

The Purpose of Schooling and the Culture within

A case study of the public and Islamic learning system from Senegal

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IV

Abstract

This thesis explores perspectives on the purpose of the public and the Islamic learning system in Senegal, by comparing the governmental presentation of the purpose with the perceived purpose of the learning systems by households. Drawing on perspectives from world culture theory and post-colonialism, the thesis shows how both learning systems are historically situated, and it became clear that both government policy and reforms and the participant's understandings are influenced by several forces, both from the past and the present. The colonial past of the country continues to play a significant role for the understanding of the purpose of the learning systems at village level. In addition, the institutionalization of the "right to development" and the "right to education through the Education For All goals and framework, as well as through the Millennium Development Goals are pivotal for the understanding for the place and purpose of both the public and the Islamic learning system in Senegal.

The analysis is based on a qualitative field study in a coastal village in Senegal. The aim of the field study was to provide a platform for expression of the point of view of parents, and an increased understanding of how they perceive and maneuver within their educational reality.

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Table of Content

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	Aim of the research and research questions	4
1.3	Some “brief” definitions – taking a stand on key concepts	6
1.4	Outline of the thesis	7
2	Senegal – some key figures	9
2.1	Islam in Senegal.....	10
2.1.1	Sufism.....	10
2.1.2	Orthodox Islam.....	13
2.2	The Senegalese education scene	13
2.2.1	The public learning system	13
2.2.2	The Islamic learning system.....	15
3	Methodology and methods	19
3.1	Paradigmatic stance	19
3.2	Strategy and design.....	20
3.2.1	Qualitative approach	20
3.2.2	Case study design	20
3.2.3	Research Site and duration of fieldwork	21
3.2.4	Sampling.....	23
3.3	Methods	23
3.3.1	Literature review and qualitative document analysis.....	24
3.3.2	Participant Observation and informal interviews.....	25
3.3.3	Semi-formal in-depth interviews.....	26
3.3.4	Use of interpreter.....	28
3.4	Analysis	28
3.5	Ethics, Reliability and Validity	29
3.6	Limitations of the study and challenges during the inquiry	30
4	Conceptual framework	32
4.1	World Culture Theory	32
4.2	Post-colonialism	35
4.3	Understanding the purpose of a learning system.....	37

4.3.1	Creating the ideal person.....	37
4.3.2	Addressing the purpose of schooling through the manifest and the hidden curriculum – why culture matters.....	38
4.3.3	Instrumental and intrinsic purposes of learning systems	40
4.4	Summary of framework.....	41
5	The development of perspectives on the purpose of schooling	42
5.1	Historical backdrop of mass-schooling	42
5.2	Converging ideals?	43
5.2.1	Creating the state and notions of a common national identity	43
5.2.2	Modern institutions for a modern society.	44
5.2.3	Creating a human workforce	44
5.2.4	Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals	45
5.2.5	Education – the single catalyst for “development”?	46
5.3	Summary.....	48
6	The development of the public and the Islamic learning system in Senegal from the colonial era to present day.....	49
6.1	The colonial period.....	49
6.1.1	The French assimilation policy	49
6.1.2	Perspectives on Islam	50
6.1.3	The Islamic learning system during the colonial period	51
6.1.4	The colonial public school – “creating schools rather than churches”	52
6.2	Independence	53
6.2.1	Creating the Secular State. Creating tension.	53
6.2.2	The development of the Senegalese education system post-independence.	54
6.3	The new millennium and a break with the past?	57
7	“Education for the head and education for the spirit”. Presentation of findings from the field.....	60
7.1	The Context	60
7.1.1	The village.....	60
7.1.2	Indigenous learning systems and learning in the household.	65
7.1.3	The burden of costs and the shame of not making ends meet.....	68
7.1.4	Observations and interviews from the public primary school.....	70
7.1.5	Observations and interviews from Qur’an school and other varieties of the Islamic learning system	73

7.2	General perceptions of the learning systems.	74
7.2.1	Perceptions of the public school – Echoing Education for All	74
7.2.2	The Islamic learning system.....	77
8	Analysis.....	82
8.1	Perceptions of the purpose of the learning systems at government level	82
8.1.1	The public learning system	82
8.1.2	The Islamic learning system.....	85
8.2	Perceptions of the purpose of the learning systems at village level	88
8.2.1	Changing times, changing values.....	88
8.2.2	The public learning system	89
8.2.3	The Islamic learning system.....	93
8.2.4	Duality emphasized – large emphasis on co-existence of two learning systems.....	96
8.2.5	Navigating	96
8.3	Summary of analysis	97
9	Concluding remarks	100
	References	101
	Appendices.....	112

List of tables, figure and boxes

Table 1:	Key educational figures for Senegal with focus on primary schooling.....	15
Table 2:	Overview of the public learning system, Franco-Arab schools and Qur’an schools..	17
Table 3:	Topics for semi-formal interviews, households	27
Table 4:	Topics for semi-formal interviews, context.....	27
Figure 1:	Process of institutionalization of World culture of education.....	34
Figure 2:	Variables of modernization theory.....	48
Box 1:	The ideal person.....	37
Box 2:	The Six Education for All goals.....	46
Box 3:	The Millennium Development Goals.....	46

List of Abbreviations

EFA	Education for All
EPT	Education pour Tous
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMR	Global Monitoring Report (EFA)
IIEP	International Institute of Educational Planning
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PDEF	Programme de Développement de l'éducation et de la formation
ROCARE	Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Education
UCM	Union Culturelle Musulman
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WB	The World Bank
IMF	The International Monetary Fund

1 Introduction

“Là ou il n’y a pas d’écriture, il n’y a pas de culture.”

(Hampaté Bâ as cited in Mungala, 1985: 132, in Ndiaye, 2012 p 24, commenting on the Western epistemological perspective).

« La République du Sénégal est laïque, démocratique et sociale. Elle assure l’égalité devant la loi de tous les citoyens, sans distinction d’origine, de race, de sexe, de religion. Elle respecte toutes les croyances.»

(Senegalese government 2013)

1.1 Background

With a background in Social Anthropology and through my studies in Comparative and International education I was puzzled by what I saw as a narrow definition of the concept of education, and more specifically when reading about educational structures in the so called 3rd world. It seemed as the only “accepted” form of education was “western-style” education, and furthermore, these educational systems were presented as though there had not been any learning structures in place before the introduction of these, mainly, European schools.

Through reading more literature I became aware of the assumption that an education system had to grow out of the cultural structures and learning structures already in place in order to be “successful” in terms of enrollment and outcomes. There appears to be recognition of the cultural relevance as a prerequisite for societal ownership and parental involvement, which in turn has great effects on both enrollment and the outcomes for each learner. At the same time, I found that a focus on “culture” seemed to be relatively overlooked in the international literature, although some scholars do indeed focus on the importance of a strong relationship between community/culture and education system.

Since the end of the Second World War and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1945, the world has come to increasingly endorse two fundamental human rights: the right to development and the right to education (Chabbott 2003). At the World Conference of Education forum in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank, NGOs and 164 governments agreed to commit to 6 education goals to be met by 2015,

focusing on providing quality basic education for all children. These goals were reaffirmed in Dakar, Senegal 2000, where a framework for action was agreed upon. At the same time basic (primary) education was considered paramount in order to reach the 6 Millennium Development Goals, of which goal number 2 related directly to education (UNESCO 2013)¹. According to Chabbott (2003) these conferences and frameworks institutionalized the focus of the meaning and importance of development and education, and the relationship between the two.

The Education For All Global Monitoring Report² 2005 *The Quality Imperative* noted that *access* often was deemed more important than *quality* when striving to reach education for all, although, the report argues, education for all cannot be reached without quality. The report also identified cultural relevance as a prerequisite for a quality education and for child-centered teaching and learning, while noting that particularly in the 3rd world, education systems "...have often been judged insufficiently sensitive to the local context and to learners' socio-cultural circumstances" (GMR 2005, p 31). In addition, the use of (less costly and time-consuming) quantitative methodological approaches within educational (and social) science have often reduced highly complex realities into what is quantifiable and measurable (GMR, 2005). According to Tikly (1999, p 605)

"(...) much of the recent literature on education in formally colonized countries has been weighted towards economic concerns. This reflects the post-Jomtein emphases on access and quality in relation to basic education in the context of deepening austerity and structural adjustment programmes. It also reflects the hegemony of what Samoff (1982) has described as the intellectual-financial complex in education research (i.e. the dominance of the research priorities, discourses and agendas of the major donors and financial institutions in education). One implication of this emphasis has been the relative neglect of "non-economic" [issues] concerning those around race, culture, language and identity".

¹ It is of course recognized that the end-year (2015) for both the Education for All-goals and the Millennium goals has been past. We are now talking about the Sustainable Development Goals, and more particularly, goal number 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030, monitored by UNESCO and solidified through the Incheon Declaration and Framework for action of 2015.

² The Global Monitoring reports were created by UNSECO each year in order to monitor the progress being made. Each report had a particular theme.

To rephrase: there appeared to be an overall acceptance that there *should* be a strong link between the culture and the education system, however, the link between education and (economic) development appears to hold the most weight within leading international education agencies, particularly regarding education systems in formerly colonized countries.

Why Senegal?

During my first stay in Senegal in 2008, I noticed the role of religion in people's lives and the stark contrasts of the melting pot Dakar. Most households would have a framed picture of an elderly male, whom I was informed was the *Marabout* (Islamic religious leader) of the household. In downtown Dakar, you cannot overlook all the people begging in the streets, nor fail to hear the prayers from the minaret, side by side with hypermodern glass-buildings and vast marketplaces where you can buy anything your heart desires.

These contrasts appear to be manifested in the educational sphere as well. The Senegalese education system is often presented as dual, related to discussions regarding the problematic nature of the co-existence of a secular and an Islamic learning system, and the indoctrinating and traditional nature of the latter in general and Qur'anic schooling in particular (see for example André and Demonsant 2012, Goensch and Graef, 2011).

Islamic education in Senegal has been criticized by various human rights organizations, UNICEF and the media. (See for example UNICEF, 2006; and Hussain, 2012). Street children in the urban areas are often reported to be *Talibés*³ or former *Talibés* forced to beg for food or an amount of money. (Mbow, 2009; André and Demonsant, 2012). Although these issues are important to address, the focus do provide a highly homogenous view on the Islamic learning system in the country.

Studies that have been conducted regarding the Islamic learning system in the country have (mostly) been guided towards practical, economic, or compatibility-concerns. At the same time, several authors point to the broader complexity of the education systems, especially regarding the Islamic learning system(s) (see for example Daun, 1992). The literature indicates that most of the studies (though not all!) conducted largely relate to whether Qur'an schools are compatible with the overall aim of development and progress. The literature also suggests that there has been little explicit focus on the cultural relevance of Islamic learning

³disciples, children at boarding Qur'an schools

systems in the region. Most studies acknowledge the cultural embeddedness of the Islamic learning system, yet this is not the main focus. Qur'an schools are presented as potential "rivals to formal education" by Goensch and Graef (2011) and as potential "obstacles to primary education" by André and Demonsant 2012, which seems to underline the predominant perspective on public schooling as the single most fruitful educational approach in the Senegalese context and emphasizes the seemingly tense relationship between the two learning systems. As will be elaborated upon below, the infamous state of many urban Qur'an schools in contemporary Senegal may provide an explanation for this perspective.

Education in most Muslim countries has the highest percentages of subjects related to faith and values than any other education system (Daun, Okuma-Nyström and Sane 2004). Yet in Senegal, the public education provided largely remains secular, as based on the French education model. Also, the country was one of the frontrunners among nations committed to reaching the Education for All goals by 2015 (Boubacar and Francois, 2007).

One of the main arguments of World Culture theory, which is the theoretical backdrop of this study, is that there is an endemic decoupling between policy and practice (Meyer et al 1997). This means that the highly internationally influenced policy often does not fit reality. In the Senegalese case the picture is more complex, as the Senegalese colonial history stands out with regards to the assimilationist policy of the French colonial administration. The education system appears to be under influence also by strong neo-colonial ties to France and from the religious leaders of the country.

According to Boubacar and Francois (2007), there is a decoupling between the supply of public education and the demand posed by parents and communities in Senegal: "Parents' occasionally negative perception of school also gives cause for concern, as the various forms of education provided publicly sometimes fall short of meeting complex social demand." (Boubacar and Francois, 2007, p 1).

With this in mind it became natural to investigate the very basic, but very complicated question "What is the purpose of schooling?".

1.2 Aim of the research and research questions

The comparative dimensions of the study have been the public and the Islamic learning system, while the levels of comparison have been the national level and the local level (the village). As such, Senegal provides an interesting case to investigate what is generally perceived as two co-existing learning systems which may appear to cater to different needs of the people.

The thesis is based on a case study. The main reason for the choice of research design is to give sufficient attention to the particular context of the village; it is amongst the aims of the research to shed light on how households in one specific village perceive and maneuver within their educational reality. The research design also facilitates a focus on the Senegalese context, and the relations to the international education community.

Research questions

The research questions remained quite broadly defined throughout the fieldwork, as I wanted to ensure that the voices of the participants guided the research and not the other way around. Through the literature review and at the analytical stage of the study, the research questions became narrowed down and more specified. Within qualitative research, as is the methodological approach of this study, this is of great importance in order to stay open to the field and make sure that the perspectives of the participants are at the core of the research and not the a priori stated research questions.

The research questions are formulated as follows:

- 1. How is the purpose of the Islamic and the public learning system perceived by households in a coastal village in Senegal?**
- 2. How is the purpose of the Islamic and the public learning system perceived at government level, as presented by the relevant policy documents?**

In order to establish an understanding of the Senegalese education discourse and to provide a platform for further comparison with the findings from the subsequent fieldwork, policy

documents of the Senegalese government have been qualitatively analyzed. The overall aim of the fieldwork was to grasp the perspectives on the purpose(s) of the Islamic and public learning systems, as seen by parents, and to thus provide a platform for the expression of their point of view. In addition to comparing and searching for similarities and contrasts between the formal presentation of purpose and the perceptions by representatives from households, interesting findings regarding how the first influences the latter emerged. Also, following the logic of the choice of research design, this enabled situating the Senegalese educational scene into the wider international context and pointing to the most important influences. The main focus has been put on primary, or “basic” education in Senegal.

1.3 Some “brief” definitions – taking a stand on key concepts

In order to provide an understanding of the main concepts of the research question “the purpose of [...] learning system”, an understanding of the concept “learning system” is called for. How the purpose of the learning systems are understood and analyzed in this thesis is elaborated upon in chapter 4 *Conceptual Framework*.

Learning system

The notion of what counts as “education”, may be seen as quite narrow within the international education paradigm. This was noted by professor Wim Hoppers during the Education for All conference held in Oslo in 2014. He argued that although it may appear as a “Pandoras box” to start acknowledging the different alternative educational paths all over the world, it was seen as a paradox that no alternatives to “mainstream education” was included in the Global Monitoring Report, Islamic education used as an example⁴.

I will therefore during this research use the term *learning system* in order to better incorporate contesting ideas of the concept of education. Although some scholars hold a quite wide definition of the concept of education, especially within anthropology (see for example Maseman 2007), it is quite often seen as formal, institutionalized education, transmitting standardized skills, values and so on in a building called a school. In order to broaden the scope of the terminology, the concept *learning system* appears to be a fruitful approach to

⁴ Education For All Conference, Oslo 2014, researchers own notes

also include learning systems which may easily fall in-between if one is only considering *education* (Daun 1992). For the research at hand, it seems to provide a certain balance to the analysis of perceptions of the public and the Islamic learning system in Senegal on equal terms. However, in the literature review the reader will meet the concepts “schooling” and “education”, depending on the point of view of the authors being presented. It is the point of view of this thesis that these concepts should be broadly defined.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

The next chapter of the thesis presents some background information. Key findings from Senegal regarding demography, Islam in the country and the current educational scene provide the reader with a general insight into the public and Islamic learning system in Senegal before diving deeper into the research at hand.

The third chapter of this thesis presents the methodology which has been applied during the course of the research. The chapter begins with a presentation of the epistemological and ontological considerations which have been made, before the strategy and design of the research is presented. In this section the research site for the field study is also presented. Subchapter 4.3. Method presents and discusses the methods which have been applied; qualitative document analysis, participant observation and informal interviews, and semi-formal interviews with open-ended questions. Thereafter the analysis of the data material is presented. Lastly the chapter focuses on ethical considerations, reliability and validity and also the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the framework which will be applied throughout the paper. The first section presents World Culture theory. Both the perspectives of Meyer et al (1992 & 1997) and Chabbott (2003) are discussed. Thereafter an account follows of the related concepts post-colonialism, otherness, and education hegemony, and how these are applied during the following analysis of the background of the contemporary educational structures in Senegal. I will also discuss how these concepts continue to be relevant today. The following sections of the chapter are aimed at describing how the concept “the purpose of schooling” is understood and applied throughout the thesis through the focus on the overt and the hidden curriculum.

Chapter 5 addresses some of the converging ideas of the purpose of learning systems. First it is argued how converging ideas of “the purpose of schooling” has been understood through

various theories on education, as well as the role and implications of the leading education-development paradigm. Following the logic of the framework an emphasis is put on the increasing international isomorphism of the perspectives on the role and purpose of an education system, particularly in the so-called “developing countries”.

Chapter 6 focuses on the development of the public and the Islamic learning system in Senegal, through focusing on both political and educational aspects, from the colonial period and development after independence to the present day. In section 6.3 the relevant policy documents surrounding the Senegalese educational sphere is presented through a qualitative document analysis.

Chapter 7 presents the data and findings from the field study in the village. The findings are presented thematically, as it is believed that this provides a more holistic picture of the lived reality of the participants in the study as well as the responding households to the semi-formal interviews. It is believed that this strategy enables to present the data from the different applied methods on equal terms.

Chapter 8 connects the dots. Through further analyzing and discussing findings from literature review, document analysis and field study, the comparative dimension of the study is emphasized, continuously guided by the research questions. The last section of the chapter summarizes the analysis

Chapter 9 presents some concluding remarks.

2 Senegal – some key figures

Senegal, covering 196 722km², is situated in Sub-Saharan Africa, and is the westernmost point of the African continents mainland. The country borders Mauritania in the north, Mali to the east, Guinea Bissau and Guinea Conakry in the South. The Gambia stretches into the country at both sides of the Gambian River. The coastline is 531 km long, bordering the Atlantic Ocean (CIA Factbook 2015).

The Senegalese population is by July 2015 estimated 13,975,834. The median age of the population is 17,7 for males and 19,4 for females estimated in 2015. The life expectancy age is 59,29 years for men and 63,42 years for women. 43.7 % of the population lives in urban areas.

The fertility rate is 4.44 children/woman, while an estimated 16,8 % of children under the age of 5 is underweight (CIA Factbook, 2015). The percentage of the population living below the national poverty lines was 46,7 in 2011 (World Bank 2015). 48% of the population was unemployed according to an estimate in 2007 by the CIA factbook. This does not take into account the part of the population working in the informal sector.

The largest ethnic group in Senegal is the Wolof (43,3%), followed by Pular (23,8), Sereer (14,7), Jola (3,7), Mandinka (3%) and Soninke (1,1%). In addition there are European (mostly French) and Lebanese parts of the population. Lebanese immigrants and their descendants have particularly been present in the country following the French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon (1923 – 1946)⁵. The Lebanese population was highly invested in the peanut sector until the nationalization of the industry, where after a large proportion of the population is invested in trade (Boumedouha, 1990). The CIA factbook considers 9,4 % to belong to “other”, of which it has been observed that there is a growing Asian (particularly Chinese) part of the population.

The country's GDP (purchasing power parity⁶) was \$33.61 billion in 2014, 15,6 % from the agricultural sectors, 23,8 % from industry and 60,6% from services. Within agriculture the

⁵ France was assigned the mandate of Syria and Lebanon by the League of Nation Mandate system in the period 1923-1946.

⁶ “A nation's GDP at purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rates is the sum value of all goods and services produced in the country valued at prices prevailing in the United States in the year noted. This is the measure most economists prefer when looking at per-capita welfare and when comparing living conditions or use of resources across countries” (CIA factbook 2015)

people are producing peanuts, millets, corn, sorghum, rice, cotton, tomatoes, and vegetables. Some also hold cattle or poultry. Fishing is another large industry, although the fishing in recent years has deteriorated due to overfishing, and according to participants in the study at hand particularly foreign fishing companies using explosives.

The CIA Factbook (2015) reports that 92.2 % of the population in urban areas, 33,8 % of the population in rural areas, and 47, 6% of the total population has access to *improved drinking water*⁷, whereas the rest of the population's drinking water remains *unimproved*.

2.1 Islam in Senegal

“History only begins when men take to writing”

(A.P. Newton, in Gwanfogbe, 2001, p 42)

Islam was introduced in Senegal as early as in the 10th Century by North African and Arab traders, although accepted and negotiated differently in different regions and by different ethnic groups⁸. There are many perspectives on how the region came to adhere to Islam; customs of exogenous marriages between Muslim immigrants and local women who took the religion of her new husband among the Mandinke and Bainunk ethnic groups; the conversion to Islam by the Toucouleur leader of Tekru, one of the first pre-colonial states; and the swift abandonment of matrilineal societal organization may be mentioned (Dilley 2004; Daun, Okuma-Nyström and Sane 2004; Tang, 2007).

It appears to be a strong consensus that it was the jihad wars of the 19th century which firmly established Islam in the region (Tang 2007; Dilley 2004; Daun, Okuma-Nyström and Sane, 2004).

2.1.1 Sufism

One may thus also argue that Sufi-Islam, the dominating Islam in Senegal, gained its influence and popularity particularly due to its openness towards and inclusion of preexisting

⁷ As will be noted in chapter 7 *Education for the Head and education for the spirit. Presentation of findings from the field*, a water crisis was plaguing the Dakar area at the time of the fieldwork due to a leakage in a water pipe, forcing hospitals to close, delayed start of the school year and long walking distances for the population to fetch water.

