Technology and African Education Democratization

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School Television in Côte d'Ivoire and Beyond

By

N'Dri Thérèse Assie-Lumumba

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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This book first published 2026

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-0364-6830-9
ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-6831-6

This book is dedicated to the pupils in Côte d'Ivoire who succeeded through television schools, renovated schools, and traditional schools, and to the numerous school-aged youth who never had, and who even in 2026 still do not have, access to schooling. It also acknowledges those who begin their education but are forced to interrupt it due to difficult social and learning conditions and severe attrition policies. May stronger political will and the wise use of technology soon ensure that all children can fulfill their potential and contribute their talents and skills to social progress in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa, and the wider world.

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PREFACE

This book is the culmination of a long trajectory of work that spans several decades, beginning in the late 20th century. I have been involved in various aspects of the transfer of technology from the global North to Africa, as well as in scholarly debates and academic research since the 1970s. After completing my second master's degree in Sociology in France[1], I was granted an educational and professional opportunity by the Ivorian Ministry of Scientific Research[2] for the 1975–76 academic year.

With this status, I was recruited to participate in a major research project at the Université d'Abidjan (now Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny). I joined an international and multidisciplinary research team composed mainly of architects and urbanists based at the Centre de *Recherches Architecturales et Urbaines* (CRAU), which was conducting a national study in the central part Côte d'Ivoire. I am from that region and familiar with the area, having previously conducted research there for my two master's theses: one in history, *"La Femme Ivoirienne dans la Vie Politique: La Femme Baoulé N'Gbongbo de l'Exode à la Pacification (1730–1915),"* completed in 1974; and one in sociology, *"Économie de Plantation et Changements Socio-économiques en Pays Baoulé,"* completed in 1975.

Furthermore, I had a linguistic advantage as a native speaker of Baoulé, the primary language in the region and rural areas where the Université d'Abidjan's study was being conducted. I was one of two sociologists who were native Baoulé speakers, and we played a crucial role in facilitating and

[1] At Université Lyon II, now Université Lumière, in Lyon, France. After a first-year undergraduate study at Université d'Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) in a common program for students aiming to major in History, Sociology or Applied Social Sciences, I pursued my studies for my undergraduate degrees and masters in the disciplines of History and Sociology, between 1971/72 to 1974/75.

[2] The specific title was *Stagiaire de Recherche*, a title with a fellowship after earning a master's degree and before starting doctoral studies.

contributing to the scientific work of data collection in the communities, whether through one-on-one interviews or focus-group discussions with villagers who generally did not speak French. Our responsibilities included translating during fieldwork (Baoulé–French–Baoulé) and supporting the analysis of data and the drafting of the final report, part of which contributed to the publication of a book[3].

At the same time, I was preparing to pursue a PhD in education in North America. In May 1976, I began doctoral studies in the Department of Education at Université Laval in Quebec, Canada, as a laureate of the Ford Foundation–funded West African Project, which aimed to support the training of researchers and professional administrators in African education systems. In January 1977, I transferred to the Comparative Education Center at the University of Chicago (Chicago, Illinois, USA).

Given my interest and readiness to pursue doctoral studies in education, I was assigned an additional key responsibility within the CRAU team: to research the significance of the physical and social location of schools in rural communities in the region with a meaning for the broader historical and social context in Côte d'Ivoire. Of particular relevance was the fact that the educational television program (PETV) was in full operation in the mid-1970s in many of the villages where our research was conducted, although some of the villages still had traditional or renovated schools.

After completing my PhD at the University of Chicago, I held a one-year position (1982–1983) as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance and as an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Studies at the University of Houston, Texas. Subsequently, I taught in the Lomé doctoral program, which had been transferred from Université Laval. Following my teaching and administrative experiences in the Lomé program, I undertook several other professional roles across various institutions and countries. These included serving as a Policy Analyst in the Planning Unit of the Ministry of National Education of Mali, a Resident Fellow at the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of UNESCO in Paris,

[3] N'Dri Assié et al, *HARUBA: Modernisation de l'Habitat Rural en Côte d'Ivoire*, Québec, Canada: Éditeur Officiel du Québec, 1978.

and, in 2003, being awarded the "Foreign Expert in Education and Development" Professorial Fellowship by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Japan/MEXT) with residence as visiting professor at Hiroshima University.

