Bjorn Harald Nordtveit

Constructing Development

Civil Society and Literacy in a Time of Globalization

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And then it became known that the white man's fetish had unbelievable power. It was said he wore glasses on his eyes so that he could see and talk to evil spirits. Not long after, he won his three first converts.

Achebe.

When the farthest corner of the world has been conquered technologically and can be exploited economically; when any incident you like, in any place you like, at any time you like, becomes accessible as fast as you like; when you simultaneously "experience" an assassination attempt against a king in France and a symphony concert in Tokyo; when time is nothing but speed, instantaneity, and simultaneity, and time as history has vanished from all Dasein of all peoples; when a boxer counts as the great man of a people; when the tallies of millions at mass meetings are a triumph; then, yes then, there still looms like a specter over all this uproar the question: what for? – where to? – and what then?

Heidegger.

My mom can write her name now and she is telephoning by herself. That helps to keep her occupied. At home, when we are watching the African Football Cup, she now knows who scored (Villager).

I am 46 years and I am a farmer. I go to the literacy course because I want to learn more. I have learned the Arab language, but am especially motivated to learn my local language. I want to be able to read the road signs when I am traveling - now I can read the names of the villages. The course has helped me to become more aware of things – and also to have a better relationship with other villagers. Every day after the classes I review the lessons, because I don't want to forget them (Current learner).

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Acronyms

AOF	(*Afrique Occidentale Française*): French West Africa
AGETIP	(*Agence d'Exécution des Travaux d'Intérêt Publique*): Contract managing agency
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CFAF	(*Francs of the Communauté Financière d'Afrique*): Currency used in 12 former French-ruled countries in West Africa (including Senegal). Also known under the acronym XOF
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CNOAS	(*Coordination Nationale des Opérateurs en Alphabétisation du Sénégal*): Providers' Association
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DAEB	(*Direction de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Education de Base*): Department for Literacy and Basic Education at the Ministry of Education
DALN	(*Direction de l'Alphabétisation et des Langues Nationales*): Department for Literacy and Local Languages (formerly DAEB)
EFA	Education For All
GAD	Gender and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIE	(*Groupement d'Interêt Economique*): Local for-profit association
GTZ	(*Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit*) German Technical Cooperation for Development.
IA	(*Inspection de l'Académie*): Regional Chief Education Office. Also used to designate the *Inspecteur*, the regional chief education officer
ICR	Implementation Completion Report (the World Bank's final project report)
IDA	International Development Association (the part of the World Bank that provides interest-free loans and grants to the world's poorest countries)

IDEN	(*Inspection Départementale de l'Education Nationale*): Department Education Office. Also used to designate the *Inspecteur*, the departmental chief education officer
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IS	Impact study (of four main literacy projects in Senegal)
KfW	(*Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau*): German Bank for Reconstruction/Development
LCD	Less Developed Countries (Senegal is classified among the LCDs but not among the LLCDs)
LLDC	Least Developed Countries (the poorest of the LDCs)
LS	Longitudinal Study (of PAPF)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PAPA	(*Projet d'Appui au Plan d'Action*): Action Plan Support Project (Literacy project financed by CIDA)
PAPF	(*Projet d'Alphabétisation Priorité Femmes*): Literacy project prioritizing women (financed by an IDA grant)
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PM	Procedures Manual
PPP	Public–Private Partnership
PRSP	Government Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (sponsored by the World Bank)
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Strategy Credit
RDA	(*Responsable Départemental de l'Alphabétisation*): Department Responsible for Literacy
RRA	(*Responsable Régional de l'Alphabétisation*): Regional Responsible for Literacy
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SAL	Structural Adjustment Loan
SAR	(World Bank) Staff Appraisal Report (equivalent to a UN Project Document)
SDR	Special Drawing Rights: The World Bank's lending currency. Also known under the acronym XDR
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (www.unesco.org)
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund (www.unicef.org)
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (www.unifem.org)
WDR	World Development Report (a yearly World Bank publication)
WID	Women in Development

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Prelude

I hope that you are with good health; I pray to God that all is well in your life and with your family. Thank you for your intervention in the village; before you came we were in the darkness, and you made us see light. We could not write or read or make telephone calls. Currently, we can write without anybody knowing what we write. Previously, we could not hide anything. Now we can telephone without anybody knowing to whom we are speaking. God alone can pay you, may He bless you (Letter from learner).

They are not animals (Private provider staff, about literacy learners).

I have four wives and twenty-two children. All my wives have attended literacy class; I have seen nothing but benefits from it (Villager).

These quotations are taken from stakeholders in a World Bank non-formal literacy education project in Senegal, West Africa. Illiteracy – in this project and elsewhere – is often constructed as an illness, an animal stage of being, not fit for the modern world. The World Bank and other organizations are proposing a cure; primary education for children and non-formal literacy programs for youth and adults. And we – development workers, academics, and educators, are following up on the projects, programs, and policies, nodding and smiling when the "beneficiaries" obtain higher literacy scores and perform according to our pre-established "indicators." Our understanding is largely bipolar and often comprehended and analyzed by opposites. Developed countries are contrasted to underdeveloped ones, the Western – or Northern – world to the Global South, literacy to illiteracy, and poor to rich. "Development" in this binary world has become a modernization project, a path for "them" to become "us."

We are constantly informed that we are living in an era of globalization. Images that fill our television screens go a long way in underscoring this point: we see terror in the Middle East, poverty in Africa, and economic development in the Far East. An array of stereotypes fills our minds and confirms our vision of the "global" world. Heidegger already 70 years ago realized that we had conquered the world technologically and exploited it

economically; and that any incident, in any place, at any time, had become accessible instantaneously (Heidegger, [1953] 2000). Despite all this movement, we rarely pause, and question underlying meanings: what for? – where to? – and what then? Rarely, do we look at the background of problems and their historic evolution; and even more rarely do we consider the relationships between the one and the other. We are used to categorize each phenomenon under its own label, and hardly ever consider them from other perspectives. The subjects that we study are labeled and classified: politics, economics, education, history, sociology, and anthropology. If connections are found between the disciplines, then new disciplines even more narrow than the former ones, such as "economics of education" or "sociology of education" are born. It may be difficult, however, to gain a more complete understanding of an issue by putting it into a scientific box, labeled according to the discipline we feel the most appropriate: "the phenomena dealt with in these separate boxes are so closely intermeshed that each presumes the other, each affects the other, each is incomprehensible without taking into account the other boxes" (Wallerstein, 2004, p. x). There is a necessity, then, to unpack the boxes and question the relationship between economics, ideologies, and our construction of literacy, development, and gender.

Our questioning, however, is not constructed on a blank slate, but is based on what Nobel Prize economist Schumpeter in his massive History of Economic Analysis (1994) called a pre-analytic vision: "... analytic effort is necessarily preceded by a preanalytic cognitive act that supplies the raw material for the analytic effort" (p. 41). This vision influences and is influenced by global "discourses" and ideologies that form our opinions. In this study, discourse is understood in its Foucauldian sense, not as ideology, but as "the glasses through which, in each age, people have conceived things, how they thought and acted [my translation]" (Veyne, 2008, p. 46). In other words, "discourse is not the expression of thought; it is a practice, with conditions, rules, and historical transformations" (Escobar, 1995, p. 216). A dialectical relationship therefore exists between our internal pre-analytic vision and the external manifestation of discourses.

When we learn that the World Bank is helping poor, illiterate women in West Africa, we think that it is a Good Thing. We watch pictures from the "field," in which African women point to a blackboard where they have written something. We do not stop and reflect on how the participants fit into the global aid industry, which ideologies are underpinning the financing of the literacy courses, and which discourses are constructing "our" vision of "their" development. We seldom question whether *our* vision fits *their* vision, and which are the power structures ruling this relationship.

This study is an attempt to step back and consider our construction of development. As a development worker, I rarely had the time to do so. My life was spent in a space of in-betweenness, in which I was always going somewhere or coming back from somewhere. After working for UNESCO in Asia for 5 years, I worked for the World Bank in Africa for 6 years, participating in the setup of public–private partnerships for literacy education in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Niger, Senegal, and The Gambia. The partnership approach is also used to construct development in many other countries and is often used to set up literacy and health projects. The case of Senegal, which is the country referred to in this study, is one of the first West African countries to have adopted the partnership model. The Women's Literacy Project, extensively studied here, has become a model of the World Bank's public private–partnership strategy – and is a good example to analyze how the World Bank is interacting with countries and how it is funding literacy and development projects. My involvement with this particular project spans over 8 years and includes the organization of various evaluations and assessments of the project. My exposure to the project cannot be changed (or set aside) as I write this study – and therefore I write about it as a lived experience: "researchers do not step outside their ordinary lives when they observe and interpret and write up the workings of a case" (Stake, 1995, p. 134). The aim of the research is not to find One Truth, but to seek to disentangle various meanings and constructions of development based on stories and events that I was able to collect during my visits to West Africa.

This study thus investigates a Senegalese literacy project for women, which received funding from the World Bank. The project is both studied from a "boxed in" perspective – looking at its financing, its administrative processes, its gender aspects, and its literacy impact. But what should be done if the financing influences the processes and the processes in turn influence the gender aspects of the project, which again influence the literacy impact? Then, we have a problem with our labels and our science boxes. In this study, an effort is made to go beyond boxes, in order to show how different aspects of a project influence each other in complex, non-linear manners, and how these aspects are partially formed by global ideological streams. In particular, the study examines the interaction between the World Bank, globalization, and civil society, and their impact on development projects in Africa.

I find it useful to define and analyze development processes using insights from a combination of several strands of theories that may at first seem arbitrarily chosen, or even incongruous. In particular, the use of Post-Development and Complexity Theories, as well as New Institutional Economics (NIE), helps inform analysis. Such combination may prove valuable because NIE proposes tools that help examine certain phenomena

recognized by Complexity Theory, such as inertia, or resistance of a given population to move toward what is generally conceived as development. However, where NIE often examines linear development relationships, Complexity Theory proposes to study multifaceted networks of interactions to explain dynamics of change or lack thereof. As noted above, the sense of development is often taken for granted by a pre-analytical cognitive act as a modernization project and as progress toward the realizations of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Hence, the reduction of the number of people living in absolute poverty (less than US $1 a day),[1] higher literacy scores, more gender equity, etc., are considered "development;" often without questioning to which extent this reasoning (and the supporting policies and programs) is based on the view of the "modern west as a teaching civilization" and as the "only universalizable civilization" to use two notions that have been critiqued by the historian Sachsenmaier (2006, p. 456). Instead of taking the Western view for granted, I argue that first the change desired by the stakeholders in the development process should be investigated, as well as the pre-analytical cognitive act predefining that this change is "good."

My work with the World Bank at times led me to question whether the organization's work really supported the poor, or if it was merely a part of a global system of Western hegemony. This study was originally an attempt to examine whether the public–private partnership-based literacy projects in West Africa were "good" or "bad" – and thereby to question my role in them as a World Bank expert. I never found any straightforward answer to this binary opposition between good and bad. Instead, I found a series of stories, some of which are told here, of various encounters people had with a development project.

I found that most analysis never go beyond a questioning of the cost-effectiveness of development initiatives – and I desired to push analysis beyond my blind acceptance of the MDGs and the Education for All (EFA) discourse. This, I found, was useful. In particular, I found it important to consider some basic questions related to the sense of development itself, when analyzing the project:

> Which fundamental beliefs are grounding the analysis – and how do they relate to the community beliefs, value system(s), culture, and institutions?

[1] For lack of better word, this study uses the term poverty, although it is often connected to pre-packaged definitions and standard solutions along definitions long established by the West.

Is change desired and desirable in this community? Which change, empowering whom? What are the alternative courses of action (or non-action)?
Who owns the discourse and who is disempowered by it? Is there any alternative discourse?

This first set of questions could investigate the sense of development in West Africa in general, and the sense of development among participants in the Women's Literacy Project in particular. I found it necessary to investigate, regardless of the MDG and EFA, to which extent the World Bank's vision of development coincides with national and local visions of development. This level of analysis includes investigation of local noncalculative norms, which are characterized by very slow mutations. Williamson (2000) calls this level "social embeddedness," which encompasses religion, informal institutions, customs, and norms. This level has already been mentioned above, because it includes the pre-analytic vision of development (and change). Embedded values in society are often slow to change and will sometimes last for decennia. Economic development analysis has habitually ignored this level, although development activities may be different if the participants' bounded rationality is understood within the embedded values of their society.

When an analysis of the community-specific meanings of development has been undertaken, a second set of questions investigates the holistic systems of action that will contribute to change:

What are the causes for inertia and change in the community?
Which combined actions are necessary to achieve a critical mass leading to change?
How to design a flexible development project that can quickly respond to new community concerns and a situation that may be rapidly evolving in a different direction than the one that was initially imagined?

With the use of Complexity Theory, the debate of the cost-effectiveness of a certain service as opposed to another should be pushed to a subordinate position and instead the wholeness and interrelation of development activities as a system should be considered: development, both at macro and at microlevels, is a non-linear phenomenon that must be analyzed as such:

> Outcomes are determined not by single causes but by multiple causes, and these causes may, and usually do, interact in a non-additive fashion. In other words the combined effect is not necessarily the sum of the separate effects. It may be greater or less, because factors can reinforce or cancel out each other in non-linear ways (Byrne, 1998, p. 20).

Complexity and development can be brought together because human cultural settings, productions, and institutions as related to development efforts are complex and dynamic by nature. Also, an action of development (A) is rarely linear, leading to a known outcome, (B). Instead of linearity, the relationships are often dialectical and complex. Individual human beings (local participants, donors, administrators, service providers) as well as associations of individuals (institutions and associations) are multi-dimensional, non-linear, interconnected, far from equilibrium, and unpredictable:

> . . . rather than seek to undertake inquiry that simplifies through reducing this complexity to that which can be measured objectively, a complexity approach begins by acknowledging that human settings and activities are necessarily complex (Kuhn, 2008, pp. 182–183).

A possible problem with most analysis of development efforts is its focus on the efficiency of the delivery of a single product, such as women's literacy – and lack thereof. It does not consider the society as non-linear systems of inertia and change. Complexity Theory may be a better fit for analysis of development actions, since it does not isolate an event (e.g., a literacy course) causing an effect (e.g., literacy), but looks at the holistic systems where the event has different outcomes depending of the co-interacting factors with the event. Hence, the basic premises of Complexity Theory is that a system needs to reach a certain level of complexity, or critical mass, to overcome inertia of the status quo, and to reach a "sustainable autocatalytic state – that is, for it to maintain its own momentum in a particular direction" (Mason, 2007, p. 4). Once this critical mass is reached, new proprieties and behaviors emerge that are not necessarily contained in the system's constituent elements.

Most development initiatives bypass the two first sets of questions and challenges and turn straight to the question of cost-effectiveness of a prepackaged Millennium Development Goal (MDG) "solution" to a pre-defined development deficiency in a given community. The cost-effectiveness of one action is then compared to another, and the most cost-effective will be implemented, regardless of whether it corresponds to the visions of the concerned community members about their own development, or whether this particular action will be the most cost-effective solution in a complex system of change. Here I argue that it is only when the first two sets of questions have been fully explored, that one should turn to the questions of effective implementation strategies and cost-effectiveness. The third set of questions a development practitioner or theorist ought to ask are therefore related to the practical implementation of the development project, program, or policy:

Which set of actions would be cost-effective (in the sense of minimizing transaction costs and implementing activities leading to positive community-owned and -driven change)?
How to avoid problems of asymmetric information and moral hazard?
How does the (bounded) rationality of each stakeholder impact the set of actions deemed necessary to cause change?

The cost-effectiveness analysis encompasses several levels. First, the institutional environment and the formal rules of the society, e.g., the state system and civil society ought to be questioned. Change at this level occurs frequently and is often measured in decades. A level of social analysis consists of governance, or how institutions are enforced. Activities can be decomposed into principles of conflict, mutuality, and order – in which governance can be understood as an effort to craft order and "thereby to mitigate conflict and realize mutual gains" (Williamson, 2000, p. 599). A further level of analysis encompasses resource allocation and employment, including prices, quantities, and incentive alignment. Change at this level is continuous.

In this study, first, the World Bank's and local constructions of development are questioned, as well as long-term social practices and development beliefs of the community. Chapter 2 presents the case study and the rationale of World Bank's involvement in development. Then, the discourse of different agents is investigated (World Bank and Government staff, private provider staff, literacy learners) and I also attempt to give an overview of World Bank's agenda in a globalized world and to demonstrate how the World Bank draws on market mechanisms to produce civil society and literacy. Chapter 3 explores notions of civil society and gender, whereas literacy education will be analyzed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents the mechanisms and processes of the public–private partnership model employed by the World Bank in Senegal and other African countries, followed by a consideration of the costs and effectiveness of market-based production of literacy in Chapter 6. The aim is to look into the cost of creating and structuring civil society to deliver and receive literacy projects and to determine the level of wastage. The impact of the project is then measured by investigating the possibilities for significant social change through the influence of civil society organizations and literacy. Finally, Chapter 7 explores where market-based and large-scale delivery of literacy education and other social services are cost-effective and where the market fails. It also analyzes the effectiveness of the World Bank and the market to provide social services and questions the underlying development discourses that are framing the implementation of literacy education for women.

Chapter 1
A Sense of Development

The reason that I come to the classes is that they have helped trigger a development process. Development – that's first of all knowledge and tools for conducting economic activities, such as micro-gardening, small shop keeping, dyeing, etc. (Literacy learner).

Development is an individual's progress from a state "a" to a state "b" in which he or she is better off socially, economically, and culturally (Private provider staff).

Most people think that the aim of education is to obtain a paid job. We had to explain that if we want to achieve development, development is first of all the capacity of the population to be aware of a number of essential questions, e.g., how one can take care of one's own health, and that of the family and the community, through the knowledge of prevention and hygiene, as well as nutrition. That is development. Understanding that destroying the natural environment has severe consequences for today and tomorrow, and knowledge to preserve it; that is development. Using traditional production methods as a basis for evolving toward modern production methods; that is development. Knowledge of the citizens' rights, and demand that the local authorities respect those rights; that is development. Knowledge to organize the community to collectively take charge of school and health-related issues, so as to improve the well being of people; that is development (Civil servant).

The three quotations show three different – and yet similar – views of development and education in the Senegalese women's literacy project. According to the civil servant, the "we" of knowledge had to explain "them" that they had to become aware of a number of essential issues; issues that ostensibly would lead them from a state (a) to a state (b) where they would be better off. The first "I"; the learner engaged in her own development, sees this process as purely economic. The second interviewee, a professional development worker, considers development to be an all-encompassing restructuring of the participant, a reform of social, economic, and cultural values. It seems to faintly echo the quotation in the introduction; "they're not animals." They're humans, but (in our eyes) they need a transformation toward "our" level of

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development. The third interviewee, a civil servant, develops this discourse: development is first and foremost the contact with a certain value system, "our" value system. The dichotomy is perfect – a world of "thems" becoming "uses." The literacy learner, who is willingly being "developed" as long as it entails a better economic situation, does not refute this sense of development. It is a world in perfect harmony, reflecting Rostow's scheme of a traditional society taking off and flying to the "age of high mass-consumption," representing the highest level of economic development (Willis, 2005). Education is one of the keys for the take-off, and the pre-analytic vision of development is related to a Western image of economic well-being, health, and knowledge.

1.1 Development Discourses

Our pre-analytic vision of development has largely been conditioned and informed by the two major Western visions of world order emerging from Enlightenment, i.e., socialism and capitalism. In the globalized area and especially among aid agencies, the capitalist worldview (or, to use Schumpeter's term, "vision") has been predominant. Sachsenmaier (2006) explains that for other intellectual movements, searching to distance themselves from an Eurocentric world, "the presence of a liberal market economy and not its absence was the root cause for the economic misery and social crises in most countries south of the Rio Grande des Norte border" (p. 457). Of course, the analysis leading to development programs is often made by reference to neoclassical economics; this latter in itself a construct responding to Western ideas. However, increasingly the assumptions of neoclassical theory are questioned even in the West, in particular beliefs about the actors' free access to information, the lack of transaction costs in calculations of development activities, and the confidence in a Western rationality among the actors. Further, many intellectual movements have criticized development programs in their focus on economic growth, a development objective arguably dating back to the 1940s, when President Harry Truman in his famous inauguration speech defined most of the world as underdeveloped and proposed that all nations move along the same path as the United States and aspire to the same goals of development (Truman, 1949). Some practitioners and theorists argue that development policy choices should rather respond to distribution criteria (i.e., empowering the poorest people in society), instead of a search for economic growth that often benefits the wealthy and creates an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. The decisive criteria of development would, in such a perspective, be related to social justice and not only be based on questions of cost-effectiveness and growth.

The proposal of Sachsenmaier, and to a certain extent Schumpeter, is to go beyond the criticism of specific theories and instead to challenge the pre-analytic vision itself. This has been done by different intellectual movements, starting in the early 1960s as a reaction to the Western domination of social sciences. For dependency theorists, in particular, the main objective was to “gain local control over the concepts and mechanisms of development” (Sachsenmaier, 2006, p. 457). Through the use of a Foucauldian lens and in questioning the vocabulary of development, one notices a widespread usage of a negative and possibly disempowering discourse. In terms of education, as noted above, illiteracy is often compared to a sickness – and education is the cure. Likewise, Western-inspired and theoretical education systems are seen as the cure of many an illness, and, similarly to a shamanistic solution, fixes health and hygiene problems, increases the household’s income, combats HIV/AIDS and, in general, is praised as a solution for misery. Do these promises hold true? Illich already in 1971 criticized development projects and demonstrated how many programs correspond to standardized, “pre-packaged solutions” and “outdated version of their [the rich people’s] standard models” (p. 96), which make “schools rationalize the divine origin of social stratification with much more rigor than the churches have ever done” (p. 98), and lead to rural exodus, thereby ultimately creating unemployment and frustration.

The criticism of a disempowering discourse and development mechanisms is partly borne from postmodern intellectual streams and can especially be found among postcolonial and post-development theorists. In terms of the mechanisms of development, “inspired by postmodern philosophy, many postcolonial thinkers challenged concepts such as modernity, asserting that they are mainly discursive instruments to further western imperial interests” (Sachsenmaier, 2006, p. 458). The intellectual strand known as post-development criticized development practices and discourse as a Western-imposed “planned poverty” to use the title of a groundbreaking paper by Illich in 1971. In this paper, Illich defined development as “package deals” corresponding to a Western pre-analytic vision:

> We have embodied our world-view in our institutions and are now their prisoners. Factories, newsmedia, hospitals, governments and schools produce goods and services packaged to contain our view of the world. We – the rich – conceive of progress as the expansion of these establishments (Illich, 1971, p. 95).

Escobar, furthering Illich’s thought and building on Foucault, demonstrated that Western economies imposed external norms and values on countries of the Global South – and thereby characterized them as least developed or developing:

> That the essential trait of the Third World was its poverty and that the solution was economic growth and development became self-evident, necessary, and universal truths (Escobar, 1995, p. 24).

In this context, the concepts of under-developed and poor brought into existence a set of new discourses that shaped policies of the necessary “intervention” in the Third World countries. Adapting Western norms of development, then, naturally brings about a pre-defined vision of lacking development in the South, and the corresponding Western-inspired fix. Escobar and other post-development intellectuals reject the development discourse as a whole and propose to search for alternatives. In particular, it is claimed that many grassroots movements are implementing alternatives to Western development strategies and that the search for a new paradigm should start at this level (Escobar, 1995).

Various intellectuals have challenged Escobar’s vision and demonstrated that many development initiatives are not results of a top-down imposed Western discourse, but are grounded in local grassroots movements and searching to promote local culture, institutions, and norms (Willis, 2005). Here, I argue that the pre-analytic vision preceding – and providing – the development activities should be questioned, as a first priority before analysis. In particular, it is important to question the fundamental beliefs grounding the development activities – how do they relate to the community beliefs, value system(s), culture, and institutions? Then the desired nature of change should be questioned; and it should be established who is empowered and who is disempowered by the discourse and the envisaged development. With other words, it is important to deconstruct the World Bank’s, the government’s, and the community discourses to seek to discover the ideological influences informing various development activities.

However, one can question to which extent it would be naïve to seek any “untainted” development discourse responding to a natural desire for improvement of one’s condition (or a lack of such desire), when even the farthest corner of the world has been conquered technologically and is being exploited economically. The world is interconnected in an economic web, a global system of desire, consumption, and production. In Senegal and other West African countries, illiteracy is not seen as a shame, but rather as a curable illness, and the Western discourse of development is so prevalent that people characterize themselves as “developing” or “under-developed” without hesitation. Hence, one can question to which extent we are living in a globalized world or in a post-globalized one, in which the discourse has become largely uniform and most people are aware of the predominant ideologies and discourses of development.

1.2 The World Bank, Ideology, and Globalization

The term "ideology" is a controversial notion that has been defined in various ways. Many development theorists reject outright the use of the term "ideological" in conjunction with the World Bank's discourse, claiming that the institution is a "learning organization" that employs the newest inventions in development. Other theorists claim that the World Bank is a Western-influenced organization, which is setting an economic pace in the developing world that is based on a very conservative economic ideology.

Clearly, the notion of ideology, and of aid being ideological, depends on the definition of the term ideological. Some definitions of the term are very broad, designing a culture or a worldview (Eagleton, 2007). Under such definition, most aid can be said to be ideological. The term can also be used in a narrower sense, as a promotion of a group interest, relevant to the sustaining or challenge of some political form of life, "a discursive field in which self-promoting social powers conflict and collide over questions central to the reproduction of social powers as a whole" (Eagleton, 2007, p. 29). Further definitions of ideology may narrow the term to mean "ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interest of a ruling group or class by distortion or dissimulation" or that regard "such beliefs as arising not from the interest of a dominant class but from the material structure of society as a whole" (Eagleton, 2007, p. 30). In this study, we will consider aid under these various definitions, in an attempt to determine to which extent aid can be said to be ideological.

Of course, Western countries have different means of channeling aid to developing countries. Typically, one-third of their aid (development and humanitarian assistance) goes through multilateral organizations; the rest consists of different forms of bilateral aid (Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, 2003). A main player among the multilateral organizations, the World Bank, was initially created to deal with European reconstruction after the Second World War, but began a global outreach in the 1950s. Its two development institutions cover a large part of the world; the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) focuses on middle income and creditworthy poor countries, whereas the International Development Association (IDA) targets the poorest countries in the world. IDA is the single largest source of assistance to basic social services in the world's 82 poorest countries, and its grants are currently averaging US $7–9 billion a year, of which about 50% is directed toward Africa.[1] Various national and international targets guide the assistance to Africa. At

[1] World Bank data, see http://go.worldbank.org/55TJCXJ4D0

an international level, the World Bank refers to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to Education for All (EFA).[2] At a national level, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) purportedly offer a comprehensive vision of each individual country's development needs (World Bank, 2002). Regionally, the World Bank's key strategy for Africa is outlined in a 3-year Africa Action Plan. It is currently acknowledged that if current trends continue, poverty in Africa will fall short of the goals set in the MDGs. Therefore, at a 2007 mid-term assessment of the plan, the World Bank refocused its Africa vision, and its Action Plan now specifically targets the following areas:

- Strengthen the African private sector
- Increase the economic empowerment of women
- Build skills for competitiveness in the global economy
- Raise agricultural productivity
- Improve access to and reliability of clean energy
- Expand and upgrade road networks and transit corridors
- Increase access to safe water and sanitation
- Strengthen national health systems and combat malaria and HIV/AIDS[3]

Returning to our definition of ideology as the promotion of a group interest, relevant to the sustaining or challenge of some political form of life, it can be said that the World Bank's agenda may be considered ideological if it aims at the reproduction of the established social structure – or the perpetuation of the material structure of society as a whole. In general, the World Bank's agenda does not seem to encourage the redistribution of wealth, or of a more equitable structure of riches in African countries. Instead, it seems to focus largely on the growth of the economic sector as a whole, although it is claimed that the growth should be "pro-poor."

As noted in the Action Plan, the World Bank aims at strengthening the private sector. It also often promotes market-based solutions for implementation of public services, generally because these private implementation methods are said to be more effective than state implementation of services

[2] The MDGs were adopted by the UN General Assembly's resolution 55/2 of 18 September 2000. Most countries, including the main donor countries, have promised that all efforts are to be made for the realization of EFA and the MDGs by 2015. Whereas EFA is education specific, the MDGs address the development context as a whole and offer international targets in different areas of poverty alleviation – including education. The main EFA goals are therefore integrated into the MDGs.

[3] See interview with John Page, Chief Economist for the Bank's Africa Division, at http://go.worldbank.org/ 97EL6N8070

(Harper, 2000). It seems that the change of social service provision from government to the private sector, whether justified by evidence of better performance or not, is linked to global policy changes, frequently known under the term *globalization*. Policies favoring market solutions to delivery of social services are increasingly employed in most countries. These policies also affect the nature of the state and civil society.

The debate on globalization in many regards parallels the one on privatization. According to a conservative point of view, globalization is equivalent to a market-based driving force that helps improve the worldwide economic system. Some critics take a different stance and argue that globalization, insomuch as it is a pro-market agenda, is an ideological force, or even a deliberate *policy* that needs to be challenged and redirected. The understanding of globalization is therefore widely contested. Most theories of globalization are based on its economic aspects; the cultural aspects are often seen as derivatives from economic and technical changes: "all the other dimensions of globalization – ecology, culture, politics, civil society – [. . .are placed] under the sway of the world market system" (Beck, 2000, p. 9). Globalization is largely understood as the creation of a global market and in its opposition to the term internationalization, which can be used to define relations that are based on separate national entities (Daly & Farley, 2004). The notion of integration of national economies into a global economy suggests that national economies are being disintegrated. Furthering this view, some would say that the global economic system is no longer based on autonomous national economies but on a "consolidated global marketplace for production, distribution and consumption" (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 15). Arguably, globalization as disintegration of national economies into a world economy may lead to significant changes in politics and other areas of national decision making, which would henceforth be dominated by the world market. Globalization in this context may be understood as "the view that the world market eliminates or supplants political action – that is, the ideology of rule by the world market, the ideology of neoliberalism" (Beck, 2000, p. 9).

The role of information and the pace of financial exchange in this system are important. It can be argued that the new economy is so different from anything precedent that in fact it is replacing the very fundaments of the nation-state. Hence, globalization may be understood as the materialization of a different economic system:

> . . . an information or postindustrial economy characterized by the global and instantaneous movement of unprecedented amounts of finance and information-based capital that makes the old nation-state economies, and therefore the nation-state itself, irrelevant (Holst, 2002, p. 52).

The emergence of globalization can be seen in stages from internalization toward increased global integration: the Bretton Woods institutions were created to facilitate international trade and investment after the Second World War; the oil crisis in 1973 made offshore markets expand rapidly; the policies of Reagan and Thatcher further accelerated global market integration, as did the collapse of the Soviet empire in the early 1990s (Soros, 2002).

The interpretation of globalization as a new phenomena driven by significant and qualitative change in market relations can be challenged, since the capitalist system has been based on a world economy from the seventeenth century and onwards (Wallerstein, 1997; Pieterse, 2004). Also, the majority of exchanges and a large part of production are still taking place among Western countries, and there has been no significant change in production modalities. By challenging the idea of significant changes in market relations, the notion of globalization of world markets can be negated on three grounds: first, capitalism has always been global; second, there has been no welfare state compromise between labor and capital, and no qualitative change in the interaction between them; and third, production cannot be moved easily between the North and the South – the majority of production is still carried out in the North (Holst, 2002).

Instead of accepting globalization as a new and global market integration, it can therefore be seen as a way that the state structures and manages the functioning of the market. In light of this view, globalization can be considered as a conservative policy, or "specific politic choices (not inevitabilities) made by those with the power to use the nation-state as an instrument to maintain or enhance profitability" (Holst, 2002, p. 54). According to this reading, globalization is not seen as an inevitable evolution toward a weakened state, but as a deliberate policy choice that aims to accumulate and concentrate political and economic power. This view would argue that globalization leads to changes in the nature of the state, since the state is less a representative organ for its constituency and instead is a strong representative of international corporations:

> . . . in the 1990s, nation-states have been transformed from sovereign subjects into strategic actors, playing their interests, and the interests they are supposed to represent, in a global system of inter-action, in a condition of systematically shared sovereignty. They marshal considerable influence, but they barely hold power by themselves, in isolation from supranational macro-forces and subnational micro-processes (Castells, 1997, p. 307).

One can speak about privatization of the state, since the new modes of governing are blurring the distinction between public and private, between economy and politics, and between legal and illegal (Hibou, 1999). In understanding globalization as a deliberate policy choice, it may be argued that

globalization therefore corresponds less to a weakening of state power than to personal and often undisclosed negotiations and arrangements between members of the political–economic elite (Hibou, 1999). Further, the state is experiencing contradictory pressures from the local and the global. It still needs to have a façade of listening to its constituencies, whereas its policies are in reality dictated by multinational companies (Castells, 1997). Arguably, such policies may undercut the democratic functioning of society (MacEwan, 1999).

From most welfare economics and critical viewpoints, whether one considers globalization as an inevitable evolution of the modern society or as a deliberate policy choice; the winners of globalization are the advantaged, and the losers are the populations as a whole, and especially the poor populations:

> It is clear to almost everyone that something has gone horribly wrong . . . globalization has not succeeded in reducing poverty, neither has it succeeded in ensuring stability . . . the West has driven the globalization agenda, ensuring that it garners a disproportionate share of the benefits, at the expense of the developing world (Stiglitz, 2002, pp. 4–7).

Many welfare and critical views contend that globalization enables governments to carry out a social policy that has corporate growth as its goal, and not welfare (Hertz, 2001). It is argued that in the 1960s and 1970s many countries' policies gradually shifted from the coupling of Keynesianism and internationalization toward neoliberalism and globalization (Korsgaard, 1996). As a result of a shift in local and global policies, responsibilities for implementing social services have increasingly been transferred from the state to businesses and civil society organizations.

Globalization policies have been criticized not only for affecting the delivery and quality of education but also for affecting its substance. It is contended that education has become economy centered, instead of child centered. The Norwegian education researcher Alfred Telhaug analyzed the education systems in a number of countries,

> . . . and identified a common tendency which prevailed during the 1980s. Although Japan, China, Germany, Great Britain, the USA, Russia and the Scandinavian countries are extremely different regarding history, culture and political systems, there is, according to Telhaug, a common tendency to shift from "child-centered" to "economy-centered" motivation. When new school planning is formulated, ideas about social justice and personal development are exchanged for concepts from management discourse such as competition, quality and productivity (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 19).

In order to make education more market oriented, there is also a movement to establish standardized curricula and standardized tests that are calibrated to the new economic needs:

> In educational terms, the quality of national education systems is increasingly being compared internationally. This has placed increased emphasis on math and science curricula, standards, testing, and on meeting the standards by changing the way education is delivered (Carnoy, 2000, p. 44).

Globalization can therefore be said to have an impact both on the delivery processes of education (which are now more market based) and on the content of education (which is now more economy centered). The Freirian model of education as critical dialogue has increasingly been considered as threatening and regressive by education policy-makers (Apple, 2001).

In the 1990s, the World Bank started its support of Senegal's public–private partnerships policies in literacy and offered financing of a Women's Literacy Project[4] in 1995. As noted in the introduction, there are several reasons to select this particular project as a case study. It is one of the first literacy projects that used public–private partnerships to implement services; it is has been documented as one of "the best" of the large literacy projects in Senegal (perhaps because of its relatively high unit cost per enrollee); and it has been diffused as a model by the World Bank in other African countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Niger, and The Gambia. The Senegalese partnership structure is therefore being used as an international reference. The project can also be used as an example of how the World Bank attempts to strengthen the private sector in Senegal and to increase the economic empowerment of women, as outlined in the Africa Action Plan. Our study of the Women's Literacy Project offers an analysis of the day-to-day management and implementation of a project that aimed at developing literacy courses in Senegal and shows how the World Bank's policy supported civil society and literacy provision in the country. It thereby aims at analyzing how globalization and privatization policies influenced service provision in Senegal, and how these changes in turn influenced local people's conception of the state, gender, and civil society.

1.3 West Africa and Senegal

The political map of Africa is largely a colonial construct. Senegal is situated in West Africa and borders Mauritania in the North, Mali in the East, and Guinea and Guinea-Bissau in the South. A small country, The Gambia, is situated inside Senegal, on the Gambia River delta. Senegal counted 11.7 million inhabitants in 2005 (UNESCO, 2008). The Jolof Empire in the sixteenth century, stretching out between the rivers of the Gambia and the

[4] *Projet d'Alphabétisation Priorité Femme*: Women's Literacy Project.

Senegal, represented a more coherent ethnic and geographic entity than the present political divisions. Gradually, the Jolof Empire disintegrated into smaller entities. Inter-ethnic distrust contributed further partition when the slave traders began using prior ethnic distinctions as a tool for the trade.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the French did not have a strong presence in Senegal (the slave trade was mainly set up from Gorée Island outside Dakar). Their politics changed in 1850, when the expansion toward the interior began during the "the scramble for Africa," which ended by the turn of the century (Pakenham, 1991). Dakar was made the capital of French West Africa (*Afrique Occidentale Française*, or AOF) in the beginning of the twentieth century. The French domination lasted until 1960, when the Senegalese parliament proclaimed the country's independence (Manning, 1998).

The Senegalese population is concentrated in and around the capital city Dakar (25% of the population) and in the center region (35% of the population). The east is less populated. Overall, the urban population represents 41% of the total population; Senegal is thus fairly urbanized as compared to other African countries. Over 90% of the population is Muslim; less than 5% is Christian. It is a fairly young population; 58% is less than 20 years old, and the population growth is estimated at 2.8%. Senegal's population predominantly belongs to Black African ethnic groups; nearly half of the population belongs to the Wolof, and the three ethnic groups of Wolof, Pulaar, and Sereer comprise about 82% of the population. The less represented ethnic groups are Joola and Manding, which represent about 10% of the population; whereas other smaller groups represent 8% of the population (Diouf, 1994). The impact of the Wolof culture is important; linguists have estimated that about 80% of the Senegalese population speak Wolof as their first or second language (Diop, 1996).

Senegal is administratively divided into 11 regions, each of which is subdivided into three departments. The departments are subdivided into districts (*arondissements*), which are again subdivided into rural communities, each of which includes a certain number of villages. The regions and departments have important roles in education and literacy management. At the regional level, the Chief Education Office employs one civil servant in charge of literacy.[5] In addition to the regional chief education office (which is a permanent administrative structure), there is also an elected body of advisers in

[5] In Senegal, literacy (*alphabétisation*) is understood as a non-formal education activity; hence, the civil servant in charge of literacy is not concerned with literacy as related to primary education, but only to non-formal literacy classes.

education, the Regional Education Council Board. At the department level, the Education Office employs one civil servant in charge of literacy.

At the village level, the head of the village (*chef du village*) is the traditional leader of the community although his role is more based on traditional prestige than on administrative duties. A community development committee and various other committees (such as youth and women's associations) complement the village structure. Most women belong to a community women association. In many villages, there are also one or several women's for-profit associations, called "economic interest groups" or GIEs (*Groupement d'Intérêt Economique*). These GIEs often have legal registration documents and associate women that are involved in the same economic activity, such as the production of peanut oil or production and sale of vegetables:

> *The associations . . . include all the village women from 50 to 15 years. They're working women. A few village women do not participate, sometimes they are very poor, or sometimes they have a very jealous husband. . . Some husbands are also very naive and think that their wives will be too intellectual if they attend the association's meetings (Private provider staff).*

One reason for women's participation in associations and groups (including financial networks) is to obtain some economic independence from their husband. This is particularly important because the Senegalese society accepts polygamy, and the women in the household may be in competition for obtaining the husband's attention and for funds for food to feed their children. In such cases, women's affiliation with local financial networks and associations has both a financial and a social role (Abdoulay Kane, 2001).

