tools. Through stories and songs provided

with the assistance of volunteer grandmothers, the program works to value and perpetuate local cultural heritage. Children are also initiated in modern technologies like computers.

However, with 95% of the population Muslim; religion is embedded in the Senegalese traditional culture and many parents prefer to send their children to *"Coranique" schools* at an early age so that they learn the basics of their religion.

In Mali, with a similar education system to Senegal (both are former French colonies), education is based on the French system and the language of instruction is French. However, unlike in Senegal, local languages are used in early primary schools. Mali also, has a strong program to integrate indigenous knowledge and practices in children's schooling.

The "clos d'enfants" project initiated in 1997 by a women's association, *Jiguiya*, in collaboration with UNESCO provides a "safe, clean environment to socialize and learn," to 15 children per clos under the supervision of volunteer mother-educators (Soudee, 2009). The latter are recruited locally, trained to provide knowledge of health, and hygiene, and great importance is given to local knowledge and practices too. The project, as described by Soudee, is community based as local people choose the different actors involved and the distribution of closes through request from communities.

The Gambia is culturally very close to Senegal and Mali as well, because they share borders and have many ethnic groups and languages in common; but as a former British colony the educational system is based on the British model and English is the language of instruction. There is not a specific program like in Senegal and Mali, but a study done by Sagnia (2004) has shown how the Madinka, Fula, Wolof and Joola communities have already integrated local knowledge and practices in the education of

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their children. Toys and grandmothers stories have proven to be beneficial to children's emotional and intellectual growth. Unlike in the Malian and Senegalese examples, this example by Sagnia is more informal and generally performed at home. In his conclusion Sagnia suggests further integration of indigenous practices such as toys, songs, dance and stories in the formal education system to perpetuate traditional knowledge and ensure an efficient education system.

The three examples described above show alternatives means of implementation and incorporation of two different but complementary methods and approaches to education. However, these three examples are limited to young children, and the teenage years are described by psychologists and psychoanalysts as a crucial stage in the formation a person's personality. Teenagers generally frequent middle/high school in Senegal and West Africa in generally; hence this paper's focus on these schools to study the impacts of socio-cultural values on students' school performance.

CHAPTER III

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND IN SENEGAL

3.1. Overall Poverty of the Country

Senegal has a GDP of $23.86 billion, ranking it 116th in the world (2010), an unemployment rate of 48% (2007), and around 54% of its population living with less than $2 per day (www.cia.gov). These facts describe the general poverty of the country and the immediate need to work out ways out of underdevelopment. According to the US Central Intelligence Agency Senegal is among the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). This dire position helped the country benefit from the eradication of two third of its bilateral, multilateral, and private sector debt. Senegal has also recently received $540 million from the USAID's Millennium Challenge Account for infrastructure and agriculture development. Yet, poverty, inflation, and unemployment are still undermining the country's development efforts and the youth's hope. The young generation is massively migrating, often illegally and at the risk of their lives, to Western countries in a hope to find better jobs. Recently, thanks to the Spanish cooperation and the state's efforts to sensitize and finance some youth projects, since 2006 (www.allafrica.com), the emigration trend has decreased.

Sénégal has scarce natural resources and a low exportation rate comprised mainly of phosphate, fertilizers, fishing products, and peanuts; therefore, the country heavily relies on international aid to support the socio-economic demand of the country. In addition to that, Senegal is endowed with long sunny beaches, natural and historic sites such as Gorée Island which make tourism an important part of the country's economy

and rank it the second source of income after the fishing activities. Due to the country's political stability, Senegal could benefit more from globalization and multinational corporations' investments in developing countries such as Senegal by increasing its labor skills through education. I argue that by investing 40% of its national budget in education the national authorities are on a good track, increasing the gross enrollment rate. However, a lot need to be done in terms of quality and school life extension in order to make education an effective tool to fight poverty.

3.2. Traditional Values, Social Responsibility and Expectations from Children's Education

Most of the time, studies in African education tend to show that traditions constitute a major obstacle to school fulfillment and intellectual development of African learners. This can be explained by the fact that these studies are often made by foreigners, Westerners who do not understand the African social and cultural realities, and who do not take the necessary time to study it. It is often studies made by NGOs on issues like girls' early marriage in the quest for funding and donation knowing that organisms and foundations are fully sensitive about the issue. However, these studies underemphasize the fact that in Africa and particularly in Senegal, traditional values are very demanding in term of social success. As the Western school is perceived as a new avenue towards success, parents and society in general regularly remind the students that these values of *Jom, Kersa, Mu , and Fulë*, which will be defined and discussed below, should be used in all aspects of life and particularly in school. Each student does his/her best to succeed and honor his/her family in the neighborhood, village or city hoping one day to find a job and help his/her parents, family and to raise a family, too.

In Senegal, families put a great hope on children and students in particular, and they consequently invest all they have in students hoping that one day their children will bring them out of poverty and misery. Parents, especially mothers, laboriously spend all their savings earned from micro-trading, farms work, etc. on their children. They are willing to sell their jewels or clothes to buy books, pens, uniforms and give school contributions to build rooms or other expense. Women are devoted to keeping their children in schools hoping that some day they will be rewarded. Conscious of this and the responsibilities weighing on their shoulders, the Senegalese students particularly those who are sitting for exams are more devoted and learn harder with the available means to succeed just to please their parents.

Beyond wishing to please their parents, families, and community; learners are haunted by the shame, the *kersa* of failure. In fact, exams (Entrée en Sixième, BFEM, BAC, universities) take place at the end of the year and the results are publicly released. The day of the results, the candidates come with their families, friends, neighbors and the jury yells the results out loud to the public. The exams are selective in Senegal and, the success rate is very low, especially for high school examination where it is approximately 23% since 2000 (www.education.gouv.sn). Those who succeed are congratulated whereas those who failed are plunged into a big shame and sometimes they receive remonstration from parents who often put the blame on them for not working very hard to succeed. The blame is also often put on the mothers. The publication of the results is an unforgettable burden for any student and the possible shame of failure haunts students and motivates them to work hard at schools.

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Another aspect is social competition. According to the Senegalese traditional beliefs, the success of a child depends on his/her mother. The Wolof saying *"ligg eyu ndey a u doom"* meaning a mother's deeds are reflected by her children's success or failure in life; if she has been a good wife her children will succeed in life, if not they will fail. In other words, traditional beliefs suggest that if the mother is good, hardworking, respectful to her husband, correct, faithful and enduring in her marital home, she will see her children succeed whereas a bad mother will see hers fail in life. Therefore, a successful child at school is source of joy for his/her mother who will say aloud that her efforts and endurance are amply rewarded. However, the mother who sees her child fail will feel guilty towards the society and will have to bear gossip of other women above all co-wives. So to avoid mothers such a situation, children have to work hard to sit through the difficult exams. To avoid such a discomfort that accompanies failure during school exams and motivate them, parents and the whole family, supervise their children's schoolwork and constantly remind children about the values listed above and discussed below.

Endowed with *Kersa* decency, the students, especially girls, wear correct and suitable clothes and behave correctly towards teachers and school administration. This can be a motivation in school because it is shameful to oneself to be criticized in class for not doing one's homework or not working hard enough to succeed. Moreover, decency can hold students away from places such as bars, night clubs, cinema or having boyfriends/girlfriends very early, so that they have more time to spend on studies and are more likely to succeed.

Endurance, *Mu*, is a Senegalese traditional value which puts the person into the obligation to show courage, self-sacrifice and endurance before any difficulty: nothing is easy and nothing is gained easily in a poor country where everyone wants to succeed. It is not often the very intelligent people who succeed but the most enduring. When dealing with education, students are confronted with many difficulties at school, in their families and above all their hosting families. Whatever the difficulties one may face, one has to overcome them without complaining: to suffer in silence and never surrender be this as it may. In rural areas, when students leave primary school they sometimes need to move to bigger cities for higher studies and then to the capital for university studies. The luckiest ones may find a parent, friend or neighbor in the city who can accommodate them; however, they will always be confronted with social and economic difficulties. Consequently some students give up school and go back to their villages, not because they are not good at school, but because the conditions of life are hard and they do not have enough endurance. Endurance is a quality that motivates young Senegalese to continue their studies in spite of the social difficulties and hard work it takes to succeed.

Fulë which is more about a personal character of self respect, respect to others, and a demand of respect from the others, is highly valued in Senegal. Applied in the field of children and education it can be very helpful to students as self respect requires a compliance with the school's internal rules and hard work in class to avoid any remonstrance from teachers, school administrators, and/or parents. In addition, it fosters honesty and dignity and as such it encourages students to avoid any form of cheating at school.

Jom can be defined as the combination of all these values and virtues. This word has a broad meaning and encompasses honor, pride, courage, resistance, and endurance. When used to describe a person in Senegal it can procure pride or shame depending on whether you have it or not. People are very careful in using this word to negatively qualify a person as it can be an encouragement and a source of motivation and, therefore, it can have positive impacts on children but also it can be shocking and produce the contrary effects expected. The place of this virtue is undeniable in the informal educational process in Senegal; and like other values it is used by society as a means to educate people in general and children in particular.

Overall, Senegalese put a great hope on education and they use generally traditional values to incite their children to work harder at school and behave appropriately in life. The values of *Kersa, Mu , Fulë*, and *Jom* discussed above among others such as *Fit* (courage) and *Kólëre* (loyalty), are based on traditional beliefs and have been passed down from generation to generation as described by the historian Iba Der Thiam in an online newspaper (www.rewmi.com) in October 2010. In the same article he described how these values have been consolidated by the introduction of Islam and *Dahras* because most of them are compatible with Islamic teaching and seemed to form the basis in *Quranic* schools in Senegal. Some *dahras* "teachers" even hide behind these values and send their students, known as *talibes*, to beg for food and money arguing that it is part of building in them *mu* or *jom.* The thesis will discuss later the relevancy of introducing these values in the curriculum, teaching students the actual meaning of such values and hopefully keeping them in the society and to help people succeed in life with dignity.

3.3. Brief Historical Overview and Major Reforms of the Educational System in

The history of the Senegalese educational system has been significantly marked by colonization. During the pre-colonial period, the social organization of the country was mainly based on castes and ethnic communities. The transmission of knowledge, competence and socio-professional aptitudes was performed within families and socio-cultural groups. Even today we can find in Senegal some particular families or ethnic groups that retain the monopoly of skills and/or knowledge in making some particular tools, instruments, or to traditionally cure specific diseases, just to name a few. This socio-professional classification has resulted in the system of social castes in Sénégal. For example the *griots* make and beat the drums, and some families cure snake bites, others treat malaria, and so on so forth. Such knowledge has been transmitted from fathers to children and can rarely be acquired by one who is a stranger to the particular social group. Socio-cultural and traditional values they are transmitted through an initiation system which can differ in performance from one community to another but they have the same objectives of building up socio-professional aptitudes.

In addition, we have the gradual implantation of Quranic schools that started right after the introduction of Islam in the 10th through 11th centuries. Religious teaching/learning was the main means of conversion. Later on with the expansion and consolidation of colonialism, a clash was inevitable, not between Western education and traditional education or between traditional education and *Quranic*/religious models, but between the two foreign "imposed" ones. The colonial authorities saw in these *Quranic* schools an obstacle to the expansion of French schools. Despite a tough resistance of the

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former, the French Western model of education managed to overtake the religious one in terms of geographic spread and population reached by the middle of the 20th century as discussed by Ndiaye (2010) in his article "Les Réformes de l'Education au Senegal". He argues that the colonial school, because of its historic, confrontation with the *Quranic* school considered by the French traditional education remained disconnected from the social, religious, and community realities of Senegal, which has still affected the formal educational system (Ndiaye, 2010).