⁸ Further information on the expansion of Islam in West-Africa may be found in Tang, 2007 and Roy Dilley, 2004

societal organization and belief systems. Roy Dilley sees the spread of Islamic beliefs and ideas from the 8th century as a globalizing force which “...has been shaped in its encounter with local conceptions of social and cultural difference” (Dilley 2004, p 191) which in Senegal has led to the different conceptions and shapes of Islam in the country. He argues that what he calls a pre-existing “caste-system” in Senegal, through negotiation with these new religious influences from the 11th Century, allowed the growth of the different Muslim brotherhoods in the country, (Diouf and Leichtman 2009). This may also provide some explanation for the great variety within the Islamic learning system in the country, a point which will be addressed later in this paper.

The religious life in contemporary Senegal is mainly organized around Muslim *tariqua* (in Arabic, translated to brotherhoods or confrèries in French, plural *turuq*) which is a common form of societal and religious organization within Sufi Islam. In Senegal the *Tijaniya*, the *Quadiriya*, the *Mouridyia* and the *Leyéne* are the largest *Turuq* (Dilley 2004, Daun, Okuma-Nyström and Sane 2004), the *Tijaniya* and the *Mouridyia* being the largest by a great majority (Tang 2007). The *Mouridyia* stands out in the fact that it originated among the Wolof ethnic group⁹ in Senegal in the 20th century (Daun, Okuma-Nyström and Sane 2004). The founder of the *Mouridyia* tariqua, Cheikh Amadou Bamba, is buried in the country’s largest mosque in the tariqua’s holy city Touba. The Mourides have established themselves both economically and politically within the country, and are known to hold substantial power in Senegalese communities. While the origin of the *Tijaniya* tariqua is Moroccan, its Senegalese branch was led by El Hadji Omar Tall, a religious leader of the Toucouleur ethnic group, who launched a series of jihads against the colonial power in the 1850’s (Tang 2007). The Toucouleurs, mostly situated in the North-east region of the country bordering Mauritania, was the first ethnic group to convert to Islam (Dilley, 2004).

For the most part, affiliation to the different *Turuq* coincides with ethnic group affiliation. For example, most Wolofs are Mourids, and most Serer are Tijani. Literature on the matter has not been found, but I was informed during the field-study that Tariqua-affiliation follows the patriarchal family line. This means that children will become members of their fathers’ Tariqua and women become members of their husbands’ Tariqua when married.

Marabouts

⁹ There are strong arguments for the hybrid nature of the Wolof, especially in contemporary Dakar, and there are strong arguments for a “Wolofication” of the country (Tang 2007)

The role of the Muslim leaders within the *Turuq*, the *Marabouts*, is worth noticing. Originally, “Marabout” is the term used for someone who knows the Qur’an well and teaches the Qur’an. Interesting for the sake of this paper is the expanded role of the Marabouts, who are not only religious leaders, but politically, socially and culturally bound. They are further more known to hold expertise in esoteric knowledge, being a key aspect of their wisdom. This will be elaborated upon during the findings chapter of this paper. According to Thiam (2010), Sufism originates from the first educators of Islam. Ware (2014) emphasizes the long and complex history of the Qur’an schools, and argues that the role of the Muslim “teachers, preachers and healers”, or Marabouts, played a prominent role in the spread of Islam in the region, alongside the abovementioned trade networks (Ware 2014, p 22).

Teachers of Islam had to make themselves and their faith relevant to transmit Islamic knowledge. This was no easy task. But they were, in the long view, extremely successful; institutions of Islamic education multiplied throughout the region, providing networks of regional integration and, ultimately, a framework for collective identity (Ware 2014, p 22)

In addition, the term “Marabout” may also be used to refer to leaders in the *Turuq* in which there are Marabouts on hierarchically different levels: The *Cherif* is the hierarchically highest Marabout in the Tijane Tariqua in Senegal. A *Cherif* is known as a direct descendant from the prophet Mohammad. They have tremendous respect in Senegalese society, but do not hold any particular esoteric power. Second is the *Khalif*, who is the Marabout, the leader of the Tariqua. Then there is the *Cheikh*, who may be seen as sub-leader below the *Khalif*. The *Cheikh* often lives far from the *Khalif*, though following the words of the Tariqua¹⁰.

Marabouts on all levels may teach the Qur’an and each has a number of *talibés*¹¹ (disciples or followers) (Dilley 2004).

It thus appears as facets of the Islamic learning system were introduced alongside the spread of the religion itself. According to Diallo (2010) literacy in the Arabic language was widespread in pre-colonial Senegal; not only the use of the language in Qur’an schools and as part of religious practices, but as *Ajami*, which is “the practice of using the Arabic alphabet to write African languages” (Diallo, p 39).

¹⁰ Information from semi-formal interview during field study

¹¹ The name “Talibé” may be somewhat confusing, as it mostly used to refer to urban talibé street children (Tang 2007)

2.1.2 Orthodox Islam

In addition it should also be noted that a more orthodox strand of Islam which originates from Islamist reform groups¹² has had various influences over the years, particularly during and after the colonial era. Contemporary Islam in Senegal cannot be fully understood without reference to French colonial rule. Diouf and Leichman (2009) argue that the literature on Islam in Senegal has been largely one-sided: “The focus on these brotherhoods overlooked the contrast and competition with an urban, literate, and deliberately Arab and orthodox Islam of colonial and postcolonial bureaucrats, centered especially in Saint Louis” (Diouf and Leichman, 2009, p 2, see also Dillely 2004). This development will be elaborated upon in chapter 6. The relationship between what was to be called “Islam Noire” (coinciding with the Sufi Turuq) and “Islam Arabe” (coinciding with the more orthodox and Arab orientated Islam) by the French colonial administration has been crucial for perspectives on Islam in the region.

I will in the following paragraph present the current relations between the public and the Islamic learning system in Senegal, before diving deeper into the colonial past which I argue must be seen as among the most important factors which have led to the tensions between the secular and the religious, the formal and the informal sphere in Senegal in chapter 6.

2.2 The Senegalese education scene

The focus of this thesis is on the public and the Islamic learning system in Senegal. Particular emphasis has been put on both these learning systems role in terms of “basic education”. However, there are in Senegal in addition a relatively large proportion of learners in other learning establishments, such as private “secular” schools (6,1%), private Catholic schools (1,7%) and private protestant schools (0,1%) (Villalón and Bodian 2012, p 13).

In the following paragraphs the contemporary public and Islamic learning system will be presented. As Franco-Arab schools appears to play an increasing role, an overview of these schools are also provided. The development of the learning systems are more elaborated upon in chapter 5.

2.2.1 The public learning system

¹² Please refer to chapter 6

The Senegalese public learning system is highly based on the French educational model. Though reforms have been passed over the years targeting the issue, the language of instruction largely remains French¹³.

Starting at the age of six, children attend school for six years. Thereafter take a nation-wide official written and oral exam in for the *Certificat de Fin d'Etudes Elémentaires* (CFEE) in order to continue to secondary education. Lower secondary school lasts for four years, for which one must successfully pass the examination and acquire the diploma *Brevet de Fin d'Etudes Moyennes* (BFEM) in order to succeed to upper secondary school leading to obtaining the *Baccalauréat*. (Goensch and Graef, 2011). The public school is compulsory for the age group 6-16 (Goensch and Graef, 2011).

However, there are severe constraints to this model in reality. According to Goensch and Graef (2011), schools are often in poor conditions, lacking basic facilities as well as equipment and teaching materials. Also, though primary schooling in principle is free in Senegal, an inscription fee is commonly posed by principals and parent's association, often due to maintenance issues of the schools. Also "...financial burdens, however, increase sharply at the secondary level..."(Goensch and Graef, 2011, p 6), a crucial factor for families living under harsh economic conditions. Class-sizes are also a matter of concern, as the pupils-teacher ratio is a high 60:1 in some areas. Furthermore, according to the same study, teachers report of low ratio of grade progression and late enrollment. Also, although Senegal had showed progress in terms of the quantity of school provision, there are great disparities between the rural and the urban areas.

According to Boubacar and Francois (2007, p 6) "a child living in a rural area can expect to have 3,5 years of primary education (including repeated years), while a child living in the city can expect 6 years". In the Global monitoring report for Education for All 2015, the number was reported to be 8 years. However, it must be noted that this estimation is based on estimates from the Senegalese government (GMR 2015). As "survival to the last grade" in primary school according to the same report is 61%, an average of 8 years of schooling is obviously optimistic.

¹³ See Ndiaye (2012) on attempts at reforms regarding local languages of instruction

Table 1. Key educational figures for Senegal, with focus on public primary education (Based on statistics from GMR 2015)	1991	2011
Net enrollment primary	55%	79%
Survival to the last grade	63%	61%
Transition from primary to secondary general education	----	88%
Youth literacy rate	1995 – 2004 : 49%	2005 - 2012: 66%
Adult literacy rate	1995 – 2004: 39%	2005 – 2012: 52%
Public spending on education as % of GNP	3,2%	5,2%
Public current expenditure on primary education as % of public current expenditure on education	-----	40,1%

2.2.2 The Islamic learning system

Some scholars argue that a distinction between Qur'an and Arab schools might be useful, the latter being highly related to the previously mentioned Islamist reform groups in Senegal and including a higher level of focus on the Arabic language and secular subjects (see for example Daun 2010). Other scholars argue that this distinction is superfluous in today's Senegal, as there is a general tendency towards learning the Arabic language in Qur'an schools, and the tendency of Arab schools being merged with facets of the public learning system towards the hybrid solution Franco-Arabic schools, which are elaborated upon below (Mbow, 2009). In the following paragraphs the Islamic learning system in Senegal is divided into 1) various Qur'an schools and 2) Franco-Arab schools. The development of the public learning system

and the varieties of the Islamic learning system will be further elaborated upon in chapter 6 of this thesis.

Qur'an schools (Daaras in Wolof)

The most common form of Islamic learning in Senegal are Qur'an schools (Daun, Okuna-Nyström and Sane, 2004; André and Demonsant 2012; Diouf and Leichtman 2009). The leaders and teachers of these Qur'an school are referred to as Marabouts. According to Mbow (2009), the great variety in the provision of Qur'an studies in Senegal must be stressed, suggesting that grouping them together is near to impossible. In contemporary Senegal, there are Qur'an schools all over the country, with a variety reflecting the multitude of Muslim articulations and identities (Diouf and Leichtman, 2009). According to Anzar (2003, p 1): "Koranic schools can function in the mosque, under a tree, in the house of the Koran teacher or under an open sky", a point which was stressed by several participants in the study at hand. This variation includes curriculum-issues which are highly dependent upon the local context, and great variety in timetables. The most common distinction is that between Qur'anic boarding schools, where the children live at the Qur'an school, or Qur'an schools which also allow children to attend the public learning system (Daun, Okuna-Nyström and Sane, 2004; André and Demonsant 2012). Qur'an schools follow for the most part affiliation to a Tariqa¹⁴. For the analytical purpose of this paper, however, some patterns may be identified, as presented in table 2.

In recent years there appears to have been a development of teaching written and reading Arabic, prior to studying the Qur'an, particularly in urban areas (Mbow 2009). This was confirmed by the participants of this study. The overt curriculum of the Qur'an schools is the Qur'an, and the students are expected to learn to memorize the Qur'anic verses in Arabic. Anzar (2003) notes that the Arabic writing in West-Africa often is semi-phonetic, and used to transcribe local languages in addition to Arabic.

Franco-Arab schools

Franco-Arab schools follow the same structure as the public school and have been noted as a compromise between the Arab schools and the public school. In these schools, the teachers

¹⁴ For example, The village of the field study was seen as a Serer village, following the Tijani Tariqa. The Marabout of the Qur'an school had been educated through a Tijani Qur'an boarding school. The Qur'an school in the village was therefore Tijani

are referred to as “Qur’an teachers” or teachers of Islam. As part of the 2002 reforms by the Ministry of National Education, the creation of public Franco-Arab schools was addressed¹⁵. According to Mbow (2009), such public elementary schools were to open in October 2003, preparing student for secondary education of the same type. There has been growth in the provision of public Franco-Arab schools since the change of the millennium, particularly in areas known to show low enrollment-rates to the public schools (Daun, Okuma-Nyström and Sane, 2004; Villalón and Bodians, 2012). In these schools, in order to gain public funding the government requires strict control over the curriculum.(Daun, Okuma-Nyström and Sane, 2004). It would appear as if the Franco-Arab schools continue to mainly cater to the Muslim elite of the country, as the schools often require substantial fees from parents (André and Demonsant 2012). According to Villalón and Bodian (2012), 2,9 % of the age-cohort of learners in “basic education”(6-16 years) are enrolled at private Franco-Arab schools.

Based on the available literature I was able to summarize the learning systems as presented in table 2:

Table 2. Overview of the public learning system, Franco-Arab schools and Qur’an schools.			
	Public learning system	Franco-Arab schools	Qur’an schools
Year of introduction	First school under France: 1817 Established post-independence, 1960	1953, although extensive growth in the 1970’s and lastly since 2000	Apr. 15 th Century
Language of instruction	French	Arabic French	Arabic Wolof Great variety in local languages French (trilinguisme policy)
Curriculum	Centralized and controlled by the state. Religious subjects to be included from 2002. However, this is yet to be put in motion. Schools with Arabic-speaking teachers have Arabic two hours/week	Knowledge of the Qur’an Islamic theory Arabic Secular subjects which are centralized and controlled by the state	Considerable variation; Basic knowledge of the Qu’ran Focus on teaching respect, obedience, humility and solidarity. Focus on manual labor in some cases. Development towards teaching spoken and written Arabic. ‘Modern’ Daaras include some secular subjects

¹⁵ It should be noted that none of the participants in the case-study had any knowledge of such a development

Subsidized by the state	Yes	Yes	No
Levels of schooling	Primary level: six years (age 6 – 12) Lower secondary age 12-16 Upper secondary age 16 – 19	Structure following the public learning system	Primary level: basic knowledge of the Qur'an. Secondary level: Memorization of the Qu'ran, translation and written traditions Higher Qu'ranic studies: Some hyper modern Daaras in Dakar, also including ICT and other secular subjects.
Payment	Primary education: free in principle, however maintenance-fees are reported Secondary education: CFA 3000 - 10000, according to the schools' needs.	Fees paid by parents Public schools free	Manual labor Families supporting local Marabouts and his Talibés Fees (high variation)

(based on data from Andre and Demonsant,2012; Daun, Okuma-Nyström and Sane,2004; Mbow 2009; Ndiaye,2012, and Wagner,1989)

In the next chapter we turn to the methodology and methods which have been applied in order to shed light on the guiding research questions.

3 Methodology and methods

3.1 Paradigmatic stance

The ontological paradigm of the research is placed within constructivism, or nominalism (Bryman, 2012, p.30). This means that, other than viewing external forces as pre-given and almost with a will of their own, the phenomena is seen as “*continually accomplished by social actors*” (Bryman 2012, p 33). It is important to notice, however, that the research is not bounded in “extreme” constructivism, but rather following the logic of Strauss et al (1973, in Bryman, 2012) and Becker (1982, in Bryman, 2012). This means that there is an acceptance of pre-existing structures of (in the case of this research) the world culture of education and post-colonial structures which surround the Senegalese case. However, rather than being treated as distinct, having a tangible reality of its own, these cultural structures are treated as a social construct, created through human interaction.

The epistemological foundation of the research is within the paradigm of interpretivism, or anti-positivism, as it is to “...grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman, 2012, p 30) which is the aim of the research. As will be noted during chapter 4 *Conceptual Framework* the framework applied to the background and literature review of this research is placed within *macrophenomenology*. This means that a phenomenological approach is applied at the global level, in order to analyze how the Senegalese education system as presented formally has been, and continues to be, influenced by the accepted and “appropriate” educational culture. According to Stanford,

Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions. (Stanford, 2013).

A phenomenological approach was also considered suitable at the micro level, as it is the perceptions and lived experiences of the participants and respondents which are analyzed. This multilayered phenomenological approach enabled a more complete and holistic picture of the reality.

3.2 Strategy and design

3.2.1 Qualitative approach

Based on the paradigmatic point of departure described above, the research has followed a qualitative approach. According to Schell (1992, p 10):

Qualitative research begins from an ontological foundation that defines reality as some type of projection of imagination, the point of view of at least one actor, or at best a social construction, which can be explored through a science of meanings, phenomenological insight and subjective processes. [...] A justification of qualitative research is not likely to succeed under positivist assumptions, and is thus linked to a subjective, phenomenological epistemological position. Under an empiricist/subjective theory of being, the views of actors as communicated through case studies, is the empirical point of departure.

I thus decided it suitable to choose a qualitative approach. While quantitative research approaches are mostly concerned with the generation of quantifiable data (number), qualitative research is mostly concerned with words as the data for analysis. In order to facilitate a broad understanding of the perceived purpose of the public/Islamic learning system, it was seen as important to provide a platform for the expression of the points of views of the participants. Also, one of the advantages of a qualitative approach is the generation of “thick” descriptions and data. For the research and research questions at hand this has been the goal.

3.2.2 Case study design

It makes sense to assume that the particular history and context of the participants will play large roles in the data collection, which are at the core of the complexity I wish to capture. The research questions forming the base of the inquiry also presuppose a large insight into the context of the participants and respondents. In order to limit the scope of the study, to provide substantial attention to the different concepts derived from the literature review and to fully analyze the Senegalese education context the research will have a case-study design. This will also contribute to place the Senegalese education within a broader conceptual background and the international context. In order to situate and contextualize the case internationally as well

as locally and to provide a rich description of the key concepts and theories, reviewing literature has played an important role in this study.

According to Yin (2009), one of the benefits of the case study approach is that it also allows using multiple data sources, and therefore enables a continuous triangulation of the findings in order to assure validity and reliability. For the research at hand, the methods of data collection and thus the data sources were qualitative document analysis, participant observation, informal interviews and semi-formal in depth interviews.

The research has been aimed at being an exploratory, exemplary case. It is exploratory due to the relative lack of previous research on the topic. Although making generalizations is not the aim of the research, it was deemed appropriate to provide an exemplary case considering the nature of the research questions. This also had implications for the choice of the site for the field study, which will be elaborated upon during section 3.2.4.

3.2.3 Research Site and duration of fieldwork

As mentioned above, aiming at an exemplary case was key during the preparation for the field study. Choosing an appropriate research site also depended on gaining access to the field, as there was a strict two months limit to the duration of the fieldwork. Having lived in Senegal before, I took advantage of my connections in the country. In order to answer the research questions it was also natural to choose a research site which facilitated both learning systems.

The village of the field study is situated at the coast, a few hours' drive south of Dakar. The Municipality of which the village is part has about 12 000 inhabitants, according to the local mayor-office. The fieldwork was conducted during 8 weeks from September to November 2013, at the end of the rainy season in the region.

Gaining access

Before arrival in the village, contact had been made with one household who had agreed to let me stay with them during the first days of the fieldwork. After three days, I decided to rent a small house close by, and continued to participate in everyday activities and meals with the family. The family was Muslim and consisted of a mother and a father, four grown up children, and three children between age 7 and 16, all enrolled at the public schools. The contact with the family was valuable on several grounds: 1) this provided me with insight into

the everyday life activities and lived reality of the family, 2) members of the household became what Bryman (2012) calls “gatekeepers”, people who are prepared to vouch for the researcher and the research and who may present the researcher to the community. The latter was seen as crucial in gaining access and being allowed to assist meetings and religious events.

Also, I made sure that the first people I talked to, and presented my research for were the hierarchically highest in the village in order to get “clearance” to proceed with interviews. These were the chef du village¹⁶, the mayor and the Imam¹⁷. Within the observed learning facilities I made sure to first present myself to the principal and the Marabout before proceeding.

Another important aspect of gaining access was to learn some of the local language. As will be elaborated upon more during the Findings-chapter, learning how to properly greet people, and particularly the elders of the village was seen as an act of respect and an example of me wanting to learn about “their ways of doing things”.

The educational scene of the village

In the village, the households had the choice between

- two public primary schools
- catholic private school
- one lower and upper secondary school,
- and several arrangements for Islamic learning:
 - Franco-Arab school in a neighboring village
 - Qur’an teacher appointed by the Imam of the village¹⁸
 - Qur’an school lead by Marabout¹⁹
 - Several Marabouts who would teach outside in what may seem like an informal fashion
 - In the households

¹⁶ The chef du village originates from pre-colonial leadership, the Mayor was formally appointed working for the government

¹⁷ An Imam is a religious leader in Sunni Islam who leads the prayers in the mosque.

¹⁸ The Qur’an teacher had completed the upper secondary cycle of the public learning system, before deciding to “devote himself to the teaching of the Qur’an” (extract from interview). It was his desire to open a Franco-Arab school in the village)

¹⁹ Note the role of Marabouts on page 11 and 12

The substantial amount of education provided in the village suggests a high level of focus on public schooling which is not always the case in rural Senegal (André and Demonsant 2012). The proximity to the capital as well as some tourist destinations may count for some of the emphasis. This point will be elaborated upon during chapter 6 *Analysis and Discussion*.

3.2.4 Sampling

One public primary school and the Qur'an school were sampled for full observation, due to time-constraints. It was my impression that being able to spend some time at the locations enabled people to become used to and comfortable with my presence. In addition visits were made to the other learning facilities in the village in order to be able to provide a rich contextual frame. This included one other public primary school, the public secondary school, the private catholic school and various forms of the Islamic learning system

The sampling for the respondent households for the semi-formal interviews was conducted through a purposive snowball sampling. As noted above, I gained access to the village through gatekeepers in the host-family. It was feared that only interviewing households I was presented to by this family would bias the exploration and interview process, as the family was in a particular situation regarding education for the children, as all were enrolled in school, and the eldest had completed tertiary education at University level.

I therefore established contact with other respondents to the semi-formal interviews through participant observation and was continuously being directed in new areas of the community. Some criteria for the respondents for the semi-formal interviews were employed:

- The household had to have one or more children in the process of enrollment to the primary school, or already enrolled
- They had to be Muslims
- The aim was to cover various parental backgrounds and employment situations

It was decided to interview representatives from 10 households.

