Community schools in the inner suburbs of Bamako
The case of Sabalibougou

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DEDICATION

To all the children living in abject poverty in Mali, you deserve a better life than the one you are living today. Inchallaw your condition will be improved with time, let's continue to do our best and hope...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AC: Athletic Club.

ADARS: (Appui au Developpement pour l'Amélioration des Rendements Scolaires), Development Support for the Educational Outputs Improvement.

AN RM: (Assemblée Nationale Republique du Mali), National Paliament of Republic of Mali.

ATT: Amadou Toumani Touré

C.A.P: (Centre d'Animation Pedagogique), Centre for Educational Training.

CFA : (Communauté Financière Africaine), African Financial Community.

Cf: Confer.

CSCOM: (Centre de Santé Communautaire), Community Health Care Centre.

DVD: Digital Video Disc.

ECOM: (Ecole Communautaire), Community School.

F: Franc.

FC: Foot-ball Club.

IIEP: (Institut International de Planification de l'Education), International Institute for Educational Planning.

Km: Kilometre.

PRODEC: (Programme Decenal pour le Developpement l'Education et la Culture), Ten-Year Program of Development of Education and Culture.

PRM: (Présidence de la Republique du Mali), Presidency of Republic of Mali.

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme.

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

USAID: United States Agency for International Development.

ABSTRACT

This work presents and analyses the condition of existence of the community schools in a specific quarter of Bamako called Sabalibougou considered as an inner suburb. Based on data collected through fieldwork, carried out among the local community, this thesis, consisting of both text and film, tries to examine the difficulties faced by the community schools of Sabalibougou.

Life in Sabalibougou is a challenge and the education of people living there in extreme poverty becomes problematic for children's parents and the schools' managers. Worse still, the education and political authorities do little to overcome these challenges. The relationship between schools' managers and the local populations who are their owners and immediate customers, suffers from miscommunication and misunderstandings, thus the community schools are trapped in a cycle of problems.

My decision to research these issues stems from a belief that education, when it is successful, can provide the opportunity for communities to transform their living conditions and overcome the very challenges related to their lack of education.

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1. Introduction

"The fundamental purpose of education is human development. Learning is about enriching and deepening one's relationship with oneself, the family, community, and the globe."

Malak Zaalouk (2006:16)

1. Background

From the 4th April to the end of July 2008, I carried out fieldwork in an inner suburb named Sabalibougou of Bamako, the capital of Mali. I am not from Sabalibougou and have never lived there but I have lived in a quarter not far from there. I could not find literature about the community schools of Sabalibougou or the urban areas, but I had read literature about community schools in Mali in general. My practical knowledge about the quarter enabled me to get in touch with the different actors involved in the field of education in Sabalibougou. I was worried about how it would be possible to use a camera in a quarter where people have an inferiority complex because they consider themselves to be living in extreme poverty. Many people think that because of their poverty outsiders make fun of them.

My first step was to meet the mayor of Sabalibougou in order to get his permission despite the fact that I had an official research permit. The assistance of the city council helped me to be accepted by some people and to carry out my research and filming. I then started to look at different community schools and eventually decided to choose the community school Sector II as my research headquarter. I chose this particular community school because its principal allowed me to film in his school without any constraint and in addition, it was one of the community school officially recognised by the local education authorities.

Community schools are non-profit making schools, which aim at acquiring and developing instrumental and professional knowledge. They are created and managed by rural or urban communities or associations.[1] There are three kinds of schools following the curriculum of the Malian government: public schools, private schools, and community schools.

In Mali, the idea of creation of community schools was conceived for rural areas but because of the increasing educational needs, some urban areas created community schools to fill the gap left by government schools. That is the case in Sabalibougou. Creating a community school gives access to schooling for the children, knowing that many parents are not able to

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[1] This definition of community schools is given according to decree number 944778/PRM 28, December 1994 concerning the regulation of community schools in Mali (Cissé *et al.*, 2000: 42).

afford the private schools. The official aim of the creation of the community schools in general is thus to alleviate the task of the government in terms of schooling and at the same time to give parents more influence in the management of their children's education.

I decided to study community schools in Sabalibougou because the first time I saw Sabalibougou I was very young and surprised to find this kind of quarter in the middle of a large city. I was struck by the living conditions of the people living here. As a little boy, I played football several times against the teams of Sabalibougou. I remarked the talent and skills of the members of the Sabalibougou team. I remarked the talent and skills of the children of Sabalibougou, their teams always consisting of good players. The three important things I remember from then are that they were obviously very good football players, that they were violent (including the supporters) when they played at home in Sabalibougou, and, finally, that most of them did not attend school. It was not common to see very young boys in my own quarter not attending school.

In 2004, I was among a group of students from the Department of Social Sciences (Educational Sciences) of the Faculty of Humanities (University of Bamako) carrying out a small research project about schools in general in Sabalibougou. I was amazed by the existence of community schools in Bamako in general and above all by the chaotic situation of them. In addition to my personal experience, I understood that the issue of the community schools was unknown by people in Bamako, maybe because people simply ignored the poorest inner suburbs, as, indeed, seemed to be the case even with some government officials.

1.1. Fieldwork context
- **Sabalibougou: village of tolerance**

Sabalibougou is located at the heart of Commune[2] 5th, which is one of the two communes situated on the right bank of Niger River that passes through Bamako. It is spread between five other quarters of the same commune that are not suburbs. Sabalibougou is bordered to the west by Baco-djicoroni, to the east by Daoudabougou, to the north by Quartier-mali, to the northwest Torokorobougou, and to the south by Kalaban-coura.

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[2] *Commune* is the Malian name for local district, a term used for the different administrative and political subdivisions of Bamako, the entire capital being a district proper.

Figure1: map of Commune 5 of Bamako with Sabalibougou in the middle.

COMMUNE V DU DISTRICT DE BAMAKO
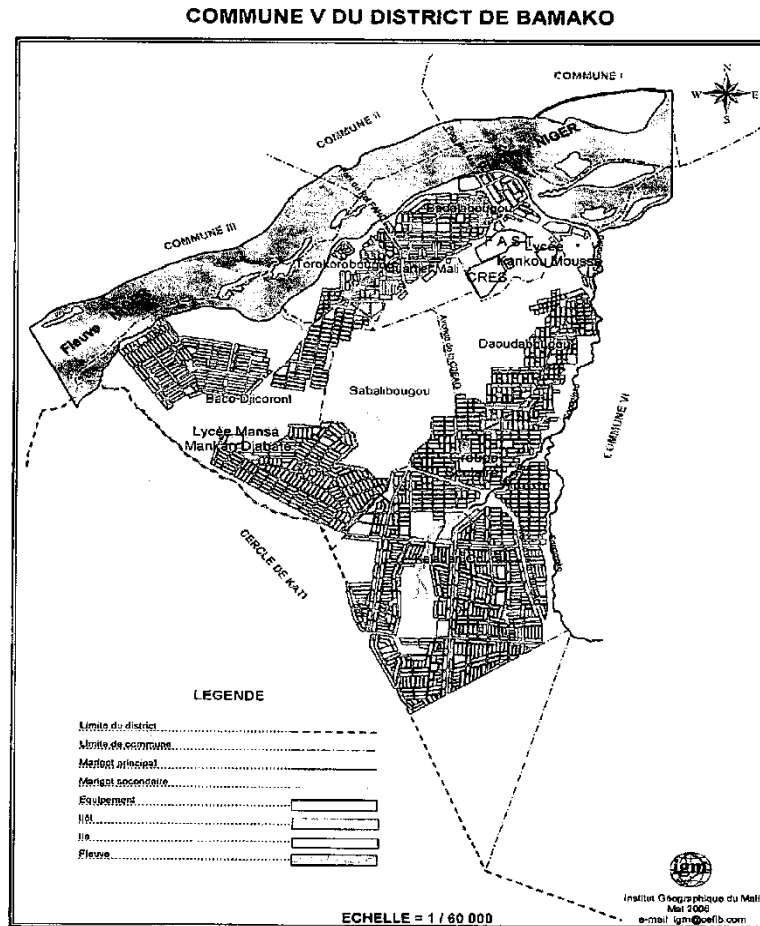
Source: Geographic Institute of Mali.

The population of Sabalibougou is heterogeneous with different ethnic groups living together. According to the official figures based on the census of 2001, 49,192 inhabitants live in Sabalibougou, 25,165 women and 24,027 men. This population is composed of about 8 to 10

ethnic groups: Bambara or Bamanan[3], Diokorome or Fula Dianwambe[4], Bobo, Bozo, Dogon, Fula[5], Malinke or Maninka[6], Senufo, Sarakole or Marka[7] and Sonrhaï. The main language of communication in the streets as well as in the families is Bamanankan[8] (which means the language of the Bambara people). The majority of the population has immigrated from the villages recently and in many respects still conducts a village life. Few of them have formal education or training. They are involved in different trades in order to survive. They are carpenters, weavers, bricklayers, handymen, repairmen, Sotrama[9] or taxi drivers, or night and day watchmen. Some are involved in small businesses and others continue to be farmers and market gardeners, doing their farming and gardening activities in the adjacent suburbs of Bamako. The majority of this population is Muslim, and a minority is Christian (catholic and protestant).

Sabalibougou is divided into three sectors. There are three community health care centres (C.S.COM: Centre de Santé Communautaire) and two private clinics, one public school subdivided into six school groups, about ten community schools but five only are admitted by the C.A.P. In the Malian educational system, the local Departments of Education that represent the Ministry of Education are Academies and the C.A.P (C.A.P means Centre d'Animation Pedagogique), which is the state organ that regulates local schools and provides them with all kinds of support.

This local Department of education authorities, C.A.P defines school admission criteria. There are more than ten Koranic schools and Merdersas (where the teachings are done in Arabic and based on the Koran) (Sanankoua, 1985:359). There are two churches and twenty-nine mosques, eleven of which organize Friday prayers. Sabalibougou means the village of tolerance in Bamanakan. Tolerance is a key value of the people of Sabalibougou, and religion plays an important role in helping people cope with their living condition.

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[3] The word Bambara and or Bamanan is used because in Bambara language it is Bamanan whereas Bambara is the word used by the French colonizers and in many official documents.

[4] Diawambe or Diawando is an ethnic group known under the name Diawambe according to different publications such as Meillaissoux (1965:135), but the term Diokoromè is used by the local populations. In addition Meillassoux like other researchers, including myself, use the term Fula Diawambe because they share the same language with the Fulani.

[5] Fula is what the local population call the Fulani.

[6] The term Malinke is known in French and is according to the historical dictionary of Mali (Imperato 2008:207). However, in Bamanakan, the local population says Maninka.

[7] According to Imperato (2008:209), Marka is supposed to be a distinct ethnic group but to the population of Sabalibougou Marka corresponds to what the same dictionary and other official publications call Sarakolé.

[8] The lingua franca in Mali. The ethnic group Bamanan consists of more than four million people according to Imperato (2008:33).

[9] The Sotramas are the main means of public transportation in Bamako.

Sabalibougou, although urban, looks rural. Most buildings are mud huts and one has the feeling of being in a village. Like many other quarters of Bamako, Sabalibougou is very large. It covers an area of five square kilometres, composed of hills mainly in its western and eastern sides, where it is difficult to get water. To dig a well, one has to sink more than twenty-five metres. That is why most of the children are always dirty because priority is given to finding safe drinking water. Red feet, caused by dust from the hills in neighbouring quarters, have become an identity marker for the children of Sabalibougou.

1.2. Short presentation of the Malian educational system

Many efforts have been made to improve education in Mali since independence in 1960. However, the schooling rate remains among the lowest in the world. The government has set up different strategies to resolve this problem. The latest is the Ten-Year Program of Development of Education (PRODEC[10]), which aims at improving education management in terms of quantity and quality. This program was reformulated in 2000 with the objective to achieve universal primary education (cf. World Bank 2007). One of the corner-stone's of this program is to involve local communities in school management.

Different reforms made since 1962 have contributed to a rapid development of the Malian education system. Despite the efforts made by communities many problems persist, such as low school attendance, lack of financing, lack of teaching materials and human resources, and misunderstanding of the of the roles and responsibilities of some actors and partners within the education system.

The Malian educational system consists of four levels:

1- Preschool education.
2- Primary school. In Mali it starts from age six and is composed of two cycles. The first cycle is six years and the second cycle three years.
3- Secondary school is what is called "lycées[11]" or professional schools that are the intermediary level between primary school and higher education.
4- Higher education is composed of the university and the institutes (presently Mali has only one university).

There are four kinds of education in Mali:

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[10] A strategic planning of the national policy of education system recondition from the period of 1999 to 2009, launched by the Malian president in 1999, the orientations and the objectives of this programme are defined in the work of Cissé et al, Les écoles communautaires au Mali. UNESCO, IIEP, (Cissé et al 2000:172-188).
[11] In Mali the Lycée is a three-year course. In the third year, students obtain the baccalaureate, which is the requirement for entering university.

A- Non-formal education including for example the *Medersas*[12], the Koranic schools, and other training and courses conducted in institutions with no links with the Ministry of Education.

B- Special education, for example for persons with disabilities and adult learning (he institute for the blind, the institute for the deaf, and courses in adult education).

C- General education or formal education in Mali; it concerns all the primary schools and secondary schools, and tertiary education at the university.

D- Technical and professional training at secondary schools which are different from *lycées*. They run shorter training courses.

There are three different kinds of schools: public schools, private schools, and community schools, which are considered as semi-private.

The Malian educational authorities committed themselves to focusing on increasing school attendance since this was very low in comparison with other African countries. This situation may be explained by the poverty of the country, considered to be among the 10 poorest countries in the World as mentioned in the preface of Historical Dictionary of Mali (cf. Imperato, J. P. and Imperato H. G. 2008). Financially, the country could not support the educational needs of the majority of citizens. The major challenges are access, capacity building and quality. Many strategies were designed to promote education access to all, especially girls, to support teachers' recruitment, and financing the building of schools. However, the difference is huge between all the plans and the reality on the ground, for example in the inner suburb of Sabalibougou. Through the problems of education, I have seen all the other difficulties the populations of Sabalibougou are confronted with in order to cope with the extreme poverty with which the majority of the population in Mali is living.