In 1960 when the country got its independence from France, secularism was the motto of the educational system, and objectives set by the authorities, such as universal education, were taking shape with a rapid progress in terms of enrollment rate and infrastructure until 1980. Meantime in May 1968, the educational system was the target of a worldwide social movement that challenged existing hierarchy and curriculum at all levels of the educational system, especially in France. Senegal experienced an echo of post 1968-French educational reforms, culminating in 1981 in the Etats Generaux de l'Education et de la Formation (the National Consultation on Education and Training) which set up the basis of what is called l'Ecole Nouvelle (the New School) with its main objectives being the integration of communities and social diversity (Ndiaye, 2010). The state started to increase the educational budget, and the new national fund for education was created to facilitate the financing of education by giving back part of the enterprises' taxes to the educational sector.

However, this project was hit by the consequences of Structural Adjustment Programs of the mid 1980s. The government was forced to reduce educational expenses, stop training and recruiting professional teachers, and cut back any kind of social support

to schools, families, and communities in order to get loans from the international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank). This period also marked the birth of *volontaires* and *vacataires,* a new type of teachers who are not trained and who are paid less. They have been positively affecting the educational system by filling the gap of insufficient teachers. But they have also had a negative impact because some of them are incompetent, and due to their now large numbers they very often paralyze the system with many strikes demanding better pay. The consequences of the influx of undertrained teachers have created an unprecedented crisis in the educational system in Senegal, which is characterized by a huge decrease of the students' level, selective exams, and strikes from teachers and students.

Two other major dates mark the history of education between 1960 and 1980. In 1972, a law was voted (loi 72-36) to change the educational objectives as set by the colonizers to a new orientation the main objective of which being to form a genuinely Senegalese citizen. This law was meant to adapt education to the local communities and focus and integrate more local realities (Ndiaye, 2010). Such laws and measures were also undertaken at a regional level, to depart more from the educational system left by the former colonizers in Africa. However, on the ground little to nothing was done to bring an actual change by authorities, most probably because such changes require deep studies and financial means.

The second major date was in 1979 with a law meant to stabilize the teaching programs and to base school and teaching on the Senegalese realities. This law that sets the teaching programs is still governing the national program elaboration (Ndiaye, 2010). Though the curriculum lays more and more emphasis on local realities, still very

important socio-cultural aspects of the country are ignored and/or threatened as the thesis discusses.

Before these major challenges, the Senegalese government partnered with international development institutions, such as UNESCO, to set up the P.D.E.F. (Decennial Program for Education and Training) in 1998/1999. This new plan brought some positive changes towards the 1990 Jomtien goals: Education For All. After the 2000 education forum in Dakar, Senegal, the PDEF shifted from a decennial program to a longer term development program for education and training (www.education.gouv.sn). This program has three main components: access, quality, and management which govern the current educational system in Senegal. As stated in the PDEF document (2000), the main principles of program are liberalization, participation, partnership, and decentralization. These principles are meant to bring communities and partners closer to the school milieu for the benefit of the country in general.

As clearly stated in the PDEF (2000), access has been the top priority and has gained lots of progress since the implementation of the program. This improvement has been facilitated by the recruitment of many "cheap" teachers, the *volontaires* for primary schools and *vacataires* for middle/high ones. Thanks to the PDEF, 330 schools have been built in rural areas and 216 schools in urban areas between 2003 and 2009 (PDEF, 2010). As stated in the PDEF, the Education de Base project, which is part of the program, aims to increase the partnership between the public and private sector in order to increase the long term financing of education and to support the NGOs that are working to reduce the drop out and failure rate in Sénégal.

Non formal education and literacy started to gain more ground in the educational sector with the creation of the ministry of basic education and national languages. Literacy programs have helped the older people, who did not have chance to attend school, learn some reading and writing skills, particularly in the three last decades (www.education.gouv). The reform process has been occurring since the country's independence and has brought many changes in the integration of local realities; but, still some find it slow and ignoring the basis of the Senegalese traditional heritage such as values, local languages, and rituals.

3.4. The Curriculum

Curriculum has been designed and implemented differently in West Africa depending on the former colonizer and the local socio-political aspects. Curriculum can be defined as what is to be taught and learned within school in a specific topic. Since its main objective was to make sure that the teaching/learning process is leading to the desired learning outcomes (Obanya, 1995), the colonial system made sure to design curriculum in a way to reach the desired effects. In Senegal, people from Dakar, Goree, St Louis, and Rufisque, known as the four communes, were considered French and could benefit from the Western education. The programs then were meant to assimilate and "civilize" those people as well as provide the colonial administration with educated auxiliaries. On the other hand, as Michael Crowder (1962) describes the majority of Senegalese living in different areas of the country were kept docile, as tax payers, obedient subjects and a source of labor and military services. Most of the people outside of the four communes could not benefit from the Western education. During the colonial period, curricula in West Africa were tailored to fit the need of the colonizers and the best

illustrations of this are the language of instruction, which were all European languages, and the actual content and materials in the curriculum which are very similar to the former colonizer's.

After independence, newly-born African countries just copied and pasted most of former colonizers political, economic and social institutions, education included. Senegal is a startling example of this copy/paste approach which is visible in the judicial institutions of the country as well as the educational approach and programs. The first main educational reform happened in 1972, twelve years after independence.

As the document that governs pedagogical orientations, including details on what is to be taught and how to teach in order to compose citizens of given society, the content of curriculum should be more adapted to local realities to escape the ongoing domination and hegemony of former colonizers. Although sporadic changes have been made since independence to incorporate more local aspects in curricula and accommodate education to West African realities, still a recent survey shows that:

> "Instruction is in French, at the primary level, and 100% of the time in the following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal and Togo. The only exception is Guinea where instruction is 95% in French. In the Anglophone countries, the picture is different (Nigeria: 70%, Sierra Leone 45%, Liberia 25%, The Gambia 25%), mainly because the early years of primary education in these countries involve instruction in the various national languages" (Cavicchiomi and Eriksson 1991).

In Senegal local languages are only taught to older people, mainly women, who did not have a chance to attend formal school, and also to some students who major in

Linguistics or languages at the university. For example, from my primary school to my graduation at the university I have never been taught how to read or write in Wolof. So when I was selected in the Fulbright program to come in the US and teach Wolof, I had to quickly attend some Wolof classes at the linguistic department and received tutoring from some friends. I then realized the mistakes Senegalese, me included, are making in writing Wolof words through advertisements, announcements, and other messages. I also started to learn some new Wolof words that I thought never existed because we generally used their French equivalents.

In 2005 Senegal's Ministry of Education started to experiment with the introduction of national languages in 400 primary schools throughout Senegal (Walfadjril, Feb. 2011). Even though the children who went under that experimentation made good results during end of primary school exams (Entrée en sixieme and CFEE), the Minister of Education described it as a failure, during his speech at the 2011 International Day of Mother tongues, because many parents decided to retrieve their children from such class. He acknowledged first the importance of local languages in the development process and the benefits of starting children's schooling through mother tongues, however, according to him, parents did not adhere to that initiative due to lack of information. He also sees in the number of codified local languages (6 in 2000 and 19 in 2011) an obstacle to a successful implementation of such project. The project is now suspended for deeper studies (Walfadjril, Feb. 2011).

As for the organization and the context, they vary from one country to another depending on who the former colonizer is. For the particular case of Senegal, a former French colony, there are five different stages in the educational process: preschool,

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primary school, middle school, high school and university. Students have to the pass national exam to move from one stage to the next except from preschool to primary. The six years of primary school is when children are mainly introduced to different skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading) of the French language plus some introductory classes in mathematics, history and geography of France, Senegal and some other parts of the world, sciences, civics and morals based in western French model. At the end of the six, seven or eight years, depending on how good the child is because they have to retake classes if they don't have the required average grade, students have to sit for a selective national exam and join middle school where places are limited. Generally, an average grade of 10 out of 20 is required to move up from one class to the other or to succeed an exam. In middle school they will learn more about the French language, mathematics, history and geography of the world, sciences and other languages now with an instructor for each course. Again at the end of the four (five or six years because students are not allowed to repeat more than one class in each cycle learners will take the BFEM (Brevet de Fin d'Etudes Moyennes) exam and go to high school if they succeed. Success and failure rates will be discussed more below. High schools are very similar to middle ones in terms of organization and curriculum, except that learners start to specialize in science or literature, depending not on their will but on their grades in different courses. At universities students who succeed in their exams can choose different specialization ranging from law to economics, science, arts, human sciences, health, etc.

Some great efforts are being done to adapt the whole educational system to the local West African realities. Recently, in September 2010 experts from 39 countries gathered in Kinshasa to discuss curriculum reforms and how to adapt them more to the

local realities (RTS1, 2010). In Senegal the *case des touts petits,* discussed in the literature review chapter, initiated by the president Wade in 2000 is an example of attempts that have been made to incorporate more local knowledge and values in the educational system.

3.5. School Administration in Sénégal

On the top of the educational hierarchy we have the Minister of Education appointed by the President of the Republic. This political function has been held most of the time by teachers. They are helped in their tasks by delegate ministers in charge of literacy, local languages, universities, etc. At the next stage downward we have the *inpecteurs,* who control, supervise, evaluate and follow the implementation of the educational policies at the regional level. There are 14 *inpecteurs d'academie,* one for each region, appointed by the Minister of Education.On the next stage of the hierarchy, at the school level, we have the directors who manage elementary schools, principals who manage junior schools, *proviseurs* who are in charge of high schools, and *recteurs* for universities. At the middle/high schools levels, the focus of this thesis, we have teachers and *surveillants* in addition to the principals and *proviseurs*. Principals and *proviseurs* are teachers who compete for their posts and are selected based on their duration in the teaching profession and their grades to manage the school administration and act as liaison between teachers, students, parents, and the political authorities. *Surveillants* are also teachers appointed by *inspecteurs* to assist *proviseurs* and principals in their administrative duties. They are in charge of tracking attendance of teachers and students, grades calculation, and they liaise with the parents and the teachers or teachers and students in case of conflicts or any other misunderstandings.

There are two main categories of teachers in Senegal: the regular civil servants and the *vacataires/volontaires*. Regular teachers are selected after a national examinationt, and then they are trained for one to two years before being recruited as civil servants and posted throughout the country. The *vacataires/volontaire* corps started in the 1990s to fill in the gap of teachers before the number of students increased. They are selected upon application, they do not need to take an examination and they receive no training. Holders of the BFEM degree are recruited as *volontaires* to teach in primary schools and holders of BAC or university degrees are recruited as *vacataires* to teach in middle/high schools. They receive a low monthly stipend which is approximately half of the pay of regular teachers and they do not benefit from social insurance (health, pension, unemployment, etc.) as regular teachers do. Hence their regular strikes particularly now that they outnumber the regular teachers. However, they receive in-service training and after two years of *vacataire/volontaire* work, they can take an exam and have the teaching diploma which will allow them to become civil servants (www.education.gouv.sn).

3.6. Parents in the Educational System in Sénégal

The A.P.E. (Students' Parents Association) was created in Senegal before the independence (1960) with and the first national federation of APE appearing in 1956 in Sénégal (Niane, 2005). Since then, they have been important partners for the educational system in Senegal. However, they have never played a preponderant role in the management of pedagogic and administrative affairs of schools.

Recently, the Senegalese have been demanding more responsibilities for the APEs in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of the educational development

strategies. The most startling example, as discussed by Niane (2005), is the parents'
recent protest against their marginal role of financial and material contributions and
managing crisis and their demand and commitment for more responsibilities through the
"Charter of the Students' Parents" adopted in the Dakar 2002 congress of the federation
of African APEs. The text stipulates in its Article 8 that "the parents have the duty to
supervise regularly the schooling of their children. For that, they need to provide them
with the minimum necessary (food, accommodation, clothes, health care, school
materials, etc.). They have also to build an ongoing contact with the teachers, the
educators; the educational advisor, and the educational experts," Article 10 goes on to
state, "parents have to actively participate in the administration and functioning of
schools and universities. They put on themselves the duty to contribute to the pacific
settlement of conflicts within schools." Article 16 asserts, "parents have the right of
access to all information of the training institutions and schools relative to their children,
the right of being informed and consulted for the educational and professional orientation
of their children and to participate in the elaboration of the schools' policies." (Charte des
Parents, Nous les Parents, n 6, 2002). Such resolutions taken by parents could play a
tremendous part in achieving the EFA (Education For All), the MDGs about education,
and in improving the education level of students. However, the content of this written
document is far from the realities on the ground and parents' inclusion in Senegal will be
discuss later on in this paper.