In addition, semi-formal interviews were conducted with Chef du Village, the Imam of the village, the Qur'an teacher, the Marabout of the Qur'an school, the Principal at observed primary school, one teacher and the Arab teacher at the observed primary school.

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 Literature review and qualitative document analysis

In order to shed light on the focus point of the thesis from a world culture perspective and to point to the particular nature of Senegal's colonial history, it was seen as key to place both the public and the Islamic learning systems in their historical context, which is the theme for chapter 6. The aim for this part of the research was to provide insight into how the purpose of the public and the Islamic learning system as developed and is presented formally, and to establish a platform for comparison with the perceptions of the households in the village.

It was noted that the new millennium brought about significant changes in the Senegalese educational discourse, both as a focus on the Education for All-goals and the Millennium Development Goals, but also what appears to be an increased focus on the meaning and importance of the Islamic learning system. I therefore conducted a qualitative document analysis of a) The educational legal framework (Loi 004-37, du 15 Décembre 2004 and Loi no 91-22 du 30 janvier 1991 d'orientation de l'Education nationale²⁰), b) the relevant Policy document (Lettre de politique générale pour le secteur de l'éducation et de la formation, 2005) and c) national education plan (Programme de Développement de l'éducation et de la formation (PDEF/EPT) (Education pour tous). The core focus of the qualitative document analysis was on primary public education and the Islamic learning system. This is due to the extensive amount of pages and the need for limitation, but also based on the notion of both constituting facets of "basic education" in Senegal.

All documents were retrieved from the Website of the Senegalese government or from Planipolis (IIEP). The analysis was conducted by first reading through the material to gain a certain overview and creating a general understanding of the material. Thereafter categories were created, searching for similarities in the documents.

In addition to the specific documents, emphasis has also been put on the political, social and economic climate within which the documents were created. Secondary sources, analysis and critiques of the policy documents have also been addressed.

Literature in both English and French was reviewed. The latter played a crucial role for the discussion of the history of the two learning systems, and certainly for the analysis of the reform documents.

²⁰ The law document from 2004 is a complementation to the framework established in the law-document from 1991. I therefore decided to include the 1991-document in the analysis.

3.3.2 Participant Observation and informal interviews

As I lived in the village during the fieldwork, and spent time with the inhabitants of the village as a part of the every-day routines, participant observation and informal interviews played a significant role in the data collection and the data-collection might be interpreted as ethnography. Two months, however, is considered to be too little time for a fieldwork to meet the criteria of an ethnographic approach. However, according to Bryman, the term micro-ethnography could be applied to the research conducted (Bryman 2012, p 443).

In addition to the observation and conversations at the observed public school and Qur'an school, conversations and observations was part of the day-to day work while in the field, which facilitated massive amounts of field-notes. Through participating in activities such as going to markets, cooking, drinking *attaya* (tea), looking after children, eating meals, looking after animals and participating in the day to day routines of various households gave me insight into the lived realities of the participants which I otherwise might have missed. It is believed that the amount of participant observation made the semi-formal interview situations more relaxed, and the questions and topics more precise. Also, whenever I was invited to assist any at event or meetings at either the observed public school or the observed Qur'an school, or in the village in general, I did.

As will be more elaborated upon in chapter 6 *Presentation of findings from the field*, the celebration of Tabaski²¹ fell at the same time as the early phases of the field study which had consequences for the planned start of the semi-formal interviews. Although this was not planned, the Tabaski celebration turned out to be a very valuable source of information and data.

Fangen (2004) states that

The word participation implies that you participate in everyday social interaction with your research subjects, not that you conduct the same actions as the research subjects. When I studied a group of neo-nazis I did not have to make racist utterances nor exercise violence (Fangen 2004, p 30, my translation).

This means that even though I did not participate in for example prayers, but was present and respectfully observing these activities, I still participated in the sense of being present, observing, and participating in activities before and after the prayers.

²¹ Eid el Adha, one of the largest Muslim feasts of the year

It was also fruitful in order to establish contact and to make sure the topics and questions for the informal and semi-formal interviews were as precise as possible. Following the same logic, observation also seemed wise in order to make sure that the ethical dimension of the field work was not jeopardized and to make sure that no toes were stepped on, as religious education may be a sensitive subject to many. Participant observation also helped to get my face known to many people and to establish trust. In the beginning of the fieldwork it was also important in order to make people used to my presence in the village.

3.3.3 Semi-formal in-depth interviews

Semi-formal in-depth interviews were chosen as a method because it allows for flexibility in the interview situation. As noted above, the aim was to let the respondents feel free to express their experiences and perceptions.

Interviews in 10 households

Due to time-constraints I decided to interview representatives from 10 households. I also landed on this number as setting up interviews would take time, I also wanted to make sure that there would be time for follow-up interviews if this was judged necessary.

In 50% of the interview situations both parents were present. As gender is not an explicit focus of this research, this will not be emphasized during presentation of findings and the discussion part of this thesis.

All interviews were conducted in the households of the respondents to limit the time taken from them in order to participate in the study. This was also deemed appropriate in order to make the respondents feel comfortable and at ease, and provided useful observational data. A disadvantage of the choice of interview location was the interviewer's lack of control over the surroundings. The interviews in the households lasted between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours. The interview situation, however, lasted much longer as interruptions did occur frequently. All the semi-formal interviews were recorded. An interview guide was created, but rather than being treated as specific questions being posed in a pre-set sequence, it was treated as a thematic guide, summarized below. This became useful as respondents would often talk about themes in a different order than sometimes anticipated. The use of open-ended questions also allowed

the interviewees to reflect freely and to elaborate when they felt this was suitable. For full interview guide see appendix 2.

Table 3 Topics for semi-formal interviews, households

10 Households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the respondents story (focus on education and training), - perceptions about development of the public school - choice and motivation for children’s education; - how a child should be raised; - perceptions of the purpose of the public education system; - perceptions of the purpose of Islamic education system; - education outside of learning systems; - values of society; - cost-related issues
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Contextual interviews

In order to provide a rich contextual understanding, semi-formal interviews were also conducted with Chef du Village, Imam, Qur’an teacher, Marabout, Principal at observed primary school, one teacher and the Arab teacher at the observed primary school. The contextual interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour.

The topics for the contextual interviews may be summarized as seen below. For full interview guides please refer to appendix 3

Table Topics for Semi-formal interviews. Contextual

Chef du village	History of the village. Traditional leadership and hierarchy
Imam	Islam and Islamic education in the village. Religious context
Qur’an teacher	Islamic education in Senegal, Islamic education in the village; his own history, education and training, Qur’an schools vs Franco-Arab schools
Marabout	Islamic learning system, the workings of the Islamic learning system, different varieties of the Islamic learning system
Principal at sampled	Curriculum; Reforms; Parents’ participation; Redoubling of classes;

primary school	practice; Inscription fees; School equipment, the role of religion in the school, Duality and Qur'an schools, Franco-Arab schools
Arab teacher at sampled primary school	The respondents own history and training (Daara boarding school), values in the Islamic learning system, organization of classes;
Teacher at sampled primary school	Inscription; Curriculum, subjects; Parents participation; Religion (Tabaski); Language; Values; Perspectives on Islamic learning systems,

3.3.4 Use of interpreter

Most interviews were conducted in French. When the respondent did not feel comfortable expressing their opinions and perceptions in French I would bring an interpreter, as I speak neither Wolof nor Serer, the most common languages in the village. I was assisted by a member of the host-family who in addition to being fluent in Wolof, Serer and French also was studying English at the university Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar. During participant observation and informal interviews there would always be several people present who would assist in the translation when needed. However, as in all research being conducted crossing several languages, it is recognized that some meaning might be lost in the translation process.

3.4 Analysis

In the field

During the field-work the process of organizing the data began, yet this may be seen as a more preliminary organization and analysis-phase. For the observational data and the informal interviews it was crucial to make order out of notes made in the field when these were still fresh in mind. A part of the day-to-day routines of the field work was therefore to spend time in front of the computer in the evening writing up raw-data, searching for new themes and underlying messages and as a result, improving interview questions and topics. Although challenging, this strategy ensured that the inductive element of the analysis was in focus.

After field work

The first step in the analysis – process after the field work was to transcribe all the in-depth interviews and to organize the field-notes consisting of both observational data and data from informal interviews. Although highly time-consuming, it was seen as necessary to transcribe and organize all the collected data to ensure that no stones were left unturned.

Reviewing the literature was a continued process throughout the research. After an initial, preliminary analysis I went back to the literature in order to help create the categories under which I would then organize the data material and to research aspects which came up during the data collection and analysis. This represents an ongoing reciprocal relationship between data and theory. It is not uncommon within qualitative research that the researcher engages in a cyclical process of reviewing literature – collecting data – reviewing new literature.

The presentation of the findings from the field study is done thematically in order to provide a holistic presentation.

3.5 Ethics, Reliability and Validity

Ethics

As noted above, it was important for me to show respect for the respondents and participants and the other inhabitants of the village. The potential private nature of the topics under investigation was understood. Creating and establishing trust was therefore of great concern. During participant observation I would always present myself as a researcher and provide a short description of the type of research I was conducting. Often, this would occur naturally as people were generally curious as to what I was doing there.

All respondents to the semi-formal interviews were informed of the consent form. Those who could read and sign this, those who could not were orally informed, and would agree to participate in the study. All respondents were asked for permission to record the interview. The thesis holds a high level of focus on anonymization of research site(s) and participants. All information which would make identification possible is therefore anonymized.

Reliability and validity

Because of the challenges regarding applying the concepts reliability and validity to qualitative research, Guba and Lincoln (1985; 1994, in Bryman 2012) developed alternative

criteria for assessing qualitative studies: trustworthiness and authenticity (Bryman 2012, p 390):

Trustworthiness:

- a) Credibility, which may be accomplished through triangulation as is the technique applied in this study
- b) Transferability, will the research be (at least in part) transferable to other contexts? In the research at hand this is ensured through attempting to explore an exemplary case, and to provide a thick, contextual description.
- c) Dependability, entails a rarely applied “auditing approach”, meaning having peers reading through all data material making sure that analysis are correct. Not applied in this research. However, the use of supervisor during the process from outline of research to the finished product has included some aspects of ensuring dependability.
- d) Confirmability: that the researcher can show to have been acting “in good faith”

Authenticity is more concerned with “...the wider political impact of the research” (Bryman 2012, p 393), or the more practical outcome of the research. For the research at hand the aim of the research is to compare the Government’s and the participant’s perceptions of the purpose of the learning system. Provide a platform for expressions of the point of views of the participants and their views is understood as a practical outcome.

3.6 Limitations of the study and challenges during the inquiry

Lost in translation

As noted above there will always be a risk of losing content when conducting research across languages. Although I do speak and write French, as will be noted during the presentation of the data and findings, the spoken languages of the village is mostly Wolof and Serer Safin. It is therefore recognized that the information might had benefited from a researcher fluent in local languages. Yet it is still believed that the research at hand does shed light on important issues, since as noted above, there would always be someone who spoke French present.

Not being French was seen as an advantage, as some people hold quite negative conceptions about French people. At the same time, it was noted as a challenge to investigate peoples' perceptions of the two learning systems when I was so clearly representing one learning system rather than the other myself. My interest in the Islamic learning system seemed to be surprising to some, yet it would appear as this interest was highly appreciated. This will be elaborated upon more during the presentation of the findings.

Confusion of roles

One significant challenge was that I was often expected to contribute financially. At the observed primary school this was both indirectly (emphasizing the need for partnership with "European schools") and more directly ("we would be so grateful for any contribution") stated, which would sometimes lead to challenging situations and some disappointment. Also, I was approached at the house where I was staying by a woman who had "heard there was a woman living there who was helping with school" during the inscription process at the primary school (As will be noted during presentation of findings, a fee had to be paid for each child to be enrolled, for maintenance and equipment).

4 Conceptual framework

During the course of this paper I will apply a conceptual framework inspired by several theories. I aim to show how the processes leading to the dichotomous relationships in the contemporary Senegalese education system have unfolded on two levels; a systematic “othering” of Islamic and indigenous ideas related to colonial and post-colonial ties to France and the influence of the World culture in the education system, providing quite specific ideals of what it means to be a successful, modern society and human being and the role of formal education to achieve such ideals (Fagerlind and Saha 1989). I also wish to situate what appear to be patterns of domination and oppression by a quite specific view on what counts as knowledge, within the international educational discourse and point to the hegemony of the western epistemological dominating discourse and ideology (Breidlid 2013)²².

In the second part of the chapter I focus on how “the purpose of schooling” is understood and applied in the thesis.

The framework chapter first presents the wider theories before becoming more thematically narrowed. Each theory/concept is used to address specific areas of the research and data. This is specifically emphasized under each sub-heading and summarized at the end of the chapter

4.1 World Culture Theory

The overall guiding theoretical framework of this study is based on world culture theory, as both theory and research aim at connecting ideology, hegemony and contextual empirical findings. According to world culture theory, we have seen a standardization of nation-states, the appropriate functioning of the nation-state and the goals of the nation-state particularly after the Second World War; economic development, equality, enhancement of individual opportunity (Meyer et al 1997).

Meyer et al (1997, p 145) argue that

“ Worldwide models define and legitimate agendas for local action, shaping the structures and policies of nation-states and other national and local actors in virtually all of the domains of rationalized social life—business, politics, education, medicine, science, even the family and religion”.

²² This perspective may be seen as a combination of several theories as presented by Anders Breidlid in the book “Education, Indigenous Knowledges, and Development in the Global South” (2013).

Instead of regarding the nation-state as a product of "...worldwide systems of economic or political power exchange and competition (as in macrorealist approaches) or of "... power and interests" (as in microrealist approaches) (Meyer et al 1997, p 147), the authors see the nation-state as culturally constructed, critiquing the other theories as not acknowledging the "substantive significance of culture and its presence in world society" (Meyer et al 1997, p 148).

The argument of the World Culture Theory is built around a macrophenomenological approach to the world. By applying the concept of «culture» to the international macro level, World Culture Theory sheds light on several general models for appropriate behavior at the global level:

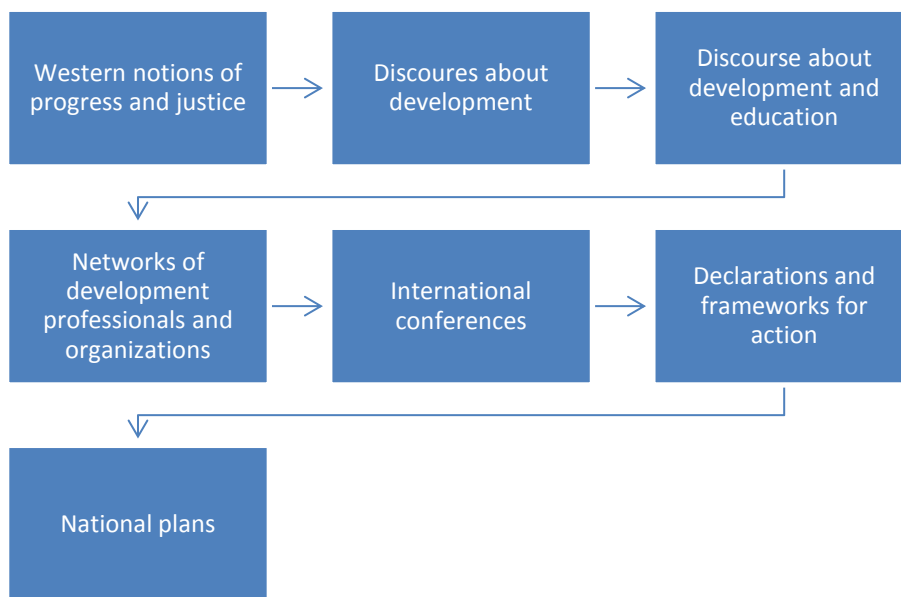
First, contemporary constructed "actors", including nation-states, routinely organize and legitimize themselves in terms of socioeconomic development, and rationalized justice. Second, such models are quite pervasive at the world level, with a considerable amount of consensus on the nature and value of such matters as citizen and human rights, the natural world and its scientific investigation, socioeconomic development, and education. Third, the models rest on claims to universal world applicability; for example, economic models for development and fiscal policy (...) are presumed to be applicable everywhere, not just in some locales or regions. (Meyer et al. 1997. P 148)

The authors argue that schools often reflect the ideals of progress and modernity. A central feature of the modern nation-state and how to reach the above-mentioned goals has been the expansion of mass schooling (Meyer et al 1992). World culture theory is based on the argument of a "common source of modern mass education" and hence, one sees schooling systems converging towards one global model (Anderson-Levitt, 2003, p 2). Most scholars would agree that any system (political, economic or educational) ought to be based on the principle that government policy should reflect reality. According to Meyer et al., one consequence of the world-wide adoption of the world culture on education is that it has led to an "endemic decoupling" between policy and practice. The argument is that this development has occurred because of the importation of models of nation-states, and education systems, not taking local variations and pre-existing cultural traits into account.

Applying the World Culture theory to Education for All

According to Chabbott (2003, p 2), the world culture in which we live is a “...distillation of Western Enlightenment ideas about progress and justice and the unique role that science plays in promoting them”. By applying the world culture perspective to the development of the World Declaration on Education for All, the author argues for the relative isomorphism that has occurred due to an international articulation of “...”correct” principles, “appropriate” policies and “best” practices...”(Chabbott 2003, p 2). According to Chabbott (2003), the conferences in Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000 exemplified how the new ways of thinking (particularly regarding notions of progress, human rights, democratization and education) which had developed particularly after the Second World War were “institutionalized at the global and national level” (Chabbott 2003, p 10) through the process highlighted in figure 1:

Figure 1. Institutionalization of world culture of education (Chabbott 2003, p 10)



It is emphasized how the high ideals of progress and justice, as well as the international support to these claims are making them practically mandatory, even though declarations and frameworks for action in principle are not. National plans on education will therefore most often incorporate “expanded definitions of human rights, citizenship, and development. (Chabott 2003, p 10).

Addressing the critical voices

Kathryn M. Anderson-Levitt (2003) presents in the preface of the book “Local Meanings, Global Schooling: Anthropology and World Culture Theory” perspectives on the relationship

between what may be seen as two very different theories of education: World culture theory, on the one hand, and the anthropological emphasis on local variations on the other. Drawing on case studies from various countries, Anderson-Levitt argues that World culture theorists are making a point “that anthropologists cannot ignore” (2003, p3). As we have seen, world culture theorists argue for an increasing isomorphism of school practices at a global level. The very existence of world mass schooling as well as the converging trends of education and schooling internationally, cannot be overseen, as

None of us can ignore that ministries of education, school inspectors, teachers, students and parents import, play with, or react against a set of similar-looking reforms that are traded back and forth across countries (Anderson–Levitt 2003, p 18).

4.2 Post-colonialism

Breidlid (2013) discusses how the ideas of inferiority and otherness regarding the colonized populations was prevalent within thinking in the Imperial West. The ideals of European imperialism may be traced back to the 18th century Enlightenment thinking, closely related to the great thinkers of that time, such as Descartes, Locke and Hume. The emphasizing of the dominating rational and intellectual ideals of the “white man”, and thus, the responsibility to bring that knowledge to the inferior, irrational, superstitious “other” on a great civilizing mission, laid the moral grounds for colonialism (Breidlid 2012). The work of Edward Said has been one of the most influential critiques of the liberal, positivist perspective on societal progress. Through his most known work *Orientalism* (1978), Said argued that the writings and perspectives of the East were established within the perspective of the West as dominant, developed and civilized, and that it was a precondition for this perspective to present the East as a natural binary opposition; as weak, inferior, exotic and so on. The perspective of the time, which many scholars argue laid the ground for colonial imperialism, was the responsibility for the “West” to assist these societies in their progress towards a common goal. Although this work mainly focuses on perspectives on Asia and the Middle East in particular, it has been highly influential in post-colonial studies in general, and the concepts of *Orientalism* and the *Other* has also been used to refer to the continuing dichotomization between “the West and the Rest”. Rizvi and Lingard (2006), through drawing on the work of Said, argue for what they present as the cultural politics of Education; how the dominating discourse on education and what it is supposed to entail continues to lead to a marginalization of any contesting

ideals. This perspective on educational hegemony was during this research applied both to the global and national level. It thus provides a welcome expansion of the World Culture Theory as presented as the theoretical backdrop, as the focus on the context and the various local expressions a world culture may produce is more emphasized. For the analytical purpose of this thesis, the concept of educational hegemony proved useful in order to understand the relation between the public and Islamic learning system in Senegal.

In chapter 5 Background, the particularities of the Senegalese case will be discussed. The chapter also focuses on perspectives from a post-colonial perspective. The relationship to France was elaborated upon by participants during the data-collection and cannot be overlooked due to the explicit model the French education system plays for the Senegalese public school. A pitfall of post-colonial perspectives is that they may be in danger of presenting the population of colonized states as passive, powerless non-agents, for which it has been highly criticized. It is amongst the aims of this research to shed light on how households in one specific village perceive and maneuver within their educational reality – they are agents indeed. However, it is also emphasized that the participants are well aware of the constraints to their educational reality.

4.3 Understanding the purpose of a learning system

In the following paragraphs we turn to how the purpose of the learning systems have been analyzed through the research and discussed in the thesis.

4.3.1 Creating the ideal person

Cummings (2003, pp 32-33) applies an institutionalist framework to education, summed up in 10 core principles, which emphasizes the purpose of learning systems as to create, sustain and nurture “the ideal person”:

BOX 1. The ideal person

1. The concept of the ideal person is the core of an educational system. All of the great educational proposals begin with a vision of the type of person that society prefers [...]

2. In times of rapid ideological, political and economic change, new thinking about education may emerge, leading potentially to educational reform [...]

3. The most fundamental educational reform is the creation of a new concept of the ideal person [...]

4. Notions of who should be taught, what they should be taught, how people learn, and how education should be organized follow from a society’s conception(s) of the ideal person [...]

5. The representative school is the principal vehicle for nurturing the ideal person [...]

6. A society is likely to establish numerous schools, which, while they vary in level, size and location, reflect the institutional pattern of the representative school[...]

7. Educational change, since the emergence of these six concepts and their representative schools, has largely focused on their refinement, expansion and systematization[...]