Since 1991, I have been a professor at Cornell University, where I initially arrived as a Fulbright Senior Research Fellow. Since 2016, I have also served as Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Ali A. Mazrui Center for Studies in Higher Education, Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg, South Africa. I mention these select institutions, among many others, to underscore the continuity of my teaching, research, and extensive publications on educational technology and innovation, a trajectory that began with my early experience in 1975–76 at the Université d'Abidjan. Over the years, I have delivered multiple presentations on the Ivorian PETV (Programme d'Éducation Télévisuelle de la Côte d'Ivoire), both at Cornell University and at conferences and in invited talks including at the Center for International Cooperation in Education at Hiroshima University, the University of Ghana (as a Carnegie Diaspora Fellow), Vanderbilt University, and other venues[4]. This enduring interest demonstrates

[4] "Re-imagining Science and Technology in African Education amid the Covid-19 Pandemic: Critical Convergence of the Received and Indigenous Knowledge" delivered at the international annual conference of the International Society of Comparative Education, Science and Technology (ISCEST), Virtual, December 2020.

"Critical Perspectives on Education: Science, Technology, and the Innovation Factor in Agenda 2063," delivered at the international annual conference of the International Society of Comparative Education, Science and Technology (ISCEST), Abuja, Nigeria, December 2019.

"Envisioning Africa's Social Progress through Science and Technology: The Synergy with Critical Thinking as A Sine Qua Non or Eradication of Poverty through Relevant Education Policies and Practices" at the International Conference on Research in African Challenges (ICRAC), American University in Cairo, Cairo, Egypt, December 2019.

Invited presentation on "Digital Technologies and Critical Thinking: The Empowering Nexus tor Africa's Social Progress" The 14th edition of eLearning Africa, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, October 23rd -25th 2019.

"Science, Technologies and Entrepreneurship Education: The Nexus of Technical Competence and Comprehensive Education for Social Progress in Africa within the Global Context," at the International Society of Comparative Education, Science and Technology (ISCEST), Port Harcourt, Nigeria, December 2017.

that the project has continued to generate scholarly engagement and reflection across decades, from the 1970s to the present. I have also authored and co-authored several articles and books on the topic, some of which are listed in the references.

It is worth recalling that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education globally, highlighting the vital role of technology in sustaining learning

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Invited Presentation on "Technological Transfer, Democratization of Education and Africa's Global Partnership Revisited: Prospective Reflections on the Educational Television in Côte d'Ivoire" Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, January 2017.

The XVI World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) held August in Beijing where I presented two papers including "Science, Technology and Higher Education for Development in Africa: Potentialities, and Inadvertent Effects of Leapfrogging toward Social Progress" August 2016.

Attended the 56th Annual Conference of Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) on "The Worldwide Education Revolution." Presented two papers including "Revolution by way of technological innovations in the education sector: the Worldwide and Historical Development with a focus on Africa" San Juan, Puerto Rico, April 2012.

Invited to a presentation on "Cyberspace and the Dynamics of Academic Communities: Proximity, Social Distance, and the Transformation of the Pedagogical Space in the Era of Information and Communication Technologies" at the Fall 2007 Colloquium of the Telluride House, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, November 2007.

Invited to give a talk titled "African Higher Education in the Context of Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)" in a panel discussion on contemporary issues in African Education organized by the Humphrey Fellows' program, February 2006.

Interview by Mlle Danielle Sylvie Tagro of *Le Courrier d'Abidjan* regardant "le rôle des nouvelles technologies d'information et de communication dans le développement en Afrique", July 19, 2005.

Invited presentation on "Technological Transfer and Education for All in Africa: Prospective Reflections on the Educational Television in Côte d'Ivoire (1971-1981)" to the Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education, Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan, May 2003.

Invited to the 10th General Conference of the Association of African Universities on "African Universities and the Challenge of Knowledge Creation and Application in the New Century" held at Kenyatta University Nairobi, Kenya. Presented a paper as a discussant of G. Olarele Ajayi's paper on "Information and Communications Technologies: Building Capacity in African Universities," February 2001.