APEs are present in almost every school in Senegal. Membership is voluntary and
one has to have or had children in a school to become member of the APE. Local APEs

gather to make up regional and national ones which join with other African nations' to

make a regional one called the FAPE (Federation of Students' Parents' Associations).

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF EXAMS IN THE SENEGALESE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

4.1. Exams and High Rates of Failure

The Senegalese educational system is divided into kindergarten (3 grades), primary school (6 grades), middle school (4 grades), high school (3 grades), and university (depending on departments). As discussed above, apart from the kindergarten, students have to take internal exams within the four other stages and an annual average of 10 out of 20 is required to move from one class to the next. In addition to that students who manage to make it to last year of each of these stages (as some students who fail a maximum of two classes within a stage are sent out of school) have to take a national exam be able to move to the next stage. These exams being Entrée en sixieme for end of primary school, BFEM for end of middle school, and Baccalaureat for end of high school, have been very selective and subject to many controversies because of the high rates of failure observed. The table below shows the CFEE, BFEM, and Bac results in 2001, 2004, and 2007. This information is drawn from the PDEF report and the Baccalaureat office website.

Table 1 below shows the admission rates in 2001, 2004, and 2007 for the three main national exams in Sénégal: CFEE, BFEM, and Baccalaureat.

Table 1: Admission rate for CFEE, BFEM, and Bac (2001, 2004, and 2007)

Admission rate	2001	2004	2007
CFEE	50.4%	45.05%	55.9%
BFEM	46.5%	55.4%	45.2%
BAC	31%	46%	48%

From 1960 to nowadays, two phenomena seem to dominate the Senegalese school: high failure rate and strikes. The success rate has rarely reached 50% except for the CFEE. The program that is defined at the beginning of each year is never ended. That is the same in junior and senior education.

The success rate in exams such as high school diploma or middle high school diploma is generally disastrous. And even though there are some changes in the process, the report is the same. Each year, there is more failure than success. For the high school diploma exam, the results seem less bad with the suppression of the first part. The first generations did the first and the second part of the high school diploma exam. The first part took place in Premiere and the second part in Terminal. One could successfully pass the first part and spend a lot of time repeating the terminal class. The high school diploma exam was reformed and organized once in terminal class in the end of the 1980s. Therefore, only the French tests were anticipated in Premiere.

The BFEM exam has replaced the DFEM (Diplome de Fin d'Etudes Moyennes) one which has taken the place of the BEPC (Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle). These

are only changes in the name of the exam but the goal, format, and content remain the same. That diploma allows students to pass from middle school to high school. The exam results are generally bad as shown in the table above. Today the CFEE exam which has known the same changes as the prelisted diplomas seems less bad. It is the same as in the first form entrance exam which is competitive. It is determined by the available number of places in senior and junior high schools which can welcome the best students of the primary cycle. The satisfactions noted at this level are obtained since the coalition government advent in 2000 which has increased the number middle/high schools throughout the country. The CFEE which is an exam seems greatly affected in term of quantity. However, last year there was almost 96% success at the CFEE and Entrée en Sixieme, which raises some critiques from education trade unions who see in this "too high" rate of success as the government's policy to satisfy the MDGs' in terms of education.

The success rate is lower in the Bac exam because of strikes, low level of students, lack of motivation of students, but particularly because of the lack of resources to educate all of them. The main university in Dakar (Cheikh Anta Diop) is now receiving twice the normal size of students. Even though some regional university centers have been created since 2000, still the increasing number of students in high schools poses a great problem to the authorities who do not have enough resources to educate all of them. This resource issue, among others, explains the high failure rate in Bac exams.

4.2. Perception of the Main Causes of Failure

Failure rate in the educational system in Senegal, as discussed earlier, is high and what is absurd is that people are so used to it that they find it exceptional when someone manages to get a bachelor's degree without failing any exam or repeating a class or when a school makes more than 50% success during national exams. To better assess the causes of this phenomenon and contemplate the best solutions possible, including the incorporation of socio-cultural values such as traditional values, parents and poverty, this paper will analyze the answers provided by parents, students, teachers, and school administrators regarding this issue.

Five out of the 10 students interviewed have either failed an exam or repeated a class or even both; two of them have not yet failed and 3 denied to answer this question. Considering the "shame" which accompanies failing an exam or repeating a class in Senegal one can assume that those denial to answer means that they have probably failed somewhere in their educational life. Moreover, all the teachers and school administrators interviewed acknowledge and deplored the high rate of failure with sometimes giving an example of their own schools one of which was above 57% in 2009. The alarming failure rates as shown and the background chapter and reinforced by the school administrators we interviewed have been attributed to various causes some of which we will discuss later on in this paper. I remember we were only two in my class of over 70 students to succeed the *Entrée en sixieme* (middle school entrance exam) and only 11 out of more than 50 students to get our high school leaving certificate, an exam we took during the month of September instead of the usual July due to four months of strikes out of the nine month academic year.

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Strikes, incompetence of teachers, and lack of motivation of both teachers and students are pointed by the people interviewed as being the main causes of this alarming failure rate. "Now *volontaires* and *vacataires* make up more than 50% of all the teachers in Senegal, they have not received any training, knowledge of a subject is not enough teaching requires some skills you can only acquire through trainings, in addition they do not have a good salary and they have sometimes to run after that pay, hence the numerous strikes … and all these factors will definitely affect exams," said a school administrators to show how strikes and incompetence contribute to failure. Many other interviewees made similar comments.

In addition, many people now resort to teaching not because they love the job but because it is the only job available or easier to find after graduation. Lowly paid, with no training, and no love in what they are doing there is little to no hope that these teachers will provide a good education to children who themselves are discouraged by the "miserable situation of our teachers, they need to go on strikes every month to be paid, … I am wondering if it's worth getting a masters' degree in this country because you will only end up being a *vacataire* just like the BFEM or Bac holders," as a student commented to express his waning motivation to continue his studies till the university.

On the other hand, other people interviewed, particularly students and teachers put the blame on the workload and the actual organization of the testing and national exams themselves which according to a teacher "are meant to fail more than to accurately test the students' knowledge, because I can't understand for example they keep dictation in the BFEM exams knowing that more than 95% of the students will have 0 out of 20." The dictation part of the national and school exams is worth reconsidering, with ten

words wrongly written out of a text of 150 to 300 words, the student gets a grade of zero out of twenty and few students manage to collect even I point in such. Such grades can be easily understood as there is no lesson or subject designed solely for dictation. Why should they keep testing students in something they are not taught and one knows they almost all will fail? At a larger scale there are no mid terms, papers, attendance, or participation; there is only one chance which is the d day written test for every subject which some people find unreliable as it neglects the learner's performance during the school year and does not take into account the socio-psychic aspects of the children. While students whine "too much to learn;" parents, mainly illiterate ones, just think "the examiners must be more tolerant with our kids we always give them food and shelter during the exam period, these students work hard and they should give them the degrees they are seeking …" commented a parent on the high failure rate at national exams, showing their ignorance of the educational system. Parents, through A.P.E. in some areas of the Senegal provide with food and shelters to examiners who are teachers recruited from different areas, not only for hospitality but also expecting a "mercy" from these graders.

Everything from quality of education, programs, motivation, testing design, to even tough grading are pointed as the causes of this issue. However, little to nothing has been done to improve students' level and increase the success rate. As a teacher I was teaching my students the same programs I was taught and testing my students the same way I was tested by my teachers, national exams are almost held the same way they have been since independence. The following chapter of this paper will explore whether or not including socio-cultural values such as traditional values and parents could somehow or

another improve the success rate and ask if poverty could be a source of motivation

leading to educational success.

CHAPTER V

PLACE AND ROLE OF TRADITIONAL VALUES IN THE EDUCATIONAL

SYSTEM

5.1. Introduction

The current educational system in Senegal is totally different in setting and

implementation from the traditional one. The range of content is diverse and depends on

the different levels of the school system. People have different views, understandings,

and suggestions about the curricula and programs. Though formally few to no courses are

teaching about local values depending on the schools and their understanding of

traditional values, the Senegalese social structure, which gives adults, parents, and elders

a crucial place in the education of children, means teachers and school administrators

sometimes informally play the role of traditional educators at school. Traditional values

occupy an important place in the everyday life of the Senegalese. From the running of the

family house to the government of the state, the Senegalese refers to them to promote a

fairness, hard work, dignity, decency, respect, etc. For the particular case of education

some people think that traditional values are integrated in the curricula whereas others

argue that they are not integrated or not enough and that they should be more

incorporated for the benefit of education in general. To better assess the place and role of

traditional values in the Senegalese educational system I have analyzed answers provided

by 50 participants (teachers, students, parents, school administrators, and community

elders) from different geographic settings (city, rural, semi-urban) to a set of questions

related to this issue.

5.2. To What Extent Are Traditional Values Integrated into the Current Curriculum?

Due to relevancy and reliability concerns, questions related to this issue were not asked of elders because in Senegal many elders have not attended school and do not know much about the curricula and programs which are implemented in schools. Therefore, for this particular case I will analyze the 40 responses provided by other participants as shown in the table below.

Analysis of interviews and data collected about the place of traditional values in the current educational system in Senegal revealed that there are no specific courses in the curriculum regarding traditional values in middle/high school, at least from the answers of the majority of respondents.

Table 2: Attitudes about level of integration of traditional values in the current educational system by respondent category.

Category of respondents.	Integrated	Integrated but…	Not integrated	Not integrated but…	Total respondents
Students	1	1	7	1	10
Teachers	0	2	6	2	10
School administrators	0	0	7	3	10
Parents	2	2	4	2	10
Total	3	5	24	8	40

As shown in table 2, subject participants generally acknowledge the non-integration of this heritage in the teaching/learning process; 32 out of 40 respondents answered "no"

to the question about integration of traditional values. Among the eight "yes" to the same question two are teachers with experience in primary and preschool who confirm that traditional values are incorporated in the system but only for lower grades as one of them remarked: "yes they are included in the educational system. I had a chance to teach both in preschool and elementary before my current position as a mathematics teacher in a junior/high school, and I have noticed through this experience that traditional values are given a big part in preschool, less in primary school where subjects like *Morale* and *Education Civique* provide some knowledge about our culture and traditions; however, they are totally absent in the middle/high schools' programs." (teacher2) This comment shows that the so-called traditional values taught at school are gradually removed in the teaching/ learning process. Similar comments are also made by one student and two parents who actually have some teaching experience in the past.

The three remaining positive answers come from two parents and one student and, in my opinion, they result from either ignorance of what traditional values are or about the school programs. Comments such as "yes, we learn about Lat Dior and the different kingdoms in Senegal before colonization…" (student4) made by the student show that some students and many other Senegalese reduce the meaning of teaching values to solely the teaching of some historical facts about Senegal. Reminding people, particularly children, about the glorious past of ancestors to motivate them and keep them on the right path, is a common practice in Senegal used by elders, religious, and traditional leaders. However, cultural values are broader than that, as discussed in the background. Even political authorities who defend obstinately that traditional values are incorporated will

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always use as examples of the courses about the history and geography of Sénégal. They too show ignorance of the full meaning of traditional values based on these arguments.