1.3. Research perspectives

In the course of this study my focus has been *why and how some community schools exist in a town like Bamako and which constraints the community schools in the inner suburbs are confronted with?*

In trying to reach my objective I defined the following tasks:

1- To understand the role and significance of all stakeholders, i.e. the population, teachers, authorities, parents, and pupils in the context of community schools.

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[12] Medersa or Madrasa is a school in which the language of instruction is Arabic. There is at times an emphasis on religion and the curriculum is different from the official curriculum of the Ministry of Education.

2- To identify the problems and challenges faced by the community schools and the factors causing these problems.

3- To assess whether the community sees the schools as their own schools, i.e. is there a sense of ownership and responsibility? And why or why not?

In this thesis, I intend to show which impact the absence of community schools could have for the children of Sabalibougou**.** I identify the reasons for the difficulties with which the community schools are confronted. I also show the impact of the community schools in increasing the schooling rate and its importance for the children. In addition, I look at the involvement of the whole educational community in **Sabalibougou**: the school authorities, the political and administrative authorities, the board committees, the parent associations, the teachers and pupils of community schools, and the local population, i.e. what Ogbu (1981:4) calls the 'school population' in his work on school ethnography.

1.4. Thesis outline

The thesis is organised in seven chapters including the introduction and conclusion:

Chapter one is the introductory chapter in which I describe the process of my fieldwork, the background, and the fieldwork context.

Chapter two discusses the methodological and theoretical approach. This chapter concerns how and what kind of data was collected, discussing, for example, the difference between observations made with and without a camera. I also present the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter three deals with the community schools and the inhabitants of Sabalibougou. Through focusing on the relationship between schools and the local population, I discuss the influence of poverty on the community schools and above all the importance of community schools in Sabalibougou.

In **Chapter four** I try to describe the migration from rural areas of Mali and urbanisation of Bamako, resulting in the growth of city suburbs. I inspect the self-perception of the community as well as the perception of them by outsiders. I also discuss the difficulties of life in Sabalibougou, such as education and poverty, health, hygiene, and sanitation. Finally, I discuss other aspects, such as the significance of religion and sport, particularly football, which has enabled some inhabitants to become rich despite general poverty.

Chapter five presents the main findings and provides different perspectives on the community schools in Sabalibougou. Emphasis has been placed on infrastructure and the

challenges of securing grounds to build schools upon owing to the lack of support and poverty. This chapter also speculates on possible improvements of the community schools in Sabalibougou, for example how the board committees can be transformed and how increased involvement of the local population and political and school authorities might help.

II. Methodological and theoretical approach

There were both advantages and disadvantages to using a video camera in my research. With the camera, I always received several questions regarding my presence. The questions asked did not only concern the camera but also the future impact of the use of camera, especially what could they gain from being filmed. Most of them categorically refused to be filmed and in addition they refused to give information even without the camera for fear that anything they said might have unwanted consequences. On the other hand, the use of camera helped to bring to life vividly the actors involved for the audiences of my film. Thanks to the camera, the real expressions and feelings of people appear. Looking through the audio-visual material, I realized that certain facts, reactions and answers would be difficult to describe using simple field notes. An example is the director of the local department of education, C.A.P, who hesitated in his responses because he was not fulfilling the obligations of C.A.P. Another is the stormy debate between Sector II teachers during a staff' meeting about the salary. Finally there are the classroom activities in which Negueting Traoré, the school principal, corrects the misspelling of a pupil during a reading session. There is also another scene in which Maimouna, the wife of Negueting, teaches the little children how to read, by following the text from the left to the right side of the board. Despite her enthusiastic explanation we see a child continuing to read from the right to the left[13].

2. 1. Methods of data collection

I have used various methods to collect my data. Structured interviews were carried out with some people to obtain specific information. This was the case e.g. community school' principals, the head of school local authority, and other government officials… Participant observation was an important tool throughout the fieldwork; I observed settings and social situations, sometimes participating actively, for example in the classrooms and other activities. Observation was essential both with and without a camera. The utilization video camera was following an observational cinema method of Henley, involving in the processes of discovery and participation with my informants (Henley, 2004:166). The camera was to me almost like the microscope is for the biologist investigating (cf. Loizos 1993:17).

Doing anthropology almost at home made the process in many ways easy for me but I do not feel that like I was affected by what Eriksen describes as home blindness (Eriksen, 2004:34).

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[13] There are many other examples from my footage but these are included in the film, "The principal Fight", which forms part of this thesis.

In the sense that every single fact, scene, and story aroused my curiosity, I remained keen to discover all the aspects of the lives of my informants both with and without the camera, including everyday matters such as when they drink from the same cup, eat an unpeeled mango, or brush their teeth with a toothpick amongst the family.[14]

I held discussions and conversations with people whenever the opportunity arose. This was done most of the time in either Bambanankan (my mother tongue) or in French (my first language), the official language of Mali. I felt I was doing field work in my own culture, as an "insider" to allude to Diallo (2008:17) referring to Holliday's concepts of "insider" and "outsider".

Position	Sex		Quantity
	Male	Female	
Principals	5	0	5
Teachers	12	9	21
School board members	5	2	7
Ordinary inhabitants	25	27	52
City councillors	2	0	2
Regional school authority	0	1	1
Local school authority	1	0	1
Pupils	50 +	50+	100+
Worker of CSCOM[15]	2	2	4
Pupils parents of	7	9	16
Total	109	100	209

Figure 2: the sample covered in data collection (these figures concern interviews both with and without camera).

I had the most joyful, and worst, moments with my informants when they talked about their sadness, anger and disease. I attended official and unexpected meetings of the school board and board-committee.[16] I attended social events like funerals, sacrifices, and baptism

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[14]There are many other examples from my footage but these are included in the film, "The principal Fight", which forms part of this thesis.

[15] CSCOM is the acronym of *Centre de Santé Communautaire*, the Community Healthcare Centre.

[16] The term board-committee is the literal translation of "*comité de gestion*" in French, the organ composed of local people in charge of the management of the community school in terms of recruitment of teachers, payment

ceremonies, i.e. every day events and daily routines as mentioned by Emerson *et al.* (1995:1). I travelled with some of my informants, prayed with them in the mosques, played football and cards with them, and ate with them. Eating with people in Sabalibougou represents a great mark of respect and friendship which made them feel pride. In the course of different encounters in the community, I managed to construct bridges of understanding between different actors in discussing the objectives and targets of my fieldwork among them, allowing me to get information. According to Dahl (2006:2), constructing bridges of understanding in inter-cultural communication research may be difficult or even unsuccessful in certain cases.

2.1.1. Observation without a camera

At the beginning, I was interested in getting in touch with key actors and decision-makers. Sabalibougou is reputed to be dangerous because of the crime and vandalism of certain unknown groups of young people. I met one of the city councilor who is actually known to be quite violent himself, and good at dealing with criminals. My close relationship with the mayor helped me to start my research in safety. I first made a 'grand tour' observations of the quarter following the method described by Spradley (1980:77), seeking the locations and actors etc. of the different community schools and then chose the school on which I would focus. In the end I chose a school named Sector II for many reasons as described above.

I first talked with the students who brought me to the principal's home. I discussed my project with the principal and entered an agreement concerning the development of my research. Before starting shooting I met more than one hundred children, asking them questions about the conditions at school and in the local community. I also looked for suitable characters for my film. Even without the camera or notebook, I used my own ability to find out what was going on in certain situations, such as at teachers' board-committee meetings and visits by school managers to the town hall, in which I could not ask questions for fear of provoking conflicts between stakeholders (cf. Hobbs and May 1993:10).

2.1.2. Observation with camera

I used the camera both to observe and to document discussions with people. By doing this I privileged certain of my informants with whom I spent more time than others. My focus groups included the headmasters, teachers, and pupils of community schools, those responsible for the community schools at a local level, such as the director of the local

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of salaries, payment of rent and so on. It is totally different from a school board composed of teachers whereas the only teacher represented in the board-committee is the principal.

department of education (C.A.P), the director of the regional department of education (Academy), as well as the pupils' parents, the mayor of Sabalibougou, and the general public. Since my research focused on school issues, I chose Negueting, the school principal, as my main informant. Three pupils (one boy and two girls) were chosen to show the daily life of a child in Sabalibougou. Although I spent much more time with them than other children, many others took part in the filming and as informants. The age of my child informants is between 4 and 14 years. I filmed in all the seven classrooms of the community school in which I was based, enabling me to record the situation in the classrooms and the work atmosphere that exists between teachers and pupils. I also filmed a group of young women in the street where many women do activities because of the heat in the narrow family compounds. I filmed general footage of the quarter of Sabalibougou including the town hall, the market place, the sheep's market place, the location of the schools and water supply points.

The presence of the camera had a general effect. People would like to understand why I used the camera as a research tool. They were not familiar with the use of camera which had not been used by previous researchers in the quarter. On the other hand, the presence of the camera did not have any influence on the content of my field materials. To them the camera provided an opportunity for the community school to be broadcast all over the world in order to allow people to understand their predicament.

2.1.3. Ethnographic Film

The Principal's Fight is a short ethnographic film that constitutes the visual part of this thesis. The principal, Negueting Traore, runs an elementary community school, Sector II, in Sabalibougou. His 'fight' is about keeping the school open despite minimal state support and the inability of parents to keep up with even the modest fees he needs to pay teachers and secure decent premises. In the film we meet various government officials who emphasise the importance of community schools for the nation without being able to guarantee sufficient support in sustaining Sector II as well as the other community schools of Sabalibougou. The film also portrays the family life of Negueting and his wife - who also teaches at the school - and we come to realise that they also have a fight on their hands just to support their own family.

2.1.4. Interviews with camera and without camera

I filmed interviews with different people who, for example, gave me more attention when referring to them while interviewing the school and political authorities. Interviews were efficient because they revealed the background of many conflicts and difficulties that gave me

an understanding of currents problems related to community schools. While filming, despite the fact that certain questions were conceived beforehand, different improvised questions became necessary in order to get more information and clarification about main questions. Interviews were also carried out without the camera, often informally in talking with people and holding spontaneous discussions about a particular problem raised by an informant. When we ate, slept or travelled together we would discuss matters regarding community schools. Besides all these interviews, some informants required formal questionnaires which they were going to read in order to prepare for our meeting. I also carried out a formal interview in order to get information about the salaries of teachers and the monthly student fees of each school.

2.2. Theoritical framework

The focus of my thesis is why and how some community schools exist in a town like Bamako and which constraints the community schools in the inner suburbs of Bamako are confronted with?

The theorists I draw on are:

- Benedict Anderson, Anthony P. Cohen, Olivier de Sardan, Goffman, Frederick Barth and Reidar Grønhaug.
- John U. Ogbu, city Pia Christensen and Margaret O'Brien, Robert Serpell, Malak Zaalouk, Peter I. Crawford, Gardner and Lewis.
- Pete Alcock and Unni Wikan.
- Hilda Kuper, Jonathan Baker and Thomas Hylland Eriksen.

The community school belongs to the community in which it is situated. In order to understand the interaction between people in Sabalibougou, I will try to show what a community like Sabalibougou with about ten ethnic groups, is like.

Whatever these people might have in common in that community my fieldwork experience has shown me that they have many differences. I concluded that it is an imagined community based on Anderson's model (1991:6): "*all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.*" Whilst Anderson is referring to the nation, the concept works equally for the community of Sabalibougou. Within the community people belong to different ethnic groups and religions, and within those religions they belong to different sects, which makes them so different in their way of thinking and their behaviour. To paraphrase Anderson, I would say a community in Sabalibougou is

imagined because the urban forces people to overcome ethnic and religious barriers. Here, former rural practices are replaced by practices shared by the rest of the community in the city. This concept of imagined communities becomes relevant because it can be linked to the idea of belonging of Anthony P. Cohen (1982).

Since I am dealing with education in an extremely poor area, I will utilize development theory in order to understand the link between education and community development. Again Olivier de Sardan has been a strong voice in the discourse of development in anthropology. In his work *Anthropology and Development*, he wrote

> "'*Development' is just another form of social change; it cannot be understood in isolation. The analysis of development actions and popular reactions to these actions should not be isolated from the study of local dynamics, of endogenous processes, of 'informal' processes of change. Hence, anthropology of development cannot be dissociated from anthropology of social change.*" (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:23-24).

On the other hand Gardner and Lewis (199:3) summarise what development means shortly in the following term "*In virtually all its usages, development implies positive change or progress.*" Of course, I admit that I would also like my study to contribute to the improvement of the conditions of community schools in Sabalibougou, as is common in the social sciences according to Olivier de Sardan (2005:110). This positive change is also sought for by the principal Negueting Traoré (cf. The Principal's Fight). In his interview, he emphasises the need for a plot of land in order to build suitable school, furniture and decent salaries for teachers. The principal Negueting continues by saying that the parents want to school their children but they cannot afford it.

Kuper says that: "*Towns, as strategically situated centers of innovations, have always received immigrantss*" (Kuper, 1965:2). In addition she finds two forms of migration: one is migration through coercion owing to negative forces and the other is voluntary migration, motivated by positive inducements (ibid:2). For Kuper whatever the reasons, migration is not only related to urbanisation. Like Kuper, Baker, in dealing with migration in francophone Africa, talks about climate effects on the soil throughout the decrease in rain fall in certain francophone landlocked countries (Baker, 1997:16).

III Sabalibougou: a village in the city

"There are several related causes of urbanization. Population growth in the countryside and transitions from subsistence agriculture to the production of cash crops lead to a general land shortage and greater vulnerability; simultaneously, new opportunities for wagework arise in and near the cities."

