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# A Postcolonial Study of Three Public Libraries in Mali

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**Abstract:** The focus of this Minor Field Study is public libraries in Mali. The aim is to explore the perspectives of users, librarians, employers and local level decision makers on the significance of and obstacles confronting three public libraries. Interviews and observations have been conducted in three public libraries in different regions of Mali. The results have been analysed with concepts from Library and Information Science in Africa within a postcolonial theoretical framework.

The study's results disclose that the majority of library users are educated boys. The public libraries play a very important role for this particular group according to the informants. The users use the library for learning, for facilitating their schooling and also for leisure. Obstacles facing these public libraries today are rooted in the effects of colonialism and hinder development. Problems are linked to poverty which inhibits public libraries from providing adequate documentation and, in consequence, from fulfilling users' requirements.

Le centre d'intérêt de cette étude est les bibliothèques publiques au Mali. L'objectif est d'explorer les perspectives des utilisateurs, des bibliothécaires, des employeurs et des décideurs locaux sur l'importance de ces trois bibliothèques et les obstacles rencontrés. Interviews et observations ont été réalisés dans trois bibliothèques publiques dans différentes régions au Mali. Les résultats ont été analysés à l'aide de concepts de la science de l'information en Afrique, dans le cadre de théories post-coloniales.

Les résultats de l'étude montre que la majorité des utilisateurs des bibliothèques sont des garçons éduqués. La bibliothèque publique joue pour ces utilisateurs un rôle très important selon les interviewés. La bibliothèque est utilisée pour apprendre, faciliter la scolarité et les loisirs. Les obstacles dus aux effets du colonialisme freinent le développement de ces bibliothèques. Les problèmes sont liés à la pauvreté et empêchent les bibliothèques publique de fournir des documentations adéquates et, par conséquent, de ne pas réaliser l'exigence du public.

Nyckelord: Afrika, beroendeteori, Mali, politik, postkolonialism, utvecklingsfrågor, världssystemanalysen, användare

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Mali has a state-owned public library service with free access in all regions of the country. These libraries were initially introduced by support from French co-operations. They are still partly supported by France and other international co-operators for example twin towns in Europe but they are managed by the Malian state, both nationally and regionally. This study is about the situation of three public libraries in Mali, West Africa today. These libraries are dependent on both national cultural policies and politics conducted on an international level, particularly since Mali is a developing country. Mali is also a neo-colonial society, meaning that it is still dependent on its former coloniser, France, and a victim of unequal allocation of the world capital. The view of 'postcolonial' in this study is that countries with a recent colonial past takes into account the historical and existing control of a country from the distant dominating metropolis. However, what interests me is the libraries in relation to their users and the role they might play in their lives. I am also interested in what obstacles there might be for the libraries to respond to the society's and the users' demands on them.

This study will contribute to the understanding of the challenges that a public library may face in a developing country such as Mali. It is written within a social science perspective on Library and Information Science (LIS). The matters of interest are ideas and other powers in the societies that have formed the development of libraries, culture and information activities. To understand structures of societies and political, economical and social contexts, topics of LIS must be studied and analysed both in historical and contemporary perspectives.<sup>1</sup> As public institutions dependent on both cultural and development policies, the libraries are also studied within a postcolonial framework.

This is also a Minor Field Study (MFS) scholarship financed by Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA), of which the aim is "to provide Swedish students with the opportunity to build up their knowledge of developing countries and development issue."<sup>2</sup> This thesis serves, therefore, as a report for SIDA as it connects to problems concerning international development, but it is also a contribution to the Library and Information Science research (LIS) that needs to be updated on studies in African contexts. The study should also be at the disposal for Malian readers and others who might have interests in subjects like public libraries, Africa, postcolonialism, world system, development or LIS.

## 1.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The focal point of this study is that the public libraries in developing countries are affected by colonialism. Today Mali faces problems such as poverty, a low level of education and a high rate of illiteracy, which might have an influence on the use of the public library. A state's government does not naturally spend money on rural libraries when there is a lack of means. Being dependent on international donors is also a problematic situation for the country's self-reliance and for their own decision making according to Paul Sturges.<sup>3</sup> These facts may have an impact on the state owned libraries. In this study I will focus on how these problems affect

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.hb.se/bhs/Master/Info\\_utbildninght2006.pdf](http://www.hb.se/bhs/Master/Info_utbildninght2006.pdf) [2007-04-19].