The negative answers related to the integration of traditional values in the programs can be divided in two main groups: 24 participants who merely point out the absence of a specific subject dealing with the issue with sometimes suggestions "to integrate it as a whole and separate subject to be taught at all the levels of the school system" (teacher1) as one teacher mentioned in his answers. Among the other group of participants six out of seven (teachers, administrators, and students) after providing negative answers, saluted the great efforts that have been done by some teachers to indirectly integrate these values in their classes through their choice of materials and teaching strategies. For example, literature, history, geography, and philosophy teachers bring their students to visit some symbolic places, invite some traditionalists, religious or elders to give some speeches in class, assign students some readings related to traditional values and watch some films or make students do some role plays among other activities to emphasize more on the other side of education different from knowledge sharing, even though they don't have to. From my experience as a student and teacher in the same system I acknowledge the efforts made by different school actors to initiate children about local values. Some *surveillants* (supervisors) also whose role in the middle/high schools is more as an administrative and liaison between teachers, students, parents and school headmasters see to it that students dress and behave appropriately within the school area. Indeed, in many schools they send back home students who wear "sexy" clothes, hats or who act in a disrespectful way according to the Senegalese culture. They call their parents to school to discuss the student's behavior. Unlike the Western way of dressing I have seen in the

US, girls' dressing is very restricted and sensitive in Senegal. Showing one's arms or legs is still considered indecent and is subject to a lot of critiques from elders and religious leaders. Girls who are wearing inappropriate clothes are therefore consistently sent home. Students who also fight at school, abuse or show disrespect to any member of the school community are submitted to the same sanctions. Children, in Senegal, are generally afraid of parents and consider it a shame to have one's parents at school for such reasons, as quickly one can be labeled negatively within and even outside of the school community. Coming back to the informal implementation of traditional values, school authorities and other people praise the informal practices that are undertaken by teachers and *surveillants* that contribute to consolidate some of the Senegalese values. The following quotation from a school administrator's interviews reinforces how such actions from teachers and *surveillants* are hailed:

"There is no separate program on that, however, the teachers who are also parents, are doing a good job on that {…}. One has to acknowledge also the important role played by the *surveillants* who make sure that children are dressing and behaving appropriately, and all these actions are somehow a way of teaching our values." (School administrator 8)

Similar comments are made also by students; and below is one example among others to show that traditional values are indirectly implemented by some teachers: " no, here in Senegal we do not have a specific subject on our traditional values, like I said earlier, it's through certain readings… particularly books from Senghor, Camara Laye, Cheikh A. Kane, Mongo Beti… in African literature and civilization classes that some

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teachers to put emphasis on African culture and traditions to better explain the reading or motivate us…" (Student 4)

Based on his own experience, a teacher who also acknowledged the absence of such programs, raised an interesting point which is the training of teachers in local values before they are posted throughout the country, "in our teaching we have to take into account local values. When I was teaching in Casamance during my first days I sent a student to clean the board, he refused telling me that there are some students "slaves" in the class and that they should do it not him…. Therefore, teachers just like students should learn about these values for a better education" (teacher 2). This teacher's point is all the more relevant as cultural realities can differ thoroughly from one region to another in the same country.

In addition to issues of training teachers about cultural values, the comments made by this teacher raise the contradictions that one can find in some local values. Traditional values such as "slavery" and social castes are thoroughly different from western type of slavery because this one is more about social organization or history than exploitation. However, it is not only contradictory to the universal values of inclusion but also to the laws that govern the educational system in Senegal. Descendants of former slaves within the Senegalese context, in some parts of Senegal, are still named slave which does not mean they cannot benefit from any resources or job or that they may be subdued to work without pay for anyone else. However, they are only sometimes marrying among themselves, even though this practice is disappearing as social class is more and more leaving the ground to material wealth.

School in Senegal is free and mandatory until 17 to all children without any discrimination and it is the state responsibility to provide it to all children and youth as stated in the January 2001 constitution in its articles 21 and 22. Such practices, like slavery and social castes, are also contrary to religious values. With 95% of its population being Muslim and its acquaintance with Islam since the 10/11th century, Senegalese have adopted and integrated Islamic values in the socio-traditional ones. Islamic values as well as Christian ones refute any form of exclusion, therefore where should be the place of traditional values and practices like "slavery" and castes? Should we integrate them in the educational system? Which values should be integrated and which should be excluded or wiped out? These are questions that make the integration of traditional values in the educational system a complicated issue to handle by authorities and I will give my point of view in the conclusion part of this paper.

Overall, the data collected on this issue indicate that, though teachers and *surveillants* are indirectly and informally incorporating some traditional aspects in the teaching/learning process and the running of the school, there is not a whole and separate program about socio-cultural values in the curricula. The question of whether respondents think that it is worth integrating these traditional values in the curriculum is analyzed in the next subtopic based on the responses provided by participants.

5.3. Is It Relevant to Integrate Traditional Values into the Educational System?

The issue of relevancy of the integration of traditional values into the curriculum has been a constant part of the debates about education in Senegal**.** From the claim that there is a lack of means to train and hire teachers in that discipline to the idea that the current

system precipitates the loss of traditional values, among other arguments, Senegalese people have diverse and interesting point of views on this issue. Table 3 below shows different perceptions gathered from interviews with 50 Senegalese teachers, students, parents, elders, and school administrators'.

Table 3: Relevancy of integrating traditional values in the educational system

Participants	Yes, it is relevant.	No, it isn't.	Total
Students	8	2	10
Teachers	8	2	10
School administrators	9	1	10
Parents	8	2	10
Community elders	6	4	10
Total	39	11	50
Percentage	78%	22%	100%

The first result one easily notes is that 78% of respondents find it relevant to integrate traditional values in the curriculum. However, the gap is narrower among community elders, only 60% of whom (six out of ten) find it relevant; their position will be analyzed later in this section.

Eight students out of ten find it relevant to integrate traditional values into school programs, but most decline to comment on their position, except two (a *Terminale* and a *Premiere students*) who argued that "it is learning about our culture and we should." (Student 4) From my experience as a teacher in middle/high school, I would attribute these short positive answers to students' limited knowledge of the subject matter, particularly with respect to younger students. The only students who added comments are

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from Terminale and Premiere classes, the last two years of high school, which means that they are at least 15 years old. Since interviews were conducted in French, the younger students' limited vocabulary probably affected their ability to understand and argue in French about a topic such as traditional values.

The two students who found traditional values irrelevant based their arguments on the fact that they think there are "… already too many subjects to learn," (student 9) as one of them puts in. Actually, depending on the schools and the availability of teachers, students have to learn 10 to 15 different subjects, so they sometimes complain about the plethora of lessons. Such consideration might have influenced their answers to the particular question presented here.

Three intertwined topics emerge from the comments made by the 31 remaining positive answers provided by parents, teachers, elders and school administrators: motivation, preservation of heritage, and counterbalance to perversion.

Sending children to school and keeping them there remains a major challenge for school authorities in Senegal because some parents, particularly in rural areas, are reluctant to bring their children to school and sometimes take them back for various reasons, including negative perceptions of Western-style education. More and more school girls are getting pregnant by their boy schoolmates, teachers or school administrators. During the 2009/2010 academic year, 144 school girls got pregnant in the small region of Sedhiou (with 438,348 inhabitants), most of them by their teachers (Walfadjril, Sept. 2010). Many parents and elders relate these pregnancies and other social ills to the perversion borne out of these Western-style schools. As one elder stated:

"look at our young daughters they have lost all their *kersa* [shyness], they dress in a provocative way and they all would like to become models, just because they don't know the actual value of Senegalese women. It's normal they get pregnant. Pregnancy used to be a big shame, not only for the girl but for all her family; it isn't any more. Our women used to be shy, but since no one teaches them how they should behave any more, they just copy what they see on television… We do not reject thoroughly Western education, but it should include our values, to keep our children in the right way "(community elder 3).

This comment and similar ones made by other parents and elders reinforce the perception of perversion that some Senegalese attribute to the formal educational system, and the relevancy of traditional values as a method for the preservation of the Senegalese cultural heritage.   Therefore, the integration of courses on local values into the educational system could be a source of motivation for reluctant parents to keep their children in schools.

Four teachers, three school administrators and one parent (6 of them from Pout and Tamba which are rural and semi-rural areas) see the teaching of values as a source of motivation for people who really would like their children to receive a traditional education. It is noteworthy that this response is higher in rural areas where people are generally deeply rooted and bound to their traditions. The following interesting comment made by one parent supports her argument for the relevancy of teaching local values, and summarizes the comments of many others:

"We are illiterate so it's not easy for us to be confident with that type of education given to our children, they are learning another language and we cannot discuss

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with them about their studies because we don't know what they are learning. As mothers we are very worried about the education of our children; particularly girls, they need a good moral education above all. We would be more reassured if in addition to the foreign knowledge they are also taught about themselves. We just want teachers to play the role of fathers and mothers, and perhaps a program on that would facilitate their task." (Parent 9)

On the other hand, 40% of the community elders do not find it relevant to incorporate such values in the school programs. Two of them advocate preliminary traditional education through *dahras* or traditional initiations. Consider this quote from one of these elders: "The problem is that we send our children out to school at a too an early age. They should first attend the *dahras* which are doing a better job in terms of education then when they finish at 10 or 12 they start learning about others… It will be useless to integrate them in these schools because the settings and materials are not suited to traditional education…" (Community elder 4). Fewer elders support the incorporation of traditional values into modern schools because the elders want those values to be taught elsewhere like in the houses or in *dahras*.

The two remaining elders and the two teachers who gave negative answers argued that such education should be the role of parents and family, and therefore should be conducted within the community, not at school. For this group, family and community best know their values and their children, and they have the entire responsibility *to* "inculcate our values in our children, just like we received them from our parents and them from their parents. These teachers come from different areas how can they teach

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about our values if they do not understand them?" (Community elder 10). This comment by one of the elders illustrates an argument common among other respondents'.

Overall, the answers collected on this issue indicate the absence of a formal and specific course about traditional values in the curriculum in middle/high schools in Senegal; however, teachers and *surveillants* are sometimes integrating these values in the teaching and running of the school. Most participants also find it important and worth being integrated with different arguments among which this relevant one derived from a parent who defines education as a combination of "physical, intellectual, and moral values and as such it should not be limited to academic knowledge."The next subtopic will analyze the relation between the teaching/learning of these values and the motivation and school success of students.

5.4. Effects of Integrating Traditional Values on Students' Educational Success

As discussed earlier there is a high rate of drop-out and school failure In Sénégal, particularly in junior/high schools, which needs rapid and efficient solutions if the authorities want to value the 40% part of the national budget investment in education. Most of the time traditional values are considered tremendous obstacles to education of children in Senegal and in Africa in general. This paper explores, among other themes and solutions to school failure, the effects that the integration of traditional values might have on children's school success. School success as discussed in the background chapter is believed to be the stepping stone to the future socio-economic success of children in Senegal. Therefore, anything that could participate in its betterment is generally welcomed by parents, teachers, school administrators, elders, and students above all. All

of the 50 participants involved in this project provided diverse and interesting comments

and observations on this point. Most of them seemed very excited to talk about this point;

and table 4 below give us an idea of what participant think about the issue.

Table 4: Will integration of traditional values impact positively school success?

Respondents	Yes	No	Decline to answer	Total
Students	5	5	0	10
Teachers	6	4	0	10
School administrators	8	2	0	10
Parents	6	4	0	10
Community elders	8	1	1	10
Total	33	16	1	50
Percentage	66%	32%	2%	100%

This table shows that 66% of all participants think that failure rate at national

exams might decrease if local values are integrated in the educational system. To the

question: "explain how introduction of traditional values might improve school results,"

motivation is the main point that comes out of the comments. Motivation is described by

education specialists such as Jacques Andre in " Eduquer a la Motivation, cette force qui

Fait Reussir" (2005) as the main driver to children's success at school. Motivation in this

particular case is described as key to educational success because, since strikes and

students' lack of motivation are among the main causes of failures at national exams, as

discussed in the previous chapter, "students need to be frequently reminded the values of

jom, mu et de *fulë* to incite them to work harder at school…" said a parent (parent 2).

