



Laboratoire de Recherche en Art et Culture



*Revue internationale de langues,  
littératures et cultures*

**Numéro 23**  
**Janvier 2025**

**ISSN**  
**0851-4119**

**Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis**  
**B.P. 234, Saint-Louis, Sénégal**



**Safara N° 23, janvier 2025 – ISSN 0851-4119**

**Revue internationale de langues, littératures et cultures**  
**Laboratoire de Recherche en Art et Culture**

UFR Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université Gaston Berger  
BP 234 Saint Louis, Sénégal

Tel +221 77 718 51 35 / +221 77 408 87 82

E-mail : [babacar.dieng@ugb.edu.sn](mailto:babacar.dieng@ugb.edu.sn) / [khadidiatou.diallo@ugb.edu.sn](mailto:khadidiatou.diallo@ugb.edu.sn)

**Directeur de Publication**

Babacar DIENG, Université Gaston Berger (UGB)

**COMITE SCIENTIFIQUE**

Augustin	AINAMON (Bénin)	Babacar	MBAYE (USA)
Abdoulaye	BARRY (Sénégal)	Magatte	NDIAYE (Sénégal)
Babou	DIENE (Sénégal)	Fallou	NGOM (USA)
Simon	GIKANDI (USA)	Ousmane	NOM (Sénégal)
Pierre	GOMEZ (Gambie)	Maki	SAMAKE (Mali)
Mamadou	KANDJI (Sénégal)	Ibrahima	SARR (Sénégal)
Baydallaye	KANE (Sénégal)	Ndiawar	SARR (Sénégal)
Fatoumata	KEITA (Mali)	Alexiskhergie	SEGUEDEME (Bénin)
Vamara	KONE (Côte d'Ivoire)	Aliko	SONGOLO (USA)
Edris	MAKWARD (USA)	Marième	SY (Sénégal)

**COMITE DE RÉDACTION**

Rédacteur en Chef : Mamadou BA (UGB)

Corédacteur en Chef : Ousmane NGOM (UGB)

Administrateur : Khadidiatou DIALLO (UGB)

Relations extérieures : Maurice GNING (UGB)

Secrétaire de rédaction : Mame Mbayang TOURE (UGB)

**MEMBRES**

Ibrahima DIEME (UGB)

Cheikh Tidiane LO (UGB)

Mohamadou Hamine WANE (UGB)

© *Safara*, Université Gaston Berger de Saint Louis, 2025

Couverture et mise en page: Dr. Mamadou BA, UGB Saint-Louis



## Sommaire

1. Devotional Soninke Poetry: Mama Jagana's Songs in Praise of Shaykh Hamallah and Yacouba Sylla  
**Cheikh Tidiane LO** ..... 1
2. The Processes of Religious Values Reform and Building of New Ethics in Victorian literature: Illustrations in *Silas* by George Eliot  
**Ibrahima DIÉMÉ** ..... 23
3. Dehumanization and Purgation of American Loss in Vietnam in Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* (1978)  
**Louis Mathias FAYE** ..... 43
4. Sustaining the Empire's Legacies: Schooling and The Perpetuation of Colonial Subjectivity in Post-colonial Senegal  
**Mamadou Moustapha SANGHARE** ..... 107
5. War Trauma on Soldiers in *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane, *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque and *A Rumor of War* by Philip Caputo  
**Papa Ibrahima MBODJI** ..... 131
6. L'éthique de l'humanisme moderne occidental : le « deuxième péché originel »  
**Maurice GNING** ..... 149
7. Colonialismo y búsqueda de identidad: Estudio comparativo entre *Amkoullel, l'enfant peul* de Amadou Hampâté Bâ y *Las tinieblas de tu memoria negra* de Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo  
**Abdoulaye GUEYE** ..... 173
8. Art des intraduisibles dans « L'ingénieur hidalgo Don Quichotte de la Manche » de Louis Viardot  
**Rodrigue BIGOUNDOU** ..... 191
9. Interview with Professor Omar Sougou on Oral Literature, Teaching Philosophy, and the Future of African Scholarship in a Rapidly Changing World  
**Cheikh Tidiane LO** ..... 209

Sustaining the Empire's Legacies: Schooling and The  
Perpetuation of Colonial Subjectivity in Post-colonial Senegal

Mamadou Moustapha SANGHARE

University of Sussex (United States of America)

**Abstract**

This article explores how colonial subjectivity is perpetuated within the postcolonial Senegalese educational system. Despite post-independence reforms, the system has maintained critical elements of colonial education, particularly in using French as the language of instruction, the Eurocentric curriculum, the teaching approaches and the social constructs of colonial gender norms. These educational practices lead to cultural alienation among the students by overlooking indigenous knowledge and shaping a mentality of inferiority and subordination.

**Key words:** Colonial Subjectivity, Senegal Educational System, Identity formation, Curriculum and Pedagogy, colonial education, gender

**Résumé**

Cet article explore les mécanismes de perpétuation d'une subjectivité coloniale dans le système éducatif sénégalais postcolonial. Malgré les réformes mises en place après les indépendances, l'école Sénégalaise continue de s'appuyer sur des éléments essentiels de l'éducation coloniale, notamment l'usage du Français comme langue d'enseignement, l'adoption d'un curriculum euro-centrique, d'approches pédagogiques autoritaires et d'un régime de genre hérité du colonialisme. Ces pratiques éducatives participent à une aliénation culturelle parmi les apprenants en marginalisant les systèmes de connaissance indigènes tout en consolidant une mentalité de subordination.