8. Educational leaders, in the process of systematizing education, seek to buffer the core educational processes from external influence [...]

9. Each institutional pattern provokes counter-patterns that have some impact on the educational practice, the magnitude of which depends on the openness of the political system and the strength of opposition politics[...]

10. The six patterns have had a profound impact on the educational landscape, resulting in six distinct patterns of education. [...] Education in most other modern settings came to emulate the educational institutions in these six core nations [...]

(Cummings 2003, pp 32-33)

The emphasis on the “ideal person” is worth noticing. In culturally heterogeneous societies, such as Senegal, there might be several “ideal persons” in the same society. In post-colonial societies, the schooling system of the former colonial power was often adopted, leading to what may be argued as an imposed notion of the “ideal person”, rendering other person types as less ideal. This will be further discussed in chapter 8, *Analysis*.

4.3.2 Addressing the purpose of schooling through the manifest and the hidden curriculum – why culture matters

Kubow and Fossum (2007) argue that the purpose of a country’s schooling system manifested through the curriculum reflects values and norms of the society, particular images of the state and citizenship, and also the legitimacy and dominance attached to particular kinds of knowledge. The curriculum may according to the authors further be divided into the overt, manifest curriculum, such as educational policy and plans, planned activities, textbooks etc, and the hidden curriculum, seen as the implicit messages students receive “about proper values and behavior” (Kubow and Fossum 2007, p75).

The authors draw on two major theories; 1) structural functionalism – the purpose being to reinforce the society’s existing social and political arrangements, to restore societal balance and cohesion, stability and harmony, and 2) conflict theory: often related to the latent, hidden curriculum and purposes of schooling. According to the latter theory, schools maintain a certain structure to privilege some over others; key words being ideology and hegemony. It is the argument of the authors that, in order to fully understand educational systems, one must also include the latent curriculum. It is important to notice the importance attached to the relationship between the culture and the learning system or education system, as

Culture can be defined, in general terms, as the ideas, values, beliefs, practices and customs of a particular nation or group of people. Shared values are central to the concept of culture, and their transmission is accomplished in part through the schooling of new members (i.e. children or members from other cultures) regarding the societies shared meanings (Kubow & Fossum 2007, p74)

Maseman (2007, p 103) argues that “...a fundamental characteristic of culture is that it expresses the value system(s) of a particular society or group”. The author claims that what is being thought through any learning system will reflect the underlying value system of the

culture in which it exists. This perspective, is, as noted above, shared by Kubow & Fossum (2007). Within educational research, the author suggests that the cultural value perspective may be applied to both the manifest curriculum and policy documents and the study of the hidden curriculum.

In culturally heterogeneous societies it is likely to assume that multiple “cultural value sets” are in place. Drawing on the work of George and Louise Spindler (1987), who based their argument on an empirical study from the United States, Anderson-Levitt claims that

“[...] what makes a culture is not necessarily shared values but simply an agreement to disagree about specific opposed values. Their [the Spindlers] notion of cultural dialogue allows for conflict and contradiction within a group and even inside individual members of the group” (Spindler and Spindler 1987, in Anderson-Lewitt 2003, p. 13.).

The point needs to be emphasized. This “cultural dialogue”, or cultural debate, occurs not only within local communities, or nations-states, but also within the various institutions, such as the World Bank, the UNESCO, or within the international educational community. During the research at hand, we will see how the people of the village are negotiating between very different forms of cultural patterns, expectations and ideals. This perspective has been particularly useful in order to compare the perceived value system(s) reflected through the Islamic and the public learning system in the village and how the participants negotiate between and interact with their educational reality.

According to Gay (2002), one of the benefits of a culturally relevant learning system is that it facilitates the teaching of the whole child, through focusing on, and thus maintaining the importance of the child’s cultural identity and heritage. Another benefit is that

“It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly” (Gay 2002, p 106).

In other words, when curriculum and pedagogical practices are filtered through the learners own cultural background and lived experiences; one can expect an increase in the academic outputs of the education received as well (Au & Kawakami,1994; Foster, 1995; Gay, 2000; Hollins, 1996; Kleinfeld, 1975; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; in Gay 2002).Merry (2005)

argues for the effects on identity construction and maintenance of a culturally coherent learning system:

“For educators, cultural coherence assumes that a learning environment culturally (or religiously) consonant with the parents’ is more likely to produce healthy learning outcomes for young children and is more likely to foster a firmer sense of self” (Merry, 2007, p 483).

In addition, one may assume that a learning system which is culturally coherent with the existing cultural values of the society in which they exist, may facilitate societal and parental involvement to a larger degree than if it is incoherent. Following the argument of Merry (2005) this is not to say that a culturally coherent learning system need to be coherent to one culture only, as people, particularly in heterogeneous societies, often encompasses multiple sources of cultural identity.

4.3.3 Instrumental and intrinsic purposes of learning systems

Drèze and Sen (2002) bring to our attention several possible purposes of education.

- 1) Education may serve an *intrinsic purpose*. Being educated or knowledgeable may be valued in itself, for the sake of self-fulfillment or enlightenment.
- 2) Education may serve *several instrumental purposes*.
 - a) Instrumental personal roles include the other aspects being educated may serve; getting a job, reading street signs, participate in social activities which presuppose the skills acquired through the education.
 - b) Instrumental social roles include any societal effects of an educated population; economic development of society, any aspect of participation in a democracy, or to address societal issues (such as health, environmental issues etc).
 - c) Instrumental process roles are presented as the more “indirect” objectives of an education. For example, when children are in school, it is less likely that they will be involved in child-labor. Also, schooling may play a role in terms

of empowerment to “...enhance their ability to resist oppression, to organize politically...” (Drèze and Sen 2002, p 39).

In this thesis, the understanding of Drèze and Sens typology has been a modified, yet important one. A similar understanding may be found in Robeyns (2006), and mainly involves a focus on the distinction between the intrinsic and the instrumental purpose of a learning system. This has been applied both in the analysis of the purpose at government level and the participants views on the purpose of the two learning systems.

4.4 Summary of framework

In this chapter the conceptual framework which will be applied through the analysis of the literature, and the data-material and findings has been discussed. First the World culture theory, post-colonialism and the related concepts otherness and educational hegemony were presented. Through the course of the thesis it will become clear that these theories and concepts not only affect national educational policy and legislation, but also trickles down to the village – level and contributes to shape how the participants in the study perceive their own educational reality.

Thereafter the focus shifted to the understanding of how “the purpose of schooling” has been analyzed through the research. These paragraphs also placed the concept of culture within the scope of the purpose of a learning system and pointed to some of the benefits of a culturally coherent learning system. Lastly the chapter narrowed the concept further in presenting how perspectives on the intrinsic and the instrumental aims of education have been used in the thesis

5 The development of perspectives on the purpose of schooling

The literature review for this thesis has been wide, yet it is recognized that other aspects could have been included. In the first paragraphs of the sub-chapter I will first present an overview of the development of mass-schooling. Then follows an account of how the importance of creating a common national identity, becoming modern and generating human capital has been paramount within international perspectives of the purpose of schooling. In addition, viewing schooling as a fundamental human right has played a pivotal role within the international education discourse. The education – development paradigm, and its trajectories are discussed in the last paragraphs of the chapter.

5.1 Historical backdrop of mass-schooling

Societies have always been dependent upon passing on culture, and thus specific values and skills from one generation to the next. The family was the primary unit for this transmission, however, with the increased value of writing and reading came the need for more institutionalized education. The political, social and cultural climate of Europe was highly shifting from the 18th Century: 1) The creation of autonomous nation-states led to the need for creating and strengthening a national identity, 2) Several wars on the European continent were coming to an end, creating the political climate to focus on internal issues, such as creating a national identity and 3) the industrial revolution led to a shift in social, political and economic needs and societal organization. It also created a greater need for a skilled workforce, and thus institutionalized schooling (Fägerlind and Saha 1989).

The development of mass-schooling coincided with the European colonial expansion. As noted on page 29, a central feature of the Imperial thinking was based on a linear, evolutionary perspective on progress and the importance of the complex societies of Western Europe as the endpoint which all societies (should) strive to reach. In addition, it was the responsibility of the Imperial centers to “help” the indigenous populations towards this goal.

World culture theorists argue that this thinking, which may be traced to the ideas of the Enlightenment, continues to play a significant role, particularly regarding education. Meyer et al (1992) argue that

...mass schooling made sense in so many contexts because it became a central feature of the Western, and subsequently the world model of the nation-state and its development (Meyer et al, 1992, p 129)

It is the argument of World culture theory that we have seen a convergence in ideas about the role of the nation-state, the emphasis on schooling and the ideal person internationally, especially following the years after World War 2. Well-known theoretical foundations such as modernization theory and human capital theory may be placed within this framework. Along with an increased focus on human rights and democratization, these theories constituted the main theoretical foundations on which the development apparatus and its institutions were founded in the post-world war 2-era and further into the decolonization process.

In the following paragraphs the thesis turns to some of these converging ideals and how this development happened.

5.2 Converging ideals?

5.2.1 Creating the state and notions of a common national identity

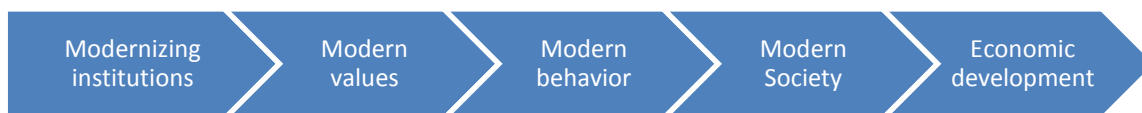
As was noted in chapter 4 *Conceptual Framework*, great emphasis has been put on the role of the nation-state, particularly after World War 2, and significantly after the independence of the former Colonies during the late 1950's and 60's. This was visible on several grounds: protecting and creating autonomous nation states, an increased focus on human rights, the importance of democracy, the importance of creating a common national identity, and the role of the education system in achieving these goals (Fägerlind and Saha 1989).

Enslin (2002) argues against including the element of national identity in education, especially in societies with a heterogeneous population, as was, and still is, the case in most post-colonial societies. The author uses South Africa as an example, a country with a history which is seen as “distinctive in some respects, it is an example of a post-colonial society in which the unifying idea of nationhood is advocated by some as a part of building democracy” (Enslin 2002, p101). Enslin argues that promoting a common national identity through public education contrasts the democratic element it wishes to enable, as democracy presupposes autonomy; the ability to think for one self, to be critical and independent.

5.2.2 Modern institutions for a modern society.

Developing in the 1950s and 1960s, the idea behind modernization theory was based in an optimism of the “future of mankind” (Fägerlind and Saha 1989, p 15). This interdisciplinary theory places little emphasis on the “already arrived” western societies, and more on the potential of other societies to follow the same path to become ”modern” and hence economically developed. The role of education, and schools as modern institutions, became paramount within this thinking. This path to modernity was based on the assumption that there is a link between the variables as presented in figure 2.

Figure 2. Variables of modernization theory



According to the authors, modernization theory has received critique on several grounds, of which I will only name a few. First, the casual links between the abovementioned variables are questioned. Secondly, the emphasis on what have been seen as “modern” implies a contrasting and less ideal set of “traditional” variables. Following the same logic, the meta-theory has received critique as being “...ideologically biased and ethnocentric” (Fägerlind and Saha 1989). Even so, scholars argue that the theory continues to play an implicit role within much development thinking (and funding) throughout the world (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989).

5.2.3 Creating a human workforce

Widely applied within the economics, human capital theorists based their thinking on the potential of the productive capacity of the people within the society, thus drawing on the thinking of the earlier structural functionalism. Creating a human workforce and thus creating economic development was the goal, and the role of the education system was paramount. According to Fägerlind and Saha (1989), this justified larger expenditures on education and further establishing this as investments in the future. As with other theories of the time (i.e. liberal economic thinking), it placed the responsibility of a society’s developmental success (or lack of) on variables internal to the society, rather than attributing this to external factors.

As with modernization theory, human capital theory continues to hold a certain implicit weight within international education and development thinking, although the theory has been criticized on several grounds (Meyer et al 1992). This is not to say that the prospect of finding a livelihood and increasing ones possibility for a decent income is not important. What is problematic is when this becomes the single aim of an education system, discriminating other important aspects. Robeyns (2006) points out the limited focus of the human capital theory. The focus of the educational model is put solely on the instrumental outcomes of receiving an education, and firmly establishing the economic instrumental aims as the sole purpose “...[blocking] out the cultural, social and non-materialistic dimensions of life[...]It values education *only* in so far as they contribute (directly or indirectly) to expected economic productivity.” (Robeyns 2006, p 72). Furthermore, it is questioned whether increased expenditure on education does lead to increased income. As we know, other variables, such as family background, play a tremendous role. Placing the responsibility for a person’s future income success on their success in school may be seen as corresponding with attributing a country’s (economical) developmental success solely on internal factors.

5.2.4 Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals

The perspective of education as a human right was established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, article 26, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, article 13 and 14. According to Robeyns (2006), the human Rights Discourse is strongly endorsed within the UN agencies which focus on children and education, such as UNICEF and UNESCO. After the institutionalization of the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Framework for Action through the conferences in Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000, as well as through the Millennium Development Goals from 2000, international standards and ideals for the scope and the providing of education were set (Chabbott 2003). The World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien was according to Colette Chabbott (2003) an important part of the process of the world culture on education, redefining what it meant to be a complete human being and where ones potential was.

In stating the EFA as a moral value as well as an economic incentive, the former dichotomies of modern/traditional were reestablished through the “have” and the “have not” s of knowledge, education and literacy (Chabbott 2003). Continuously being presented as the dominant ideology, it becomes the dominant ideology. National education plans are likely to follow the internationally set standards, and “national ownership” has become the leading strategy to legitimize influence (Dale 1999). It is important to notice, however, that even though the responses may vary, one should not underscore the implications of such international standards and blueprints of education's role in development. Nordtveit (2010) claims that international standards such as the Millennium Development Goals and the EFA goals and framework are

...proposing unquestioned frames of references, which are hallowed as a superior truth. They reduce development and education to a series of largely quantitative targets, which are said to be universal in their purpose. (Nordtveit 2010, p 326).

5.2.5 Education – the single catalyst for “development”?

The theoretical debates and policy decisions concerning development have varied considerably, and have sometimes stressed technological advancement, but at other times have focused on social well-being. However, throughout these years a key variable in these discussions has been the role that education plays in the development process (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989 p 3).

The importance of education in relation to development and societal progress has become more or less accepted. The power within education of the masses has been valued (and feared) since the very development of mass education systems. Creating a human workforce, as well as shaping the minds of children to fit the needs and values of that society was key (Cummings 2003).

Box 2: The six Education for All goals

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

Box 3: The Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Global partnership for development

Education has been seen as the key to societal progress – it is on the classification and meaning of societal progress one have differed. However the leading definition of progress may have been; whether development is understood as economic development, increased individual freedom, or an increased understanding of human rights; education has been about developing the ideal person in order to reach a goal of “progress” of some kind. Schooling has been seen as a key institution for the modernization of individuals and societies, as well as creating a workforce for the development of society (Samoff 2007, Chabbott 2003, Nordtveit 2010).

Becoming “developed”

Fergusson (1990) provides an anthropological analysis of the “development apparatus” and how this played out at a particular time in a particular place, namely Lesotho in the years 1975-84. According to the author the concept of “development” has become one of the most taken for granted and uncontested concepts of our time, and wherever a “development project” fails to produce the expected outcomes, it is seen as it has “failed” per se. The author argues that even if the outcomes are often very different from the ones expected and thus largely overlooked, the production and acceptance of certain ideas regarding development, who is seen as “developed” and who is not, have real social effects.

An example of the trajectories and impacts of the implementation of this ideology, and especially the rhetoric around the education – development paradigm is found in Nordtveit’s (2010) “Towards post-globalization? On the hegemony of western education and development discourses”. Through independent research while on field visits for the World Bank in Senegal in the period 2000-2007, Nordtveit studied how participants of a literacy project (or investment) for women, interacted with the course and their conception of development (Nordtveit 2010, p 330). The impact of the close relationship with France is particularly evident within the education system, according to the author. Formal schooling was established during the Colonial period; all instruction was in French, aiming at educating civil servants for the colony. Nordtveit (2010) argues that this established education from the very beginning as something foreign, and that the convergence to the MDGs and the EFA goals was merely a shift from “...one colonizer to the other” (Nordtveit 2010, p 329). He found that few participants questioned neither the outcome nor the aims of the learning, but that there was a high degree of acceptance of education as the right way to develop. (World Bank 2012) However, it is emphasized how the participants were tired; the rural villages in

which the courses took place meant a heavy workload for women. As Senegal is plagued by drought, fetching water could take hours, leading to many participants not able to continue what was often referred to as “my development process” by the participants, due to domestic responsibilities (Nordtveidt 2010, p 333). This perspective provides a welcome expansion of the World Culture Theory, as the focus on the context and local expressions a world culture may produce are more emphasized.

5.3 Summary

In this chapter emphasis has been put on the converging ideas of the purpose of mass-schooling, with particular focus on this development after the Second World War. Towards the end of the chapter the focus shifted to a discussion of the dichotomous and taken for granted relationship between “development” and “education”.

Following the logic of the theoretical backdrop of the study, a historical analysis may facilitate an understanding of how the contemporary educational scene in Senegal has grown over time, and place the reluctance of including the Islamic learning system into the public educational sphere in a historical context. Senegal’s colonial history plays a significant role in the development of the public school, and the relationship between the public and the Islamic learning system in contemporary Senegal. In the next chapter we take a closer look at the development of the public and the Islamic learning systems in Senegal from the colonial period to the period of the field study in 2013.

6 The development of the public and the Islamic learning system in Senegal from the colonial era to present day

6.1 The colonial period

Senegal has been part of several kingdoms, and from the 15th century, mostly due to its favorable position in relation to the transatlantic slave trade, it has been increasingly colonized by various European powers. France has been present in the region since 1659, but the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and the rivalry between the English and the French interrupted the expansion. France firmly established its Senegalese territory in 1817. (Diouf 2002).

6.1.1 The French assimilation policy

One can hardly discuss the French colonial empire without any reference to a policy of cultural assimilation, the civilizing mission and French citizenship. The French assimilation policy was based on the idea that French culture and language were to be exported to the colonies in order to raise the cultural level of these populations (Diouf 2002). In Senegal, the inhabitants of *Les Quatre Communes*, the four cities of Saint-Louis (the first capital of l’Afrique Occidentale Francaise²³), Gorée, Rufisque and Dakar were technically to be granted the rights of full French citizenship between the end of the 18th and the middle of the 19th Century. Also, in 1848, the Second French Empire passed a law enabling each of the Quatre Communes to send one representative to the French National Assembly (Diouf 2002). However, there were strong social, cultural, religious and economic barriers to both obtaining French citizenship and to the abovementioned political participation. The few who were seen as “civil” enough and had “...accumulated enough wealth and capital to go into business and other activities” (Diouf 2002, p 672) were systematically discriminated until fully assimilated and seen as trustworthy colonial partners. The aim was for these people to assist in a smooth

²³ The capital of French West Africa was then moved to Dakar in 1902 (Diouf 2002)

transition from traditional authority to the colonial system and later, from a colonial to an independent, yet strongly connected relationship.

6.1.2 Perspectives on Islam

The majority of the Senegalese population did however show reluctance towards French culture and language (Diallo 2010), and the Turuq became a central arena for colonial resistance. Bowen (2012) further problematizes the issue by pointing to what he calls the “divide and conquer” policy of the French colonial administration. The French colonial power saw Islam in Senegal as two-folded; on the one hand was “*l’Islam Arabe*” (coinciding with the more Arab oriented and Orthodox Islam in the country), while on the other was “*l’Islam Noire*” (coinciding with the Turuq). These tensions may be traced into the contemporary schooling systems and laid the grounds for the two co-existing Islamic schooling-systems which are focused on in this thesis; the Qur’an schools (Daaras) and the Franco-Arab schools.

“L’Islam Arabe”

Modern religious and political Islamist associations were growing all over the country particularly from the 1950’s, such as *Union Culturelle Musulmane* (UCM), which did not stress affiliation to any particular tarîqa, but were to be open for all Muslims²⁴ (Loimeier, 2000). These associations were referred to as “*L’Islam Arabe*” by the colonial administration, and were seen as a “purer” branch of Islam, uncontaminated by indigenous beliefs and practices (Loimeier 2000, Diouf 2002). This more orthodox Islamic branch was seen as external to Senegal, highly related to the expansion of Arab trade networks. They were seen as more literate and hence, more modern. However, the secular ideals of the French government proved to be problematic. The reluctance towards dialogue with the growing Muslim population and religious and cultural expressions proved to be a stance not taken lightly by these growing Islamist reformist groups in the country, particularly the Saint-Louis area.

The appearance of the Islamist associations was not welcomed by the colonial administration, but rather “...to be prevented for as long as possible” (Loimeier, 2000, p 171). Non-implementation of the right to meet in public (in force in France since 1901) led the associations to be dependent upon colonial authorization. According to Loimeier (2000, p

²⁴ However, most of the members of the new associations were Tijâni (Loimeier, 2000)

171), “*Circulaire 47 AP/I-2* of 3 February 1936 thus stressed: ‘Inquiries of this kind must be systematically rejected’ (Diouf 1988: 24)”. As a consequence, these attempts from the more elite, literate branch of Senegalese Islam at opening the system for religious and cultural expressions through the formal established administration were short lived. However, as I will return to, these were not the last attempts at reforming the system towards openness to Islamist ideals.

“L’Islam Noire”

The term “*l’Islam Noire*” was used to refer to the Sufi Turuq. They were seen as a blend of Muslim and indigenous beliefs which was more based on oral traditions and thus less literal and modern. It was perceived as more flexible and thus capable of blending with the colonial structure, although largely left to the informal sphere and not given any formal space within the colonial administration (Loimeier, 2000).