Actually, values of *Jom, Fulë, mu* , *Sutura* can be found in 8 other comments made by 2

teachers, 3parents, 2 elders and 2 administrators. These words, already discussed in this paper, convey a strong sense of responsibility and dignity of any individual vis-á-vis his/her community and him/herself. As such, people, particularly parents and community elders, use it in their discussion with younger ones when the latter are misbehaving, showing sign of laziness, or when they are getting ready for a trip, journey, etc. as "provision" to remind them what the society, in general, expect from them. Therefore, it is not surprising for me to see that no student mention these values in their comments because generally they are recipients of such advisory discourse from older people. Children and students in particular are not used to saying these words, but to hearing them; it is awkward and hilarious to hear such words in the children's discourse. In Senegal phrases like "*amoo jom*" (you are hopeless) or "*mu ël*" (be strong) are used by parents when upset by their children or to encourage them in hard situation. Such phrases are very touching particularly coming from parents and have in many cases proven to be very efficient means of triggering motivation on children.

Motivation also because "they will learn about themselves, their ancestors, how they were living, what they have accomplished, how they fought against enemies to leave this legacy, a peaceful country… and I think they will love it, and if you love something you are motivated to do it, with motivation success always follows," commented a teacher (teacher 4), inferring that teaching traditional values through history of a country's great men might lead to motivation of children learners. Another group of 2 parents, 4 elders and 1 student have talked about the power of religious education in the formation of a disciplined and hard working citizen. *Quranic* schools, known as *dahras* in Senegal, are considered by many people as the most relevant type of education for

children to acquire "moral values which are fundamental for every single individual to receive at early age if one wants them to overcome life's obstacles," commented a community elder (community elder 5) who has experienced both education and occupied high political responsibilities in Senegal. Furthermore, he gives his own example among others to support his belief that religious values might help resolve this issue of school failure, in the following quote:

> "life is a series of obstacle and one need a strong faith and dignity to go through it …., I have received a religious education before the western one and I think it was very helpful to me, you have also the example of Idrissa Seck or Cheikh A. Diop they received a religious education and they did well in the Western schools too… so I think integrating religious studies in schools can, not only be an alternative to the so-decried *dahras* but also make children be aware of their responsibilities, work harder and hopefully succeed not only at school but in life in general." (Community elder 5)

Analysis of the comments above shows that Senegalese people have different understanding of traditional values; some relate them to values of jom, fulë, kersa, etc., others consider them history of the great men and women of the country, a third group see them as religious teaching and another group also think it is local languages and way of life. These various perceptions of traditional values from the Senegalese people will probably not make it easy for the educational authorities to elaborate a program that will suit the different layers of the Senegalese society. However, this paper will propose some solutions in the conclusion.

The chart above also shows that 32% of the participants believe that an integration of traditional values into the educational system would not affect children's academic success. Among this group were five students (making up 50% of all the students interviewed), three of whom argued that it would only be extra work for them and could therefore decrease their chances of success in national exams. Again, the workload issue was raised in rejecting the incorporation of traditional values into the curriculum, so we may ask whether their negative responses reflect real beliefs about academic success and failure, or simply reluctance to accept more work. Similar comments were made by 1 teacher, and one administrator barely mentioned it in passing. The 2 remaining students declined to comment on their position.

Teaching traditional values was not considered an obvious formula for school success by 40% of all teachers and parents interviewed. One teacher, as mentioned above, worries about the workload while 3 others blame high failure rates on the strikes by both students and teachers: "As long as authorities do not improve the teaching and living conditions of the teachers, there will be strikes, and with strikes no program can be covered, so it will be very difficult for students to succeed at exams, I don't see what traditional values can do here…" commented one of them (teacher 5). Whether this observation was intended as a total rejection of the relationship between traditional values and academic success or simply as a complaint against the authorities, the fact remains that many Senegalese refer to teachers as "always-complaining-guys." This label, alongside the amorality of some teachers, makes parents dubious that teaching values might have any effects in increasing school success rates. As one parent bitterly remarked: "they are raping our daughters. How can you teach values to kids if you dare

do such horrible things? Them teaching values would have no effect on children, neither in their daily attitudes nor in their works." (Parent9). Parents simply think this kind of behavior among teachers *is* incompatible with any teaching of values and any positive expectation for such a program. This attitude raises questions about implementation, e.g., who should teach traditional values even if they were to be integrated into the school system. As noted in the chart, one elder declined to answer this question, for the stated reason that he had already answered it.

It seems that the groups of participants who are most skeptical are not criticizing integration of traditional values per se, but they are interested in other ways of improving exam results, or else they simply blame the situation on others: teachers on parents and authorities, parents on teachers and authorities, and authorities on teachers and parents. Each of these actors is on the defensive and throws the responsibility for students' failure at others, instead of actually commenting on the impact which value-teaching might have on students' success at school.

This chapter indicates that there is no specific school course covering traditional values currently used in the Senegalese curriculum, according to most interviewees and data collected. Most of them also find it important to be integrated in the curriculum or be given a stronger place. It is also considered by the majority of interviewees as a catalyst of motivation for school children and therefore it could positively affect their work and school success rate. Though many of the respondents argue negatively with valuable comments too, such as leaving the traditional values to parents or different educational settings, still the majority do not reject the importance and positive impacts it might have on children's schooling and education in general. Overall, people seem to agree that it is

worth integrating traditional values and that its incorporation in the teaching learning process can positively affect success rate at national exams. However, some respondents find it more efficient to include parents more in the system to improve school success rates. The following chapter analyzes parents' inclusion and its effects on educational success in Senegal, again based on the interviews of different school actors in Senegal.

CHAPTER VI

PARENTS' INTEGRATION IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND ACTIVITIES AND IMPACTS ON EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

Parents and community elders have played a major role as educators in the traditional African society and in Senegal in particular. With the advent of colonization, and the introduction of Western-style education, the responsibility of educating youth has partially shifted from the parents and elders to formal schools. It first went to Western teachers, mainly through missionary schools, and then gradually to local people who have been trained according to European concepts (Ndiaye, 2010). However, the institutionalization of Western educational system has not entirely succeeded. As discussed above, as early as independence of the country l'A.P.E. (l'Association des Parents d'Eleves), the students' parents association, was formed to bring parents closer to the schools and get them participate in the running of the school. An analysis of the data collected will show to what extent parents are actually involved in the school life and teaching/learning process, and whether their integration into school administration and involvement in school activities could affect learners' academic success.

Three main questions were asked of participants to understand what Senegalese think about the degree of inclusion of parents in their children's schooling: do parents supervise their children's school work at home? How often do parents visit their children's school to request information? And do parents participate in the school activities and the running of the school? In addition, the following questions will be used in our analysis of the correlation inclusion of parents and school success: do you think a greater inclusion of parents in the education system can impact school success?

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Answers to these questions, from students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and community elders, will give us more insights of the issue. School work requires lots of homework to succeed in it; therefore, a regular supervision and assistance of children out of school can be crucial for their success at school. On the other hand, children spend more time at school than in their house which makes school a second home for them where studies are mixed with cultural activities. As a second house for their children, parents are bound to be present and involved in the running of school; whether they are fulfilling this duty or leaving the entire job to school staffs may have many consequences on the whole education of their children. Another reason why I investigated about parents' involvement in schools' activities is that it could be easier to fully incorporate traditional values and culture.

6.1. Parents' Inclusion in Children's School Life

To measure parents' inclusion in their children's school life, specifically at home, the study focus on responses from students and parents as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Parents supervising their children's school work at home

Do parents supervise their children's school work?	Total interviewed		
		Yes	No
Students	10	3	7
Parents	10	4	6

Only 3 out of 10 students indicated that their parents supervise and make sure they regularly do their homework and help them when needed. Due to the insufficient time in class, the incompetence of some teachers, and the big amount of homework and

other assignments; children really need someone to get them to focus on their studies and reinforce their learning outside of formal school hours. According to UNICEF 57% of adults in Senegal are illiterate. Parental illiteracy can partly explain the low number of parents who supervise their children's schoolwork. With their lack of knowledge about education, parents are either unable to help children with their assignments or unaware of the need to supervise their children's schoolwork and progress.

The second main reason for this low rate of parents' participating in children's school work at home, according to the students' comments, is their parents' poverty. Parents are currently more concerned about the daily expenses, and making sure children have food. So even if they wanted to spend time on schoolwork, there is almost no time left to dedicate to their children's education. The following comments by a student summarize the two factors that contribute to the low level of parent involvement in their children's education:

> "First my parents are illiterate so they can't help with school work. However I am very   grateful to them for sending me to school, … second even though they want they can't pay teachers for _home reinforcement classes_ because they are too busy finding food and clothes for us…" (Student 8)

The comments also reveal another interesting point related to the paying of university students or teachers to supervise children's school work at home. This is a very common practice in Senegal: parents who have the means often pay college students or teachers to reinforce their children's learning in subjects they have difficulties following or in which they do not have good grades. Actually, even among the seven students who answered no to the parents' involvement above, three admitted that their parents have

found them "home teachers". Still four students out of 10 do not have "home teachers" and are not assisted by their parents at home, which might reduce their chances to succeed at school. However, some of these students work out some other ways to obtain outside help, with group work, and the assistance of friends and neighbors. Others, who are unlucky, lazy or not conscious of the need to work hard will most likely suffer from the lack of home assistance and supervision because children have a natural tendency to play and procrastinate and therefore need to be guided outside and assisted of school to be more likely to succeed at school.

Other factors, such as parents' death, divorce or children living outside of the family circle for different reasons education included, may explain the parents' absence in formal education.

The majority of parents (6 out of 10), like students, admitted that they do not assist and supervise their children's studies at home. Like students, parents also mention illiteracy and poverty when explaining this lack of engagement. Failing to pay for "home teachers" or supervise children themselves because of illiteracy, some parents "try to motivate them, to appoint them a schedule for their homework, … often remind them of the importance of education in the current world system, and give them my own example, how I am regretting my not attending schools which has limited my chances and opportunities to find a decent job…" commented a parent (parent 3). This parent's comment reveals his desire to help children succeed, but his limited resources and illiteracy prevent him to do more for the surveillance of his children's out of school work. I can tell through my experience that many illiterate parents are very worried about their

children's school success and are sometimes endeavoring, in vain, to help their children throughout their educational process.

However, illiteracy can be a double handicap for parents. First illiterate parents are unable to supervise their children works at home themselves. Second, illiterate people are generally the most vulnerable to poverty as shown in the IMF (2007) facts "almost 55 percent of heads of household without education are poor", and therefore do not have the means to pay for "home teachers" for their children. Illiterate parents might not neglect their children's education and might be striving to assist them, however, this is not enough to give these students the maximum of chances to succeed at school considering the endless strikes in the school system and the lack of trained and competent teachers. Compared to the children of the six parents in the table above, who either supervise their children's work themselves or pay a "home teacher", one has to admit that it is difficult to impossible for children coming from modest families to compete against students coming from better of families. Parents who engage are more likely to help their children succeed in exams. Indeed, the four parents among the six who supervise their children home works have all received a western education and the two others who pay for tutors are also educated as they expressed in their interviews. Through these facts one can observe that educated parents seem to invest in and commit themselves more to their children's work.

The general remark one can draw from parents' comments up to this point is that parents do not have equal opportunity to support their children's schoolwork outside of school. Some parents are able to brag about and be proud of the time and/or money they devote to their children's education. Consider this parent who expresses his " … pride

because she(her daughter) is intelligent (*kaar*: knock the wood for luck when praise) and hard work. I do not even need to tell her to do her homework. And I pay some private classes for her" (parent 5). Others lament their inability to help their children and their helplessness before this situation, "we wish we could put them in the best conditions to succeed but we can't, we just rely on God and good willing people, … l really want him to succeed at school and have a better life in the future" a woman commented (parent 9).

6.2. Parents' Visits at Schools.

The second tool I have used to measure parents inclusion in the educational system in my research was to ask teachers, students, school administrators and parents themselves about the frequency of parents' visits to schools to inquire about their children's work and behavior. Table 6 below gives an idea of how often parents visit to their children at school.