Invited to give a talk titled "African Women in Science and Technology in Historical Perspective" to the International Association of Camel Breeders (International Development Association), February 1996.

processes. During my second three-year term as Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, we organized an international colloquium in October 2021 under the theme *"Social Sciences and the COVID-19 Pandemic: State of Knowledge and Proposals for Action."* Sponsored by UNESCO, this event brought together scholars including those whose revised contributions, after rigorous peer review, were published in a book co-edited by Professor Erwan Dianteill of the Sorbonne (then President of MOST) and myself[5].

Moreover, the advent and accelerating integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in education and broader society have called for renewed reflection on the intersection of technology, pedagogy, and social change. My engagement with the discourses, research, and reflections on the pandemic and the new roles of technology, including AI, in education has reshaped the original contours of this publication project, as presented in the introduction.

[5] "On Brick-and-Mortar and Virtual Spaces of Learning: Pedagogy, Exigencies of COVID-19 and Equality of Educational Opportunity" *World Voices Nexus: The WCCES Chronicle*, Vol. 4 No.2, June 2020 (Available online: https://www.worldcces.org/article-1-by-assieacute-lumumba).

Erwan Dianteill and N'Dri Assié-Lumumba, *Leveraging Social and Human Sciences for Crisis Response: Lessons from COVID-19,* Paris: UNESCO, 2023. (https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000391128).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many people, too numerous to list, who, over the years, have contributed to and supported my ongoing and passionate research in this area. I am particularly grateful to the primary school pupils, teachers, administrators, television technicians, and village residents who participated in or were affected by the educational television program, as well as to the traditional school communities and academic colleagues who shared their insights. I also owe special thanks to my students and fellow scholars in various institutions including in Côte d'Ivoire, Canada (Québec), Togo, Mali, Japan, Ghana, UNESCO in Paris and Dakar, and in the United States especially at the University of Chicago and Cornell University. Their interests over the years in these topics and encouragement have made it possible for me to bring this book to publication and I am forever appreciative for their supports.

I am most grateful to my family in Côte d'Ivoire, and to my spouse and our (now grown children) young men and woman professionals in the United States, whose intellectual support and encouragement in countless ways have sustained my passion for the research that has brought me to this fulfilling stage.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF ISSUES, METHODOLOGY, AND OVERVIEW

Background and Issues

The main thrust of this book has evolved since the original research several years ago. Initially, the project aimed to undertake a critical analysis of the *Programme d'Éducation Télévisuelle* (PETV) (educational television program) that the government of Côte d'Ivoire adopted in the 1970s. This initiative was conceived as an innovative use of television technology to implement the official policy of achieving universal primary education, expanding access to secondary education, and supporting the development of a nascent tertiary system centered around a single national university (Université d'Abidjan). It also sought to promote literacy among large segments of the population, both adults and out-of-school youth, who had either never enrolled in school or had dropped out before consolidating basic reading skills.

In support of the Ivorian government initiative, several industrialized countries, through their development agencies and international organizations, were involved in financing and/or designing and managing the program. These included France, Belgium, and Germany in Europe; Canada (via CIDA); the United States (via USAID and the Ford Foundation); and multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNDP.

The initial research aimed to critically examine the broader idea of using technology as an instrument for democratizing education, questioning whether technology can indeed be considered a neutral tool for the public good. A key dimension of the study concerns the role of technology within

the global framework of North-South relations, particularly in the field of education, which is increasingly mediated by various models of distance learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought new urgency to these questions. The World Health Organization's declaration in March 2020 of COVID-19 as a global pandemic created widespread panic, confusion, and disruption, particularly affecting education systems across all socioeconomic contexts. The crisis laid bare deeply rooted inequalities, within and between countries, including in some of the most developed economies. In contrast, data and anecdotal evidence suggested that many African countries were not as heavily devastated in terms of infection and mortality rates, offering a momentary, albeit relative, respite.

However, the pandemic's enduring effects on education, despite official declarations of its end, were complex. It catalyzed the widespread and improvised use of educational technologies. Post-pandemic, debates emerged on whether to return to traditional face-to-face instruction or adopt hybrid delivery models. What became indisputable, however, was the central role of technology in the education landscape.

This context contributed to reframing the initial focus of the book, making the Ivorian television initiative of the 1970s/1980s a globally relevant case study. The key question became whether educational technology represents a long-awaited panacea, or, conversely, a potential amplifier of inequality.