Diouf and Leichman (2009), argue that it was in the context of a desire for peace and stability due to previous armed social movements dating back to the transatlantic slave trade, that the more “spiritually oriented” Sufi orders were able to establish themselves; both in order to gain autonomy for the Muslim communities on one hand and to centralize and “stand together” and function along the lines of the colonial administration on the other. They argue that Sufi Islam in Senegal could be best understood as “... a distinctive reaction to the imposition of colonial rule and the decomposition of the moral, cultural, and economic narrative and practices of traditional communities” (Diouf and Leichman, 2009, p 5).

6.1.3 The Islamic learning system during the colonial period

Although Qur’an schools were established well before the colonial period, one may argue that the Islamic learning system during the colonial era functioned “...as the most important institutions for the production of Muslim sensibilities and identities” (Diouf and Leichman, 2009, p 9), The Qur’an schools became significantly more numerous during the colonial period and were to a large extent hindered by the colonial administration to exist within the formal sphere²⁵, a point which will be more thoroughly addressed below. Bowen (2012), argues that it was the French favoring of the Sufi organization as a more orderly and thus manageable form of Islam, less inclined to follow the pan-Islamic reform movements and

²⁵ However, this was not exclusively the case, as presented by Dilley (2004).

more inclined to “fall in line” with the colonial administration, which facilitated the tremendous growth (Bowen 2012, p 131).

In addition, the Islamist reform movements²⁶ wanted to create an alternative not only to the secular, French school, but also an alternative to the existing Qur’an schools, which the reformists saw as incapable of meeting the demands of the modern times (Loimeier 2000), regardless of its close ties to the Senegalese population and culture. The first Franco-Arab school was opened in 1953 (Loimeier 2000). According to Dilley (2004, p. 192) “These Islamist critiques of Sufism have proposed replacing what might be seen as ‘local’ forms of religious belief and practice with more internationalist or global forms”.

The Islamic learning system as a whole, which had tremendous growth during the colonial period, were feared to function as venues for production of anti-French cultural and political ideals and “jihadist political doctrine” and the political line “took the shape of an educational, rather than military war” (Diouf and Leichman, 2009, p 6). Diallo (2010) notes that the French realized the importance of Islam in the country, as well as the dangers which could follow a confrontation of the Islamic practices. Rather than embarking on a mission of imposing Christianity, the colonial administration “...[postponed] the Christianization phase and [produced] an expeditious plan to establish schools in Senegal” (Diallo 2010, p. 40). The creation and functioning of these schools are discussed in the next paragraph.

6.1.4 The colonial public school – “creating schools rather than churches”

The first French school was established in Saint Louis in 1816; one of the rationales being to “...rally the local people to support the colonial cause. The Senegalese people showed no interest in the French culture and language.” (Diallo 2010, p 41). One important aspect of these first schools was the strict rules regarding use of local languages, and a “French only” decree was eventually enacted. Use of local languages was strictly prohibited (Diallo 2010).

Eventually, Catholic missionary schools came to play a large role in the first colonial schools after all. These schools, established in Les Quatre Communes (St Louis, Gorée, Dakar and Rufisque) followed the assimilationist policy, and saw it as their “...divine mission to ‘civilize’ the Africans, based on the colonial authorities’ belief in the superiority of the French

²⁶ The UCM was founded by the Islamic scholar Cheikh Touré, who came from a respected family, mostly from the Tijaniya tariqua. Touré was himself educated in Algeria (Loimeier 2000)

people, their language, and their culture” (Diallo 2010, p 45). The schools were not as popular as expected, and Faidherbe, the governor of Senegal at the time, believed that amongst the reasons for the low enrollment was the hesitation amongst the Senegalese population to comply with the Christian values. This led to the creation of secular schools which maintained the policy of assimilation, but were religiously “neutral”. At the same time, in order to spread the French language and culture, the colonial administration aimed at opening secular, French schools also outside the Quatre Communes (Diallo 2010). One strategy which was applied to increase the enrollment of the colonial schools was to “...strongly encourage the children of local political, spiritual and social authorities to attend these schools so that they could serve as *intermédiaires* (intermediaries) and interpreters between the colonial authorities and the general population.” (Diallo 2010, p53). The aim of the schools was to educate (and assimilate) the elite of the population and integrate them into the colonial system. Until independence in 1960 (and some may argue after) both missionary schools (later known as catholic schools) and secular schools (which became the public learning system) continued to multiply in Senegal (and other parts of Francophone Africa). According to Diallo (2010), the role of the colonial schools within the assimilation mission and the “French-only” policy might be amongst the reasons for the continuing resistance to the public school in Senegal. During chapter 7, *Analysis and discussion*, this point will be elaborated upon.

6.2 Independence

6.2.1 Creating the Secular State. Creating tension.

“Senegal, like many other African states, adopted the political system of the former colonial power, France, with its independence in 1960: the constitution of the Fifth Republic, the bureaucratic centralism, the ‘laicistic’ school, the organization of the trade unions, the legal system based on the Code Napoléon, down to the rules for regulating traffic” (Loimeier 2002 p 183)

At independence in 1960, the new Senegalese Republic stated its secular nature in the first constitution (Loimeier 2002). At the same time, the vast majority of the population had converted to Islam (Clark, 1999).

Some scholars have argued that there were forces at work to open the independent Senegal towards Islamist ideals. Co-operation with the Islamist reformists could provide the

government direct control and access to the population, where they before largely had had to depend on the relations with the *Turuq* (Loimeier, 2002; Hedin 2007). However, there was far from consensus on whether a more Islamist direction was desirable. The arrest of Prime Minister Amadou Dia in 1962, who had "...encouraged grassroots political rejuvenation throughout rural Senegal" (Hedin 2007, p 34) and who played a major part in the political influence of the Islamist reform movement, strangled the political movements. The secular position of the state has thus largely been remained unchanged (Mbow 2009).

At the same time the government desired some control over the informal sphere, a line which was well established during the colonial period (Mbow 2009). In order to ensure this, the first Senegalese president after independence, Senghor (himself a catholic) declared both the Mourid Tariqua's holy city Touba, as well as the Tijani village Medina Gounass in upper Cassamance, as "religious centers beyond government control" (Clark 1999, p 160).

As the *Turuq* have large influence over big parts of the population spiritually, culturally and ideologically, the government has been, and continues to be dependent upon their support. The relationship with the *Turuq* has been argued to become the government's Muslim "alibi" (Mbow, 2009; Clark 1999).

6.2.2 The development of the Senegalese education system post-independence.

The Senegalese education system after independence has been critiqued for being epistemologically limited and reflecting the post-colonial ties to France. In the following paragraphs we go into more detail on the development of the Senegalese public learning system and the perspectives on the Islamic learning system in the decades following independence until the change of the millennium.

1960's and 70's – the independent school

During the early years following independence, the education system functioned mostly as during colonization and was "... far from reflecting the endogenous realities of the country (Villalón and Bodian 2012, p 17). During the first period post-independence, the public educational system was largely aimed at catering to the elite. The Senegalese education system was criticized for creating a "...cultural dichotomy [with] on the one hand, a privileged, alienated, imitative culture and, on the other, [a] neglected, national, culture of the

people” (Sine,1979,p 30, in Ndiaye, 2012, p21.) French was continued as the language of instruction in schools, for which the first president of the republic, Leopold Sedar Senghor (himself educated in France), argued would “...help ensure Senegal’s development and economic stability” (Ndiaye 2012, p 6), as well as establishing a common Senegalese identity.

As we have seen, the colonial as well as the post-colonial governments were reluctant towards including religious subjects in the formal school curriculum, as well as interfering with or challenging the Muslim educational structures. Even though the first constitution of the Republic of Senegal underlined its secular character, it did nevertheless recognize “... religious institutions and communities as “means of education”” (Villalón and Bodian 2012, p 17). However, these were left to the informal sphere and not publicly subsidized.

At the same time, some compromises were made with the more orthodox Islamic orientation in the country. The desire to create a modern Islamic educational system had been part of the broader Islamist reform movement from the mid 1950’s, though it was not until the 1970’s that Franco-Arabic, “hybrid” (Mbow, 2007) schools gained some recognitions by the Senegalese government, which is why this school-type is included in this paragraph. The increased recognition may also have been due to pressure from the growing wealthy Arab population and under strict conditions regarding the curriculum in order to subsidize.

As will be elaborated upon later, these schools has been noted as a more ideal educational solution in the Senegalese context.

The political and economic climate of the Senegalese Republic during the first decades after independence was challenging. The ruptures and trajectories of the international oil-crisis of the late 1960’s and the following financial crisis of the 1970’s becoming evident also in the education system in Senegal. Students initiated general strikes and revolts were frequent at the University of Dakar (Villalón and Bodoïn, 2012). According to Villalón and Bodoïn (2012), the desire for reform-change of the public school was paramount.

1980’s

It was within this climate that President Diouf (president during the years 1981 – 2000), attempted to create an educational system which was “...national and Senegalese in character, democratic and popular in orientation, secular in its inspiration but still sensitive to local socio-cultural realities” (Ndiaye 2012, p 13). Doubt has however been raised whether the political attempts were mostly related to pressure from the religious classes of the country

(Mbow 2009). Regardless of the government's motivations, the Structural Adjustment Programs put breaks on such more inclusive attempts (Ndiaye, 2012), firmly establishing the neo-liberal ideals on education as more than anything institutions for generating human capital and creating a human workforce.²⁷

1990's

The educational scene in Senegal in the 1990's was highly affected of the economic crisis of the 1970's and the following structural adjustment programs of the 1980's, as well as a significant growth of the school aged group (age 7-12), and low progression rates, leaving the educational scene in the country in a state of crisis (Villalón and Bodian, 2012). Following the international conference on education in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, president Abdou Diouf, and the National Assembly initiated a new national law surrounding the Senegalese public school, which replaced the "loi d'orientation de l'éducation nationale nO 71-36" of 3. July 1971 (Villalón and Bodian 2012, p 18). For the research at hand, there are several points of significance of this new law document which are highlighted below (Senegal 1991):

- The purpose of the public schooling system is presented as
 - To form men and women capable of working efficiently at the construction of the country
 - To promote liberty, pluralistic democracy and respect for human rights, national legislation, equity and mutual respect
 - To elevate the cultural environment of the population, and to prepare citizens for active participation in society
 - The document also underlines the education provided through the public education system as being Senegalese and African, and the education system's role in establishing a sense of a common African unity, as well as reflecting the commonalities of the francophone countries and at the same time reflecting international currents and values of education

²⁷ Under what was to be known as the Washington Consensus, the leading forces within international politics and economy, agreed on a common path towards economic growth and societal prosperity, which had trajectories through a line of organizations and a range of political environments; connecting aid and council, and replacing ear-marked funding by requirement of convergence to core economic and political principles. States were not to be weaker, but with a more effective and focused goal; enabling the free operation of markets (Jones and Coleman 2005)

- The law emphasizes the responsibility of the state government as providers of public education (titre II, article 3). It also stresses the Senegalese government as responsible for the quality of the education.
- The law document further stresses the secular nature of the education system and the state (titre II, article 4), while also being “...favorable towards private establishments likely to provide religious instruction” (Senegal 1991 , p 2)

6.3 The new millennium and a break with the past?

In the year 2000 a national election made Abdoulaye Wade the new president of the Republic of Senegal. Senegal had been under socialist rule since independence, while the new president was the leader of Senegalese Democratic Party, proposing a more liberal political and economic turn. The change in leadership was accompanied by a strong belief in change amongst the population. In addition to being known as a devoted Mouride, Wade has been known to be much more internationally oriented than his predecessors (Villalón and Bodian 2012)

In the following paragraphs we take a closer look at the law-, policy- and educational plan-documents for the period 2000-2015. Particular emphasis has been put on formulations of the purpose of the learning systems, the inclusion of the Education for All-goals and framework and the Millennium Development Goals, and particularly the relationship between the public and the Islamic learning system.

Loi 004-37, du 15 Décembre 2004 constitutes a complementation and a modification of Loi d’orientation de l’Education nationale N 91-22 du 16 février 1991 which was presented on the previous page, and the education plan PDEF/EPT, which is elaborated upon below. As noted above, Senegal committed to “educate all children aged 7 – 12 years to enable all children to acquire a basic quality education” in the law document of 1991. The new law stated that the government would stretch the ambition further; establishing compulsory, free public education for children aged 6 – 16 and increasing the years of what as noted as a “basic education”. The most important aspect of the law document for the task at hand, however, is a break with the past regarding the relationship between the secular and religious education system in Senegal. While the law of 1991 emphasized the secular nature of the education

system, the law of 2004 stated that “...religious, optional education may also be proposed. Parents are free to choose whether to inscribe their children to this education or not.”(Senegal, 2004)

Senegal introduced in 2000 the 10 years educational plan *Le Programme Décennal de l'Éducation et de la Formation (PDEF)*, which, according to the Senegalese government made it possible for Senegal to early position themselves according to the international focus on Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Therefore the decision was made to integrate the National plan for Action (NPA) for reaching the EFA goals which was started in 2001, into the already existing PDEF. The new educational plan *Programme de Développement de l'éducation et de la formation (PDEF/EPT)* (Education pour tous), PDEF/EPT was introduced in March 2003 (Senegal 2003).

The first section of the document is arranged around a presentation of Senegal and the Senegalese education system. The education system is divided into

- “formal education”: pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and higher education and
- “non-formal education”:
 - *alphabetization programs (for ages 15-49) and basic schools*: education for the non-solarized or early drop-outs, particularly targeted at alphabetization and practical skills, providing a “complete education”
 - *Traditional training and practical education*: targeted at providing the large number of people trained as artisans with increased “technical knowledge”
 - *Schools providing teaching in the Arabic language*: Franco-Arab schools are noted to have several challenging aspects, but at the same time, the education plan states that “ Besides these difficulties, we must note the liveliness of the social demand and the dynamic [nature] of the Franco-Arab schools as potential factors for improving the school enrollment “ (PDEF/EPT p 32, translation).
 - *Daaras*: The following paragraph of the education plan states that improving the Daaras follow the same logic, as the learning system correspond to the goal of supplying a diverse education “... by creating the conditions for plural expressions of educational modalities” (Senegal 2003 p 32).

In addition to the planned actions for each level of public schooling, the plan included actions which are planned across all school levels. For the sake of this paper, there are three planned actions which must be emphasized: Action 3: Development of teaching in Arabic (PDEF/EPT p. 85), Action 4: Introduction of religious education (PDEF/EPT p. 86), and Action 5: The creation of public Franco-Arabic schools.

The policy document *Lettre de politique générale pour le secteur de l'éducation et de la formation*, 2005 states that primary education is the main priority of the government, and emphasizes that both policy and the education plan PDEF/EPT is in accordance with the MDGs and the “fight against poverty”. Under subsection 3.2. “Elementary education”, point ii) notes the development, prioritized in the rural zones and “where the population so wish”, of creating bilingual Franco-Arabic schools or introducing teaching in Arabic in already existing schools. The same point stresses that learners in these schools must receive the same diploma as learners in “classic schools”. In addition there is a large focus on increasing the efficiency and quality of the primary schools.

Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Education (ROCARE), provides a more detailed account of the changes in policy and reform (ROCARE, 2009) regarding the relationship between the public and the Islamic learning system:

- Religious education was to be integrated into the primary cycle of the Republic School.
- Modernizing the *Daaras*, both in terms of physical surroundings, as well as a greater emphasis on professional training and larger central control of the curriculum, and a test project of Trilinguisme was introduced (instruction in French, Arabic and local languages), was carried out in 80 schools in the areas Diourbel, Dakar, Kaolack and Thies
- The establishment of public Franco-Arabic schools
- Children, who were receiving religious education in *Daaras*, or Franco-Arabic schools, were to be considered “schooled”, the same title as pupils inscribed in the formal education system and therefor to be included in statistics regarding school-enrolment.

7 “Education for the head and education for the spirit”. Presentation of findings from the field.

They say that Cristopher Columbus discovered South America. But there were already people there! The same goes for how the black man used to live in [name of village]. They went fishing and enjoyed themselves, went hunting and knew the nature. Then a new system came with new rules for how to live, and how to be. After many years they came and told us we were free. We were already free; we were free to begin with! (Male participant)

In this section, I will present the findings regarding how the inhabitants in one specific village perceive the public and the Islamic learning systems, and their lived reality with the learning systems. We have seen that these learning systems are quite specifically historically situated, which for these people means that they bear quite specific connotations and associations.

As noted in the methodology and methods-chapter of this thesis, an emphasis has been put on presenting a holistic understanding of the lived reality of the participants. No distinction is therefore being made between participants in the semi-formal interviews and participant observation.

7.1 The Context

7.1.1 The village

The village of the field-study is small and easily accessible by foot. With its proximity to a larger tourist destination and being situated at the coast a few hours by car from Dakar, the village has become a popular destination for both Senegalese, and to some extent foreign, tourists. Most houses along the coast line facing the ocean belong to foreigners and are rented out to tourists.

There is both a traditional “chef du village”²⁸ and an officially appointed Mayor (who is the formal leader of the Municipality of which the village is part). The two leaders function alongside each other. For the research at hand this was exemplified through a meeting at the observed public primary school regarding school fees, where the principal, the mayor and the chef du village were leading the meeting and seated next to each other facing the participants.

The extended family appeared to be the base for most households, especially amongst families with long historical ties to the village. Generally, notions of “family” appeared to be of significant importance to the inhabitants in the village. This was noticeable on several grounds. Housing is often as family compounds, 5-10 small houses situated around an open common-space shared by the extended family was frequent. I was often introduced to “cousins”, “brothers” or “sisters”, who were living in the household but were originally from other parts of Senegal. Economic reasons and the need and duty to assist each other were often the explanation. People who had moved to the village often expressed the desire to own land where their children could build a house.

The village has traditionally been a fishing-village, but in recent years the fishing has, according to the villagers, become a lot harder. The participants in this study often complained about large foreign fishing-companies who were infamous for using dynamite as one of their techniques. A large proportion of the inhabitants are farmers, some worked with tourism, some as artisans and some occupied various other positions. Unemployment was however of large concern for many of the participants. A large proportion of the inhabitants grew some vegetables or fruit/berries, and/or would have some poultry and often sheep or goats. For the most part this was for personal use for the family and household, while others produced for sale. Donkeys were also frequently used as transportation animals. As the animals were notorious escapists, the scenery of the village would almost always include some sheep grassing in the corner. Most households have electricity; though there was frequently loss of electricity. Food was mostly bought at the market along the main road of the village on a day-to day basis. Cooking is done over open flame, for the most part by bottled gas or coal, and was often highly time-consuming. All laundry was done manually. As a general observation, household-chores were labor intensive and occupied a large proportion of the day, especially for women. At the time of the field work, a water shortage crisis was

²⁸ The Chef du village was also known as a Saltigue, the “minister of defence, culture, the ground/earth and the ocean” (Sipsenegal, 2016) and the highest ranked religious figure within the Serer traditional religion)

plaguing the country. Due to a leakage in a water-pipe, the Dakar-region was particularly ill situated. Hospitals had to close, and people had to travel long distances to fetch water for their daily consumption and routines. The start of the school year was also postponed.

On almost every corner there would be a small food shack, where women and men sold coffee, Ataja (Senegalese tea) café Touba (spiced Senegalese coffee) and sandwiches; white bread with most often tuna, red or green bean stew, or eggs. Some of these places would have small seating possibilities outside and some protection from the sun, and were very popular amongst the local population. These were also fruitful places to come in contact with people. People in the village were often interested in what we were doing there. Explaining my research project would often lead to very interesting conversations, as most people had some sort of opinion about this in one way or the other.

Though the weather was mostly dry during the days, heavy rainfall and thunderstorms would sometimes occur at night. This would often pose challenges for parts of the people in the village and the question “Did you wake up dry or wet this morning?” seemed to be part of the routine on these days.

Ethnicity, Language, and religious affiliation

Although the ethnical composition of the village today has become more heterogeneous, the village is still considered Serer Safin, along with a strong (and growing) presence of the Wolof ethnic group.

Wolof and Serer Safin are the spoken languages. According to participants, Serer Safin is mostly spoken at “village level”, amongst the elderly of the village. Wolof and Serer Safin would often be mixed with a few French and Arabic words here and there. An example of this are the long greetings expected when meeting someone in the street (Wolof):

- Salaam aleequm
- M’alequm salaam
- Ca va? (How are you?)
- Ca va, Na nga def? (I’m fine. How are you)
- Mangi fi rek. Yangui si jam? (I am here only/I’m fine. Do you have peace?/How are you?)

- Jaam rek. Ana waker gui? (I am fine/Peace only) How is your family?)
- Ñunga fa rekk (They are fine/ They are here only)
- Ca va?
- Oui, ca va alhamdoulillah. Yangui noss? (Yes, I'm fine, thanks to God. Whats new? Literally means do you have a party)
- Toutti rek (Only a little)
- Alhamdoulila (Thanks to God)
- Alhamdoulila (=)
- OK, Ba beenen yon (OK, until next time!)
- Ba beenen. Chiao! (Until next time. Bye!)

The list of greetings provided above could however go on. Quite often you would also ask how things are in the house, how business is going, how members of the family are doing more specifically, etc. I found that learning how to use these greetings had a significant impact on the respect the participants felt I was showing. Trying to learn how things are done and making an obvious effort was of high importance to people.

French was never observed as language of communication in any households or in any other context in the village during participant observation, except when communicating with tourists (or researcher). French was often referred to as *la langue toubab*²⁹. One of the local *boutiques* (small shop where you could buy the everyday necessities) refused to speak French. Although French is the official language, Wolof was used as language of communication during breaks and meetings at the public school, while this was used in a combination with Arabic at the Qur'an school.

There is a (in comparison to other Senegalese villages) a large proportion who are Catholics in the village. The vast majority, however, are Muslims and part of the Tijani Tariqua. There is also a minority who are Mourid (mostly Wolof). In addition, some participants reported that there had been a growing presence of a more orthodox Islamic orientation.

²⁹ "Toubab" is often used to refer to Europeans, and literally means "white man". Langue toubab may thus be translated to "the white man's language"

There are two mosques in the village. One is connected to the village of the field-study, and considered the “original mosque” of the village. The other (the Grand Mosque) was recently constructed, and was connected to the municipality of which the village is part.