**Mots clés:** subjectivité coloniale, Système éducatif Sénégalais, identité, programme scolaire et pédagogie, éducation coloniale, genre

## **1. Introduction**

Education under colonial rule was a tool for assimilation and regulation (Rodney, 1981). In Senegal, the French colonisers designed the educational system for social control (Bryant, 2014; Conklin, 2001; Sane, 2010). That education focused on teaching French culture and rote learning, excluding indigenous knowledge and perspective. It was an education that aimed to create mental confusion, the colonised being uncertain of their cultural identity, leading to a sense of subordination (Conklin, 2001; Rodney, 1981). The final aim was to create a generation of docile civil servants with administrative roles that would perpetuate colonial dominance. This promoted “the development of underdevelopment” (Rodney, 1981, p. 241).

Despite post-independence reforms, the present-day educational system continues to bear the heritage of colonial dominance (Sane, 2010; Diallo, 2011; Vavrus et al., 2011). The Senegalese government tried to include the country’s values and history, but traces of the old system continue. French is still the language of instruction, and Western history and culture are emphasised. Besides, there is a centralised management approach with rigid regulatory rules. This adaptation of the colonial education system, initially designed for oppression, maintains colonial domination.

In this article, I argue that the colonial heritage in Senegal’s education system perpetuates colonial subjectivity. It fosters a mentality of subordination and inferiority among students. I seek to answer the following questions. How do the curriculum and the teaching practices perpetuate colonial subjectivity? What are the impacts on students' identity formation? It is crucial to critically analyse the relationship between colonialism and education in Senegal, examine the present educational system, and show how colonial subjectivity has been perpetuated in students. Through this analysis, we can understand how colonial subjectivity influences power dynamics and identity formation in educational contexts. This stresses the significant role of institutions like schools in producing identities in postcolonial contexts (Foucault, 1995).

In the first section, I examine the historical context of education. I stress the imposition of colonial education and post-colonial continuities and changes.

In the second, I analyse the strategies to perpetuate colonial subjectivity through the language of instruction, the formal and hidden curriculum. Further, I examine the enactment of gender regimes and how they represent colonial gender norms. The last section deals with the impact on the learner's identity formation and society.

## **2. Conceptual Framework**

This section explores concepts central to the analysis: subjectivity, identity, and gender through a poststructuralist perspective (Foucault, 1985; Hall, 1996; Butler, 1999; Davies, 2006). This perspective challenges the traditional understandings of these concepts and highlights their constructed and fluid nature, shaped by social discourse and power dynamics.

In poststructuralist thought, subjectivity is not an inherent attribute but a construction through societal discourse deeply embedded in power dynamics. Foucault (1985) argues that subjectivity is shaped by the pervasive influence of discursive practices governed by power-knowledge relationships. These practices define and categorise human identities and behaviours, integrating them within the societal norms that are constantly reinforced and renegotiated in institutional settings such as schools. Davies (2006) applies these theories within educational contexts and maintains that the repeated interactions within these structures perpetuate and shape individual subjectivities. Subjectivities are perspectives shaped through social and discursive practices.

Identity is a dynamic and evolving construct, continually performed and reformed through discursive practices. Hall (1996) argues that identity is not fixed or given. Instead, it is produced within specific historical and institutional sites and between specific discourses and practices. Identities are constantly being constructed and reconstructed through the various systems of meaning and cultural representations that individuals interact with. Butler (1999) highlights the performative aspect of identity. She claims that gender identity is realised through repeated performative acts. These acts are framed within the regulatory schemas of societal norms, which various institutions

enforce. Through these performances, identities are expressed and continuously created.

Gender is intricately tied to the broader discourses of power and identity. Foucault's ideas on power/knowledge can help to understand how institutions such as schools shape individual subjectivities. Elements such as the curriculum, school rules and the interaction between teacher and student contribute to power dynamics. They help construct gender performances, showing how schools perpetuate gender norms through everyday practices. The hierarchal structuring of classroom interaction sustains this dynamic. The latter privileges some voices and conduct while sidelining others according to gender. Moreover, textbooks and learning materials may reflect these gendered norms that maintain traditional roles. They define what constitutes acceptable masculine and feminine expressions. These institutional practices construct how genders are performed and inscribe these roles into the being of students. Thus, schools represent an essential site for the reproduction of gendered societies.

Butler's (1999) perspective on gender performativity is essential to understanding how institutions shape gender. She mentions that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender" (p. 24). Gender is not something that people have but something that people perform. It is a reiterated act. This repetition is neither passive nor fixed; it is performed and reinforced through daily practices (Youdell, 2005). Social norms and expectancies dictate these performances. Institutions play a significant part in maintaining such norms through regulation and perpetuation. Schools, for example, reinforce such gender performances by normalising certain types of behaviours and expectations tied to gender. This establishes the social structures defining and constraining gender identities even further. In this respect, gender is the product of institutional processes and cultural practices rather than natural.