1.4 A World Bank School System?

The first colonial school was established in Saint Louis in 1817 by Jean Dard, a French teacher who tried to set up an African education system built on the Wolof language. Dard believed that the children should learn to read and write in their local language (Wolof) and then learn French by translation. To establish his method, Dard learnt Wolof and transcribed it using Latin letters. He also established a dictionary and grammar (Printz, 1996). However, due to health reasons, Dard had to return to France and his attempt to set up a genuine African schooling system failed. The project of making a local school system was abandoned. Instead, schools used French as the learning language, and literacy education in local languages was almost non-existent. During most of the nineteenth century, religious groups, particularly Catholic

missionaries, managed the school system in Senegal. At the end of the century, the French government gradually took over the school system; by 1900, 85% of the school population was enrolled in public schools (White, 1996). Educational opportunities were limited: in 1900, only 70 schools had been established in French West Africa.[6] The schools aimed at educating a number of Africans to be employed as lower-level civil servants to help in the administration of the colony. For this reason, the formal school system with its objective to train civil servants was often considered as something foreign by the local population (Sylla, 1993). The colonial perception of education has continued to this day and is enforced by a curriculum that remains highly theoretical and offers little relevant learning for rural people's improved livelihoods. In many ways, it still seems to be designed to train civil servants.

After independence in 1960, Senegal had a very low literacy rate. The education reforms of 1971 and 1981 aimed at moving Senegalese education from a colony-inspired system toward a genuine national education system, and at the same time to boost enrollment and achievement. However, the public school system faced several problems, particularly in terms of its planning of education expansion. The government relied on day-to-day planning, without having any systematic approach to eradicate illiteracy:

> It does seem as if, faced with a truly endless array of problems, the public authorities decided back in 1988 to give up the idea of forward planning. To all intents and purposes they adopted a new credo: to let problems come as they may, and to cope with or adjust to them as far as momentarily possible, one day at a time (Sylla, 1993, p. 371).

In absence of planning, and as a result of flawed implementation, global donors, and particularly the World Bank, became very influential in Senegal. Some teachers were less than enchanted with the foreign influence, and even suggested to re-baptize the national education system as "The World Bank School System:"

> The World Bank has taken over the bulk of funding for educational projects. Confronted with a staggering array of urgent problems while World Bank intervention increases steadily, the State stands open to suspicions that as far as the educational system is concerned, it has abdicated its sovereign responsibilities, and given up the planned management of educational investments and programmes. Some teachers, accusing the state of dereliction of duty, have taken to quipping that henceforth the system should be called the World Bank School System (Sylla, 1993, p. 370).

[6] French West Africa was originally a union created in 1895 comprising Senegal, French Sudan, French Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire.

Planning and achievement problems continue to this day, both for primary and for non-formal literacy education:

> *All is managed on a day-to-day basis; there is no overview of what is going to happen tomorrow. The civil servants have no idea what they are supposed to do the next day... (Former civil servant).*

Currently, only about half of the Senegalese population attends school and is by government standards considered as literate. However, a large number of pupils attend too few years of schooling to be functionally literate. The literacy rate, showing a significant gender gap, grew from 27% (37% male and 18% female) in 1985–1994 to 39% (51% male and 29% female) in 1995–2004 (UNESCO, 2008). It is projected to grow to 47% by 2015 (57% male and 39% female). These statistics situate the literacy rate in Senegal among the lowest in the world.

To correct the gender disparities, the government attempted at several occasions to set up literacy programs that are specifically targeted at women. In 1968, a law officially recognized the existence and use of local languages; most literacy courses subsequently used them as the language of instruction (Printz, 1996). In the period between 1968 and 1986, supervision, coordination, and management responsibilities for the literacy sector fluctuated between government institutions. The main task of the public sector was to coordinate different NGO programs in the field. In 1986, the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) was created to establish strategies to eliminate illiteracy, to train literacy teachers, to control and coordinate all literacy actions in Senegal, to promote local languages, to publish and distribute literacy materials, and generally, to provide the basic skills education that was deemed necessary for people to participate in the development process of the country (Printz, 1996). Various literacy programs were implemented in the 1970s–1990s, mainly by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The scale of these interventions was limited, and the impact was therefore low (Diouf & Nachtman, 2001).

Then, in the 1990s, a new implementation strategy was tested out, based on public–private partnerships in which civil society associations were subcontracted to deliver services. The selected provider associations were financed by various international agencies. The Women's Literacy Project, covering half of Senegal, was financed through an International Development Association (IDA) loan of US $12.6 million (1996). The Canadian International Development Association (CIDA) financed another program, "Action Plan Support Project,"[7] which covered the other half of the country,

[7] *Projet d'Appui au Plan d'Action* (PAPA).

using similar partnership approaches for implementation. The partnership approach went under the name *faire–faire* (to make do), indicating that the state "made" the private sector "do" something:

> *Faire-faire is a modality of partnership between the state and civil society to implement literacy, in which the state is in charge of resource mobilization. The state then entrusts civil society at grassroots level with funds. In addition to resource mobilization, the state is in charge of follow-up and evaluation. . . . The civil society has prior experience from the field and is in charge of implementing the subprojects in coordination with the beneficiaries identified at grassroots' level (Former civil servant).*

The approach was set up during a policy colloquium in Kolda in 1993, which had as its objective to define a 10-year policy framework for literacy in Senegal. Representatives from civil society and several donor groups, including the World Bank, were present at Kolda and would later support this strategy. The World-Bank-financed Women's Literacy Project aimed to strengthen existing civil society organizations and also to stimulate the growth of new associations for the provision of literacy courses. At the local level, the literacy courses were designed to teach literacy and also to build local capacity to manage women's associations.

During a period of 5 years, through this particular project, about 200,000 people were enrolled in local-language literacy courses. These courses were managed through the set-up of over 300 small provider projects (henceforth called "subprojects" to distinguish them from the Women's Literacy Project). In 2003, the Senegalese government estimated that over a million women had participated in such local-language literacy courses (financed by the World Bank, other donors, and the Senegalese government). This form of social service delivery may therefore have had a great impact on poverty alleviation, the strengthening of the local private sector, and the economic empowerment of women.

1.5 A Case Study: The Women's Literacy Project

The Senegalese Women's Literacy Project can be used as a case study to show how globalization, development theories, and theories of the new roles of civil society are interconnected and interdependent, and how they influence local literacy and gender policies. During my involvement with the World Bank, I noticed how the implementation of conservative economic aid policies, particularly through structural adjustment programs, has led to new institutional arrangements and a new discourse of aid in which the private sector and civil society are seen as preferable for implementation of

social services instead of the state, which is often perceived as inefficient and corrupt. By analyzing the Women's Literacy Project, as well as World Bank, government and local discourses, I examine the following issues:

- How do the various discourses construct the roles of the World Bank, government institutions, and civil society organizations?
- What are the economic and political rationales for making use of partnerships to deliver social services? To which extent can the discourse be said to be *ideological*?
- What design and implementation strengths and weaknesses may be encountered in using partnership approaches?
- What are the outcomes and impact of outsourced literacy education services?

I examine these questions through investigation of documents and quantitative data related to the Senegalese Women's Literacy Project, as well as data collected during my fieldwork in Senegal and other African countries. The research is constructed as a case study, which can be conceived as the study of a bounded system; hence, it can be described as a "thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. I can 'fence in' what I am going to study" (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). The research on Women's Literacy Project is both a study of a policy (of outsourcing and partnerships) and the application of the policy (the Women's Literacy Project). As a historic focus, the research concentrates on the period starting in September 1993 with a colloquium the city of Kolda in Senegal, which defined a 10-year literacy plan for Senegal (from 1993 to 2003). In September 2003, 10 years after Kolda, a new colloquium took place, this time in Thies, which is one of the political power centers of Senegal. The second colloquium had as its objective to define the new policy orientations for literacy in the country for the period 2003–2012. Hence, the case study uses the 10-year period between 1993 and 2003 as its chronological boundaries. As geographical borders, the public–private partnership policy was applied nationwide, but the Women's Literacy Project was geographically limited to five provinces in Senegal.[8] The actors in the case belong to four main categories, including international agents (especially World Bank staff), Senegalese institutions (especially the Ministry of Education's Department for Literacy and Basic Education), parastatal organizations such as the contract-managing agency (AGETIP), and civil society. This latter

[8] Dakar, Diourbel, Fatick, Kolda, and Louga.

category includes the provider organizations and the literacy course participants, organized for the most part in local grassroots associations. The case now has boundaries, in the form of a limited time horizon, a limited number of actors, operating in a limited geographical zone. The end limit (2003) is more arbitrary than the beginning limit (1993), since World Bank financing for literacy still continues under another program, using largely the same implementation modalities and covering the same geographic zones.

A combination of methods has been used to explore the case, including analysis of interviews conducted in Senegal, as well as the examination of project documentation and survey data. The survey data include statistics from two longitudinal studies (the Department for Literacy and Basic Education's *Etude Longitudinale* and *Etude d'Impact*). I made a number of field visits to Senegal for the World Bank in the period covering 2000–2007 to follow up on the project, and independent research work was conducted in 2004 and in 2007. Since the fieldwork focused mainly on only one aspect of the participant's lives, i.e., their interaction with the literacy project and the outcomes thereof; a compressed ethnographic research design was used,[9] using individual and group interviews with learners and key informants.[10] Many of the interviews were constructed as small stories about the participants and subsequent analysis used accounts of single individuals to develop a picture of the issues that are being investigated. The research thereby strives to give the project stakeholders a voice, and the use of quotations from the interviews is the preferred method used throughout the study.

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[9] A compressed ethnographic study is a modified ethnography that accommodates to shortened time lines and multiple sites; it requires that the researcher is already familiar with the field setting (LeCompte, 1999, vol. 1).

[10] In all, 52 interviews were conducted, transcribed, and coded. The interviewees as well as focus groups and classroom participants can be divided into the following three broad categories: civil servants, consultants and staff of provider associations, and learners.

Chapter 2
Conservative Economic Policies

If we trace the history of the project, we have to begin with the Kolda colloquium in 1993, in which all actors in the field were represented: government agents, technical and financial partners, the communities, the providers; all the segments of the society were present at Kolda. The colloquium defined a policy and an action plan over 10 years, from 1993 to 2002 . . . It had as objective to reduce the illiteracy rate with 5% per year. A priority was accorded to women, because we needed to correct disparities between gender and between rural and urban areas. . . . At that point the Women's Literacy Project and projects financed by the Germans . . . were created. The Women's Literacy Project had as its aim to experiment with a new strategy of implementation that was called faire-faire. . . . The goal of the strategy of faire-faire – for the first time in Senegal – was to work with civil society. The government made public funds available for civil society to implement courses at grassroots level (Civil servant).

Some time after the drafting of a policy and action document [at the Kolda colloquium], the Minister received a delegation from the World Bank that was exploring literacy and vocational training. This delegation was particularly interested in the fact that priority was accorded to women. . . . The question of transparency in the implementation process was important, both for the Minister and for the Bank. Finally, the involvement of civil society was important; but it was at first not known how this should be done, and which mechanism should be used (Former civil servant).

The local discourse related to the setup of public–private partnership structures is mostly positive, and highly internationalized in the sense that it is indirectly referring to the Millennium Development and Education For All goals as well as to development buzzwords such as "correct disparities" and "transparency." The practices of implementation are based on a largely consensual agreement; there seem to be little dissent to the *faire–faire* policy: "all the segments of the society were present at Kolda." The objectives of policy and implementation strategies are to "make public funds available for civil society" to "reduce the illiteracy rate" and "correct disparities." Distinct economic, gender, and education discourses, said to represent "all segments of society," thus make a case for a literacy approach. During my work in Senegal, Kolda was always refereed to as something almost mythical, as a

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period of consensus and action, a reference point – the birth of partnerships (*le partenariat*). The vocabulary used for the development of public–private partnerships is never aligned to a discourse of privatization, but always to a discourse of "partnerships" and *faire–faire* (to make do).

To better understand the Kolda decisions, it is necessary to briefly review the debates between economic streams, in particular conservative views and welfare economics approaches. I use the latter to define liberal and socially oriented theories (which have inspired "Third-Way" welfare theories, especially in the Tony Blair administration). The conservative (also called neoliberal) approaches include various schools of thought that usually advocate for market-based solutions and a minimization of government services. Both welfare and neoliberal views generally aim at the preservation and reproduction of the existing social hierarchy and would not find it necessary to radically change power relationships in society. A third set of theories explored in this chapter is labeled critical views, which question gender, ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic power imbalances.

2.1 A Conservative Discourse

> As Hayek once pointed out, "social is a weasel word..." (Thatcher, 2002, p. 432).

The development discourse of the World Bank and other donors is largely related to cost-effectiveness, and thus implementation practice. The underlying definition of the term development in itself is less explored in projects, programs, and policies, maybe because it is believed clarified by the Millennium Development Goals. Hence, the question is not, "what for? – where to? – and what then?," but rather "how to?"

Both Thatcher and Reagan's policies were inspired by Hayek's theories on individual liberty and the restriction of government, which, at the left, became widely known as neoliberalism or market fundamentalism. The right-wing push in the United Kingdom and in the United States also moved the international agencies (including the World Bank and IMF) toward a more conservative agenda. These agencies would, in the post-Reagan area, often consider the governments in developing countries as obstacles for economic growth and promote policies aimed at liberalizing markets and reducing the scope of the public sector: "[U.S. Treasury] pushed market fundamentalism on the rest of the world, both directly and through the IMF" (Stiglitz, 2003, p. 229).

In the development context, a version of the conservative agenda became known as the "Washington Consensus," a term first used in 1989 by a World Bank economist, John Willhelmson in an attempt to,

> . . . distill which of the policy initiatives that had emanated from Washington during the years of conservative ideology that had won inclusion in the intellectual mainstream rather than being cast aside once Ronald Reagan was no longer on the public scene (Willhelmson, 2000, p. 254).

The Washington Consensus is largely based on the standard market model (Todaro and Smith, 2003) and holds that the growth of the economy helps reduce poverty. With other words, development should focus on the liberalization and "improvement" of the economy as a whole. The Washington Consensus promoted economic growth through a series of deregulation and privatization activities. It can be summarized in ten points, including fiscal discipline; financial liberalization; tax reform – including cutting marginal taxes; unified and competitive exchange rates; secure propriety rights; deregulation; trade liberalization; privatization; elimination of barriers to direct foreign investment; and redirection of public expenditure toward health, education, and infrastructure (Todaro and Smith, 2003). In this model, privatization of social services is considered as an effective way of improving delivery. In general, the Washington Consensus had, as a fundamental idea, that unhindered market exchanges would be the driving force of economic growth:

> It involved minimizing the role of government, through privatizing state-owned enterprises and eliminating government regulations and interventions in the economy. Government had a responsibility for macrostability, but that meant getting the inflation rate down, not getting the unemployment rate down (Stiglitz, 2003, p. 230).

Although public expenditure to some extent was redirected to health, education, and infrastructure, the funds available were in most cases insufficient to continue a needed development of health care and education (Stromquist, 1999; Stromquist and Monkman, 2000). These sectors may have suffered from the implementation of the Washington Consensus. The policies used, among other instruments, structural adjustment programs (SAPs), and structural adjustment loans (SALs), to impose certain pro-market conditions on the borrowing countries. Hence, the loans were

> . . . designed to foster structural adjustment in the LDCs [least developed countries] by supporting measures to remove excessive governmental controls, getting factor and product prices to reflect scarcity values, and promoting market competition (Todaro and Smith, 2003, p. 810).

The SAPs intended to bring about a recession, arguably a necessary first step to bring economic stability and then economic growth (MacEwan, 1999). In the 1980s, the SAPs were severely criticized from many institutions, including International Agencies. UNICEF, for example, proposed a "SAP with a human face." The criticism was partially endorsed within the IMF and the World Bank, and milder versions of the SAPs were proposed (Stiglitz, 2003).

The Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile, in April 1998 recognized the existence of market failure and the need for government intervention in certain sectors (the outcome of this conference is called the "Santiago Consensus," or the "Post-Washington Consensus"). The main points in the Santiago Consensus were only superficially different from the Washington Consensus and included the following ideas:

> 1. Development must be market-based, but there are large market failures that cannot be ignored. 2. Government should not be in the business of direct production, as a general rule. 3. But, there is a broad, eclectic role for government in . . . public health [,] education and training (Todaro and Smith, 2003, p. 704).

The lending instruments to implement the new policies are known under the name of poverty reduction strategies, which should be coordinated within a Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF). The development frameworks are conceptualized in country-specific Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and backed financially by Poverty Reduction Strategy Credits (PRSCs). Hence, "the PRSP is an operational vehicle – which can be a specific output of processes based on CDF principles – that is intended to translate a country's poverty reduction strategy into a focused and time-bounded action plan" (Wolfensohn and Fisher, 2000). The PRSPs aim to reorganize development assistance by improving donor coordination and by reducing the fragmentation of donor efforts. This, it is argued, would lead toward broader government-formulated policy frameworks and implementation mechanisms. The World-Bank-sponsored Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for Senegal is a clearly formulated example of how World Bank conceive the relations between poverty, development, and economic growth:

> Different statistical studies point to a very strong relationship between the national per capita income and the poverty indicators, whether monetary or non-monetary. A recent (2000) World Bank study covering 80 countries has moreover shown that on average the incomes of the poorest 20 percent of the populations have increased at the same rate as that of the economy as a whole. In Senegal, the analyses made of the determinants of poverty clearly demonstrate the importance of the "insufficient income" factor and amply justify promotion of wealth creation in a sound and stable macroeconomic framework being considered the primary pillar of the [poverty reduction] strategy, with the aim of favoring the emergence and strengthening of productive employment for the poor (World Bank, 2002, p. 22).

Again, we notice how unproblematic the term development seems, insomuch as "wealth creation," or money, is considered "a pillar" of poverty reduction – and thus development. In many aspects, the new consensus and the new instruments for policy implementation are only other versions of the Washington Consensus and the SAP policies, since they rarely question

underlying meanings of development, and they still promote market-based solutions and at the same time use the basic model of economic growth as a condition for development. Both consensuses are based on the belief that privatization and public–private partnerships are more effective than the government. Hence, the private sector needs to do what it is believed that the state cannot do effectively. This has been criticized as a mere continuation of former conservative policies:

> What the Bank and the Fund continue to advocate is more openness to trade and foreign investment; less protection of domestic industry; laws that encourage "flexible" labor markets (i.e., weaken unions and employment safeguards); more emphasis on exports; macroeconomic stability; no new taxes; and small government through privatization, greater efficiency, and contained social sector budgets, but with some attention to protecting the poor–i.e., SAPs with a human face (Klees, 2001).

State ownership and public delivery of services, it is often argued by conservative theorists, can seldom be efficient for a number of reasons. Proponents of public choice theory claim that many politicians direct services toward their supporters and that it is therefore rare that services reach the disadvantaged population strata (because these strata do not typically have any political influence). Also, many economists argue that government services are corrupt and that privatization, outsourcing, and partnerships may have an effect of bypassing corrupt civil servants (Harper, 2000). However, the effects of corruption on service provision are ambiguous, since a corrupt government may not only be less able to effectively run publicly delivered services but may also be less able to privatize or contract and regulate the private sector in the public interest. The pro-privatization argument states that the prevalence of corruption strengthens the case for private ownership, since it is easier to fight corruption in private companies and NGOs than to fight corruption inside state firms and agencies. Also, once an activity is privatized or outsourced, it is argued that the government control over it weakens, and so do the possibilities for corruption (Schleifer, 1998). Further, a number of arguments strive to prove that private provision is more effective than state provision, because it is based on competition between providers. The providers can be held accountable for their actions, while it is difficult to hold the government accountable for its own actions.

Usually, privatization was done through "the act of transferring publicly owned property rights to private owners" (Kasper and Streit, 1998, p. 303). However, privatization took other forms when a large part of the prior state functions had been privatized, and there was still a growing discontent with the effects of Washington Consensus policies and the SAPs (Stiglitz, 2003; IMF, 2004). In view of the "Santiago Consensus", governments and funding

agencies, especially the World Bank and IMF, have been gradually turning to public contracting of private providers to carry out projects and services. Privatization policies are now increasingly being implemented through the setup of public–private partnerships (PPPs):

> ... by the late 1990s privatization was losing much of its earlier momentum ... It was at this time that PPPs began to emerge significantly ... as an alternative where there had been obstacles to privatization. After a modest start, a wave of PPPs is now beginning to sweep the world (IMF, 2004, p. 4).

Outsourcing and partnership methods can be understood as methods of privatization that are built on cooperation between the public and the private sectors. The private sector includes, in most definitions, both businesses and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), these latter being part of what is commonly called civil society. Public–private partnership in education is described by the International Finance Corporation as a

> ... partnership between the public and private sector for the purpose of delivering a project or a service ... PPPs come in a variety of different legal or contractual forms, but at the heart of every successful project is the concept that better value for money can be achieved through the exploitation of private sector competencies and the allocation of risk to the party best able to manage it (Edinvest, non-dated).

There is no standard definition for the legal framework of a public–private partnership. According to the IMF, the difference between partnership and outsourcing is that in partnerships, the private sector designs the project or service type (instead of implementing a government-designed project or service) and shares some of the risk. Hence, in a typical partnership, the government specifies and provides funding for the services it wants the private sector to deliver, and then,

> ... the private partner designs and builds a dedicated asset for that purpose, finances its construction, and subsequently operates the asset and provides the services deriving from it. This contrasts with traditional public investment where the government contracts with the private sector to build an asset but the design and financing is provided by the government (IMF, 2004, p. 7).

The risks taken by the private sector in Senegal include the research and design of a proposal that may not necessarily be funded, and may also, at least theoretically, be related to the results of the subproject: if the results are poor, the provider may be asked to bear a larger part of the costs of the unsatisfactory project. The risk taken by the "consumer" (i.e., in Senegal; the literacy participant) is rarely discussed, since it is argued that the consumer can vote with his or her feet and not buy into the service offered. In this conjuncture, education is not seen as a human right; it is rather considered as a product or merchandise:

> *...we speak about "clients" because when we speak about clients, we indicate a possibility of [their] choice and search for quality in the provision. A client does not buy just anything [n'importe quoi] but knows what he or she wants. When it does not fit the client's needs, he or she can say "stop"! (Civil servant).*

According to their proponents, public–private partnerships are employed for three main reasons. First, the government wishes to concentrate on certain key sectors and uses private providers for other sectors where the private sector has a comparative advantage and where risk can be shared. Second, in a number of countries public social services are inefficient and run-down due to lack of human and material resources, and therefore it is believed that instead of re-equipping government services, private providers can make possible a more effective implementation. Finally, many donors view private provider-implemented programs as less corrupt than traditional public delivery (Harper, 2000). In all three cases, according to a pro-partnership view, the use of private providers to implement services aims to improve cost-effectiveness without sacrificing equity. The stated objective is that through partnership programs, one will achieve a quicker pace of implementation, higher disbursement rates, and larger impact than traditional, government-executed programs. It is often underscored that one key solution to avoid corruption problems and cost-cutting practices in partnership programs is to make providers accountable toward clients (or receivers of services). Typically, government providers are accountable toward policy-making institutions (e.g., teachers are accountable toward local or central education offices). This is what the World Bank's Development Report (WDR) for 2004 calls the "long route of accountability." The report argues that in state-implemented services, information about flawed implementation needs to reach the government, and then the government needs to channel the information to the provider agency. In many cases, any negative sanctions will be taken too late to have any corrective influence on the service delivery, and in most cases, such correction will be difficult to implement, since the implementing institution is the same as the policy-making and control institution. This is why the 2004 WDR suggests using a "short route of accountability" in which the provider is directly accountable to the recipients of services:

> For the services considered here – such as health, education, water, electricity, and sanitation – there is no direct accountability of the provider to the consumer. Why not? For various good reasons, society has decided that the service will be provided not through a market transaction but through the government taking responsibility...That is, through the "long route" of accountability – by clients as citizens influencing policymakers, and policymakers influencing providers. When the relationships along this long route break down, service delivery fails (absentee teachers, leaking water pipes) and human development outcomes are

> poor . . . Given the weaknesses in the long route of accountability, service outcomes improved by strengthening the short route – by increasing the client's power over providers (World Bank, 2003, p. 6).

The World Development Report further cites voucher schemes, public–private partnerships, and other privatization means as examples of the short route of accountability. Even strong advocates for partnerships, however, agree that their use in an attempt to reduce costs and enhance efficiency may lead to flawed results. For example, schools might substitute short teacher-training workshops for more expensive teacher-training courses. In such situations, cost-cutting incentives may lead to inefficient outcomes: "ironically, the government sometimes becomes the efficient producer precisely because its employees are not motivated to find ways of holding costs down" (Schleifer, 1998, p. 11). According to the pro-privatization model, under-provision of quality can be addressed through making it possible for consumers to switch suppliers; reputation-building among providers; and where competition is weak, consumer choice is ineffective, and where reputational mechanisms are also weak, one can make use of non-profit organizations as providers. Some theorists hold that the use of non-profit organizations as providers has the advantage that their surplus in most cases is used to improve lives of the organization's employees, and even to increase quality of delivery when the organization is socially motivated (Schleifer, 1998).

In neoclassical economic theories, the validity of these aims is relative to the accuracy of assumptions regarding the ease of seller access to the market and the ready and inexpensive availability of relevant contract information:

> The first assumption speaks directly to the existence of sustainable competition, and the second pertains to the ability to obtain low-cost and effective contract enforcement. To the extent that these conditions hold, contracting in a market-oriented society can typically be expected to be more efficient and more effective than the work done by public employees (Sclar, 2001, p. 9).

For most public–private partnerships, the second assumption of access to information seems to be the most difficult to implement. Asymmetric information problems, in which the government does not know how the providers perform, have in many cases made it necessary to set up costly (and often flawed) monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure contract compliance, or have resulted in ineffective and unregulated service implementation. The question of delivery of services, and in particular of the effective avoidance of government bottlenecks and corruption, has in many cases dominated the debate and to a certain extent pushed the discussion of the services themselves, to a second rank.

A large part of the development discourse, then, is focused on the effective delivery of a pre-defined package of services. These services are often defined by, or related to the Millennium Development Goals. Underlying tensions, power relationships, questions of justice and rights, and problems of the reproduction of social stratification are less debated than the effective implementation of a project. Effective implementation in many cases seems to be the most important criteria of successful development help. It seems as if development specialists are living in zones of in-betweenness; they are on the way to the field or back from the field, and rarely have time to consider fundamental questions of "what for," hence the use of abstractions and generalizations in the discourse. For example, project "ownership," of course, should belong to "the community." The community is something abstract, not decomposed, not analyzed, and its dynamics are rarely understood. When we now return to our case, we will see a concrete example of how a policy and a project focus on the "how," rather than the "what for," and "what then."

2.2 Creation of a Policy

The year of the creation of large-scale literacy projects in Senegal – 1993 – immediately brings to mind questions: first, was the creation of literacy in Senegal pushed by an international agenda, more specifically, by the Education For All conference in Jomtien in 1990? Second, why was a public–private partnership approach used? Was it related to the conservative turn taken by international agencies in the 1990s? Third, how did the World Bank come into the picture? Did the World Bank push the Senegalese government to privatize the sector by adopting a public–private partnership approach? The following pages will attempt to look into these questions.

Investigation of different materials (reports, interviews, historic records) provides relatively analogous responses to the questions: the literacy sector in Senegal *was partly* developed in response to an international agenda (possibly for something as mundane as to prevent politicians from losing face in an international forum). Second, the use of the private sector for implementation was also partly stimulated by international policy streams, but more importantly, corresponded to a former mode of operation of the sector. With other words, the sector was not privatized, but rather, remained private when the government, pushed by Jomtien and the EFA discourse, took an interest in literacy. Finally, the World Bank played a role, but not in forcing the sector to adopt specific policies, but rather as a sideline player, encouraging and helping what it considered as "healthy" policies and projects to emerge. In

evolutionary terms, it may be useful to speak about the survival of the project and policy that fit the World Bank.

For the examination of the partnership policy, it is useful to distinguish three phases of literacy delivery in Senegal:

- 1960–1993: Independence of Senegal to the literacy policy colloquium in Kolda
- 1993–1995: Policy colloquium in Kolda and construction of tools for mass-literacy projects based on public–private partnerships
- 1995 till present: Implementation of the main literacy projects

The colloquium in Kolda in October 1993 marked in many ways the beginning of a literacy policy in Senegal. Before that, literacy programs were implemented by businesses and civil society organizations and did not receive much attention from the state's side. In the 1970s and 1980s, some small-scale civil society associations and NGO projects, as well as some larger enterprises, such as the National Association for the Development of Textiles (SODEFITEX), were involved in literacy education. The small-scale civil society associations mainly provided literacy courses in local languages for cultural, religious, and altruism reasons. The larger enterprises needed literate workers and therefore organized literacy classes for their own staff members. As opposed to many other countries, Senegal had few literacy programs or campaigns in the 1960s and 1970s. Pape M. Gueye a former director of the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) traces the evolution of literacy programs in Senegal in the following terms:

> Literacy programs in Senegal go back to the colonial period and were continued in an improvised and disorganized manner up until 1970. It is not until 1971, with the creation of the Department of Literacy, that they began to be systematized. [...] But only recently, at the beginning of the 90s, their development was given a jolt, after the World Conference at Jomtien, with the creation of a Ministry in charge of Literacy and Promotion of National Languages (Gueye, 1999, p. 51).

The institutional history of literacy education in Senegal began in 1971, when a Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) was created and attached to the Ministry of Youth. Literacy became a service of the Ministry of Education only in 1985–1986, but did not receive much attention before it obtained international donors' funding in the 1990s. Civil servants underline the importance of civil society associations (and especially of language associations) in the implementation of literacy courses before the 1990s. The concept of civil society in this context principally consisted of language and culture associations, promoting certain local languages, such as Wolof, Pulaar, or Joola. These associations, and the lessons in local languages, were seen as a reaction to the dominance of French in primary schools. Also, some international NGOs and development societies set up literacy classes. A civil

servant described the preeminence of civil society in implementing literacy in the following terms:

> *Literacy has traditionally been an important issue for civil society; we have language associations, association for the defense of Pulaar, organizations for the renaissance of the Joola culture, or the Manding culture, Soninke associations . . . these associations were the pioneers that established the base of our literacy programs. All by themselves, they began providing literacy. The Senegalese state took up their work in 1971 and 1972 when a Department of Literacy was created. These associations were the first to provide literacy classes, because local languages were at that point a cultural issue, related to [in confrontation with] French. Afterwards, NGOs that had the possibility to obtain external or state financing, became interested in literacy and in local languages (Civil servant).*

Before the 1990s, the state's encouragement to civil society to conduct literacy classes was reduced to acknowledging the existence of courses. Overall, the government's interest in the sector was low, and little public funding was available. A former civil servant stated that the DAEB was not very involved in literacy issues:

> *. . . The DAEB had no policy, no financing, . . . there was nothing (Former civil servant).*

In 1990, the government became preoccupied with the low literacy rate of the population, which was seen as an obstacle to development. The impulse to make literacy a priority was closely linked to the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien. The policy orientations of the government were based on several key events:

> The literacy policy of the government was registered within the framework of the conclusions of the General States of Education and of Formation (GSEF), of the recommendations of the National Conference of Educational Reform and of the Formation (NCERF), of the World Conference on Basic Education for All of Jomtien, of the law of Orientation Number 91-22 of February 16, 1991, and of the conclusions of the Colloquium of Kolda, of September 1993 (Gueye, 1999, p. 51).

In 1990, a delegated minister position was created to deal with illiteracy. The system of creating a delegate minister post was a means for the government to deal with specific issues or problems that the country faced. A census in 1988 (finding that 69% of the Senegalese population was illiterate) and Jomtien in 1990 compelled different national institutions to identify illiteracy as a problem. To deal with it, the delegate minister obtained funding for a project called "1000 classes." The project was the first large literacy initiative of the Senegalese state. Since literacy in Senegal already was the prerogative of civil society associations, the project built on a strategy of cooperation between the state and civil society. The project was not backed by any specific policy and it lacked procedures that regulated its functioning

(e.g., its selection and financing methods were not clearly defined) and was therefore vulnerable to embezzlement and to the promotion of a (personal) political agenda of government authorities, both at the central and at the local levels. One interviewee stated,

> *I encountered the program 1000 classes at Ziguinchor. It didn't work; it didn't work at all! (Former civil servant).*

Civil servants and local stakeholders are generally negative about the 1000-classes project, which they describe as "inefficient." No comprehensive written evaluation was made about the outcomes of the project. The model, arguably because it was not based on proper partnership mechanisms (and thus led to embezzlement), was quickly abandoned. A second public attempt to set up literacy courses succeeded the first, in which the *faire–faire* or partnership model was abandoned in favor of a more direct state intervention. This time, the authorities recruited the literacy teachers directly, without using civil society associations as intermediaries.

In 1993, a new political party came to power in Senegal. The new government appointed an enthusiastic leader of a civil society association, Mamadou Ndoye, as a delegate minister of literacy. Most civil servants and provider association staff members underline the political importance of this appointment:

> *... there was political will led by a minister who was a visionary, but also one with field experience. When Mamadou [Ndoye] was appointed, he was supported by the President of the Republic, who had a vision for the sector (Former civil servant).*

One of the first actions of Mamadou Ndoye was to convene a colloquium, which took place in Kolda and therefore got the name "the Colloquium in Kolda." This colloquium is constantly referred to in literacy-related discourse in Senegal. Written policy information almost always makes reference to Kolda as a starting point for the Senegalese partnership approach. All future partners of the big literacy projects, including the World Bank and other donors, were present at Kolda. The colloquium made it possible to define the partnership approach, which has been used as a strategy for implementation of literacy since 1993.

Instead of the government's direct intervention in the recruitment and training of literacy teachers, the policy was building on an idea that had appeared in the first phase of the 1000-classes project, when the state financed civil society to conduct literacy classes. The goal of the partnership approach as it emerged in Kolda was both qualitative and quantitative: the resulting policy documents stated that Senegal's literacy projects needed to

improve their quality, and at the same time that the civil society organizations needed to develop their capacity of enrolling more learners. The central orientations of the government's literacy policy included the correction of gender and geographic disparities, using a faire–faire strategy (Gueye, 1999). The policy was thus centered on the core role of civil society and was defined in the following terms by a former director of the government's Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB):

> *The partnership in literacy is a relationship of different actors, which has as its aim to maximize the efficiency of [literacy] programs, both on qualitative and quantitative levels. The quantitative levels are important for us, and faire-faire partnerships have enabled a large number of participants to be enrolled in literacy courses. It would have been unthinkable to enroll such a large number of people in the courses without the partnership with civil society. As for quality, I think that the partnership has helped us to create a body of providers that are specialized in literacy (Civil servant).*

A new policy seminar, which took place in Thies in September 2003, reaffirmed the decisions of Kolda and stated that there were no alternatives to the partnership strategy and that this strategy will be used to eliminate illiteracy in Senegal over the next 10 years. The colloquium of Kolda and its outcomes in terms of policy documents and work plans interested several donors. The implementation modality, built on the principle of civil society partnerships, corresponded to World Bank policies within a Washington Consensus framework, since it arguably avoided government bottlenecks.

The period after 1993 can be divided into two periods with different institutional characteristics: 1993–1998: During this period, the delegate minister, Mamadou Ndoye, ensured institutional stability; the partnership approach was created (1993–1995) and consolidated through the action of CIDA and World-Bank-funded projects (1995–1998). Civil servants and other interviewees characterize this period as a "golden age:"

> *Between 1993 and 1998 it was fantastic . . . there was a good collaboration [complicité] between actors to get things going, hence my use of the word "team" (Former civil servant).*

From 1998 till present: In 1998, Mamadou Ndoye left his post. The large projects continued to be implemented under the supervision of independent Project Coordination Units (PCUs) that were set up during the Mamadou Ndoye period. These coordination units should in principle keep the projects safe from political turbulence, i.e., shifting priorities and change of staff members in the Delegate Minister's cabinet and the Department of Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB). However, most civil servants and provider organization staff members agree that there was deterioration in the partnership policies from the moment Mamadou Ndoye left his post. This

deterioration was due to three factors: the civil servants in key positions did not last for a long time in their posts; the recruitment of staff in key positions responded to political requirements, not to technical ones; and the institutional entities themselves were not stable – the delegate Ministry was constantly cancelled, recreated, and reorganized. Further the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) changed; its staff members were frequently reassigned. Also, it sometimes had responsibility for the promotion of local languages – and sometimes this important responsibility was given to a separate department. In such circumstances, institutional memory was quickly erased:

> *You see how the political dimension is very important; I remind you that between 1993 and 1998 we had only one Minister, who had a vision and a plan, and who began implementing this plan; it was Mamadou Ndoye. Between 1998 and 2003 we have had three other Ministers; and with each of them a change in the director of the cabinet and the technical divisions: the institutional memory is fleeing away [fout le camp]. There is no continuation; the new people have to learn everything anew (Former civil servant).*

The political instability affected the partnership approach and the literacy projects in several ways. Political considerations instead of technical ones were used to select providers in the projects. Also, a flawed decentralization was initiated, which was criticized both from local levels and from the providers' side. Schedules were no longer kept, and the provider selection and implementation guide (the "procedures manual") was no longer used. It seems as if public–private partnerships are well functioning in Senegal only when the political system is stable and that partnership projects are only effective if there's a stable regulating power.

2.3 Creation of a Project

The creation of the Women's Literacy Project was directly linked to the colloquium in Kolda. Three donors, including two bilateral institutions (the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the German Technical Cooperation for Development (GTZ)) and the World Bank were willing to provide assistance to the sector. The first donor to become interested was CIDA, which developed the PAPA (Action Plan Support Project). The second was the World-Bank-funded Women's Literacy Project, which was developed quicker than the PAPA and was therefore launched ahead of it.

The setup phase of the Women's Literacy Project can be divided into different stages: first, the identification of a project strategy and the creation of project management tools; then, the conducting of a pilot project; and

finally, the experimentation with the management tools and the literacy models used. The first phase was intimately linked to the Kolda colloquium, the pilot phase was set up and implemented in 1993–1995; and the main phase of the Women's Literacy Project was implemented in 1996–2001.

The Women's Literacy Project originated from the development of the partnership approach and from the policy goals decided in Kolda, which planned to reduce illiteracy by 5% per year. The use of civil society associations for implementation of subprojects, a strategy that had been experimented with little success in the 1000-classes project 3 years before, was reintroduced. The strategy was formalized and theorized at this time.