The original target audience of the Ivorian television program was primary school-age children, with the first phase launched in the 1971–1972 school year. The objective was to ensure uniform access to quality education by providing all children with the same televised lessons. The second component, *Télé Pour Tous* (Television for All), was a non-formal community education program aimed at broader population segments, especially rural dwellers, farmers, and non-literate groups. This component offered practical knowledge and functional literacy to improve living conditions and increase productivity. Although the formal education segment of the program was discontinued in the early 1980s, the non-formal

Télé Pour Tous component remained theoretically significant in the context of national development goals.

Despite strong governmental commitment and substantial international support, the television education program was abruptly discontinued after a decade. The decision left behind heavy financial debts incurred from the importation of technology and the engagement of foreign technical experts. More importantly, it left educational impacts, creating a generation of learners and early school leavers with distinct educational experiences.

To date, there has been no comprehensive evaluation of this major policy experiment. This book seeks to fill that gap by analyzing its legacy and assessing its relevance considering renewed global interest in educational technology, especially in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

In the 1960s, designated by the United Nations as the "Decade of Development," Côte d'Ivoire enjoyed one of the highest growth rates in the world, second only to Japan. Classified by Walt Rostow (1960) as ready for "economic take-off," the country's policymakers embraced the use of television as a modern means of accelerating educational access and quality. Yet scholars such as Samir Amin (1967) warned of unsustainable growth and predicted the stagnation that became evident in the 1980s, coinciding with the program's termination.

Despite the eventual failure of the educational television initiative, it represents a crucial case of educational innovation, technology transfer, and North-South cooperation. Technology, often perceived as neutral, is here analyzed as a reflection of global structures and interests. The book argues that the Ivorian program was embedded in the Cold War politics and neo-colonial agendas of former colonial powers and international financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF.

Distance education in Africa has a long history, even predating independence of the colonized countries across the continent, with earlier technologies like radio and correspondence/long distance courses to supplement initial training of teachers so they may remain take the courses while teaching. Television marked a significant step in that continuum, reshaping classroom dynamics and pedagogical authority. It also brought

educational resources into rural areas, thus altering both educational delivery and community-school relations.

Though efforts were made globally, from Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000) to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to achieve universal education, many African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, continue to struggle with enrollment, retention, and education quality. In this context, the book examines whether the Ivorian television program achieved its intended outcomes and explores the lessons it holds for contemporary efforts to integrate technology into education systems.

In addition to the simple question of registration in the first grade of primary school, the problems related to attrition and disparity in the quality of education for all school children enrolled to acquire desirable levels of cognitive skills and long-run societal outcomes and attainment are important indicators of actual expansion of access to education for all eligible groups of the population.

Thus, the projected application of the policy of using technology to offer the same learning opportunities to all the relevant population groups was one of the compelling arguments in the adoption of the educational television program in Côte d'Ivoire, one positive aspect of a highly centralized system. This book examines, among other things, the actual achievement of the Ivorian television program in these different areas of the educational process.

When within a decade the government decided to discontinue the television program for formal education, it was a *de facto* official admission of failure, especially considering the initial decision to cover all public primary schools and higher levels of the education system. However, as an educational endeavor, this television program was bound to have enduring effects on the system and its constituencies, particularly the students, whether they pursued their education beyond the primary television school years or were among the early school leavers, be they dropouts or forced outs. Although the program was conceptualized, adopted, and implemented within a national planning scheme, in the decision-making process for its formulation and implementation, visibly influential actors and resources

were located within the international/global context. This had major consequences which are analyzed in this book.

Despite the crucial roles played by various actors originating from outside the country, a national agent played the determining role in the decision to introduce technology as a medium of instruction and as a modern instrument to provide education of equal quality to the relevant populations across Côte d'Ivoire, including those in remote villages. The Ivorian 1970s educational television program and other major educational policies from independence in 1960 until the early 1990s were determined by the historical and educational trajectory and political leadership and vision of the first President of the country, Félix Houphouët-Boigny who passed away on December 7, 1993.

Methodology

One of the main challenges in working on this project has been the difficulty of accessing archival data decades after PETV was seemingly in an abrupt way terminated. As Elisa Prosperetti (2019, 3) stated in working on her article:

> Several decades after PETV's final broadcast, and with its audiovisual and print material destroyed, it is no longer possible to evaluate the program itself, the evidence for which has largely disappeared. Instead, this article seeks to account for the particular domestic and international conjuncture that made PETV possible in educationally conservative Côte d'Ivoire, to recover the alternative vision of Ivorian development that PETV's innovations presented, and to probe its sudden un-doing.