The Serer people in Senegal were amongst the last ethnic group to convert to Islam, and there were numerous example of rites from the Serer-religion *a fat –Roog*, such as carrying *jujus* (talisman to protect from evil spirits), often around the waist or around the neck, or offerings to *Roog* (the Divine) at the base of Baobab trees. Although the belief in the spirits was important for all the participants, some were highly opposed to performing such rituals, as this is forbidden in Islam.

As previously mentioned, the celebration of Tabaski, or Eid Al-Adha, one of the largest Muslim celebrations of the year, also fell at approximately the same time as the start of the fieldwork, and the start of the semester at the public schools. In Senegal, part of the celebration of Tabaski, concerns offering an animal, preferably a goat³⁰. There was a lot of honor attached to who would have the largest goat, and who would not afford a goat at all. Buying a goat was expensive, but still seen as a duty. Normally, goats came from Mali, but due to the conflict situation in the country, there were fewer goats available. The day of Tabaski started in the early morning hours, when the men of the village took their goat to the beach to be washed. There were about 100 men and boys who then would, after bringing the animal back home, shift into their finest garment and attend a ceremony in the large Mosque, led by the Imam. Most of the women stayed in or around the household, but some women were observed in the Mosque. After returning from the Mosque it was then time for the offering. This was done Halal, by cutting the animals’ throat and letting it bleed out. There was a sense of seriousness surrounding Tabaski, most participants responded that they did not like the offering, but they saw it as a duty as Muslims. The rest of the day was spent by taking care of the carcass, cooking large amounts of meat, eating and socializing. For most inhabitants eating meat was not a part of everyday life, and the amount of meat eaten was highly emphasized, as was the sense of gratitude over the meal. An important part of the celebration of Tabaski is sharing. The meat from the offering was shared both with Catholic households (who do not celebrate Tabaski), with neighbors, family and with the poorer parts of the population.

³⁰ The offering (and sharing of the meal) is done in order to commemorate Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son to follow the bidding of Allah.

7.1.2 Indigenous learning systems and learning in the household.

In addition to perspectives on the public and the Islamic learning system, other aspects of a child's basic education would often come up during the in-depth interviews.

Example 1

During an in-depth interview, one respondent explained in depth his perspective on the role he felt was attributed to the public learning system, particularly primary school. He had himself attended both public school from where he dropped out before completion, and the local Qur'an school. He was working as an artisan, both painting and crafting art pieces from anything he found on the beach and selling them to tourists during the season. This man became one of the key participants in the study, and we spent hours discussing life, religion and education in the village, where he was born and raised. The very name "ecole primaire", as in public primary school, was misleading to him.

"This is not primary education. Primary education takes place in the home, in the village. It's not like you come to school and have not learned anything before in your life. Education in the home; that is primary school".

Example 2

One day, I interviewed a mother of one child who worked as a seamstress in the village. The interview took place in her shop, amongst beautiful fabrics, dresses, bou-bous³¹, and sewing machines, and we had to take breaks every time a customer came in. She explained how she had been working extremely hard to establish herself and to become independent. She had not finished lower secondary school. She pointed out several times the lack of understanding and respect for the "Senegalese way of life" from Europe.

"Here we have so many choices on how to educate our children. In your place, you have only one choice."

The respondent was very critical to what she saw as a patronizing view on African women, as dominated and oppressed, and appeared to be very focused on making sure her own daughter

³¹ Boubou is a term used for a type of clothing often worn by men in West-Africa

understood the importance of hard work and self-worth. It was evident that the respondent was very proud of her own accomplishments in life, and wanted to make sure that her daughter did not grow up thinking that these things come for free.

“She does not get a new dress for Tabaski, she has to use the one from last year. I could make her new dresses all the time, but I don’t want to do that. She cries and cries, but I don’t want her to have it too easy”.

Example 3

Another participant explained in depth how initiation rites³² among boys played an important role in knowledge transfer in traditional Senegalese society³³, and more specifically for the Sereer people, the *Ndut*. For him, this was an important part of their tradition. For a period of 3 weeks -1 month, young boys would be separated from the community. They were taken to the forest³⁴ and lived in a hut with their peers and a few adult (already initiated) men. The participant had himself been through this rite, in which circumcision was an important part. He thought he had been amongst the last generation who practiced the tradition, other than the Diola ethnic group in the Cassamance region³⁵ who are known to still practice the *Buku*³⁶. He explained how they would be awakened during the night, watching the elders take their meal while the boys themselves were given only leftovers. The treatment and conditions during this period were harsh, almost cruel, and they were often beaten. It was believed that the young men thus would be better prepared for challenges later in life. The same participant explained that the mentality was that they were to be broken down in order to be built up again before they were reintegrated into society.

“What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger. Mais c’était tellement dure!”

As related to this, the path to become a knowledgeable, respected member of society was described by the well-known Senegalese philosopher, Kocc Barma Fall (1586-1655), who was quoted by younger and elderly participants alike during the field work. During an in-

³² Initiating rites refer to rites of passage between childhood and adulthood, and is a term often used in anthropology

³³ All though the rites described and explained in this section is derived from Seerer and Wolof initiation rites; the pattern is reported to be the same for other ethnic groups in Senegal.

³⁴ In Traditional Serer religion (Fat Roog) the forrest (particularly Baobab trees) are believed to be where the boundaries between the living world and the divine are

³⁵ Cassamnace is the part of Senegal south of Gambia.

³⁶ Initiation rite amongst the Jola ethnic group

depth interview, the respondents excused themselves and started searching for an old paper where one of the most well-known analogies of the philosopher was quoted:

“If you want to conquer knowledge, there are four characters that you have to make your own:

The one of the camel; it’s an animal that supports, without whining or moaning, all we can put on his back. Similarly, he who seeks knowledge must be patient and bear all without balking.

The one of the Raven; which is a morning animal. He gets up very early to get his food. The example of this bird suits those who seek knowledge: to extract oneself very early from the mildness of the bed and the empire of soft sleep. It has nothing to do with laying down.

The one of the pig; the pig is an animal who does not hate anything – on the contrary, he spends his time devouring everything. This is why it is difficult to find skinny. Kocc invites those who seek knowledge to do as the pork: accept to learn everything because culture encompasses everything to be extensive.

The dog; he loves his master who he accompanies while putting himself at a distance. Ready to defend him in any circumstance, he warns his master of any unusual presence and yet he eats leftovers. It is this attitude that him who searches knowledge must have: get close to his master without bothering him, loving and accepting him without whispering his own wishes”

It was the perspective of these participants that the values being transmitted through earlier forms of knowledge transfer had played a significant role in their personal development. Although, as mentioned, the treatment during initiation rites had been harsh, they did mean that the society would benefit from re-integrating some of the focus. As will be elaborated upon below, several participants were experiencing a time of change, from a collective focus where society is seen as more important than one-self, to a more individualistic focus.

Example 4 - Ngor, Kersa, Joom

The concepts Ngor, Kersa and Joom were mentioned by several participants, and would be found written on the walls several places. The public school had a large sign with the three words in the court yard. It was reported to have great significance in traditional values in Senegal. The concepts origin from Wolof:

- NGOR – Someone who is noble, who is honest
- KERSA – To be discrete, who is in balance, to hold one’s temper
- JOOM – always do like everyone is watching you – self-honor

It was reported that although the three concepts are not formalized into either learning system, they play a large role in the original value-system of the village and in Senegal in general. One participant underlined that the traditional values were transmitted through the pedagogical practices at the public school, not through the curriculum. It was also observed how the teachers at the school had a much more authoritarian teaching style than what I am used to from Norway, and respect played a significant role. These values were, however, emphasized as some of the most important outcomes of the Islamic learning system, particularly Daara boarding schools. All though rituals such as *le cas de l’homme* (wolof initiation rite) or *Ndut* (Seerer initiation rite) now largely has disappeared from the region, the focus on hard work, and the perspective of experiencing challenges early in life in order to be more prepared for adult life, was reported by several participants as being key components in the society and reported as highly important in bringing up a child. As will become clear during the rest of this chapter, similar values are noted to form the base for the Islamic learning system

7.1.3 The burden of costs and the shame of not making ends meet

It is not uncommon that parents in economically pressed families still struggle to educate their children. Because of this, one participant stated that public education was still seen as a “luxury”. The tradition of sending your child to live with other member or friends of the family, often people who live closer to a school or are more “well of” is still quite common, for both boys and girls.

The summer-vacation of the public school was coming to an end by the start of the fieldwork and I was able to observe the inscription process at the sampled primary school. According to both teachers and parents, each child each year had to pay a formal fee to the primary school and the parent’s association. It was reported that inscription fees were also required at the other public schools in the village. There were not only indirect costs, such as materials, books, transportation, but also direct, formalized payment, which also increased at the secondary level. The importance of the inscription fees at the school, as well as the additional

(renting books, additional costs regarding materials, clothing, etc) was of large concern for the parents interviewed. Many parents expressed concern as they did not understand what they were paying for. Especially families with more children expressed that they had difficulties providing the means for educating all their children. It was quite common that these parents reported that their oldest children had not attended the public school, simply because they did not have the means at that time.

In order to agree on a reasonable fee, the observed primary school summoned an open meeting. I was allowed to assist at the meeting, which was attended by the school principal, teachers, mayor, chef du village, the Marabout from the Qur'an school, the presidents of three different parents unions, and 13 parents (all together, although some did not participate in the whole meeting). After two hours of discussion, the inscription fee was set to 4000 FCFA³⁷. The meeting was started and ended with an Islamic prayer, led by the Marabout from the observed Qur'an school. According to the principal the parents were told about the meeting through word of mouth, and there was no routine for noticing parents about for example meetings and such.

There were varying reports from the parents regarding fees to the Qur'an school ranging from 1000 Fcfa³⁸/month to occasional contributions, to nothing at all. It thus appears as though the payment to the Qur'an school was more based more on individually set contributions from the families, which was confirmed by the *Marabout*.

As will be elaborated upon below, most children attend both learning systems. The financial burden of a child attending the Qur'an school was not explicitly emphasized by the parents in this study, but the combined payment of both the public and the Islamic school was reported to weight heavy on the households,

Schooling was clearly an important part of people's mentality. As mentioned during chapter 2 *methodology*, section 2.2.4 *Research site and duration of field work*, there was a relatively large amount of schools available in the village. The participants who could not find the means to inscribe their child at the public school assured me that they were trying, that they were troubled by not "*properly educating*" their children.

³⁷ 4000 FCFA is about 56 NOK or 6 EURO

³⁸ 1000FCFA is about 14 NOK or 1.5 EURO

There was a large divide in the village. Some presented the village as being more “advanced” than neighboring villages, that a large part of the population are “intellectuals”. While this may be correct for some of the inhabitants, a large proportion was uneducated.

7.1.4 Observations and interviews from the public primary school

The school

The observed public school consisted of 4 buildings and 8 classrooms. There were 8 teachers who would teach all subjects, and one teacher in Arabic and Islam. The normal school week at this school had classes in the mornings, from 9 – 13 Monday to Friday. In addition there were classes in the afternoon Tuesdays and Thursdays. One teacher reported that these afternoon-classes had been initiated by the national government, in order to improve the level of French. A low level of parental involvement was a concern, and the focus of the afternoon-classes was on helping the learners with homework. The teachers who were part of this conversation also agreed that the majority of students were at the Qur’an school, or in church, depending on their religion, in the afternoons they did not have classes.

The learners were divided into the following classes:

- CI Cours d’Insignation
- CP Cours Préparatoire
- CE 1 Cours Élémentaire 1. année (two classes; A og B)
- CE 2 Cours Élémentaire 2. année
- CM1 Cours Moyen 1. année
- CM2 Cours Moyen 2. année (les candidats)

The course “civisme”, which is a social and health course, was pointed out by several teachers as an important part of the public school curriculum, and was described as “...how to behave oneself in society” by one participant teacher. Related topics were also included into the French curriculum, both in reading and writing. There were for example short stories about children who had to take a bath, who got sick from drinking un-pure water, who got sick (and “punished”) from eating tobacco, and so on. The primary school principal saw this development as highly positive, as it in his perspective attached the readings to the surroundings.

According to the principal at the observed school, the start of the inscription of students at the school would be postponed to “*after the Tabaski*” because the “*heads of the parents are focused on Tabaski*”. It was noted that this was not a governmental decision, but a contextual decision made locally at the school. There appeared, however, to be a relative consensus around this decision, and all three public schools (two primary and one secondary) followed the same logic. In reality, this meant that the inscription process at the observed school started two weeks later than the starting date of the semester set by the government. The actual teaching and learning started two weeks after the start of the inscription. In sum, the classes were delayed by one month.

The role of language

One male teacher stated that the language situation creates a “blockage” between the school and the home, and often the parents lacked the means to help their children with the homework.

“Most parents don’t have the means to help their children with the homework”,

he said, pointing to his head. Both the principal and other teachers reported that there was little or no parental involvement in the school, and a system for establishing good communication and contact between the school and the households was lacking. The language situation was also discussed among some of the teachers during a break one day, as they were a bit frustrated over the lack of parental involvement in their children’s education.

“We have to speak French with them when we meet them in the street, just some simple greetings. It is necessary to force them”

stated another teacher.

Both the principal and a few other teachers reported that the use of local languages had been put higher on the agenda in the later years, with a large project being tried out all over Senegal regarding bi-lingual schools. This was regarded with some optimism and was perceived as a positive development, although the linguistic complexity of Senegal was also raised as an issue. Although several participants pointed out that the language situation in schools had changed a lot since independence with regards to the usage of local languages the language of instruction remains French, although use of Wolof was observed.

Mistrust

From the principal and the teachers, mistrust was expressed towards the government, from whom they did not get enough resources to maintain the school buildings, buy additional materials, etc. They felt as they had no choice but to ask the parents to “*contribute with a modest payment*” (PI), to provide a secure environment for the children. Both teachers and parents reported, however, that children were allowed in primary school even if their parents did not have the means to pay. The payment was going to secure some means to maintain the school buildings; however, the plan far ahead was to establish a computer lab for the learners.

Trajectories of government policy

One teacher, who had worked at this school for 25 years, meant that the school had become a lot more *efficient*, that there were a lot more learners going through the school. The teachers perceived this as a positive development, although the government did not follow up financially, and the lack of funding was reported to be paramount. They expressed a high level of discontent with the situation of the expectations from parents and central authorities alike, and the lack of means to meet those expectations.

The statistics also cover up another part of the educational reality, according to the principal.

“The Senegalese government has set a 5% limit for how many students in one class the teachers can fail and make retake a course. It is only the classes CP, CE2 and CM2 which students might retake. The international agencies that pay for the Senegalese school have said that it is not good with so much redoubling of classes; that is why they have set a limit at 5 %. Before 2006 it was 10%. And before that it was a lot. You know of Education for all? Aha..”.

While this on the one hand led to some students moving on to the next class without the “means”, he also meant the less redoubling the better, because of the social stigma related to having a child who had to re-take a class, and for the children themselves. He claimed that

“That does not give the right spirit“,

and he felt as redoubling often led to abandonment. The principal claimed how this is because of international aid agencies which “set the rules” for what is good practice:

“When it looks good on paper –you receive more funds. Nothing has really changed”.

7.1.5 Observations and interviews from Qur'an school and other varieties of the Islamic learning system

The observed Qur'an school was situated in an otherwise anonymous building in the center of the village. Most participants had some kind of relationship to the school which was known to hold great respect. There were no set classes or groups, but it appeared as the learners were grouped together according to level of knowledge of the Qur'an. Each child had their own miniature chalkboard where the Marabout would write down an extract from the Qur'an for the learner to memorize, and hopefully, successfully know at the end of the day. The older students would write verses themselves, from which they would also learn written Arabic. Although the focus is on learning the Qur'an, and not teaching the Arabic language, several participants reported that this was where they had learned the language. Many also reported that there was a large focus on values which are reworded in society, such as respect, humbleness and honesty, although this was more of an implicit part of the learning system, a point which will be more elaborated upon below.

Both teachers at the sampled public school and the Marabout from the Qur'an school reported a general observation that children would attend religious education when they did not have classes at the public school in the village. As noted in chapter 3, there were several ways in which the children could obtain Islamic education. There were two Qur'an teachers appointed by the Imam of the village, who in addition to teaching at the private catholic school also taught from home, Marabouts who would teach and train their Talibés, often seated outside in what may seem like an informal fashion. Some would also receive religious education in their households.

Towards the end of this chapter we will see how ideas regarding education of a child continue to play a significant role for people. The interviewed Marabout reported that the values formed the very basis for the Islamic learning system:

“If you are not clean, your house is not clean, how can your relation with God be clean [pure]?”

In addition to interviewing the Marabout of the Qur'an school, an in-depth interview was also conducted with one Qur'an-teacher who had been trained by the Imam of the village. As mentioned on in a footnote on page 22 of this thesis, the Qur'an teacher had finished the upper secondary cycle of the public school, before he had decided to submerge himself in Islam and teaching of the Qur'an. It was the point of view of this Qur'an teacher that parents

were “not serious enough” about the religious education of their children, and he had a desire to also open a Franco-Arab school in the village, which as previously noted are seen as a hybrid learning solution and provide a substantial alternative to the public learning system in Senegal.

“Traditional systems in a modern world”

During the interview the Marabout of the Qur’an school explained the origin of the Islamic learning system in Senegal. The *marabouts* and their *talibés* were traditionally farmers. The *Marabout* would educate the child in the Qur’an, let him work on the fields and in turn give the harvest back to the village. The *talibé* paid for the education received, accommodation and nourishment through work. It was a holistic system on which many villages depended, and the *Marabouts* and his *talibés* were among the most respected men in the society.

When people started establishing themselves more and more in the bigger cities, and the land dried out, the Daaras followed too. It was what we call the rural exodus, While the Daaras were forced to deal with this new reality, their meaning for many parents have not changed. They are traditional systems in a modern world.

He also talked about how a focus on hard work as a part of the self-development had been nurtured in the Daaras. So was also the tradition of begging. Not only did the villages depend on the harvest from the Daara, the Talibé and the Marabout were dependent on contributions from the villagers in form of meals or financial contributions. It was also meant to foster humility³⁹. In addition, *Zakat*, or charity/donation is one of the five pillars of Islam,

7.2 General perceptions of the learning systems.

7.2.1 Perceptions of the public school – Echoing Education for All

³⁹ In today’s Senegal children begging in the street has become a large concern, particularly in the urban centers. Forced begging, as is the practice in some of the contemporary Daaras in Senegal, however, is forbidden both by Islam, the Senegalese community, and, as of 2005, by Senegalese law (Loi N 2005-06). The intricate relationship between the Senegalese government and the different Sufi Turuqs, may be amongst the reasons for the relative lack of implementation of the law (Hussain, 2012).

Enrollment and quality of public school

As we have seen, the Education for All movement (EFA) has led to an increase in the enrollment figures to primary schools in Senegal. While most of the parents interviewed had no knowledge of this, they had observed that the school was more “open” now, and there were *“a lot more students than in earlier years”*. Parents in three of the households had knowledge about the Education For All movement, and the role of international donor-agencies. One male parent described what he believed to be yet another foreign regime being imposed, in a sarcastic manner:

“Everyone is in school! It’s evolution! Bravo!”

Learning outcomes not living up to the expectations

Several households reported that the learning outcomes were not living up to the standards they were expecting, and some noted that the quality of the education had deteriorated. The quality of the education received was of concern for several parents, one who stated that

“If you go there for one year, two years, and you don’t learn anything, why go?”(R4)

Another respondent argued that *education de l’âme*, education of the soul, was something that was widely overlooked by the public learning system.

“How to live, how to be, et cetera. If you educate the head and not the spirit, what is the point? You cannot disconnect the head from the spirit like that. What if you don’t use anything of what you have learned?”

The importance of learning French

Both during interviews and during participant observation it became clear that the outcomes were very high on the agenda for parents, when referring to the public school. For most, a good outcome would mean to speak and write French, to know some math, and hence have the skills necessary to get a job.

The link between schooling and prospects for finding a livelihood in the future was of great importance for all the participants in this study. The lack of expected outcomes, and for many, the lack of finding a livelihood upon completion, appears to be amongst the most important factors leading to the low level of parental involvement. Also, as noted above, several of the

parents who participated in this study reported a sense of powerlessness towards the system as it is today.

“Even if you disagree with the system, you need the diploma to get a job”

one participant stated. During another in-depth interview, the participant claimed that

- *“It is very important to get an education. School, it is very important” (R1)*
- *Researcher: “Why is it important?”*
- *[Laughing] To get the diploma. The French school is for the diploma, the Qur’an school is for the spirit.(R1)*

Low parental involvement and the role of language

Three participants mentioned how in previous times, the use of local languages, such as Sereer and Wolof, had been forbidden at school; in classes, but also during the breaks. Learners who were caught speaking their language would have to bear a chain with a pig snout around their neck the rest of that day. One participant used this as an example of the framework within which the Senegalese school was established, and stated:

“It was pure racism, and the worst is how people grew to believe it was right. I think that how Senegalese think of their own languages are still affected by that. They have been taught that its bad and inferior!”

The participant pointed out that things were slowly getting better, by pointing to the increased use of local languages.

At the same time, French is generally referred to as *“la langue toubab”* in everyday speech, “the white man’s language”, even in households where education had been highly prioritized and who in the village were seen as “successful”, meaning that their children had attended both primary and secondary school, some university.

An interesting observation was that in none of these households French was the spoken language, and none of the children had learned French prior to starting school, other than a few words and phrases.

Another participant, had two years of primary schooling himself, but was very proud of his level of French. He claimed that amongst the reasons for him speaking French was the exact same pedagogical practice criticized above. He was very critical of the state of the school today, for which he blamed the teachers:

“Those teachers! They don’t know how to teach.. The young ones today, they don’t even speak French!”

Lack of Senegalese history

One participant, who had grown up in the village, had attended both the public and the Islamic learning system. He was very eager to present his points of view regarding the public schooling in Senegal. He had finished his Baccalaureate in 1988, and reported that some of the books he had been using back then were the same books that were used today. From the participant’s point of view, the most important thing in this regard was the lack of Senegalese history in the curriculum. He stated that

“The young ones know a lot about European history, and American history, but they don’t know their own history, they don’t know anything about Senegalese history, like the ancient kingdoms! It is like history started in 1960”.