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.programkontoret.se/templates/Page\\_865.aspx](http://www.programkontoret.se/templates/Page_865.aspx) [2007-03-24].

<sup>3</sup> Sturges, Paul 1998. *The quiet struggle: information and libraries for the people of Africa*. s. 138.

the public libraries in Mali. The public libraries and its stakeholders are far from the decision makers and the financiers in the capital and in the core states. That is why it is important to explore what the libraries' situations are in the localities where they are used.

According to several scholars, for instance Aissa Issak director of the Mondlane University Library in Mozambique, the public libraries in Africa are not adapted to its context:

[...] public library models were imported into Africa, without any consideration of the real situation of the continent and the information needs of the African people. Public libraries in Africa have therefore failed to fulfil their role within the society because they were built for a small percentage of users, the ones with access to formal educational systems. Additionally, the provision of library services now are not taking the political, social and economic realities of the African countries into consideration. The inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the provision of services to the public, and a more realistic approach towards the kind of users existing in Africa, is required before a public library sector can be effective in many African countries.<sup>4</sup>

What will be investigated in this thesis is the public libraries' importance in Mali today. But we have to be conscious about the past. All types of studies about phenomenons in present Africa has to be apprehended in the light of its past and history. As Adolpho O. Amadi states, "today it is virtually impossible to study any aspect of Africa without reference to, or some understanding of, the historic saga of colonialism".<sup>5</sup> The libraries' problems in Africa, as we will see by the previous research, have faced a lot of problems because they were not adapted to the context. The main part of the literature about LIS in Africa gives the impression that the African libraries have failed to meet the users' demands. This is usually caused by reasons such as lack of means, difficult reading context with a high rate of illiteracy, funds that do not answer the demands of the users and often centralized management that does not know the needs in the locality of the library. This is the conclusion of Aissa Issak who in her report on public libraries in Africa also states that the public libraries have failed because they were built only for few users, those with access to formal education.<sup>6</sup> Issak as well as Paul Sturges, professor in LIS, argues that the implantation of public libraries in African countries is not adapted to the needs in its context.<sup>7</sup>

## **1.2 AIM**

The aim of this study is to explore how the functions of the public libraries and the obstacles that inhibit the development of public library activity in Mali can be understood in the light of post-colonialism. To fulfil this aim I will investigate the perspectives of users, librarians, librarian employers and local level decision makers about the public libraries. For the realisation of this investigation a field study with observations and interviews have been implemented.

To fulfil the aim of this study the following questions are asked:

- What is a public library according to users, librarians, library employers and decision makers in Mali?

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<sup>4</sup> Issak, Aissa 2000. *Public libraries in Africa: a report and annotated bibliography*, s. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Amadi, Adolphe O. 1981. *African libraries: western tradition and colonial brainwashing*, s. ix.

<sup>6</sup> Issak 2000, s. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Sturges 1998, s. 92.

- How is the public library used by the Malian population?
- Which obstacles might the public library face?
- Does post-colonialism explain the situation of the three investigated libraries?

The first question is to be answered by interviews with users, librarians, employers and decision makers as it is their own conception of the public libraries that is asked for. The second question will be answered by both observations and by interviews. The third question is also going to be answered by both observations and by interview.

The results of this study are going to be explained in the light of postcolonial theories. Concepts from LIS within the postcolonial theoretical framework will be compared to the results.

In addition to this, a part of my mission is to give a background of the public libraries' history in Mali as well as describing the situation of the three investigated libraries. For this purpose I have used statistics, literature and internet sites on Mali and on libraries in Mali. I have also been using my own observations of the localities.

### ***1.3 LIMITATIONS***

The number of investigated public libraries is three. Studying only one would be misleading as only one can not be representative. That could instead be an interesting case study. With three libraries studied, I might be able to show the varieties that exist within the Malian context. More than three would be too vast for a study of this extent.