According to Senegalese civil servants and to the World Bank project document (SAR, 1996), the Bank was interested because of three main factors: priority was accorded to women; civil society was involved in the implementation of the courses; and the project would use a transparent method of transfer of funds, involving civil society. Both the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the World Bank provided technical assistance to define the management tools for the public–private partnership strategy. The government and the World Bank decided to use AGETIP (*Agence d'Exécution des Travaux d'Intérêt Publique*), a parastatal contract-managing agency that was set up as an NGO, to manage the contracts with the providers. AGETIP was chosen because it had prior contract-management experience from infrastructure projects financed by the World Bank. After the selection of AGETIP, the procedures for selection of providers were established. The selection mechanisms were based on AGETIP's procedures for implementation of large-scale World Bank-financed infrastructure projects, which were modified to be used in the literacy sector:

> *They [CIDA and World Bank] were facilitators, and they encouraged the [faire-faire] approach by mobilizing important resources to finance it. Also, they provided human resources to assist the formulation and set-up phase. Maybe we couldn't have achieved all of this ourselves (Former civil servant).*

> *The Bank then stated its interest [to finance] a literacy project with priority for women, involving civil society in a transparent manner. How should this be done exactly? At that point, it was necessary to invent the process, and the "faire-faire"strategy was thought about and theorized by the Ministry, of course with Bank support. It was necessary to look at the problems of transfer of funds and decide which organization was most capable of rapidly managing and transferring funds. After an initial assessment, it was concluded that only AGETIP made such transfers, in the building sector. We decided that AGETIP should play that same role in the social domain, for literacy, because there were no alternatives (Former civil servant).*

The procedures established to finance literacy programs were explained in a procedures manual. First, the potential provider association requested financing through a bid written as a subproject proposal. The proposal would typically plan the setup of 10–20 Learning and Activities' Centers, each of which were to enroll about 30 participants. In total, each provider enrolled between 300 and 600 persons, for which they received financing from the state. The financing was based on a fixed unit fee per enrollee (see Chapter 6 for a cost analysis).

The subproject proposals were checked for accuracy at local level by government staff. They were then sent to a selection committee, comprised of literacy staff from the government and representatives from the providers, which provided a technical analysis of all the proposals and decided which ones should be financed. The proposals approved for financing were then sent to a contract-managing agency (AGETIP), which established contracts, paid the providers, and managed and verified the contracts. After obtaining the first installment of funds, the providers began the implementation of the subproject.

During implementation, the providers were responsible for follow-up and monitoring on a regular basis, the government was responsible for overall technical supervision, and the contract-managing agency was responsible for financial supervision. A providers' organization (CNOAS) was created to represent the providers' interests and to help in case of conflict between any of the providers and other parties. In addition to the above, the project employed a Project Coordination Unit (PCU), which was responsible for day-to-day management of the project. Civil servants staffed the PCU, and the World Bank paid for administrative (secretarial) support and equipment.

In addition to setting up the project management structures and procedures, the project also needed to delineate responsibilities and to create a capacity building plan. This latter was seen as a priority, since the literacy sector had limited capacities in public–private management. The selection procedures were clarified in the procedures manual, which defined the duties of each actor and explained the exact procedures the provider associations had to follow to obtain funds. It was intended as a tool for the providers when they made a subproject proposal. The World Bank and the government consulted civil society on the management setup indicated in the procedures manual; the project procedures were therefore considered as a partnership product in their own right.

The pilot phase of the Women's Literacy Project created and tested out the tools of the partnership method. Also, the project experimented with the literacy courses themselves, to find the most cost-effective course type. In this context, the partnership approach was considered as a particularly interesting

method to experiment with different methods of literacy teaching, since each provider would have, in theory, a different approach to literacy and would be able to adapt the course to community needs:

> *The Minister at that time [Mamadou Ndoye] told us to go ahead, make errors, correct the errors, and at least we will have learned something (Former civil servant).*

Another civil servant stated that

> *The aim of Women's Literacy Project was to experiment with this [partnership] approach. This was interesting, because we had to experiment with everything; it was necessary to change all the methods that we previously had used. We all came from the formal schooling system, and were used to command this or that. Now we had to work in partnership with others and to give them public funds. The first difficulty of the Women's Literacy Project was to determine how to work with these partners. How to work with civil society? In order to figure that out, we cooperated with civil society to set up the project and in particular, to write the procedures manual.... The second challenge was to define the nature of the courses that should be taught. We decided to implement functional literacy courses. Also, we decided to set up an experimental post-literacy program. In addition, we decided to support production of newspapers and books. In this way, we experimented with different strategies to make the program efficient. We tried to find the constituents of a good literacy program through this experimentation (Civil servant).*

The pilot phase of the project took place after selecting the institutional modalities for project setup (i.e., the decision to use AGETIP as a contract-managing agency and to use the newly created PCU as a coordination unit) and after deciding on the procedures. During the pilot phase, 22 providers were selected. They enrolled a first cohort of learners. Each selection of sub-projects and subsequent enrollment were called a "generation" or a cohort. Each year (with a few exceptions) a new generation or cohort of learners was enrolled.

The pilot phase was evaluated before the courses of the first cohort had ended. The evaluation did not report on the actual learning of the participants, but only on the procedural and financial aspects of the project. The World Bank was interested in a technical evaluation of the processes – to check whether the use of partnerships as an implementation approach was feasible. The overall sense of the project, the literacy learning itself and the interaction between the community members and the project, were not investigated. The World Bank, at that time, found that the mechanisms of the project were adequate:

> *...it was convened with the Bank to test the approach with 24 providers in four of the regions of the country. The pilot phase of the program was implemented in June 1995, and an evaluation took place in December of the same year. At that point the process was evaluated; because we had made the procedures manual;*

the providers were informed and had written the requests, the subprojects to be financed had been selected, and the courses had started. The Bank visited the field to see how the activities were implemented. And in the field, the courses were there, as well as the learners and the facilitators… (Former civil servant).

After the adjustments of some procedural aspects, the main phase of the Women's Literacy Project began in 1996. Senegal secured a World Bank loan of US $12.6 million (1996) to cover the project over a period of 5 years (1996–2001).[1] In many ways, the project seems to be built on pre-established and global criteria of development, since only the implementation methods were evaluated by the World Bank, not the literacy courses and the appropriateness of the learning per se. The sense of development (and literacy) was not questioned; neither were at that time the holistic and integrated (complex) relationships between development services that could help the community to overcome inertia of the status quo and to achieve a sufficient complexity to stimulate a positive change.

Later, the project was considered as effective, insomuch as the quantitative enrollment goals "to reach about 135,000 adults (75% women) over the 5-year period 1996–2001" (SAR, 1996, p. i) were achieved – and even surpassed, according to statistics from AGETIP and the PCU. These sources state that about 200,000 people (of which 87% were women) enrolled in literacy training in the local languages of Wolof, Pulaar, Sereer, Joola, Mandinka, and Sonike (ICR, 2004). Because of this perceived effectiveness, the Women's Literacy Project continues to this day, financed through the World Bank's education sector program in Senegal. It should be noted that effectiveness for the World Bank is largely a disbursement issue that is related to the implementation pace and effective enrollment in literacy courses. The project's contribution to development (however, the term is being defined) seems to come secondary to its implementation effectiveness.

During the period of the Women's Literacy Course, 312 literacy subprojects were financed, out of 960 requests. The Senegalese Government had previously had problems to implement World Bank projects (SAR, 1996). Civil society's capacity to enroll a higher volume of people in literacy courses than expected was considered as a sign of efficiency and effectiveness of the partnership approach used.

[1] A loan of the World Bank of Special Drawing Rights (SDR) 8.7 million (in 1996, it corresponded to the equivalent of US $12.6 million). The SDR serves as the unit of account of the World Bank, IMF, and some other international organizations. It is an international reserve asset based on key international currencies and created by the IMF in 1969 "to supplement the existing official reserves of member countries" (http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/sdr.htm).

The Women's Literacy Project financed three different types of literacy approaches:

- Type 1: the "non-integrated" approach (which was the main implementation type for Women's Literacy Project). World Bank estimated total number of learners: 158,393
- Type 2: post-literacy training (which was always combined with non-integrated literacy training). Estimated total number of learners: 13,133
- Type 3: the "integrated" approach (integrating the previous type 1 and type 2). Estimated total number of learners: 31,790 (ICR, 2004)

The "non-integrated" approach corresponds to functional literacy training emphasizing literacy (i.e., to learn to write, read, and perform basic mathematical operations) and some basic skills, especially related to hygiene and health. The post-literacy training was offered to a reduced number of learners that completed the (non-integrated) literacy course. In total, 13,133 persons attended post-literacy courses (ICR, 2004). It had as aim to offer income-generating training that helped the participants to sustain the literacy skills they had learned in the literacy course and at the same time taught new skills.

The integrated approach began in 1999 and is discussed throughout this study. It corresponds to a "mature" project approach, which integrates literacy and post-literacy actions. The procedures manual corresponding to this period was created in 2000, and a similar, integrated approach has been used to this date.[2] One interviewee explained,

> *Women's Literacy Project had as objective to be an experimentation and innovation program. During each phase we conducted action-research and tried to improve the quality of the program. The integrated approach emerged as a result of the research (Civil servant).*

The integrated type of literacy course, which consisted of literacy activities combined with post-literacy and income-generating activities, proved so popular that the World Bank only financed integrated literacy subprojects from 2000 and onwards. The dropout rate of the subprojects (for all three approaches) was seemingly low and was estimated at 15% by the government and the World Bank (ICR, 2004). In a subsequent analysis, I calculated that the real dropout rate may have been higher, perhaps 34% (Nordtveit, 2005). Integrated approach courses trained the participants in literacy, basic skills, and also organized income-generating activities. In addition, some selected participants received training in management and administration, with the purpose of strengthening the functioning of the local women's association.

[2] A major revision of procedures, however, took place in 2006–2007.

In areas where such organizations did not exist, the providers helped the local women create an association.

One or two persons in each implementation site, called the *relais*,[3] received specific training to continue literacy training for local participants after the subproject finished. In theory, the recruitment of the *relais* should ensure that the learning activities in the village were sustainable. The *relais* was usually a volunteer living at the implementation site, who received specific training sessions on management and adult pedagogy, organized by the provider.

Information on how to formulate a subproject, on the selection of the subproject, and on requirements of the providers was defined in the procedures manual, which was the legal instrument of the Women's Literacy Project. The procedures manual required that each provider, in cooperation with villagers, prepare a literacy subproject proposal. In general, the private providers were paid to do the following work:

- In discussion with villagers, establish a subproject (i.e., a service delivery program for literacy education in 10–20 communities)
- Recruit, pay, provide initial training, and in-service training of staff
- Upgrade or construct Learning and Activities' Centers in each community. This was a required feature of subprojects using the integrated approach, but not for the non-integrated approach
- Procure learning equipment for the Learning and Activities' Centers and for the participants
- Implement the subproject (for the integrated approach subprojects, the training offered included post-literacy and income-generating activities, as well as training of the leader of the local women's association)
- Monitor and evaluate the progress of service implementation (Source: PM, 2000)

The courses were not free; each participant had to pay 2,500 CFAF (about US $5) to the provider to participate. Each provider implemented one subproject; it was very infrequent that a provider implemented several subprojects at the same time (it often happened, however, that a provider finished a subproject from an earlier cohort while starting a new cohort). The integrated courses were generally of 450 hours duration, and the participants could in principle decide on how they wanted these hours to be used. In most cases, they decided to attend the course three to four times a week,

[3] In this study, the French word *relais* is used, which designates a "relay person" who is supposed to continue learning activities in the community when the provider-implemented course has finished. The *relais* appeared with the integrated project and is a function given to one or two enrollees in each literacy course.

for 3–4 hours each time. Weekly, 9–12 contact hours were scheduled, which habitually made the course last for 10–14 months. Most often, the participants wished to go to class in the afternoons, before dark. Many classes were therefore held between 3 and 6 PM during three afternoons per week. For the integrated project, it was generally assumed that the *relais* would take over the literacy course after 10 months of provider implementation.

2.4 Why the World Bank Was Involved

The World Bank's involvement in the literacy sector in Senegal was conditional on the use of public–private partnerships (SAR, 1996). The organization did not consider that any form of direct implementation of literacy by the government was a viable option. Specifically, the World Bank believed that the government had to concentrate on the primary education sector:

> The Bank's strategy for increasing the level of literacy in Senegal has focused exclusively on providing support for the expansion and improvement of primary education since it is widely believed that this is the most cost-effective strategy for developing the basic human capital required for development (SAR, p. 7).

Since the state did not have enough resources to create a proper primary school system, the World Bank believed it should not take up non-formal education for youth and adults in addition to the formal education. The Women's Literacy Project document (or, Staff Appraisal Report, in the World Bank's jargon[4]) describes the World Bank's position as follows:

> . . . the experience of mass literacy campaigns and functional literacy programs popularized by UNESCO during the 1960s and 1970s . . . were unsuccessful . . .
>
> . . . governments in Africa already have great difficulty organizing and delivering primary education. Support for literacy programs risks distracting the government from fulfilling this obligation . . .

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[4] The name of the Staff Appraisal Report is interesting in itself, since it clearly shows the power relations underpinning a World Bank project. Financing decisions are not based on a community appraisal report, or even a government appraisal, but are intrinsically connected to the World Bank staffs' appraisal. The World Bank's definition of the SAR is as follows: "The Staff Appraisal Report (SAR) is the technical report in which Bank staff assesses the intrinsic quality of a project and evaluate the critical risks to which the project is exposed. The SAR also serves as technical background for the Memorandum and Recommendation of the President (MOP) and a guide for project implementation. In addition, because it identifies critical performance indicators, it can guide the Bank and the borrower in monitoring performance" BP 10.00 – Annex D, January, 1994.

> Literacy programs do not require significant investment, and they are difficult for the government to provide because they are usually small-scale operations that need to be responsive to needs of diverse groups . . .
>
> Finally, the Bank has little experience with literacy programs (SAR, p. 7).

The first statement above, on UNESCO literacy campaigns, is a contested opinion, reflecting the World Bank's belief about the low rates of return to literacy education for adults. No mention is made to the highly successful mass literacy programs in socialist countries (e.g., Cuba or China). The second statement (about governments' need to focus on primary education) is a policy judgment by the World Bank. The third statement appears to indicate two reasons for not financing non-formal education: since literacy programs did not require significant investment, they were not interesting for the World Bank; and they are difficult for the government to implement anyway. The fourth point indicates that the World Bank did not know much about literacy programs (which is probably true, since the World Bank does not have any section specializing in non-formal literacy education). The position of the World Bank does not seem to be based on research but rather on a theoretical economic and cost-effectiveness rationale. It is uncertain whether this position has been rigorously evaluated. The World Bank's attitude (at least the two first points) was clearly understood by the Senegalese counterpart. In an interview, one of the members of the Senegalese negotiation team noted that

> *. . . prior programs that were implemented through UNESCO and other agencies' support had not been sufficiently convincing in terms of outcomes and effectiveness as well as economic and cultural impact on the society. . . . These arguments were important for the World Bank because at that point the international community was skeptical to the need for financing literacy programs. Many thought that it would be better to invest in primary education, because the enrollment rate [for primary] was at that point [only] about 50% (Former civil servant).*

In view of its priorities to finance primary education, the World Bank was unwilling to accept that the government used resources (especially human resources) to conduct literacy courses. Many civil servants agreed that the government had to concentrate on primary schooling and should not get involved in literacy provision:

> *Could we have used another way 15 years ago? Could we have given everything to the state? No. No, we asked the state to educate the children. And the state is supervising children's schooling; the children are obliged to go to school. A state that is not capable of schooling one child out of two; now you ask that state to provide literacy courses for millions and millions of illiterate people; it doesn't work. Also, the state is not organized to do that. At the department level, you have one person in charge of literacy. During the 1000-classes project, this person was supposed to control and follow up on the implementation. Many fake classes were*

set up, and no monitoring followed. The state was not capable of controlling the sector (Former civil servant).

It is possible that the government, knowing the World Bank's and other donors' reticence to finance non-formal basic education, eliminated other possibilities and focused on the implementation modality that had the largest chance to succeed to obtain outside financing. Many interviewees underlined that one main outcome of the partnership approach was to receive increased financing:

. . . this strategy has resulted in increased financing from donors. Before 1993 we never received financing at over 500 million [FCFA]; currently, the amounts are measured in billions. Hence, two main results of the strategy are; first, improved quality of programs; and second, increased financing from external partners (Civil servant).

The World Bank and other international donors, through their financing of projects clearly promoted the use of private associations for service delivery. For the government, the implementation method was sensible, because local associations existed, and they had already set up literacy courses by themselves. Based on the two reasons, one external and one internal, the obvious implementation model would be to use civil society associations as providers:

There was a large potential for literacy actors; we didn't invent these actors. We found that they were already implementing literacy activities. The "faire-faire" did not invent them. The "faire-faire" said: I have found actors that are implementing small literacy programs with maybe an insufficient quality level. I will support these programs, make them bigger and make them high-quality programs (Former civil servant).

The World Bank's project document explicitly mentions its concerns about what is called *the specter of the government*: "the specter of the government using primary education resources for literacy financing," (SAR, 1996, p. 7). I wonder if this odd formulation is an unconscious (or deliberate?) reference to the opening lines of the Communist Manifesto.[5] Such ideological formulation seems peculiar in a project document setting up the modalities of financing and collaboration between Senegal and the World Bank in the field of literacy. It is possibly meant as a reassuring sentence for the Board of Directors of the World Bank (which has to accept the SAR before financing is obtained), rather than a warning to the Senegalese government. It should

[5] "A specter is haunting Europe – the specter of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French radicals and German police spies" (Marx and Engels, [1848] 2005 edition, p. 208).

be noted that the World Bank is not a monolithic giant, but rather a complex power system, full of internal streams of oppositions and contradictions, necessitating internal negotiation and compromises. Such sentence may have been deemed necessary by the staff responsible of the appraisal report to make clear to the Board of Directors that the World Bank and the Senegalese Government had entered into an alliance to exorcise the specter of Government involvement in literacy. In any case, the wording seems peculiar and incongruous in this context.

From the beginning of negotiations between the World Bank and the government about a possible literacy project, the discussion centered on the definition of the partnership approach and on clarifying the state and the providers' respective roles. The World Bank's project document explicitly mentioned the conditionality of the project:

> Since 1991, the Senegalese authorities have persistently requested IDA support for a literacy program. However, for all the above reasons, particularly the specter of the government using primary education resources for literacy financing, the Bank was reluctant to move ahead. Additional concerns included the limited experience of the MCALN [Delegated Ministry of Literacy and Local languages] in the area of literacy, and that increased government involvement in the sub-sector would turn towards program delivery and regulation of private providers. Therefore, at the outset, IDA-Government discussions on this proposed project centered on defining the meaning of its faire-faire strategy, the appropriate roles for Government and literacy providers, and on an experimental approach to expand literacy programs (SAR, 1996, pp. 7–8).

The World Bank's conditions had the potential to exert a major influence on the development of the literacy sector in the country, since World Bank assistance often, in addition to project financing, includes financing of policy formulation exercises that are likely to orient both the government's and other donors' actions. In Senegal, the partnership approach became the favored approach used for implementation of literacy projects financed by the key donors.

However, the World Bank's preferences for a particular model were not enough to create the policy. Confluence of favorable factors has often been called a policy window of opportunity, which opens "because of change in the political stream" such as a change in the government (Kingdon, 1995, p. 168). Another important factor for policy formulation is the existence of a "policy entrepreneur" who can join the different streams of problems, policy and politics, and push the creation of policy (Kingdon, 1995). An interviewee in Senegal notes several reasons for the establishment of partnership policies along this line, including political leadership from Mamadou Ndoye (who became the "policy entrepreneur" in this case); refocus of the World Bank on social issues in view of criticism against its structural adjustment policies; the

existence of civil society associations in Senegal that were already operating in the field; and existence in key positions, of individuals in the World Bank and in Senegal who were favorable to literacy. We should add to this list the Jomtien conference, which seems to have made the Senegalese government more responsive to literacy.

Hence, the World Bank was not the sole decision maker for the Senegalese policy formulation. As an economic sponsor, it had a large role in orienting the policy, but obviously also needed internal support and leadership from the Senegalese government. The choice and definition of the partnership model were open for discussion, and some discrepancies between the World Bank's view and the Senegalese view could be seen already in the policy's conception phase. It was not taken for granted that the partnership model that eventually became known as *faire–faire* was to be used. In the beginning, the World Bank disagreed to use many small and local providers, since it was believed that they did not have the necessary competency to implement high-quality literacy programs. The World Bank therefore suggested subcontracting with a few, large associations, which had an international reputation, and which the World Bank assumed would set up high-quality literacy courses. Such model, using a few large providers, may have made it easier to monitor the associations (because there were less of them to monitor). If any of the providers were delivering low-quality projects, allegedly, they could be easily replaced.

The delegate minister in Senegal, Mamadou Ndoye, did not agree with the World Bank's position. He had earlier been responsible for an NGO in Senegal and wanted to develop the local civil society milieu. He therefore insisted on using many small, local associations to conduct literacy classes. This use of small-scale associations, instead of using a few big providers, may well be the most original aspect of the partnership approach in Senegal and is, according to many interviewees, a reason for the apparent dynamism of the project. A civil servant involved in the negotiations with the Bank notes that

> *. . . we began having a number of difficulties with the Bank. The Bank wanted us to subcontract with a few big providers, which were internationally and nationally well known, and which had a large implementation capacity. Very few organizations fulfilled these criteria. The Ministry thought that it was necessary to make the criteria wider. Also, the use of national associations was supported since the big international organizations had networks that made it possible for them to find other resources. Small associations, for example those defending languages such as the Pulaar, or other small organizations, were implementing small programs because they did not have access to any financing networks. If they were not given access to financing, they would not have the possibility of entering into such networks by themselves (Former civil servant).*

The World Bank finally agreed to finance a pilot project testing out the Senegalese approach of using many small providers. World Bank staff members, however, were still hesitant about the capacity of the providers to conduct literacy courses in the beginning of the main implementation phase. The project document for the Women's Literacy Project noted, "although literacy providers show significant interest in the program, capacity is widely believed to be weak among small providers" (SAR, 1996, p. 18). Despite this reticence, the Senegalese version of the model was adopted. It is widely believed (in Senegal) that the model is genuinely Senegalese and that the Senegalese government invented it without any pressure from the outside:

> *In the field of education, [the faire-faire is] a Senegalese innovation. We were pioneers, and the other ministries followed [by adopting] the partnership approach after the Ministry of Education. We wanted it to be more than a technique; we wanted it to be a philosophical approach [deontodologie] – and we also wanted it to be an ethical approach (Former civil servant).*

Mamdou Ndoye, whom many people consider as the "father" of the approach, said,

> *. . . it was evident for me that a partnership between the state and NGOs, and in general, between the state and civil society, is necessary. This has nothing to do with the World Bank. It is true that the World Bank helped us from a technical and professional point of view, especially with the procedures manual. The basic policy orientations, however, were ours, and had nothing to do with the ideas of the World Bank (Mamadou Ndoye).*

When looking at the World Bank's project document, it appears that the World Bank influenced the basic policy orientation and that the Senegalese state adopted it to their circumstances. A further point of inquiry is the reasons for appointing Mamadou Ndoye as delegated Minister. His background from civil society must have been the ideal choice if the government wished to promote partnership approaches. As Ndoye himself indicates,

> *I used to work for the Teachers' Union, which promoted the idea that the government should include all the stakeholders in any policy decisions. . . . When I left the Teachers' Union in 1990, . . . I started a project of volunteers for education, in which we financed the training of youths who would like to become volunteers and teach in community schools. In this context, I could see how civil society organizations could develop education. Therefore, at the time I was asked to become Minister, I was . . . a part of the NGO milieu. It was evident for me that a partnership between the state and . . . civil society is necessary (Mamadou Ndoye).*

The choice of the partnership model may therefore be read as a dialectical relation; international agencies indirectly (by refusing to finance any other program than those based on partnership approaches) exerted pressure on

the government to choose the model, and internally, the government appears to have adapted the model to local and international circumstances.

The Women's Literacy Project apparently worked well until a government change in 1998, followed by increasing turnover of directors in the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB). The problem of the political instability in the government was coupled with rotation of World Bank's staff members assigned to follow-up on the project. The World Bank itself rates its own performance in the project as "satisfactory":

> ... despite the turnover of TTLs [task-team leaders in charge of the project] (the project had three TTLs), the Bank team was able to ensure continuity and coherence in its dialogue with the Senegalese counterparts (ICR, 2004, p. 14).

The interviewed civil servants in Senegal underlined that the World Bank had provided thorough follow-up in the beginning of the project (during the conception of the partnership strategy). After an initial phase of strong involvement, the Senegalese had the impression that the World Bank lost interest: new staff members were made responsible for the project and they had less time to follow-up on the project:

> *... some of the financial sponsor's [World Bank's] staff members seem to be arbitrarily assigned to the job. I think it is necessary to follow-up on these issues; here, an architect is responsible for education, and there, an administrator is taking the place. These people are not at all competent [to follow-up on education programs]! Also, sometimes they are involved in many things at the same time, so they cannot go in depth on any question (Former civil servant).*

Again, the World Bank's investment of time seems to be related to the formulation of procedures and not to actual follow-up on the development work. As we have seen, the financing was contingent on the setup of a partnership strategy that did not use human resources from the primary education sector. Another way of conceiving this is to relate it to a "survival of the fittest" or evolution theory: the World Bank (and any other donor), will, of course, fund the "fittest" project, i.e., the project most likely to succeed within the donor's notion of "success." Invariably, this would be the project that would comply with the donor's policies at the moment. In the current development theory climate, such project would need to have a low risk for failure and a high potential for a good return on investment. The World Bank has increasingly prioritized use of the private sector in implementation. The theorists at the World Bank, especially Stiglitz, partially due to influence by Putnam, turned toward analysis of civil society's role in development in the 1980s and 1990s (Todaro and Smith, 2003). The new World Bank discourse has been criticized for changing rhetoric and keeping the same objectives as before. Partnerships with civil society can be considered as a form of privatization:

> . . . partnering with NGOs began in the 1980s as a direct result of the ideological shift in the U.S. and the U.K. to neoliberal policies that emphasized a diminished role for the public sector. Working with NGOs instead of governments became a part of the de-legitimization of the government (Klees, 2001, p. 1).

The World Bank did not agree to fund literacy services until the state had formulated a "fit" project within the World Bank paradigm, i.e., a literacy project that outsourced funding to private providers and that did not make use of human resources within the state structure (which were to be reserved for the areas that the World Bank had defined as priority areas, i.e., primary education). According to the World Bank's project document, the Senegalese government repeatedly asked for support for a literacy project. Funding, however, was contingent on the use of public–private partnerships. Was then the use of outsourcing and partnership approaches inevitable for the Senegalese government? Would the World Bank categorically have refused to fund literacy projects that were state implemented? To respond to this question, it is interesting to compare Senegal with Ghana, where, during roughly the same period, a large mass-literacy project was initiated, which was implemented directly by the government and financed by the World Bank. This fact seems to contradict the World Bank's own statement (in the SAR) that it did not wish to finance state-run projects that may draw resources from the formal to the non-formal education sector. However, it should be noted that the Ghana project in most cases did not use primary school resources for implementing literacy (it mainly used literate people from the private sector who functioned as voluntary teachers). Further, the World Bank team in Ghana was not the same as in Senegal and therefore did not have the same attitude toward the specter of government intervention. Finally, the civil society contexts in Ghana and Senegal were not similar. These aspects point to the fact that the World Bank is open to other approaches than the public–private partnership approach (or other privatization methods). If one considers the survival of the fittest theory, it should be noted that Senegal and Ghana were among the first literacy projects financed by the World Bank in the 1990s. The Senegal model fit the World Bank's theories and thereby became an international reference; nobody today speaks about "the Ghana model" in West Africa. Public–private partnerships became the model that was later used in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Niger, and The Gambia and is currently being propagated elsewhere.

If a new model comes up that is more fit to the World Bank's policy view than the current partnership model, it is quite possible that slowly, as in evolution theory, such model will take over and outmaneuver other models used (partnership methods may thus be eliminated in their own turn, for example,

by social fund types of financing, which seem to be increasingly popular in the World Bank today).

The World Bank's financial weight is so great that it can influence the implementation strategy for a whole sector. As noted in the World Bank's project document for the Women's Literacy Project, it has little experience in literacy education. It therefore seems strange that it was so sure about the effectiveness of implementing literacy services by using a partnership model. What, for example, if the private-implementation model undermines the quality of services? How can one know that it is the "right" model? The World Bank seems to ground its decisions on its pre-analytic visions about the supremacy of the private sector and explicitly mentions UNESCO programs and other literacy campaigns as an example of "unfit" policies.

Chapter 3
Civil Society, Women, Illiteracy

The strengthening of the organizational capacities of the participants is a core activity of the program, because when the association has a structure, a life, an action plan, then something sustainable can be built (Civil servant).

Our association was created in 1989, obtained its legal status in 1990 and became an NGO in 1993. The association has two parts: one non-profit part that is implementing a Women's Literacy subproject, and one for-profit part, which is, among other activities, running the only hostel in town. It is also running a joinery, as well as making peanut oil for export to Belgium. The objective of the for-profit activities is to make the association financially autonomous. The NGO part of the association has one administrator, one coordinator, a driver and a watchman to guard the offices. It intervenes in six villages through [a project for credit and microfinance], and in ten villages through Women's Literacy Project financing. The group is a member of CNOAS [the providers' association]; and the director of the group is the local secretary of CNOAS (Private provider staff).

Our [religious] association has, in addition to the literacy classes, also computer classes, English classes, and classes for pupils who have failed the primary school exam (Private provider staff).

The GIE was created in 1993 – through a general assembly. In the beginning we did not conduct literacy classes – we were partners in an initiative to produce milk. In the villages, we found that the low literacy rate was a problem (Private provider staff).

There are several types of providers; one type is a local development agent at the village level [promoteur villageois], which is stimulating activities in its own community. Such agent has specific competencies, and maybe has specific goals for its own village's development. It is therefore a provider, because it has capacity for literacy training; it is situated in the village and aims to promote its community. I think we need to differentiate this provider from a professional provider that comes from Dakar and has as only goal to assist the village in a specific training program. We have to continue reflection about these issues because the local development agent is situated in the village and will continue its activities [beyond subproject financing], and in the use of such agent, there is a possibility

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> *for sustainability of activities. Such agent will accompany the village in the whole development process, whereas the other type only comes to provide a specific service (Civil servant).*

Escobar, in his critique of the Western development enterprise, suggested that local civil society associations and social movements should be the base of formulation of some redefined form of development (Escobar, 1995). Ironically, one can ask whether the World Bank is following Escobar's recommendation since it purportedly is implementing a grassroots' project, based on civil society and social movements in West Africa – for literacy and development. However, one should also be wary of the different discourses regarding civil society: the World Bank considers civil society a tool for a specific purpose, whereas the post-development theorists consider it as the starting point for a re-definition of development, which should not be based on a Western modernization program. In investigating different conceptions of civil society, it may be worth questioning whether we live in a post-globalization world, in which most discourses have been unified into a Western-economic one and to which extent an original (in the sense of native, or natural) conception of development still can be found among civil society organizations. Most development associations in Senegal, although often having religious, cultural, or economic goals, also have a vision of development that is aligned with the Millennium Development Goals and Education For All. Moreover, civil servants and other interviewed stakeholders frequently complained that many associations (popularly called "economic operators" in Senegal) are created only to capture funding and that they therefore do not truly belong to civil society but rather functions like a business:

> *Many providers only want money. Among six local providers, four are economic ones. In most cases, over half of the providers are mostly occupied with money. When we go to the field and see the Learning Centers, we notice that everything is in a bad state (Civil servant).*

Although the Women's Literacy Project was primarily a literacy project, it also had other, important functions. First and foremost among these, it had as its objective to create and strengthen civil society associations at a local level, not only by using civil society to implement subprojects but also (during the project's integrated phase) through the strengthening of local women's associations and by obtaining a legal status for these associations, so that they could, in turn, become literacy-provider organizations. The following sections will discuss to which extent the newly created civil society was only a Western artifact, i.e., business structures trying to capture funding, or whether it was a viable structure of organizations representing local people.

3.1 Old and New Discourses on Civil Society

Civil society has become a new partner to the government for delivery of education and other social services. It has not always been considered a partner to the government; in many cases, civil society represents the "people" against an oppressive government, e.g., in Lech Walesa's Solidarity movement in Poland in the 1970s and 1980s. Currently, instead of being a representative of local communities and local interests groups, civil society is increasingly being used as an implementing agent for the government's work. In this context, it is important to examine the definition of civil society as compared to private businesses or trade unions.

The word "civil society" is known since the ancient Greeks and has led to countless debates on its definition and purpose. The term is currently being used to characterize civic associations and is thereby often defined as a set of organized activities that are independent of the state and economic interests,

> . . . a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication (Cohen and Arato, 1992, p. ix).

This was not the idea of the Greeks: Aristotle first mentioned civil society in terms of *politike koinonia* (political society). The Aristotelian definition of civil society did not allow for distinction between state and society; the "politike koinonia was a unique collectivity, a unified organization with a single set of goals that were derivable from the common ethos" (Cohen and Arato, 1992, p. 85). This understanding entered the tradition of political philosophy, and civil society thus became the designation of the state–civil-society unity until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Montesquieu sought to differentiate between "government" and "society." He contended that political law regulates the relationship of governors and governed, whereas civil law regulates the relationship between members of society to one another. Therefore, the government should be separate from civil society. The Scottish Enlightenment furthered the notion of civil society as an entity that was separate from the state. Civil society was claimed to be the appropriate entity to manage relations among "civilized gentlemen," whereas the state functions should be limited. Also, for the Scottish Enlightenment, religious notions that had previously been inherently linked to notions of civil society became less evident. It was assumed that citizens associate voluntarily with courtesy, trust, reliability, and concern in different organizations including social networks, learned and professional societies, firms, and markets (the Scottish Enlightenment did not include military, aristocratic, or sectarian groups in its definition of civil society). Hence, the economic role

of civil society in the Scottish Enlightenment's philosophy is pre-eminent: "For those of the Scottish Enlightenment, civil society is principally the unification of individuals by market exchange" (Holst, 2002, p. 60).

Hegel and Marx laid the fundaments for today's debates on civil society. Hegel had an idealistic notion in which civil society is the realm of the individual; the aggregate of the individual culminates in the idea of the state. Marx did not view civil society idealistically (as did Hegel), but as humans who live and experience it (Holst, 2002). Also, Marx furthered the Aristotelian concept of integrated civil and political society, and defined civil society as a political construct and as an ideologically charged notion, insomuch as it is impossible to separate civil society from the state. In the twentieth century, Gramsci developed Hegel and Marx's theories on civil society. Gramsci, building on a definition of civil society that includes the family and political culture, considers that civil society is a conservative defense of the existing society's power structure and whose function is the social integration of capitalist domination (Cohen and Arato, 1992).

Alexis de Tocqueville largely broke away from Marx's definition, and explained the success of the US democracy by the existence of civil society organizations. Tocqueville included voluntary associations, newspapers, civic institutions, and local government in his definition of civil society, but excluded all large organizations that did not have face-to-face relations between their members. Civil society is, according to de Tocqueville, necessary for the democracy, since it relieves the state burden, checks the state's power, distributes information, and initiates people into public life. Putnam, based on Tocqueville's philosophy, defined the notion of social capital as an aspect of civil society, arguing that "official membership in formal organizations is . . . a facet of social capital" (Putnam, 2000, p. 49). A networking society, it is argued, functions better than a society with no networks. The level of "connectivity" of the society is usually measured by the number of people registered in civil society associations and the number of such associations (Krishna, 2002).

These definitions of civil society are very Western oriented and do not necessarily apply to other contexts. In Africa, for example, the notion of family is subordinate to the notion of "clan," and all clans have a clear economic *raison d'être* (Lachenmann and Lavigne Delville, 1994). One may discuss whether or not a clan is civil society. Likewise, for-profit organizations, often publicly registered as Economic Interest Groups (*Groupements d'Intérêt Economique*), have a clear economic mandate. It can be debated whether these associations belong to civil society. Furthermore, the current expansion of associations in West Africa is rarely generated through forms of self-constitution and self-mobilization, but is on the contrary often

constituted through assistance from government-financed programs (Thiané, 1996). Again, one can argue whether such associations, whose main purpose is to capture finance from the state, should be included in the definition of civil society. Overall, a multitude of associations that are less known to Western societies belong to daily life in Africa, e.g.,

> ... in West Africa the following types of movements can be distinguished: – movements linked to cultural institutions, such as secret societies, prophets, diviners, sorcery, etc., – religious revival movements and sects, Islamic fundamentalist movements, – new ethnic movements, – cultural, youth, and development associations, social movements (Lachenmann and Lavigne Delville, 1994, p. 70).

Based on the above, associations in Africa can be roughly divided into three groups; such as traditional mutual help groups (women's village associations, economic networks called "tontines," etc.); religious groups; and new, development-related associations whose aims are to capture external capital for the purpose of setting up development activities (these groups are most often for-profit). For the purposes of this study, I contend that civil society in Africa is a sphere of social interactions that are linked to political, religious, cultural, and economic interests and composed above all of the sphere of associations, especially voluntary associations such as traditional grassroots organizations, faith-based groups, and development-related associations (Nordtveit, 2008b).

Citizens' connections to associations, Putnam argued, have both private advantages and societal advantages, since there are positive externalities to the society in connectivity (Putnam, 2000). Neoclassical economists further maintain that social capital lowers crime and amplifies mutual trust, thereby leading to economic growth. It is argued that a society with many civic associations and many people adhering to such associations (i.e., with a "strong" civil society) has a high social capital, which leads to a more inclusive democracy and to economic growth:

> How many civic organizations exist in any given setting and how effectively these organizations perform will have a close bearing not only upon rates of economic growth, but also on levels of communal harmony and patterns of political participation. Governments and development agencies are being urged, therefore, to "invest" resources in building stocks of social capital (Krishna, 2002, p. 3).

This view of social capital, drawing on Putnam's theories, is particularly attractive for conservative theorists who are skeptical to the government (Harriss, 1997). Not only conservative movements attack the state: in the 1970s, disillusioned workers and intellectuals began questioning a state that was perceived as cruel and inefficient. In Eastern Europe, first in Poland, civil society was reinvented as a conceptual weapon to challenge the state:

> The anti-authoritarian movement felt that civil society expressed their aspirations for freedom as citizens, their right to a voice and to representation. These were not their only objectives. Social and economic inequalities remained a major, if not the major, concern in the South (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p. 15).

Civil society was at first not an item on the conservative agenda, which preferred to speak in terms of individuals. As Margaret Thatcher said in a famous interview with the magazine Woman's Own (1987):

> ... you know, there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first (Thatcher, 2002, p. 426).

During Bill Clinton and Tony Blair's governments, the search for an alternative way in between capitalism and socialism became the topic of Anthony Gidden's (1999) influential Third Way. As adviser to Tony Blair, Giddens was defining a so-called socially responsible capitalism where "civil society is an intermediary sphere serving to complement rather than to replace the state" and "offers a third route to welfare provision, which is neither private nor state" (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p. 67). From the 1980s, the World Bank and other development agencies began to use civil society organizations in the implementation of their social programs. Recently, partnership with civil society has become a new buzzword in the debate on democracy and development, and is now largely being adopted into the conservative discourse. In the 1990s, World Bank theorists such as Stiglitz, partially due to influence by Putnam, turned toward analysis of civil society's role in development (Todaro and Smith, 2003). From a development perspective, Putnam's theories could be used to argue that increasing the stock of social capital would be realized through strengthening civil society and that the increased stock of social capital would have both economic and political results. In the end of the 1990s, especially through the influence of Stiglitz and Wolfensohn, the World Bank began to actively advocate policies that resulted in the creation of civil society.

From the donors' side, the idea of an accountable and democratic state that could foster economic development progressively gained ground. Criticism from different viewpoints contended that state reform programs, including various forms of structural adjustment, had not gained conclusive results and lacked political and popular support. To overcome these problems, donors gradually turned toward civil society:

> ... which by the late 1980s had already been constructed as a benign arena in contrast to the malign state. Housed within civil society was a potential agency in the form of NGOs and, later, other non-state groups ... Civil society assistance could encourage external pressure on states for reform (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p. 41).