Thomas H. Eriksen (2001:245)

When the founding fathers of Sabalibougou created the quarter, it was situated in a suburban area instead of the centre, like it is today. In the late 1960s, Sabalibougou was considered a village outside the city. The founders created it because they wanted to benefit from the proximity to the city centre of Bamako. They continued to practice agriculture, cultivating a small piece of land during the rainy season, and were involved in small manual jobs or, in the worst cases, in seasonal labour like *bara-gnini*[17] (Meillassoux 1965:140). Nowadays the factors that urge people to move from rural areas to Bamako remain the same. Most of the families in the suburb and squatter areas are from the rural areas.

The family situation of some of my informants gives an understanding of the current situation in the community and the community school issue. According to some elder members of the quarter, in the past, people from Sabalibogou did not need to be qualified in order to get a factory job and other small jobs like a house-worker or servant in the rich quarters of Bamako. They built their own houses and did not pay rent. They used to have no electricity and did not need to take the *sotrama* for the simple reason that it did not reach Sabalibougou. For public transport it was the *Dourouni*[18] that was four times cheaper than the *sotrama* of today. Life in Sabalibougou was less stressful as was life in Bamako in general. There was no stress linked to unemployment and uncertainty about getting daily food as today.

Community schools and poverty are the main focus of this thesis. Sabalibougou is like a village in the city, migration being the source of its population. There are severe problems with health, hygiene and sanitation. I discuss the perception people have of themselves as well as the way outsiders see them. Religion is an important cultural aspect in the community in general and sport is an important aspect of youth culture in particular. I try to demonstrate the

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[17] *Bara-gnini* literally means 'work seeker' from Bambara; *bara*: work and *gnini*: to seek.
[18] This term is from the Bambara word *dourou* that means 'five' in English, It became the name of the public transportation in Bamako because the trip cost only 25 CFA francs, but today the Sotrama costs 150 CFA for the same trip.

holistic character of what Ogbu calls a 'school ethnography', which attempts to show how education is linked with economy, the local situation, the belief systems and practices of the people served by the schools (Ogbu 1981:7).

The lives and realities of families, teachers, and the school principal helped to show different aspects of the situation in the quarter linked to education and the Sector II community school. Negueting, the school principal, came to Bamako for the first time because the city needed him. Whilst families migrate for various reasons, his migration was voluntary. Migration has resulted in the increase in the number of absolute urban poor in many cities, as foreseen by a World Bank report from 1991 (Baker, 1997:17). Different short term survival strategies are required to fight against urban poverty. I believe that a long term investment through education could be a solution for the poor urban area to prevent extreme poverty in the future (Crawford, 2001:1). Such an investment could help the community schools of Sabalibougou, which are dealing with extremely poor people who are not able to afford education fees for their children.

3. **The exodus from rural areas to an urban setting**

> "Most urban dwellers in non-industrial countries, however, are usually classified as poor, although their lot might not have been better if they had stayed in the countryside."
>
> Thomas H. Eriksen (2001:245-246)

Many discussions I had during fieldwork revealed that most of the people living the quarter with children in the community school Sector II have migrated from rural areas, being part of what has been known as the Malian rural exodus. The migrants have chosen to live in Sabalibougou, as well as in any other suburbs and slums of Bamako, because they were attracted by the advantages linked to the life in the city. They had escaped from the terrible famine in their villages linked to the merciless droughts in many sub-Saharan countries. Others, such as civil servants like Negueting Traoré, decided to move to Sabalibougou as part of what Hilda Kuper calls coerced or voluntary migration (Kuper, 1965:2). Sabalibougou became for them the place where they can manage with their low salaries due to their ability to cope with the life in the village. The story of Negueting constitutes a tool for grasping the dynamic of rural-urban interaction.

In the course of discussions and trips, I relived certain aspects of my informants' stories with them, often through conversations that did not form part of the filming, which was also the case with Negueting, although he is the main protagonist of the film. Negueting is both the

community school principal and a night watchman. As principal, he teaches one class like the other teachers. The fact that the principal gives courses is not common in the other community schools of Sabalibougou. As principal he is busy with all the administrative tasks and school inter-relations with parents and so forth. He combines the job as principal with that of teacher of the fourth grade. In addition he is employed by a security firm. He is at school during the day and spends nights protecting a house as guardian.

Negueting is from a village called Nonsombougou, a village of the second administrative region (Koulikoro) of Mali, about 130 kms from Bamako. He completed primary school in his own village and then attended the institute of training to become a junior secondary school teacher in Bamako. After he graduated he first became a teacher and afterwards the supervisor of a school for the Malian civil service.

After four years of complete disillusion, Negueting left his farming equipment with his mother and brothers and returned with his family to Sabalibougou to re-begin his life. Since he had resigned from the public service, he could not expect to have any monthly remuneration while in Bamako. He urgently needed to find a job to feed his family back in Sabalibougou. Fortunately, he did not sell his house when he left Bamako, although houses do not cost much. The first job the former civil servant and professional farmer got was selling cakes, which, however, did not enable him to feed his family. He then got a chance to get a formal job. He was first employed by a security firm, working as night watchman at the house of an American diplomat. Meanwhile, due to his qualification and background in teaching, the community school Sector II approached him and he became night watchman and schoolteacher at the same time. Since he did not have time to sleep during daytime, because of the teaching job, the security firm dismissed Negueting because most nights he fell asleep. He could not, however, survive on the miserable salary of a community school teacher alone, and managed to find another job as watchman.

Negueting is responsible for about fifteen people, including the children of his deceased brothers and other relatives. Like Negueting, most people live in Sabalibougou because the life in their rural area became almost impossible for them.

Many informants told me that life does not exist in the village. Whilst in the village one is dependent on the fragile economy of farming, one has at least hoped to improve one's situation in the city. Negueting Traoré's case shows that migration is not necessarily related to urbanization but may depend on the pressure and the need of migrants rather than the fact that the area is urban (Kuper, 1965:17). Negueting followed a kind of continued migration from

rural to urban, from urban to rural and from rural to urban, which I have tried to represent in Figure 3.
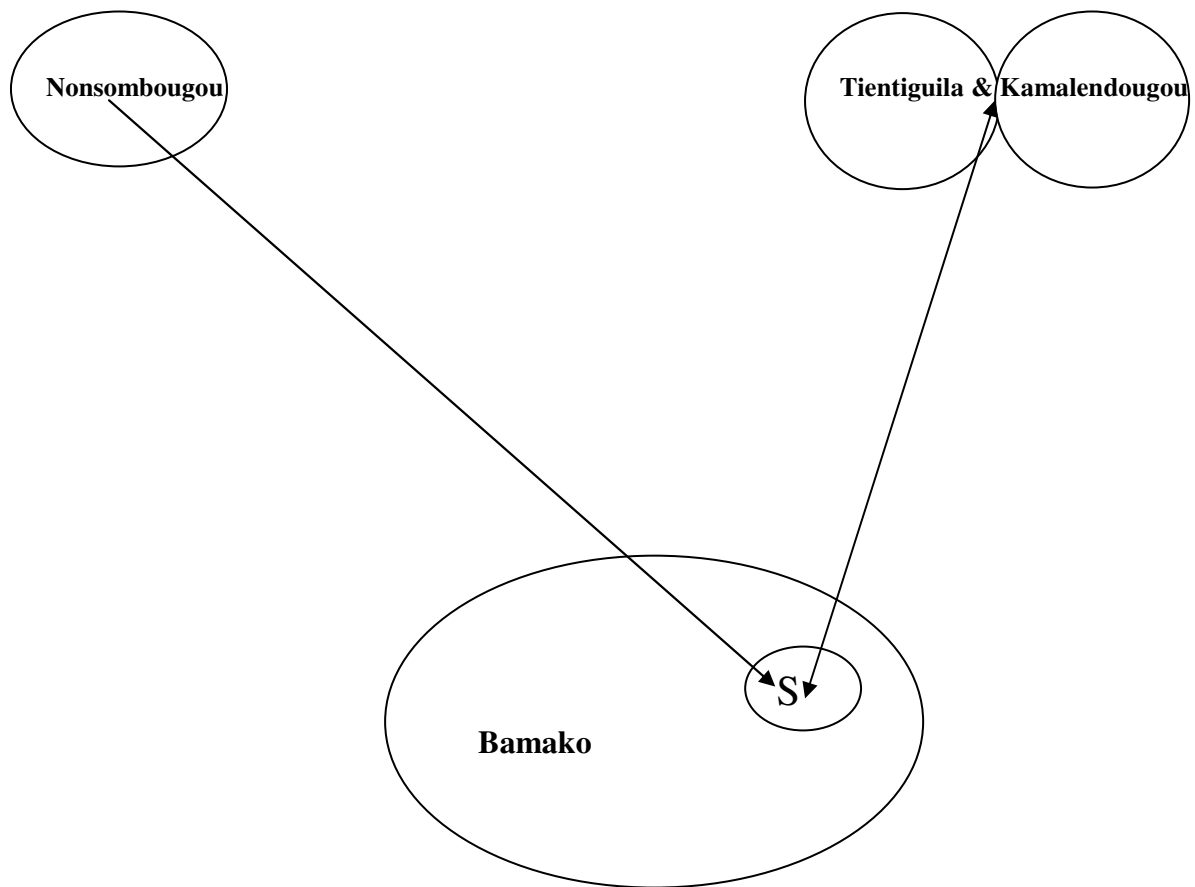
Figure 3: This figure tries to visualize the migration road followed from the village of origin of Negueting to Bamako and from Bamako to two other villages, where he went to farm, and afterwards returning to Bamako. The "S" means Sabalibougou.[19]

3.1. From own perception to outsider perception

The conditions might be hard in a community but may become even harder when people under-estimate themselves because of the social conditions. The term class is not so much used in Bamako because it is difficult to distinguish between definite social classes since we may find, inside the same family or the same friendship group, wage-earners, craftsmen, high officials, rich businessmen, and labourers (Meillassoux 1965:140). But in Sabalibougou people do not hesitate to regard themselves belonging to a lower class. When one talks about lower class in a poor country, it does not necessarily mean the layer composed of workers the low salaries but concerns people who live on the poverty line, surviving from informal and manual jobs such as water carrying, brick-making, and small trades.

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[19] Inspired by Eriksen (2001:76) and the concept of rural-urban continuity of Michael Banton, quoted in Kuper (1965:134): "the migrant travels a short distance and goes to a community less different from the one he has left."

The Sabalibougoukaw[20] regard themselves as extremely poor. Everybody emphasises extreme poverty when they talk about the importance of the community school for the local population. Most people in Sabalibougou are aware that they are illiterate and also that the majority is extremely poor. The situation affects children in their daily lives, acknowledging that they are different from people of other neighbourhoods in Bamako. The city-makers of tomorrow feel stigmatised for living in a place associated with poverty and discrimination (Christensen & O'Brien 2003:118-122).

In the book of Christensen and O'Brien, the living conditions of the pupils of Sector II seem to be unfolded by Chawla and Malone when they portrayed the indicators of community quality from children perspectives (Christensen and O'Brien, 2003:122). I noticed that the children of Sabalibougou in general are stigmatised for living in a quarter associated with poverty, discrimination, violence and crime, dirtiness, and teenage pregnancy. . They feel politically powerless to improve the current conditions of lack of provision for basic needs like clean water and sanitation. Chawla and Malone idea is reinforced by Morrow when she talks about activities and facilities, particularly the exclusion by cost (ibid.:171). All the points in those works are raised to improve of the environment for children both by safeguarding their lives and providing them with opportunities in the future.

What is crucial about Morrow's work (Christensen and O'Brien, 2003:168) is the pupils' sense of belonging. Despite the conditions of Sector II, pupils said that they prefer the school environment over that of the home. They feel harassed by the non-stop work they do at home, such as carrying water from the water pump every day. Children do not enjoy themselves at all when they stay home. This joy, however, could be seen on the face of the pupils at school in the course of the celebration of the end year in my film. This celebration is a unique event at school, though many pupils cannot attend because they cannot afford the price of admission.

Referring to some of my young informants who have siblings at Sector II , the reason in some families for not sending all the children to school is due to the huge number of children. In *The Principal's Fight*, for example, one informant says: *If you have more than five children for example, you cannot put all of them in school because you cannot afford it.* I often asked why people had so many children when they knew that they could not cope. I asked some young women and men why they did not use contraception when discussing birth control and sexually transmitted infections. But they said that it is not possible to talk about such subjects

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[20] Someone from Sabalibougou is called Salibougouka in Bambanankan, in plural it becomes Sabalibougoukaw, the inhabitants of Sabalibougou.

with someone who is older than you. The principal of the community school ATT[21] told me that the lack of birth control and teenage pregnancies are main factors in the increasing number of children. He actually said that "… if you have difficulties or are unable to have a baby, you should come to Sabalibougou." The subject of reproduction remains a taboo due to lack of awareness and because of cultural barriers, such as the way many adults say that it is forbidden to use contraception and impolite for young educated relatives to talk about these issues with them.

Despite the differences in religion, social practices, and cultural values, people attend each other's social events and help each other with small daily problems. People take part in their neighbours' wedding or baptism ceremonies and in the cases of death there is always a lot of support. In this last situation the neighbouring families spending the whole day with the grieving family. Schools and shops close down and young people take on the role of gravedigger. The solidarity between people is thus evident in Sabalibougou. It is through these social events that the distinctive sense of solidarity and of belonging (cf. Cohen 1982) is expressed between members of the community in Bamako.

People used to ask me if I thought Sabalibougou was different from other neighbourhoods of Bamako. My answer was always that it is a neighbourhood of the capital city like any other neighbourhood. Once I wanted to print out some pictures I had taken in the community school Sector II. I went to a place not far from Sabalibougou, and yet the person in charge of the shop asked me in which village I had taken the photos. I was surprised and shocked and wondered 'what is the reason for this kind of question'? After I told him the location he just said "Oh anyway that quarter is equal to a village."

The majority of people involved in small trade with for example peanuts, bananas, and melons are children from Sabalibougou. They have to walk long distances so their feet become red from the particular dust in Sabalibougou. Most of my child informants are either pupils of the community schools or have dropped out from school because the parents could not afford the fees. Many of the children attending Sector II are trading during afternoons and week-end when they do not have class.