In this section, I have demonstrated that subjectivity, identity, and gender are not merely inherited traits. They are actively constructed through the continuous interaction of power and discourse within institutions. They are unsettled and open to renegotiation. Thus, this conceptual framework

recognises identity, gender, and subjectivity as a fluid and dynamic construction process. This perspective helps me explore how Senegalese education systems continue to perpetuate the legacies of colonialism, constructing students' identities and their social trajectories.

### **3. Methodology**

In this study, I use my experiences as a former student and teacher with five years of experience in Senegal. I also refer to relevant literature to further contextualise such a personal reflection within the larger academic discussions concerning colonial legacies, education, identity, and gender. My experience gives me insights into how the educational system perpetuates colonial subjectivity and shapes students' identities and behaviours. As a student, I experienced the educational system's focus on teaching the French language, Eurocentric curriculum, and strict regulation rules. I use my subjective experiences with the system to illustrate my point.

As a teacher, I was directly involved in implementing the formal curriculum. I observed how students within such contexts negotiated its colonial content. These experiences allow me to analyse how the curriculum perpetuates colonial legacies, especially in poorly resourced rural schools. Having navigated this system as a student and later as a teacher, I can reflect on how colonial elements within the education system shaped my identity and subjectivity. I observed those same dynamics at work among my students.

My positionality requires reflexivity. I am also conscious of the personal biases inherent in analysing a system I have experienced. However, assuming a reflexive approach helps me to look at my experiences and observations more critically, balancing personal insights with existing literature to present a comprehensive analysis. Triangulation ensures that the research is rigorous and well-grounded. At the same time, my personal experiences add depth and lived experience that are valuable to the study.

The reliance on my personal experience may be a limitation of this study. It can bring a possible level of bias, which may influence my interpretation of

events and practices. These experiences are also confined to a specific period and regions: Thies and Louga. They might not be representative of the entire country. Personal recollections can be influenced by various memory biases that may cause me to give little or much emphasis on certain aspects of my educational experience. Despite these limitations, the study provides a detailed insight into the perpetuation of colonial subjectivity in Senegalese education.

#### **4. Context of education in Senegal**

Dunne and Adzahlie-Mensah (2016) recall that no analysis of educational programs in the Global South can be adequate if colonial heritage is not considered. Colonialism shaped education's structures, curricula, and language policies in the Global South. Thus, this historical context helps us understand the status of education in Senegal.

Schooling during the colonial era was developed mainly to serve the needs of the French colonial regime and its *mission civilisatrice* (Conklin, 2001; Rodney, 1981; Trnovec, 2019; Vandewiele, 1983). The curriculum was designed to shape Senegalese consciousness into embracing French culture, history and values while marginalising indigenous knowledge systems (Conklin, 2001; Rodney, 1981; Sane, 2010). The system was also about training a workforce who were literate in French and alienated from their cultures. Rodney (1981) outlines this, referring to minds being colonised to adapt to French culture, causing “mental confusion” (p. 241). This was also a highly selective and elitist system, accessible to the children of the local elite and shaped to prepare them for subordinate administration to the French colonial bureaucracy (Conklin, 2001). It created a divide between the educated minority and most of the population, contributing to the social order that justified colonial control.

Conklin (2001) affirms that the education system was not designed to promote full equality or integration. It was meant to instill a sense of inferiority and the idea that their progress depended on adopting French culture. The curriculum overemphasised France's history, geography, and

culture and omitted African languages and traditions. This made people believe that the civilisation of the French people was superior. Contrary to the rhetoric of the so-called *mission civilisatrice*, the education system was created to train clerks, interpreters, and low-ranking administrators rather than thinkers or leaders who might question colonial rule.

The creation of the School of the Hostages in 1855 is a concrete example of the work of colonial education (Bryant, 2014). The school was developed to educate the sons of local leaders to hold them 'hostage' by indoctrinating them with French cultural and political sensibilities to secure their loyalty to the colonial regime (Bryant, 2014; Vandewiele, 1983). The system was dominated by a rigorous French curriculum that excluded local history and languages (Sane, 2010). The aim was to make these students into intermediaries to promote colonial policy.

When Senegal gained independence in 1960, it attempted to reform the system to reflect national values. President Abdou Diouf created the Direction de l'Alphabétisation to reinforce the national language status in 1981 (Diallo, 2011). However, the persistent use of French as the language of instruction and the curricular frameworks remains a legacy of colonial education (Diallo, 2011; Vandewiele, 1983). The perception of the importance of that language for economic and professional opportunities prompts the recent implementation of English language teaching in primary schools. Though meant to increase global competitiveness, this sidelines national languages. These dynamics show the deeply rooted legacy of colonial education. They also highlight the complex challenges of implementing reforms reflecting national values and responding to global demands.

This historical overview shows how the creation of Senegal's education system was designed for domination. It also shows the tension between the colonial legacy and Senegalese attempts to reconceptualise education on their terms within the confines of independence.

## **5. Mechanisms of Colonial Subjectivity**

In this section, I analyse how the postcolonial schooling system perpetuates the colonial legacy, primarily through the language of instruction and pedagogical approaches. This is also done through the imposition of gendered norms that are reminiscent of the colonial era. This maintains a colonial mindset and attitude towards French colonial rule, shaping how learners perceive themselves and their broader social world.