The role of NGOs and civil society thus became the preservation of a good state; or,

> . . . system maintenance, in other words, the creation or strengthening of the democratic institutions that protect the rule of law, legitimate peaceful oppositions, and the expression of dissent in acceptable ways (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p. 59).

From a critical perspective, such a restricted vision limits civil society's role to a safeguard against the excesses of the government, a function that preserves negative liberty by defending the individual against the mass (Howell and Pearce, 2002). The strengthening of civil society therefore became a tool to create accountable states. At the same time as development workers began recognizing market imperfection, NGOs were gradually conceived as alternative deliverers of social services and welfare. In the 1990s, development programs not only began using civil society organizations but also set up programs that aimed to strengthen, or even to create civil society. Key financial development institutions, especially the World Bank under the leadership of Wolfensohn, began perceiving civil society as a main partner in the development business.

3.2 World Bank Creation of Civil Society

> *In fact, what I call civil society includes non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and different associations. . . . The current dilemma is that we are in a three-pronged partnership: [first] there is the population. [Then] there is civil society, which sometimes represents the population [. . .]. More often, however, it is a structure which supplies a service, and which has certain skills that can be transferred to the population. It is not very representative of the population (Former civil servant).*

During my work in Senegal, many stakeholders explained their understanding of the composition of civil society as a group with technical capabilities that could be used by the state. Civil society was not, however, conceived as groups that represented the local population. By being distanced from the local population and by its closeness to the state's affairs and to economic interests, the notion of civil society in Senegal fits our definition of civil society as a sphere of social interactions that are linked to political and economic interests, composed above all of the sphere of associations and especially voluntary associations. One can make a legal distinction between for-profit providers (GIE: *Groupement d'Intérêt Economique*) and larger non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In Senegal, the NGOs and other non-profit organizations (e.g., religious associations, women's associations) were registered by the Ministry of Interior, whereas the for-profit

associations (GIEs) were registered by the Department of Justice. Most GIE personnel I interviewed desired that their organization would become an NGO, since the NGO status was more prestigious. Also, since it was considered as a non-profit organization, an NGO could in certain circumstances obtain easier access to funding than GIEs. Other differences between these two categories were blurred, since in many cases the principal aim of the NGO or GIE consisted of capturing enough funding to pay its members decent salaries and to purchase equipment, such as a car, motorbikes, and computers.

Other than the NGOs and GIEs, there were also religious associations and language associations that offered literacy courses. In some cases, the provider association was working in a partnership with a church or a religious structure. Occasionally the provider association was Muslim and the associated Church was Christian:

> *There is a division between our [Christian protestant] church and the literacy classes. External Muslim consultants organized themselves [into a GIE] to provide literacy classes and they associated with our [Christian] church. The cultural center attached to the church is secular (Private provider staff).*

Staff from another provider association explained that their association was composed of two groups, one business group and one non-profit group. Also, many providers were not specialized in education, but became specialized when state funding was made available to conduct literacy courses. Most stakeholders made a distinction between local and "professional" providers. The professional providers sometimes got the slightly pejorative name of "economic" provider (*opérateur économique*), whose main aim was to earn money. Needless to say, the difference between local and economic providers was blurred: in many cases, the local providers were as much profit oriented as the ones coming from urban areas. The larger providers were international NGOs, with their own specific development goals. At a national level, several large NGOs operated, often providing services in multiple regions for many projects simultaneously, including literacy, health, and microcredit. Of a random sample of Women Literacy Project-contracted providers evaluated by the longitudinal study, 53% were working only in literacy, 20% were also involved in microfinance and credit activities, 13% were involved in for-profit shop keeping, and 13% were involved in health-related projects (LS-T0, 2001). The providers involved in several projects rarely merged service delivery; in most cases, each project operated independently, and services were not integrated between projects (i.e., literacy services were set up in one community; health services in a second; and microcredit programs in a third; etc.).

At a local level, various for-profit associations (GIE) provided services at a reduced scale. Also, former language associations reconstituted as a GIE or as an NGO provided services at regional or local levels. Some of these associations had clear cultural or political mandates. Most providers were new for-profit associations (52%) or cultural and language associations (25%), and some of the for-profit associations (GIE) were former groups of literacy recipients (DAEB, 2004). The longitudinal study found that 20% of provider associations were led by women and had female directors and coordinators. Of these, all but one had less than 3 years of experience, signifying that they were relatively new associations.

Local for-profit associations (GIE) as well as cultural and language associations thus implemented the majority of the subprojects, whereas NGOs and other types of providers (e.g., religious organizations) were less represented. Most GIEs and language and culture-oriented associations were providers in their region of origin, whereas some Dakar-based associations were providing courses nationwide. A majority (67%) of the providers covered by the longitudinal study had less than 7 years of experience and 20% had only 1–3 years of experience. The NGOs, generally, were more experienced than the GIEs and smaller associations (LS-T0, 2001). Data from interviews as well as the longitudinal and impact studies of the project demonstrated that the Women's Literacy Project contributed to an important growth of grassroots associations. The World Bank's intervention in Senegal was perhaps as focused on the creation of civil society as the creation of literacy. This creation, leading, theoretically, to social capital, was not explicatively mentioned as a goal in the project document. It was merely noted that

> A main objective of the proposed pilot project is to test a mechanism to operationalize a strategy of *faire-faire par les partenaires sur le terrain*, in other words, to support private sector literacy providers to expand their operations and encourage new providers to enter the market (SAR, 1996, p. 6).

Nevertheless, the project invested massively in the building of civil society. This "associative movement" was complex and closely related to the Women's Literacy Project implementation strategies. In particular, providers had the following obligations:

- Create a management committee for the local administration of the literacy course in each community
- Train the leaders of the local Women's Association and help the association to obtain legal registration documents
- Help the participants of the literacy courses to connect with financial networks and obtain financing for income-generating initiatives

- Strengthen local associative movements, especially those involved in income-generating activities (IGA), such as for-profit associations (GIE)

Not all subprojects used the same organizational and organization-building structure, but adapted to local needs and desires. One provider staff member explained,

> *. . . in each course, we create two committees, one for the management and monitoring of learning activities and one for the IGAs [income generating activities]. Sometimes the learners want to set up different types of IGAs, and they split into two groups. Then there is competition; every group wants to be the best! In the course, the learners assign a mature woman, or someone who is known for being honest, to the responsibilities related to course-work. She will tell anybody who is not concentrated during the class to stop talking, or will give a 100 or 150 FCFA fine to those coming too late for the class. Also, the management committee is monitoring payments for IGA and the reimbursement of loans (Private provider staff).*

In most cases, the provider association first helped to create a management committee for the literacy course for purposes such as keeping the class registry and organizing the community's participation for the construction of a Learning and Activities' Center. The separation of the community's women's association (which is also involved in the Women's Literacy Project) and the literacy course management committee was sometimes unclear, since in many cases the same women participated in both.

It was unusual to find a village without a women's association – in most cases at least an informal associative movement existed. Most associations gathered all the women in the village to consult on different issues related to daily life in the village (e.g., water fetching, problem solving, support for sick or pregnant women). The association, in most cases, did not have any educative objective. Participation was not based on ethnic criteria, but on age:

> *Most often, there are many women in the association. In a big village, there can be 100 women in the association. In a small village, there can be 15 - 20 - 30 women in the association. The association is not defined by ethnic criteria. I can go to another village and marry a person belonging to another ethnic group. Then I will join the women's association there. If a woman in the association gets a child, the other women will give her a piece of soap. With that soap you can clean clothes until the child gets big or you can sell [the soap]. Or they give you clothes or they give each 1000 FCFA; that makes 100,000 FCFA. So each woman coming to the village, be it Bambara, Peul or from Dakar, will integrate into the women's association, because there are advantages [in doing so]. The associations therefore include all the women from 15 to 50 years (Private provider staff).*

Also, the associations have an economic role, which is based on mutual aid between women. In this regard, the women's associations can be seen as a product of a particular sociocultural and religious context that favors distinct female and male spaces (Kane, 2001). Women are confined to the private or family spheres (e.g., the household and the farmland), whereas the men are seen in the public spheres (such as the mosque and the café). Women therefore ostensibly have a social need of a forum for discussion and sharing of information. These aspects may be more important than financial aspects of mutual aid and financial networking. The financial aspects of these associations, however, should not be underestimated. Many women's associations function as, or are connected to, "tontines," or female financial associations. In addition to the mutual aid function described above, tontines often make it possible for women to access credit and also to save money:

> Most women who participate in neighborhood tontines draw their contributions from the household budget, funds given to them by their husbands. Women, therefore, have a vested interest in keeping their husbands out of the tontines, where they would learn about female accumulation strategies. This is especially important in polygamous families, where each wife attempts to draw maximum advantage from the family budget for the needs of her children (Kane, 2001, p. 305).

Literacy providers sometimes created and managed tontine-like financial networks. During each cohort of literacy course provision, the provider could attach between 10 and 20 new associations to the network (depending on the size of the subproject). Most women's associations were eager to connect to these networks since it is difficult to obtain credit within the villages. According to the Women's Literacy Project impact study, 43% of the sampled learners were connected to similar credit organizations (DAEB, 2004). Further, the provider had an obligation to assist the local women's associations to obtain a "legal status" or a legal registration document, which is an official document stating its existence. Such document would enable the association to obtain loans or financial aid from various donors. Also, the providers' role consisted in strengthening the local women's association through various management training.

Many villages had more than one association in the village. In some cases there were one or several women's for-profit associations (GIEs), which often had legal registration documents and united women that were involved in the same economic activity, such as the production of peanut oil or production and sale of vegetables. In many cases, a local GIE requested a provider association to implement a literacy course in the community and thereby acted as a representative of the local population. Also, in cases where the

provider association proposed its services, the head of the village often connected the provider staff with the most structured women's association in the community, which was sometimes a GIE. For the provider, it was easier to work with such structured groups. In cases where the women's associations was unstructured (i.e., had no clear management or organized existence), the women in the literacy course sometimes formed a GIE by themselves. In the latter case, the provider often helped them to obtain a legal registration document.

The project's impact study found an average of 1.15 women's associations (*Groupement de Promotion Féminine*) in communities with literacy courses, against 1.05 associations in communities without a literacy course. Likewise, communities with literacy courses scored higher on the count of GIEs; the communities with a literacy course had 0.64 GIEs against 0.35 GIEs per community in areas without literacy courses. Most (83%) of the sampled learners belonged to a Women's Association or to some other type of non-profit association, whereas 10% belonged to a for-profit association (DAEB, 2004).

As seen above, the local women's associations obtained a legal status as a result of the provider's intervention; this was one of the aims of the project. This legal status was sometimes obtained at great costs for its members, since evidence from interviews shows that local administrative structures in many cases were corrupt and requested "special fees" to establish the legal documents for the new associations. Even though the legal documents of the association were expensive, it enabled the associations to negotiate development activities directly with funding agencies:

> *The legal status makes it possible for the association to open a bank account, obtain a loan, and to work directly with financial sponsors. In the 1980s, few members of the local associations understood the advantages of obtaining a legal status (Private provider staff).*

Since the associations with formal registration papers were free to engage in direct communications with funding agencies such as international NGOs, they could in theory bypass government bottlenecks and work directly with these associations. Funding agencies, however, were less free to subcontract directly with the women's associations – since government officials in many cases wanted to control the processing of funds and the implementation of the activity. Such control may have constituted an inhibiting factor for the associations' quest for local approaches to development, especially in cases where decentralization efforts transferred unchecked power to local administration units.

The women's associations, by obtaining a legal status, were free to submit subproject proposals to conduct literacy training (or to implement other

social services). Many associations thus became literacy providers on their own right. Different project actions (training sessions, seminars, etc.) had as aim to build the capacity of provider staff. With the emergence of officially recognized women's associations, these associations increasingly gained access to funding, and the enfranchisement of the women's associations may have helped strengthen the condition of women both at local and national levels.

3.3 Gender Discourses

Development agencies seem to be in a constant need of defining and redefining the "victim" and the "target." Hence, women have to a certain extent become a political construct, a development target at the likes of the poor, the ethnic minorities, and the orphans and vulnerable children. Dualist discourses have attempted to depict women on the one hand as "illiterate, beasts of burden or victims of a barbaric patriarchy" (Saunders, 2004, p. 14), on the other as "empowered." The bipolar discourse is often needed to design projects, programs, and policies, and to raise funding for the development enterprise. In times of donor fatigue and economic downturn, many organizations need to justify their *raison d'être* as development practitioners. Backed by the Millennium Development Goals and Education For All, women are an appropriate target for intervention:

> The figure of the poor women in the South is well suited to a victimology narrative that rationalizes the planned management and liberation of women in the South by Westernized professionals in the development apparatus. . . . The strategic discursive exhibition of the empowered Third World Woman is no more "real" than her twin, the contrary figure of the victimized woman (Saunders, 2004, p. 14).

Development actors employ various approaches to create and exploit this "victimology" and to suggest strategies for "empowerment." Gender-related issues can be studied both in their relationship to human capital (this approach is frequently used by neoclassical economics) and from a power and oppression perspective (this approach is often used by various strands of critical theory). The World Bank in Senegal, for example, adheres to the former approach and strives to empower women who are "in their peak years of productivity, childbearing and motherhood" (SAR, 1996, p. 3).

The debate on women's role in development is of recent origin. As we have seen, the post-war development discourse focused on increased industrial and agricultural production and the mining of resources. In this context, women were only considered as passive recipients of welfare policies (Heward and Bunwaree, 1999). This changed in 1970 with a pioneering

study by the Danish economist Ester Boserup, who showed how introduction of cash cropping in Africa created gender segmentation because the new cropping techniques were aimed at men, whereas women were responsible for subsistence farming (Boserup, 1989). Boserup's work was followed by a great number of studies from 1978 and onwards on the topic of women's role in development. They were stimulated by a 1975 conference in Mexico City, in which the United Nations inaugurated the Women's Decade. The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), was created in 1976 as a result of the conference. UNIFEM has as its core mandate to strengthen the capacity and leadership of women's organizations and networks and to test and build a knowledge base of innovative approaches to women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. Further, a Mid-Decade Conference took place in Copenhagen in 1980. UNIFEM prepared the conference by collection of worldwide statistical information on women's living conditions.

These initiatives proclaimed that women were active contributors to development and important to economic growth. In doing so, they claimed that investment in women was cost-effective and lead to development. In short "it focused on what women did for development, rather than what it did for them" (Heward and Bunwaree, 1999, p. 1). The effort to make women key actors in development efforts was labeled "Women in Development" or WID. The development community responded positively to the arguments of the economic efficiency of investing in women-related activities, and many WID projects were created, especially in the domain of income-generating activities. Usually, these projects were aimed at women exclusively. They were later criticized because they often added to the already heavy workload of women and also tended to classify women as inferior or "vulnerable" (Nordtveit, 2008b).

The notion of "gender and development" (GAD) gained momentum in the 1980s, criticizing WID for its focus on "Women's development . . . as a logistical problem, rather than something requiring a fundamental reassessment of gender relations and ideology" (Marchand and Parpart, 1995, p. 13). In other words, the WID movement focused on approaches that arguably would increase women's effectiveness at work through policies focusing on health, education, and training. Proponents of the GAD movement insisted that development work instead should be based on a critical analysis of the relationship between gender and society, and promoted a fundamental social transformation of patriarchal power structures. GAD sees gender as a social construct:

> . . . the concept of gender makes it possible to distinguish the biologically founded, sexual differences between women and men from the culturally determined differences between the roles given to or undertaken by women and men respectively in a given society. The first are unchangeable, like a destiny. The latter are workable

> and may be changed by political and opinion-shaping influences. The concept of Women in Development is concrete and may lead to marginalizing women as a particular species with inherited handicaps. The concept of Gender in Development is abstract and opens up for the realization of women's productive potentials in development (Østergaard, 1992, p. 7).

In this context, the GAD movement addresses such issues as the inequity of women's representation in administrative bodies. Women are often excluded from political arenas in which decisions about development are made. GAD's challenge of traditional patriarchal power structures (albeit rarely of the goals of modernization and Westernization of the development world) has made the approach less attractive for mainstream development and donor agencies, such as the World Bank (Marchand and Parpart, 1995).

According to GAD theories, the place of women in the community is linked to a female sphere and activities that are distinct from the men's sphere. These activities and relationships need to be analyzed, both as they relate to development activities, and also how they are affected by them. However, it is argued that women and development must not be seen as a united, single "issue." It is important to stress the heterogeneity of women and their interests, which lead to heterogeneity in their relations to development (Heward and Bunwaree, 1999):

> Women are never simply women; they are daughters, widows, married mothers of small children, unwed mothers, wives of migrant labourers, mothers-in-law. The authority, autonomy, responsibility, obligations and workload they have in the families vary accordingly. And so does their ability to participate in a [development] project and the way they are affected by it. Thus we cannot simply ask how a project has affected women's roles in the family; we must ask how family roles affect their potential participation in the project (Østergaard, 1992, p. 9).

A number of theorists stress the importance of analyzing these relationships in all development initiatives to make them "gender-sensitive," thus not adding to the already wide gap between men and women's relative positions in society, if not improving them.

The GAD movement, although attempting to reveal gender as an ideological construct in various cultures, rarely criticizes the Western model of development as it is largely rooted in the very same Western concepts. Other feminist movements, such as Development Alternatives With Women for a New Era (DAWN), appeared at the same time as GAD, offering a Southern vision of women and development. DAWN was created in 1984 and set up networks of women scholars and activists from developing countries, who engaged in feminist research and were committed to economic and gender justice, and democracy. DAWN scholars did not only critique development at a microlevel, but were interested in the macrolevel, proposing alternative paths to development as compared to Western modernization views:

> DAWN's first global analysis provided a strong critique of the dominant economic model. DAWN's theme of Alternative Economic Frameworks, which provided the focus for the network's continuing work on the economic growth model until 1995, was renamed Political Economy of Globalisation in 1996. Under this theme, DAWN monitors and analyzes the systematic processes of economic globalisation and trade liberalisation and their impact on poor women of the South, working closely with other global development networks for greater accountability and radical restructuring of institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations system and (from 1999) the World Trade Organisation (www.dawn.org, 2005).

In many countries, the economic dimension of women and men's work was a traditional pattern in which men were employed in waged jobs and women worked in unpaid household and subsistence work. The movements that are referred to as neoliberalism and globalization had a double impact on women's lives: first, in many cases, they changed the structure of family income (in which the men were responsible for cash income); and second, they changed and sometimes limited women's access to services, especially through the reduction of state services that accompanied World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programs (SAPs). The first point is demonstrated by the globalization of the labor market: "as the process of expansion of capitalism continued, capital proved gender-blind and the cheap, efficient labor of women was found to be preferable to that of men" (Afshar and Barrientos, 1999, p. 4). The second point, introduction of structural adjustment programs, is characterized by changes in service delivery that, it is argued, in many cases have negatively affected women (Stromquist, 1999). The debate on how globalization affects women and development in many cases is parallel to the debate on globalization and neoliberalism. Many welfare economists argue that state-based actions are still necessary to improve women's access to basic services and that privatization and de-regulation may negatively affect women more than men. In this context, organizations such as DAWN criticize the effects of conservative economic policies on women and emphasize the need for access to basic needs:

> DAWN articulates the desire of Third World Women as tied to a yearning to be free from class, gender, racial and national inequalities, with a privileging of basic needs as basic rights.... DAWN criticizes the emphasis on liberal capitalism... They reject a monolithic viewpoint, affirming heterogeneity and diverse feminisms but recognizing the common opposition to gender oppression (Saunders, 2004, p. 12).

The World Bank takes a different stance, closely linked to human capital approaches. Access to education can be considered within a neoclassical economic framework as an investment that has the potential to lift individuals out of poverty through their increased returns from the labor market. The social return on investment, it is claimed, is higher for girls and women than

boys and men. Education for girls and women will improve productivity, cash income, and lead to positive externalities in terms of consumer behavior, health, family planning and, to a lesser extent, asset management and migration (Cohn and Geske, 1990). Based on this, "societies may also want more investments in women, because of the greater social returns (external benefits) accruing from women's human capital compared to men's" (Schultz, 1995, p. 15). Accordingly, the World Bank and other institutions have been launching specific programs targeted at girls' enrollment in primary education and alternative non-formal education to address the gender gap in education. The education provided, it is argued, should respond to women's practical needs and daily life. Income-generating activities and basic skills classes, in this point of view, should be included as a part of the curriculum:

> 1. Strategies to improve girls' education in Africa need to work on the provision of basic fuel and water infrastructures for the household . . . 2. There is a need to redefine the educational requirements of women and girls. Educational programmes aimed at adult women should go beyond literacy programmes to include knowledge of soil fertility, water use, animal husbandry, forest products use, food storage, nutrition, health and marketing . . . 3. To accomplish gender objectives the collection and use of social statistics will have to be improved . . . 4. Financial assistance should be targeted to low-income women and should be available for low-level economic activities, including micro-credit capacity (Stromquist, 1999, pp. 28–29).

Women's (and men's) education can also be considered as a human right.[1] Such a stance has been taken by UNICEF and many NGOs and lead to an analysis of education in terms of equitable access to education regardless of the returns on investment. Further, it is claimed that the efforts of the World Bank and other UN agencies are not sufficient to achieve the international goals set for gender and education (i.e., the Millennium Development Goals and the Dakar Declaration on Education for All) to ensure gender equity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all education levels by 2015. UNESCO statistics show that the gap between male and female enrollment has been reduced between 1990 and 2000, but that there are still great inequalities between male and female enrollment and achievement, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. From a critical perspective, it has been argued that these measures do little to address prevailing patriarchal gender ideologies (Marchand and Parpart, 1995). If women have the same access to education as men, it is argued, they will still be channeled into women's roles and women's work. Equity in access to education per se does little to

[1] See, for example, Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) available at http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_c_educ.htm

dismantle barriers to women's development that are due to existing power structures.

3.4 Constructing Gender

The World Bank is committed to correct gender disparities in education. This is one of the reasons it created the Women's Literacy Project, which had several components, not only to strengthen women's literacy but also to strengthen women's associative, organizational, and management skills. Ironically, the associative part, and the building of women's capacity, two of the principal outcomes of the Women's Literacy Project, were not clearly foreseen by the project document. Instead, the World Bank's documentation insisted that women need to learn to read and write in order to reduce their number of pregnancies, improve the chances of their children's survival, and send their daughters to school:

> The majority (80%) of young rural Senegalese women aged 15–39, women in their peak years of productivity, childbearing and motherhood, are illiterate . . . A recent analysis from Senegal shows that children of illiterate mothers are 50% more likely to die in childhood; illiterate women want 1.8 more children on the same income as literate mothers; and all other things being equal (income, geographic location, ethnicity, etc.), literate mothers are about 50% more likely to send their daughters to school than illiterate mothers (SAR, 1996, p. 3).

In other words, women were constructed as a tool for development, since their productivity, childbearing and motherhood were believed to be improved through the reception of a literacy course. Another benefit, this time related more directly to the women themselves, and not only to their production capabilities, was said to be empowerment, though enhanced self-confidence and self-efficacy:

> Adult literacy programs are also shown to have important empowerment effects. They increase the self-confidence and self-efficacy of women, and provide an opportunity for women to meet, discuss and formulate solutions to an array of common problems. Beneficiaries themselves often describe a more wide ranging set of benefits that motivate them to participate. Among the most common are: the desire to learn reading, writing and calculation for its own sake, to gain more independence and greater control over their personal life, and to acquire new knowledge useful in their daily lives (SAR, 1996, Annex 2, p. 2).

The emphasis is on the "useful" for the daily lives. It may be argued that the project merely maintains existing power relationships in the society by giving women a poor education, instead of providing a channel for upward socioeconomic mobility (Papagiannis and Bock, 1983). The use of local languages seems to support this point of view: as was noted by Mamadou Ndoye in an interview, "one cannot get a job after having learned a local

language." The aim of the project was not to give women the necessary skills for obtaining jobs that required French; the aim was to give them the necessary skills to improve their families' and communities' living conditions. The improvement of the basic needs situation in poor communities could best be achieved, it was thought, through the training of women. The needs of women, as seen in a women-in development perspective, were thus linked to the idea of providing a minimum of skills to women, to make them more effective in their households and in their communities (e.g., by teaching them how to obtain vaccination and schooling for their children, and how to improve household hygiene). Some of the interviewees pointed out that the learning of local languages without the possibility of converting them into French at a later stage was useless and that such learning was imposed by government policy:

> *There are no newspapers and no literature in local languages; it is not useful to learn them. Local languages are learned because they are politically correct (UNESCO staff).*

> *There is a big government push for local languages, especially for girls' education. Boys seem to continue learning French. In this way the girls obtain "literate" status, but not in the official language [French]. The same effort should be given to girls as to boys to get them into [formal] schooling and to keep them there (Private provider staff).*

The official discourse differed from the above. Senegal had a very high rate of illiteracy, particularly among women. This was mainly linked to cultural and religious reasons since many families did not see the necessity of educating girls. The government's efforts therefore prioritized girls and women – both in literacy courses and in primary school enrollment:

> *. . . some of the communities actually refuse to have a primary school. This is due to cultural and religious reasons. Also, most of the villagers do not think that education of girls is important (Civil servant).*

> *The Women's Literacy Project is prioritizing women. The other projects also prioritize women. This is because the government has opted for a policy of correcting disparities between the genders. The Women's Literacy Project has as objective to enroll 75% women among its participants, whereas PAPA and some other projects have 65% as a target figure for women's enrollment. The projects also prioritize women for the positions of supervisor and instructor (Civil servant).*

The use of local languages for literacy courses, seen from this point of view, was due to several reasons. Traditionally, literacy courses had been taught in local languages; it was therefore natural to continue as before. Also, literacy was seen as a tool for the participants to obtain information to improve their daily lives, not as a tool for emancipation or to obtain a job in the formal economy. Finally, the literacy courses were aimed at areas of high illiteracy, where most participants could not speak French. Teaching French literacy

would have required a long time – both to familiarize the learners with French and then to train them in reading and writing this foreign language. Many of the enrollees would simply not have had the time to learn both French and literacy at the same time; the opportunity costs would have been too high. Besides, research has shown that people learn better in their own language (Lauglo, 2001); it therefore made sense to focus on local languages to teach literacy and then eventually teach French after the participants had learned how to read and write.

However, there is a disjunction between the policy and the reality, because the country lacks a literate environment in local languages (as noted in the quotation above, all important official documents and most other types of information are in French). Besides, the training of girls and young women in local languages (through literacy training) and boys in French (through primary education) replicates current gender differences and constitutes a barrier for women to access work in administrative positions. An increase in girls' enrollment and girls' higher attainment in primary education could have helped correct this situation, whereas the literacy training did not help modify such gender barriers.

The World Bank was occupied by the gender disparities in the country, but considered that local languages would be a better choice for the literacy learners. The project document noted that the Women's Literacy Project was complementing pro-girl efforts in the primary school sector, but, since these latter were not great enough to offset the gender disparities, the Women's Literacy project was a supplement to other efforts:

> Widespread illiteracy among women is directly related to a historical under-provision of primary education, to financial, cultural, and social constraints that limit girls' school enrollment, and limited education opportunities for teens or adults who missed the opportunity to attend formal school. To expand access to primary education, IDA, the KfW [German Bank for Reconstruction/Development], France and Japan are supporting a five-year program . . . to increase girls' enrollment. This effort alone, however, will be insufficient to significantly lower illiteracy among young women for at least another cohort. Projections suggest that even assuming the objectives for primary education are attained, in the year 2015, still about 45% of teens and young women (aged 15–39) would be literate, and even less in rural areas. The proposed project complements . . . the efforts to expand basic education by supporting the expansion of literacy programs for teenage girls and young women who dropped out, missed the opportunity to attend, or are not yet reached by formal schooling (SAR, 1996, p. 13).

The World Bank saw this project primarily as a supplement to primary school activities to correct gender imbalances in literacy. Many local people had a different opinion. The setup of literacy classes in a village was not automatic. Several communities, for cultural reasons, were at first hostile to letting

women participate in literacy classes. Often, only one or a few villages in the rural community initially accepted the setup of a literacy course. Later, the project seems to have benefited from a positive reputation, and many communities that were previously hostile to the project subsequently requested to participate in it. During the integrated phase of the Women's Literacy Project (from the year 2000 and onwards), the literacy project was well known and accepted in most of the rural and urban areas:

> *[During the set-up of courses,] sometimes we meet the women and men separately. When meeting with men, we listen to their problems, but we also try to convince them [about the literacy course]. In the beginning, the men were hostile to allow women to attend the literacy course. Now they are no longer hostile to it (Private provider staff).*

Still some people refused to allow their wives to attend the courses. This was both because of gender issues (the existence of a "jealous" husband) and because of other reasons, e.g., cultural issues. Most project stakeholders, however, underlined the importance of men's willingness to let their wives participate in the project. One village had particularly good results – and I was informed that

> *The men supported the women - sometimes the women even were pushed [by their husbands] to go to class (Private provider staff).*

In general, the men's support was necessary for a course to be set up in the community. If the men, and especially the elders, were against the course, it was rarely if ever set up. A curious example of resistance to a course occurred in a village where the villagers had two competing chiefs. One of the chiefs accepted the course, the other refused it. The supporters of one chief let their wives go to the course; the others did not:

> *The other women in the village [those married to men who were against the literacy course] are sorry not to participate. Their husbands refused to let them join when the course was set up in the village; the reasons for this were mainly political (Current learner-relais).*

Still, this story shows that male acceptance of the course was necessary before women could enroll. As time went by, there was a change in the local attitude toward the literacy courses since the providers met less and less resistance in the villages. It is unclear whether this increasing acceptance was due to change in the gender relationships in the village – or if the men simply recognized that the literacy course was not threatening and that it did not challenge the traditional gender patterns in the community.

Although the Women's Literacy Project recommended that providers teach civics classes, such classes were rarely seen as a priority. Nevertheless, certain subprojects took the matter of civics seriously. Some taught about

voting rights or about other gender-related issues. According to some civil servants, a rise in women's voting participation was largely an impact of the literacy classes:

> *At an organizational level, literacy helps set up better organizational structures [in the villages] – and provides instruction on the rights and obligations of citizens. The literacy programs have led to an important increase in voting over the last 10 years (Civil servant).*

Some providers, often language and cultural associations, taught about local culture and actively encouraged women to vote:

> *As for civics, our traditions and culture as Serreer are particularly studied. Also, we provide some information about civil law: what is the nation, the republic, how does the administrative structure function, what are the rural taxes, etc. The participants are encouraged to vote in elections (Private provider staff).*

However, most providers stated that they were afraid that such instruction would be too political. Politics are a sensitive topic in Senegal and could easily lead to important problems in the community. It would, for example, be difficult if the husband and wife voted for different parties. Voting preferences had been known to create many problems both between individuals and in-between different fractions in the communities, even in remote rural areas. A director of a provider association said,

> *I have seen families destroyed by politics. When a couple votes for different parties, there can be serious problems. Literacy can help to improve this [situation]. However, politics belong to one domain; literacy to another. In one village, we had two heads of village, one for each political tendency. We had to open two literacy classes, one for each camp. The formal school was opened under one head of village, and the children of people belonging to the other political tendency would not attend the classes. I had to intervene, and ask the village chiefs to dissociate between education and politics (Private provider staff).*

Most provider staff, as shown in the quotation above, felt that the literacy education in Senegal should be politically disinterested and did not in any way question the status quo of the society or the situation of women. It may, however, be difficult to be neutral in setting up literacy courses, and self-proclaimed neutrality often hides an agenda. Some non-formal education theorists, such as Freire, refute the possibility of objectivity in teaching and learning:

> In the context of history, culture, and politics, I register events not so as to adapt myself to them but so as to change them, in the physical world itself. I am not impotent. [...] For this reason I do not accept (because it is not possible) the ingenuous or strategically neutral position often claimed by people in education [...] No one can be in the world, with the world, and with others and maintain a

> posture of neutrality. I cannot be in the world decontextualized, simply observing life (Freire, 2001, p. 73).

As if explicitly disagreeing with Freire, a provider staff stated that,

> *As for civics in the curriculum; I think it is a bit dangerous since the providers are often politically connected. I have tried to remain as neutral as I could in my classes. Many of the learners belong to other political orientations [than mine] (Private provider staff).*

Another director of a provider association said that the women in the locality were not registered to vote and that he was not going to take up this subject with them. Most providers concentrated on giving general information about Senegal; and some ventured to give classes in civil rights, and how to obtain administrative papers (identity papers, birth certificates, marriage licenses, etc.). The courses thus had as effect to include women (and their families) in the "normalized" social life of Senegal. The project did not challenge any established hierarchal social order, but maintained and preserved the society in its existing power structure:

> *As for civics, some paralegal specialists have provided training for the 7th cohort on rights in marriage, divorce, civil status, rights of renting, inheritance laws, etc. These sessions are intended for women, and also help them with such issues as obtaining a national ID card and how to declare children's births – this is necessary for subsequent enrollment to primary school (Private provider staff).*

> *Some of the participants are getting marriage licenses, even after having being married for 30 years! Also, we teach the women how to obtain children's birth certificates; now they are pushing their husbands to obtain birth certificates! (Private provider staff).*

Classes on gender issues, with a special goal to strengthen the women's position or to challenge the patriarchy, obviously were not frequently encountered in the courses; these were still too sensitive topics for most rural areas. However, using the World Bank's conception of "empowerment" in the project document, the women's position in the village may in many cases have been improved by attending the course. The new capabilities to write, read, and calculate in themselves "empowered." One participant said,

> *I think that the immediate effect of the program is that I have a better vision of things; the program has raised awareness, which has made me manage my actions in a better way. In addition to the instrumental knowledge, such as knowing to write my name – which I have known for a long time now - I can also write letters. I can write what I want, and have written to people outside the [women's] association (Current learner).*

The learning of the instrumental knowledge enabled women not only to look after their own accounts but also to communicate (through telephone and

letters) with people outside the village. Their position was further changed when the course helped them to conduct income-generating activities:

> *The status of women in the village, in particular, has changed and they are now managing their own funds. They produce soap and tomatoes (Private provider staff).*

Another outcome of the courses was social and related to the women's interrelationship within the village. The learners often used the class sessions to discuss problems in the village and to find common solutions to these problems. Many interviewees pointed to the course's role to solve internal strife:

> *The village is more united by the literacy course, and there are less incidents between people (Current learner).*

> *The literacy classes made it possible to resolve problems in the community, whereas the French school is a door toward other perspectives (Villager, whose family members participated in literacy courses).*

> *The village is much more closely-knit and united than before (Private provider staff).*

Further, there are reasons to believe that the literacy course's content strengthened primary school enrollment in the concerned communities, especially for girls. The World Bank's project document underlined that the improvement of girls' education was an important rationale for the project: "The program is estimated to result in a 23% increase in girl's [primary school] enrollment" (SAR, 1996, p. 5); and "all other things being equal (income, geographic location, ethnicity, etc.), literate mothers are about 50% more likely to send their daughters to school than illiterate mothers" (SAR, 1996, p. 3). The likelihood of literate mothers to send their girls to primary school structures had several reasons: on the one hand, it was a self-selecting mechanism since the mothers who were interested in literacy often wanted their children also to have an opportunity to learn. In addition, the literacy course was supposed to promote children's education and especially to focus on the necessity to send girls to school. A third reason was that some teachers taught the participants how to obtain birth certificates, which were necessary to enroll children in formal schools. Finally, the course set up a Learning and Activities' Center, which in many cases was also used by schoolchildren, both boys and girls:

> *The center is a reading center, but it is also a resource center. Anyone in the village can come to the center and read books in the library, where one can find reading materials in both local and other languages. There are both reading materials for children and books about the Koran for religious people in the village (Civil servant).*

None of the outcomes of the courses can be seen in terms of political engagement or a radical change in civic behavior. The World Bank's project document described the desired "empowerment" outcomes in terms of improved literacy skills, independence, better motherhood, etc. During implementation, however, other aspects of the project emerged, such as subproject support to improve women's management and organizational skills (especially in the legal sense). These aspects were not foreseen by the project document, and, in my opinion, are some of the most significant gender-related outcomes of the project. The gender strengthening components in the project are partially connected with its civil society components and include:

- Training of a *relais*
- Training of the course's management committee
- Acquisition of a legal status of the local women's association or GIE

One or two *relai*s, usually women, were selected in the beginning or during each literacy course's implementation – and received special training by the provider. The *relais* organized continuous learning activities in the Learning and Activities' Center when the course officially had finished and the provider association had withdrawn. In this way, the *relais* took over the functions of the literacy teacher, who left the village when the course was over. The learning activities taking place in the Learning and Activities' Center that were organized by the *relais* promoted sustainability of the literacy skills learned during the course and created a continuous learning system in the villages:

> *The [use of a] relais is a part of the measures taken to ensure sustainability; it is one person from the community who can be a participant in the literacy class or a person who has already been made literate, and who has been selected according to criteria of availability and of knowledge of writing and reading, as well as the capacity of organizing activities. Generally there are two relais who are selected to continue each class's learning activities after the provider has left. The relais are offered an initial training of one month from the provider, which is followed by a system of hands-on [in-class] training [tutorat] by the facilitator, which starts about six months after the beginning of the classes. The relais are taught how to organize a class, how to plan lessons, etc. Then, after twelve months of training by the provider, the relais are taking over the classes. The provider-paid literacy teacher is accompanying the relais for another six months, upon which he or she [the teacher] leaves the village. The relais remain in the village, and are now responsible for local training activities (Civil servant).*

Specific training helped the *relais* to improve their literacy knowledge and administration skills, and also, in some circumstances, it assisted them in gaining access to credit. The training often led to the subsequent recruitment of the *relais* as a literacy teacher in a next cohort of literacy courses.

The *relais* position – even if it did not always, as intended, ensure that literacy activities continued in the village after the course had ended – was a stepping-stone for one or two people in each community to a new position. In many cases, it enabled the *relais* to continue a development-related activity since many of them were recruited as staff for other providers or development projects. Also, given that the *relais* were almost exclusively women, this new function (which was apparently created by, and specific to the Women's Literacy Project) led to an opening for women in various positions for community development.