As indicated earlier, this book seeks to analyze the enduring impacts and lessons of Côte d'Ivoire's 1970s television program as a national educational policy. Key questions include:

- What were the goals and objectives of the program?
- Who were the primary actors and stakeholders?
- Who were the intended and actual beneficiaries?
- What were the educational and financial costs, and who bore them?

- What has been the program's impact on pedagogy, educational access, and policy development?

Despite the few available archival sources, it was possible to pursue the project. The analysis draws from multiple sources, including official government and agency reports, policy documents, and research conducted during the program's operation. In particular, the author conducted fieldwork during the 1975–1976 academic year as a member of a multidisciplinary team studying rural housing and development. This research included visits to both traditional and television schools and focused on the socio-geographic location of schools and their interaction with surrounding communities, especially in the context of Télé Pour Tous.

The book also integrates published and unpublished literature on the subject and includes a reflective essay addressing the theoretical and practical dimensions of technology, democratization, and the political economy of education in a global context.

Methodologically, the book adopts a framework of historical structuralism which posits that societal institutions and policies, from local to global arenas, are shaped by socio-historical contingencies within the local and global context. Thus, any analysis of educational innovation, even if the focus is technology which may at times be considered neutral, it is critical to consider historical and structural factors that influence both internal policy decisions and external interventions.

From May to November 1979, while I was a PhD student at the University of Chicago in the Comparative Education Center, I conducted fieldwork in Côte d'Ivoire for my dissertation, which culminated in the thesis *Educational Selection and Social Inequality in Africa: The Case of the Ivory Coast* (1982). To gather both quantitative and qualitative data on/from students, teachers, and administrators, as well as through direct observation, I visited secondary schools across the entire country of Côte d'Ivoire. After cleaning the data, I retained responses from 5,493 students, collected through questionnaires administered in thirty-two schools, including fifteen *lycées* and seventeen *collèges d'enseignement général* (CEG). Among the students in the lower grades of secondary school were some of the "fortunate

few" who had attended PETV schools at the primary level. Consequently, both students and teachers at these secondary schools offered valuable insights during focus group discussions, some of which touched on the PETV, which was still ongoing at the time. I want to take this opportunity to explain that I drew from my PhD thesis and used resources that I gather for it.

This study uses a mixed-methods approach. Indeed, conceptual and theoretical analysis, archival and library research, and qualitative and quantitative field data are used. The book is organized into ten sections, including this introductory section and the conclusion.

Overview

The ten chapters are structured as follows:

The first chapter is the introduction which presents the background of the issues, the methodology and the overview of the content of the volume.

The second chapter on indigenous African education and colonial legacy examines pre-colonial education, colonial schooling systems, and their dual roles as instruments of control and liberation.

The third chapter on education, social formation, and state-building, focuses on formal education from the colonial "pacification" era to independence, and its role in nation-building of an independent nation-state and socio-economic mobility. Furthermore, in African countries, the artificial boundaries that the Europeans drew in the Berlin Conference in 1884–1885 continued to constitute a puzzle at independence. Thus, their leaders decided to use formal education as a major instrument in the process of nation-building to create a sense of belonging to a nation among their citizens amidst many grounds of diversity including ethnicity and religion. All these factors, in addition to the fact that UNESCO declared education a universal human right, created the impetus for making education the "priority of all priorities." Thus, the Ivorian context in which the television program was adopted as an effective means to achieve national and socially desirable goals is discussed.

The fourth chapter on global and continental discourses discusses human capital theory, democratization, educational demand and supply, and the context of adopting the television program.

The focus in the fifth chapter is technology and democratization, analyzing theoretical and practical perspectives on technology as a tool for educational reform and the dynamics of technological transfer.

The sixth chapter analyzes the adoption and operationalization of the notion of the classroom as a "black box" with the beam into that space and social relations, pedagogy, and learning from the traditional to the television classrooms. The analysis addresses, among other areas of interest, classroom dynamics, pedagogy, comparative cognitive skills of pupils in the traditional and television schools, and the perceptions of teachers and administrators of the relative values of the two systems. It critically examines the teaching and learning space of the classroom as a microcosm of social relations. Considering the traditional classroom conceived as a "black box," both figuratively and practically, the television in this space represents a disruptive array whose impacts are discussed. The curricular components of the educational television and the pedagogical innovation and its implication for learning and educational output are analyzed.