### **5.1. Language of Instruction and Pedagogical Approaches**

In Senegal, schooling continues in the language of the coloniser, which reproduces colonial subjectivity by reinforcing a linguistic hierarchy that stigmatises native languages. Colonial rule depended on the imposition of the coloniser's language to control and assimilate native peoples (Fanon, 2002; Memmi, 2003). Using French as the language of instruction may imply that academic success is achievable only through it. As a student, we were made to believe that speaking French meant you were intelligent and well-educated. More often, some of us were afraid to speak it, fearing that we would make mistakes and be laughed at. This establishes stigmatised relationships with native languages and perpetuates a colonial mindset among students who associate native languages with inferiority (Diallo, 2011).

Learning in French may be a significant challenge for students. Many speak their mother languages at home. However, they are forced to learn in an unfamiliar linguistic milieu when they enter school (Ka, 1993; Sane, 2010). Though spoken by a minority, French is the country's official language. The USAID (2020) shows that 4.3 million people speak French out of 14.7 million. Forty-seven thousand use it as a first language (L1) and the rest as a second language (L2). Wolof is the most spoken language, with 12.2 million speakers. It is spoken by 5.9 million as L1 and 6.3 million as L2. Other major Indigenous languages are Pular (4.2 million speakers), Seerer (1.7 million) and Maninka (1.6 million). This shows that although only a tiny minority speak French as their first language, it is still the language of instruction (Diallo, 2011; Sane, 2010).

Learning in a language one does not speak can be challenging. Some students are taught to fail academically and to accept these failures as a reflection of their lack of intelligence, which impacts academic success and their learning outcomes (Diallo, 2011). Indigenous languages are devalued in schools, even though they are the languages which these same students use in their daily lives (Diallo, 2011; Ka, 1993). This makes students culturally alienated due to the lack of relevance. Moreover, due to its perceived importance in the global economy, the recent implementation of English at primary levels creates a hierarchy of languages that may marginalise Indigenous languages. This can lead to disconnection from the education system and cultural heritage. It may promote disengagement in education and socioeconomic disadvantage.

Schooling continues to embody the colonial legacy of rote learning and teacher-centred pedagogy (Vavrus et al., 2011). Colonial education was designed to produce docile and submissive citizens who were fit to perform the executive functions of the colonial system (Rodney, 1981). The focus on rote learning reproduces these structures by encouraging servility to authority and discouraging critical thinking. Vavrus et al. (2011) specify that teachers predominantly employ teacher-centred pedagogy, whereby students have limited opportunities to participate and passively follow the teacher's direction, reinforcing the banking model of education (Freire, 2017). In the schools I taught, students with the best grades are said to be disciplined, silent, and able to reproduce lessons during tests. This reflects colonial forms of pedagogy, strengthens existing relations of power and discourages questioning or challenging authority.

In a typical classroom, students are encouraged to memorise dates and definitions without fully understanding the concepts and their applicability. As a student, I remember how I had to memorise history, geography, and science lessons. This was the only way to ensure good grades. Questioning either the material or the teacher's explanation may be taken as a challenge, hence disrespectful or disruptive. This is particularly true for subjects like history and geography, where the learning might have been better achieved through discussions and questioning. However, students are

primarily rewarded for their ability to reproduce information from a lesson during examinations.

In this section, I have shown that colonial subjectivity is perpetuated in the educational environment of Senegal through the language of instruction and the pedagogical approaches, as it forms students' attitudes and maintains the education system in a colonial mode. I am going to focus now on the curriculum.

### **5.2. The Planned and Hidden Curriculum Content**

The planned curriculum refers to the formal content, objectives, and program of study outlined in government documents and school curricula (Abuzandah, 2021; Marsh, 2009). It is the explicit and organised aspect of education, formulated to provide specific knowledge and skills to the students. The planned curriculum in Senegal comprises French, history, mathematics, English, science, etc. Great emphasis is put on rote memorisation and rigorous adherence to standardised content. This formal curriculum is a direct consequence of educational policies and is centred on training students for national examinations (Apple, 2019; Marsh, 2009).

The hidden curriculum consists of the implicit lessons students learn through the atmosphere, culture, and daily social interactions within schools (Abuzandah, 2021; Dunne and Adzhalie-Mensah, 2016; Marsh, 2009). Contrary to the planned curriculum, the hidden curriculum is not written or expressed. However, it is conveyed in the structure and practices of the school environment. It includes the norms, values, and expectations transmitted implicitly among students through teacher interactions with the students, classroom management, and rules. For example, many schools emphasise discipline, obedience, and deference to authority, which reflects and reinforces certain behaviours and attitudes, such as conformity and submission to hierarchical structures (Apple, 2019; Marsh, 2009).

Apple (2019) claims the curriculum is never neutral; it is always designed to serve the interests of people with power. The planned curriculum seeks to achieve educational outcomes, while the hidden curriculum shapes students' social identities and attitudes in line with social and institutional

configurations of power. Both curriculum elements combine to create a complete educational experience; the hidden curriculum often reinforces the values and norms embedded in the planned curriculum. In Senegal, the curriculum limits critical thinking and promotes French culture's superiority (Rodney, 1981; Sane, 2010). It still reinforces colonial subjectivity and the power of the former colonial masters by emphasising Eurocentric knowledge while also denigrating indigenous knowledge systems.