The strengthening of women's organizational skills was also important for the course management committee, which received specific training from the provider. In most cases, the training, called "leadership training," was targeted at the president, secretary, and treasurer of the management committee. Some providers asked men to participate in the course management committee. In most cases, the men were not selected to have any dominant role in the committee, but nevertheless represented the male "power" to get certain things done:

> *I ask [the villagers] to include one man in each committee, so that he can help the women to organize activities. For the construction of the CAL, I associate the Chief of the Village. It is necessary to associate with the men. The men will do nothing if we don't associate with them. The man is not the head of the management committee; most often he is the assistant to the secretary (Private provider staff).*

The work of the management committee would give its members useful experience in supervision and finance. Usually, the members of the committee were involved in general course monitoring and also in financial matters related to the course fees and income-generating activities:

> *The management committees are monitoring the learning and the income generating activities... After we have trained the relais, we will train them; it is what we call the leadership training. There are three positions in the management committee, president, treasurer, secretary; they are the same as in the women's association (Private provider).*

Women's participation in such structure by itself was sometimes a first step toward a more independent situation. It could contribute to help members achieve more financial autonomy and also encouraged travel, participation in meetings and in training sessions, as well as in management training given by the provider. Often the training of the management committee led to the structuring of the course participants themselves as a for-profit association, i.e., the class set up a GIE that was different from the local women's association. The participants in this GIE would most often collectively continue the income-generating activities that they had learned in the course. Also, the

management committee had financial responsibilities, since it was generally responsible for the payment of the financial contributions of the participants to the provider (2,500 FCFA; or about US $5 from each participant). Sometimes, the committee was also accountable for the use of these funds and purchased materials for the course's income-generating activities or for other activities:

> *This is a part of Senegal where there is a lot of fishing. Prior to the course, we had to use an intermediate person to go to the market and buy fishing materials for us. We lost a lot of money in doing that. Now, we can buy it ourselves; it is the management committee that is doing it (Participant).*

These experiences led to some enfranchisement of women's position in the communities; for example, women increasingly emerged in leadership positions in provider associations. The Women's Literacy Project thus helped generate women's leadership capabilities within the village, both by training the *relais* and by creating course management committees. The partnership approach's boosting of the development of civil society organizations was therefore likely to promote increasing female participation in civil society – and thereby strengthen the position of women in the society as a whole. The project both improved women's basic knowledge (literacy, skills, etc.) at an individual level and was instrumental in creating a civil society that was aware of women's issues and that is also increasingly being run by women. The result was an emerging and gradual consciousness of gender issues at the local level:

> *The literacy programs in themselves have been important in shaping a consciousness of citizenship, and a sentiment of belonging to the country. After attending literacy classes, participants enroll their children in school. They look for education for their children. They also ask for local health offices, because they would like to ensure that their children are healthy. In the courses, they have discussed about education, they have discussed about health, and they have discussed about the environment. Not all these questions are understood at the same time, but they make people gradually aware of their place in the society (Civil servant).*

To summarize, the government's reason for implementing the literacy courses with a special focus on women was to establish gender equity in literacy in the country. The empowerment outcomes of the project can be contested since the project also can be seen as a means to maintain existing social relationships by giving poor women a poor education. The World Bank documentation seems to partially construct women as illiterate beast of burden that are in need of literacy to get empowered, to raise children, and to be good mothers. Rather than a victimology, however, the discourse is related to human capital building, describing what "empowered" women can do for development. The power relationships were not directly challenged;

the project rather targeted to increase the self-confidence and self-efficacy of women, and the possibility that they "gain more independence and greater control over their personal life, and . . . acquire new knowledge useful in their daily lives" (SAR, 1996, Annex, 2, p. 2). Nonetheless, the impact of the project seems to go beyond the maintenance of existing gender relationships, because of the committee leadership training that was to take place as an obligatory part of the subprojects, the training of the *relais*, and official validation (through legal recognition) of women's associations and new-borne GIEs. It remains to be questioned to which extent the building of civil society and the women's empowerment are "real," or if the newly created associations and new status of women only are artificial and economic constructs, without sustainability.

Chapter 4
A Literate and Enabling Environment

I believe there has been a qualitative change in the implementation of literacy courses because the dynamics [of the courses] have evolved together with the politics of our country. After 40 years, literacy has acquired more institutional weight, and we have understood the impact that literacy has on the promotion of citizens and its impact on development. Literacy has produced a silent revolution. The local population [now] has leaders with access to documentation; they have gained confidence, and organize themselves efficiently; they defend their interests (Former civil servant).

People know that the lack of skills to read and write is a barrier for them. They would like for literacy to change their lives. Many of them want to learn, and many even take initiatives by themselves. However [the providers] do not take their wishes into account, but sell a pre-established program. There is no real discussion and responsibilization of the population. They say yes [to the program] – then the classes are empty – and the activities are stereotyped. The needs of the financial sponsor, the literacy department, and others take precedence [over appropriate actions in the villages]. There is no space for participants to change things significantly [in the course]; everything is standardized (Consultant).

The government-implemented programs had as a basic idea to provide reading and writing skills to the population. In the faire-faire system, questions of what to read, what to write, and the aims of these skills become more important than the skills acquisition per se. The faire-faire system gives a purpose to the acquired skill. The novelty of faire-faire is that it makes it possible for the beneficiaries to say that this is our context, these are our needs, and these are the problems that the literacy course can help us resolve. The learning program is built on discussions with the beneficiaries on these needs. The interest of the system is that it motivates the learners, because they learn for a purpose and can use what they learn instantaneously. This motivation is improving learning and also the pedagogical effectiveness of learning. The previous system was close to the primary school system, and taught the learners in the same manner as children (Former civil servant).

The Jacques Delors International Commission on Education for the twenty-first century identified four "pillars" of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be (Delors et al., 1996). These pillars repeat a very traditional aims-of-education debate that

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identifies main areas of philosophical standpoints on education. Of course, as a very simple classification, one can distinguish between personal and social aims of education. Further, one can separate between various "sector goals" or "pillars" of education, which often includes knowledge and child-centered goals, as well as economic and social-reconstruction goals (Longstreet and Shane, 1993; Bottery, 1992). Hence, "learning to know" would refer to an academic rationalist (or subject-centered) mode of learning, but also, as noted by the Delors commission, to "learn to learn" and lifelong learning. The "learning to do" would be related to an economic aim of learning (i.e., in view of employment), whereas "learning to live together" would be related to social reconstruction. Finally, "learning to be" would be related to a child-centered discourse, for which the purpose of education would be to develop the child's character and possibilities for self-realization. The philosopher of education, Noddings, contends that the debate on the aims of education has been muted by the economic discourse:

> It is as though our society has simply decided that the purpose of schooling is economic – to improve the financial condition of individuals and to advance the prosperity of the nation (Noddings, 2003, p. 4).

She subsequently argues that one of the overlooked aims of education should be happiness. To illustrate her point, she stages a discussion between a visitor from another world and a representative educator, Ed. The discussion closes with the alien saying, "it just seems so sad that, when everyone seeks happiness, the schools do so little to promote it" (Noddings, 2003, p. 95). Instead in seeking happiness or self-realization, it appears to be generally accepted that most educational systems, pushed by forces of an integrated world market economy, have departed from child- and culture-centered education systems and moved toward an economy-centered education (Korsgaard, 1996).

Postman (1996) defined the two core problems of schooling as an "engineering" and a "metaphysical" problem. In developing countries, interventions have largely been focusing on engineering issues, such as how to implement a project, program, or policy to support Education For All. The Women's Literacy Project is a useful example. The project document and related documentation (including evaluations) to a large extent were preoccupied with the implementation modalities and processes. The metaphysical question, i.e., related to the aims-of-education debate (in this case, aims of literacy), was present, since the project document had clear (and practical) outcomes of the project in mind. The question of how the project scored against the goals of literacy acquisition and the use of this knowledge, however, was relegated to a third place, or was at times non-existent. Some studies analyzed the quality of the courses, i.e., the successful learning

of something (often, writing, reading, and problem-solving skills), without questioning why *this something* instead of *that something*. In the next sections, we will investigate the metaphysical part of literacy, and discuss how literacy was constructed in Senegal.

4.1 Literacy Education

The definition of literacy has been the object of much debate. Historically, it was possible to make a distinction between those who had attended school and those who had not; schooling was generally seen as synonymous with literacy, since most students attained a literacy level (Wagner et al., 1999). However, by the end of the century, the number of people who had attended only a few years of schooling augmented considerably, and it was therefore questionable from which level of education one should consider a person literate. The increase of enrollment in primary education contributed to make a much more variegated landscape of literacy skills, where the traditional dichotomy between schooled and unschooled neither reflected the population's literacy level nor accounted for its abilities in various basic skills (Wagner et al., 1999). Literacy training was in this context an ambiguous term, since it could be used to define formal basic education as well as non-formal training, and included all levels of technical and basic skills education. Instead of literacy training, the term non-formal education (NFE) became widely used in the 1970s. At that point, non-formal education was defined as

> . . . any organized, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups of the population, adults as well as children (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974, p. 8).

Using this definition, all literacy programs come under the NFE umbrella, except (formal) primary education, self-study, and informal family instruction. Self-study methods and also non-institutionalized family learning settings are frequently labeled informal education. Primary non-formal education programs increasingly gained interest from the early 1970s as a way of addressing the problem of out-of-school and unschooled children and youth.

Most theorists oppose functionalist and sociocultural views of literacy. Under a functionalist view, a person's degree of literacy is not considered as dependent on the local context but as a pre-defined and measurable quality (Wagner et al., 1999). Using this viewpoint, one can therefore define literacy as reading "automatism" e.g., reading faster than 1 word per second, so that reading becomes automatic. In a review of cognitive research for developing

countries, a World Bank publication notes that literacy training for adults is often inefficient because the recipients of training cannot read at the end of the course, or in some cases that they cannot read fast enough to make the reading skill useful (Abadzi, 2003).

From the perspective of neoclassical economics, the reasons for implementing non-formal basic education are drawing on human capital theory and intimately linked to efficiency and equity arguments. Education policymakers have often preferred investment in primary education instead of investing in literacy education. Proponents of non-formal literacy education have suggested that literacy is a necessary complement to formal education and should not be shunned, even if the perceived return of investment will be longer for young people in primary schools. Since most adult literacy education programs cover the age group of 15–39 years old, with a usual average age of 20 years, it can be argued that literacy education is also likely to generate a long stream of return to investment.

Cost–benefit research on non-monetary effects of education has often concentrated on consumer behavior, health, family life, and to a lesser extent, on asset management and migration (Cohn and Geske, 1990). Recent World-Bank-sponsored research on literacy education has found further evidence of impact on the following areas:

- Support of children's education
- Empowerment
- More effective communication (oral as well as written)
- Improved family health
- More productive livelihoods (Lauglo, 2001)

These areas of impact are complementing earlier research, which depicted literacy education as a means to

> (1) provide education to those for whom schooling is not a realistic alternative; (2) make new skills and attitudes available to the rural poor; (3) circumvent cultural obstacles that prevent some people from utilizing school effectively; (4) use scarce educational resources more efficiently; and (5) modify the schooling system itself (Papagiannis and Bock, 1983, p. 8).

One of the few quantitative studies of monetary and non-monetary benefits on non-formal education was conducted in Ghana, based on data from the Living Standard Measurement Study 1998/1999 (Valerio, 2003). This study revealed little monetary benefits and mixed results regarding non-monetary benefits from the program. Primary school attendance for children in Ghana was positively correlated with the parents' literacy level: "Overall, the attendance rate is lower, irrespective of the child's age, among children whose

parents are not literate" (Valerio, 2003, p. 97). This finding is consistent with earlier studies (Lauglo, 2001; PIRLS, 2003).

Literacy may not primarily be seen as a means to obtain increased cash income, but rather as a way to stimulate political and social participation. Also, its effects on awareness raising is claimed to be important:

> . . . education and training for youths is not only an economic imperative. In many countries young people's dissatisfaction and disillusionment with their prospects for education and work threaten social cohesion and stability. Reaching this age group through formal and non-formal education is also vital to the targeted intervention in such areas as HIV/AIDS and reproductive health education and programs to raise awareness of civic rights and responsibilities (World Bank, 2001, p. 14).

In addition to the awareness raising effects mentioned above, literacy education can be seen as a way to restore equity and fairness for young people. Particularly, it may provide a second chance to learn for young illiterate girls and women who have missed the opportunity to go to primary school for sociocultural and economic reasons.

As opposed to a functional view of literacy education as a pre-defined and measurable "quality," leading to specific and measurable outcomes, the sociocultural views allow no fixed definition of literacy since they see literacy as culture dependent. Literacy thus becomes

> . . . a cultural construction that has meaning only in a specific cultural context . . . To be viewed as literate, individuals must be able to manipulate culturally meaningful symbols and must be able to do so in a culturally appropriate manner (Ferdmann, 1999, p. 97).

The sociocultural view denies the measurability of literacy against fixed standards. Its definition of literacy rejects standard literacy projects and programs and also rejects the use of standard testing:

> . . . there has been a tendency to compare or contrast all out-of-school educative activities in terms of their content and pedagogic methods. This has led to the misplaced belief that it is possible to borrow innovative ideas about education from Cuba's parallel system . . . what distinguishes nonformal education in different societies . . . is differences in the intervention theories that underlie such programs and the contextual realities within which these models are implemented (Papagiannis and Bock, 1983, p. 13).

From a critical perspective, literacy's contribution to replicating existing social power relationships must be assessed. Literacy can be understood as the degree to which a person possesses the skills that are valued by

the dominant group (Ferdmann, 1999). Therefore, literacy can be used as a strategy to

> . . . displace blame for prior political and technical failures onto the poor; reinforce social myths about people's degree of control of their own fate; lead to person-centered treatment rather than institutional or system treatment in order to understand poverty; encourage and justify continued study of the poor rather than the rich (Papagiannis and Bock, 1983, p. 10).

It can be further argued that literacy education rarely gives the learners the formal certification necessary to gain access to good jobs. In this way, literacy becomes a way of containing social discontent by giving vulnerable people a poor education. At the same time, literacy education may replicate and maintain existing power relations in society:

> If nonformal education programs are successful in producing more competent, satisfied farmers and fishers, they are likely to effectively defuse legitimate social discontent, and inhibit the development of concerted demand for social and economic restructuring. Instead of providing an alternative channel for upward socioeconomic mobility, nonformal education may rigidly maintain existing channels (Papagiannis and Bock, 1983, pp. 11–12).

However, literacy education can also be seen as a means for emancipation of the poor. Many states in transition to a socialist regime have used literacy education to change the power relationships between people. This has been the case in the former Soviet Union, China, Mongolia, Cuba, Nicaragua, and other countries. Mass literacy campaigns, historically, were favored by socialist states that used mass mobilization. Some of the more famous campaigns took place in USSR (1919–1939), Vietnam (1945–1977), China (1950–1980), Cuba (1961), Burma (1960–1980), Brazil (1967–1980), and Tanzania (1971–1981) (Wagner et al., 1999). In Cuba, for example, 1961 was designated as a "Year of Education" and more than 250,000 men, women, schoolboys, and schoolgirls were mobilized over a 9-month period into a teaching force to eradicate illiteracy on the island. They were transported all over the island and supplied with more than 3 million books and more than 100,000 paraffin lamps (Carnoy and Samoff, 1990). The literacy campaign brought the revolution to the most physically isolated areas of Cuba and also brought the urban, educated population groups into contact with the rural poor and illiterate:

> The campaign was therefore a means to connect elements in Cuban society that had been successfully separated by conditioned capitalist development. Bringing urban youth to the countryside through the educational system became a dominant theme in education from 1961 on, and the breakdown of barriers between urban and rural areas (both in production/distribution and in values) has been an integral part of the Cuban development process (Carnoy and Samoff, 1990, pp. 176–177).

One of the most influential scholars about literacy education as an emancipatory tool has been the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921–1997). His theories contend that education should be based on conversation and dialogue instead of curricula. The dialogue should involve respect, and people working with one another instead of the teacher lecturing the illiterate. As seen in the previous chapter, Freire also claimed that education should be informed action, not neutral. It is impossible for educators to be neutral; hence they should have a clear political mandate, linked to values of social justice (Freire, 2001). In this way, education should have as aim to develop consciousness about the possibility of transforming reality. This process is called "conscientization" from the Portuguese word *conscientização* (Freire, 2001). Freire's concept of literacy education as a tool to promote freedom for the oppressed and social justice stands in stark opposition to the neoliberal views reviewed above.

4.2 Production of Literacy

The *faire–faire* system was supposed to adapt the learning to the participants' needs, and thus positioned the project within a sociocultural understanding of literacy. However, in the Women's Literacy Project (as indeed in most literacy projects in Senegal) the format of the curriculum was rigid. About 300 out of the 450 contact hours were related to acquiring the "instrumental skills" (reading, writing, and basic math). During fieldwork and in interviews, few of the literacy course teachers and provider staff indicated that they had been using specific methods for adult learning, e.g., participative learning methods such as group work, peer tuition, etc. which are often suggested to improve adult learning (Abadzi, 2003). The literacy teachers in Senegal instead use traditional primary school methods; the teachers read, the learners repeat the lesson aloud.

Providers in the Women's Literacy Project were expected to use sociocultural criteria to propose a literacy program that was intimately linked to the life and needs of the learners. The use of a needs-based curriculum was promoted: the learning program was considered appropriate if "it clearly responds to the requests of the population as revealed in the needs assessment" (PM, 2000, p. 14). Instead of basing the learning program on needs, however, it was often based on the cost of learning materials – or on a "standard" primary school booklet that the provider was familiar with. The longitudinal study indicates that at the beginning of the classes, only 38% of the courses had a goals-based curriculum and half of the courses did not even have a schedule indicating the subject for each lesson (LS-T0,

2001). Interview evidence suggests that the courses that had a goals-based curriculum partially succeeded in adapting the goals to the learners' needs. Provider staff generally indicated that they made the learning as responsive as they could to the local sociocultural context by the choice of skills learning subjects.

National evaluation requirements and political pressure, among other factors, made it necessary to find a standard definition and measure of literacy. The tests submitted by the Department of Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) to measure learning achievements at the end of the courses were standardized, and theoretically, were not supposed to take into account local and sociocultural elements. In reality, each evaluator (who were generally civil servants at department education offices) had his or her own style of evaluation and tended to be less strict in areas where the population had had less prior exposure to reading and writing. The evaluators asked the participants to read a text, to write a sentence, and to solve a problem. Generally, this latter was related to some income-generating or market-related activity, which tested the participants' knowledge of simple math. Most civil servants evaluated each ethnic group differently, as it was believed that some population groups did not have the same aptitude for and needs of literacy as others. During evaluations, education officers estimated that the ability to read, even very hesitantly and slowly, was an indicator of project success. In some cases, the sole ability to write one's name and the name of the village was considered sufficient to be declared as a "literate person." If the evaluator found that the learning achievements were low in a particular area, the provider would explain that the participants had learning difficulties, because of their traditions and culture. In certain contexts, the evaluator would then change his or her approach. For example, a local education officer noted during an evaluation session that he did not apply any criteria at all in appraising the participants' literacy level:

> *I'm certifying them to be literate because I don't want to discourage them (Civil servant).*

In this case, people who could not correctly write their own name were considered literate. Not surprisingly, the results of the problem-solving exercise (which required more analytical literacy skills) were consistently worse than the reading and writing results (which could more easily be adapted to the evaluators' appreciation of each case). The problem-solving results improved from 6% success in 1997 to 20% (longitudinal studies, 1999) and a reported 44% success rate in 2000. It is difficult, however, to appreciate whether the improvements noted in the test results were due to an improved pedagogic approach, changes in evaluation methodology, or more

widespread corruption. In reality, each evaluator adapted the participants' final exam it to his or her own liking. There is also some evidence that it was common for providers to pay the evaluator to obtain a positive evaluation. Results of the project evaluations were therefore fairly arbitrary.

In many countries, tests are seen as the culminating event of education, and the pedagogy and learning program are adapted to fit the final exams. This was not the case in Senegal. The final test often took place a long time after the course had finished, and with a small sample of the learners. The tests had very little effect on the pedagogy, on project processes (e.g., imposing negative and positive sanctions on providers), and were at best a simple control that some learning activities actually had taken place in the communities. The testing system therefore valuated processes over delivery, i.e., the testing process and subsequent reporting were assigned importance, but they were not oriented toward an improved subproject quality. Also, the tests did not take into account the learners' prior knowledge of writing and reading, and the outcome of the tests therefore varied greatly according to the learners' literacy level at enrollment (which was rarely tested).

The interviews and studies of the Women's Literacy Project indicated that the learning outcomes of the courses were modest. For example, participants who were close to completion of the course said that they had learned to write their name and to use the telephone during the 450-hour coursework. Most learners cited the ability to telephone as a major outcome of the course, whereas advanced learners who had achieved mastery of reading and writing generally stated that they have been using the newly acquired literacy skills to write poems and letters. Helen Abadzi, who has been involved in the evaluation of World Bank literacy programs, noted that "the outcome of literacy programs are still modest" and that "reading must become automatic, fast, effortless and accurate in order to be useful" (Abadzi, 2003, p. 1). In Senegal, the reading skills obtained were rarely fluent – and in the rare cases where the participants could read fluently and effortlessly, they had previously been to school or attended other literacy courses.

Seen from a sociocultural view, however, interviews and participant observation underline that the literacy course helped satisfy very basic needs of the learners for privacy (e.g., to telephone without assistance) and to be able to function better in the marketplace:

> *The learners write poems to show to the coordinator. They also write to each other – and keep financial books. Some use a calculator (Private provider staff).*

> *During the course, the women learn to write, read, and how to solve problems. Many of the participants write to me or to each other. They write if they need something – they give the letter to their children to give to me (Private provider staff).*

The first skills acquired (and in many cases the *only* skills acquired) were how to use the telephone, writing small notes, and/or keeping small business notes (who owes who, how much). These skills were hardly sufficient to characterize the learner as "literate" if literacy is understood within a functionalist view; yet they may have given the learners tools that enabled them to function better in the local society. Within a sociocultural view, it could be argued that participants acquired some literacy skills needed for their daily life. Many interviewees indicated that this level of achievement was not sufficient and that they would like to attend another course (some of the participants had already attended other courses previously). They also pointed out that the course's duration was too short. In several cases, learners had concrete needs that the literacy course had not satisfied, e.g., learning specific basic skills (especially income-generating skills) or learning to read a newspaper and write a letter. Quantitative measures of literacy achievements confirm interview evidence. The project's longitudinal study divided reading achievements of the Women's Literacy Project learners into three categories:

Level 1: can read an easy text on their daily life
Level 2: can decipher words
Level 3: cannot read a word or a letter

With these definitions, the study obtained the following outcomes of the course:[1] at entry, most participants (74%) were illiterate and only 17% were literate (according to the definition of literacy given above – which does not require fluent and effortless reading). Roughly half (53.7%) of the illiterate people learned at least to decipher words; the remaining 46.2% still could not read a word (or a letter) at the end of the course (see Table 4.1 below).

Table 4.1 Literacy levels of course participants

Literacy level of course participants	Level 1: literate (%)	Level 2: intermediate (%)	Level 3: illiterate (%)
Literacy level at enrollment	17	7	74
6 months after start of program	36	16	48
24 months after start of program	52	14	34

For writing achievements, the numbers are lower than for the reading. The following definitions of learner achievements were used:

[1] Remembering the caveats above – civil servants certifying illiterate people to be literate because he or she "does not want to discourage them;" corrupt civil servants giving positive certifications against the payment of a fee, etc.

Level 1: can write a simple statement that makes sense and that respects the basic syntax and orthographic rules of the language
Level 2: can write words
Level 3: cannot write a word

Only 38.7% of the participants were at level 1 at the end of the course and 26.5% were still at level 3; they could not write a word at the end of the course (LS-T1.2, 2003, p. 21). At enrollment, 13% were at level 1 (they could write a simple statement) and 51% could not write a word (LS-T0, 2001, p. 42). We note the same order of achievements is found in writing skills as in reading skills; roughly half of the illiterate participants learned at least to write words – the remaining half could still not write a word at the end of the course.

The longitudinal study indicated that the results were better for providers with more than 6 years of previous experience in education. Also, learners in urban areas performed about twice as well than learners in rural areas. The project's impact study obtained similar data. Moreover, it provided a breakdown of the previous schooling of those participants (whether literate or illiterate) who had been to previous schooling (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Literacy level of participants having been to prior schooling

Level of literacy of course participants having been to prior schooling	Level 1: literate (%)	Level 2: intermediate (%)	Level 3: illiterate (%)
Participants having been to primary school (average attendance: 5 years)	10	81	9
Participants having been to Arabic school (average attendance: 3 years)	3	70	27
Participants having been to a previous literacy class (1–2 years)	3	70	27

The literacy level of participants who had been to prior school establishments was low. The statistics show that the illiterate participants having been to French school had attended school for an average of 4 years; those having a correct reading level had attended school for an average of 6 years. This is consistent with international findings on literacy in Africa.[2] The Progress

[2] The test was submitted in the local language of the participants (i.e., the language taught in the literacy class). For some students (especially those having studied only

in International Literacy Study (PIRLS) investigated reading achievements in the fourth grade in 35 countries. Most children were literate by that level. Morocco, the only African country participating in the study, obtained much lower scores than the average. Since the education situation in Senegal is considered as less effective than in Morocco (UNESCO, 2008), it is to be expected that the scores of fourth graders are even poorer in Senegal, and that most students will not be literate before they have attended school for another 1 or 2 years. Recent World Bank publications on Africa confirmed this: "A high share of the adults who have completed less than five or six years of primary schooling remain functionally illiterate for the rest of their lives" (Bruns et al., 2003, p. 29). The studies found little literacy impact after 3 or less years of primary schooling and noted "Especially striking in the data is the very limited impact on lifelong literacy from as many as three years of schooling" (Bruns et al., 2003, p. 24). Studies conducted in Togo and Niger both found literacy rates that were lower than 20% for students who had completed 3 years of schooling. It is important to investigate the reasons for the seemingly low results, both for primary education and for literacy courses.

The World Bank and the Senegalese government, in general seemed more preoccupied with the project procedures than with the outcome of the courses. In the Implementation Completion Report, the World Bank rates the quality of the courses as "satisfactory:"

> In 1997, the proportion of beneficiaries having achieved the minimal competency required in reading, writing and problem solving was 57%, 28%, and 6%, respectively. In 2000, this proportion raised up to 75%, 63% and 41%, respectively. The sustainability of literacy skills is likely because a literate environment was created in the areas where the post-literacy sub-projects were tested (ICR, 2004, p. 6).

The World Bank data are based on sketchy information from local education offices, for which monitoring and evaluation of the courses were not standardized or systematic. The World Bank thus evaluates the quality of the courses according to literacy data produced by a defect monitoring and evaluation system.[3] Further, the World Bank states that "a literate environment was created" without giving further explanation to show who created it and how. Since the construction of such environment was one of the core aims of the project, it is useful to explore how the project tried to make the environment literate.

Arabic), this may have lowered the results. A fully literate person in French, however, would have been able to read the simple text in local languages used for this reading test.

[3] The World Bank rated the monitoring and evaluation system as "unsatisfactory" (ICR, 2004, p. 7).

4.3 Production of a Literate Environment in Local Languages

The aim of the Women's Literacy Project was to promote a literate and enabling environment in the village – and to sustain learning activities beyond the subprojects' duration. Several strands of activities were set up to create this environment, few of which were planned in the project document or received much attention in the project completion report. These activities included the training of a *relais*, the setup of a community Learning and Activities' Center, and the creation of a community library:

> *The first measure of sustainability is the reading center in the village. The center is a reading center and a resource center. Anyone in the village can come to the center and read books in the library, where one can find reading materials in both national and other languages. There are both reading materials for children and Koran-related books for religious people in the village. The second measure of sustainability is the organization of participants, and the [third measure] is the library. At the center of all this, is the relais (Civil servant).*

The library generally consisted of a wood box – that was given to (or made by) the course participants. Often, when the course was ongoing, the box was stored in the Learning and Activities' Center. The *relais* or some other person in the course management committee kept it at home if the center could not be locked or if it was not waterproofed. During classes, the books often were exposed on shelves. The providers sometimes organized community activities related to the book box:

> *As for the libraries, we bring together people, not only beneficiaries, but also all others who want to come. The teacher reads, and asks questions about the text afterwards. There are readings from health books or other books; the session is made to interest other people about the course. They read fairy tales, and also books on how to transform produce, etc. Also, I have invented something; I have bought the Koran to make the older villagers interested so they will come and consult the libraries we set up in the villages. The books are written in Arab with Arabic letters. All the other books, except the Koran, are in Wolof or Serreer. Sometimes we give them French books too, but only the teachers and other villagers can read those books. At times schoolchildren come to the literacy center to read books (Private provider staff).*

The providers' sustained intervention was necessary to make the book box and library system work. Some providers were visibly discouraged about the participants' disinterest in using the library. In many cases, the library disintegrated after the provider left the community. Sometimes the learners divided the books between themselves, and sometimes the book box was standing unused and exposed to wind and rain. During several field observation sessions, I found that books were in very poor shape because they were stored inappropriately and not used. The library books were in many

cases lost. When I asked a former learner what had become of the books, she dryly noted:

> *The subproject finished one year ago. The participants divided the library books among themselves when the teachers left (Former learner).*

UNESCO staff members confirmed the problems observed in the libraries:

> *During field visits, we have found that all the libraries were in bad shape (UNESCO-Dakar).*

Senegal's rural areas still are of an oral tradition, and the written word has not the importance that it has in a literate environment. Also, since important documents, such as road signs, official information, instructions manuals, etc., are in French, the literacy courses in local languages have less instrumental value than literacy in French.

Many of the Learning and Activities' Centers were given or lent to the providers for the duration of the course, partly to satisfy the Women's Literacy Project's requirements. When the subproject ceased, the building went back to its original usage. In particular, buildings used for storage of food staples were seen as appropriate to conduct literacy courses, since they were constructed of cement. In other cases, the villagers built a center that was too frail to last through the heavy rains of the wet season, and the center itself disintegrated. The difference between the Women's Literacy Project's requirements and the reality therefore showed a disjuncture. On one hand, the integrated literacy model experimented and built by the project management was theoretically very compelling; on the other hand, the implementation of the model was somewhat less convincing. However, the results of the project should not be generalized: the realizations of the project largely varied according to subprojects: some of the subprojects were of very low quality (no Learning and Activities' Centers, few reading materials, untrained teachers), whereas others were of astonishing high quality (well-organized Learning and Activities' Centers and many extra-curricular development activities organized by the provider to complement the literacy classes).

Some of the implementation problems may have been linked to flawed assumptions about the utility of literacy in local languages. Of course, the main language, taught in the formal schools, was French, whereas most of the literacy courses taught local languages. The participants had a variety of opinions on the language policy. Some considered it as an urban movement, driven by intellectuals, having little relevance to the needs of the participants since most written documents are in French:

> *The New Big Thing is local languages: Wolof and Pulaar are challenging French and each other. Maybe intellectuals drive the movement: A famous writer, Bobacar Diop, just published a novel in Wolof (Private provider staff).*

People learn to read and write, but it doesn't change anything for them. Local languages are not promoted at an institutional level, by the town council papers, the postal services, newspapers, or by other information sources. Local languages don't respond to peoples' needs. Often the beneficiaries want to learn in French. . . . The learning [in local languages] doesn't work (Consultant).

Other interviewees saw the language policy as a gender issue; local languages are good enough for women – whereas the boys need to learn French. It should be noted, however, that the teaching of literacy classes in local languages was not specific for the Women's Literacy Project, or of the partnership method. Most literacy classes in Senegal were taught in local languages, even before 1993 (the only exceptions were some specific courses implemented at the demand of companies that needed their workers to be literate in French).

The literacy skills thus did not aim at creating the capacity for the learners to get a job in which literacy is required, but to "function better" in the community. Further, the literacy classes did not have as their aim to reintegrate the learners back into formal schooling. Rather, it was recognized that it is easier for the students to learn in local languages. Pedagogical research supports the notion that people learn to read and write much faster when they learn it in their own language (Lauglo, 2001). Also, local languages appealed to some participants' feeling of community and ethnic belonging. For these reasons, most of the courses were implemented in local languages, even when the learners wished to learn French. Mamadou Ndoye echoed several other civil servants when he noted that the literacy learning was not a tool for social promotion but rather for improving the daily lives of the participants (in giving them access to written information):

Many people asked why we teach in local languages, since one cannot get a job after having learned a local language. Most people think that the use of the school is to obtain a paid job. We had to explain that if we want to achieve development, development is first of all the capacity of the population to be aware of a number of essential question, e.g., how one can take care of one's own health, and that of the family and the community, through the knowledge to prevention and hygiene, as well as nutrition (Mamadou Ndoye).

Literacy was not seen as an objective in itself, but as a tool for development. Also, the learners had different reasons to learn a local language: some of the supposedly illiterate learners were literate in French but would like to know Wolof transcription; others were illiterate and would have preferred to learn French. Others again wanted to learn a local language different from their own, for cultural purposes, or they were married to someone from a different ethnic background and wanted to learn his or her language. A few participants were semi-literate in French and wanted to learn better Pulaar and

Wolof. Among the participants interviewed, some had forgotten to read and write (since they had attended a few years of primary education in French); and they considered it was easier to learn in local languages. Several interviewees could not write correctly in French – and said they wanted to learn Wolof, because then "they could write what they wanted." The reasons for the preference of learning in local languages were in many cases based on the learners' negative assumptions about their ability to learn to read and write in French. Some learners stated that they primarily wanted to be able to telephone and to make calculations. Local languages would be a better means for learning these limited skills than French. Consider these quotes:

> *We're not learning much in the French school. We have to learn in Wolof to be able to read and write, to telephone, and to calculate ... Previously we couldn't do [all this], but in Wolof, we can (Current learner).*

Local languages were linked to the national culture; French was not:

> *I am 38 years old; I have been to the literacy program for two years. ... My motivation is to help the village to develop. There are two aspects of this development; promotion of local languages and economic development. I love my country and my village, and it is important to learn my language ...The use of the local language is a major motivation to go to the course – because it is linked to our culture. The program has helped raise awareness – and I can write everything now ... I attended 4 years of primary schooling before coming to literacy class. I left the school to get married (Current learner).*

Local languages could be used as a base to learn other languages:

> *I want to learn French after having learned Wolof (Current learner).*

French made people leave their communities; local languages made them stay home and help with the development of their village:

> *The literacy classes make it possible to resolve problems in the community, whereas the French school is a door toward other perspectives. Literacy is enough to develop the localities; in fact, literacy is much more advantageous for the village than the French school. Besides, the literacy classes open possibilities for all, whereas French schooling is only for children of low age. This is my own opinion (Elder of the village).*

Interviews with provider staff indicated that some providers might have convinced the community to learn a specific language (in most cases Wolof) because the teacher at hand was Wolof. Some ethnic groups did not appear to have the same needs of literacy; their learning was consequently at a different pace and of a different nature than that of other groups. The subprojects were in principle supposed to adapt the learning to these different needs.

Most of the participants had attended some form of prior education, through Arabic school, literacy course, or primary schooling. Their literacy

level, however, was generally low and they were still considered functional illiterate. The low level of learning in the literacy courses, and the low level of prior knowledge mastered by those who had been to prior schooling, demonstrate to which extent the education system in Senegal is lacking in quality.

4.4 Poor Education for Poor Women

The low results of the literacy courses were likely due to a set of problems, including poverty, malnutrition, and/or sickness leading to subsequent low attendance, and other socioeconomic issues, including cultural festivals and agricultural activities during the rainy season:

> *...in the end of July, beginning August, [the classes] don't really function, because of the rain. Those who want to attend classes are often prevented because of their agricultural work. When our teacher went to his assigned community, he found 15 people dispersed everywhere; they complained that the weeds would invade the field. He tried to conduct classes, but the objectives of the Women's Literacy Project were not at all achieved. I have to tell the truth!...It is better to conduct classes in the dry season but the contract with the Women's Literacy Project says we must do it [i.e., conduct classes in the rainy season] and we have to work with these difficulties....Do you know Taysie? It's a great Senegalese wrestler. Every village organizes a wrestling ceremony that lasts between 3 days and a week...Every village close to a Sereer village organizes a wrestling festival. This is making us lose time. We began [the literacy training] in March – after completing the teacher training in January. We had to begin in March because of the wrestling ceremonies and [because of the] family ceremonies. The Wolof give their daughters to be wed during the dry season; they are afraid [of doing it in] the rainy season. Weddings are big ceremonies; one has to go from a village to another with many people. This has prevented us from starting classes early. We began in March and then we visited the villages in June to say that the course should continue [during the rainy season] even if they needed to reduce the number of classes (Private provider staff).*

Another challenge is related to the age of the learners. The project was aimed at young women from the ages of 15–39, which corresponded to the government's target age for literacy training. From a human capital view, younger learners have a longer time of productive work ahead of them; it may therefore appear more cost effective to enroll young women in the courses. However, in the Women's Literacy Project, the provider staff preferred enrolling women that were well above 15 years of age. They did not wish to admit younger girls, because the normal age for marrying is between 15 and 18 years. The newly wedded girl would often drop out and leave the course. Most providers mentioned this problem:

> *They should be at least 15 years old, and I even prefer that they are older than 15, because the 15-year old girls are rarely married. They will be asked for marriage during the course and sometimes leave the village. The married women are more stable. If we only take young people, we will end up without participants, because they will all get married during the time of the course! The marriage age is 15–16, and there are some who marry before that age as well; especially the Peul marry early (Private provider staff).*

Many providers observed that their courses had a relatively high mean age of enrollment. Since the local women's associations were involved in the setup of the courses, many of the more senior members of the associations became interested in attending them. Also, a number of more senior men became interested and participated in the course. Some providers accepted to enroll very young boys and girls – and one provider noted, "5–6% of the learners [. . .] are in the age group of 12–15 years." The provider received the same fee for enrolling people outside as for people inside the targeted age group (15–39 years old). This was against the procedures manual and general Women's Literacy Project's requirements. In many cases, however, especially in villages without primary schooling (or where the girls did not attend primary schooling for family, cultural, or religious reasons), it was accepted that the provider enroll young girls or boys who had fallen outside the formal school system.

Many of the classrooms were very dark, and students complained about the lack of light (most centers did not have electricity). The dim light in most centers added to eyesight problems, the latter being a phenomenon that is seldom addressed by use of correcting eyeglasses in the rural areas of Senegal. The combination of age and presbyopia is positively correlated, and most adults have some eyesight problems and need correcting lenses. These problems almost certainly contributed to lower the learning achievements – especially for the older students.

Additional quality-related problems were related to the poor value of the education provided. Here, we will focus on three aspects of quality:

- Short duration of the courses
- Lack of adequate learning materials
- Lack of adequate teacher training

The procedures manual required that the literacy courses should supply at least 450 contact hours of instruction over a period not exceeding 24 months (PM, 2000). The theoretical duration for a course should be about 18 months, with the *relais* taking over the teaching after approximately 10 months. Consequently, the teacher only remained in the community for about 10 months. The *relais*, however, often stopped organizing classes and literacy activities a short time after taking over the teaching role. The supervisor (the

procedures manual required each provider to recruit one supervisor per ten classes) followed up on the course for a more extended period of time, often for the full duration of the course. Lacking monitoring of the courses disposed some providers to close the project early, before the required course implementation period had ended:

> *Normally the programs should last 18 months, but it is infrequent that a provider conducts the courses for that long. When they notice that the [government] follow-up does not really exist, they close the classes. During the rainy season, they do not conduct classes for at least two months (Civil servant).*

Most learners regretted not having more time to learn and also complained that the course period was too short. This was also the sentiment of many provider staff, who suggested that the financing should make it possible for them to hire the supervisors over an extended period – so that they could provide a more thorough follow up on literacy activities organized by the *relais* in the villages.

The Department of Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) had the role of regularly updating repertoires of learning materials that were accepted for financing by the Women's Literacy Project – and of evaluating the appropriateness of new materials. In principle, a CIDA-financed resource center (based in Dakar) was supposed to collect learning materials used in the courses. In that way, the providers could consult the different materials and suggest the most appropriate to the communities for use in the course. In reality, most providers imposed learning materials on the learners, which were often selected by convenience and price criteria. According to the longitudinal study, the Learning and Activities' Centers that had more pedagogical materials were obtaining better results:

> ... the students in centers with better [learning] materials have better performances with a 37% [success rate] against 26%. For the centers that have student registers [*documents andragogiques*]; the analysis of the results shows that if these latter are well kept, it influences the performances positively ... It is the same for the existence of a yearly plan, monthly repartitions [of the learning program], and material written in local languages [my translation] (LS-T1.2, 2003, p. 18).