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[21] ATT is the acronym of Malian current president Amadou Toumani Touré called by everybody ATT.

3.2. Poverty and Education

Several community schools have been created in Sabalibougou since the poverty of the quarter makes access to private schools impossible. The people of Sabalibougou created community schools because they had a real need for them.

The community school belongs to the local community or community association. The local community does not have sufficient funds to provide all the management services to the school. When the local school authorities (C.A.P.) accept the creation of a community school they provide the official studies curriculum and a few books but they do not provide funding or furniture.

In *The Principal's Fight*, the mayor of Sabalibougou says that "… the city council makes the creation of community schools easier in order to help the population to be close to school." In the same frame the director of the local department of education says that "… without the community schools many children would stay at home without education because there would be no school for them." The community schools are created because the population cannot afford upmarket private schools but the community school Sector II needs money from the population to manage the school.

The development and the success of community school cannot be possible without the involvement of the whole community in the management of the school. The extreme poverty makes this very difficult as many people struggle to afford essential items such as food. According to the UNDP in order to make a step towards a development, at least a certain percentage of the population of the concerned nation must be able to read and write in short to reach the basic education (cf.UNDP-Mali, 2007). The poverty of people in Sabalibougou might be linked to illiteracy. A couple of families have children who have become policemen, soldiers or other types of civil servants and cope better than the majority. These cases encourage people others to send their children to school. What is evident is that all the children's parents confirm that they want education for their children but most of them cannot pay the fees. In the film a mother talks about her sad experience of not being able to pay the school fees of all her children. Despite their poverty, parents feel obliged to give their children a chance and want them to be educated.

Children in the community of Sector II are not consulted and are not regarded as stakeholders by decision makers. In *The Principal's Fight*, the children show that they need to play through all the joys they have in dancing during the end of school year celebration. They perform a

role play in which they talk about the whole problem concerning the community school and convey the difficulties the parents face to pay their fees and the struggle of the teachers and community school managers have to maintain the school. Through this short sequence in the film, all the problems are highlighted. The film reveals that the end of term celebration is the moment in which children need to eat something special, to play, and to enjoy their belonging to the community school. But even the cost of this small party organized for pupils, prevents many from participating. The contribution was 250 CFA per child (less than half a Euro).

All the children I spoke to said that they liked their school despite the difficult conditions. They said it is because they want to learn that they are well treated at school. Others said that the best moment for them is when they are at school because once back at home they have no time to take a rest because of all their duties.

3.3. Health, Hygiene and Sanitation

People in Sabalibogou say they have serious health problems in the community, calling their quarter a home to malaria caused by large quantity of mosquitoes. What is dangerous is that they do not attend health centres except when seriously ill. Two cases of illness among the pupils of community school Sector II drew my attention. In the first case, one may have had malaria and was almost paralyzed by a strong attack of fever. The community school Sector II has no medical kit, not even painkillers. The principal and the class teacher decided to accompany the girl home instead of bringing her to the closest health centre.

The second case happened when two little boys were playing and one of them fell and was injured. The only thing possible was to clean the blood with a piece of tissue which might have caused an infection. Both cases show that even the minimal means to address health problems are non-existent.

Hygiene and pollution constitute a major challenge in Sabalibougou. Heaps of rubbish are scattered everywhere in the quarter which constitutes a threat to the health and safety of both children and adults, as described by Simard and De Koninck in their survey of public health in another quarter of Bamako (2001:30). Most of the latrines are not closed and are situated outside the family compounds. The water of the latrines attracts mosquitoes and flies, which is a source of malaria and diarrhoea by food contamination, especially during the rainy season. The quarter has no ditches to allow the overflow of waste water. The community school Sector II has no adequate toilets, the consequences of which are highlighted in the film where Madame Traoré complains about how they have to clean up after children using a

ground next to the school for toilet purposes. Overflowing water from neighbouring families comes into the schoolyard which also has stagnant water during the rainy season. The two jars used to keep safe drinking water are for the whole school and there are only two cups, highlighting the high risk of transmitting diseases and infection.

The general difficulties related to the community's health are in one way or another linked to the schools. Most parents are aware of the problem but according to some of them it is not such a big issue or a priority. They need to fix the most pressing needs like daily food before thinking about cleanliness. Still, the populations of a community need to educate the children about hygiene because the children deserve to be protected and this responsibility should not only with their parents.

3.4. Religion

Islam and Christianity play an important role for the community's inhabitants. Despite the poverty the branch[22] of Islam called Wahabites[23] has built very nice mosques. The branch of Wahabites is the richest in Mali and popular among other Muslims in Sabalibougou maybe because of their relative richness. This is contrary to what people may think reading Meillassoux who says that the Wahabites are very unpopular among other Muslims in Bamako (Meillassoux 1965:137). In Sabalibougou it may be easier to convince people to be attached to a faith when they tend to lose the hope for a promising future on the earth. There are two Christian churches in Sabalibougou, one Roman Catholic the other Protestant. People continue to attend geomancy and other divination ceremonies although forbidden by the monotheist religions. They have a strong belief in oracles that are supposed to predict the future in term of prosperity and turn away certain curses launched by witches and other enemies.

The good thing about religions and beliefs in Sabalibougou is that people live together in harmony whatever their faith. The majority of the population is Muslim but this does not preclude the participation by people of other faiths in social events. A Christian may go to the mosque when there is the religious ceremony of his neighbour's marriage just as a Muslim may go to the church to attend the wedding ceremony of his Christian neighbour or friend. Through the divergence of religions, and the behaviour of people towards each other, the

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[22] I prefer the term branch rather than sect, used by Claude Meillassoux, which I find pejorative.
[23] Wahabites are one of the two main branches of Islam in Bamako known for their way of praying in crossing their hands and their long beards.

tolerance of the people of Sabalibougou is shared. In the community school sector II, the faith of people is normally only apparent by a person's name.

The principal, Negueting, is an interesting case. Negueting[24] is a typical traditional Bambara name and he is a 'real' Muslim practicing the five prayers[25] of the day. Yet, since Negueting wanted a promotion in his job as night watchman, he asked me to accompany him to his village to consult the oracles and do sacrifices allowing him to get the position of supervisor over the other night watchmen.

3.5. Sport

Sport, in particular football throughout its ninety minutes games, can be a way in which 'new kind of solidarity sociability' is established in any kind of society (cf. Armstrong and Giulianotti 1997:6). The virtues of sport allow it to create links between people. It creates cohesion in the community when people meet and it also promotes the health of people. The children, however, do not have much time, and lack adequate grounds to practise sport. The only sport practiced is football, but participation is confined to boys. Young girls are not involved in football except for rare occasions at schools. As in most African countries, the young boys of Sabalibougou dream of becoming professional football players and play whenever they have an opportunity especially in the streets. Some of them end up joining Sabalibougou's famous football team, *Tourbillon* (whirlpool in English). The young players show their talents in the hope that the large teams of the first division of the Malian football championship may show an interest in them. Some players have dropped out or never attended school and have worked their way up to play for big teams. One of the most famous teams of Mali, Djoliba Athlétic Club, moved to a quarter not far away from Sabalibougou, which encouraged many young players to try their luck. Their hope is sparked by the success stories of two children from Sabalibougou. The first is Dédé Tamboura who played for Djoliba AC with which he was several times champion of Mali. He then became an international professional player and played for teams in Iran Russia and Bulgaria. Dédé also played for the national team of Mali, which really made the quarter proud. The second is Dramane Traoré, who is now a striker of the famous Russian football club Lokomotiv FC as well as the national team of Mali. Before Lokomotiv FC, Dramane Traoré, affectionately called Dra-Jan (tall Dramane in Bambanankan), played in the leading clubs of the Malian championship and in Tunis and Egypt. Although these two football players bought houses in

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[24] Negueting means the iron owner in Bambanankan.
[25] The five prayers of the day is one of the five pillars of Islam;

other quarters, their parents, who they often visit, still live in Sabalibougou. The importance of this story in my paper is to show how sport can give the same chance of success to both children from the poor suburban quarters and children from the non-suburban quarters. This is inspired by the article "Soccer's racial frontier: sport and suburbanization of contemporary America" which examines the ways soccer became complicit in the process of American suburban normalisation, precisely because the game was able to resonate with the practices, values and institutions, that marked the boundaries of normalised suburban existence (Armstrong and Giulianotti 1997:179).

The case of these two success stories instilled the desire to become a football player, and helped their families escape poverty. But the chances of football success of other children are meagre since most schools of Sablibougou do not even have the sport grounds and facilities required according to the rules of the Malian school authorities (Loi d'orientation de l'education 1999).

The improvement of the area for children activities could have a positive impact on the progress of the children in different fields apart from formal school education (cf. Christensen and O'Brien, 2003:169). The lack of a sports ground has been a huge problem for Sector II. The former school building of Sector II was in a location reserved for the general public, defined by the political authorities as a 'green space.' The youth of the community would like to use this space to build a football ground but Sector II already had it as school premises. The youth ended up by wrecking the building and vandalising everything because they lacked a football ground in the quarter.

IV. Community Schools and the inhabitants of Sabalibougou

4. Difference between Community schools and Private schools for an inhabitant of Sabalibougou

It is evident that community schools are different from public schools. Like in most other quarters of Bamako there is only one public school in Sabalibougou. The premises of a public school are quite different from community schools, with a construction form that is classic in the mind of all Malians. Yet many people do not know the difference between a community school and a private school. In Bamako, the private schools are easily recognised by the quality of the buildings and the school materials. There are few private schools in Sabalibougou compared with its neighbouring quarters, and some of them almost resemble community schools. The children of the private schools are aware that their schools are private but the children of the community schools often cannot tell you that they attend a community school. In the minds of people, a school must be either public, in which case you do not pay, or private. It is difficult for people to understand the concept of semi-private, where you pay a small contribution to help the government fulfil its obligation to provide schooling. Welmond describes it as a cost-sharing management with government (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder, 2002:4).

A private school is a school created by a person or a private group to make profit by the owner with the payments of the pupils' fees, and the owner pays all the teachers and staff. A community school is managed by a local association or group deciding to create a school because they see the necessity and those they are able to do it for the common interest of the local community's children. A community school is thus a common possession, opposed to an individual enterprise or corporation (DeStefano, 2004:2).

 The ability of a community to create a community school depends on whether they can fulfil the conditions defined by law, such as having an organised board or committee elected by the local population, a minimum of twenty enrolled pupils, and having a school building etc. (Marchand, 2000:45). In Sabalibougou all the community schools I visited had a real board-committee composed of different people from various professions. Sector II, established in 1997, actually by a former principal of the public school of Sabalibougou, is an example. He thought about the creation of a community school because of the problem with so-called double or triple vacations. The double or triple vacation is when two or three different groups of pupils overlap, sharing the same classrooms but with a different time schedule.

He called for a general assembly in order to create a community school. According to my informants, there were many children who never attended school. The reason given by many parents was that they could not pay the transportation fees for their children to go to the neighbouring public school, and even less so to pay private school fees. At the beginning, the first board was elected by the general assembly and the president was someone well-known and respected in the community. The school started in a place owned by a local who agreed on the condition that he would be paid rent. Most of the community schools in Sabalibougou have been created in the same way, for example the community school ATT was founded by an association of carpenters.

The parents of Sabalibougou welcomed the idea of community schools because they felt the need to send their children to school. The school authorities approved the community schools, even if some of them were not fulfilling the norms fixed by the law, because they were contributing to alleviating the task of the government. Problems arose when the boards chosen by the community through a general assembly had to pay the teachers. In most of the cases, like at Sector II, apart from the principal, who was a retired teacher from a public school, all the other teachers were chosen among jobless young literate persons in the quarter, often persons without formal qualifications or pedagogic experience. Because of their level of education, they were not expected to have a substantial salary. Most important was their desire to save children of the community from illiteracy. When the board- faced difficulties with payment, they started to press the pupil's parents to pay a fixed amount. As indicated in The Principal's Fight, the payment of school fees is one of the most difficult problems of the school, and the expulsion of pupils due to lack of payment causes much debate.

Because of extreme poverty, people do not understand why they should pay for the schooling of their children and cannot see the immediate advantage, even though they know and believe that schooling is important for the future of their children. The monthly fees are actually quite reasonable, a maximum of 2,500 CFA per month for primary school. This is half of the fees of the private schools in Sabalibougou. Most parents affirm that they do not like the school managers forcing them to pay. They felt that the managers do not appreciate their difficult situation and also that the conditions at the schools, for example the toilets classrooms n, need to be improved. The fees thus make the local community perceive the community schools instead, as private schools.

Figure 4: information concerns school fees of single pupil by grade.

Name of the school	School fees grade	1rst year	Second year	3rd year	4th year	5th year	6th year	Second cycle
Group ATT	Per month	2,000 F	2,000 F	2,000 F	2,500 F	3,000F	3,000F	--------
SECTOR II	**Per month**	**2,500 F**	**2,500 F**	**2,500 F**	**2,500F**	**2,500F**	**2,500F**	---------
JIGI SEME	Per month	2,500F	2,500 F	2,500F	2,500F	3,000F	3,000F	5,000F
LA PLUME	Per month	1,500F	1,500 F	1,500F	2,000F	2,500F	2,500F	---------
YELEEN	Per month	2,500F	2,500 F	2,500 F	2,500F	2,500F	2,500F	4,000F

Source: concerned schools' administrations.

Figure 5: this table presents the average salary of school teachers and principals.

Name of the school	Salary by teacher	Salary by principal
Groupe ATT	35,000 F	40,000F
SECTOR II	**35,000 F**	**40,000F**
JIGI SEME	40,000 F	50,000F
LA PLUME	35,000 F	40,000F
YELEEN	35,000 F	40,000F

Source: concerned schools' administrations.