The planned curriculum reproduces the legacy of colonialism, privileging European perspectives and marginalising local traditions and histories (Sane, 2010). Literary studies are based on the writings of European and French authors but much less on Senegalese African writers. The curriculum divides francophone literature into two parts: African literature and French literature. This equates the literature of a country to that of a whole continent and reinforces the power of the former coloniser. I learned about French authors' literary achievements and movements as a student. Authors like Victor Hugo, Alphonse de Lamartine, Moliere, and Saint-Expery are emphasised. Immersing students in French literary traditions implicitly equates intellectual accomplishment with Western models while eroding ties to their cultures, values, and norms (Rodney, 1981).

The history and geography curriculum reinforces a Eurocentric worldview where the history of Europe is seen as more important than the history of Senegal (Ngwa and Akgün, 2021). The history curriculum highlights lessons about the World Wars, the Cold War, the European Industrial Revolution, and the Greek and Roman civilisations. Cheikh Anta Diop's theories were overlooked when we learnt about Ancient Egypt. Senegal's colonial history is presented through the perspective of European expansion and development. It is not taught as a historical narrative rooted in its political logic and cultural values. Indigenous histories and contributions are thereby put into a secondary position, which helps teach students a certain inferiority regarding their cultural heritage.

The science and mathematics curriculum privileges European achievement and methodology. It excludes crucial non-European contributions and reaffirms that modernity and progress are associated with Western scientific

thought. Thus, the curriculum contributes to an academic culture in which Eurocentric knowledge is prioritised and Indigenous knowledge is excluded (Rodney, 1981; Sane, 2010). This exclusion acts to further the colonial narrative that devaluates non-Western scientific contributions, limiting the diverse perspectives in the classroom. This would, in turn, limit students' abilities to imagine themselves as contributors to the world of science. Therefore, the science curriculum continues to institutionalise those colonialist ideologies of placing Western knowledge at the centre. It fails to integrate various scientific achievements from other diverse scientific thought beyond the West.

The continuous use of French as the language of instruction goes beyond matters of academic success. Fluency in French indicates higher social and intellectual standing. Hwang (2024) shows that 83.64% of the population considers French a tool for social prestige, and 79% think mastering it is mandatory. Consequently, students who do not speak good French are often mocked, reinforcing that mastering this language is the key to success. When I was a student, a shameful object called 'symbole' was given to students who spoke their native language. They had to wear it around their neck and would pass it on to another student who did not speak French, which equates to considering speaking one's first language as a shame. These social dynamics silence native languages and their cultural value.

The hidden curriculum is present in school policies and practices. It reflects Western cultural values such as behavioural norms and strict regulation mechanisms. Students are subtly educated in Western communicative behaviours and manners, while practices associated with local expressions are discouraged and ignored. Students then associate success and progress with Western ways, reinforcing colonial hierarchies. For example, in all the schools I was in as a student and teacher, students must address teachers formally using 'Monsieur' or 'Madame'. This mirrors traditional European schooling that places great emphasis on formality.

I have reviewed how colonial and neocolonial subjectivities are inculcated through what is explicitly taught and what is constructed as a hidden curriculum. This provides the educational means to inculcate in students their

inferiority to their native cultures and languages. It underscores that such inferiority will only be overcome by adopting Western standards of excellence. These two layers of the curriculum determine the narrative through which students understand their identities and sense of self-worth. In the following section, I will analyse how colonial subjectivity is maintained through colonial gender regimes.

## **6. Gender Regime and the Subjugation of Females**

The implementation of gender regimes in schools relies on gender performance. This solidifies colonial subjectivity through deeply fixed colonial social norms. As Butler (1999) notes, performativity refers to gender as repeated acts restricting the possible looks, gestures, movements, and expressions. By promoting heteronormative performance, schooling does not encourage but instead forces children to comply with the colonial era norms about appropriate gender presentation.

Lugones (2007) highlights how colonialism interlaced with the roles of gender to validate and finally seal its domination over colonised people. The colonial powers did not simply transplant their cultural norms but rebuilt and manipulated gender identities to fit in with a rigid, hierarchical structure that supported their dominance. Colonial regimes used heteronormative standards to undermine more fluid, inclusive Indigenous roles of gender systematically. This had dual purposes: to subjugate and marginalise women and to reinforce a Eurocentric ideology on racial and gender superiority.

The colonial power reshaped the gender roles to allow the colonised societies to follow European patriarchal structures. Men were encouraged to hold public roles, whereas women were confined to the domestic sphere. This directly affected the socio-political influence of women. It was a calculated move toward destabilising existing community ties and governance structures. This reordering of gender relations is integral to the “coloniality of power” (Quijano, 2000). This still permeates contemporary social norms and plays a determining role in the relations of women and men.

Analysing the legacies of colonialism necessarily requires considering colonialism's effects on gender roles as an integral part of the broader socio-economic and political legacies of colonial rule. Indeed, postcolonial students are socialised in colonial education systems to reproduce a sense of colonial subjectivity through gender performativity. Colonialism introduced a new system of gender roles and reproduced patriarchal familial norms and expectations of women's submission to male authority as the natural situation (Lugones, 2007). The Western view of gender led to categorising women and men (Oyěwùmí, 1997). Post-colonial education socialises students to perform colonial gender roles and reinforces established notions of femininity and masculinity.