It is likely that well-equipped Learning and Activities' Centers belonged to more qualified providers, which generally implemented better subprojects. In most cases, the material stayed in the villages after the course ended. Unfortunately, some of the providers collected the textbooks that they had given to the villagers and used them for the next cohort of learners:

> *Some of the providers take back the textbooks they have given to the participants; in that way they "earn" 600 [participants] times 800 FCFA [price for*

the textbooks] on the next subproject. Sometimes the providers even collect the library books that were given to the participants (Civil servant).[4]

The same disparities noted in the equipment of the Learning and Activities' Centers could be seen in the recruitment and training of literacy teachers. The literacy teachers in Senegal were called "facilitators" (*facilitateurs*). They were not considered with the same respect as formal schoolteachers, and in most cases their background did not include any teacher training or experience, let alone adult teacher training. Generally, their educational experience was limited to that of their own lower secondary education and their methods would therefore often reflect the methods used in primary education.

In order to illustrate the teaching in a Learning and Activities' Center, I videotaped learning settings, and a typical learning session is transcribed below:[5]

Picture 4.1 A literacy center

The learners arrive to the Learning and Activities' Center, which is made according to the project's standards, i.e., it is made with cement, and the roofing and door are made of aluminum sheets. Learners have their learning materials under their arm or balancing on their head; some of them having

[4] The amount "earned" by this type of embezzlement would be 480,000 FCFA (for a subproject with 600 learners). This corresponded to roughly US $960 (using a conversion rate of US $1 = 500 FCFA).

[5] The visit was unannounced to a rural village and took place during the rainy season – when only a limited number of learners would come to class sessions. The videotaping began immediately after my arrival to the village, so the participants did not have time to dress up. Class attendance was obviously seen as a social event; hence the nice clothing.

obviously dressed up for the occasion. The literacy teacher – a man in his thirties – is arriving; he has his teaching materials on the back of his bicycle.

Picture 4.2 Lesson of the day

The teacher is standing in front of the blackboard; the window shutters are open to let in light (there is no electricity in the village). The windows do not have any glass – and one cannot fail to notice how dark the classroom is. The students practice reading of the letters that have already been taught (lessons taught during the rainy season are often repetition sessions). Many participants bring their youngest children to class, and the classroom is never silent.

Picture 4.3 Literacy participants

In the beginning of the session, 12 learners (with three babies) arrive on time. The learners arrive during the whole session. In some classes the women's association or the class management committee imposed a fine for latecomers; this is clearly not the case here. At the end of the class session, there are about 20 learners in the classroom.

Picture 4.4 New learners arrive

The teacher writes three sentences on the blackboard, which constitute the writing and reading lessons for that day.

Picture 4.5 Reading the lesson

The teacher gives a ruler to a learner; she uses it to follow the text as she reads. The reading is hesitant and slow; the other learners are listening. The teacher corrects her when she has problems to read the text – and at times he

corrects the sentences he wrote on the blackboard (when he discovers that he has written something erroneously). After the learner has read the text, another student reads the same text . . . and then another one. It is the same text on the blackboard during the whole lesson and since the learners become more and more familiar with it, they can "read" it more and more fluently. As the class progresses, they become less and less concentrated, and the children become more and more impatient. These latter are breast fed when they are hungry.

Picture 4.6 Losing concentration

The remaining time of the class is used to read and repeat the sentences on the blackboard. The class lacks any supporting pedagogical materials. Other field observations from Senegal and the subregion found very similar class settings, e.g., a World Bank study noted:[6]

> . . . on the board, there is a story about their [the learners'] daily lives, and the women take turns reading the text. The text is short, and after a few repetitions, the next reader recites it by heart. While one learner reads, the rest are inactive, fiddling with the items on their desks or looking out the window. . . (Abadzi, 2003, p. 64).

The procedures manual requires that the literacy teachers should be "competent" and that they should be "development agents from the same background [as the learners] who are willing to do the job, motivated and trained for their

[6] A former civil servant, now a World Bank consultant, read the above description, looked at the pictures, and noted that, "the course seems to have a normal size and learner population. Often, one finds literacy teachers who teach poorly, like in this case. The situation seems convincing. However, the literacy classes are not supposed to take place like this!" (Former civil servant).

assignment" (PM, 2000, p. 12). However, many interviewees pointed out that the profile of the teachers did not always correspond to the requirements of the procedures manual:

> *I doubt we can have a high-quality course if the literacy teacher is not sufficiently trained. We need to define the profile of the literacy teacher. The procedures manual has defined a certain profile, but the reality shows that it is not always this profile we find in the classroom (Civil servant).*

The Women's Literacy Project required that the provider associations train the literacy teachers. This training, however, was in most cases too short to make them good literacy teachers. Often it did not last beyond 1 month: the longitudinal study noted that the average training duration for literacy teachers was 19 days and that it varied between 10 days for the provider that offered the shortest teacher training period and 31 days for the provider that offered the longest. The providers often used low-cost local teacher trainers with little experience. Several seminars were conducted to raise awareness among provider staff on the importance of teacher training. The project newspaper, *Partage*, provided suggestions about how to improve the training (see, for example, *Partage no 19*, May 2001). However, success rates from the longitudinal study did not give evidence of better outcomes over time. One possible explanation is that the teacher training did not sufficiently insist on individual learning methods, peer tutoring, and group work, which are acknowledged as methods that can improve the learning, especially to increase reading speed and accuracy (Abadzi, 2003).

The learning situation seen in the pictures above represents learning conditions in dim light. Except for the low quality of lighting, this Learning and Activities' Center is, comparatively, of good quality. Many centers were too crowded and had benches and other equipment of very low standard. The longitudinal studies (LS-T0, 2001) found that 61% centers were in bad shape at program start and offered unsatisfactory learning conditions, with inadequate and provisional buildings, lacking materials, low security (against theft), and they were sometimes disturbed by noise pollution.

Albeit large variations could be found in the quality of literacy courses offered, the courses had all the same basic characteristics even if the learner groups were very different and lived in different geographic locations. The costs and basic requirements of each subproject were the same; a unit cost per enrollee was used to calculate the fee given to the providers. Most providers therefore implemented a similar type of low-cost programs, which ensured a certain standardization of the courses. Most providers tried to cut

costs as much as possible. The costs were even reflected in the choice of languages since some providers refused to conduct courses in other languages than Wolof and Serreer, the two most common languages, for cost reasons:

I have been asked to conduct classes in other languages, but have always refused to do it. For each language, I need to train teachers. I need to use Wolof trainers for the teachers in Wolof classes, and do the same for Pulaar. Also, I need one supervisor for each language. The funds are the same even if I have more languages. And allowing for more languages would be costly (Private provider staff).

In many cases, such cost considerations led to the establishment of a standardized, low-cost program. For the World Bank and the Senegalese government, one has the impression that the processes and the quantitative objectives were taking precedence over quality:

There is an important effort to reach a large number of people, especially women, by literacy courses. However, similarly to primary schooling, literacy courses have a big quality problem. The programs are satisfactory at a quantitative level, but have qualitative problems. The courses seem to touch real illiterate people, but they are not useful. . . . The participants don't attend regularly - and nothing or very little is learned during post-literacy classes (Consultant).

There are often problems in the [literacy] training, for example the literacy teachers are not competent (Civil servant).

The emphasis on quantity and the lack of quality made it difficult if not impossible for participants to (re-)access primary schooling after having completed a literacy course. Likewise, the courses did not give the participants any certification. The question of equivalency between literacy classes and formal schooling was not addressed by the government, and literacy courses therefore lacked an official recognition. The current administration, during an interview, recognized this problem – and a senior official in the Ministry of Education underlined the need to give a formal recognition to the courses:

. . . the masses we had to educate in terms of quantity were more important than criteria of quality. This is a reality that we had to work with, and it needs to be corrected in the future. We have also seen that some of our former participants have continued to learn through their own effort. This is not frequent - but it indicates that there are other ways to follow. During our recent policy seminar, we had a group working on intersector coordination. More and more we perceive that we need to increase the relations between formal and non-formal education. This is especially necessary if we want to give a value and a certificate for the literacy training. More and more we are asked about the value of our training (Civil servant).

In conclusion, many providers implemented courses that were too short and lacking in terms of quality. These courses were not recognized as a valid education by any institution. It can be argued that the courses only aimed at providing poor citizens with a minimum level of basic knowledge. In other words, many literacy courses became a second-hand education for those considered second-class citizens. Its basic aims were said to assist local development. In addition, it could be a face-saving strategy for civil servants, to correct the country's literacy rates, among the lowest in the world. Through its focus on both literacy and basic skills, the project tried to find solutions to fulfill both short-term income needs at a local level and a long-term development vision based on concepts of literacy and economic growth.

The amalgam of voices and discourses is difficult to disentangle. Self-serving civil servants with a personal political agenda tried to secure funding for the sector; while on the other hand, dynamic government staff with a personal commitment to literacy and to the development of local communities tried to implement a high-quality project. Similarly, economic provider staff with little concern for local development tried to maximize personal benefit at the same time as cultural associations tried to propagate and strengthen a local language and culture. The different strands of interests by learners, facilitators, provider staff, and public servants do not add up to one unified discourse: instead, a multitude of situations and stories emerge.

Chapter 5
The Partnership Approach

In principle, the faire-faire approach is acceptable, but in reality there is a problem with the financing and the quality of the classes. People feel that there is a lot of money from the World Bank, CIDA, etc. linked to the approach. The state tries to recapture some of that money; after all, faire-faire is the application of the government's policy. The state, then, is conceiving the program; the private sector is executing the program. This is a problem, because there is no social anchorage of the program. The administration is disconnected from the social level, and the procedures are so complicated that they can hardly be realized (Former civil servant).

5.1 A Provider's Story

An interview with a provider staff member is cited at some length below because it gives a good overview of how the literacy project was conceived by a provider association. The interviewed staff is a supervisor, who is in charge of the supervision of literacy classes in ten communities. The supervisor will generally check that the centers' literacy teachers adequately implement the teaching and learning activities in the centers.

The first step of a subproject's proposal and implementation is the selection of a community for provision of literacy education:

We take any village. Sometimes, when a village has benefited from a course, other villages [which have seen the course take place] come to ask us for a class. I don't want to glorify us, but given the quality of our provider association, we have currently 40 villages that have asked us if they can participate in our subprojects. So, if a village has a literacy course, other communities approach us to ask to participate. We have hardly ever found villages that refuse to attend. In the beginning, there were some villages that said "yes" and when we came to sign the agreement with them, there were problems. These, we know, are lazy and do not want to work. Few are like that; all our villages work well – we are lucky.

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Participatory needs assessment in the village (necessary to make the subproject proposal):

> *We have to go to the field to conduct the assessment, We need to write documents, photocopy this and photocopy that, and use gasoline. We, the supervisors, are all tired. And if the proposal is not selected, we, and the provider association, lose, physically and financially. If we tell a village that we are trying to set up a school [Learning and Activities' Center] in their village, we come back to sign the agreements when we have obtained the financing. If we don't obtain financing, we return to say that we didn't obtain financing, and that we are going to submit the request elsewhere. So if we get the funds, we come back, and if we don't have the funds, we come back too. And if another provider takes care of that village, it is good – we go elsewhere.*

Choice of learning language and program; choice of class schedule:

> *In our subproject, it is the participants who choose the hours and the days during which we conduct the lessons. During the needs assessment, we go from one village to another, asking which days they prefer to attend classes. Some say Monday; others say Wednesday. We choose 4 days with 3 hours-lessons per week, or we choose 3 days if the participants wish to attend classes for 4 hours. In all, the course takes 12 hours per week. Some learners want to work in the mornings, others prefer the evening; they have to decide – because they are adults and it is very difficult to make them satisfied.*

Before the course starts, the provider sends a literacy teacher to the village. The course can then begin. One of the tasks of the teacher and the learners is to choose a *relais*:

> *In the beginning, if we find someone who has attended the old functional [literacy] program, and we know that she can write some Serreer or Wolof, we choose her immediately as relais. If there is no one, we let the class go on for 3 months, and try to find someone who can read and write among the population, someone who is liked by the villagers. It should also be someone who works well and is not lazy, who helps the provider group. Therefore, there are relais that are chosen immediately, and there are relais that are chosen after 3 months.*

Class size; dropouts:

> *In each course, there are 30 participants. In the beginning we report that some classes have 30 participants, but they really have 32. The dropout rate is very low, and we have waiting lists of people who wish to attend classes. There are not waiting lists in all the villages, but in some villages there are up to 45 women waiting for training. My director said that maybe we are going to ask for another course in that community in another request. But the women say that they want to learn now, so they all come to listen. We needed to use the public school as classroom since we needed a larger space. We can't help it. At the end of the course, there are a maximum of 5 dropouts, but they are not real dropouts. They are people who lose their husbands and need to respect the mourning period, or*

they move from the village or they get married, or are sick. The real dropouts are 2 people maximum. In some courses there are no dropouts at all.

Construction of Learning and Activities' Centers:

The Women's Literacy Project has said that we need to construct a center. The head of the village gives us six times six meters of land and the women together with the women's association look for means to construct the center. If the association has enough money, they will find cement to construct it; else it is constructed of straw. The director of my provider association gave five bags of cement to each literacy center. Some of the villages have already finished the center now, but a few are slacking behind. Our next monitoring trip will check up on this. Primary schools let the learners use the classrooms where they haven't yet constructed a center.

Strengthening of the women's association:

The women's association brings together most of the women in the village. Participation is based on age: the association's members are 40-30-15 years old women. If we have a course with only 15-year old girls, there will be a problem since they will leave the course to go to their husbands. The girls marry very early here. The courses with many young people have the highest dropout rate. Sometimes we are lucky to get them replaced [i.e., replace the dropouts with a new learner]. The women's associations need to get their legal status. If they don't have a legal status, we help them to obtain it. The legal status is like a birth certificate for the association.

Coordination with a financial network:

We have set up an arrangement with "Action Plus" – which is a big NGO and a financial network. The president of this NGO has worked with the director of my provider association. He has said that each of our classes that are involved in IGA can come and take up a loan. They lend between 100.000 and 500.000 FCFA [to the participants] in the course – it is the participants who decide how much they want to borrow. If the course participants estimate that they can reimburse 200,000, or 300,000, or 100,000, they ask for it. Right now there are two relais who have asked for financing. They have asked for about 400,000 each. They are setting up marsh farming and also make milk products. There are others who do agro-forestry work, or other activities – there are many activities.

The provider is a member of the literacy providers' association in Senegal (CNOAS):

The director is the secretary of CNOAS. I hope that [his function in CNOAS] will help create relations with other associations. (All quotations above are from the same interview, with a private provider staff member).

The interview above gives a fairly comprehensive view of the responsibilities of a normal provider association, from project setup through implementation

of the subproject. A few additional tasks are worth mentioning: the provider association is supposed to bring in external resource people to teach specific classes on skills (e.g., hygiene, vaccination, and cattle raising). Often, civil servants from the local health or agriculture administration are subcontracted for this purpose.

Also, the provider association is involved in the final evaluation of the participants' literacy skills. Normally, the evaluation is conducted in cooperation with local and central education authorities. Finally, the providers participate in policy discussions with government agencies, especially within the framework of the National Committee to Eliminate Illiteracy (CNEA). The stages of the subproject formulation and implementation, already described by the provider staff, will be further explained below.

5.2 Selection

Although the procedures described above, by a project supervisor, are specific to the Women's Literacy Project in Senegal, it would have been quite similar to other literacy projects in Senegal. Also, World-Bank-financed projects in the subregion generally adapted similar procedures, only with minor differences. In general, World-Bank-financed literacy initiatives in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Niger, Senegal, and The Gambia use similar approaches.

Often, the Senegalese procedures manual has been used as a reference when developing projects in the subregion. The procedures manual explained the selection procedures to be followed to obtain funding and to implement the subproject. It defined the different stages of the subproject cycle; beginning with information about the available funding to the providers and ending with the closing of the subproject.

In Senegal, the World-Bank-sponsored Project Coordination Unit (PCU), the decentralized education offices, and the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) were responsible for informing the providers about the bidding for each new cohort of literacy subprojects. Normally this was a yearly procedure, so most providers were waiting for this information. Given that provider staff rarely, if ever, complained about lacking knowledge to the bidding process, it appears that the transmission of information was successful. At the same time as providing information about the bidding, the department's education offices (RDA) also announced the priority zones in which the literacy subprojects were to be implemented. In most cases, requests for funding of subprojects outside these zones were refused. Some providers complained about the choice of target zones. Populations from

non-target areas sometimes requested to participate in literacy courses, and the provider staff felt it was unfair to refuse this, because of administrative requirements.

At a second stage, the provider prepared a subproject proposal, most often through a preliminary identification of villages within the target zone, based on ease of access and on the willingness of the population to participate. During an initial field visit, the provider staff presented the project idea to the chief of village, elders, and to the person in charge of the local women's association. The initial visit was followed up by a more general discussion with the whole village and with the women in particular. During discussions, the to-be-learners decided on the language of instruction and on the basic skills learning program, i.e., on income-generating activities, such as soap making or shop keeping, that they would like to learn during the course. In theory, the literacy part corresponded to 300 contact hours of functional literacy learning (reading, writing, math); the elective part, for which the villagers decided the program, corresponded to 150 hours. This elective program was to be based on a needs assessment and was supposed to take into account several issues, including the learners' daily occupation (e.g., a fishing village would rarely be interested in cattle raising and vice versa); the learners' "problems" (e.g., malaria prone areas were sometimes interested in gaining more knowledge about malaria); the learners' wishes in terms of learning activities (which in some cases were unrelated to their problems and to their daily activities, e.g., they may decide to learn to dye clothes or to make soaps even if these were not known skills in the community); and finally, the learning had to take into account the providers' capabilities and the governments' objectives. For example, the provider could not convert the literacy project into a cattle-raising project – this was not the intention of the financing. In many cases, however, the provider helped the women's association to seek assistance from other organizations to perform work that the provider association could not do within the scope of the literacy course financing:

> *I tell about my objectives, and I ask them to tell about their problems. If I cannot resolve the problems, I tell them at once. For example, I cannot make a fodder, but I can tell them who they should contact to get more information about it (Private provider staff).*

After reaching a compromise between what the population wanted (tractors, water pumps, etc.) and what the provider could offer (small-scale income-generating activities and basic skills learning activities), the provider staff signed an agreement with the population (most often the document was signed by the chief of the women's association). Based on this, the community was included as one of the 10 or 20 participating communities in the subproject proposal.

The villages were often chosen on a convenience basis, i.e., based on criteria of access. Hence, villages that were close to the road were often chosen more readily than remote villages. Also, many villages, having noticed that a neighboring community received a literacy subproject, requested a similar course from the provider. A few villages did not wish to participate; the providers most often left them alone. Such refusal was infrequent and often linked to a prior experience with a "bad" provider. Sometimes the refusing village was situated in a zone that had not been exposed to literacy courses previously and that considered them as a threat to cultural or religious practices:

> *Often the head of the village does not want to have any project. This happens when we are in zones that are not used to schools. Sometimes other providers have not kept their promises. During the pre-assessment some providers promise this or that, and then they do not keep the promises. Then the population becomes discouraged. There are at maximum two or three villages that refuse [over 20]. Sometimes, the neighboring village accepts. Then after a while the village that refused, will come and ask for the project. I always withdraw from the village straight away, when the local population refuses the literacy program. Then I wait until they come back to me and ask for it (Private provider staff).*

Upon finalization of the pre-assessment, a subproject proposal was formulated, in which a table indicated in very synthetic terms the site and the development problems of each participating community. A typical subproject proposal of the integrated phase included four sections:

- Legal and general information about the provider association (resources, personnel, etc.)
- Information about the localities and the participants to be involved in the courses (based on the needs assessment)
- Learning program and teaching methods (based on the needs assessment)
- Information about the provider's proposed management, follow-up, and monitoring of the course

In addition, annexes included a detailed budget and other information (e.g., CVs of provider staff). Once the proposal was finished, it was transmitted to the department education office (IDEN), which made sure that the provider had received clearance for implementing literacy projects in the concerned department; that the information in the request was correct (this should theoretically be verified through on-site inspections); and that the implementation zones corresponded to the priority zones for literacy education.

The procedures manual required that the department education office performed an on-site inspection of at least 20% of the proposed communities to

control that the information in the requests was correct. Provider and local education staff explained that such on-site inspection was rarely performed; the stated reason was the dearth of means of the IDEN (no car, lack of gasoline). Despite this lack of on-site control, the department education officer provided a "technical note" about the request (certifying the accuracy of the proposal), which was then sent to the regional chief education office.

The pre-selection committee, composed of representatives from different regional bodies, including the regional education council, the regional chief officer of education (IA), and the office for community development services at the regional level, analyzed the requests. Also, observers from the provider's union (CNOAS) participated in the proceedings, without having voting power. Nevertheless, the CNOAS representative had the right to include comments in the minutes from the pre-selection deliberation. The pre-selection committee was responsible for evaluating the two first parts of the request (information about the provider and about the locality). Any request that did not fulfill a minimum set of requirements was rejected. The pre-selected requests were sent to Dakar for a final decision.[1] At central level, the selection committee, which was called the "technical analysis committee," analyzed the requests through the use of an evaluation sheet.[2] In order to be eligible, the proposal needed to score at least 60% of the maximum points possible, in the following categories:

- Legal and general information about the provider (maximum score: 50 points)
- The provider association's knowledge about the localities and the participants to be involved in the courses (maximum score: 40 points)
- Proposed learning program and teaching methods (maximum score: 50 points)
- Proposed management, budget, follow-up, and monitoring of the course (maximum score: 40 points)
- Proposed capacity building of the provider association and of the local women's associations (maximum score: 10 points)

The two first criteria having already been subject for pre-selection, the selection committee concentrated on the last three, which consisted of a

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[1] At present, the whole selection procedure has been decentralized to the regional level.

[2] The committee was composed of one representative from the delegate ministry for Basic Education and Literacy; one from the Ministry of Family, Social Action and National Solidarity; one from the contract-managing agency (AGETIP); and two members without voting rights, one from the PCU and one from the providers' association (CNOAS).

learning program; the management and budget of the course; and the proposed capacity building of the provider association and of the local women's association, also called institutional support. This latter concerned a part of the budget that could be allocated to activities or purchases that would strengthen the associations of the participants and of the provider (this budget item was generally set at 10% of the total subproject cost). Such institutional development budget could be used to purchase a means of transport (car or motorbike) or a computer, or any other item or training, either for the provider association or for the learners. It was a part of the project's strategy to develop civil society in Senegal.

Any subproject proposal that contained minor errors, for example, in the budget setup, could be sent back to the provider for correction. Then the committee would consider the corrected version of the proposal. Each proposal received a score and was hierarchically ranked during the selection. The highest ranked projects usually obtained funding and those ranked under 60% of the maximum score usually did not. The aim of this approach was to fund the best projects:

> *The civil society is making requests that are analyzed, and then approved by an approbation committee. This is a set-up that makes it possible to fund the best civil society subprojects (Civil servant).*

After selection, the subprojects were sent to the approbation committee, which had as its goal to check that the selection procedures had been respected. The committee also processed appeals to re-evaluate rejected proposals. Finally, it checked that the number of subprojects selected corresponded to available financing from the World Bank. After the approval committee approved the financing, the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) prepared a decree for signature by the Delegate Minister. Finally, when the government had made a public announcement about the selected providers, the rejected providers had 5 days to submit an appeal to the approbation committee. In some cases, the financing was not sufficient to cover the whole subproject, i.e., the 20 communities. Most providers stated that in case of rejection (or partial financing), they tried to find some other means to conduct the course. Some providers even tried to implement the literacy course by their own means:

> *We have a contract linking us to them ... The chief of the village signs this protocol. If we don't receive the financing, we come to explain to them that we haven't received the financing, and we can't help them. We sometimes try to make a reduced formula – and implement some literacy activities – until the next financing. This happened once – when I received financing for 15 centers out of 20. I don't understand how this happened. I was able to finance two centers by myself, and the local population helped with the financing of the remaining three. Also,*

last time, I did not receive financing for the 20th class, which was very motivated and had already constructed a center for literacy activities (Private provider staff).

The rejection of a subproject proposal did inflict some financial losses on the providers. Such losses can be considered as a part of the risk-sharing features of a partnership. The risk was real; out of 960 proposals during the project's lifetime, only 312 obtained financing, and there was no mechanism in the Women's Literacy Project to reimburse the pre-assessment or any other work undertaken by the prospective provider association to prepare the subproject proposal. The participants did not have any specific financial loss if the subproject was rejected. Also, sometimes, knowing that providers did not always obtain financing, they signed agreements with several providers to be on the sure side of receiving a literacy course. Since there were no mechanisms to prevent such double implementation, occasionally two provider associations (or more) were selected to implement a course in the same village. In practice, one of the following happened: one provider went elsewhere (in principle the first provider to the site had a priority); or, if there were enough participants, two courses took place simultaneously.

Likewise, there was no mechanism to check in which sites literacy courses had been implemented previously, and it often happened that new courses were implemented in communities that had already received literacy courses in prior years. This phenomenon was frequently encountered with the new formula of the integrated project, since many previous learners wished to gain access to the additional features of the integrated project (such as the new income-generating activities offered):

There is no control over which sites have been touched previously, so we're often implementing courses in the same places as we have before. This is especially a problem for the integrated program, in which many former participants enrolled [i.e., participants from earlier courses] (Civil servant).

Four additional phases of a subproject life were explained in the procedures manual, relating to the financial and evaluative mechanisms of the subproject. These phases included the contracting of the provider, as well as the implementation, evaluation, and closing of the subproject.

After selection and contracting, a transfer of a first installment of funds followed, upon receipt of which the provider informed the community participants about the outcome of the selection. At the same time, the provider staff would check that each locality had a functioning course management committee. The director and management staff of the provider association would then recruit the subproject personnel (supervisors and literacy teachers) and train the personnel. Also, before the beginning of the course, the provider staff ensured that each participating community had a Learning

and Activities' Center, or at least a location where classes could be held. Finally, the provider staff needed to purchase the necessary booklets and instruction materials for the participating communities. The course was then implemented, theoretically as it had been planned by the subproject document.

Three internal provider-specific reporting systems were used to monitor the implementation progress: attendance records kept by the instructor; the supervisor's reporting book; and the financial manager's register. In addition, the director (or accountant) of the provider association submitted implementation reports to the contract-managing agency and the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) every 4 months. After the subproject had been implemented, the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) and the decentralized education offices evaluated its outcome. Then the subproject was closed by the contract-management agency.

Very similar project procedures were adapted in other countries and for other projects, including non-literacy-related projects. For example, the World Bank set up community health projects, various poverty alleviation projects, as well as microcredit projects based on analogous models.

5.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Three state agencies were involved in the monitoring of the subprojects; i.e., the Project Coordination Unit (PCU); the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB), and the local education bureaus, especially the regional and department education offices (IDEN and RDA). The PCU was involved in day-to-day management of the project and conducted many monitoring visits to control that the courses had started and that their implementation progress was satisfying. The DAEB and the local education bureaus were supposed to verify whether the people who had attended classes had obtained an adequate level of literacy, and, generally, to probe the content of the learning that had taken place.

In reality, little of the planned monitoring and evaluation took place. Specifically, the implementation completion report of the project stated that the DAEB "experienced significant difficulties in accomplishing [their] task," and especially underlined the failure of the DAEB to set up a capable monitoring and evaluation system (ICR, 2004, p. 15). In analyzing a typical day for the monitoring and evaluation division in the DAEB, one finds that very little substantive work was actually performed – except for report writing:

For the head of the division of monitoring and evaluation, the day begins with a look at the mail. Then there is usually a brief meeting with the director – and then a review of the work of the division members. Most of the work is related to the provincial bureaus and the reports they have submitted. There are often problems in the reports. We need to review these reports and make comments on them. Currently we're working on the drafting of the reports for [other projects] and functional literacy centers. During 2003, we made four reports: for the Women's Literacy Project on the experimental [integrated] program; T2 – the longitudinal studies; and two reports for PAPA. This is very satisfactory; a few years ago we had very little capacity. Sometimes we have to work on unscheduled activities, for example, recently we had to make a report for ADEA on faire-faire (Civil servant).

At a decentralized level, the report writing was an equally important task. Most local civil servants stated that they did not have the means for on-site monitoring and evaluation – and that the central level in Dakar was incapable of performing a good monitoring of the project. Consider these statements made by local officials:

The problem of the project is linked to the lack of means for follow-up and monitoring. The means are confiscated by Dakar. We need to certify the statements of the providers [i.e., the request for funds]; we don't have the means to do it (Civil servant)

We don't have the means for follow-up and monitoring. We don't have the logistical means. We receive some money for gasoline and fax paper; but we don't have the means of visiting the providers in the field. We can't do anything else than the administrative work (Civil servant).

I have about 300 centers to supervise, so I can't visit all of them. I cover about half of these centers. Since I only have a motorbike for traveling, it is difficult to visit the remote centers. I haven't visited any centers at all for 2 or 3 months now (Civil servant).

The PCU considered the lack of monitoring as the single most important problem in the project:

There should be more reflection on the monitoring of the projects - this is the element that doesn't work – or else it is the [faire-faire] strategy as a whole that does not function (Civil servant).

We have asked the IDEN to control all the sites, but they haven't done it. There is no follow-up from the Department of Literacy and Basic Education. Maybe there exist 5–10% of fictitious cites. In some of the zones, there are about a hundred kilometers between sites, and the RDAs say that they can't really inspect them; they don't have any means [of transport]. All seems very well in the providers' reports from these zones. However, it looks too perfect; one cannot have the same perfect situation in all the sites – it is not normal (Civil servant).

An additional problem was encountered when monitoring and evaluation actually had taken place, reports had been written, and a certain number of

problems had been identified. Evaluations were characterized by the lack of action on their findings; for example, no action was taken on reports of embezzlement or on substandard implementation and outcome of the courses. The implementation completion report of the project stated, "sanctions and incentives for providers based on their performance were rarely undertaken" (ICR, 2004, p. 15). At worst, the project financing was withheld for a short period – during which the provider was supposed to reorganize the course:

> *Negative sanctions do not exist. We need to integrate them in the procedures manual; when people get involved, they need to know the rules. We need to have not only sanctions, but also a system to analyze bad management, with rigorous sanctions (Former civil servant).*

The parastatal contract-managing agency (AGETIP) was supposed to make on-site visits to verify that the provider associations were on track in the implementation of the subprojects. In the beginning of the project, when the Women's Literacy Project still had relatively few providers, the contract-managing agency assigned two full-time professional staff members to follow up on the project. They were already at that time unable to inspect a significant sample of the subprojects; and when the project expanded, the financial monitoring came close to a standstill. The implementation completion report of the project stated that the AGETIP supervision's frequency was insufficient:

> [Supervision] deteriorated over time as the number of subprojects increased ...The fifth cohort required the monitoring of over 1,030 classes. It became evident that AGETIP's capacity with only two supervisors was insufficient to carry out the supervision work correctly. However, the supervision model remained unchanged for the remainder of the project (ICR, 2004, p. 17).

The most important monitoring and evaluation of the courses were performed by the provider organization itself. To this effect, it had at least two staff members in charge of following up on the courses: the manager of the subproject (also called coordinator) and the supervisor(s). The supervisors (typically one person per ten communities) visited the courses to obtain information about the progress of the learning and reported to the coordinator. Also, the *relais* was supposed to have a supervisory and monitoring role when the provider ceased activities in the villages. However, during the interviews, provider staff complained that the subproject financing did not allow for a prolonged follow-up of the subprojects and that the short timeframe of implementation hindered a sustainable learning to take place, i.e., it was not sufficient to train people in literacy to ensure the knowledge was sustainable. Similar monitoring and evaluation problems were

found in other projects financed by the World Bank, and using the same partnership approaches.

5.4 Moral Hazard

The processes of the project can be criticized from both a design and an implementation angle. The design of the project may have been characterized by a certain over-confidence in market mechanisms, and the design flaws included selection problems, decentralization problems characterized by asymmetric information and very possibly leading to moral hazard, and the possible creation of economic providers instead of "genuine" civil society:

> *[The] problem is the non-application of the procedures manual, and the lack of positive and negative sanctions (Civil servant).*
>
> *There is a bias in the selection procedure, since it allows for civil servants to become providers [under a front name]. They try to gain money through providing literacy programs (Civil servant).*
>
> *Every three months the director of the provider association comes with his fictitious report – I am disgusted by it. I have barely enough money to survive and he makes 2–3 million. It is exceptional that the education inspector refuses [to validate] a report. In most cases, the provider is too strong and can get around the inspector [IDEN]. Or he gives 300,000 – or even a million – to the children of the inspector. For the Tabaski [mutton feast to celebrate Abraham's sacrifice], he gives a sheep to the inspector. A lot of providers are staff members of the literacy department or they are local civil servants, but they don't use their own name (Civil servant).*

The critique is sometimes linked not only to the Women's Literacy Project, but also to the public sector in Senegal as a whole, which is often characterized as slow, inefficient, and corrupt:

> *If there is anything that characterizes Senegal, it is the impossibility of innovating something, and testing it out because of the [political] instability. The instability also influences the mentality of how the system functions: it is not democratic; the structures on which the system is founded are not democratic. The person who is in charge of anything, needs to belong to the same group as those in power. If not, one is fragile, and if one does anything wrong, one's head is going to be chopped off [figuratively speaking]. One does not look to innovate anything but to keep one's place (Former civil servant).*

According to proponents of public–private partnerships, the partnering with the private sector makes it possible to bypass government bureaucracy. Interviews conducted in Senegal and reports from the project's implementation point show that this is only partially true. The government is a main actor

in the partnership approach. Therefore, the Women's Literacy Project did not bypass the bureaucracy; it simply changed the rules under which the bureaucracy applied. The World Bank's project completion report deplores the institutional instability of the sector and the failure of the project's selection and implementation processes. Evidence from interviews (with civil servants, consultants, and private provider staff) indicates that the dysfunctional processes may have led to corruption and the emergence of economic providers who are mainly interested in the economic advantages that development projects can offer them.

The selection method consisted principally of the analysis of a project proposal. In some cases, the provider staff did not even create this proposal by themselves, but subcontracted the work to a consultant or to another provider association. In other words, a very bad provider could make a very good proposal (or subcontract it to a consultant who would make a very good proposal). The selection procedures therefore did not always lead to the selection of the best providers because only the proposal document was evaluated and not the provider's past performance. One of the main arguments for the partnership process, namely that it led to competition and thereby to better quality of projects, was therefore partly bypassed. The partnership in Senegal, by the project's selection technique, merely led to competition in the write-up of project proposals, not in the implementation of the subprojects. The improvement in proposal writing was notable, but it was not always parallel to a corresponding improvement in the quality of the literacy courses.

A second problem was the lack of verification of the subproject's statements. The selection committee did not check whether two or more providers were involved in the same village; whether civil servants were providers, using a front name; or whether the provider requested financing for several subprojects, using different front names. Further, it was difficult to prevent the provider associations from selecting the areas that were most easily accessible within the priority zones. Also, there was no evaluation of the learners' skills at entry, so the provider association could enroll literate people in the courses, if it wished. Project studies indicate that a large part of the enrollees were literate at entry.

An additional problem was related to the decentralization of the Women's Literacy Project's administration, which followed the general decentralization process of the government that was initiated in 1996. The project's monitoring and evaluation work, for example, was decentralized to local agents who lacked the required skills and equipment (transport, computers) to perform the work. Moreover, the local education offices were prioritizing work in the formal sector, and the lack of central control of local education officers made it possible for the latter to engage in unethical behavior. These

problems were generally attributed to the lack of project funds to train local civil servants and to provide them with the necessary resources:

There are many problems linked to the decentralization of project activities. First, there is a problem of competency and [lack of] human resources. Then there is a problem of lacking equipment, such as computers and transport (Civil servant).

Also, institutionally, the work performance of local education authorities was evaluated according to the formal schools' performance (i.e., pupils' scores at exams), not according to their follow-up on the literacy centers' performance. In many ways, the decentralization was simply an assignment of new duties to local levels. The local education offices did not receive the means to perform these new activities; no new staff members were assigned to the field, and the institutional setup was not changed to allow the local authorities to use more time to follow up on literacy programs. As one inspector of education pointed out,

In my department, I have 300 formal schools, and I also have lower secondary schools. The Ministry has given me a car and gasoline to monitor these schools. If I am given the responsibility for 200–300 literacy classes in my department, you can understand the problem. Sometimes I am given some liters of gasoline and told that literacy is my responsibility since I'm the inspector of education! I am an official - and I can't do it. They evaluate me, not on literacy classes, but on the functioning and results of primary school classes. This is a problem with all our literacy classes; and not only a problem related to the Women's Literacy Project (Civil servant).

As many other development activities, the decentralization of the project was seemingly done as a desktop exercise, without taking into account the institutional, human resource, and material needs that were necessary to make it successful. As a result, the mechanisms of selection, monitoring and evaluations were open to unethical behavior:

Decentralization is a good idea. But it is necessary to really decentralize; at this point one only has the impression that problems are transferred to a lower level. Then local small bosses [des petits chefs] who try to make a profit are born (Consultant).

Unethical behavior could occur in various occasions, some of which have been discussed above: local education staff could establish an association and request funds for implementing a subproject; the evaluating officers (most often the local inspector of education) could refuse to sign an evaluation sheet before they received a "gift" from the provider; or they could refuse to give access to financing to a provider association which did not pay its dues to the local authorities:

Then there is the problem that all of the actors know each other. The inspector can tell any of the providers that he needs 200,000 or 300,000 FCFA and the provider will have to pay it straight away. After that the inspector gives a good evaluation

of the subproject. The inspector in [Department Name] has not done a correct work; now the providers do what they want (Civil servant).

In many cases, the situation led to a duel between the provider and the local authorities:

Some days it is like the state's role [i.e., the civil servants' role] is to get as much as they can as middlemen: the World Bank is funding, the provider is implementing: what else is there for the state than to cash in? Some people who do not take the project seriously are seeing the evaluations as a means of receiving something (Private provider staff).

In many areas "good" providers had to pay local authorities. Such payment in turn reduced the quality of the course, and thereby the partnership became a downward spiraling system. In some cases, the provider staff chose to pay off the local authorities, and then to reduce subproject costs and enhance personal gain. Some honest project staff and civil servants tried to set up a minimum monitoring system to avoid a moral hazard problem in which the government did not know the providers and the quality of the providers' work. The monitoring and evaluation, however, were not sufficient to avoid a principal-agent problem, in which the provider (the agent) short changed the state (the principal) because of the state's lack of knowledge of what was going on in the field. The local learners were the losing partners in this system.

A game theory matrix may help understand the relationship between the provider and the local authorities: if both engage in unethical behavior, both "win" since the risk factor is low for cheating, even in a repeated game (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Moral hazard

	Provider: ethical behavior	Provider: unethical behavior
Authorities: ethical behavior	(1) Low financial gain for both; no risks	(2) Low financial gain for authorities, high financial gain for provider, some risk for provider
Authorities: unethical behavior	(3) High financial gain for authorities, no financial gain for provider; risk for both	(4) Somewhat high financial gain for both; low risk for both

This repeated game is stable at two points: (1) when both the authorities and the providers are ethical, and there is a low profit for both and no risk. This point is stable, unless the authorities or the provider start engaging in unethical behavior. (2) If the provider engages in unethical behavior, there is some risk that the payments for the course would be stopped and that the provider will not obtain future financing, since the (ethical) local

authorities will try to prevent the provider from obtaining more funds. The risk for negative sanctions, however, is almost negligible. This point is not stable, since it may prompt the provider to bribe the local authorities to make them close their eyes to the flawed implementation. (3) If the local authorities engage in unethical behavior, there is low risk that any administrative action is taken against them. This point is not stable, however, since the providers cannot, in most cases, both pay-off authorities and also implement a high-quality course. (4) If both the provider and the authorities engage in unethical behavior, there is a higher return for both than in (1). This point is stable, since there is low risk for both. The matrix shows how the partnership system as it is set up in Senegal may actually *encourage* corruption: the reward is higher for both providers and authorities in point (4), and the risk is low. Besides, points (2) and (3) are most likely to tip toward point (4), in which there is a higher reward for both. If one out of many (ethical) providers engages in unethical behavior, there is a chance that the local authorities will accept the bribe. In such case, the local authorities may also expect similar bribes from other providers, which is likely to result in both providers and authorities engaging in unethical behavior. The matrix, both for individual providers and especially for a system with many providers and one local civil servant, is slanted toward point (4).