The term *community school* comes from the French "école communautaire," i.e. a school for a given community in a general sense. That concept of community school exists in the small villages, where the community is usually homogeneously composed of one ethnic. In Sabalibougou it would not be wrong to say "communities' schools" rather than community schools because there are many community schools scattered all over the quarter, not just the five I dealt with that are included in the figures above. The different communities are like 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983) that do not fully share the same cultural values. Whatever these people might have in common in that community my fieldwork experience

shows me that they have many differences owing to their poly-ethnic environment. I concluded that it is an imagined community based on Anderson's model (1991:6):" *all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.*" Whilst Anderson is referring to the nation, the concept works equally for the community of Sabalibougou. Within the community people belong to different ethnic groups and religions, and within those religions they belong to different sects, which makes them so different in their way of thinking and their behaviour.

Anderson quotes Seton-Watson (1997:5) "*All that I can find to say is that a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they form one.*" According to Anderson, the expression "*consider themselves*" may be translated "*imagined themselves*"(Anderson, 199:6).

Both the notions of 'considering' and 'imagining' can be applied to my study. In Sabalibougou the common point between people is poverty. Everyone in the community identifies themself as poor, as they do in my film. To paraphrase Anderson, I would say a community in Sabalibougou is imagined because the urban forces people to overcome ethnic and religious barriers. Here, former rural practices are replaced by practices shared by the rest of the community in the city. It is imagined as community because certain people even having their children in the community school do not regard it as their own school. Finally it is imagined as community because even in the frame community school Sector II, all the stakeholders as educational community do not belong to a locality and do not live at the same place.

This concept of imagined communities becomes relevant because it can be linked to the idea of belonging of Anthony P. Cohen (1982). I agree with Cohen when he states that "*The ethnography of locality is an account of how people experience and express their difference from others, and how their sense of difference becomes incorporated into and informs the nature of their social organisation and process.*"(Cohen, 1982:2). That is why I use his theoretical perspectives to analyse my empirical data to see what is the sense of belonging and what produces belonging among the community of Sabalibougou?

Following Cohen, "*The belonging, of what it means to belong, is constantly evoked by whatever means come to hand: the use of language, the shared knowledge of genealogy or ecology, joking, the solidarity of sect, the aesthetics of subsistence skills.*" (1982:6). I noticed that one language has a greater importance among the community in Sabalibougou despite the existence of several ethnic groups with their own languages. The role of Bamanankan as lingua franca highlights the process of social alignment, owing to the urban context. The

solidarity is the most important value for the population in Sabalibougou and that not only based on sect but the large scale of community whatever the religious beliefs or sect belonging. This solidarity is an important element of belonging and works beyond those of sect, friendship and family membership. That brings me to compare this community with the associational categories cited by Mewett (in Cohen, 1982:102) in reference to the community of Clachan. According to Mewett: "*In Clachan there are three associational categories especially relevant to interpersonal relations: kinship, neighbouring, and church.*" For Sabalibougou I noticed more than three associational categories relevant to interpersonal relations: I can cite the family (through marriage between families in the quarter), neighbours, the church, the mosque, the community school and community health centres throughout their management boards. In Sabalibougou a neighbourhood brings everybody together above all the other aspects of interpersonal relations in the community. This confirms Mewett when he states: "*Neighbourhoods, then, may contain fact that neighbouring obligates people to co-operate and to exchange mutual aid.*" (ibd.1982:103). That maybe because of the tolerance shared within the community as described earlier. One example in my film which highlights this obligation of solidarity towards each other is when Binta discusses with Maimouna outside the classrooms, both complaining about not being well.

-Maimouna "It's really quite tiring, I haven't been well lately"

-Binta "It's better to stay at home when you're not well, I guess I have to go to the ceremony." "It's going to be hard. The baby's sick which worries me." "I can find a seat but the baby..."

-Maimouna "Did you buy medicine?"

From this discussion I noticed that both Binta and her baby on the back are actually ill but Binta feels obliged to attend a social event, a naming ceremony. Maimouna in some way confirms that Binta has to attend because she could have said that "No, you don't need to go when you're sick" but she instead just asked if Binta had bought medicine.

The concept of 'imagined communities' can also be linked to what the French anthropologist de Sardan names "traditional communities" and "modern societies". Olivier de Sardan, inspired by the American sociologist Parson (1976) and others like Redfield (1956), Hoselitz (1962), summarises this concept in two different parts: Traditional societies are characterised by; ascription, community, *gemeinschaft*, homogeneity, gift, patron-client relationships, routine and solidarity opposed to achievement, individual, *gesellschaft*, heterogeneity, money, bureaucratic relationships, innovation and competition for modern societies (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:46). This concept is originally from the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies

who defined *Gemeinschaft* as 'community' exemplified by the family and neighbourhood, and *Gesellschaft* as 'society' exemplified by the city or the state (Tönnies, 1887).

Although the populations do not know the difference between a community school and a private school, the definition of a community school is easy for the school managers particularly the board presidents and the schools' principals. When Negueting describes the school to people who do not speak French he uses the Bambara expression '*djékaa kalanso*' for community school. '*Djè*' means 'together' and 'djèkaa' means 'doing together' or 'joint effort'. 'Kalan' means education, and thus '*djèkaakalanso*' means a school managed by all. The communitarian sense in this phrase is clear for someone who understands. The sense of the community school, of course, is important to start thinking about what one can do for the school. One reason of the lack of interest of the local population can be explained by the fact that they do not know the concept. On the other hand they fight for the cause of the board-committees, seeking to improve the conditions of the school. That factor is appreciated by the population because many pupils' parents interviewed say that they cannot afford the fees all the times but they understand that the school managers need to claim them. The only visible difference may be the community schools' low-price education and conditions which are worse than in private schools.

4.1. Community school and the poorest quarter

Mali is among the top ten poorest countries in the world. According to a UNDP report, 64 % of the population currently lives in poverty, with a little over 21 % of living in abject poverty (UNDPMali, 2007:1). "*The starting-point from for any analyses of poverty must consequently be how people themselves experience their own life situation, and whether this is confirmed by others.*" (Wikan, 1980:26). Accordingly, I tried to find out how people perceive themselves as poor and why. My questions in the field were not to point out poverty, but the responses of my informants revealed their extreme poverty. To enrol a child in a community school is regarded as a burden. The situation of poverty is deepened through the education of their children.

Wikan indicates in nine points the standard solutions applied by the families in Cairo in coping with poverty (ibid:35). The second of those points is quite comparable to Sabalibougou. She mentions that the need of certain consumption and payments are postponed for as long as possible (ibd:35) which is highlighted in my ethnographic film. The question of money is recurrent in the film, from the beginning where pupils are questioned if they discuss school fees with their parents, to the continual struggles faced by parents in

paying the fees. Moreover, the only reason for school dropout is the recurrent exclusion of children owing to non-payment. At this point the parents give up. The rent fees and medical prescription are always less of a priority than food for the family.

Alcock finds it important to make a link between children and poverty. Talking about poverty in British society, Alcock says that children are potentially poor because they are excluded from the labour market and therefore their poverty must be calculated in relation to their parents' status, because parents are supposed to take care of them (Alcock, 1993:26). Alcock continues "*even if parents do largely care for their children, however, they still need the resources to be able to do this, and lower their income, and greater the risk of poverty*"(ibid:26). Alcock wants to say that the families with many children need more resources to care for their children. The responsibility of the parents is much greater in Sabalibougou since they receive no extra support. In my film, the principal Negueting says that he is forced to spend the night as a watchman because he has to support his family of fifteen. He says "It's not for fun that I work two jobs, school principal and nigh watchman". Likewise, the film also shows a group of ladies who say that it is difficult to feed a family and pay school fees for all children when faced with extreme poverty. In the second case, the woman says that she was forced to take out her children from school because she could not afford it. Many sequences of the film highlight how the children are the direct victims of poverty, like the play role between the children themselves. What I also find interesting in Alcock's study, is when he says "*the problem of poverty is not just a problem of insecure or inadequate cash incomes. Poverty as deprivation includes a broader range of disadvantages, exclusion and powerlessness resulting in a quality of life which is poorer and more restricted*". (ibid: 153). The families (children and parents) in Sabalibougou are deprived, excluded from the right to education, powerless because children as well as parents feel much humiliation when they cannot afford the monthly fees. The sentence of a parent for example in the short role play in the film when the imagined mother tries to negotiate with the principal who refuses and explains that he and his colleagues have to support their own families. Finally powerless she says to her daughter that "No money means no school for you". Again concerning Alcock's assertion above, in Sabalibougou parents do not exclude children from the labour market, since they are mostly involved in informal trade; they make involve children and to some extent are obliged to use children as a work force. But the involvement of children in an informal labour market on the streets does not make them independent because they do not earn anything from those jobs.

The central point of both Wikan and Alcock is that poverty must be understood from the conditions of the people living and experiencing the situation themselves. The circumstances and the interactions in the community confronted by the poverty reveal the poverty situation itself. In the course of my four months of fieldwork I experienced the poverty from the living conditions, and the circumstances and the testimonies of people inside the community. My impression is that poverty is manifested by the inadequacy or total absence of certain basic facilities in the Sector II community school.

There is a lack of interest in the management of the community school. Many parents say that the management of the school is the matter of literate persons. On the other hand they will tell you that everybody knows the importance of schooling.

The population is mainly composed of people working in the informal sector (cf. Hansen and Vaa, 2004), many being small traders, who in the morning go to the big market of Bamako to purchase the goods that they later sell in Sabalibougou. In other cases they work for the big dealers. Some are tailors working either in the quarter or in another quarter. Many are taxi drivers and Sotrama drivers like the fathers of Awa D. Diakite and Modibo Traore, two pupils of Sector II. The sotramas are the minibuses used as the main means of transportation similar to the *matatus* in Nairobi (cf. Kumar & Barret,2008:54,81). There are also carpenters repairing houses and also the desks for the community schools. Pupils at Sector II have to buy their own furniture and bring it back home at the end of school year. Finally there are brick workers and cobblers who work anywhere they can find a job.

Working in the informal sector most people do not know what they are going to earn tomorrow. The uncertainty makes people nervous and stressed. In the film one of the female characters emphasises the increase in food prices to show the continual struggles of poverty. There is also the problem of house rent. One of the girls of 6th grade, whose father is a sotrama driver, could not come to school one day because she was helping the family to move. Her parents were expelled from the house for non-payment of rent.
When the problems become complicated, the parents take out their children from school. The argument is quite simple; the child or the children are not performing well at school because the parents are illiterate and cannot help with their homework. Parents then say, "Oh we cannot afford the schooling fees of the children any more". The main reason that they are not sure about the future of the children if they remain at school is because the diploma itself does not ensure a job, so the children, after several years of studies, may end up being unemployed.

It is better for them to find a job as quickly as possible, a job that can help the family as well as themselves.

There are many children in Sabalibougou who have never gone to school or who have dropped out. Primary education remains a specific challenge in Mali. Nearly three in ten children have never attended school and one quarter of those who start school will drop out before completing the first cycle of basic education (World Bank 2007:7). All the children I followed were involved in work activities in addition to school. Some school dropouts said that they were not so sad to leave school, maybe because they do not realise the consequences of dropping out while very young.

The board and school management of Sector II are composed of different layers of the sector, including teachers, a well digger, and traders. They all live in the school area. The main resources of the community school come from the contributions and the funds raised by the local community members themselves but may also come from the funds and school fees of the parents and teachers' associations, grants, donations and legacies (Cissé et al., 2000:47). Sector II has no grant and the donations are very few apart from 80,000 CFA that they receive from a small donor called "Fond ADARS". Most of the non-governmental organizations involved in the field of education in Mali, such as USAID and CARE, have built community schools in the poor rural areas (cf. DeStefano, 2004:2). The community schools of Sabalibougou have not had the same chance from donors due to the urban area factor.

The community schools of Sabalibougou reflect someway the reality of the quarter itself. The conditions of the schools are deplorable, and staff, including the principal Negueting, complains about their work conditions. The main difficulties are: the lack of school premises, facilities, and the incapacity of the pupils' parents to afford fees, the incapacity of the school to keep its teachers, who quit because of the low salaries, the shortage of government grants that are sometimes delayed, and the forced unemployment of the teachers during the three months school vacation. The situation of Sector II like all the other community schools is tough because it is an urban context and everything depends on money. At community schools in the rural areas teachers sometimes receive free food from the community to compensate for the low salary.

4.2. Importance of community schools in Sabalibougou

> "If you see that everybody is schooling his children today, it is because each one has discovered the importance of schooling"
>
> Keita (children's parent in Sabalibougou)

Despite the multiple hindrances of the community school Sector II it continues to exist. Although wrecked three times, it always manages to find a new building with the commitment of the managers and with the help of a few community members who sometimes are even not parents of children at the school. The community schools have really contributed to the increased schooling rate in Sabalibougou. With five officially recognised community schools, the smallest has about one hundred and fifty students and the biggest has more than three hundred students. In Sabalibougou more than one thousand children are enrolled in the community schools. The number of pupils in the public school is around one thousand and in private schools less than one thousand so the community schools account for more than 35 percent of the education needs in Sabalibougou. This factor is confirmed by the director of the local department of education who says that "… without the community schools, many children would stay at home because there simply would be no school for them."

Figure6: Data related to community schools in Sabalibougou in year 2008

Name of the community schools of Sabalibougou	Date of creation	Number of pupils		Number of teachers		Number of board members		Number of classrooms	
		Boys	Girls	Men	Women	Men	Women	1rst cycle	2nd cycle
Group ATT	1995	77	68	6	2	6	2	6	0
SECTOR II	**1997**	**98**	**82**	**8**	**3**	**8**	**4**	**6**	**0**
JIGI SEME	1997	166	86	12	4	8	4	6	3
LA PLUME	2002	182	180	11	4	5	3	11	0
YELEEN	1997	217	197	12	3	6	4	6	3
Total		740	613	49	16	33	17	35	6

Source: I have this information from the questionnaires I gave to all the principals of the community schools.

Comparing exam results the community schools perform well compared with the public school and certain private schools. The results are comparable because the exams are based on identical national curricula. The community schools scored better than the public school and despite the difficulties of Sector II, only three pupils failed in 2007/2008, which is considered as a good performance according to the school authorities as well as the principal of Sector II. The less qualified teachers of community schools are conscious about their status but do their best to fill the shortage of qualified teachers.