Students' genders are constructed through discourses and practices reinforcing certain norms linked to a particular gender and sexuality. Those norms dictate how students behave and perform their gender identity (Youdell, 2005). Students perform heterosexual gender roles. For example, school administration requires dress codes or uniforms in daily gender performances based on colonial ideals of decency and propriety. In my schools, girls' uniforms require long skirts and often pink, while boys wear pants and blue shirts, which implies that young girls must be modest and shy and that boys should have more range of movement, respectively. Girls with shaved heads are often shamed. These daily bodily performances continue to reproduce colonial ideals and gendered norms.

Another domain for gender performance in the classroom is teacher-to-student interactions. Teachers typically have higher expectations for boys, encouraging them to speak out, to take a leadership position, and teaching them to dominate the conversation (Paechter, 2005). On the other hand, girls are told to be quiet, respectful students, defer to the teacher and sit still. In school, boys dominate the classroom, while girls are trained not to speak out. Teachers may tell boys they are natural leaders and explain to girls the importance and value of helping and supporting.

The structure of extracurricular activities perpetuates performativity. Students are guided into groups replicating more traditional forms of gender. The practice of sports is gendered (Eder and Parker, 1987). In the schools

where I taught in Louga, boys played football while girls could only teach a local sport called 'coupe'. Girls mop the classrooms and toilets while boys clean the blackboard. These activities also provide scripts for repeating behaviours that might be associated with pre-colonial ideas about masculinity and femininity.

The hidden curriculum of schooling is a crucial mechanism in gender performativity; textbooks and lesson plans often implicitly shape this process. In textbooks, women are portrayed as passive actors in the historical record, supporting men's activities in the political and economic spheres. For example, the story of the 'heroine' Yacine Boubou is usually emphasised. She sacrificed her life in a ritual to allow her husband to become king. She is given as a model for girls, illustrating that she becomes a hero because of her supportive role in her husband's leadership ambition. The content leads girls to replicate nurturing and supportive activities, setting the performative cycle in motion and thus reinforcing colonial norms.

## **7. Impact on Learners and society**

This section explores the impacts of colonial legacies on learners' identities and society. In this perspective, students become alienated from their roots and their heritage due to the assimilationist and controlling strategies of colonial education. The Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogical approach reinforce a notion of Western cultural supremacy. This often leads students to develop a sense of inferiority. These imposed colonial identities and gender norms persist and shape how students perceive themselves.

### **7.1. Learners' Sense of the Self**

The colonial education system has led to cultural alienation. The result is often a split sense of self that can be difficult to reconcile. Students may feel inferior to Europeans based on the content of the schooling provided by the education system (Fanon, 2002). This content draws heavily from Eurocentric narratives, many of which send insidious messages that implicitly or explicitly highlight that African history and contributions are minimal in

comparison to European culture. It implicitly conveys that Western Europe is the birthplace and the only place of the so-called 'progress' that leads to 'civilisation'. Students are left with a clear sense that their indigenous histories and cultures are secondary to those of Western Europe (Fanon, 2002; Memmi, 2003). Thus, the students struggle to see their indigenous identity with pride.

This inferiority complex can manifest in numerous ways, leading students to minimise their identities. Students may develop and perform hybrid identities. Bhabha (1994) developed the concept of 'Third Space' (p.218), where hybrid identities are formed. People living in the Third Space may develop new forms of identity not exclusively tied to one or the other 'pure' traditional culture. Students are often caught between cultural worlds that do not always fit together. They may develop hybrid identities containing mixtures of Indigenous and colonial elements and sometimes struggle to negotiate the difficulties of a system that continues to privilege European educational norms. The pressure to conform may encourage them to disregard their heritage, complicating their identity formation. Besides, they might incorporate aspects of a colonial worldview into their worldview while maintaining parts of their indigenous identity and integrating those into what it means to be Senegalese.

Language use is a concrete example of how students make and perform hybrid identities. As a student, my friends and I spoke both French and Wolof. Once in class, we were supposed to speak and learn in French. This way, we fit the standards of the colonisers. However, outside the school compound, we spoke Wolof when interacting with family and friends, with which our identity connects more. The situation is similar with most students. French is mainly used at school, while Wolof is spoken at home and in the market (Hwang, 2024). Indeed, students may adopt French when discussing philosophical ideas or scientific theories in class. This is meant to align with Western education systems. They may use Wolof to express local knowledge and wisdom in life contexts. This linguistic duality exemplifies the Third Space. Students navigate and negotiate two different cultural and linguistic spaces.

These constant negotiations between languages and cultures may lead to an internally conflicting sense of hybridity. Students are urged to prioritise French for academic and professional success, while native language and cultural practices are considered second-class. This constant balancing of two contradictory value systems tends to complicate their identity formation by having to integrate these two competing influences into one coherent sense of self. The hybrid identity enriches them while simultaneously providing challenges since the students may try to find balance and personal authenticity in a system that still privileges colonial norms.