Table 6: Frequency of parents visiting their children's schools

How often do parents visit school?	Never	Rarely	Often	Very often	Total
Students	1	6	2	1	10
Teachers	1	6	3	0	10
Parents	2	4	2	2	10
School administrators	0	6	3	1	10
Total	4	22	10	4	40
Percentage	10%	55%	25%	10%	100%

Illiteracy and poverty are the main reasons raised in the previous part of this chapter to justify the small number of parents supervising their children's school work at

home. Yet visiting one's child's school for information does not require much means or any level of literacy. As the table above shows that 65% of the 40 participants interviewed, parents included, declared that parents never or rarely visit schools to inquire about their children's school work. Here, the main two reasons listed by parents and students are lack of time and ignorance.

Those parents who acknowledge their failure to be more involved in their children's education generally find excuse in the lack of time, "to tell you the truth I rarely go to my children's schools, I really wish I could but daily expenses has taken all our time, you know we have to feed, dress, treat our family when they are sick. I am not a civil servant, I have to work it out in a daily basis, however, whenever they need his parents at school his uncle will do it for me and that's the same he is his father too," added a parent to justify his failure to do so (parent 4). Actually, uncles in some Senegalese culture, like the Serer one, can play the role of the biological father and they are the ones who even give to marriage their nieces and nephews. Therefore, having one's uncle, brother, parents' friend or neighbors represent biological parents at school is acceptable in Senegal, not only for the Serer but for other communities too because the understanding of parents go beyond father and mother.

Some parents do not find it necessary to often go to schools and only go there when they are convoked. This is not surprising, considering that parents are called upon only twice a year to pick their children's end of semester exams papers, when their children have administrative issues, or misbehave at school. School administrators and teachers profit by this period of exam papers distribution to talk with parents about their children and exchange information. The main issue is that the school system expects

more parent involvement and parent do not seem to get it. Furthermore, students sometimes resort to "fake parents" whenever they have bad grades or misbehave for fear of being reprimanding by parents as one of them mentioned in his interview:

> "My father rarely comes to my school, he does not receive a western education and does not understand much about how things work there so he sometimes prefers to send his younger brother to pick our papers and inform him. However, he cares a lot about discipline… so we students sometimes prefer to pick some people in the streets and convince them to be our 'fake parents' because we don't want to be reprimanded before our classmates or because our parents live far away." (Student 2)

The resort to "fake parents" can be a consequence of the extended family in Sénégal, which creates an opening for clever students who are in trouble at school to substitute a completely fake adult for a family member. It would be culturally inappropriate to only accept biological parents at school, however the school authorities should set up some clear rules to identify and verify a range of "parents" who might normally be coming on behalf of the parents to avoid such cheating from students.

The main consequence of the distance between parents and schools is that parents are unaware of the actual progress of their children. Teachers and school administrators, who by 65% (13 out of 20) declared that parents never or rarely visit school, deplored this situation. Consider these comments from a 54 year old school administrator: "they never come to school, they have given up the education of their children, some of them send their kids to school just to get rid of them and put the whole responsibility and blame on us whenever something wrong happens" (school administrator 8). Likewise a

teacher expresses desperation about parental disengagement: "We really need them, they know their children best and their feedback and presence would really facilitate our task" (teacher 5). Another teachers and a school administrator make similar comments to deplore parents' gradual resignation in their children's education.

By contrast, 35% of respondents report that parents do frequently visit to schools. This group includes educated parents and a few children of schools' staff such as this 14 year old boy who noted, "my father is always at school because he teaches there" (student 2). Parents who directly or indirectly work with schools or education in general are more aware of school life and what they are expected to bring in the process. This parent who is also a civil servant noted, "after I get the transcripts of my children I make sure to go back to school and to his different teachers to ask about children's weaknesses, strength, how they behave, their absence, and where they need to be reinforced because I have friends teachers and we talk very often about education," (parent 5). This shows how his acquaintance with school actors makes him aware of what he should do or could do to help both his children and the school staff. Some other parents, just because they go twice a year to their children school to pick their grades, argue that they frequently visit schools. Perhaps because of their understanding they have to go to schools only when they are convened; and if that is the case authorities and school administrators should invest more on sensitizing the parents about their actual duties and responsibilities and what they are expected vis-à-vis schools in the educational process of their children.

In general, this analysis reveals a low level of parent engagement with school and also suggests that most parents who visit their children's schools are themselves educated. Still, some parents, though illiterate, have expressed their concerns about their

kids' education and very often go to school to request information about their children's schoolwork.

6.3. Parents' Involvement and School Activities

To discuss the parents' involvement in school activities this thesis has focused on the responses of participants regarding their participation in school activities and decision making as shown in table 7.

Table 7: Parents' participation in school activities and decision making.

Do parents participate in school activities and decisions making?	YES	NO	Total
Students	2	8	10
Teachers	5	5	10
Parents	3	7	10
School administrators	6	4	10
Total	16	24	40
Percentage	60%	40%	100%

This table reveals also that 60% of people interviewed do not think that parents participate in school activities and decision making. However, one interesting point is that more than 50% of teachers and school administrators think otherwise. Those same teachers and school administrators, many of whom were deploring parental disengagement earlier in this chapter seem to contradict themselves by noting in the chart above that parents do participate in school activities and decisions making. But these responses, far from being contradictory, can be analyzed as a way for teachers and school administrators to praise those A.P.E. members who are already active in the running of schools and encourage the majority, who remain remote, to be more involved in school

activities. By acknowledging and praising whatever little the small handful members of A.P.E. are doing in the schools is a way to avoid frustration of this active group. But it invites the others to integrate more into the school. However, right after the positive note, most of the respondents deplored the small number of parents who are active in such associations and the A.P.E. limited "power" and influence in the actual making of school decision. We find such ideas in the comments of many teachers and school administrators. For example this 50 year old school administrator notes that:

"They do participate in the school's activities and they even attend some meetings particularly the president of the association and the treasurer. They take 20% of the registration fees of students and use them for the good running of the school. For instance, they repair and build new classrooms, however, just like us they cannot take major decisions as far as curriculum design and implementation is concerned, those decisions are made by authorities in the ministry…" (school administrator 4)

As shown in the table above, few (3 out of 10) parents acknowledge that they participate in school activities because it seems that only educated parents who are members of the A.P.E., should take part in socio-educational activities as one can read in the following comment made by a 38 year old parent: "we should have a say in the teachers who are posted in our schools and we should also be consulted when designing the programs that are taught to our children, they only call us when they need money, to settle strikes, or for discipline concerns." (Parent 1)

Some parents just think that because of their illiteracy there is not much they can do and they won't be listened to or even given any chance to attend activities. Many agree

with the assessment of this 43 year old father "only educated parents can win a seat in the A.P.E. so how can we participate in activities, etc. and I think we won't be very useful there, we do not know much about the educational system" (parent 10). This comment reflects the importance of thinking about the actual role illiterate parents might play in the education process and how they should be better integrated for the benefit of children and education in general. If participating in school activities and decision making areas requires a certain level of education, 54% of illiterate adult in Senegal may be relegated to the position of observers in the educational process of their children which is not only unfair but it also reduced the learners chance to profit by whatever positive parents can bring in their education and schooling in particular.

Analysis of the comments made by participants reveals that few parents participate in schools' socio-pedagogical activities through the A.P.E. as 60% of the respondents state that parents do not participate in school activities and decision making. Furthermore, such participation is limited because major decisions are made by school administrators or their bosses at the ministry. After investigating the inclusion of parents in the educational system, this paper analyzes the correlation parent inclusion/success in schoolwork in the following subpart.

6.4. Parents' Inclusion and Educational Success

To the question whether or not parents' greater inclusion in school spheres will impact positively on school success, the study collected answers of all participants as shown in the table 8.

Table 8: Impacts of parents' inclusion on school success.

Can parents' inclusion impact school success?	Yes	No	Total
Students	7	3	10
Teachers	8	2	10
Parents	7	3	10
School administrators	10	0	10
Community elders	7	3	10
Total	39	11	50
Percentage	78%	22%	100%

The number of students in schools goes far beyond the school capacity in Senegal. Classrooms contain approximately 70 students instead of 40. Because students outnumber the desirable capacities of schools, parents are needed to play a bigger part in the educational sphere to facilitate the staff's work. Hopefully this collegial work might positively impact students' performance at school.

This idea seems to be shared from 100% of school administrators and expressed towards the community as expressed in their comments. By answering the question, administrators not only agree on the correlation between parents' inclusion and school success, but they also seem to make a call to parents to come closer to the schools.

Convinced of the positive impacts bigger parents' inclusion can have on school success 78% of the interviewees from the 5 different categories (students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and community elders) based their arguments on two main reasons: 1) sensitivity and high respect of younger people towards older ones can be used to decrease strikes at schools because students and younger teachers will accept their parents' suggestions and 2) the pedagogical aspect of the parent/child relationship as parents' have a valuable expertise and knowledge of their children which should be more valued in the educational process.

Society and parents in particular resort to various means including corporal punishment to build up fear, deference, and respect in the education of children. As a Wolof saying *xale xamul yala way xam na yatt* "child does not know God but knows stick." Since corporal punishment is thoroughly forbidden in the schools since 1973 this "powerful" educational weapon only lies on the hands of parents today. Hence, it is necessary for parents to know what their kids are doing at school and use their parental power to complete the grading means used by school staffs. Corporal punishment is a controversial issue in Senegal. With globalization, international law and children's rights in particular, child abuse is the main weapon that has been used by the children's right defenders to argue for the elimination of the use of stick or any form of "violence" against children, even for the sake of education. However, if Westerners view any use of stick or hand against children as an abuse, many Senegalese find it an efficient means of achieving pedagogical goals. Such position does not mean these people are disrespectful to children's dignity, but it might reflect the importance they put on children's education and future socio-economic success. From my experience I remember that during my last

year of primary school, every morning we had to recite our multiplication tables or received some punishments including beating with a stick. This strategy seemed to work because, all of us, by the end of the first semester, managed to recite all our tables for fear of either being beaten or shamed in front of our peers.

None of the means of punishment was meant to hurt the children, however the increase of the accidents and children's right movements have led the authorities to toughen the laws against corporal punishment and their implementation. Some people see it as a source of drop-out and injuries leading sometimes to death. Whereas others see in the corporal punishment a necessary means to keep children focus as the nature of children requires them to be afraid of someone or something to work hard or behave appropriately and it is frequently used in different informal education sectors in Senegal. Maybe since most Senegalese do not have the rewarding option westerners' have, the "stick" option could be accepted maybe with some restrictions to avoid any excessive use of it and its limitation to young primary school students; just as many the traditional values should not be wiped out but readjusted to better fit the current realities.

Strikes, either from teachers or students, are among the main reasons for students' failure according to the data collected in this research; and according to many interviewees parents' inclusion can decrease such strikes of children and teachers too. One teacher explained that, "students who have their parents working at school generally work well and are never involved in strikes or reprehensible acts…"

Afraid or ashamed of their parents, children would not like to be responsible or take any part in strikes for fear of being reprimanded by parents. As this school administrator added "less strikes will definitely lead to better results at local and national

exams" (school administrator 3). Other interviewees advocate a bigger presence of parents during prize giving ceremonies, as children want to be rewarded particularly in front of their parents. Such an emulation method was a teacher idea.

The second main reason, pedagogical aspect, is generally based on the fact that parents know their children better than teachers; therefore, a permanent exchange between parents and the school staffs' is necessary for the success of children at school and in life in general. This position was mainly defended by parents (4) and teachers (3), however while the former might be accused of praising themselves, they can nevertheless contribute significantly to the educational process, as seen in this quote from a parent "we can bring a lot, children need their parents close to them as source of motivation and to morally support them when need be. Teachers can do some things but others only us parents can do most. However I have to acknowledge I spend less time for the schooling of my children. Life's not easy," (parent 6) the latter not only acknowledges the role parents can play in school success but also makes a call for a bigger parent inclusion. Since both sides acknowledge the benefits and complementarities of parents' inclusion in schooling, it should not be difficult for authorities to work out a compromise for the benefit of learners.