The language of instruction is French in Mali, but in recent years, the authorities decided to give the opportunity for children to learn in their mother tongues through the so-called "*pedagogie convergente*" (Miller-Grandvaux an Yoder, 2002:69). The method consists of teaching children in their mother tongue during the first three years of school and after that in French. In Bamako, most of the parents complain about that method, arguing that their children need to be taught in French since they cannot avoid the French teaching in the rest of their curriculum. In addition, they add that the children need to be taught in French because they must be fluent in this international language in order to be positioned in the globalised world in which we live today. However, since most parents at community schools are illiterate, and the teachers prefer to use Bambanakan sometimes, the children are taught in both French in Bambanankan although everything is written in French.

The community schools are also important because they provide a number of jobs to the less qualified who are motivated to become teachers. Thanks to the community schools they may benefit from training at the local department of education and teachers' trade-unions. The training allows them to improve their qualifications and chances of getting a job at other schools. Through the organisation of the boards, the initiative of community schools created a forum in which people can express themselves democratically about the schooling of their own children. The population of Sabalibougou is growing quickly and the authorities do not intend to create another public school, but it is said that the government may transform community schools into public schools if the government has the financial capacity and if the local community express the willingness to do so.

V. Main findings and perspectives

Community schools have been created in general with the will to resolve the lack of public education (cf. Cissé et al, 2000). Furthermore, they contribute in tackling the problem of access to school in certain poor urban areas like Sabalibougou. The board-committees are designated by the communities to manage the school as it should be. Those school managers being a part of the community are poor as well as the population customers. Therefore the equation between poverty and education is unbalanced. Education belonging to an entire community cannot be managed without the commitment of the whole community and their awareness about the importance of education is not sufficient if their contribution is lacking. Existing in the same environment with people having the same social conditions, the community schools are almost confronted with the same major constraints denying their progress, and their management becomes problematic, to some extent impossible. The constraints are the main reasons impeding the progress and the management of the community schools in Sabalibougou. The case of Sector II highlights all these issues.

5. Background of the common problems

The first condition to establish a community school is to possess an adequate schoolyard with a proper school building (cf. Marchand, 2000). By an adequate schoolyard, I mean a place where one can build classrooms, toilets, have a water-supply and playing ground for children, thus where pupils can learn and stimulate (cf. Loi 99 – 046 AN RM du 28 décembre 1999). All of the five community schools visited during my research do not fulfil these conditions, which were fixed by the educational law in Mali. All the community schools in Sabalibougou are located in the places formerly reserved for housing purposes. The same yard used for a family compound is used for a schoolyard, equivalent to more than one hundred as many people.

From the point of view of the schools' managers, the problem is neither the size of the premises nor the size of the classrooms built, but the cost of the site. In most of the cases, the owners of the sites are not members of the board-committees for fear that the school will confiscate its own pupils and thus not having enough children in the community school. So the school managers have to pay expensive fees each month if they want to stay where they are. Sometimes the payment of the bill for the premises is more pressing than the salaries of teachers.

All the constraints are linked because when the school managers threaten to leave the premises because of lack of money, their only alternative is to press the delayed parents who have two or three months to pay before removing their child. When the non-paid months accumulate, the amount becomes higher and thus more difficult for the poor parents to pay. The concerned parents try to negotiate a little bit and when the school managers remain inflexible because of the pressure from the premises' owner, the parents become discouraged and take out their child from the school. The main reason advanced by many parents is that they are not sure about the future even if the children remain at school because the degree does not ensure the job for the children.

The source of the real reason is lack of money to keep paying the school fees of children from one side, and from the other side lack of money to keep the family viable. The pressure is appreciated because the overwhelming majority of the children, attending school or not are involving in the small trades to help their family in Sabalibougou.

5.1.1. Infrastructures

School itself is infrastructure; its existence is a step ahead for the development of an area. But when one talks about the infrastructures of an infrastructure, one means the accommodation facilities. The community school of Sabalibougou lacks the minimum required facilities. The school buildings are in a deplorable state.

In the Sector II for example, the school is jammed between two family compounds, the building for the classrooms is not finished and the unfinished rooms were done for sleeping and living purposes instead of classrooms. The rooms are so small because they are not designed to be school classrooms, and since they are unfinished, certain classrooms are without roof because the part of the roof is done in iron and the other part is made of thatch. All the classrooms are without doors and windows, and thus one cannot to talk about electricity. Talking about inside the classrooms, the blackboards are almost unworkable and their use dangerous for the eyes of the children and the teachers. Pupils' furniture is charged to their parents within the school fees. When it rains, teachers give teach whilst wading in the mud and water. The toilets do not exist in reality, but there is a place where everybody goes and urinates on the soil but not for other toilet needs. At every water supply-point, two jars are erected in two classrooms because the neighbouring families complained so much about the pupils coming to bother them because of drinking-water.

The existing minimum pedagogical equipments are the programme for the courses and the few ancient books provided by the C.A.P, the local department of education. The number of books provided remains insufficient. The lack of infrastructure constitutes a real factor, which creates conflicts between pupils' parents and schools' managers because they cannot understand how they pay the fees for the school and their children have no access to basic facilities like using toilettes and having water to drink.

The parents are not able to check the literacy of teachers but they can observe by eyes and hear from the children about how they are at school, as many parents told me. The school authorities are regulate the requirements for the establishment of schools. But why do they leave the community in these conditions knowing that the schools do not comply with their own regulations?

5.1.2. Lack of premises

It has been mentioned before that the lack of premises constitutes the main problem because more than fifty percent of constraints come from this problem of premises. The community schools were initially conceived for rural areas because of the complete absence of public schools, but these did not need to face the problem of space to build the schools.

 Firstly, in rural villages, the size of the village means that they do not need more than one school unlike in Sabalibougou where they need several schools due to the size of the quarter and the number of the population. And since the school belongs to one community or to one single village in rural areas, having big empty spaces it is easily decided where to provide a place for the construction of the community school. In Sabalibougou, there is no empty space left for schools. The community is the only responsible party to find a place for the community school they intend to create. The city council told me that they do not have *"a space come and take"* for a community school unless the community school saves money and buys a plot of land, but with which money? The school authorities, although knowing the situation of the schools' premises accept the violation of rules about the respect of norms because the situation is some way profiting to them since the given community school is contributing to increase to schooling rate. In the ethnographic film, the Director of local department of education (C.A.P) cites certain numbers of norm as condition to approve a community school. Referring to the case of Sector II and others school I visited during fieldwork, I asked the following question: "*But it's evident that the norms are not respected in certain community schools*". The Director stammers and turns around the question without

giving an adequate answer. I continued to point out the particular case of Sector II. First of all, he recognises that Sector II is approved by the education department and afterwards to justify why Sector II is in the situation in which it is. He says: "*The problem of Sector II is their location*" and explain all the story concerning the site of Sector II without giving a clear solution (Cf. The Principal's Fight).

The community school Sector II has been struck by a series of crises of premises. Since its creation in 1997, the school was built in the place reserved for housing. That place belonged to a member of a board committee but uninhabited because the rooms did have roof and doors. The boards at this moment tried to do their best to fix the roof, build other classrooms and arrange some blackboards for the beginning of the courses. The school spent three years in that way, and during the vacations of the third year the rooms fell down following the raining season that year. Before the incoming school year, the board committee decided to rebuild the classrooms. But the owner of the place rejected this proposal. The reasons for this were amongst other things the non-payment of the rent postponing it. After his refusal, he resigned from the board of management. The school manager could not find any place before the return to school. They managed to build some classrooms in thatches and others with mud in places like public spaces within the city. The school spent about five years there; in the course of these five years the local city council told them twice to leave the site for the reason that it can be used for school premises.

Like the information confirmed by the authorities, twice, certain persons acting through simple vandalism have burnt the classrooms. The authorities informed did not express any will to find out the perpetrators of these crimes. The school continued to survive despite these different challenges. The latest problem came in June 2007 during the last month of the school year, when some youths encouraged by certain political leaders of the quarter attacked the premises of the school, devastated and sacked everything as described in the ethnographic film, by the director of C.A.P. The culprits of this attack were identified and they had no problems admitting to these crimes because they were endorsed by certain leaders of the quarter.

These young men were more or less eager to become involved in this odious act because they were paid. It was not difficult to convince them that the space occupied by the community school is a public one belonging to the whole quarter rather than a part of the quarter constituting a tiny community. Most of the young involved in these acts of vandalism were not aware of the consequences because they themselves did not attend school and they do not

care about what the school represents for the future of a quarter. The only possible justification of their crimes may be the social sufferings they experienced making them breakers (cf. Bourdieu, 1999:17). I met most of these people whilst talking around a small kettle of tea on a fire/cooker, but there was no possibility to film them. According to them, the moment around the tea is a privileged one to forget about the difficulties linked to the unemployment and in particular to life in general in the quarter.

This study presents the particular case of Sector II, but two other community schools have been burnt twice. The reason advanced by certain people is because the managers of the given schools do not speak the same political languages like the leaders running the city council of the quarter. So it becomes easiest to tell the young people or the population that the community school managers are earning money from the population in managing the community school that is supposed to be for everybody and more or less free of cost for the population, an argument made by many youths. Although regarding the living conditions of the community schools' mangers, they have not evolved from their previous situation; the family situation of Negueting Traoré gives evidence of this fact. The act of burning and destroying a school, whatever the reason, is a criminal act which should be condemned, since school is a public service.

5.1.3. School dropouts

Ogbu' work 'the next generation' is about an urban neighbourhood called Burgherdside as I am dealing with Sabalibougou. As he did, I have been observing all the problems people share in community such as extreme poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, terrible environmental conditions and above all high school dropout and"push-out"(Ogbu, 1974:34-35) rates. My paper is concerned with the term dropout and "push-out", by which I mean children who are not eager to stay at home or do other activities like selling stuffs like other children. But with repetitive exclusion because of lack of payment of monthly contributions, lack of food for family, lack of housing fees, many parents give up on education because of the cost. The children in these circumstances, which was common during my fieldwork at Sector II, are rejected therefore 'pushed-out' because they and their parents would not wished that situation.

The general idea of Ogbu is the children in Burgherside are not performing well at school because of their minority background linked de facto to poverty and marginalisation elsewhere. I reject this assumption based on my research because of the scores of the pupils of Sector II compared to other private schools from other quarters. The illiteracy, poverty, lack

of furniture, under-qualification of school teachers are factors that exist in the Sector II community. The classroom activities and school year report prove me how good the pupils of Sector II are despite their study and difficult conditions in the community.

At the end of his work, Ogbu criticises the idea of "equal education opportunity" in the U.S, a concept connected to both equal favourable learning conditions for all children and to the equal enjoyment of the benefits or rewards of education by individuals and segments of the society according to their educational achievement.(ibid.:258). This concept of equal education is comparable to the global discourse of education for all and the local discourse: "*Le droit à l'éducation est garanti à chaque citoyen. Il s'exerce à travers l'accès à l'éducation et la fréquentation des établissements d'enseignement publics ou privés*"(Loi d'orientation,1999). This local discourse tells that the right to education is guaranteed for every single citizen, and it is done through access to public or private schools. I want to point out that the minimum that is to get a chance to study is not ensured in the poor inner suburban of Sabalibougou in comparison to the situation of the neighbourhood of Burgherside.

The cost of school has led many children to drop out whereas the article 26 of the law concerning education in Mali states "*Le droit à l'éducation crée une obligation pour les parents d'inscrire leurs enfants à l'école et de les y maintenir au moins jusqu'au terme de l'enseignement fondamental*"[26] . Roughly this means the parents have to enrol their children at school and keep them there at least up to 9th grade which is the end of basic education (Loi 99 – 046 AN RM du 28 décembre 1999). Here the point is how deprived and poor parents can manage to keep their children at schools when they have to pay all the charges of education. What is happening with the parents of all the children dropping out before the end of basic schooling in Sabalibougou? I personally met several pupils who dropped out and the community school Sector II, which consist of almost 30 per cent of the number of pupils enrolled, according the principal.

On the other side the term failure is privileged by Serpell and seems accurate in light of his fieldwork in Zambia experience. In his work ''the significance of schooling", found through interviews, Serpell analyses the reasons why individuals did or did not enter school and why they left (Serpell,1993:21). Analysing the reasons, he came up with "intellectual, social and cultural connotations of failure and success"(ibd.:181). The persons interviewed by Serpell mentioned their intellectual ability, priority in getting married for the girls, and the boys mentioned the lack of assurance about economic opportunities of schooling, and their

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[26] See the article 26 in chapter 4 of the text regulating Malian education called *Loi d'orientation sur l'éducation from 1999.*

ambivalence in reaching their aspiration in terms of wealth and status. For certain people who did not enter school, their conclusion was that they would have a good live without a degree. Serpell finds schooling as only valuable for the aspirations of upper-class, city-dwelling men, and asks what should we put in its place? (ibid.:186).

The comparative link between this work of Serpell and mine is that my empirical material shows in Sabalibougou the term failure is very rare. Instead, I used the term 'drop-out' rather than failure because pupils in Sabalibougou do not leave school because of their lack of ability to climb as certain answered to Serpell in Zambia, but they are forced to stop by the incapacity of their parents to afford it. All the parents and children I interviewed emphasised the importance of schooling. According to them the first importance of schooling is to 'open the eyes'. Those who did not attend at all regret the lack of this opportunity that schooling represents. Since they are in an urban area contrary to the Serpell' field, they are not confronted by any cultural constraints. The high schooling rate among young girls evidences this factor. Indeed, even being in the extreme poor quarter, the children of Sabalibougou hope to achieve a higher social status. Many children I asked said they would like to become medical doctors and lawyers, but many parents remain doubtful. The main reason to have dropped out is the incapacity of parent to keep paying the fees since the community school needs money in order to keep schools running.