The Project Coordination Unit (PCU), did temporarily suspend payment of subprojects that had visible implementation problems. Such occurrence, however, was infrequent, and in most cases embezzlement practices did not have any consequence whatsoever for the provider. The PCU tried at an early stage to make public lists of the results of each provider and classified the providers according to results. The publication of such list would by itself be a motivating factor to perform well and would have contributed to building a reputational mechanism to classify providers that could have improved the quality of the implementation. Unfortunately, these lists were abandoned. The project completion report noted that,

> AGETIP and the PCU were able to gather data that allowed the classification of providers according to their performance. These classifications were published in 1997 and 1998 in the project's newspaper and generated enthusiastic reactions among the providers and the communities. Having performance classifications published was an unusually good practice for the time. Unfortunately, it was not sustained due to political pressure (ICR, 2004, p. 9).

For many politicians, it was not desirable to distinguish between high- and low-quality subprojects, since it may have limited their popularity, especially among low-performing providers. The provider associations had a relatively large influence in local communities and could use this influence

to apply political pressure on elected government agents. Also, in many cases, civil servants – who may not have wished to have the performance of their association published, headed the provider associations. Similar reasons may also explain reluctance to make a negative assessment about certain providers in project evaluations. Due to these political factors, a provider that had implemented an unsatisfactory project would still be eligible for new financing:

> *Among the providers selected for the Women's Literacy Project, we know that some are useless. They know that in the Women's Literacy Project, they'll never be prosecuted for embezzlement (Civil servant).*

Accordingly, monitoring and evaluation were performed in a vacuum; the objective of the project follow-up was merely to generate reports, instead of creating sound feedback mechanisms that could lead to negative sanctions for dishonesty. The flawed monitoring and evaluation also prevented the project from obtaining good baseline data about performance and course quality, and made it difficult to gain knowledge about the outcomes of the courses. Many people involved in the project think that the problems with a lacking monitoring and evaluation system are so important that they can destroy all the advantages with the partnership approach:

> *Today, there are many problems – I think these problems are so important that they can destroy the faire-faire system. It is necessary to emphasize that if there are provider faults [malfeasance] today, they come from the lack of follow-up, especially from the state (Former civil servant).*

We have seen how the World Development Report 2004 distinguishes between the "long route" of accountability, in which government implementation agents are accountable toward other government institutions, and the "short route," which makes private providers accountable toward the receivers of the services – the learners (World Bank, 2003). The method adopted in Senegal used some of the methods of the short route, since the providers negotiated the services directly with the communities. However, the setup had all of the inconveniences of the long route, and moreover it was a dysfunctional long route where the state did not play its monitoring and evaluation role. The state's performance was additionally reduced because many of the civil servants who were knowledgeable about the partnership approach, and who participated in its conception phase, left to become private consultants. Also, many civil servants left to become private providers:

> *... if we as public sector can export "brains" to the private sector, it is excellent! The civil society is weak in our country; the government is not weak. In the relationship between the government and civil society, it is the civil society part that needs strengthening. I think it is an excellent process if civil society can be*

> *reinforced by the most capable of the civil servants. Then the government can play their role, which is to recruit and train new civil servants to perform the needed state work. I think it is very positive that civil society is reinforced in this way, because it will lead to development (Mamadou Ndoye).*

Other civil servants, however, stated that the civil society associations had become too much of a political factor in Senegal. As we have seen, the Women's Literacy Project had a positive impact on the creation and strengthening of civil society through training provided for civil society staff members. After being trained, however, many provider staff members would create their own association to access funding. It can be argued that the positive impact was partially offset by a negative impact of division and thereby weakening of the associations. One interviewee said,

> *When the provider invests in training for its staff members, the next year the staff members create their own association. In this way the program is undermining the provider associations (Former civil servant).*

These many weak associations could still have a great impact if they had been organized in and controlled by a strong providers' association or union. The providers' association (CNOAS), however, could not facilitate the creation of a strong civil society, nor was it capable of exerting any control of unethical provider associations or civil servants. In other words, there was no mechanism to prevent the faire–faire partnership system to evolve toward corruption.

> *What we tried to realize with faire-faire has not been fully achieved. We wanted to come to a situation where the government does not have all the power, and where the CNOAS is a partner. In that way, the providers would create a third party alongside the government. We also wanted this strong providers' organization to supervise what is happening at the grassroots level, because the state cannot supervise everything. The organization should be capable of giving a yearly account of what is happening, to take notice of and correct problems, as well as to register and fight against any deviation from the original intentions of the program. Unfortunately, the CNOAS did not have the needed leadership to do that (Former civil servant).*

Since both the CNOAS and the providers proved unable to become a true partner to the state, or a counter power, the situation evolved toward an uneasy collaboration in which the government and civil society acted as individual opportunists – where both state agents and providers could obtain personal gains if they bent the system a little. The processes, as they were set up, allowed for such individualistic behavior and even encouraged it.

The participants in the literacy courses were at the losing end of the flawed mechanisms. As seen above, the partnership approach as it was designed in Senegal used a "long route" of accountability in which the providers were accountable toward the state and not toward the villagers. This situation was inconvenient for the recipients of services, since they had little possibilities of pressure on the providers (the lacking monitoring and evaluation of the course exacerbated the situation). Mamadou Ndoye acknowledged that this imbalance between the providers and the beneficiaries had not been considered during the setup of the partnership system and suggested that some – if not all – of the funds should have been transferred directly to the communities. In this way, the providers would have been directly responsible toward the participants (i.e., using the short route of accountability):

> *We considered this problem [of disequilibrium between providers and participants] after implementation, when we saw the relations between communities and the NGOs. The relationship is imbalanced . . . we should not give all the funds to the provider; one part of the funds should go to the communities. In this way, maybe the NGOs would be more accountable toward the communities. [NGOs] lack accountability toward the communities. In this context, the example of Latin America, where the budget was sent directly to the communities, is particularly useful. The NGOs [in Latin America] performed the work, but it was the communities that paid for the services. If the service was not well done – and a definition thereof needed to be included in the contract – the communities would refuse to pay. This aspect lacked in Senegal; we should have changed the financing to give more funds directly to the communities (Mamadou Ndoye).*

The process of identification of participating communities further aggravated the problem of lacking accountability. Since the role of selecting the communities was given to the providers, they could in many instances dictate the principles of their involvement toward the villagers. Some communities, if they had the opportunity, tried to counterbalance this power disequilibrium through signing contracts with several providers. As we have seen above, such actions, while they may have strengthened the communities' position vis-à-vis the provider, created process difficulties within the partnership system:

> *The role of the provider is to find local communities, organize them and find demand at the local level. Therefore, the provider organized the demand. We have followed up on these subprojects and found that often the provider associations had problems with the communities. Frequently, provider staff wrote to us and asked to change site because another provider had set up a course in the same site. Sometimes there were several providers in a single site; this was a problem. . . . How can we learn from this? The government should gain knowledge about the real demand from the local sites (Civil servant).*

After the providers had identified the localities in which they wished to implement the literacy course, they undertook a participatory needs assessment. Since the providers were uncertain whether they would obtain financing (and thus being reimbursed for this investment), the pre-assessment was often done in a hurry, without any real consultation of the villagers at all:

> *There are no funds to perform a good pre-assessment. It is often undertaken in a hurry, with some reference to PRA methods. The pre-assessment is rarely a living process, but already a failure from the start. It prevents the course from evolving. Literacy for adults should be adapted to the different events of [adult] life; and not be adapted to a standardized [theoretical] person who does not exist in real life (Consultant).*

The setup of the subprojects was in most cases based on mutual understanding between providers and community members about the courses; and not on a genuine participatory assessment. The providers explained what they could offer, and the community then accepted it (in which case they got the provider's version of a course), or they refused it; in which case the provider went elsewhere and the community did not receive anything. Such methods of identifying a site led to a disconnection between the providers and the population. The provider was not representative of the population – it was only a supplier of something – and, since there was little or no ownership at the community's side, there was a disjunction between the provider and the courses – and the villagers.

Many civil servants suggested that the state should identify the communities where literacy courses should be implemented, and then the providers could bid on performing the work. In 2007, indeed, a new World Bank procedures manual was created, with corrected procedures on this point. Henceforth, the government identifies the target sites, and the providers bid on pre-identified sites. The results of the new strategy are not yet evaluated, but are likely to avoid many of the procedures' problems outlined above.

The faulty procedures (already identified at an early stage of project implementation) were not corrected before the approach had reached an age of 12 years. Comparable procedural problems still exist in most other countries in which the World Bank is implementing similar projects (Burkina Faso, Guinea, etc.). These delays in the correction of procedural problems indicate a very slow learning process by government structures and the World Bank. The problem could be related to the political instability in Senegal, coupled with rotation of World Bank's staff members assigned to follow-up on the project. Civil servants in Senegal underlined that the World Bank provided thorough follow-up in the beginning of the project (during the conception of the partnership strategy). After an initial phase of strong involvement, the Senegalese had the impression that the World Bank

lost interest: new staff members were made responsible for the project, and they had less time to follow-up on the project. Also, authorizations ("non-objections") for spending or revision of the project's budget were slow to be processed (despite the fact that the World Bank has clear guidelines about the turn-around time for a non-objection).[3]

In general, the processes in Senegal, which are also tested out in other countries, lead to a number of conclusions regarding the setup of partnership procedures:

- Need to take into account past performance of providers during selection (accompanied by measures to build reputational mechanisms encouraging providers to perform well)
- Need to design a correct balance between central and decentralized partners of the project, avoiding asymmetric information problems between the central and local administration levels, and limiting corruption during selection and evaluation
- Need to address the power relationships between provider and learners. In particular it seems as a sound strategy to empower the participants by giving them control over the financing, and a large extent of autonomy in the design and evaluation phases
- Need to address providers' unethical behavior and to impose negative sanctions for low performance and embezzlement
- Need of a strong providers' association that can help steer the evolution of civil society associations and to prevent them from becoming purely "economic" providers
- Need of the funder and the government institutions to have some flexibility and be able to quickly address project flaws (both implementation and design flaws)

Since the partnership was considered an experimental approach, the government and the World Bank's failure – or slowness – to repair problems could be characterized as the most significant flaw of the project. The project was supposed to test out partnership approaches, and it is normal that both implementation and design flaws existed. The failure of addressing these flaws leads to a broader question about the government's regulatory function. The Senegalese government seemed neither capable nor willing to regulate the private sector, and the resulting ineffective processes of the project lowered the results of the literacy courses and led to wastage.

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[3] The regulations are related to the time the World Bank needs to *reply* to the request; hence, requests can be delayed indefinitely through repeated requests from the World Bank's side for more information or that the request be reformulated.

Chapter 6
Constructing Cost-Effectiveness in Development

I am from a poor background myself, and I know poverty and even extreme poverty in Senegal. I have spoken to poor women and I state clearly that in Senegal, one can use a [large] amount of money to celebrate a birth or a wedding, even in the most disadvantaged milieus. I think that there is a minimum of motivation that one needs in order to learn. To the person who says that he or she cannot use 2500 FCFA to become literate, I say that he or she doesn't have the minimum of motivation to learn. I know that even in the poorest areas of Senegal, one can mobilize 2500 FCFA. For me, this money does not constitute a real participation in the program, because it represents a negligible part of the costs, but it constitutes a proof of the participants' interest in the course. We could eliminate this fee, since it is such a small part of the overall cost . . . It is like the cost of a newspaper; if it is free, people do not read it, and if it costs something, then the person who buys it will read it (Civil servant).

The provider is in-between the financial sponsor and the population. The state has a lesser role than the financial sponsor. The silent partner is the World Bank. Maybe the state participates, but it is the World Bank that prevails. The state's role is, through the intervention of the local education inspector [IDEN], to ensure that the project works well (Private provider staff).

There is a role for the government, because everything that is going on in a territory is related to the government. The government allows the World Bank, through AGETIP, to finance the Women's Literacy Project. So the government is doing lots of things (Private provider staff).

Cost analysis is supposedly a neutral science, not dependent on the researcher, but on calculations that will prove whether a program is cost-effective or not. Here, I will try to demonstrate to which extent it may be a "constructed" exercise. First, it is useful to question our notion of "success." Both the World Bank's and my own calculations that follow are primarily based on the understanding of success as literacy achievements. According to the longitudinal study, however, 46% of the participants expected an "improvement of the income of the community" from the project, whereas 35% expected that the project would "strengthen solidarity and mutual help

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in the community." Only 28% of the interviewees in the longitudinal study had literacy as their first expectation (LS-T0, 2001, p. 32). The learners' conception of the project was therefore not primarily connected to literacy and it may be misguiding to judge the project's effectiveness based on literacy outputs alone. Whereas the project was not very successful in reducing the illiteracy rate, it may have been more successful in the domains where the community expected it to be successful, i.e., in the improvement of income through classes in income-generating activities: only 5% of the learners had the required IGA skills upon entering the project and 73% had the required skills after the subproject had ended. This represents a success rate of about 68%, which would make attendance very worthwhile from the learners' point of view (and the project very successful, from a donor's point of view). The question of project success is thus – again – dependent on the point of view from which one discusses the project. In most cases, the learners were willing to pay the direct and opportunity costs involved in the project because they saw that it was worthwhile based on their own criteria of success. Again, the project's success and non-success are therefore based on ones construction of data – and of ones understanding of the purpose of the project. Another aspect that emerges is that the participants' use of a service does not necessarily coincide with the donor's intention for that service.

6.1 A Disastrous Combination?

According to the World Bank, the primary school system in Senegal represents a "disastrous combination" of high unit costs and poor efficiency (Bruns et al., 2003, p. 52). One of the reasons for implementation of the faire–faire system was to avoid the government bottlenecks and enhance effectiveness through public–private partnerships. To probe the effectiveness of the Women's Literacy project, it is therefore important to understand the costs involved in implementing the Women's Literacy Project and to question some of the challenges posed by the calculation of cost-effectiveness.[1]

The first difficulty to calculate the cost-effectiveness of the project is related to determining the exact number of enrollees. Different project documents and evaluations give different enrollment data for the Women's Literacy Project. The World Bank's project implementation report states the

[1] This section will be using my earlier cost analysis of the project (Nordtveit, 2005 and 2008b). All costs are in nominal US $ or CFAF, unless otherwise specified.

number of enrolled beneficiaries as 191,577 (on pp. 7 and 23, for example). The same report, on page 19, observes that the World Bank, through the Women's Literacy Project enrolled 203,599 learners in six cohorts (ICR, 2004). The government's implementation report states that 168,182 people were trained (p. 5), and adds, "with a dropout rate of 15%, it is therefore 193,409 learners that were enrolled" (MOE, 2001, p. 7). In another study, based on financing data from the World Bank, I estimated that the World Bank, through the Women's Literacy Project had financed literacy classes for 178,382 people (Nordtveit, 2005).

A similar problem is encountered for the dropout figures. The official project reports from the government and the World Bank state that the dropout number represented 15% of the enrollees. A second scenario could use numbers from the longitudinal and impact studies of the project and estimate the total number of dropouts to 34% of the enrollees (Nordtveit, 2005). The official number is based on provider reports (which again are based on the literacy teachers' and supervisors' reports). It should be underlined that the procedures manual states that the maximum acceptable dropout rate is 15%, so a provider association may have a tendency to report the number of dropouts as 15%. Also, the literacy teachers may have had an incentive to make dropout numbers as low as possible, since they may be offered future employment depending on the positive results of the literacy course. Likewise, the provider associations had an incentive to report good results to show that the outcome of the subcontracting had been successful. These incentives to "improve" results therefore suggest that 15% may be a too low estimate of dropouts. In trying to estimate dropout numbers, I made use of the government's longitudinal studies, which evaluated 60 sites, in which 1,800 learners were reportedly enrolled, and estimated the dropout rate to 34%, based on the participation of the learners over time (Nordtveit, 2005).

Estimating the success rates poses the same problem as the calculation of enrollment and dropout rates. Again, I suggest to analyze two scenarios, one using the official data from the World Bank's completion report, which sets the success rate at an average of 50%, i.e., 50% of the learners who completed the course learned to read, write, and solve simple math problems (ICR, 2004). A second scenario, again based on the outcome of the longitudinal studies, estimates the success rate (reading, writing, math, and basic skills learned) at 34%, because the official reports did not take into account the literacy rates at enrollment (and calculation of project success thus implicitly estimated that all enrollees were illiterate). It can be debated whether a literate enrollee, who is obviously as literate, or more literate than before at the end of the literacy course, should be considered as "successful." Since the project's primary stated objective is to provide literacy to illiterate

and semi-literate people, there is a case that cost analysis should discount enrollees that are literate at the onset of the course. This point is clearly dependent on the understanding of the objective of the courses, since literate people may, in terms of "development" (e.g., creation of social capital and learning income-generating activities), paradoxically gain more knowledge from the course than participants that were fully illiterate at enrollment.

Two scenarios emerge from the two sources (the reported official data and the ones using data from the longitudinal and impact studies), which I characterize as *official* numbers and *corrected* numbers (Nordtveit, 2005 and 2008b). Using the highest numbers of the various *official* reports, 203,599 participants were enrolled, 173,059 completed the course, and 86,529 successfully learned to write and read (or in any case were considered as "successful" by the World Bank). Counting the *corrected* numbers, 178,382 were enrolled, 117,732 completed the course, and 43,561 were successful. Different readings of the project's data therefore provide very different numbers of success.

The two scenarios for calculating success numbers significantly influence the unit costs per person who successfully completed the course. The provider unit fee was fixed to 27,500 CFAF per enrollee in the non-integrated course and in post-literacy courses, and 37,000 CFAF for the integrated course.[2] The government costs of the Women's Literacy Project can be divided into two categories: (i) the fee paid by the government to the providers; and (ii), the government and contract-managing agency costs. To calculate a complete unit cost per enrollee, it is necessary to add the government and contract-management costs to the provider costs. In real terms and using the average conversion rate of 2003, these combined costs would represent a World Bank cost of US $13.71 million. In discounting the costs that were not fully depreciated over the lifetime of the project, and by adding the government costs, I estimated total government costs representing US $13.91 million and divided the costs on the number of enrollees, completers, and successful completers (Nordtveit, 2005). The cost per enrollee comes to $68 (official figures) or $78 (corrected figures): the cost per "completer" (person who has completed the course)is estimated at $80 (official)

[2] The fee in US $ obviously varied according to the parity between US $ and CFAF, and the buying power of the fee varied according to the Senegalese consumer price index. The conversion rates that are used to calculate costs below are based on my (Nordtveit, 2005) calculation of real 2003 costs. The conversion rate used in the World Bank's project document was US $1 = 500 CFAF (SAR, 1996). The adjustment of prices into real costs is made by using Senegal's consumer price index and using the average exchange rate between US $ and CFAF in 2003 ($1 = 580 CFAF).

Table 6.1 Public costs of the Women's Literacy Project

Real 2003 cost (US $)	Official data	Corrected data
Cost per enrollee	$68	$78
Cost per completer	$80	$118
Cost per successful graduate	$161	$319

or $118 (corrected), and the cost per successful graduate is estimated at $161 (official) or $319 (corrected) (see table 6.1).

The average unit costs in the table do not distinguish between non-integrated and integrated subprojects. The fee to the provider obviously varied in real terms each year. If one estimates that the same, average government and contract-managing costs are valid for both integrated and non-integrated courses, the unit costs for the integrated approach would be as follows (for a 1999 cohort, in 2003 real cost): Cost per enrollee: $89 (official) or $92 (corrected). Cost per person who completed the course: $105 (official) or $140 (corrected). Finally, the cost per person who *successfully* completed the course would be $210 (official) and $378 (corrected data). The costs for the non-integrated project were a bit lower.[3]

[3] In addition, the learners contributed to the project with a fixed cost of 2,500 CFAF per person. This was most often paid to the provider and was a part of the implementation budget of the provider. In real terms (2003), the direct costs of their contribution varied between US $4.88 in 1996 and US $4.31 in 2003. In multiplying these costs with the number of learners per cohort, the total fee of the participants adds up to (real) US $825,460 or an average direct cost of $4.63 per learner.

I estimated the full social costs of the course by adding the opportunity costs, estimated at approximately 2-work months, counting 28 days of work per month (Nordtveit, 2005). Using figures from the joint World Bank – IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2002) which sets the poverty threshold at an income of 143,080 CFAF per year for adults, I estimated the opportunity costs per enrollee at $38.70 (official and corrected data), the opportunity cost per person who completed the course to $40.60 (official) and $44.10 (corrected) and the cost per person who successfully completed the course to $81.10 (official) and $119.20 (corrected). Evidence from interviews point to the fact that dropout was mainly due to opportunity costs, which are clearly exceeding direct costs, as demonstrated above. The full societal unit cost can then be estimated by adding the total government costs with the total private costs, reaching an average course cost per enrollee of $111 (official) and $121 (corrected); per person who completed the course of $126 (official) and $169 (corrected); per person who successfully completed the course of $253 (official) and $457 (corrected). Again, these societal unit costs are averages for the project duration and would be somewhat lower for the non-integrated subprojects and higher for the integrated subprojects. In comparing the unit costs for the non-integrated and integrated approaches with the average unit costs, I estimated that the societal unit costs per person who successfully completed the course is US $444 for courses using the non-integrated approach and $516 for the integrated approach (both corrected numbers).

The costs shown in Table 6.1 are based on sketchy evidence and fairly uncertain data and are shown to explain how different readings of a project can come to different conclusions. A World Bank's estimate of costs per person who successfully completed the course, for example, based on the same numbers as above, comes to US $149 instead of US $161 (my calculation). My cost comparison between literacy and primary education shows that literacy courses in Senegal are slightly less costly than primary education. The public cost to produce one successful graduate in literacy education ($319) is thus equivalent to financing 4.5 years of primary education.[4] The World Bank, using different dropout and success rates, estimates that the cost of the literacy course is equivalent of 2 years of primary education:

> The main conclusion is that this type of literacy program appears to be not especially costly. Taking into account the repetition rate (13.6%) and the completion rate (44.7%) in primary schooling and in literacy classes (drop-out rate of 15%; unsuccessful completion rate of 50%), the completion of a literacy class costs about one-fifth of the completed five years of primary education. As the public cost per graduate of the literacy course is estimated at US $149, this would be equivalent to two years of primary schooling or less than one year of successful primary schooling (counting dropout and repetition rates) (ICR, 2004, p. 9).

When the World Bank states literacy is not especially costly, we must bear in mind that the literacy program is compared to primary education, which the World Bank itself characterizes as a "disastrous combination" of high unit costs and poor efficiency. Further, as noted above, different readings of the achievement data produce different numbers and demonstrate that literacy education may *not* be *very inexpensive*, depending on how the data are understood. The costs of literacy in Senegal are therefore largely constructed and depend on which data are used, which unit of comparison is employed, and what is the objective of analysis. The World Bank's completion report

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[4] Using UNESCO statistics of cohort survival rate in Senegal, which is 72% at fourth grade, and the repetition rate is 14%. The outcomes of the Women's Literacy Project in terms of literacy show an average success rate of 35% in reading and 26% in writing. This rate can be compared to 4 years of primary schooling. The cohort survival rate is slightly higher for primary education than for literacy education (with an estimated 28% dropout at fourth grade against an estimated dropout of 34% for literacy education). Based on these numbers, one can compare the outcome of the Women's Literacy Project literacy education with 4 years of primary education (measured on literacy criteria and dropout). Senegal's unit costs for primary education are, according to World Bank estimations, about 14.2% of per capita GDP in 2000 (Bruns et al., 2003, p. 131). The cost for 1 year of primary education is therefore slightly less expensive than the average enrollment cost of one person in literacy education (US $71 against $78 in 2003 costs). The cost to produce one learner who successfully completed literacy education is thus equivalent to financing 4.5 years of primary education.

needed to justify a continued engagement of the World Bank in the sector and literacy is therefore constructed as "not especially costly." It should be underlined that this construction does not correspond to any World Bank manipulation of the numbers, just the use of different sources and different interpretation of data than my own. The World Bank itself was worried about the accuracy of the project information and noted in the Implementation Completion Report that the quality of project data was dubious:

> . . . the overall performance in monitoring and evaluation improved over time. Meanwhile, the quality of these evaluations remains to be assessed. For instance, many providers argued that the evaluation tests applied to auditors were of poor quality and did not adequately measure literacy and other benefits the program intended to provide in terms of knowledge and skills (ICR, 2004, p. 15).

6.2 Whose Ineffectiveness?

However one choose to interpret the aforementioned data, it is clear that some ineffectiveness exists in the literacy courses. It may be useful to try to further disentangle where the effectiveness problems are to be found. In using calculations from different sources, one can get a better understanding of how the subprojects were spending the allocated funding.[5] At a first glance, we note that although the unit fee per enrolled participant was very homogenous, the providers' use of the funding varied widely.

A 1999 study of 55 subproject budgets found that the unit fee requested was "very close" to the maximum allowed, i.e., 30,000 CFAF per enrollee, with 27,500 CFAF paid by the Women's Literacy Project and 2,500 CFAF paid by the learners (Fall, 1999). Most provider associations asked for the maximum fee they could obtain for literacy provision and the unit costs for all the subprojects were therefore largely the same (the only variation in unit costs was between subprojects using the integrated and non-integrated approach). However, each provider association used the funds differently. Fall (1999) gives an example of three budgets, in which the amount used for learning materials per learner varies from 4,371 to 7,646 CFAF. The learning

[5] My sources include a seminar on costs that took place in August 1999, which was reported on in the project's newspaper *Partage* no. 14 (January 2000). The outcome of this seminar proposed a budget for 20 centers (or 600 learners), with a unit cost of 36,874 CFAF. This unit cost would eventually become the basis of the integrated approach, in which the unit fee for the provider was 37,000 CFAF + 2,500 CFAF (contribution to the costs by the learner). Also, to suggest guidelines for cost calculations, Fall (1999) set up an indicative budget, representing the costs of 20 centers, or 600 learners, suggesting a unit price of 31,342 CFAF per learner, based on the calculations of all costs compounded. Finally, Diagne and Sall (2001) provide a cost analysis of the project.

situation is not likely to have been the same in the three projects, since some participants received much higher quality (or more) study materials. In Fall's list of equipment and learning materials, prices ranged widely, e.g., between 25 and 125 CFAF per pen, between 40 and 175 CFAF per exercise book, and between 100 and 300 CFAF per slate. This variation may have been due to market differences between urban centers and remote rural areas; it may also have been due to differences in the quality of the items. In some cases, the price variation might also have been due to corrupt behavior from providers' staff members who agreed to pay a high cost for products and received kick-backs in return. The price of the goods purchased by the subproject was therefore rarely subject to normal market conditions, but was biased due to difficult access in remote areas or corruption.

Unsurprisingly, the most important cost component is staff salaries (including literacy teacher's fee): *Partage* no. 14 (2000) estimates it at 35% of total costs, of which 77% would be literacy teachers' fee (i.e., literacy teachers' salaries would represent 27% of a subproject's total costs). Likewise Diagne and Sall (2001) estimate the staff salaries at 35% of total costs of a generic subproject, whereas Fall (1999) gives examples in which these costs vary between 34 and 60% of the total costs. The salaries were widely different between subprojects, especially for the subproject coordinators. Fall (1999) noted a range from 15,000 to 120,000 CFAF per month in this category. The length of the recruitment of coordinators also varied, from 10 to 16 months. The first salary (15,000) would represent an income at the poverty limit and would indicate that the coordinator had some other means of income. The maximum income would represent about six times the GDP per capita. For supervisors, the fee varied between 40,000 and 80,000 CFAF, and for financial managers it varied between 15,000 and 75,000 CFAF. The length of the employment of the supervisors (per subproject) also varied (usually the supervisors were recruited for the same duration as the coordinator). The salaries of the literacy teachers were more homogenous and varied between 25,000 and 33,000 CFAF, usually for a 10-month period (Fall, 1999). The literacy teachers' salaries were sufficient to sustain a family and represented about twice the poverty limit. This expenditure was probably uniform across subprojects because it was the only cost item where the market rate was likely to be prevalent. Often the providers' staff members were linked to each other through family or other relationships, in which case market-based salaries were not applicable. For the provider organizations' staff members, literacy provision could generate a profitable income. The director (*personne morale*) of the provider association should in principle not receive any income from the project (unless the director was also the subproject coordinator, which was often the case). The World Bank's project

evaluation report estimates that the provider associations (which would most often mean the director of the association) "earns on average 4,492 CFAF per learner" (ICR, 2004, p. 19). This corresponds to 8% of the overall provider fees (in the integrated project) and would constitute a very lucrative earning in Senegal. The salaries and the 8% "earning" described above, with the exception of literacy teacher salaries, were not competitive and market adjusted. Not surprisingly, many new associations were created with profit in mind, and there was a high level of competition to write good subproject proposals.

Training of staff was estimated by various sources to constitute 6–14% of the total costs. Training of literacy teachers was the most important part of this cost component. Further, learning materials (for beneficiaries and pedagogic materials for literacy teachers) were estimated at 19–24% of the total subproject cost. Follow-up was estimated at 10% of total costs (mostly transport cost) and evaluation at about 1%. Overhead was estimated at 2–3% of the total costs, to be completed by "institutional assistance" (or capacity building) for the provider associations, which represented about 8–12% of the total costs, mostly for motorcycles, computers, and furniture. For the integrated approach, the institutional assistance budget item also covered income-generating skills activities for learners and leadership training for the leaders of the women's association or for the management committee.

At times, the provider association helped with construction materials for literacy centers, paid incentives to the *relais*, or offered other types of support. The budget changed with each subproject, but was normally based on a cost model in the procedures manual. The effectiveness of each subproject was largely connected to the human resources involved in the project, and the use of the first budget component, i.e., staff salaries, which Fall suggests could represent as much as 60% of a subproject budget. Hence, it is impossible to offer an evaluation of the project's overall effectiveness based on a general evaluation of the providers' budget use, since it would vary according to subproject. At best, it is possible to say that the faire–faire system was *non-homogenous*, and the quality varied according to the providers' use of the funding.

The World Bank's financing also covered the contract-managing agency, AGETIP, which received a fee from the World Bank loan corresponding to 5% of the amount of contracts made with the providers. In addition, the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) received financing for rental of offices and operating costs; and the Ministry of Literacy's Cabinet and personnel as well as the Department for Literacy and Basic Education's personnel received training and equipment. The real costs of these three categories represented (real) US $4.30 million, or about 30% of the total costs of the project. The

contract-managing agency's total fees represented about US $500,000. For that price, two controllers and office support personnel were hired to work with the Women's Literacy Project. The transfer of funds and the setup of contracts, as well as procurement, were most often quick and timely.

According to interviewees, the government's Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) was inefficient, even *before* the partnership policy. The Women's Literacy Project did little to correct inefficiency problems within the government. As we have seen above, a large budget was set aside to strengthen the DAEB, but it does not seem to have had the expected outcomes:

> *The Women's Literacy Project provided technical and capacity building assistance to the DAEB . . .They [staff members] perform their functions with difficulty; no one is satisfied with DAEB's work . . . They never had the experience to manage a large program, nor did they have the human resources or the organizational structure for doing it. It is not sure that they have it, even today (Former civil servant).*

The Department for Literacy and Basic Education often seemed to be incapable of (or unwilling to) regulating the sector. As noted in the quote above, interviews seemed to confirm that "no one is satisfied with DAEB's work:"

> *Maybe the DAEB is doing something positive that I don't know about (Private provider staff).*

The World Bank reiterated this dissatisfaction in the Implementation Completion Report and blamed it on the institutional instability of government agencies:

> The DAEB was directly responsible for the policy dialogue with the Bank. It was in charge of the overall monitoring, evaluation and coordination of the project. However, it experienced significant difficulties in accomplishing this task . . . The DAEB did not take all the requisite measures to address problems raised by project implementation. For example, the Project Steering Committee, which was supposed to meet regularly to discuss and address problems raised by implementation, met only rarely . . . DAEB's poor performance is partly explained by the turnover in its personnel. In December 1999, a new DAEB's Director was designated, but shortly replaced in April 2000 (presidential elections) by decision of the new Minister. These circumstances weakened the institutional stability needed to adequately follow the project (ICR, 2004, p. 15).

As we have seen, the project outsourced funds because of the lack of belief in the capacity of the government. In order to bypass government bottlenecks, especially those of the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB), the Women's Literacy Project created an independent institution – the Project Coordination Unit (PCU). Ironically, the PCU was a government agency, and all its agents were civil servants. One could therefore suspect

that the same shortcomings were visible in the PCU as in the Department for Literacy and Basic Education. However, the PCU became everything that the DAEB was not: a small, efficient, and dynamic organization, which was widely recognized as the driving government institution in the project. According to the World Bank project evaluation, the PCU functioned in a satisfactory manner:

> The PCU was proactive in managing the project and showed preparedness to assist the Ministry in taking policy and administrative decisions . . . During the project life, the PCU did a good job at the technical level, working with communities, IA and IDEN [regional and local administrative levels] and literacy providers, providing training to providers and supervising their activities (ICR, 2004, p. 16).

The establishment of Project Coordination Units, however, is against current World Bank policy. The policy of the World Bank rather aims at creating the right conditions within the government for implementation of large-scale programs (financed by the World Bank *and* other donors). Therefore, the PCU was integrated back into the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (effective in 2004). According to many civil servants and provider staff, the effectiveness of the project execution declined sharply after the PCU integrated into the DAEB.

In asking "whose ineffectiveness?" it is easy to point to specific, non-functioning processes, or to perceived non-success in literacy learning, or again to the providers' non-homogenous use of project funding. However, before asking which process is influencing which outcome, it may be useful to question whether change is desired and desirable in the community. We have seen that the participants considered the project as a learning tool in income-generating activities rather than a literacy project. Hence, by evaluating the project as a literacy project, one may not understand the full implications of the project as an integrated development project. This leads to questions about the holistic systems that could contribute to change. What were the combined causes for inertia and change in the communities? As a holistic system, how did the Women's Literacy Project function? It is to these different levels of investigation that we will turn in the end of this study.

Chapter 7
The World Bank, Civil Society, and the Market

Before, we bought like this, sold like that without knowing whether or not we had made any profit. Now we know how to study the market, and how to sell higher than we bought (Former learner).

Today, I know how to decipher words. I can also calculate prices for my shop, and see whether I have a profit or lose money when I sell things. Maybe I can't understand all that is taught since I am so old. However, what I have learned has helped me a lot (Current learner).

The participants choose their IGA [Income Generating Activities]; sometimes they want to raise cattle, but we usually don't do that because it is expensive. Most often we do chicken farming, shop keeping, and dyeing. The women choose these activities themselves. We can't choose for them; if we had chosen activities that they have never done, it wouldn't work. We help them improve their knowledge, so that they can perform better. For raising chicken for example, we ask a specialist to come and give classes. Often the expert comes from the relevant administrative structure. Also, we call in experts to train the literacy teachers (Private provider staff).

The provider gave some lessons in management, and gave each class 45,000 FCFA, which was distributed among the learners to buy small products to sell, such as soap, spices, etc. We set a day for repayment. All the products were sold for 60,000FCFA, for which we bought new products. Each learner chose to focus on the products that had had most successful sales (Current learner/relais).

7.1 A Product of Its Time

We have a development project.

The World Bank finances this project – and we have seen how it responds to national and international decisions to use public–private partnerships. We have seen local reactions; people who organize in NGOs and various types of associations as a reply to project mechanisms. We have listened to largely homogenous discourses regarding development, so homogenous,

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in fact, that we have even questioned whether we live in post-globalization societies, where discourses have largely merged into one global debate, in which the variance is much smaller than before. Some of the outcomes of the project have been identified: better organization of learners in associations (Foucault may have called it a more controlled society); better knowledge to reading and writing; improved knowledge to some skills (such as soap making or shop keeping); better knowledge to some health and hygiene practices that we (as development workers and theorists) deem important, such as the vaccination of children and the use of birth spacing methods. And yet, to repeat Heidegger's question from the introduction: there still looms like a specter over all this uproar the question: what for? – where to? – and what then?

In grounding the project in the Millennium Development Goals, one could reply: To reduce poverty. To improve health and education. To reduce gender inequities. The project has done all that, in a manner that we cannot say is cost-effective but we cannot say it is cost ineffective either, since it reflects the state of affairs of the school system in Senegal, which is characterized by some local teachers as a "World Bank school system"; and by the World Bank as a "disastrous combination" of high unit costs and poor efficiency. Both sides seem to deplore the lack of local ownership.

The project is a construct of its time. Mirroring the concept of development, which is a product of donor and recipient needs, entangled in a global economy, replying largely to a homogenized discourse – situated in a historic dimension, so the development project is a product of various strands of discourse and of discursive practice. It is based on the logic of Education for All and Jomtien; it is based on the economic–political requirements of the World Bank (to lend) and of the recipient country (to "develop"); and it is based on perceived population needs. Hence, the development project is mechanically replying to global–local concerns of its time; concerns of civil society, literacy, gender equity, and transparence. As a construct of its time, the project should maybe not be understood so much as a World Bank project, but more as a result of specific historic discourses. Therefore, an analysis of the project must bear in mind its historic settings and barriers, and question the meaning of change. To a large extent, the obtained change is related to the economic performance of the communities, and, for this reason, is responding to an institutional wish (by the World Bank and the Senegalese government) to strengthen the economic performance of the country. As indicated in the aforementioned quotations from project participants: "now we know how to study the market, and how to sell higher than we bought;" "I can also calculate prices for my shop, and see whether I have a profit or lose money when I sell things;" "we help them improve their knowledge, so that they can perform better;" "all the products were sold for 60,000 FCFA, for

which we bought new products. Each learner chose to focus on the products that had had most successful sales." The desire to strengthen the economic performance of the communities is a joint venture – and largely a homogenous discourse – of the stakeholders, the World Bank, the recipient country, and the communities. It is a non-threatening change, aiming at preserving the societies' power structures and at the same time help improving the situation of the poor toward a Western-inspired modernity. Generator-driven TV sets, available and known even in the remotest community, are guiding the ideals of "development;" money, prosperity, and health. Debates about development are not muted; arguments about project implementation and activities still exist, but they are, as we have seen in the beginning of our study, largely mainstreamed by the conception of the modern west as the only universalizable civilization (Sachsenmaier, 2006).