In addition to the two main reasons of sensitivity and pedagogical aspect parents discussed above, some others were used by the people interviewed to explain how parents' inclusion can affect school success. Among the socio-cultural part A.P.E.s can play we can list their attendance and participation to cultural activities organized in schools. This will also positively impact success as raised by some interviewees: "some students need support to succeed and others would like to join the time on board which

make them love school and studies and hopefully succeed" explained a school administrator to sustain his position (school administrator 9). In addition to that, parents could also play an important social part through assisting students who "come from rural area places and need social assistance to continue their studies" in cities as a student remarked (student 1).

On the other hand, 22% of participants do not think that parents' inclusion will have any positive impacts on school success. The reason for this can be summarized through this startling quote from a teacher, "it would be absurd to think that parents' inclusion can decrease strikes and impact results. No, the causes for failures are diverse and parents can only play an inconsequential part … solutions should be found elsewhere." Though not thoroughly rejecting the role parents can bring in the process of school success improvement, people like this teacher minimize the actual impacts the inclusion of parents can have on school success and call for the exploration of other solutions for other causes of the high rate of school failure. In the same trend, some other participants including 1 parent and 2 students and 1 teacher consider that the place of parents are not at school but at home, and therefore they cannot impacts results. "If the teachers are competent enough, students should succeed" argued a parent.

Overall, the analysis of data throughout this chapter shows that parents and students in the great majority agree that parents devote little to no time to the supervision of their children's school work at home, with illiteracy and poverty being the main reasons. Moreover, most teachers, school administrators, students, and even parents acknowledge and deplore the scarce visits of parents to schools and their participation in schools' activities and integration in the decision making areas. And finally 78% of participants in

the interview think that parents' inclusion can positively impact school success, because of the pedagogical contribution and sensitive weight parents can bring to the educational process. Indeed, the message one can derive from this chapter is that currently parental impact is underused and could be increased in order to obtain better educational success in Senegal. Although, there is no existing data that proves the direct effects parents' inclusion have or might have on school success, people still maintain a strong belief in the positive impacts it can bring in the educational system in general.

This chapter shows, at least, the undeniable role parents can play in the improvement of the educational system in Senegal. However, with the high rate of poverty some parents are mainly concerned with the daily expenses and education is down in the top priorities. Some others are aware of the crucial role of education in the socio-professional future of their children in the current global and competitive job market, but due to their poverty they are unable to bring all the necessary support to their children's education. A third group of parents, conscious of their modest economic situation, use it to motivate their children to work harder at school for hopefully a better future. Considering that "55 percent of heads of household without education are poor, compared to 46 percent of those with primary schooling… families where the head of household has secondary schooling (26 percent) or higher (12.5 percent)" (IMF, 2007), it is obvious that the majority of parents are illiterate and poor. Nonetheless a great number of people have made their way out though coming from modest families, and the example of the Lycee Limamoulaye located in Guediawaye (located in the poorest suburban area of Dakar) which receives most of the awards during the 2009 *Concours General*, a contest that gathers the best high school students in Senegal, is a startling one. Therefore, this paper

finds it necessary to analyze the inputs provided by students, teachers, school

administrators and parents about the impacts of poverty in the educational success. The

chapter below discusses this issue.

CHAPTER VII

POVERTY AND IMPACTS ON EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

To measure the degree of wealth or poverty of students' families, in a country where we already know 57% of the population are reported poor based on the GDP per capita ($1,900)and there is an unemployment rate of 54% (USAID Senegal) showing how dire the economic situation is, won't be a difficult task. As discussed in the background chapter, Senegal is an economically poor country. This paper has investigated parents' main occupations and their ability to provide their children with school materials, internet, and/or a mini home library to have the opinion of different school actors and how poverty can be perceived in the educational milieu. In other words, this paper measures wealth only in terms of the ability to provide children with educational materials needed to maximize their chance to succeed at school. Considering the hope parents nourish in the education of their children in Senegal, they would buy them school materials if they had the means to; therefore, the availability of material for students can inform about their economic situation. This chapter analyzes first the availability of school materials for students and parents' occupation, then the perceived correlation of wealth and grades, and finally what the participants think about the impacts of poverty on school success.

7.1. Students' Access to Educational Materials

Table 9 below shows the answers of parents and students as to whether or not parents buy school materials for their children and if children have access to internet and/or a small library at home.

Table 9: Availability of Educational Materials for Students

Participants	Do parents buy school materials?		Do you have internet/library at home?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Students	4	6	1	9
Parents	5	5	3	7

The facts revealed by table 9 corroborate the obvious general poverty of the Senegalese, since 50% of parents and students interviewed do not buy or are not provided with school materials, and 80% of them do not have internet and/or library at home due to poverty. In addition to these facts, only three out of ten parents interviewed work for the government and are somehow likely to pay fees and materials for their children, because civil servants are assured to be paid every month and they benefit from health coverage. The other seven parents who work as masons, small farmers, traders, mechanic, or retired and are generally people of modest means in Senegal because their income generating activities are unstable and generally affected by the overall poverty of the population. They are therefore less likely than governmental officers to provide their children with school materials. Considering the important role technologies and libraries play in the current educational system, it is obvious that the majority of students in

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Senegal are missing great opportunities to learn more, better, and at a faster pace. Furthermore, six out of the 10 school administrators interviewed have internet access for staffs and students in their schools whereas only three of them have libraries. Thus, even though, authorities provide some school materials such as books on programs, these materials are never enough. Children coming from richer families are better equipped in the quest for knowledge, success, and, later on, the job market.

7.2.Correlation Economic Status and Grades

The question of whether or not wealth determines the students' grades and success at school was asked to the students, parents, and school administrators to have insights from the actual stakeholders of schools. The point of this question was first to know what these people think about wealth's influence upon success at school; specifically the discourse that rich children are bound to succeed and children coming from modest families are doomed to fail. Then, how poverty or wealth affects the motivation of students? Respondents had different understanding of the question and different opinion supported with different argument as the analysis of table 10 below shows.

Table 10: Perceived correlation of wealth and grades.

Do you think children coming from richer families have better grades?	Yes	No	Total
Students	2	8	10
Teachers	0	10	10
School administrators	1	9	10
Total	3	27	30
Percentage	10%	90%	100%

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More than 90% of school administrators, teachers, and students, concluded through their experience, that children coming from richer families do not get better grades. "Intelligence has nothing to do with wealth," argued a teacher to explain the non correlation wealth/good grades (teacher 4). This contradicts to an earlier point made by some respondents according to which poor parents cannot pay for home teachers and therefore minimize their children chance for success. If intelligence is enough to succeed at school he might be right, but if students need additional assistance in order to succeed his argument becomes debatable. The majority of other participants base their position on their own experience or the experience of famous people in Senegal or around the world. Many teachers and students gave examples of students who, though rich, are not doing well at school while other students who come from modest families or areas manage to have very good grades. Such facts and remarks show that there is no direct correlation between wealth and success at school or poverty and failure in popular perception. Though many of the respondents seem to agree on the crucial role means or wealth can play in educational success, few seem to admit that wealth leads to success. The explanation for this opinion could be the examples of people who have managed to make out their way in life even with meager means; and, on the other hand, examples of people who, despite their means, have failed many times in their lifetime. This is not valid only for Senegal, but everywhere in the world. However, does this mean that poverty impacts positively on school success? An analysis of table 11 below will give us a general idea of relation poverty/motivation then further poverty/school success.

7.3. Impacts of Poverty on School Success

Table 11 below indicates the perception of respondents to whether or not poverty can be a source of motivation and factor to school success.

Table 11: Perception of the impacts of poverty on school success.

Participants	Is poverty a source of school motivation?		Does poverty lead to school success?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Students	8	2	3	7
Teachers	7	3	2	8
Parents	6	4	5	5
School administrators	7	3	3	7
Community elders	8	2	6	4

Though most participants (36 out of 50) agree on poverty being a source of motivation for students, 31 out of 50 making 62% reject any idea of poverty as source of success at school. Poverty can be a source of great motivation for students because the Senegalese society places the great responsibility of supporting one's family once grown up on the shoulders of children, and they are often reminded of such responsibility and hope. Despite the high rate of unemployment among educated youth in the country that shows no actual correlation between education and employment in Senegal, people still place a great hope in education as a way to socio-economic success because they identify the educated leaders working for governmental, private, and international sectors as the social groups in Senegal that are better off. This is among the main point that motivate children to work harder at school; the hopes of offering a better life to their parents and family. One of the children commented that: "many people in the government come from

modest families and why not us? … if we work hard at school we can get out of this situation and like any good children make our mothers proud, … we have to work harder than the others because we don't have as many means as they have and I am conscious of this." (Student 8) Quotes such as these express their motivation.

Participants who think that poverty does not encourage children to work more at school base this position on the shame children sometimes feel in sharing the same classes with other children who dress better and can afford all or most of the school materials required. For others poverty creates a need that leads children to, voluntary or through the influence of their parents, drop out school for miscellaneous jobs in order to contribute to the economic running of the family. This first point has been a source of many drop outs in school: I can confirm from my experience that, students, particularly girls are narcissistic at the age they attend middle/high schools (13 to 20). For example dress and make up become an important part of their personality; therefore if they can't afford to keep up with their peers, being with others who shows off nice clothes might be not easy for them to bear. As a result, they find any excuse to skip or just drop out of schools. With the establishment of mandatory uniforms since 2005, the educational authorities are endeavoring to fight against social inequalities within schools. From my own experience and perception, I believe that it was a good decision and it was hailed by the majority of parents and teachers. Uniforms which use to be private and professional schools property are now adopted by almost all the public schools; this fast expansion shows its acceptance by school actors.

As for the second point, considering that school requires a long period of time before one can hopefully reap any fruit some students "miss classes whenever they see

any opportunity to make some money. Sometimes even it is the parents who send them do those jobs because of the pressing survival need, … others just drop school to learn other jobs like mason, blacksmith, tailor, farmer, etc. which do not last long and where children are more likely to gain some money while learning skills," commented a teacher to express his disagreement about poverty as a source of motivation for students (teacher 6). This comment also raises the issue of non formal education; many parents prefer to draw their children from school and send them to learn masonry, blacksmith, mechanic, hair-doing, tailor, etc. where they are more likely to find a job at a faster pace. However, the informal character of such education makes them low skilled workers who will have to work hard and earn less, maybe just enough to survive. Such type of education does not also help the country to attract big investors and multinational corporations who are more and more looking for educated work force to maximize their profit. I would say that it is not thoroughly a bad option that some parents decide to take their children to a non formal type of education where they would at least gain skills which will help them make money, maybe not enough to enjoy a luxurious life but perhaps better than being an unemployed graduate. I think authorities should step in and either support the existing informal vocational training to help them modernize and controlling their progress or set up formal vocational schools for those students who failed national exams or drop out of school. In 2009, the universities in Senegal could not contain all the students who succeeded the BAC, and President Wade made the proposition to create vocational school for those who were not admitted in the universities and those who failed the BAC too. Unfortunately, nothing has been done so far and it seems to be another political rhetoric meant just to appease the anger of students. It still remains that the idea of

vocational training can be a good alternative or back up to the general educational system and it could not only fight against school drop outs and all the consequences related to drop out, but also unemployment.

Despite the consideration of poverty as a source of educational motivation by most participants, 62% of people interviewed, as shown in the table 11, think poverty cannot be a source of success. Motivation and intelligence are good but not enough one can read from most of the comments. The same reasons raised to refute poverty as a source of motivation are put forward to negate any effect poverty might have on educational success. Lack of educational means, children's shame to be among others who are better off, pressing needs to satisfy the survival needs all seem to overpower intelligence and/or motivation. Though public education is free, schools still require a minimum of means for indirect expenses such as fees, books, pens, clothes, food, etc. As a teacher noted, "poverty undermines school success. No matter how intelligent you are you can only make it a short period of time because higher education requires more means and children coming from poor families would like to find a job the sooner, … some of them are really motivated but a few exceptions can make it to universities or higher education" (teacher 4).