Interviews were made with people on a local level. It would have been interesting to also interview people from the Malian state and co-operation workers that have an impact on the public libraries as the public libraries are institutions that are influenced by the cultural politics. This study is instead focusing on the apprehensions of people at a local level. Interviews with non users have not been realised, even though it would have been interesting to also investigate why people do not use the public libraries.

Translating statements from the interviews, notions, abbreviations and so on could have an effect on the shade of meaning. The abbreviations are translated and explained at the very end of the thesis and can be looked up during reading. The original quotations from the interviews are also included in the appendices.

## **2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH**

In this chapter I present a few previous researches on LIS in developing countries and some postcolonial studies within LIS but not specifically in Africa. I can relate my study on these researches.

H.K Raseroka is a librarian from the University library of Botswana. She has written articles about the situation of libraries in an African context as well as contributing on IFLA



(International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions conferences). She declared that public libraries in Africa are rooted in national library service.<sup>8</sup> If the centre is weakened by lack of human resources, poor strategies or inadequate financial support, the whole system is likely to gradually disintegrate according to Raseroka. She also argues that the general Public Library System (PLS) conditions are in a depressed state in Africa as almost wholly dependent on donor support for example for the collection development.<sup>9</sup> Programmes established from the capital city in major towns and villages are planned and administered by headquarters that make it either insensitive or slow to react to local needs. Factors that have affected the use of public libraries in Africa, Raseroka states, are: general disinterest in reading, low levels of literacy and the most significant factor, she says, is the visions, plans and operations of programmes expressed in national laws are limited to providing presence of libraries in most districts without consideration of local needs.<sup>10</sup> Often the library serves as a warehouse of reading materials with readability levels which are beyond those of the majority and with limited interest. One of the most prevalent problems for the public libraries in Africa is poverty. Raseroka states that the NGO's might point a way to financial sustainability that has to be based on relevance of service to communities. If the community use their experience with NGO's to influence local politicians to finance information support for community projects that can contribute to capital creation and national development.<sup>11</sup>

Earlier studies about user and user behaviour in public libraries, even though they are not within an African context, serve as guidance on how to effect, organize and present my own study about the use of public libraries.

Master theses about LIS and public libraries in African contexts are for example *Regional Libraries in Tanzania – a field study of the Public Library Service* by Susanna Wigh and Pethra Öster.<sup>12</sup> But there is in the Swedish School of Library and Information Science in Borås no Master thesis in LIS that treats public libraries in West Africa. A few theses in LIS about public libraries in other developing countries have been written, for example *Libros para todos: Public libraries and democracy in Nicaragua* by Jennie Wangel.<sup>13</sup> There is also effectuated one user study about the use of a library in a Women's resource centre in south India by Frida Jorstedt and Zelina Nyhlén.<sup>14</sup> By observations and qualitative interviews with librarians and users they have conducted a study about that library's role in connection to the concept of Woman Empowerment.

Concerning studies in LIS with a postcolonial theoretic approach there has lately been written a few theses in Borås. To mention two of them; *The role of public libraries according to the political aims of integration* by Ulla Ekblad and Madeleine Padellaro,<sup>15</sup> and *The power of*

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<sup>8</sup> Raseroka, H.K. 1997. *Public libraries and life long learning – African perspectives*. 63<sup>rd</sup> IFLA General Conference, August 31 – September 5, 1997. s. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., s. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., s. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., s. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Susanna Wigh, Pethra Öster 2005. *Regional libraries in Tanzania: a field study of the public library service*.

<sup>13</sup> Wangel, Jennie 2005. *Libros para todos: Public libraries and democracy in Nicaragua*.

<sup>14</sup> Jorstedt, Frida, Nyhlén, Zelina 2006. "We have to empower them": a user study of a library in a Woman's Resource Centre in South India.

<sup>15</sup> Ekblad, Ulla, Padellaro 2005. *The role of the public libraries according to the political aims of integration: a postcolonial perspective*.