Colonial educational shapes also established traditional and deeply embedded expectations about gender, which live on in students' identity-building processes. Women and girls are still condemned by long-standing stereotypes discouraging their access to higher education and careers outside the home (Unterhalter et al., 2013). The curriculum often supports those by not challenging male-biased assumptions. Girls are encouraged to put the needs of their families ahead of their own. This restricts them from opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Rote learning in school restrains the capacity to think critically and creatively. Authority over knowledge belongs solely to the teacher. As a student, it was unimaginable to challenge or question them. Instilling knowledge through memory and memorisation discourages students from thinking independently and creatively, exploring and challenging unfamiliar problems (Lujan and DiCarlo, 2006). Consequently, they may become unable to apply theoretical knowledge in real situations or think outside the traditional frameworks to which they had been socialised. This is an educational culture of passiveness and domination by figures of authority who monopolise knowledge.

## **7.2. Implications for Society**

Mimicry is the process by which the colonised imitate the colonisers' language, habits, and manners (Bhabha, 1994). This process can occur because of the coloniser's insistence on the natural superiority of their own culture. It also provides a model of what constitutes a 'civilised' individual. Bhabha described this as a paradoxical strategy: The coloniser encourages the

colonised to mimic them, to be ‘almost the same, but not quite’ (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). The ambivalence of mimicry stems from its ability to undermine and strengthen colonial authority's foundations. Mimicry's ambiguity is intrinsic to its very structure. By mimicking the coloniser, colonised subjects can sometimes earn privileges such as access to education.

The Senegalese education system may foster mimicry in three distinct ways. First, it is a tool to introduce the core modes of thinking, speaking, and acting in French. Second, the curriculum positions fluency in French as the key to success, style, and good taste. Third, it creates a class of people expected to be French in taste and intellectual habits yet distinctly African and, therefore, ‘civilised’ in a colonial system that deemed them secondary to Western people (Memmi, 2003). For example, some people still try to sound French and dress in three-piece suits in the hot climate of Senegal, illustrating how they perform their hybrid identities through mimicry.

The results of mimicry are profound and long-lasting. Culturally, mimicry creates identity confusion among the colonised, who are at once alienated from their indigenous belonging and yet not accepted by the dominant culture they are encouraged to copy (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 2002; Memmi, 2003). Socially, this creates ongoing structures of power, where the colonised continue to prize the coloniser's culture as superior and strive toward that ideal at the expense of their indigenous cultural practices.

The linguistic hierarchy of the school system perpetuates economic inequality by inhibiting job opportunities for those less proficient in French. Students who do not speak well French are particularly affected, most of them living in rural areas. Few of them end up in higher education, while those with the earliest exposure to French or who can afford to pay for it enjoy job prospects. The World Bank (2016) shows a striking inequality between rural and urban areas. Indeed, only 8% of rural students are likely to finish secondary education because of the low quality of education. In this way, using French as a language of instruction limits social mobility and contributes to inequality.

Gender prejudices in education systems contribute to wider gender inequality. The International Monetary Fund African Department (2019) highlights that girls' secondary education completion rate is lower than boys: 13% against 21 %. In higher education, the enrolment rate of men was 1.5 times higher than that of women between 2008 and 2017 (*Country Gender Profile: Senegal*, 2019). Women remain often underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The number of university-educated women entering the STEM sectors remains below that of men: 26.5% against 31.9% (*Country Gender Profile: Senegal*, 2019). Some reasons for this may be that women still carry a heavy domestic burden, reflected in the opportunities they receive. This is a loss of their economic independence, undermining economic growth and increasing poverty. It also continues to reinforce the patriarchy that confines women to the private sphere.

## **8. Conclusion**

In this article, I have shown that education in present-day Senegal still reproduces a sense of subordination and inferiority. The continuing use of French as the language of instruction strengthens a linguistic hierarchy that denigrates native languages and alienates students from their cultural heritage. Hidden and planned curricula promote exclusively Eurocentric knowledge and devalue the Indigenous knowledge system, making students feel that progress and modernity are synonymous with the West. Through the gender regime, the colonised follow colonial conceptions of gender, which shapes students' ideas about proper gender roles. Their effect on students is critical. Learners experience cultural alienation and a fragmented sense of identity. They move between the competing worlds of their indigenous heritage and dominant colonial norms. This creates hybrid identities that may promote an inferiority complex.

The path to this requires liberating Senegal's education from its colonial legacy. A crucial step is embracing national languages as instruments of instruction, reforming curricula to reflect Indigenous history and values, and challenging colonial gender norms so that education becomes a place where

students can assume pride in their heritage, develop reflexive autonomy, and reimagine a future beyond colonial subordination.

Identity and gender are fluid and shaped by cultural, social, and individual processes. They cannot be reduced to binary categories of men and women. Thus, we must be open to nuance and complexity when considering these terms because they are socially constructed, performative, and challengeable. Qualitative methods like ethnography, interviews, and participant observation can help us understand these nuances. They provide depth and deep context to lived experiences of identity. Future research must be intersectional. The researcher should actively listen to and observe the diverse experiences of the participants. If researchers are reflexive, listen actively, and try to understand, they can develop rich, compassionate insights into the emergent identities of the people they research.

## 9. References

- Abuzandah, Sameer. 'The Hidden Curriculum'. *African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2021, pp. 22–25.
- Apple, Michael W. *Ideology and Curriculum*. Fourth edition, Routledge, 2019.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- Bryant, Kelly Duke. 'Clothing and Community: Children's Agency in Senegal's School for Sons of Chiefs and Interpreters, 1892-1910'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies V*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2014, pp. 239–58.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 10. anniversary ed, Routledge, 1999.
- Conklin, Alice L. *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930*. Stanford Univ. Press, 2001.
- *Country Gender Profile: Senegal*. Islamic Development Bank, 2019, <https://www.isdb.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2020-09/Senegal%20Gender.pdf>.