7.2.2 The Islamic learning system

High variety

The coranique education is something very important here, but we can see Daaras from different sides. We have Daaras in which children only learn religious education, they go there from about 5 to 16 year old. They are almost disconnected from the occidental life or education. They learn the whole Qur’an during these years. We also have Daaras who allow children to combine learning the Qur’an with public school. They learn the Qur’an like twice a week. Most of the parents choose this option for their children. Nowadays they even, if they have the means, pay a special guide, a Qur’an who comes at home when children come back from school. Parents are 100% convinced that the Qur’anic education increase the cleverness of children. That’s why they prefer Daaras to pre-school institutions. But Daaras can have [a] bad

reputation according to the tasks they give to children, like begging for money, lugging all around the town, what is definitely different from the role of a Daara as house of education.

As noted from the extract above, there is high variety in the Islamic learning system. The participants and respondents differentiated between Daaras, Franco-Arab schools, and Qur'an schools, in addition to the other forms of "less formalized" Qura'nic learning. The respondents differentiated between Daaras and Qur'an schools (*école coranique*), a differentiation which was not seen during the literature review (although some scholars point to the variety of Daaras regarding curriculum and time-tables). "Daara" was often used to refer to Qur'anic boarding schools, whereas "*école coranique*" was used to describe Qur'an schools where the learners lived at home and often combined their Qur'anic education with public education, which was the most common solution in the village.

Although the high variety within the Islamic learning system was emphasized, none of the participants appeared to focus on the different origin of the Qur'an schools and the more Arab-oriented Franco-Arab schools. It would appear as there was recognition of the need for both a religious and moral, and a secular education from representatives from both learning systems.

Prevalence

6 out of 10 households reported that their children would attend the local Qur'an school in the afternoon, weekends and in the holidays.

3 households reported that their children were educated in the religion through other channels.

One household reported that they were educating their children in the religion at home. These respondents underlined how not sending their children to the Qur'an school made them more responsible for educating their children in the ways of the religion in the household, and it was observed how children in these families were expected to observe and partake in their parents' religious life to a larger extent.

At the same time, all the parents reported that the need to keep their children "off the street" was of great importance to them, and an issue of some concern. Some reported that this had been among the motivational factors why they were sending their children to attend both the public primary school, and the Qur'an school, while others had decided to keep their children

in the household. In most households there were notable differences to what was focused on for boys and girls. Girls were expected to take part in household chores such as cleaning, laundry, cooking and other chores. Several parents reported that they felt as the role of learning taking place outside of either learning system had changed over the years, especially regarding boys. Children had a greater saying now, and many felt as the collective core values of the society were fading out, being replaced with a more individualistic (some said capitalistic) set of values. For some, this was just a natural process; that one had to keep up with the changing times. For others, this was seen as problematic and an unintended development of the society. One rationale often mentioned by parents as to why their children were attending the Qur'an school in addition to the public school may be seen as a reaction to what they felt was the role of the community in educating the children had changed.

Moral obligation

“We are very religious here in Senegal. Did you know that we are 90 % Muslims?”

It was very common, both during the semi-formal interviews, but also during participant observation, that people expressed pride in the form of Islam that is most common in Senegal, which is generally perceived as open and inclusive. Quite often, participants would separate themselves from more orthodox and Islamist movements such as in Mali, or Somalia.

As noted above, the curriculum of the Islamic learning system in Senegal is highly heterogeneous. Through the semi-formal interviews, the parents often emphasized the need to educate their children in the ways of religious life, prayers, and values. Religious education was perceived as a taken for granted part of bringing up a child and a moral obligation for them as Muslims.

One mother seemed to find my question puzzling, as she replied, “How else are they going to learn what to do, the prayers?” when I asked her about their motivation for sending their children to the Qur'an school. This “taken for granted”-perspective on the need to send their children through the learning system was less prevalent when discussing the public learning system, as will be elaborated upon below.

Duality

It appeared as the participants in the study enjoyed talking about their perspectives on the Islamic learning system, and some seemed puzzled by the interest. Statements such as “Yes,

THAT's how we do it here.” when I pointed to the existence of the two learning systems by one participant, supported this observation. As noted under *Prevalence*, all the parents reported that they were making sure that their children were being educated through both learning systems.

As noted in the methodology-chapter, it appeared as the participants were not expecting to be focusing on the Islamic learning system. The principal of the sampled primary school informed me about how there are two lines of schooling in Senegal, “public school” and “Islamic school”, and used the wording “dual” to describe the relationship between the learning systems. This appeared to be the focus of the parental participants as well, and there was a high level of focus on the existence of the two learning systems.

Franco-Arab schools were mentioned as an ideal educational solution both during contextual interviews and interviews in the participating households. No participants or in this study had any knowledge of the existence of public Franco-Arab schools, and they were perceived as very expensive and as luxurious private schools.

A grave situation in many urban Daaras in today's Senegal

Several participants pointed to the grave state of many *Daaras* in contemporary Senegal, and the rumors and accusations of child abuse were numerous. As we have seen, this is also high on the agenda of several NGOs and human rights organizations in Senegal. One participant stated that

“Those Marabouts, they will do anything for money. It has become a business, it is very grave”.

It was clear that many felt as their religion and a learning system with long historical ties to the Senegalese population was being misused for economical purposes. Several participants also claimed that the number of *Talibés* was increasing and becoming more common also outside of the largest cities, however, none was observed in the village.

Daaras as producing “the wisest of men”

On the other hand, several participants emphasized hard work as being one of the most important principles in the traditional Islamic learning system. One participant explained how it in earlier times was seen as an honor to send your child to a *Marabout*, especially for

households who were financially pressed, and could take care of all their children, a related tradition to children who are sent to relatives in order to attend the public learning system. This was not, however, the only reason for Senegalese parents to choose to provide this education for your children, as in many areas, the *Daaras* were the only formal education available, and their ties and connections with the informal sector were valuable.

The *Daaras* which were perceived as well-functioning were reported to have great respect in the Senegalese society, as did the men (and women, although less numerous) who had followed this learning system. It was not uncommon that people who were educated through the *Daaras* were presented as “*the wisest*”, and “*the most knowledgeable*”. They were often perceived to also have esoteric knowledge, having “divine abilities” and were known to perform miracles.

The esoteric knowledge and the power of the Marabouts seemed to be linked to the respect many Marabouts had. Most people believe in various spirits, and that some people have the ability to manipulate energy. However, the line between believing in and, acknowledging the existence of such power, and conducting rituals in relation to the spirits was important for some participants to underline, as the latter is forbidden in Islam.

I discussed this observation of what I found to be very contrasting perspectives with the Arab teacher at the local primary school, who himself was a former *Talibé*. It quickly became clear that this was a potent issue. The Arab teacher was very eager to present his own experiences, and to elaborate on what he saw as a largely one-sided and simplified debate, as the focus through media has been on the state of many contemporary urban *Daaras*. As he talked about how it had been extremely hard, he underlined that it had also given him some important lessons in life, making him

“...*more respectful and humble*”.

It was traditionally meant as to be

“*hard to prepare them for difficulties, challenges in life to come*”.

Several participants agreed on the importance of these values, and the role of the *Daaras* in providing them. This two-sided perspective on the *Daaras*, the focus on the ill-functioning of several *Daaras* in contemporary Senegal on the one hand, and the *Daaras* as producers of the most respected and wisest men in society on the other, was shared by several other participants in this study.

8 Analysis

The following chapter is aimed at analyzing the findings from the qualitative data analysis and the findings from the field in light of concepts from the literature review and the framework. The main focus is put at addressing the research questions which have been guiding the research project:

1. How is the purpose of the Islamic and the public learning system perceived by households in a coastal village in Senegal?
2. How is the purpose of the Islamic and the public learning system perceived at government level, as presented by the relevant policy documents?

8.1 Perceptions of the purpose of the learning systems at government level

8.1.1 The public learning system

Neo-colonial ties to France

The post-colonial ties to France continue to loom large within the Senegalese education sector. In chapter 6 it was argued that the contemporary educational scene in Senegal cannot be understood without reference to the colonial period. In today's Senegal this is most apparent both in terms of language of instruction (though as we have seen there are reasons for optimism regarding use of local languages) and in terms of the structure of the learning system, which follows the French educational model.

In addition, the French history of the learning system and the current manifestations are symbolically important. Kubow and Fossum (2007) argue that the hidden curriculum of a learning system reflects ideas about which values and norms which are important to the society and understandings of the culture. As Cummings (1999) notes, this may be seen as understandings of who “the ideal person” of the society is, and what kind of education which is deemed necessary to nurture and sustain this “ideal person”. It was the very core of the colonial school to nurture an idea of the ideal person as distant from the Senegalese population, it was meant to be transformative. The colonial public school was as we have seen

created as deliberately culturally distant from the Senegalese. The creation of the colonial school played a crucial role for the “civilizing mission” in the French assimilation policy.

The Senegalese case stands out as these ideas were preserved after independence, when the new independent government was to create a Senegalese education system under the leadership of Senghor. As will be elaborated upon below, the French origin of the public learning system continues to play a significant role in how the participants in the study view and perceive the learning system.

To “elevate the cultural level of the population”

To “elevate the cultural level of the population” is mentioned as an explicit purpose of the public learning system, as seen in chapter 6. As noted above, one way of understanding this is connect the purpose to the colonial history. Modernization may also be a useful term in this regard. There appears to have been a shift from the French as the cultural ideal to a more internationally related conception. As previously discussed, and as will be further emphasized below, the relationship between education and development has become one of the most taken for granted in the contemporary international education discourse. This may also be translated into the perspective on the meaning of modernity, of the modern, dynamic society and a modern population. We have seen how a consequence of establishing something as modern implies establishing something else in contrast as traditional. “To elevate the cultural level of the population” may thus be seen as transformative; elevating the population from the “traditional” to the “modern” and a concept of the ideal person as developed, internationally connected, modern, and competitive. This indicates that this purpose of the public learning system is indeed influenced by the world culture of education and the internationally endorsed educational values, which as we have seen scholars of world culture theory argue is based on the 18th century Enlightenment thinking

Primary education and poverty reduction

Particularly since the change of the Millennium a change in Senegalese educational thinking on government level has thus occurred. In the policy documents, the core focus might seem to have shifted from a strong connection to France and the Francophone community, to a stronger relationship with the international educational community as a whole. As noted during chapter 6, the new millennium brought about significant changes in the political

climate and an increased international focus. To remind the reader, these changes were included in Senegalese policy and reforms and may be summarized as follows:

- The inclusion of the international focus on Education for All and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) into the existing educational plan.
- The inclusion of the EPT (Education pour tous) into the education plan PDEF in 2003.
- Increased focus on primary education, allocation of more financial means to primary education (4% of GDP 46% of the government spending on education is allocated to primary schooling)
- Expanding the notion of “free and compulsory basic education” to also include lower secondary in 2004
- Emphasis on the Senegalese government as providers of this education
- Literacy and numeracy are the main goals
- 5% limit to students redoubling classes

According to Chabbott:

Isomorphism among these frameworks [EFA and MDG goals] is at least in part coercive; countries that hope to receive funding from international donors are often required to have a framework for action consistent with international agendas. (Chabbott 2012, p 164).

Chabbott’s point needs to be emphasized. Many so called developing countries are dependent upon international aid in order to meet the goals and standards set by the international education community. Education plans, policy and legislation are therefor likely to have a top-down structure, rather than bottom-up. As noted in chapter 5, human capital theory continues to play a significant role regarding educational policy and reforms, particularly in the South. Senegal is no exception to this trend. Poverty reduction is explicitly mentioned as a main purpose in the analyzed policy-documents. The legal framework for the Senegalese education system states that one aspect of the purpose of the Senegalese school is to “form men and women capable of working efficiently at the construction of the country”(Senegal 2004). The qualitative document analysis showed that there is a large focus on the instrumental purpose of the learning system, through focusing on (economic) development and increasing the learners’ prospect of finding a livelihood upon completion. The link between public schooling - Human capital – Poverty reduction suggest that the role of donor

agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF plays a significant role regarding policy development in Senegal. Also, and most importantly for the research at hand– there appears to be a common understanding of what kind of education you need in order to reach the goals of development, and particularly, the role of literacy and numeracy.

To promote respect for Human Rights, democratic participation, national legislation and mutual respect.

Another feature of the purpose of the public learning system at government level is to promote respect for Human Rights, to promote democratic participation, national legislation and mutual respect. According to Chabbott (2003), this was a central perspective of the rights-based approach to education, institutionalized through the EFA goals and The Millennium Development Goals. Robeyns (2006) underlines that the intrinsic focus of the rights-based approach to education is appealing; however it may often lose some of its potential (and credibility) due to the overly rhetorical understanding and lack of results:

Some governments of developing countries have legally granted every child a right to education, but still millions of the children in their countries have no education at all, or might be officially enrolled but are not present in schools, or are present in schools where there are no teachers (Robeyns 2006, p 76)

Although Senegal has had growth in primary school enrollment, the quality of the education received in school is as we have seen still relatively low. This will be elaborated upon when turning to the perceptions of the purpose of the public learning system in the village of the fieldstudy.

8.1.2 The Islamic learning system

Problematic history

It is one argument of the thesis that the establishment of the perspective on the Senegalese Muslim as “the other” during the colonial period became particularly evident within the educational sphere. The “othering” of what was an alien epistemological universe became even more prevalent when the political ideals regarding Islam were maintained into the educational sphere in post-colonial Senegal.

As noted in chapter 6, the categorization of what was seen as Islam Arabe and Islam Noire was established by the colonial power. The Islamist reform movements were categorized as “Islam Arabe” and seen as more “modern” by the French colonial administration and school. They were feared as they provided a substantial alternative to the French, politically and religiously. “Islam Noire” was perceived as to be more traditional and more easily left to function in the informal sphere. According to Bowen (2012), this may be seen as attempts at emphasizing the difference between the two currents of Islam in Senegal internally. As we have seen, the perspectives on which strain of Islam which were considered “modern” prevailed into the post-colonial era and continue to exist today. For the learning systems this resulted in the development of the early Franco-Arab schools, which later formed one of the bases for what is today known as more hybrid⁴⁰ Franco-Arab Schools, and the Qur’anic learning system, which mainly continues to function in the informal sphere.

As noted, the Senegalese government introduced reforms during the years 2002-2003 regarding the relationship between the public and the Islamic learning system. On the one hand, this may be seen as a significant break with the past regarding the secular nature of the public learning system (largely adopted from the French school) and an expanded understanding of the “ideal person” of the public learning system.

At the same time, the analyzed reform documents underline the contrast between the public and the Islamic school. The education plan PDEF/EPT divides the educational scene into the “formal” (the public learning system) and the “informal” (Franco-Arab schools and Qur’an schools, in addition to basic and community schools) (Senegal 2003). The relative lack of implementation of establishing Franco-Arabic schools in other areas than those with particularly low enrollment suggest that increasing the enrollment-rates of the country has been amongst the main motivations, as is discussed in the next paragraph.

Providing diverse education and increasing enrollment statistics

There has not been left much space to alternatives to “formal”, public schooling within the international education discourse, guided by the EFA’s and the MDGs. Yet providing “diverse quality education” is emphasized in the EFA framework. The Islamic learning system’s role in providing diverse education for all and “basic education” is noted as one of

⁴⁰ Hybrid between the public and the Islamic learning system

the motivations behind the policy-changes. Although there appears to be an increased recognition of the meaning and role of the learning system for the Senegalese population, the analysis of the relevant documents indicates that there is still a low level of emphasis put on the Islamic learning system within the public school discourse, in areas not directly related to enrollment.

The lack of implementation of public Franco-Arab schools in other areas than where public school-enrollment is particularly low suggest that enrollment statistics may be amongst the main motivations. According to Villalón et Bodian (2012), the public Franco-Arab schools has been constructed in the areas Louga, Kalolack, Diourbel and Kolda, areas which are known to show relative low enrollment rates to the public school and are known to be more traditional and religious. Mbow (2009) suggests that including the Islamic learning system into the public educational sector was mainly based on the motivation to increase the enrollment-ratio of the country, motivated by the desire to meet the goals set by the EFA and MDGs, in order to attract more aid. Mbow also points to the government's need to please the religious figures of the country, who continue to hold substantial power.

Nationwide, it would appear as the Franco-Arabic schools mostly continue to mainly cater to the Muslim (Arab) elite of the country, as the schools often require substantial fees from parents (André and Demonsant 2012). Research conducted following a test-project regarding the implementation of trilinguisme (ROCARE 2007) found that the establishment was still mostly in its inception, yet Franco-Arab schools are emphasized as possibly the most ideal educational solution in the Senegalese context (ROCARE 2007, 2009). In Villalón and Bodians (2012) « Religion, demande sociale, et réformes éducatives au Senegal », the authors point out several challenges of the reform regarding the establishment of public Franco-Arab schools:

- 1) Lack of resources to follow up the reform; the authors state that the lack of resources has negative implication for the evaluation of the actual implementation of the reform as this is not being properly documented and analyzed.
- 2) Recruitment and training of teachers, especially regarding the Arabic language and Islamic science. Teachers report that most seminars are aimed at teachers in French.
- 3) The same goes for establishing a common pedagogical platform and teaching material.
- 4) Lack of teachers
- 5) Difficulties in creating a full educational run for the learners in Franco-Arab schools

Opposing modernity

Including the one current into the national curriculum (Arab Islam, through integrating the Arabic language and Islam into the public school), while “modernizing” the other (Qur’an schools), may be questioned. It would appear as introduction of the Arabic language into the national school curriculum has been the most successful aspect of the reforms. There has been an increased focus of the role of the Arabic language, and in 2013, the first Baccalaureate exam was held in Arabic.

The concept “modernization” is problematic. Suggesting that the one learning system is “traditional” and not able to meet the demands of a “modern” society echoes the understanding of the purpose of a learning system from Modernization theory as discussed in chapter 5. The focus in the reform is on the need to “modernize” the Daaras, by means of curriculum, teaching equipment and language (trilinguisme). A report by ROCARE (2009) underlines that the interviewed Marabouts were positive to the inclusion of secular subjects, while at the same time fearing the concept “modernization” of pedagogical practice, equipment, curriculum and the traditions surrounding the learning system. The need for a bottom-up focus on educational reform, regarding the relationship between the secular and the Islamic learning system, is emphasized. Villalón and Bodians (2012) suggest that ensuring that the process of modernization is facilitated in a democratic and participatory manner is the key to its success. As noted in the previous subchapter, educational reform will often be the opposite. The high focus on the critical situation in contemporary Daara boarding schools by for example the UNICEF (2006), without particular regard to why the situation has become as grave (Mbow 2009) further solidifies the perspective of the Islamic learning system as a whole as weak, indoctrinating, traditional and problematic. This suggests that the motivation is more likely based on the troubled situation in, particularly urban, Qur’an boarding schools in contemporary Senegal, and not on recognition of the cultural base of the learning system as a whole. Furthermore, the modernization projects are according to the same paper funded by UNICEF, and not by the Senegalese government.

8.2 Perceptions of the purpose of the learning systems at village level

8.2.1 Changing times, changing values

In the beginning of the last chapter I showed some examples which were brought up regarding learning and knowledge transfer taking place outside either learning system. The participants held high focus on the importance of hard work and not wanting children to “have it too easy”. Childhood was supposed to be a preparation for adult life, and more specifically, to prepare them for challenges later in life. It was also interesting how initiation rites, traditional proverbs and value-concepts ancient to Senegal were brought up and presented as “Senegalese”. Corresponding perspectives, such as not putting oneself first, not being self-absorbed, being self-controlled, having high moral (“always doing as someone is watching), respecting elders and knowing your place in the hierarchy were thus understood as some of the core values of the village.

Several participants claimed that the “value set” in the village was changing; from a collective to a more individualistic set of values. It was “every man for him-self” now and more individualistic and capitalistic values were seen as to crave more attention. At the same time it appeared to be of great significance for several participants that they felt as the role of the community as a collective in educating children was changing. As mentioned in the previous chapter, keeping their children “off the street” was of high significance for parents. Children were noted to having a greater saying now than before. This was mentioned as some of the motivation in households who had chosen to enroll their children at the Qur’an school in addition to the public primary school.

8.2.2 The public learning system

Culturally transformative and symbolically French

As noted, data and findings from the field study suggest that there is a high focus on the French origin of the learning system amongst the participants. The public school is as we have seen generally referred to as “the French school”, and the neo-colonial structures need to be acknowledged. The background chapter did shed light on the role of colonial and post-colonial frame within which the public school was established. There was a high level of focus on this amongst the participants, to a greater extent than expected.

The observed public primary school was established some years prior to independence, and carried significant symbolization for the participants. It therefor represented a fruitful venue for observing the participants’ perceptions of the development of the public learning system

in one specific context. Some participants had experienced harsh realities at the colonial school, exemplified by the role of language and the practice of shaming the use of local languages in the school context. The relative negative conceptions of the contemporary public school is not understood as a reluctance towards the need for also an education in secular subjects, such as reading, writing, math, history, sociology etc. It is the history of the public school and what it continues to represent and to symbolize which is problematic to the participants. For many, it would seem as the public school, or “l’ecole francaise” (the French school), continues to function as the very manifestation of the colonial era and the regime the Senegalese population was under. It came as no revelation that the public school was seen as culturally more attached to the French history of Senegal. As we have seen, the public school was deliberately established as culturally distant from the Senegalese, and the transformative nature of the curriculum continues to play a significant role. As one respondent pointed out, the lack of Senegalese history and Senegalese groundedness is of concern. At the same time most participants would portray a sense of powerlessness towards the educational discourse, and the awareness of these constraints.