Moreover, parents who have the means pay for home teachers and can take their children to some better and less strike-affected private schools where they have a better chance to succeed in national exams. The school programs are long, particularly in exam classes, and incompletion of the program will only decrease the chance of students who can't pay to fill the gap, considering how selective national exams are in Senegal. No matter how intelligent you are there is no way you can do something you have never

learned before these students seems to say blaming at the same time the teacher for their strikes. The following quote from a schoolgirl illustrate this thought: "I failed my exams last year because of the strikes, we did not cover in class some parts of the exams… my father could not pay home teachers, and I was among the 5 top of my class since Seconde" (student 5).

Overall, the comments made by interviewees show that students who have access to the materials listed above are more likely to stay at school longer and succeed because higher studies demand more materials and financial means. Some students, coming from modest families, though intelligent, have to leave school due to lack of means or to respond to the first job offered to support their family and themselves. Others motivated by the poverty of their parents cling to school in order to get a better job and make a significant change.

One of my hypotheses in this paper is that poverty, unlike what many people think, can be a source of motivation and school success. If most of interviewees agree on the motivational effect poverty can have on children, it was not the case for poverty and success. The information collected through the interviews shows that 62% of people interviewed do not agree on the fact that poverty can positively impact on school success. However, some interesting comments seem to corroborate my point and reinforce my hypothesis; intelligence has nothing to do with wealth and poverty does motivate students. Therefore, instead of giving up or feeling sorry upon oneself, parent could try to use the fact of poverty as a means to trigger a strong awareness and motivation on their children to make them fight for a possible and necessary change, the first step of which could be through working harder at school, as hard work at school leads to degrees which

leads to good, leading to a good paycheck and a better life. Degrees have gained a great place and importance in the current global world. Interestingly, degrees have increased the social mobility, making it possible for children, coming from poor families, rural areas, lower social class, or rich families, to dream and hopefully see their dreams become true someday.

Neither wealth no poverty seems to be an absolute means to school success for children. Even though, wealth facilitates access to school materials and therefore success to some students it is not the sole foundation to success; one does not need to be rich to be intelligent. As for poverty it pushes some students, through motivation, to success; however it is pulling many others from success whenever a minimum of means is required to succeed or when it makes some children drop out of school to resort to petty jobs. Further studies on the life stories of the students are needed to better understand the actual role poverty in school success in such societies.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Human capital is the most available and sustainable asset in a country on the edge of the Sahara with little natural resources. The Senegalese authorities seem to be aware of this fact, and have responded by investing a big part of the national budget in education. During the last two decades the country has succeeded in expanding basic education, access to schools, and girls' education through reforms and programs such as the PDEF. However, this important investment will be a loss if the failure rate in national exams and dropout remains as high as discussed in this thesis.

This thesis investigated the ways in which educational success could be improved, with a focus on traditional culture as possible pathways to school success. Incorporation of traditional values, greater parental involvement, and the impacts of poverty on children's motivation and performance were the main points discussed with the participants in this research. This thesis was a great opportunity to collect insights from students, teachers, school administrators, parents, and community elders about the issue.

This investigation has provided interesting findings about the issue. First there is an absence of formal and specific courses about traditional values in the curriculum. A great majority of the respondents find it relevant to integrate them in the curriculum and they also think that an increased incorporation of traditional values could decrease the failure rate at national exams. However, questions such as which traditional values should be taught, by whom, and how, have been raised by many respondents.

Second, apart from the small number of parents who are active in the A.P.E.s, the majority of parents are barely involved in schools and the formal education of their

children. They are generally convoked at school to pick up their children's end of semester grades or when schools need funds. The great majority of parents do not supervise their children's school work and they are not involved in school activities and decision making, according to the responses collected. Though everyone seems to agree on the need to have them be more involved in the educational process and on positive impacts this might have on students' success, few suggestions were proposed on how to integrate parents into educational system. Poverty and illiteracy seem to be the main causes of this situation. Parents do not have time to participate in their children's schooling. Because they are worried about providing their family with food and because of their own lack of formal education, they do not find it necessary and important to participate in school activities.

Third, poverty does not facilitate success at school, but it can be a strong source of motivation for children to succeed. It could thus be harnessed to boost children's hard work and respect of schools' rules.

The main challenges remain in the implementation of these findings in order to improve the educational system. Additionally, it is crucial to consider how to overcome inter-cultural barriers related to the choice of traditional values to be taught. Considering the cultural diversity within the country and the controversy of some traditional values, I suggest a localized approach to selecting and teaching these values. Programs on traditional values can be negotiated among teachers, students, parents, school administration, and community elders locally, for each school. Part of such programs can be formally designed and taught by teachers in class. The selected values can be implicitly taught through existing programs such as *Education Civique* or *Morale*. Others

ways of teaching the values identified can be activities designed and implemented by the community through the A.P.E.s. These activities can be presentations, conferences, talks, debates, etc. and they should be mandatory for school staffs, students, and parents to attend. The content of such programs and activities must be based on local history, values, customs, and beliefs selected by this local group.

Furthermore, to facilitate and make this approach a long term and efficient one, parents or a close member of the student's family should be required to participate in these activities and meetings a number of times throughout the school year. All the parents or the majority of them should be given some responsibilities in the process regardless of their educational level or socio-economic status. Students also should be required to be involved in these classes and activities. Such an approach is all the more important as it will build connection, better understanding, and confidence between school administration and the local community. In addition to teaching local values to students this approach can be an efficient way of communication with parents and a great means of motivation or dissuasion towards students. Once parents get involved in school activities, it will be easier to have them contribute money or volunteer for the school. Parental and elderly power can be used to stop or tremendously decrease the strikes of students but also of teachers because Senegalese show great respect to elders and generally accept their requests. The tension between local values of social caste, slavery, use of stick in the education of children, etc. can be progressively resolved by parents and community elders once they included in the educational process. Endowed with their wisdom and know-how in terms of communication, they will never raise or teach some values that will frustrate some people particularly children, if not to denunciate them. In

Senegal, even the people who still believe in social castes and slavery rarely show it openly for fear to frustrate people or contradict with their own religious values. The use of stick at school which seems "barbaric" to the Western values is understandable and accepted by many parents from my experience. Therefore, they should be among the values that Senegalese should keep, even though they contradict with others' vision of educating children. However, they should be used for younger students and at a moderate way.

At a national level, some values such as *jom, kersa, fulë, mu*, etc. which are shared among almost all different cultural identities and do not contradict with religious beliefs should be integrated in the curriculum and added to the educational process. An upstream training of teachers accordingly will be necessary to make it more efficient. The five most common languages in each region should be available in middle/high schools to give those students who want to learn their language an opportunity to do so. To avoid any frustration from the other groups, the learning of such languages can be optional but strongly recommended. With a good communication with parents, this innovation can be successful.

Some students are already complaining about the workload and are afraid that more subjects will only decrease their chance of success. A balance in school curriculum can thus be found by decreasing programs which focus too much on irrelevant values of foreign countries such as literature, the history and geography about Western countries to the neglect of African ones, a legacy of colonial schooling in Senegal, and replacing them with the teaching of local knowledge. Hopefully students will be more interested in learning about themselves and therefore motivation and success will follow. None of

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these approaches approach requires substantial financial means, if professionally handled, can lead to the creating of a Senegalese citizen deeply both rooted in his values and open to world as suggested Senghor, the first president of the country.

Finally, to avoid a static social hierarchy, the discourse that poverty leads to poverty should be banned. Children and students in particular should be always reminded that success at school is not only a matter of means. Both poor and rich can succeed or fail at schools and that students coming from less wealthy families should work hard to change the trend. This positive discourse can be integrated in the formal or informal teaching of traditional values recommended above.

Overall, since the economic approach does not seem to be an efficient way to lead to development in Africa and Senegal in particular, other options for development could be explored. The billions of US dollars invested in the developing world for more than half a century has failed. Cultural capital can be an efficient alternative. Some values have held the Senegalese and Africans in general, together and have helped them face the hardest moments of their life long before colonialism. Harnessing, keeping and nurturing those values can lead to another form of development. This "development" may not be economic western definitions one but rather focuses on the values of social community life where people work hard to earn their living with dignity and share with others the little they have. Education should be used to keep magnify those good values, not to keep children away from them.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANCTP   Agence National de la Case des Touts- Petits

APE   Association des Parents d'Elèves

BFEM   Brevet de Fin d'Etudes Moyennes

CFEE   Certificat de Fin d'Etudes Elémentaire

EFA   Education For All

ECCE   Early Childhood Care Education

FAPE   Fédération des Associations des Parents d'Elèves

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

GEEP   Groupe pour l'Etude et l'Enseignement de la Population

HDI   Human Development Index

HIPC   Highly Indebted Poor Countries

IMF   International Monetary Fund

MDGs   Millennium Development Goals

NGO   Non Governmental Organization

PDEF   Programme Décennal de l'Education et de la Formation

UNDP   United Nations Development Program

UNESCO   United Nations, Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEWS BY AUTHORS

Student 1, Pout, Senegal, July 5 2010

Student 2, Pout, Senegal, July 5 2010

Student 3, Pout, Senegal, July 6 2010

Student 4, Dakar, Senegal, July 11 2010

Student 5, Dakar, Senegal, July 11 2010

Student 6, Dakar, Senegal, July 22 2010

Student 7, Dakar, Senegal, July 24 2010

Student 8, Tamba, Senegal, August 11 2010

Student 9, Tamba, Senegal, August 12 2010

Student 10, Tamba, Senegal, August 13 2010

Teacher 1, Pout, Senegal, July 16 2010

Teacher 2, Pout, Senegal, July 16 2010

Teacher 3, Pout, Senegal, July 29 2010

Teacher 4, Dakar, Senegal, July 24 2010

Teacher 5, Dakar, Senegal, July 24 2010

Teacher 6, Dakar, Senegal, August 3 2010

Teacher 7, Tamba, Senegal, August 16 2010

Teacher 8, Tamba, Senegal, August 17 2010

Teacher 9, Tamba, Senegal, August 17 2010

Teacher 10, Tamba, Senegal, September 3 2010

Parent 1, Pout, Senegal, July 15 2010

Parent 2, Pout, Senegal, July 17 2010

Parent 3, Pout, Senegal, July 17 2010

Parent 4, Pout, Senegal, July 17 2010

Parent 5, Dakar, Senegal, July 23 2010

Parent 6, Dakar, Senegal, July 23 2010

Parent 7, Tamba, Senegal, August 11 2010

Parent 8, Tamba, Senegal, August 11 2010

Parent 9, Tamba, Senegal, August 11 2010

Parent 10, Tamba, Senegal, August 12 2010

School administrator 1, Pout, Senegal, June 29 2010

School administrator 2, Pout, Senegal, July 4 2010

School administrator 3, Pout, Senegal, July 4 2004

School administrator 4, Pout, Senegal, July 7 210

School administrator 5, Dakar, Senegal, July 10 2010

School administrator 6, Dakar, Senegal, July 11 2010

School administrator 7, Dakar, Senegal, July 24 2010

School administrator 8, Dakar, Senegal, July 24 2010

School administrator 9, Tamba, Senegal, August 20 2010

School administrator 10, Tamba, Senegal, August 17 2010

Community elder 1, Pout, Senegal, July 15 2010

Community elder 2, Pout, Senegal, July 15 2010

Community elder 3, Pout, Senegal, July 16 2010

Community elder 4, Pout, Senegal, July 16 2010

Community elder 5, Dakar, Senegal, July 22 2010

Community elder 6, Dakar, Senegal, July 22 2010

Community elder 7, Dakar, Senegal, July 26 2010

Community elder 8, Tamba, Senegal, August 12 2010

Community elder 9, Tamba, Senegal, August 12 2010

Community elder 10, Tamba, Senegal, August 12 2010

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