5.1.4. Negueting Traoré and the Ethnographic film

The title of the film is "The Principal's Fight". The principal runs an elementary community school in an inner suburb of Bamako, the capital of Mali. His name is Negueting Traore and his fight is about keeping the school open in the face of minimal state support and the inability of parents to keep up with even the modest fees he needs in order to pay teachers and secure decent premises.

The Principal's Fight examines the case of Community School, Sector II, Sabalibougou and the struggles of Negueting Traore and his fellow teachers to keep it functioning. We meet various government officials who emphasise the importance of community schools to the nation without being able to guarantee sufficient support to keep Sector II viable. Along the way we see something of the home life of Principal Traoré and his wife - who also teaches at the school - and we come to realise that they have a fight on their hands just to support their own family. This film is itself inspired by a film entitled 'Bamako' by Sissako in which African civil society spokesmen have taken proceedings against the World Bank and the IMF

whom they blame for Africa's woes. Among the pleas and the testimonies, there is one who says *"Two thirds of our children are illiterate and now we're being asked to pay to acquire knowledge."* (Bamako, 2006). This situation is a reality in Sabalibougou because without knowing the exact figures of illiteracy among children, many are without education owing to lack of money to pay the fees since they do not have access to free education. "The Principal's Fight" also highlights aspects of the city, with the traffic and noises as attributed to African cities by Rouch in 'The Mad Masters', (Mad Masters, 1955).

Negueting Traoré the principal of Sector II is in fact the main character of my film. In the film the life and the realities of Negueting is shown through his family and workplace and different facets of his personality.

Goffman says: "*Defining social role as the enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status, we can say that a social role will involve one or more parts and that each of these different parts may be presented by the performer on a series of occasions to the same kinds of audience or to an audience of the same persons.*" (Goffman,1959:12). In addition, Goffman also talks about the 'backstage' and 'frontstage'. That view of Goffman can be highlighted by Negueting in my film through his social role in different situations and contexts, such as with family, at school, in the classroom, at the night-watchman place, in the office of the director of the local Department of Education. Negueting is the principal of Sector II, and in Mali this normally requires only taking responsibility for administrative duties. In addition to being principal, Negueting is required to teach one class like all the normal teachers. In fact many people regard Negueting as to be more or less wealthy and too fond of money because of his social role as school principal in charge of collecting pupils' monthly fees. He is the principal for everybody at school but for the pupils of his class, he is both a teacher and the principal. This official role as principal allows Negueting to meet various government officials representing Sector, and to be respected.

For Maimouna, the wife of Negueting who also teaches at Sector II, Negueting is above all her husband and head of the family, as well as a principal, member of the board-committee of Sector II and CSCOM II (*Centre de Santé Communautaire*), and a night-watchman. These aspects of his personality show the backstage of his life which proves he is obliged to do several jobs in order to support his own family.

"*The complexity is the fact that the same individuals within a population seek out, and are drawn into different fields of activity, where the rules for participation, the forms of interaction, and the number of actors involved, will vary from case to case* (Grønhaug, 1968:

5). I found necessary to use Grønhaug' concept of social field in this study because his concept can help to understand, organise carefully and give a meaning to the different stages of involvement in the community's daily life throughout the interaction of Negueting.

Like Grønhaug, Barth also points out social statuses as important in the interactions in his 'Models of social organisation'. He says: "*Behind this creation of organised encounters, we can identify the interests and goals that set social life in motion: we can recognise social statuses as assets, and situations as association for realising them by enactment.*"(Barth, 1966:122). All of these three scholars mention social status and its effect on the actor interactions of different settings in the community. Analysing my empirical materials, I agree that the social statuses of Negueting are assets for him playing several roles of interaction on behalf of his school, his community and above all his own family. These statuses were also assets for me as a researcher because they allowed me to have a better possibility to explore the life of my main informant in different contexts, situations, and interactions highlighting different themes about his life. In the paper as well, his current situation and condition of life is described in addition to his life story.

These show the different forms of social suffering, like living in a deprived area (Sabalibougou), unemployment, poverty, failed expectations, even neighbourhood feuds and crime Negueting experienced (cf. Bourdieu et al 1999). Rather than having societal consequences on their current life like in most of those kinds of life stories, as Trine Fossland utilised to treat the young marginalised immigrants in Norway (Fossland, November 2008:56); Negueting is continuing the fight with his school-teachers' colleagues and certain devoted families who have experienced some of the same forms of social suffering to do their best to save children from illiteracy. The short role play performed in the film shows how Negueting and his fellow teachers interact if he does not negotiate with pupils' parents about the fee payment. In the actual discussion about the payment, some parents accuse the principal aggressively to be too fond of money. These accusations are most of the times accompanied by insults and end up in a quarrel. One of these cases was when a mother of two pupils came to complain by insulting the principal, threatening to remove her children from the school because she thinks that her children failed an exam through the fault of the principal Negueting and the teacher in charge of the class.

5.2. **Perspectives**

> "Popular participation at community level is
> the only viable form that will allow for the kinds
> of governing structures that can overcome
> social, political, and economic inequalities"
>
> Malak Zaalouk (2006:8)

The community school Sector II plays an important role concerning the schooling of many children who are at the right age for education but who have little chance to join public school because of place shortage and even less chance at private school because of poverty. To make the task easier, the populations of Sabalibougou can be helped to improve the current situation of the different community schools. .

Education is a long-term project for the community but the management of the school structure is something that needs to be done right now to make the education of children possible. After investigations, the prominent obstacles impeding the school functioning have been pointed out. Some perspectives can be envisage in order to tackle the challenges which community school Sector II and others in Sabalibougou maybe facing despite the commitment of the current board-committees and teachers.

These possible perspectives may serve as a foundation for the local educational community for future discussion on the issue of the community schools in any inner suburban area confronted with such difficulties concerning the management of the community schools. The local populations find that schooling plays an important role in their life because they are aware of its necessity that implies community schools are very important for them allowing many children to be enrolled at school. About ten community schools, amongst which five are officially recognised and well organised community schools, can have an impact on the future of the quarter as well as the deterioration of the conditions of the community school which can also have a negative impact on the quarter both now and in the future.

However, the organ representing the population in terms of management of the community schools is the board-committees, and anyone among the population can become a member of the board and at the same time become involved in the management. The involvement of local political authorities can be helpful both financially and legally for the local population.

5.2.1. Revitalization of the board-committees

"The involvement of communities through education committee is critical to the empowerment of communities in the ownership and management of their schools. It is only such as these that the real heart of the model can reveal itself in treating the child holistically and bringing a much-desired transformation"

Malak Zaalouk (2006:37)

Zaalouk finds the participatory approach very helpful for the community concerning the management of their children's education. I found it necessary to adopt the way in which Zaalouk wants this participatory approach to be organised amongst the community. For example many parents in Sabalibougou think that the community school is a private school because they have not been informed enough. Therefore information and training for the board members may be helpful at the schools Sabalibougou.

The board-committee is the main and one of the only contexts in which pupils' parents are allowed representation. It elects the school principal, recruits the other school teachers and workers, if they exist, and all other equipments the school needs. The school cannot succeed without a management and a good management cannot exist without the involvement of the whole community.

Without blaming the existing board member of inability, the board members must be chosen in a general assembly like they are now. But the elected members must be among people who are devoted to the cause of education. To allude to Gardner and Lewis, development is not possible if the concerned community does not decide what they want with the aim of improving the conditions of their community (cf. Gardner and Lewis, 1996). All the layers of the community must be involved; after which the need for the building capacity from outside organisation will come.

"*Without strengthening local communities, and encouraging them to take a more in the planning and maintenance of their facilities, the argument goes; strategies for improvement are doomed to fail.*"(Gardner and Lewis, 1996:121). Following this call for a participatory approach the local population has its own responsibility in managing community schools. This participatory approach proves how much the community school stakeholders need to work together in order to maintain their schools.

The number of the current board-committees seems to be insufficient. The maximum number of the board is about eight persons and among these eight persons, four or five only gather to talk about the problems of the school. In order to integrate more people, the board-committees need to increase the number of its members. The more people in the board-committee, the more pupils' parents are represented, and the fewer the opponents from the local population even if those of the board-committee do not have their children in the school. The increase in the board-members will make the different layers better represented and it would be better to choose the members from the pupils' parents. The general assembly should be organised during the time in which it is decided by the majority regarding the time when most persons are able to attend the assembly. During the renewals of the boards, the local political and school authorities should be represented to referee the new board-committee's appointment. One of the tasks of the board-committee would be to convince the community of the cause of the community school and furthermore to claim the right to education for their children.

The future board-committee must think about remunerating each member of the board despite the lack of money because they spend their time to talk about school management. The board must co-operate with the nearest health care centre in order to help many students when they are sick since the schools lack medical resources. A school's board-committee needs to clarify and make available all the financial reports concerning the school in order to convince any outsider organisation which might be willing to sponsor the school.

The community school concept needs to be re-explained in the quarter to people. The community schools' board-committee should not consider private schools in the same quarter as their competitors since this will provoke confusion within the community. The communication must be prioritized and the integration of the entire population must be the one of the primary aims. The board-committees will be revitalized and became more serious only once the entire population feels integrated and that the school is theirs, which requires greater work and communication currently achieved by members.

5.2.2. More involvement of the population

The population receives the schooling through their children who need it. In most of the cases, people who initiated the community schools in Sabalibougou are not directly concerned by the need of education. The founders are graduates from public school or other forms of formal education. These people are able to find a place for their children either in public school because of their status as former teacher, or in private schools because they receive a pension.

The people directly concerned by the community schools do not care about the management because they say that school management is a matter for educated people and not illiterates like themselves. Any organisation can be managed properly if the people concerned are not involved in the management themselves. But the factors hindering people in caring about the management of the boards are a lack of time and an appreciation of the importance of education, even that of one's own child.

The population called to join the boards should be trained not only to read and write, but should also receive training on basic techniques concerning school management. Through oral formations certain parents could be trained how to involve people in the community, like, for example, the case of the community schools in Egypt, where the education committee members have been trained. The training of the members concerned community mobilization, organisation and participation as well as school management and active learning and also raising awareness of child rights and gender issues (Zaalouk, 2006:105). The responsibilities of the community school management cannot be understood by someone who does not have prior knowledge of education. The training, which could be organised for the parents, should be remunerated in order to give them more motivation. The parents should be encouraged to come to school to see the conditions of their child's education which will make them aware of basic issues such as dangerous classroom conditions.

Once the population is more involved, trust will be established between parents and the school. The population and board managers need to speak the same language in explaining to the authorities the need for better conditions. The local population would then be united with the managers of the community schools.

Each member of the local community, regardless of whether they have a child in the school, should be informed and consulted about decisions concerning the community school in their area. Besides the management boards, the associations of the pupils' parents of community schools should be created to enlarge the sphere of involvement of the local population. The individuals themselves must require the arbitration of the authorities during different assemblies and meetings organised by the boards and other management organs which are created by them, in order to demonstrate transparency in their activities.

All these are related to be aware of the importance and the role of the community schools by the community but not the importance and the necessity of schooling in general. The concept cannot be understood when the population does not start to make a change in the relation between community and private schools. The questions one should ask is why the two kinds

of private school (some private schools are cheaper than others) are not able to provide the same conditions at school, for example the toilet facilities?

5.2.3. More involvement of local political and school authorities

Providing education for future citizens is the duty of the authorities, more so than of the local community (Crawford, 2001:2). I suppose the progress of the community ignores the importance of educating children who constitute the potential hope for the future of the community. I support the assumption of Crawford's child protection theory: "*Investment in children, for example through providing access to basic education, is closely linked to long-term poverty reduction.*"(Crawford, 2001:1). Crawford is talking about poverty reduction which is a big concern of Malian government in general and the inner suburb populations of Sabalibougou in particular. Crawford continues to argue that: "*An educated, skilled and socially cohesive society is critical to sustainable development.*" (ibd.). Therefore, education can promote social change and development in a community like Sabalibougou.

 The local authorities should look more closely into the community schools in Sabalibougou. As local authorities must be represented on the board committees of different community schools, instead of criticising the management of the boards, the authorities should check and protect the rights of the populations when the managers mislead them. The authorities must follow the activities of the community schools in order to assess how well they obey the rules of managing prescribed by the law.

The authorities could find a space for school premises to alleviate both community school managers and parents. The public spaces may be transformed in community school sites and sport grounds for the local community. According to the authorities a community school belongs to a particular locality surrounding the place where the school is created, but the public space is for the whole quarter. As the local authorities are pretending to not have any empty space, they have the possibility to build schools in the spaces in which the other young people will have the opportunity as well as the pupils of the community schools to practice sports and other recreation activities considered public. The authorities should have the same attitude towards community schools as they have towards public schools. They should fix a quota each year for the community schools, and this budget will allow the schools to fulfil the salaries of teachers and permit the different community schools to keep their employees. This is especially important since the teachers may be ready to leave at any moment if they find another job since they do not receive a salary during the three months of vacation. The amount, which should be allocated by the city council, should also be sufficient to pay the

teachers during vacation. Once the city council funds the community schools, it should foster the independent establishment of the school within its community.

The school authorities must improve their communication with the community schools' managers. A school should be in the required conditions in order to function otherwise it should be closed. They must be strict with the community school managers because the lives of children are in danger owing to the state of certain classrooms. The local school authorities, if incapable of resolving certain needs, should report to the national school authorities for further assistance. They should consult the local political authorities and co-operate in clarifying the roles and the tasks of each other in the matter of community schools management. *''Le financement de l'éducation et de la formation est assuré par l'Etat, les collectivités territoriales, les communautés et le privé''*(Loi 99 – 046 AN RM du 28 décembre 1999). According to this article 26 of *Loi d'orientation sur l'éducation, les collectivités territoriales[27]* correspond to the local political authorities which is the city council. In fact, if the efforts of the community and government through the support of C.A.P are not enough, the city council support may be required. Actually *les collectivités territoriales* support the community schools in the Malian rural areas (cf. Marchand, 2000).