However, both participants and respondents were divided in their perspectives on the relationship to France and the manifestation of this in the public school; some favored the post-colonial structures and believed there should be an even greater focus on learning French and “proper ways of behaving”; others felt a high level of resistance and saw the public school as a continuing institution of oppressing Senegalese culture and “ways of life”. The transformative nature of much of the curriculum, was particularly evident in subjects which are to be “sensitive to the local context”; such as the course “civisme”. At the same time, the course is more targeted at teaching the values and social rules of the modern, democratic society, through focusing on health issues (clean water, hygiene), societal participation (being on time, being clean) and had an undertone of an ideal implying transformative elements, rather than connecting the school to the already existing set of values mentioned earlier. The linkage between public school - French – modern – success – good job, also implies an intrinsic value of the learning system in terms of altering ones’ self and identity towards a “modern” set of ideals.

“Just another regime”

Observations and the contextual interviews at the sampled public school indicated that there was a general higher level of focus on primary schooling, as one teacher noted that the school was a general perception that the school was “more efficient now”, pointing to the increased number of learners “going through” the school. Amongst the participating households, several parents pointed out the same observations regarding the increase in number of children now going to school. At the same time several pointed out what they perceived as a worsened quality of the education received, often measured by level of French. As one participant noted in a sarcastic manner: “Everyone is in school, its evolution!”. There was a sense of mistrust towards the school amongst the respondents and participants alike, especially notifiable during the inscription and payment process. Some participants were well aware of the international origin of the focus on enrollment, and perceived the development as “just another imposed regime”.

Several participants pointed to the lack of choice; the children needed the diploma from the public school in order to get a job within the formal sector. Most parents were not aware of what is being taught in school, as it was perceived as external to Senegalese culture and society. Some noted the lack of Senegalese history in the curriculum. The unquestioned role of the public learning system as the “right path”, regardless of the perceived low quality and the lack of promise of future livelihood emphasizes the hegemonic role of the learning system. As Nordtveidt (2010) noted through a literacy project for women, the participants would excuse themselves for not being able to continue their “development process”. In the village, it is a paradox that parents do not “trust” the school, emphasizing the lack of decent outcomes and the lack of promise of future livelihood yet underlining that “school is very important”. Although not expressed explicitly by any participants in this study, the findings suggest similar conceptions. This indicates that the mentality of the role and purpose of the public learning system indeed is guided by external influences, here seen as the World culture of education. This was especially noted as

- (1) The focus on literacy and numeracy as indicators of a successful (or unsuccessful learning system
- (2) The perceived correlation between public schooling and development, even when jobs are hard to find and a high level of percentage end up in the informal sector

The principal pointed out the decrease in students re-taking classes. The decreased number of students re-taking classes was seen as a consequence of policy, not of a higher level of learning amongst the students. This was, according to him, a direct consequence of policy, and not based on a higher level of learning amongst the students. On the one hand, this was perceived as a positive development, as retaking classes often led to lower motivation and abandonment, while on the other hand, this led to some students continuing to the next class without really having “the right means” to move on to the next level.

Improving prospects for finding a job in the formal sector

As previously noted, there was a high level of focus on public schooling in the village of the field-study, with two public primary schools, one catholic private school and one lower and upper secondary school. As discussed above, the respondents expressed the lack of choice, and recognition of the importance of “getting an education”. The anticipated result of receiving “an education” would be to know some math and most importantly, speaking and writing French. For most, however, this was translated into the need for “getting the diploma”, and hence an increased prospect of finding a job and making a living. As noted, unemployment is of large concern for many in Senegal, which was emphasized by several participants. This suggests that it was the instrumental purpose of the learning system which was most evidently on people’s minds.

We have seen that Senegalese educational policy and legislation has established the Senegalese primary school as compulsory and free. The findings suggest that the participants had a large sense of the importance of sending their children to the primary school. However, as the school was faced with “no choice than to ask the parents to contribute with a modest payment” the shame for families not able to pay the required fee was paramount, even if participants from the school reported that children from families with particularly pressed economy would still be allowed in class. Teachers and principal expressed discontent towards the government regarding limited funding given the results they are expected to provide. As noted above, several parents emphasized the lack of trust towards the public school. The high cost of educating their children (both formal and informal costs), while not really knowing what they were paying for was of concern. Public school is still perceived as elitist, particularly amongst the poorer parts of the population.

8.2.3 The Islamic learning system

Long history

Several authors point to the importance of the *Tariquas* and the *Daaras* within the large informal sphere in Senegal, both as providers of network but also as political and moral guides (KILDER). As noted in the previous chapter, it was explained how the “original” *Daaras* were part of a holistic system, where the Marabout would lead and educate the children, religiously, morally and spiritually. Working as farmers and contributing back to society emphasize the role of these “houses of education” in the communities in which they existed. Marabouts and those who have gone to Qur’anic boarding schools are still seen as “the wisest of men” should also be mentioned. The ideal person of the Islamic learning system is not only seen as someone who has great knowledge of the Qur’an, but also one who lives according to the value-set mentioned above, who is wise and knowledgeable

This may be interpreted as an intrinsic purpose of the Islamic learning system. However, it is not seen as transformative, as the public learning system. Rather, it is perceived as something original to the Senegalese society.

From colonial resistance to opposing individualistic set of values and the changing times

In chapter 3, Methodology and Methods, I briefly noted that it was perceived as an advantage not to be French or to speak French perfectly, as most people hold quite negative conceptions of French culture. This emphasizes the role of the religion as a cultural, social and ideological binding force in the country. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter 6, the anti-Islamic line taken by the colonial administration may have had quite the opposite effect; the colonial period accelerated both the growth of the brotherhoods and the spread of Islam in Senegal in general, as well as the colonial resistance from the Islamic movements. As the public school by many was seen as the manifestation of the French colonial rule, the Islamic learning system was seen as the manifestation of the opposition.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, there appeared to be a relatively strong focus on the changing times, and the transition towards a more individualistic society. The Islamic learning system, and particularly the Qur’an schools are seen as transmitters of values which largely has disappeared from other varieties of formalized (as in systemized) knowledge and value-

transfer, such as initiation rites. In addition, the emphasis on hard work, the perspective on childhood as preparation for adult life and the challenges that may follow is also noted to be the foundation of the Islamic learning systems, in addition to aspects directly related to religion. What is today considered a too harsh reality for Talibés in particularly urban areas appears to be based on the premise of childhood to be hard as preparation for challenges later in life. Similar conceptions were found in the examples from learning taking place outside of the learning systems and through (previous) initiation rites.

According to Gwanfogbe (2011), indigenous education is often left out from a “Eurocentric view” on education. As this neglect has been institutionalized at the international level, it has often been left out of national education policy. The author argues that the focus on writing as a prerequisite for education (or schooling) suggest that no organized learning was taking place prior to the influence of Islamic/Arabic or Western education systems. Interesting for the study at hand is the author’s argument of how the Islamic learning system appears as to have incorporated some of what he originally labels “traditional education”. In the village, the Islamic learning system is understood as important for parents, amongst other factors, because it has absorbed the value system which was earlier transmitted through other forms of knowledge transfer, and played a significant part of everyday life in the village. As noted in the analysis of perspectives on the public learning system, participants had noticed the development in the public school, particularly regarding enrollment. They noticed that “everyone was in school” now, though it would seem as they feared that something had been lost along the way. In contemporary Senegal, the Islamic learning may seem to be the very symbolization of something original to Senegal.

As noted in chapter 4, one benefit of a culturally coherent learning system is that parental and societal involvement is likely to be higher than if it is incoherent. Most participants portrayed a sense of moral, personal obligation when asked about their motivation for educating their children also through the Islamic learning system.

Personal development, Education de l’Âme⁴¹

Sufism, the dominating branch of Islam in Senegal is based in the mystical tradition of Islam, and in particularly involved in development of the self. As it has been argued that Sufism

⁴¹ Education for the soul

originates from the first educators of Islam, it was expected to find some correlation between the value-set of the village and the values which are transmitted through the Islamic learning system. As pointed out by participants, the learning system constitutes a central part of their view of the development of the child, also in areas not related to faith as such. As noted in the presentation of the data and findings it is the personal development of each learner which is the most important factor in addition to learning the “know how” of the religion. The most striking difference in how the participants would talk about the two learning systems was however how the Islamic learning system was seen as to enable the learner to be learned IN something (IN the Qur’an, IN the religious and cultural values, IN the esoteric knowledge), rather than FOR something. This suggests that the learning system holds strong intrinsic purposes for most people. The high focus on personal development as a key component underlines this observation. We have seen that related to the very purpose of a learning system are which values which are to be reflected through the learning system, taking an ethical stance concerning questions of what counts as knowledge, and who the ideal person reflected by the learning system is. As noted in chapter 7, there was a high level of focus on several values which were presented as to form the basis of Senegalese society and traditional knowledge transfer. The importance of respecting elders, being humble, composing one self and having great self-control are just some of the many examples brought up in the previous chapter and it was noted above that these values correspond with the values which were brought up as an important part of the Islamic learning system, and particularly the Daaras (here referring to Qur’an boarding schools).

Important for religious purposes and to learn how to compose oneself in society

The Islamic learning system also holds several dimensions regarding its purpose. The purpose may also be interpreted as instrumental, learning “how to be, how to live, the prayers”.

According to the Marabout of the observed Qur’an school, the aim is to teach the learners “...how to become good Muslims”. In addition to constituting an important part of personal development, and transmitting values, the Islamic learning system is of course also important for religious purposes and learning “how to do the religion” Learning the prayers and knowing the Qur’an are essential parts of life as a Muslim. So is knowing some Arabic. Learning some of the Arabic language was also noted as an outcome of the learning system.

Also, in a country where approximately 90% of the population are Muslims, learning how to be “good Muslims” may be translated into “how to become good citizens”. Learning the know-how of society may provide the children with skills which are crucial to be able to maneuver the social terrain in the village, and in Senegal in general.

8.2.4 Duality emphasized – large emphasis on co-existence of two learning systems

As noted in the analysis of the purpose of the Islamic learning system at Government level and through the policy and reform-documents, there is still much larger emphasis put on the public learning system. Participants were as noted seemingly surprised over the focus at Islamic learning system by the researcher. The findings showed how religion plays a significant role in peoples’ minds. This was directly emphasized by several participants, but also noted through the participant observation.

The purpose and the role of the Islamic learning system were much more emphasized by the participants in the field study than it is in the relevant reform-and policy documents. In addition, participants in the field study mostly saw the Franco-Arab schools as the ideal educational solution in the Senegalese context. Even though the establishment of public Franco-Arabic schools has been on the governmental agenda for some time according to the relevant documents, none of the participants of this study had any knowledge of the existence of such schools. Franco-Arab schools were perceived as a high-cost solution for the elite of the population.

Amongst the participants, there was no observed focus on the origins of the (broadly speaking) two main currents within the Islamic learning system; the focus was public learning system on the one hand and Islamic learning system on the other. The participants seemed to be well aware of the great variety within the Islamic learning system, yet there appeared to be the relationship between the public learning system and Islamic learning system which was on most peoples’ minds. The presentation of the Senegalese educational scene as dual by participants from both the public and the Islamic learning systems, and the responding households underlined the understanding of the educational scene.

8.2.5 Navigating

According to the Spindlers (1987, in Maseman 2007), members of one society are constantly negotiating between the various cultural patterns available. The two learning systems appear to draw on contradicting sets of values for the participants. One is representing values of individuality, modernity, instrumental aims and is symbolically linked to colonization, while the other represents a sense of authenticity, historicity and spirituality and is symbolically linked to opposition.

At the same time, parents emphasize the need for both a secular and a religious education, and it is important to notice that all the households who were interviewed during this study reported that they were educating their children in both learning system. In most households the children would attend the Qur'an school when they did not have classes at the public primary school. Some held a strong focus on what they believed to be constraints to their educational reality and the focus of the imposed public school. Often the participants would say that they “make due”⁴² of their lived reality.

Although it was expected that the Islamic learning system, which has been present in the country since the 11th. Century encompasses some of the values which were emphasized by the participants and respondents in the field study; it was also interesting to observe how the teachers at the public school were using these values as part of their pedagogical practice. As participants underlined that this was not part of the formalized curriculum, this suggests that teachers also navigate their educational terrain and adjust reality in the classroom to their lived reality.

8.3 Summary of analysis

Both learning systems are at government level linked to instrumental purposes, and the international educational agenda is clearly a large priority and influence, a point which have been stressed by other scholars. In addition, both learning systems have a long problematic history, and it would appear as perspectives from the colonial period, and particularly the French policy of assimilation continues to play a significant role. Although there has been reform development regarding the relationship between the public and the Islamic school in Senegal, the divide into the “formal” and the “informal” forms of education continues to be

⁴² “On fait avec” was a term used often. It literally means “we deal with it”, used similarly to “we make do”, in many situations

important. The analysis showed that enrollment appears to be one of the main drives behind the reforms.

Perspective at government level may also be interpreted as intrinsic, in terms of “elevating the cultural level of the population”. It is the perspective of the researcher that this further solidifies the contrast between the “modern” and the “traditional”.

At village level, the Islamic learning system is given much more emphasis than at government level. Participants were continuously underlining the dual educational scene, and seemed eager to present their perspectives regarding the Islamic learning system. It would also appear as the focus of the researcher on the Islamic learning system was surprising. The Islamic learning system was interpreted as to have incorporated values from what was referred to as “traditional knowledge transfer”, for example initiation rites. “Personal development” is also a central part of Sufi Islam, and there may also be some coherence between the two learning systems. As the majority of the participants felt as the core values of their society, and the role of the community in transmitting these values was changing, the Islamic learning system appeared to be important in preserving the cultural values of the village.

The public learning system was generally referred to as “l'école française”, “the French school” by the participants. The colonial past of the public learning system seems to play a crucial role in people’s perspectives. Since the change of the millennium, most participants had noticed change, particularly regarding enrollment, and there were a lot more children in school today. Though did they not feel as the outcomes were living up to their expectations, and some were aware of the international agenda regarding Education for All. They saw the change in reforms regarding the public school as another regime being enforced upon them. It is one of the arguments of this thesis, that a lack of Senegalese cultural relevance of the public school curriculum in Senegal is amongst the reasons of the findings suggesting

- a) A continuing gap between households and the public school
- b) A continued perception of the public Senegalese school as “foreign”, “French”, “just another regime”
- c) A lack of perception of the public learning system as providing much else than “learning French” and “getting the “diploma”

All participants were educating their children in both learning systems, and they did indeed see the need for both a secular and a religious and value- related education. Franco-Arab

schools were lifted as an ideal educational solution, though none of the participants knew of the existence of public Franco-Arab schools. They would “make due” of their educational reality and were thus navigating their educational reality and terrain.

9 Concluding remarks

Coming from Anthropology, it was natural for me to include some focus on the concept of culture in this thesis, and throughout the research it became clear the culture-concept plays a crucial, yet often neglected, role when addressing the question of the purpose of a learning system. The guiding research questions for this thesis were 1) How is the purpose of the Islamic and the public learning system perceived by households in a coastal village in Senegal? And 2) How is the purpose of the Islamic and the public learning system perceived at government level, as presented by the relevant policy documents? The main focus has been put on how the participants of the field study perceive the purpose of the learning system. The hidden curriculum of both learning systems, the cultural values which are “actually” transmitted through them in the eyes of the participants, showed that the learning systems draw on contrasting value-sets for the participants. One being understood as being aimed at progress and modernity, while the other as something authentic and collectivistic.

It has been noted that government policy often will have a “top-down” structure; the emphasis being put on relating government policy to the international educational agenda, rather to the lived reality of the population. It was therefore deemed important to provide a platform for expressions of their point of view, how they navigate the terrain and perceive their educational reality. Based on a qualitative field study, the aim has not been to generate generalizable data and findings, but rather to provide an exemplary case. The focus was put on the need for both a secular and a religious education by the participants in the field study, lifting Franco-Arab school as the most ideal educational solution in this context.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Consent form Request to participate in research project

”The purpose of schooling in Senegal. A case study with focus on non-economic aspects of public and Islamic learning systems”

Background and purpose

The study will form the base of my master thesis in International and Comparative Education at the Institute of Educational Research at the University of Oslo. None of the information gathered during this study will be used for political or religious purposes.

The overall aim of this study is thus to analyze how the purpose of public and Islamic learning systems are viewed at government level in Senegalese as reflected through government policy documents, and how it is perceived by households in the village. The research questions may be formulated as follows:

- 1. How is the purpose of the Islamic and the public learning system perceived by households in a coastal village in Senegal?**
- 2. How is the purpose of the Islamic and the public learning system perceived at government level, as presented by the relevant policy documents?**

I hope that you will consider to participate in this study as you are part of the abovementioned educational stakeholders and your perspective would contribute to my overall understanding of the topic at hand.

What does participation in the study involve?

If you decide to participate in this study, you agree to an interview which will last for approximately 1,5 hours. If you wish to extend the interview, or if you should think of other issues you wish to elaborate upon after completion, please do not hesitate to inform me.

The questions during the interview will largely evolve around your opinions about the learning system, the role of the learning systems in the community, and to what extent you feel that the learning system meets the needs of the people and the society. The interview will be tape-recorded.

What will happen to the information about you?

All information will be treated confidentially, only I as student and my supervisor will have access to the data material. All information which may lead to you as a person will be anonymous in the final thesis.

The project will according to plan be finalized in June 2014. All information that may link your participation to the study will be deleted.

Volunteer participation

Participation in the study is voluntary, and you can withdraw your consent at any time. If you should choose to not participate, you do not need to provide any reason for your choice, and all information about you will be deleted.

If you have any further questions, or you wish to participate in the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone +47 92860499/+221 781714957, or by email kristinekronstad@gmail.com.

The study has been reported to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services, NSD.

Informed Consent to participation in the study

I have received information about the study, and I am willing to participate

(Project participant, date)

Appendix 2 Interview guide parents

Personal information

- 1) What is your full name, and what is your name?
- 2) Are you from the village? Have you lived here your whole life?
- 3) What ethnic group do you belong to? Is this important to you, why/why not?
- 4) How many lives in your household?
- 5) Have you gone to school yourself? What kind of school? For how long?
 - a. If yes, can you tell me a bit about how this was?
- 6) What is your occupation? For how long?
- 7) In what way do you think you education has been important for your life?
- 8) Did you also receive any religious education? How?

Questions regarding education of children

- 1) How many children do you have?
- 2) What do you think are the most important factors when educating children and preparing them for adult life?
- 3) Are they in school (as in public school)?
- 4) Can you tell me a bit about your main motivations for you enrolling them at school?
- 5) How many years do you think children should go to school? Why?
- 6) Would you say that the school has changed since you were a child?
- 7) Is school something you talk about at home? How?
- 8) Are they also receiving religious education? How?
 - a. If yes: What are the most important thing they learn?
 - i. How do you think this is important for their lives?
 - ii. How do you think religious education has changed since you were a child?
 - iii. Do you think it is important for parents to provide some religious education for their children?
- 9) How would you say that what children learn at school is important for their lives?
- 10) How would you say that what children learn through religious education is important for their lives?
- 11) How would you say that the school is connected to your lives?
- 12) How would you say that religious education is connected to your lives?
- 13) What do you think are the most important challenges with the school?

Questions regarding education in general

- 1) When I say “education”, what do you think?
- 2) There are many different forms of education in Senegal, what do you think about this?
- 3) What do you think are the most important things a child needs to learn in order to become “good” adults? Do you think this is being taught at school? Through religious education? How/ Why not?

- 4) Could you please explain what “Senegalese school” means to you?
- 5) Why do you call the public school the “French school”
- 6) What would it take for this school to become the “Senegalese school”?
- 7) How would you say the school has changed over the last 20 years?
- 8) How would you say the school has changed since Senegal became independent?
Are there anything you feel has stayed the same?

Appendix 3 Interview guides contextual interviews

Interview guide Qur'an teacher

- 1) What is your "title"?
- 2) How is a Qur'an teacher different from a Marabout?
- 3) Are you affiliated to a Tariqa?
- 4) How did you become a Qur'an teacher? Can you tell me a bit about your story?
- 5) How does Islamic learning take place in the village?
- 6) Can you explain a bit about Islamic learning in Senegal in general?
- 7) What is required to become a Qur'an teacher?
- 8) In what way do you think religious education is important to parents?

Interview guide Marabout

- 1) What is your "title"?
- 2) Are you affiliated to a Tariqa?
- 3) What is a Marabout?
- 4) How did you become a Marabout? Can you please tell me a bit about your story?
- 5) How does Islamic learning take place in the village?
- 6) Can you explain a bit about Islamic learning in Senegal in general?
- 7) Can you explain how the Qur'an school works? (what do they learn, how do you teach, how are the classes divided etc)
- 8) Do you think the Qur'an schools are important also in areas not directly related to learning the Qur'an?
- 9) Do the parents contribute to the Qur'an school in any way?
- 10) Do you think Qur'an schools are important in Senegal? Why / why not?
- 11) Has the role of the Qur'an schools changed over the last 20 years?
- 12) Has the role of the Qur'an school changed since independence?

Interview guide principal at sampled public primary school

- 1) Could you tell me a bit about public schooling in Senegal?
- 2) What do you think has been the biggest changes in the Senegalese public school over the last 20 years?
- 3) What do you think are the biggest challenges of the curriculum today?
- 4) What do you think are the main challenges of the school? Why?
- 5) How do you think parents are involved in their children's schooling?
- 6) Do you think parents feel as the school is connected to their everyday life?
- 7) Do you think that subjects related to religion have become a part of the public school?
- 8) Can you tell me about your opinion on the use of the French language in the public school? Do you think this is going to change? Why/why not?
- 9) Many parents refer to the school as "the French school". Why do you think that is?

Interview guide teachers

- 10) What subjects do you teach?
- 11) Have you worked as a teacher for a long time?
- 12) What is required to work as a teacher?
- 13) Do you focus on any subjects in particular? Why?
- 14) To what extent do you feel like you can adapt your teaching to the demands of the classroom?

Interview guide Chef du village

- 1) Can you please tell me a bit about the history of the village?
- 2) How would you say that the village has changed since independence?
- 3) How would you say the village has changed over the last 20 years?
- 4) What is your role?

Interview guide Imam

- 1) Can you please explain a bit about Islam in Senegal?
- 2) Can you please tell me about the role of Islam in the village?
- 3) Do you think religious education is important for parents? How?