The seventh chapter analyzes the political economy of the Ivorian educational television program dynamics, examining the national program genuinely envisioned by internal decisionmakers, but bearing the risk of becoming a spare-part project within the post-colonial, neo-colonial and global context amidst Cold War politics. The analysis considers classroom dynamics, pedagogy, student outcomes, and teacher perceptions in traditional vs. television classrooms.

The eighth chapter deals with the range of actual and assumed determinants of the termination of the educational television program and its enduring impact including the various dimensions of the sphere of the educational process, the call for new research trails to have a fuller appreciation of the program, and any lessons learned for new policies of using technology for educational purposes. It evaluates the political and economic dimensions of the project, highlighting tensions between national aspirations and global

agendas. It assesses the factors behind the termination of the program and its long-term educational consequences.

Chapter nineth focuses on reflections on educational technology, distance learning in the era the of COVID-19 pandemic and the current context with the advent of Artificial Intelligence. It analyses the broader critical issues arising from the abrupt shift to unplanned distance learning dictated by the COVID-19 lockdowns and thereafter, and the advent of AI and prospective reflection on the forward-looking projects being promoted by industrialized countries, corporations, foundations, international organizations, and financial institutions for a shift to technology, or at least a dual mode of teaching and learning at all levels of educational systems, especially at the lower levels. Well-meaning arguments for the democratization are forcefully articulated while applying rigorous examinations in part using the Ivorian television as a case for lessons learned. In short, it considers the pandemic-driven shift to remote learning, current trends in educational technology, and any lessons learned from the Ivorian case.

The tenth chapter is the conclusion synthesizes key arguments and calls for further research considering the importance of the Ivorian early decision to make use of television as an advanced technology at the time and considering ongoing technological changes and possibilities for effectively addressing ongoing educational challenges.

CHAPTER TWO

INDIGENOUS AFRICAN EDUCATION AND DISTANT ORIGIN OF SCHOOLING AT THE INCEPTION OF THE COLONIAL RULE

Education in the African Context

As a social institution that organizes the process of teaching and learning, and which provides individuals and groups with values and skills necessary for them to belong to and perform certain roles in each society, education existed and still exists in African societies outside of the inherited systems that were transmitted through colonization. Indeed, in all its formal, non-formal and informal components, education is a universal human need and institution, although its specific organization within different systems varies from nation to nation and society to society. Its philosophy reflects the model of society that is in place and/or envisioned. For this book, while considering the three dimensions of education, the focus is more on the formal component, that is schooling, as it was introduced in the context of colonization.

Although Africa is a vast continent with many sources of diversity, as education anywhere is a means for transmitting social values from generation to generation, across the continent it is an institution that secures the reproduction and assurance of continuity and immortality of the social group. Education is a social system that assures the convergence of the members of any given social group within the nation-state or society. It encompasses all the ideals while reflecting the social contradictions in relation to the structures of society and the social ethos that constitutes the social reference. It is a symbol of perpetual renewal and affirmation of the society's sense of being in charge of, and directing its own destiny. Through the process of transmission of knowledge, education encapsulates,

translates, and gives full life and concrete meaning to the abstract notion of model of society, philosophy of and the ethos of the group. While due to various grounds of differentiation and specificities there have been inevitable variations from one socio-regional, socio-ethnic, and socio-political or administrative unit to another, African indigenous education was founded on a shared collective ethos of shared and interdependent identity and life in the group.

Despite regional and ethnic specificities, African education had certain fundamental characteristics which may or may not be found in other systems of education, as described by Moumouni (1964):

1. The great importance which is attached to it, and its collective and social nature.
2. Its intimate tie with social life, in both material and spiritual sense.
3. Its multivalent character, both in terms of conformity with the successive stages of physical, emotional and mental development of the child.

The collective and social nature of African education is different from Western education, for example. In the Western tradition and old ways, the family and institutions such as schools and churches have had the authority to provide education to the young. Teachers and ministers were teaching not as individuals, but as members of, and instructors designated by, their repective institutions that empower them to perform their duties. In the African context, while there were specialized learning spaces, by and large, all adults had the authority and even the duty to teach, reward, and punish any children of the community, in a village or town, for example. Those who know (usually older people) ought to teach all, and those who do not know must learn from all. Although much of the education took place within the family and from family members, or during initiation ceremonies where some specialists taught specific skills, learning took place anytime from any member of the community with a sense of duty and rrespinsibility toward the group.