To explain the effects of the project, most World Bank and government staff would base analysis on Weber's model of linear relationships between cause and effect. In such framework, "we must begin by positing a hypothetical process or sequence of events from an initial state (A) to an eventual result (B)" (Ringer, 2006, p. 366). Then, a change in the initial state (A) is imagined, resulting in a different path, (A′) to (B′) (Ringer, 2006). Ringer further depicts the relationships between cause and effect (drawing on Weber's methodology) in a diagram showing the *linear* relation of (A) to (B) and of (A′) to (B′). The development project is often understood as linear relationships, and when human behaviors (and hence development outcomes) are difficult to predict, it is often explained through flawed procedures and bounded rationality of actors: "practitioners of the cultural and social sciences rarely encounter purely rational actions and beliefs in reality. Their 'rationalism' is purely heuristic" (Ringer, 2006, p. 370). Our understanding of the project often focus on the efficiency of delivery of a single product, i.e., literacy classes and literacy – and lack thereof: no classes and therefore illiteracy, resulting in a lower score of the Millennium Development Goals' targets for literacy. Such understanding does not consider the society (and stakeholders) as non-linear systems of inertia and change. Maybe we should not isolate the courses causing literacy as *a single event* but investigates the holistic systems where the courses have different outcomes (B, B′, B″ etc.) depending of the co-interacting factors with the literacy course. It seems as if the project needs to reach a certain level of complexity, or *critical mass*, to overcome inertia of the status quo:

> In non-linear systems small changes in causal elements over time do not necessarily produce small changes in other particular aspects of the system, or in the characteristics of the system as a whole. Either or both may change very much

> indeed, and, moreover, they may change in ways which do not involve just one possible outcome (Byrne, 1998, p.14).

In order to reach the critical mass for change, interactions between factors of change are important. If the literacy project has little impact (however one would like to define "impact") in certain communities, it may be that it has not reached a sufficient level of interactions (or complexity) necessary to attain a critical mass for change in that community. For example, most proponents of literacy education argued that providing literacy for literacy's own sake was not successful. It was in the interaction with other development efforts that the literacy courses produced an environment that was prone to a dynamics of change. Each additional factor (for change) added to the system multiplied exponentially the number of interactions between agents, and therefore multiplied exponentially the number of possible outcomes (Mason, 2007). Hence, literacy alone did not interact with anything when it existed in isolation – which was the case in communities where there was no usage for reading and writing. In the Women's Literacy project, if one activity (or agent) was added to the literacy course, say newspapers, one connection was made, literacy newspapers. If an additional element was added, say religious books, there were three connections: literacy-newspapers, newspapers-religious books, and literacy-religious books. The Women's Literacy project was supposed, in its integrated form, to make many such connections: literacy – income-generating activities – libraries – Learning and Activities' Centers – and it is easy to recognize that it had a better chance to stimulate change when it was integrated than if it had been operating in a void. In other words, the project developed in a non-linear fashion:[1]

- Literacy alone: no impact
- One development activity: no connections
- Two activities: one connection
- Three activities: three connections
- Four activities: six connections
- Six activities: fifteen connections
- . . . .
- Ten activities: forty-five connections
- One hundred activities: four thousand nine hundred and fifty connections

[1] As Mason (2007) showed, the mathematical formula is $y_n = 1/2(n^2 - n)$, in which (y_n) is the number of possible connections associated with a given number of elements or agents (n).

Of course, the project did not act in isolation in the way we constructed it above; we have to add in factors of culture, religion, political belonging, which each interacted in a non-additive fashion, some reinforcing, and some reducing the effect of the initial development agent, literacy. The combined effect of these interactions was not necessarily the sum of the separate effects. It was greater or less in each community, because the interactions and elements reinforced or cancelled each other out in non-linear ways. Also, the agents did not act the same way in each community. In other words, the introduction of an element such as newspapers or religious books may have had a positive effect in some circumstances (i.e., contributing to reach a critical mass for literacy acquisition by the community) or may have been neutral (i.e., have no effect) in other circumstances. In some other situations, it may even have been counterproductive. The way a factor interacted with others depended largely on the initial condition of the system. Complexity Theory, thus, emphasizes the need of understanding each actor's motivation and bounded rationality, since a small change in the initial conditions of a system may exert great influence on the subsequent behavior of each added factor of change. The bounded rationality of each actor (including development workers) can be better perceived and understood when the level of social embeddedness is understood (i.e., values, norms). The same type of connections hold true for the greater picture of the project. Hence, it may be argued that

- Health efforts (in themselves a complex network of interactions) were influenced by the literacy project
- Literacy acquisition was influenced by the health of the stakeholders
- Agriculture was influenced by literacy
- Literacy acquisition was influenced by the type of agriculture of the stakeholders
- Cultural values were influenced by literacy
- Literacy acquisition was influenced by the cultural values of the learners

These interactions, again, were not linear and depended on the locality and the initial conditions of the system. In order to attain a lock-in for sustainable autocatalytic change, it was necessary to add as many interactions as possible to the system, i.e., to multiply intervention in order to overcome the initial condition of inertia (Mason, 2008). Also, it was necessary to understand as much as possible the initial condition of each system in each locality, since the agents for change did not interact in the same way; the bounded rationality of each actor was not the same, and the possible outcomes of each added factor was therefore variable according to initial circumstances.

Complexity research has identified a number of qualities that are habitually manifested in a complex phenomenon. These characteristics include:[2] *Self-organization:* a system (or more often, *systems*) emerges through self-organization of various interacting elements in the project. Such a system or structure can of course be negative or positive. In the Women's Literacy project, the self-organization varied from corruption to positive change in the community. Most stakeholders said that the literacy classes, through their use of local languages and through the promotion of local income-generating activities, promoted feelings of rural and community belonging. The project's building of local civil society further strengthened this sense of local belonging. Also, these characteristics made the project non-threatening to the established order in the communities and in the country.

Further, the self-organized systems of interaction in the communities were *bottom-up emergent;* they did not depend on a specific organization or an over-arching super-structure, although they were a part of such structure. Hence, the participants themselves adopted the project to their own use; their learning (and subsequent change in their lives) was not decided (although it may have been influenced in a certain direction) by the World Bank or by the Senegalese government. Likewise, their learning depended less on centralized control than on short-range relationships among actors. Accordingly, the systematic, self-organized, and non-formal relationships between the community members, the local service provider, local administration, and the community participants were usually stronger than the overarching, top-down administrative structure of the project. Of course, the communities' response to the courses was also dependent on the curriculum offered.

Also, complex systems are often *nested* one within the other, i.e., in the project, various levels and types of coordination, field activities, learning, and interactions took place. Many of these activities in themselves constituted complex systems. For example, literacy efforts (which were a complex network of interactions of actors and activities) were influenced by health (another complex network). Then again, the health of the participants was likely to affect literacy acquisition: an inter-relationship that promoted lock-in to a positive feedback loop.[3] The different systems in the project were *ambiguously bonded*, i.e., it is difficult if not impossible to define

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[2] Using Davis and Sumara (2006) and Morrison (2002).

[3] Positive feedback can lead to lock-in to inertia (no health program, insufficient nutritional intake of learners, low participation, and low outcomes) or to dynamic change (health program in place, better nutritional status of learners, better learning, learning about health further stimulates participation in the health program which results in better nutritional status, which results in more interest for further learning, etc.).

the boundaries of each complex system: in the example above, it would be difficult to determine with precision which other sectors are influenced by literacy (health, agriculture, culture, religion, etc.). Also, the systems were constantly changing and evolving – they were learning and "thus better described in terms of Darwinian evolution than Newtonian mechanics" (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 6). This implies that they were *not in equilibrium*. In other words, the literacy project in a community was part of its time and changed with its time. Its dynamics were constantly evolving.

In an earlier study, I have attempted to demonstrate that development programs are usually set up and implemented in a non-integrated way (Nordtveit, 2008a), and thus each activity reaches the participants in a way that precludes the maximum effect of interaction between the agents that are supposed to lead to change, which in many if not all cases prevent the intergenerational condition of poverty among stakeholder to reach a critical mass of change in the sense of development. In our case study, if literacy efforts act alone to obtain literacy, health efforts act alone to reach health, and these efforts are disseminated in a non-integrated way; they would be ruling out the complex interaction needed to achieve the necessary momentum of development change. Thus, the system of literacy, although possessing all the characteristics of a complex system (it *is* a complex system), could in certain communities be locked into inertia, because the health of the learners, the cultural incentives to learn, and all the other complex relationships that need to be explored and exploited were not included or facilitated in the initial setup of the subproject. In the cases where non-integrated development subprojects still have been successful, the success may have been largely due to complex, bottom-up emergent self-organization of the actors and their integration of the project into a larger system of local interactions. Thus, development efforts, through their adherence to a static and linear worldview, in many cases do not reach the necessary critical mass to cause change. This is due to the inertia of the status quo, and in many cases to the positive feedback cycle of poverty, which will maintain the poor (in an intergenerational cycle) locked in a path of poverty – or even in increasing poverty.

In the Women's Literacy project, the outputs in terms of poverty reduction were dissimilar between subprojects. The project, however, in most communities displayed the same discourse: poverty reduction and change in the sense of Western modernization. One of the initial quotes in this study, made by a young man studying computer science, demonstrates my point,

My mom can write her name now and she is telephoning by herself. That helps to keep her occupied. At home, when we are watching the African Football Cup, she now knows who scored (Villager).

Here we see a possible change from a globalized to a post-globalized society. The discourse is largely analogous with what a Western teenager would say if his or her mother had recently learnt to read and write. In this case, the community, having recently obtained electricity, "developed" in an extreme pace, leaving the past generation and certain women in a traditional setting, whereas a new, Western society was emerging. The Women's Literacy project then, as a true product of its time, acted as a bridge between the past and the future emergent. In this way, it is an example of globalization and homogenization – leading the way toward a post-globalized and more homogenous society.

7.2 Levels of Change

We have looked at the community changes toward modernity as a pell-mell (and complex, non-linear) combination of literacy acquisition, strengthening of civil society, reduction of gender inequities, improvement of income, etc. It is now the time to try to understand different layers of this change and the mechanisms of change. It should be underlined that these strands of change are ambiguously bounded, i.e., they do not constitute fixed categories, but are mutually influencing each other. A first level of change encompasses "social embeddedness," or non-calculative norms, which are characterized by very slow mutations (Williamson, 2000). In the case of the Women's Literacy project, the question that immediately comes to mind is whether the project has changed the social embeddedness of the Senegalese communities. The emerging society in Senegal, I would argue, is largely influenced by Western modernization, and the project is both a product of this wish of change and a tool for change. Further, in considering the project as a product of its time, and as a bridge between the past and the present, I make a case that the project should not only be seen as a product but also as an agent for change and that the change is being steered in a specific direction by a combinations of factors (e.g., by the World Bank's ideology and that of the Senegalese government, but also by the beliefs of the stakeholders themselves). Instead of understanding the project along a linear relationships, a dialectical and complex relationship emerges (Table 7.1).

A second level can be defined as the institutional environment,[4] encompassing the formal rules of the society, e.g., propriety rights and ownership, marriage, and the state system. Change at this level occurs more

[4] The term "institution" is here understood as "a set of formal, or informal, rules, including their enforcement arrangements" (Furubotn and Richter, p. 488).

Table 7.1 Four levels of social analysis

Level of analysis	Time framework
Social embeddedness	Decennia
Institutions	Decades
Governance	Years
Resource allocation and employment	Continuous

frequently and is often measured in decades. We have seen how, in the Women's Literacy project, this level is marked by an emergence of civil society and of a lesser influence of state institutions. Again, at this level the project is both a product of its time and a tool for change – and linear explanations lack usefulness in the analysis; the project must be understood as a dialectical and complex system.

A third level of social analysis consists of governance, or *how* institutions are enforced. We have seen how the project, in certain cases, is likely to have led to corruption – and in other cases to a better-coordinated civil society. A fourth level of analysis encompasses resource allocation and employment, including prices, quantities, and incentive alignment. Change at this level is continuous – and the project influenced this level continuously.

Neoclassical economics has been preoccupied with change at the fourth level and has concentrated on resource allocation and employment. New Institutional Economics (NIE) has been analyzing levels two and three. Development programs often focus on getting good institutional and governance structures, and thereby to maximize effectiveness. The most basic programs have concentrated on the fourth level of analysis, i.e., to get resource allocation and employment right, and at the same time, rely on institutions that are conceived as "effective," such as the market. The neoclassical market-based development approach, built on a version of Reagan and Thatcher's conservative agendas, was largely based on the standard market model, a core element of neoclassical economic theory (Todaro and Smith, 2003). Today, although the most austere principles of these development practices have been discounted (especially the structural adjustment programs that were supposed to reduce government and liberalize markets), the basic principles of it (liberalization and privatization) are still seen as necessary to promote economic growth. NIE, rather than supporting a simplified neoclassical model to stimulate growth, tends to offer its own efficiency arguments.

In order to analyze – and to get the institutions and governance "right," NIE proposes several analytical tools. First, NIE recognizes that there is a cost to running an economic or social system. These costs could be occurred to set up institutional arrangements (also called *fixed transaction*

costs) or they could be variable transaction costs, which include search and information costs, bargaining and decision costs, and supervisory and enforcement costs (Furubotn and Richter, 2003). Such variable transactions costs were particularly heavy in a private-run development project such as the Women's Literacy project, because of the costs of ensuring contract compliance. As we have seen, despite the investment in monitoring and evaluation, the project still did not perform well on this; the World Bank characterized the monitoring and evaluation as the project's weakest point (ICR, 2004). Further, there was no certainty that using grassroots associations or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to implement services will reduce corruption or enhance effectiveness:

> It is often stated that privatization or "NGOization" would reduce corruption but this is seldom rigorously evaluated. Private providers and NGOs can also siphon off or waste funds and perform poorly in terms of service delivery (Azfar and Zinnes, 2003, p. 16).

According to NIE the issue of *bounded rationality* is a main problem with many development projects. Bounded rationality relates to situations when people do not take the action that would maximize results, because they do not have complete access to information of what is feasible (Kasper and Streit, 1998). The actors in the Women's Literacy project (donor agencies, civil servants, service providers, local participants) had a limited ability to store and utilize information; and the use of information of each actor, as seen above, may have been dissimilar (Furubotn and Richter, 2003). The bounded rationality and asymmetric information problems may lead to selection of low-quality service providers and of distortion of the outcome of the project. Institutional economics recognizes three main ways in which people can be induced to make an effort in the interest of others:

> (a) they make the effort to benefit others out of love, solidarity, or other variants of altruism; (b) they are coerced by someone who threatens them with the use of force (command); (c) they act out of their own free will, but are motivated out of enlightened self-interest because they can expect a sufficient reward. What they do for others is then the side-effect of their selfishness (Kasper and Streit, 1998, p. 61).

NIE argues that the last type of motivation works best in large societies. Use of selfish motivation together with bounded rationality entails that each actor evaluates and chooses the implementation type that is likely to maximize his or her reward based on his or her flawed information and limited cognition. Each actor's behavior is linked to the perceived cultural and religious rewards of the behavior, or to its cash value. The design of the Women's Literacy projects, we have seen, partially responded to embedded social values (some

of which are reflected as development targets in the Millennium Development Goals), and partially to each actors bounded rationality, and action to maximize their self-interest. Jomtien provided an institutional venue for action – and the World Bank provided financing for a certain type of activity. The World Bank itself operated to maximize the return of investment in a development action that was aligned to its norms.

7.3 Dialectical and Complex Relationships

In this final chapter, we must return to the questions about effectiveness and examine them in light of the findings of the case study. Our analysis of the World Bank and local contributions to the Senegalese partnerships policy shows how international pro-market pressure worked in this case. The choice to use many small civil society associations for literacy delivery was based on a historic precedent in Senegal, since local civil society associations were more involved in literacy delivery than public organizations before the 1990s. The government therefore had a double incentive to use the civil society associations: some were already there, ready to implement literacy courses; and the World Bank and other donors only agreed to fund projects that used market mechanisms for the selection of providers. The Senegalese government therefore had little difficulties to align its discourse with that of the donors. The Education for All World Conference in Jomtien further standardized the national and even local discourses. The World Bank did not dictate the Senegalese government's policies, but clearly influenced them. The World Bank would not have agreed to fund literacy services until the state had formulated a "fit" project that employed private providers – and that did not make use of civil servants for implementation of literacy services. The economic importance of the donor's aid makes such pressure extremely effective. The pressure was not directed to improve the type of programs rendered (i.e., the quality of literacy courses), but was connected to policy-making aspects for the delivery of services, and can therefore be criticized as being ideological; a certain implementation manner was said to obtain better literacy effects than the specter of the government. Other organizations have criticized this pressure:

> The conditions that donors attach to their aid programmes go far beyond any legitimate measures to ensure that aid money is used efficiently for its stated purposes (Action Aid, 2004, p. 2).

The evolution of the education sector in Senegal in the 1980s and 1990s was marked by a repositioning of forces; a relative weakening of the government in policy formulation, and the relative strengthening of global

institutions, such as the World Bank. A parallel shift can be seen at the local level, where civil society gained strength at the expense of state institutions. At the community level, the participants in literacy courses were mostly women, organized in women's associations. The interaction between participants and providers can therefore be characterized as a relationship between women's associations and the providers' associations, as opposed to an interaction between provider associations and individuals. In view of the above, one can conclude that the partnership policy changed the role and relative influence of civil society and of the government. The government's position was weakened insomuch as it had less choice in defining implementation policies in the 1990s than before, whereas the World Bank and other bilateral and multilateral institutions had more influence. The partnerships also changed the nature of civil society associations, which ironically to a certain extent became government-dependent businesses and which at the same time exerted pressure on the government to obtain more funding. Further, the partnership policy and the Women's Literacy Project contributed to the creation of more provider associations, more women's associations, and also contributed to the emergence of new institutions and functions (e.g., CNOAS and *relais* persons), as well as new roles and actors in civil society organizations. With other words, the weakening of the state at the expense of international organizations and civil society organizations could be seen at a certain level as a partial privatization of the state, since many of the new provider organizations were headed by civil servants and were dependent on state financing. Again, we do not find linear relationships (which would entail that the World Bank, through the Women's Literacy Project, is causing this or that . . .), but dialectical and complex relationships: the project is both a product of its time and a tool for change.

In many cases, the given economic rationales were the same as the political rationales for justifying the partnership policy. Proponents of the policy said it boosted both the quantity and the quality of literacy service education in comparison to a (hypothetical) literacy program offered by the government. The quantitative increase of literacy course enrollment was real and could be explained by the availability of more funding from international agencies. There was a strong political rationale for using partnerships since many donor agencies' financing was contingent on using private firms for implementation. The avoidance of heavy upfront investment in infrastructure and setup costs for a quantitative expansion of literacy was seen as an economic rationale: the partnerships could build on an existing structure of civil society providers and thereby reduce the investment costs. The aim of partnerships was to improve the quality of the literacy courses, and at

the same time to increase the capacity of enrolling more learners. It was argued that the private provision of services represented a better quality and a higher quantity of literacy courses than the state could deliver, and the rationale of using partnerships was thereby based on the belief that the market was more cost-effective. The percentage of dropout and non-successes is so large that it places the supposed market advantages into serious doubt. One can suspect that the economic and political rationales were not sufficiently based on Senegalese realities, but were largely based on a pre-established vision about the market's higher efficiency than the government.

As seen in our cost-analysis scenarios, the idea of cost-effectiveness is largely constructed and depends of where we situate the analysis. The World Bank characterized the project as cost-effective, because it outperformed the state-implemented primary schooling. However, the World Bank itself characterized the primary school system as a "disastrous combination" of high unit costs and poor efficiency. What the World Bank is really saying is that the Women's Literacy Project was a less disastrous combination of high unit costs and poor efficiency than the primary schooling. However, this statement can also be debated, when we look at the different numbers generated from the project. I used one scenario based on official numbers, stating that over a 5-year period, more than 200,000 people enrolled in literacy courses through the Women's Literacy Project, about 87,000 of whom learned to read and write. The second scenario used data based on the World Bank's payments to providers and on the Senegalese government's longitudinal study. It estimated that the project enrolled approximately 180,000 learners, only about 44,000 of whom learned to write and read. This number represents 76% wastage (through dropout, non-success in the final test, or the learners were literate before they enrolled). The cost to the government (not including private costs) of one successful course completer ($378) would correspond to the cost of 4.5 years of primary schooling. Maybe then, the project can also be constructed as a disastrous combination of high unit costs and poor efficiency. Then again, if one is measuring the project according to the learners' expectation, which was rather based on basic skills learning and income-generating activities, we can consider that it had a 68% success rate.

Many of the participants had already attended earlier courses, because they felt they had missed the necessary fix in their lives that the literacy project would give them. According to the propaganda, the literacy courses were supposed to reduce HIV/AIDS infection, improve the motherhood experience, increase earnings, etc. In short, literacy was constructed as a magic medicine that was a prerequisite for people to "develop." Many

participants witnessed a better understanding of selling and buying, of being able to use the telephone, and of better income after the project – so the medicine was not without its effects. The literacy courses offered thus very cheap and very ineffective schooling (whereas the primary school system offered more expensive but also slightly more effective education). Literacy education offered by Women's Literacy Project therefore may appear to be poor education for the poorest of the citizens, a quick fix produced by a combination of Western magic and local trust.

The project was provider driven, and not driven by grassroots' demand, mainly because the providers had important financial incentives to set up courses. This can be seen as something both positive and negative. It was negative because the demand for literacy was not based on community demand but on the providers' persuasion of the villagers to accept the program. The subprojects were therefore rarely "owned" by the participants. However, such provider exhortation to implement literacy can also be seen as positive, since the providers publicized their program in the villages and tried to stimulate local interest for literacy. For that reason, the providers contributed to spread a message of literacy development in the communities and to raise the participants' awareness about their own underdevelopment.

In looking at results, it may be useful to try to distinguish between the results of partnerships and the results of the literacy courses per se. This is complex, since, as this study shows, the partnership policy is likely to have affected the quality of the courses: there is a dialectical relationship between project implementation processes and outcomes. First, the partnership policies boosted the possibility for large-scale implementation in the particular political situation of Senegal, because international agencies were more willing to fund courses that used private implementation methods. It can be further argued that the use of partnerships mechanisms with small, local providers made it possible to adapt the curriculum to local contexts, and this adaptation could in turn have improved results. For skills and income-generating activities, the providers were able to adapt courses to the local situation in a way that may have been difficult for the government. On the other hand, some of the reasons for the lack of quality in literacy education were directly linked to the use of partnerships. Most providers cut costs on the textbooks and literacy teachers' training, for example. Also, since control mechanisms were lacking, library and reading rooms' books were often distributed among learners or taken back by the provider after the course had ended. All these issues are related to the fundamental problems of the providers' cutting back on costs to save money, and are found, not only in the Women's Literacy Project but also in other partnership projects in Senegal and in the subregion.

The selection procedures of the providers, an essential step in creating quality, were clearly laid out in the procedures manual, but had design flaws since they failed to take into account past performance of the providers during selection. Hence, a very poor provider could obtain financing by making a very good subproject proposal. If the provider performed badly, the participants had no way of changing the provider association (their only option was to "vote with their feet" and leave the course). Many provider associations therefore had a monopoly on literacy activities in the village. Although the project had designed a monitoring and evaluation system that theoretically could address monopoly and asymmetric information problems, the design failed to take into account incentives and disincentives of government agents to perform the work. Similar problems were encountered in the project's management: the project administration worked well when the government was stable and led by capable managers, but it deteriorated when the initial project staff members were affected elsewhere.

The use of a private contract-management agency (AGETIP) ensured rapid set-up procedures of contracts and rapid transfer of funds. The agency had an incentive to perform these operations well, since it was paid on a prorata basis equivalent to 5% of the contract value. It did not have an incentive, however, to stop payments to unethical providers or to providers who did not perform well. If the contract-management agency stopped paying a provider, it stopped receiving 5% of the financing as well, hence a triple disincentive for AGETIP to conduct adequate supervision (the supervision was costly in itself; it may have led to problems with the providers, and less financing for AGETIP).

In terms of ensuring effective follow-up, the setup of a quasi-independent Project Coordination Unit (PCU) ensured a highly competent management of the project. However, it did little to address problems within the Department for Literacy and Basic Education, such as poor management skills and lack of planning. The design and setup of the providers' association (CNOAS) also had some flaws since all of its senior managers were directors of their own associations. They were therefore less involved in the management of the CNOAS than of their own provider association.

In spite of all these problems, the project seems to have succeeded in enrolling a large number of women in literacy courses, to stimulate the creation of many civil society associations, and to teach basic skills and literacy. The project also probably assisted some women to obtain a more independent status in the male-dominated society, since they were able to associate, received management training, and learned some basic skills. These skills may seem scant, but may have had an important function in creating autonomy. As we saw in a quotation in the beginning of the study: "Currently, we can write without anybody knowing what we write. Previously, we could not

hide anything. Now we can telephone without anybody knowing to whom we are speaking." The project also had a function of stabilizing power structures; it respected hierarchical and patriarchal structures in the communities and was therefore not threatening to the established order.

7.4 What for? – Where to? – And What Then?

To what extent can one establish a "true story" about the outcomes of this project? The quantitative project data seem flawed. Analysis of the quantitative achievements of the project varies according to estimation and interpretation of the numbers: the "official" number of "successful" outcomes is nearly twice of a "corrected" number of successes. Both estimations are based on project data released by the World Bank and the Senegalese government. The corrected estimate may be set lower, if one, for example, evaluates the results according to literacy achievements alone (and do not include the much-higher results of skills learning), or much higher, if one defines success according to the participants' expectation, which is connected to the relative importance they gave to the project's income-generating activities and skills learning. How can one interpret the effectiveness of the project based on such differences in numbers? To which extent can one conclude anything about the project?

It should be noted that even widely held opinions about the literacy project, such as "literacy is something good," are not universal and may not seem self-evident to people who will argue, for example, that for cultural and religious reasons, education should not be provided to girls, or that the literacy education provided was just a substitute for "real" education and therefore had a function to suppress legitimate dissent and revolt. This case study has taken as an assumption that although literacy education is not an alternative to primary education, it may be a valuable method to address certain needs. This assumption is widely supported by literature from various sources, ranging from conservative to critical (the methods as well as the substance which should be used to provide literacy courses, of course, are widely debated). One can continue to raise the following arguments:

- The integrated approach of the project was an improvement of the "non-integrated approach" notwithstanding its failures to boost literacy achievements
- The design flaws of the project led to or exacerbated implementation flaws
- The public–private partnership policy was rather an outsourcing policy than a genuine partnership since very few of the providers shared risks and the same goals as the government

- The providers' use of local language was perceived as less threatening to the communities than the "French school" (i.e., the primary school)

The study of the Women's Literacy Project indicated that literacy actions "integrated" with other development activities were more popular than the "non-integrated" approach. The quantitative data from the project are so frail that it is impossible to say whether the literacy outcome was better for the integrated approach. If anything, they seemed slightly worse. Interviews and reports from the project, however, pointed out that the "integrated approach" was more effective than literacy alone because it stimulated interest for literacy through courses on income-generating activities and that it therefore was more complex and could be more successful in generating a positive change.

The market-based approach and influence on the project failed to prevent or bypass corruption and ineffectiveness. The analysis demonstrated that public–private partnerships in this case were difficult to implement without a well-functioning state system. It was essential for the Women's Literacy Project to address state weaknesses at the same time as it began building civil society's capacity for implementing social services. Many of the flaws could have been repaired through a better project design and better implementation control. The World Bank, through the Women's Literacy Project, however, did not seem to have build sufficient government capacity for addressing such problems. If government capacity for addressing asymmetric information problems could be developed, in addition to creating better methods to ensure that a good training for providers' staff members (including literacy teachers) takes place, there may be arguments in favor of using public–private partnerships approaches.

The Women's Literacy Project has shown that civil society associations can be used to deliver social services; it has also shown the inconsistent quality of service delivery of these associations. The market methods used in the project were clearly flawed, since they did not ensure that the best subproject proposals were selected. Use of partnerships necessitates correction of these flaws, to ensure that the quality of delivery was more uniform, and of better quality. The implementation methods used were in most cases reduced to a contractual relationship between the state and the providers, instead of becoming a partnership in which the partners had a common goal. Therefore, the word "partnership" in the Senegalese case is almost synonymous with the word "outsourcing." The main difference with outsourcing would be that in the Senegalese partnership, the providers defined the subprojects themselves (theoretically, this was done in cooperation with the learners); and they participated in policy decisions taken by the delegate minister and by the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB).

As it was implemented, the project changed people's notion about the roles of the state and civil society. Previously, the state was considered a direct provider of education services, mainly through primary schools – which were called "the French school" (*l'école française*) by most interviewees. Increasingly, particularly in the late 1990s, civil society began to establish local-language classes open to illiterate adolescents and adults. In the opinion of rural people, the literacy courses became education that was closer to the local reality, as opposed to *l'école française*, a foreign-influenced primary school. Literacy classes were therefore less threatening to local customs and religious beliefs. Likewise, as noted above, the implementation was in principle made through a certain negotiation between the providers and the community (instead of being implemented in a top-down way). The local population therefore felt at ease with the Women's Literacy Project approach.

The overall implementation decision to be made when setting up a literacy program or other services would be to fix the market flaws through building of government capacity in correcting these flaws, and to use partnerships because it is more easily adapted to a local context than government programs; or to reform the government and then to create a flexible government approach that is not market-based. The partnership approach had a double effect: on the one hand, it affected the service delivered; on the other hand, the delivery method itself affected the civil society and the state. One must evaluate the effects of both, before deciding whether to employ this implementation method or not. For the service delivery, two important negative factors were linked to the monitoring and evaluation problems and the effect of cost-cutting practices. One positive feature of partnerships was the possibility of adapting the courses to the local situation. The cost-cutting factor was of a particular importance for the literacy learning, e.g., the literacy teachers did not obtain enough training and often the textbooks were chosen by cost criteria. This factor may have had less effect for income-generating activities, because the learners were more apt to control the providers' contribution to this field, and it was possible to find local "experts" on specific subjects, such as soap making or dyeing. The "flexibility factor" had therefore little positive impact on the literacy training, but it improved the income-generating activities considerably. I would argue that there is a solid case for using partnerships for training on income-generating activities, whereas there is a less of a case for using it for literacy training.

Many of the flaws of the project could have been corrected through redesign of the partnership processes. Our analysis has shown that the redesign could include the following measures: to prevent provider-driven

activities with low community participation (and to prevent asymmetric power relationships), a number of actions could be taken:

> Involve the communities in the control of the funds (e.g., make them responsible for payments to the providers upon delivery of satisfactory services rendered).
>
> The selection processes could be redesigned. Target communities should be pre-identified and providers should compete for obtaining funds for implementing literacy courses in those communities. Representatives from the concerned communities should be involved in the selection process.

The following actions could be taken to avoid government bottlenecks:

> Build the capacity of the government through careful analysis and correction of the institutional setup, so as to eliminate bottlenecks.
>
> Use a Project Coordination Unit (PCU) to manage project implementation. Although current World Bank policies try to fix government flaws and thus use government institutions to monitor projects, this case shows that in some institutions the government bottlenecks cannot easily be fixed. The use of a small flexible Project Coordination Unit may improve results in such cases.

To improve provider performance, the following actions could be taken:

> Set up a system for imposing negative and positive fines. The provider association (CNOAS) could do this job. The CNOAS should be improved through the creation of an independent (and full-time) management committee, the members of which must not manage literacy activities on their own (to avoid conflict of interests).
>
> The selection committee should take into account providers' previous performance. A list classifying the providers of literacy classes according to their results could be re-initiated [5] and the providers with the lowest results could be automatically excluded from the next selection.
>
> The decentralization processes should be fully redesigned, as should the monitoring and evaluation processes, which implementation experience has shown are flawed. A full institutional redesign must be undertaken in view of improving the government's handling of literacy. During the redesign period, the PCU could handle project implementation issues (and should steer the selection processes).

To avoid "creaming off" (i.e., that providers only choose the areas that are easy to access) and to avoid lower implementation quality in remote areas with high transport costs, the following action could be taken:

> The unit cost system could be redesigned. Three types of fees could be established (one fee for implementation of courses in urban areas, where transport and thereby

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[5] Such list existed for the courses implemented in 1997/1998 and 1998/1999 and was later discontinued because of political pressure. The results were published in the project's newspaper, *Partage*, *no. 8* and *no. 16*.

supervision and equipment costs are low; one fee for easy-to access rural areas; and one fee for remote rural areas). Pre-identified villages could be chosen and divided into cost zones.

From an economic view, it is likely that the above adjustment of project design will correct some of the implementation flaws and may boost the project's effectiveness. One further possibility to benefit both from state guaranteed quality and from civil society's flexibility would be that the government paid literacy teachers to teach literacy, and the course attendees gradually obtain control over funds that could be used to involve civil society associations in specialized training.

Yet, I believe that the flaws of the project, in not addressing problems of social justice and equitable distribution of services, are so important that they cannot be fixed through a simple redesign of processes. I would argue that, in addition to the aforementioned redesign, the literacy classes should make a priority of enrolling and fostering competencies for the poorest and most vulnerable in society (for whom one should be ready to compensate the loss of opportunity costs for attending). In order to ally the groups of the poorest with civil society, civil society could be subcontracted by these groups to perform certain jobs associated with literacy training (especially related to income-generating activities). Any payments of civil society for delivery could be done through the requests of learners and certification that the job is (well) done. In such perspective, I believe that civil society should be recreated as a part of the Senegalese state, and instead of being an economic "partner" to the government; it must represent a counterpower to political society. It must become the "hegemonic" aspect of the state balancing the coercive aspect (Holst, 2002). The idea of these changes would be to terminate a contracting system that is maintaining a false "economic" civil society and to "activate" the "real" civil society and promote social justice. The providers association (in the style of a reorganized CNOAS) would have an important role in monitoring the evolution of the sector and in preventing misuse of the system.

Further, the curriculum of the literacy courses could be reformulated to include more classes on social rights and civics, as well as management and other subjects (in the style of the integrated approach of the Women's Literacy Project). The teaching style could be changed and be informed by a state-monitored literacy teacher training. The courses should be centered on group work and peer tutoring, and as much as possible, should be based on conversation and dialogue. As demonstrated by Freire, the dialogue must involve respect, and people working with one another instead of the teacher lecturing the illiterate. It should develop local consciousness about the possibility of informed action for a more just society, along the lines of Freire's

"conscientization" (Freire, 2001). The emphasis of such redesign of literacy education must be its reinstatement as a human right, instead of considering it as a market commodity.

The field of development is generally characterized by pre-established and pre-packaged solutions and separate efforts to score against subject-specific indicators in the specific field of the concerned project, program, or policy. A literacy program will be set up because of a pre-analytic vision of literacy as "A Good Thing;" it will seek to eradicate illiteracy and will be evaluated for its score in this regard. It would rarely be seen as a requirement in an agriculture or health project, or be evaluated for its impact on health or agriculture. The community's use and need of literacy are rarely evaluated, neither are the effects of the development discourse deemed as worthy of much interest. For example, the extent to which various community "beneficiaries" who are now characterized as "vulnerable" and "illiterate" will be empowered or disempowered by this labeling is not considered.

Instead of neglecting these crucial issues, a better way of looking at the effects of a literacy program (or any other development initiative) would be to evaluate its contribution to the larger development context using multiple layers of strategies. A planned or implemented development activity would thus be submitted to at least three stages of analysis: first, a questioning of the underlying (pre-analytic) development values, discourse, and (dis)empowerment; then, an analysis of the combined efforts necessary for development change; and finally, a social and economic analysis of the internal efficiency of the development activities, transaction costs, the access to information, and the rationality of participants within their community-specific sociocultural context (see Table 7.2 for an illustration of the suggested analytic structure for a literacy program).

Development efforts have often been criticized by the mass media for their low impact. Different types of economic and social investigation have attempted to improve the effectiveness of each separate program. Increasingly, local associations, NGOs, and International Organizations have started to look at the interconnection between development efforts and have started to propose more integrated activities. This study contends that the internal effectiveness of each program can be improved through a NIE analysis of separate efforts, but that the overall effectiveness of development efforts is dependent on the integrated effort of many development activities within the same society (Table 7.2).

Instead of "thinning out" activities (i.e., proposing one service to each community), it is necessary to integrate the activities so as to create the impact for change desirable. The question that now arises is how this can be achieved in a context of donor fatigue and limited funding. Mason (2007), in an analysis of complexity theory and schools, proposes to start with the

Table 7.2 Horizontal and vertical levels of social analysis

Literacy Analysis of community needs, context, and discourse	Cross-level and cross-sector holistic analysis ↕	Complex interactions with: health, agriculture, other sectors…
Pre-analytic vision Social embeddedness		Pre-analytic vision Social embeddedness
Institutions	↔	Institutions
Governance	Cost-effectiveness	Governance
Resource allocation and employment		Resource allocation and employment

poorest schools. This may be the way to be followed in development efforts. It may also mean that certain Millennium Development Goals (MDG) would not be reached. However, as the first level of analysis contended in terms of finding a local context and meaning of development, it may be argued that the MDGs are not always adequate to define the needs of a community. The MDGs, partially a Western-steered exercise, impose a specific set of values on Southern countries. For example, instead of integrating various development activities, the Education For All initiative (reflected in the MDGs) often focuses on providing pre-packaged mass education programs, which in view of lacking financing are inadequate to create a sufficient critical mass for development, let alone reach a sufficient literacy level after primary schooling. Whether the education program leads to rural exodus and disempowering of local communities has often not even been deemed worthy of investigation. Instead of blindly following our standard solutions, the case study of the Women's Literacy project has shown that it may be useful to look differently at development practices:

- Start the project, program and policy setup with a questioning of the pre-analytic vision – the paradigm of development – for all actors involved. Investigate questions of power and discourse
- Create programs that take into account the *vertical* connections of social embeddedness of the participants, the local and national institutions, governance, and resource allocation, and at the same time also take into account and build on interacting *horizontal* forces (health with education with agriculture, etc.)
- Integrate service delivery to create a sufficient complexity to enable change in target communities[6]

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[6] For an exploration of possible integration of literacy, health and early childhood care programs, see Nordtveit (2008a).

- Understand the initial condition of the participants and community, build adequate programs together with the communities and grassroots movements, and address the bounded rationality of the actors
- Evaluate the programs as a holistic system and not as separate efforts toward separate goals (e.g., seek to understand a literacy program's effect on all development indicators instead of reducing it to literacy alone)
- Create flexible programs that change as circumstances change and that can easily be modified to the unique circumstances of each participant and target community
- Seek to address market and government failure, and in particular to address problems of provider monopolies, asymmetric information, and moral hazard
- Seek to minimize transaction costs, while at the same time keeping an effective monitoring and evaluation system (if possible by local participants) to ensure compliance with contracts and/or project, program, or policy requirements
- Ensure that the government and/or a grassroots (or parastatal) organization have the motivation and power to regulate the concerned sector(s) of intervention

These recommendations seek to avoid that "things fall apart" when the development project encounters the local society, to use the title of a novel by the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. In this novel, Okonkwo, a leader and a local wrestling champion, encounters "development" in the form of British missionaries and colonialism. He tries to fight against modernity, but "the white man's fetish had unbelievable power," (Achebe, p. 126) and Okonkwo's community is slowly converted to a new mode of living and thinking.

In traveling through Senegal, I saw hope, disappointment, broken promises, enthusiasm, as well as people believing they could be freed from class and gender inequalities and that the project could help fulfill core basic needs. The Women's Literacy project was not a monolithic monster – a uniform discourse, and hence cannot be defined in bipolar terms. It was a slice of history, multiple experiences accompanying us during a few years of our lives. Okonkwo's tale stands in stark contrast to many of the happier stories I heard about development in Senegal, but yet it contains an important message: it cautions us about a too simplistic belief in what we call "development."

> *I came from Dakar, when I finished the University, they asked me what I should do, and I said "anything; I want to work!" I don't beg; I don't drink; I want to work. I found an old refrigerator and I sold ice. I was at the University for*

two years, and I have two years of training in computer science. Then I worked in the villages to help with vaccination, and I helped with development. I like my local language; I have learned it well. I have many family members in the neighboring villages, so I don't have any problems. I do a lot of different things; I like that. One has to believe! One has to believe in development! (Private provider staff).

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