- Davies, Bronwyn. 'Subjectification: The Relevance of Butler's Analysis for Education'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 27, no. 4, Sept. 2006, pp. 425–38. *DOI.org* (*Crossref*), <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690600802907>.
- Diallo, Ibrahima. "“To Understand Lessons, Think through Your Own Languages.” An Analysis of Narratives in Support of the Introduction of Indigenous Languages in the Education System in Senegal'. *Language Matters*, vol. 42, no. 2, Nov. 2011, pp. 207–30. *DOI.org* (*Crossref*), <https://doi.org/10.1080/10228195.2011.585655>.
- Dunne, Mairead, and Vincent Adzahlie-Mensah. 'Subordinate Subjects: The Work of the Hidden Curriculum in Post-Colonial Ghana'. *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment: Two Volume Set*, by Dominic Wyse et al., SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016, pp. 216–30. *DOI.org* (*Crossref*), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473921405.n14>.
- Eder, Donna, and Stephen Parker. 'The Cultural Production and Reproduction of Gender: The Effect of Extracurricular Activities on Peer-Group Culture'. *Sociology of Education*, vol. 60, no. 3, July 1987, p. 200. *DOI.org* (*Crossref*), <https://doi.org/10.2307/2112276>.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Repr., Pluto Press, 2002.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 2nd Vintage Books ed, Vintage Books, 1995.
- ---. *The History of Sexuality*. 1st American ed, Pantheon Books, 1985.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, Published in Penguin Classics 2017, Penguin Books, 2017.
- Hall, Stuart. 'Who Needs "Identities"?' *The Question of Cultural Identity*, 1996.
- Hwang, Sinae. 'La Place Du Français Au Sénégal: Portraits Sociolinguistiques de La Ville de Dakar'. *SHS Web of Conferences*, edited by F. Neveu et al., vol. 191, 2024, p. 02010. *DOI.org* (*Crossref*), <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202419102010>.
- International Monetary Fund African Dept. *Senegal*. International Monetary Fund, 2019.
- Ka, Omar. 'Senegalese Languages in Education: The First Congress of Wolof'. *The Earliest Stage of Language Planning*, edited by Joshua A.

- Fishman, De Gruyter Mouton, 1993, pp. 305–20. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110848984.305>.
- Lugones, María. ‘Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System’. *Hypatia*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2007, pp. 186–219. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2007.tb01156.x>.
  - Lujan, Heidi L., and Stephen E. DiCarlo. ‘Too Much Teaching, Not Enough Learning: What Is the Solution?’ *Advances in Physiology Education*, vol. 30, no. 1, Mar. 2006, pp. 17–22. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00061.2005>.
  - Marsh, Colin J. *Key Concepts for Understanding Curriculum*. 4th ed, Routledge, 2009.
  - Memmi, Albert. *The Coloniser and the Colonised*. 3rd ed., Earthscan, 2003.
  - Ngwa, Neba Ridley, and Birol Akgün. ‘Transformation of National Identity, Geo-Politics and Nation Building in Post-Colonial African States: The Cases of Cameroon and Senegal’. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, vol. 56, no. 8, Dec. 2021, pp. 1757–79. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909621992790>.
  - Oyěwùmí, Oyèrónké. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
  - Paechter, Carrie F. *Educating the Other: Gender, Power and Schooling*. Transferred to digital printing, Routledge Falmer, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005.
  - Quijano, Anibal. ‘Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America’. *Nepantla: View from the South*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2000, pp. 553–80.
  - Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Rev. pbk. ed, Howard University Press, 1981.
  - Sane, Sokhna. ‘Decolonization and Questions of Language: The Case of Senega’. *Decolonization Reconsidered: Rebirths, Continuities and Erasures*, Pnina Motzafi-Haller and Michael Feige, vol. 9, Ben Gurion University of the Negev Israel, 2010.
  - Trnovec, Silvester. *The Conquest of the African Mind: History, Colonial Racism, and Education in Senegal and French West Africa, 1910-1945*. Slovak Academic Press, 2019.
  - Unterhalter, Elaine, et al. ‘Girls Claiming Education Rights: Reflections on Distribution, Empowerment and Gender Justice in Northern Tanzania and

- Northern Nigeria'. *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 33, no. 6, Nov. 2013, pp. 566–75. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2013.05.007>.
- Usaid. *Language of Instruction Country Profile Senegal*. 2020, [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00X9JW.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00X9JW.pdf).
  - Vandewiele, Michel. 'History of Western Education in French-Speaking Africa: The Example of Senegal'. *Psychological Reports*, vol. 53, no. 2, Oct. 1983, pp. 507–15. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1983.53.2.507>.
  - Vavrus, Frances, et al. *Ensuring Quality by Attending to Inquiry: Learner-Centered Pedagogy in Sub-Saharan Africa*. 2011.
  - Youdell, Deborah. 'Sex–Gender–Sexuality: How Sex, Gender and Sexuality Constellations Are Constituted in Secondary Schools'. *Gender and Education*, vol. 17, no. 3, Aug. 2005, pp. 249–70. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540250500145148>.