Thus, generally the African education at the time of colonial rule was emulating the values of collective (as opposed to individualistic) and

cooperative (as opposed to essentially competitive) ethos. The practical and technical tasks performed by members of the specific society contributed to building the society by using the communal values, as Mudimbe (1988: 1) articulates, in contrasting the Western and African modes of thinking and defining themselves in society:

> Western philosophy accepts as its starting point the notion of unconstrained and uncontextualized "I" -that is, an "I" defined in relation to the self and its inner being, rather than in relation to others. The African mode, however, seems more communal and emphasizes an "I" that is always connected to and in relationship with others.

In the general African ethos, "to be is necessarily to be in relation" to others and the "center is a human being who is free and at the same time highly dependent upon others, on the memory of the past, and on emphasizing the balance between nature and culture" (Mudimbe, 1988, 4). In the African ethos and practical life, this connection with others has been essential. The connection transits through the common culture. This connection to the other is not a mere juxtaposition of individuals living side by side who only draw resources from the same cultural source and have the same reference. Rather, they experience together their cultural expression and the use of culture.

The African saying that "it takes a village to raise a child" has had a figurative and practical meaning. This provided a forum for participation of the entire community in decision-making, practices in education and construction and reproduction of knowledge. This is the context that provides some background for a better understanding of both the nature of the French education and subsequent post-colonial educational policies and the process of decision-making including those that were related to the educational television program.

Societies which had been influenced by Islam, historically those in the northern region in the case of Côte d'Ivoire and other coastal countries in this West African sub-region, had a more widespread formal system of education from Islamic traditions. But formal education or schooling within which the television program was designed, was introduced by the Europeans, the French in the specific case of Côte d'Ivoire.

Thus, the colonial, post-colonial and current formal educational system in Côte d'Ivoire as a former African colony of France was a creation of the French and was still tied to that of France at the time of the introduction of the television program. The reproduction of French education in Côte d'Ivoire was insured, not only by the French-educated Ivorian educational policymakers, but also directly by the French (government and educationists) in the context of neo-colonial political and social influence. The focus in this section is a brief history of the origin of the of French formal education that organically developed for them, reflecting the French history with an initial transfer to the militarily conquered but totally different African sociaties reduced to colonies. This was the case of Côte d'Ivoire where this background is important for analyzing the educational and broader issues related to the educational television program.

French Education in Africa: Distant Origin and Transfer into the Colonies

The system of formal education in African countries, especially in former French colonies including Côte d'Ivoire, is inherited from European socio-historical traditions. To explain the determinants of distribution of education in Africa today, it is important to analyze the historical and structural conditions which shaped European education and its role later in African countries, with special focus on the Ivorian case. The debate on the origins and expansion of the educational system in various countries is still ongoing.

There are the functionalist arguments in which education is viewed as a social instituton geared towards helping meet the human resource needs of the economy of any specific country analyzed. There have been other views on education, as a necessary agency to respond to the need to allocate "some socialization functions" to external and "specialized agencies," for acquisition of rational, universalistic, or achieved values. Other theories, some critical of the functionalist arguments for example, have been proposed to explain more specifically the individual factor in educational expansion. Craig and Spear (1982) for example, argue that in the nineteenth-century Europe, at the time of its formal colonization of Africa, there was a clearly articulated connection between education and national development. They explain that,

indeed in the nineteenth-century Europe, educational expansion was linked to the increasingly complex economy that required expected common norms of conduct that were to be acquired in the school.

The patterns or styles of behavior required in an elaborated system of social and economic exchange include the articulation of a universal body of norms that are shared by all participants in the exchange process. In this regard, we see family investment in schooling as facilitating the acquisition of the common norms, values, and behavior patterns required in a differentiated economic structure. These include (but are not limited to) literacy, especially in the language of learning in the school that prespares the learnesrs to later function in the workplace.