The quality of any academic training depends on the teachers who hold the courses. Knowledge is provided through the teachers who promote learning within children in a formal context. But the main constraints facing the teachers of the community schools are their extremely low salaries and the delay with which those salaries are paid and the lack of salary during school vacations. The school and political authorities must consider helping the schools-boards in order to increase the salaries of teachers and pay them on time. The teaching conditions must be improved by providing school materials to community schools like a sufficient quantity of textbooks and other pedagogical equipment. They should think about the community schools as well as public ones in terms of the distribution of educational materials between schools in order to make available and accessible materials for the pupils of the community schools in Sabalibougou.

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[27] Collectivités territoriales is local political authorities according Malian decentralisation which gives more say politically to each single commune concerning the management of local resources and local institutions like school.
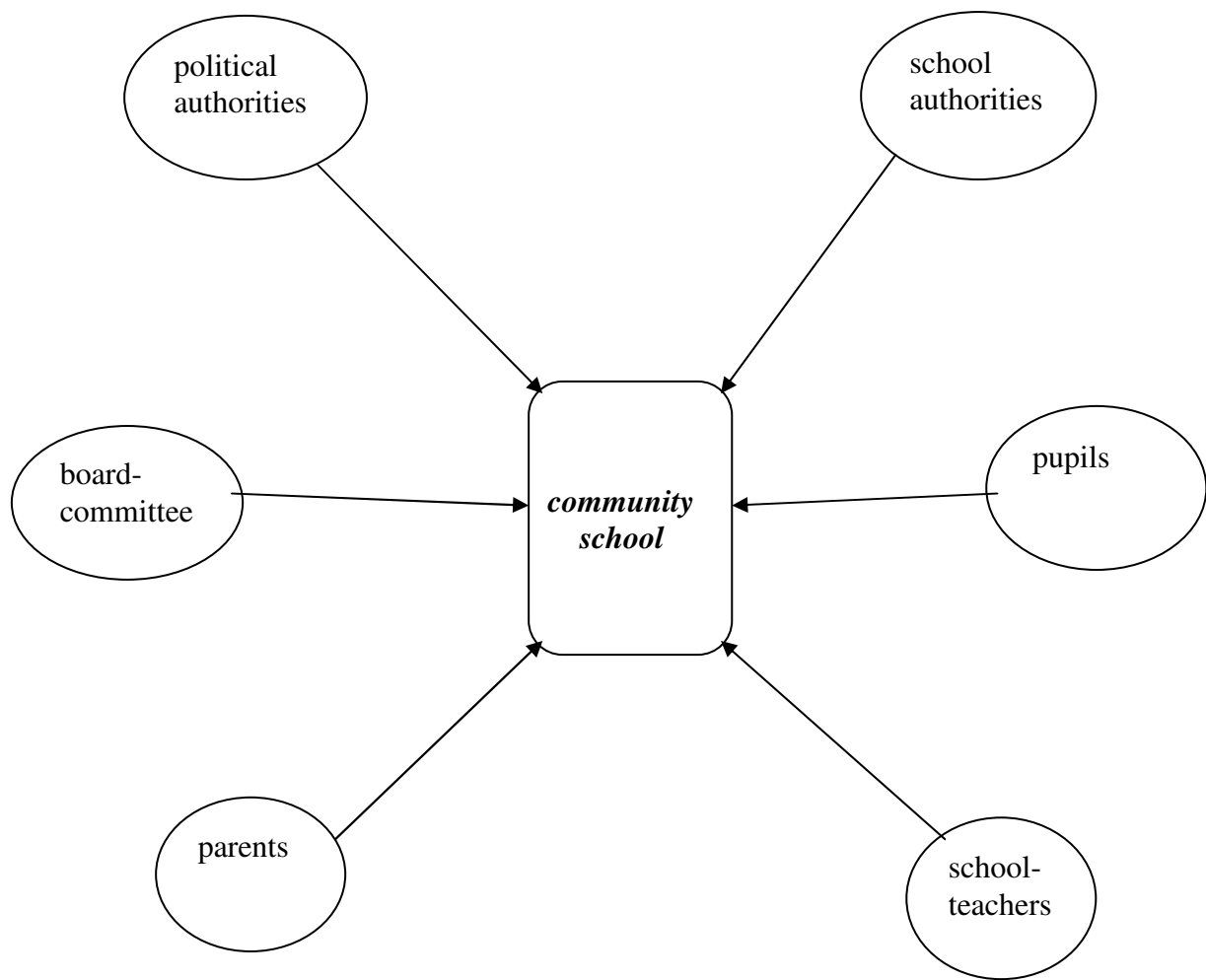
Figure 7: Community school needs all its stakeholders' involved to ensure its sustainability and development.

Figure inspired by Serpell (Serpell, 1993:293).

VI. Conclusion

The main question of this research have been how and why some community schools in the inner suburbs of Bamako and with what constraints the community schools are confronted in order to survive. Of course this research has not covered all the inner suburb areas of Bamako but it focuses on Sabalibougou only. Here, people are confronted with the same problems and have the same social backgrounds as in any populated inner suburban area of Bamako. In particular, the inner suburbs are characterised by poverty and migration owing to the population explosion of this post-colonial city since the 1960s.

My film highlights the struggles of Sector as a community school and the analyses of this paper show that the conditions of community schools in Sabalibougou remain deplorable; the staff including principals and teachers is extremely under-paid in comparison to the average salary of other school-teachers in Mali. The salaries while very low are delayed and paid only for nine months instead of twelve. The delay and the lack of salary are due to the incapacity of parents to afford it. The infrastructure is almost non-existent, with a lack of elementary facilities like acceptable classrooms, usable blackboards, and appropriate educational materials.

. The main problems are the lack of space for all the community schools, the inability of the pupils' parents to afford the monthly fees because of poverty, thereby affecting the pay of the teachers who also have their own families to support. This factor contributes to the incapacity of the community school to keep their teachers permanently. The capital in town has been considered key to the difference between the management of a community school in urban and remote areas. The latter, whilst not without their own problems, can fulfil most of the salary of a teacher and provide space for schools, which is unimaginable in Sabalibougou.

This study attempts to grasp the difficulties linked to the existence of the community schools in Sabalibougou. Through this study, it has been shown that a child's education is hindered by different factors in Sabalibougou. On one hand, the illiteracy and extreme poverty of the populations makes it difficult to focus on the future of their children. On the other hand, the school managers cannot let allow the non-payers' children to take courses which leads to the catastrophe situation of pupil drop out. All the local stakeholders, populations, political authorities, school authorities, school board committees, teachers, and pupils' parents agree on the necessity of the community school. However, they also agree that the community is in a bad condition. The economic situation of the parents is unstable, and paying school fees are

of secondary importance after buying food. Thus the subsistence of many parents is strongly related to current situation of the community schools. These conditions can only be transformed if the whole population is consulted in the management of the schools, a process which relies upon the better understanding of the challenges of its urban location and a better appreciation of the notion of 'community school' itself.

The opinions and the attitudes of the local population contribute widely to the planning of some ideas about the future success of the community school. The authorities, both political and educational, have much to do in the issue of education in the area. With the support of the authorities, the community school will be able to transform their service to their pupils as well as the rest the youth of Sabalibougou, who could carry out other "cultural activities" in addition to sport activities which will be practised on the ground in the community school. Community school and the local community could become a single entity as opposed to the current division between community and private schools. Authorities should take all their responsibility to promote the future progress of the community school in Sabalibougou. The study demonstrated that the local populations are more than convinced and aware that formal education is important for their children even though most of them have not been schooled. The current situation of the community school must be transformed as soon as possible in order to avoid the negative consequences.

The whole school stakeholders of Sabalibougou claim that the aim of the community school is to allow access for the poor families' children in the quarter and actually community schools throughout its managers are contributing widely to provide education in Sabalibougou despite the many challenges. What must be done now is to carry out the efforts to keep viable the community schools.

Concerning the general life of the quarter, outsiders use stereotypical images of people from Sabalibougou, which undoubtedly contributes to the inferiority complex found among its inhabitants. Both the insiders and outsiders opinions about Sabalibougou may carry some truth. In any case there is a need for the situation to change dramatically in the community. The children deserve to stay at school to study like other children and should not have all the economic burdens they have now, having to work hard as well as attending school. Education is the best way to bring changes to the minds of people, giving them self-esteem in all the domains of the life. With the knowledge they acquire they can bring changes to their own environmental and social condition where the perception of others changes as well.

Finally it has been shown in this work that, contrary to assumptions about the shortage of education in rural areas as well as rural poverty, the situation might be worse in certain urban areas like Sabalibougou. In sum the process and the results of this research show me the necessity of film in representing the realities of people, which is in turn supported by the text that counts my experience shared with the community of Sabalibougou. It highlights what film can do for text in ethnographic research (cf. Henley, 2004:111). Since the observational film method has been privileged, I realised the value of many facts in looking through the footages of my video materials. The editing process became like reliving the field work. I remain, however, convinced that film strongly needs the text because film is limited to certain time in which certain aspects of life and realities are experienced by both researcher and informants but text allows the possibility to explore historical aspects, life experiences as well as other perspectives.

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Appendix

Questionnaires and interviews for the principals and board committees

- When your community school was created?
- How many persons work in your community school?
- How many pupils are in your school?
- How much is the monthly or yearly contribution fees per student?
- What are different did you get until today?
- What kind of relationship exist between you board committee and the population?
- How do you see the future of your community school?

Questionnaires and interviews for the teachers

- How and why did you come in this community school?

- What is your level of study?

- Are you satisfying teaching in your school?

- How much do you earn per month as salary? Are you satisfied with it? If not what do you plan to do and why are you still there?

- Did you receive any pedagogical training from the school?

Interviews for the for the local population

- What do you know about community schools?

- What do you think about the community schools of your quarter?

- What do you know about the board committee of the community schools and what do you think about their management?

- According to you what are the differences between community schools and other kind of schools?

- What is your involvement about the community school development?

- Are you satisfied with the community school of your sector?

- What do you foresee the future of the community schools of your quarter?

Interviews for the school administrative authorities and local political authorities

- What do you know about the community schools of Sabalibougou?

- Why the community schools in Sabalibougou?

- How many community schools are in Sabalibougou?

- What do you think about the management of the community school of Sabalibougou?

- What kind of partnerships exists between community school managers and you?

- Do you think that the community schools of Sabalibougou function normally?

- What solutions do you foresee for the improvement of the conditions of the community school in Sabalibougou?

Questionnaire adressé à Monsieur le Maire de la commune V et au conseiller élu du centre secondaire d'Etat civil de Sabalibougou Monsieur dans le cadre des recherches de terrain en vue de l'obtention d'un diplôme de Master en anthropologie visuelle dont le thème s'intitule :

 « Les écoles communautaires dans les quartiers périphériques du district de Bamako ; le cas de Sabalibougou » de la version originale en anglais : « Community schools in the inner suburbs of Bamako ; the case of Sabalibougou »

   Au cours de cette recherche, le chercheur tente de découvrir les difficultés que vivent les écoles communautaires dans les zones urbaines très pauvres et même la raison de l'existence des écoles communautaire dans une ville comme Bamako. Les communautés locales ont crée des écoles communautaires afin de combler le vide qu'a laissé l'école publique ainsi que l'incapacité des parents à pouvoir payer l'école privée pour leurs enfants. Bref un thème sur la question de l'éducation et surtout des enfants.

- Qu'est ce que vous en savez des écoles communautaires en commune V du district de Bamako en général et celles Sabalibougou en particulier ?

-Pour quoi les autorités politiques (municipales) ainsi que les populations ignorent tant l'existence des écoles communautaires dans les quartiers très pauvres de la commune comme Sabalibougou?

-Combien représente l'effectif des écoles communautaires dans la population scolaire en commune V en termes de scolarisation ?

-D'après nos enquêtes, il s'avère que le problème de toutes les écoles communautaires officiellement reconnues par les autorités scolaires est le problème de site (c'est-à-dire de local.) De ce fait, qu'est ce que la mairie a déjà fait ou peut envisager de faire pour permettre aux écoles communautaires si non à certaines écoles communautaires d'avoir un site dans leur quartier.

-Est-ce que la mairie octroie une subvention aux écoles communautaires en plus de celle que donne l'Etat à travers l'Académie et le C.A.P.? -La mairie doit-elle faire un appui quelconque aux écoles communautaires ?

Si oui ? Alors:

-Quelles sortes d'appuis la mairie accorde-t-elle ou encore doit accorder aux écoles communautaires ?

- La mairie s'acquitte-t-elle de son devoir vis-à-vis des écoles communautaires comme il se doit ?

- Si non ? Alors :

-Pourquoi la mairie n'apporte pas un soutient particulier aux écoles communautaires sachant qu'elles en ont besoin?

-Que dites-vous à propos des conflits entre certains jeunes des quartiers qui s'affrontent avec les responsables des écoles pour des histoires d'espaces verts ou d'espaces publics réservés pour la jeunesse que certaines écoles communautaires ont eu à occuper comme cour d'école ? Ce fut notamment le cas d'une école communautaire de Sabalibougou dénommée école communautaire du Secteur II, lorsque des jeunes excités ont eu à brûler cette école et saccager plus d'une fois les locaux.

-A votre avis quel rôle la mairie doit jouer dans les conflits entre les écoles communautaires et ceux qui brûlent ou saccagent souvent au non de la jeunesse.

-La mairie est-elle prête à s'engager à faire comprendre aux populations que les écoles communautaires ne sont pas des écoles totalement privées, mais des écoles de la population pour la population. De même à sanctionner avec rigueur les promoteurs (directeurs ou membres des comités de gestion) qui n'organisent pas d'assemblées générales annuelles et qui gèrent l'argent des écoles communautaires comme une entreprise d'un individu ou d'un groupe d'individu.

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La version en anglais des questionnaires adressés aux autres acteurs ainsi que certaines questions adressées aux autorités municipales a été préférée, pour montrer comment les informations ont été obtenues au cours des enquêtes menées sur le terrain. Cela au près de la population et les responsables des différentes écoles communautaires sillonnées en plus du CAP (Centre d'Animation Pédagogique) et l'Académie d'Enseignement Rive droite du district de Bamako.