### 3. POSTCOLONIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Common for the theories in this study is that they all relate problems in contemporary societies to colonialism. The first section in this chapter introduces the grand theories; dependency theory, world system analysis and postcolonialism. Most of the scholars I found interesting for the topic of my study are from the political left. Those theories also correspond best with the middle-range theories that are presented in the forth section of this chapter. I use the middle-range theories on LIS in Africa in my own analysis. From this part of the theory I have chosen concepts for analysis of the empirical material.

#### 3.1 DEPENDENCY THEORY

According to dependency theory, poor countries in what is called the periphery are exploited by the developed states in the core in order to sustain economic growth. For example Andre Gunder Frank, economic historian and sociologist, is one of the founders of the dependency theory. He worked mainly during the 1950's and 1960's and his work is still relevant for dependency theory. Frank commences his article from 1966; *The development of underdevelopment*:

We cannot hope to formulate adequate development theory and policy for the majority of the world's population who suffer from underdevelopment without first learning how their past economic and social history gave rise to their present underdevelopment.<sup>17</sup>

Frank argues that a historical perspective based on the underdevelopment countries' past experience suggest that economic development in underdeveloped countries can now occur only independently from the capitalist metropolises.<sup>18</sup> Frank talks about *metropolises* and *satellites*, while Wallerstein, professor of sociology, names the same phenomenon *core* and *periphery*. Frank is confident "that the expansion of the capitalist system over the past centuries effectively and entirely penetrated even the apparently most isolated sectors of the underdeveloped world".<sup>19</sup> He states therefore that the economic, political, social, and cultural institutions and relations are products of the historical development of the capitalist system.

Samir Amin, economist and historian, explains the concept of polarization as the centres of the world produce a system as a whole by shaping the subordinate modernization of the peripheries.<sup>20</sup> Amin states:

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<sup>16</sup> Kwingwa Lidman, Pernilla, Rehnström. Karin 2006. *The power of culture: a postcolonial analysis of Sida's cultural aid*.

<sup>17</sup> Frank, Andre Gunder 1966. The development of underdevelopment. Included in Brydon, Diana, ed. *Postcolonialism: critical concepts*. Vol. V. London: Routledge. s. 1784.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., s. 1785.

<sup>19</sup> Frank 1966, s. 1785.

<sup>20</sup> Amin, Samir 1993. The challenge of globalization. Included in Brydon, Diana, ed. *Postcolonialism: critical concepts*. Vol. V. London: Routledge. s. 1895.

Polarization creates social, political and cultural conditions unbearable for the vast majority of peoples of the peripheries: worsening poverty for most, frustration, flouted national feelings, bloody dictatorships imposed by the logic of unequal accumulation.<sup>21</sup>

The countries attached to the European Commission (EC) have their own configuration according to Amin. For example African peripheries include the group of the poorest countries who are still weak under the present system. Amin suggests that capitalist expansion and development should not be mixed up, as capitalism by nature is polarizing. Development should be different in nature and overcome the polarization, he argues. Amin states that:

For five centuries absolutely no Western intervention in Asia, Africa and Latin America has been favourable to the interests of the peoples of these regions. There are no signs that the logic of the system is changing. True “globalized development”, favourable from the viewpoint of the peoples of the periphery, will be possible only when the West itself has evolved in much more radical way than the best of its social-democrat régimes have allowed.<sup>22</sup>

What Amin proposes is a submission of external relationships to the needs of internal development.

By introducing dependency theory, I try to give a framework to the understanding of why Mali is a developing country, economically dependent on the metropolises. As we can understand by the dependency theory, African states are poor because of the metropolises’ continuous exploitation of the satellites, which is a result of the historical development of the capitalist system. As public libraries are public institutions they are also affected by the disequilibrium of world economics.

### **3.2 WORLD-SYSTEM ANALYSIS**

Immanuel Wallerstein, professor of sociology, began his career on postcolonial African affairs. He criticizes global capitalism for preventing the ex-colonies developing and for keeping them poor and dependent.