The criticism against the functionalist arguments may be valid, but the social context and the social forces need to be considered. For instance, a relative freedom of choice is necessary in rational decision making. When individuals from the non-ruling class are even physically controlled, like Africans under colonial rule, at least in the beginning, the dominant class composed of the colonizers could set up a system of education which would serve their own best interests, mainly socio-economic benefits. As the instruments of social control become less physical/brutal and more subtle, and as new social forces evolve and individuals from the non-ruling class acquire more consciousness of the linkage between education and socio-economic attainment, and so forth, the factors of individual free and rational choice may become more important in explaining educational expansion. The development of European education in Africa helps illustrate this point. But first, the origin and nature of French education in France itself is presented since educational systems in former French colonies of Africa have been built according to the French model.

It may appear irrelevant to go back to the Middle Ages to analyze the relationship between the educational system in France and the current educational opportunity in an African country. However, such a historical perspective is necessary to go beyond the simplistic argument that the present educational systems in former French colonies can be explained by a presumed automatic assimilation policy that was proclaimed early as a colonial education policy. A better understanding of the process of social

formation and the development of the educational system in an African country that experienced French colonial policies requires an analysis of the educational system in France and the social structure which fostered that system of education later transplanted to Africa.

It is important to briefly recall that French education is deeply rooted in Christian and Greco-Roman civilizations. For a prolonged period, in the absence of a structured society, there was no group to organize formal education to serve its interest. The first group to organize the embryonic system of education was the religious group, which made Christianity the transmitter of European conception of ancient civilization. The influence of the Church and the religious content of formal education grew through the centuries which followed. But in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the goal of education became less uni-dimensional, and the Church was no longer the sole social system which controlled education for the use of its outcome. At that time, there was a certain growth of urban space and the economic system that the Churches were controlling. Adapting the education to their economic needs, with evolving and expanding bourgeoisie, contributed to create more schools for the acquisition of knowledge to be used in domains which were not totally controlled by the Church, such as trade, administration, and judicial system. More and more schools were created, many under the initiative of kings, princes and authorities in the developing urban areas. For those who attended those schools, the new opportunities offered by the socio-economic structure of the time constituted the main incentive.

The basic curriculum in those schools consisted of the "seven liberal arts (grammar, rhetoric, and logic, which composed the trivium; arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, which constituted the quadrivium), while education of theology, law and medicine represent[ed] a kind of higher education" (Chevalier et al., 1968, 15).

During the thirteenth century, the educational system of the future France was set up on its almost definite foundations. As Chevalier et al. (1968, 15-16) explain:

> Professor and students obtained autonomy regarding the state, and partially from the Church and constituted in bodies which took the name of universities provided with certain privileges and a certain independence.

> Those universities provided themselves a four- faculties internal organization: faculty of arts distributing a kind of secondary education oriented around the study of liberal arts, which after seven years of studies, led to the final diploma, which from the 14th century, took the name of baccalauréat; the baccalauréat holders were allowed to enter one of the three other faculties (theology, decree or law, medicine) which, at the level of higher education, delivered the licence and doctorate and opened access to teaching and occupation in law, administration, and medicine.

In the beginning some students were provided with boarding facilities. Gradually, the boarding facilities grew as distinct bodies, autonomous teaching institutions within the universities, and became the secondary schools. In some areas without universities, some secondary schools were created by the officials, or under the initiative of certain groups of the population demanding education. These "*collèges*" were independent from the universities. The Church had a complete monopoly of the universities. Final examinations and diplomas were given by the Church only.

While the Church could not prevent the opening of many independent secondary schools, it refused to let students from those schools take the examinations. Those students were denied the opportunity of obtaining a completion diploma, regardless of what they had learned in school. Therefore, they were not considered qualified to pursue their studies beyond the secondary level and/or to take jobs opened mainly to the diploma holders. Elementary schools (*petites écoles*) were few and totally separated from the secondary school-university duo. There was also a lack of technical schools, for technical education was still provided either in the family or in nearby workshops.

By the fifteenth century, the state grew stronger and in a quest for a share of the authority of the Church over the schools, the heads of state started requesting that the schools be secularized. By the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the struggle for control over the schools among other social systems had intensified. To strengthen its power, through new religious congregations such as the Jesuits and the Oratorians, the Church kept almost entire control of secondary schools. The educational and social goals, the school organization to achieve these goals, the curriculum, the evaluation and selection criteria, all these factors as set up by the Jesuits, for