The world-system analysis is an approach claiming that, there is no third world, but one “world-system” connected by a complex network of economic exchange relationships where there is a dichotomy of capital and labour, and endless accumulation of capital. The fundamental idea of the world system analysis is the view of the world system as divided according to a core and periphery structure where the core is controlling and exploiting the periphery. The world system is a capitalistic system existing of core countries, semi periphery, periphery and the extern arena where the latter has been incorporated in the capitalistic world system.

The weakest states are the colonies, according to Wallerstein.<sup>23</sup> Before colonisation these regions that became colonies were not a part of the world system. But the strong states conquered them and founded colonies with the purpose to incorporate them into the world system. The colony became the weakest kind of state with the lowest autonomy that made it

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<sup>21</sup> Amin 1993, s. 1895.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., s. 1898-1899.

<sup>23</sup> Wallerstein, Immanuel 2004. *Världssystemanalysen: en introduktion*, s. 91.

extremely vulnerable in confrontations of exploiting attempts from companies and others in the “motherland”.

The capitalistic global economy consists of a number of institutions. Those institutions are linked and the ways they are combined explain the movement of the global economy. The fundamental institutions are the markets, the companies that are competing on the market, the states within the international state system, the households, the classes and status groups. All these institutions have been created in the scope of the capitalistic global economy.<sup>24</sup>

The world system analysis will for this thesis be useful in the comprehension of the situation of Mali as a part of the world-system. It explains relations between core and periphery states in the world which will enable us to also understand Mali's, and its public libraries, “place” in this world system of connections. Wallerstein is also clarifying that institutions in these societies are created in the scope of the capitalistic world economy, of which the public library could be understood as one.

### **3.3 POSTCOLONIALISM**

The two previous sections describe how societies have been affected by colonialism. This section of postcolonial theory describes how cultural manifestations have been affected by the means of colonialism.

My own use of the postcolonial concept in this thesis will be a critical approach to the research of the cultural phenomena in the countries with a recent colonial past that takes into account the historical and existing (past and present) control of a country from the distant dominating metropolis (geopolitical distribution of power and its historical consequences to the societies).

Postcolonialism is often used in critical analysis of contemporary culture.<sup>25</sup> Ania Loomba, professor of English, states in her book on postcolonialism as a field of research that postcolonial studies bring out the connections between cultural forms and geopolitics.<sup>26</sup> She states that the mission of postcolonial research is to put into view how these connections are in our age. Postcolonialism is also a criticism against all views that analyse contemporary cultural processes without any consideration of the history of colonialism.<sup>27</sup> The global society of today is economically, politically and culturally different from the colonial era, but it is still characterized by the colonisation, which is usually called neo-colonialism.

Adolphe O. Amadi argues that it is impossible to study any aspect of Africa without some understanding of the history of colonialism.<sup>28</sup> He states that colonialism remains and that it is only one among other phenomena that have shaped and still continue to influence the history of Africa. Further, he mentions that, impact of any culture upon another like political, social, moral, and similar wisdom are not grounded in any geography except that of the mind. The coming together of the African and European worlds was the meeting of two cultures in

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<sup>24</sup> Wallerstein 2004, s. 50.

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.ne.se.lib.costello.pub.hb.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i\\_art\\_id=148578&i\\_word=postkolonialism&i\\_h\\_t\\_ext=1&i\\_rphr=postkolonialism](http://www.ne.se.lib.costello.pub.hb.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i_art_id=148578&i_word=postkolonialism&i_h_t_ext=1&i_rphr=postkolonialism) [2007-05-16]

<sup>26</sup> Loomba, Ania 2005. *Kolonialism/Postkolonialism: en introduktion till ett forskningsfält*, s. 255.

<sup>27</sup> Eriksson 1999, s. 16.

<sup>28</sup> Amadi 1981, s. ix.

which one was programmed to absorb, swallow, or mutilate the other and there were changes in social, psychological, political and cultural dimensions.<sup>29</sup>

One view of postcolonialism theory puts globalisation as the fact that we live in a postcolonial world. This argues that colonialism is not about the past but something that still characterizes the world, economically and culturally.<sup>30</sup> Normally the prefix “post” means after, but in this case there is no rupture with the colonial.

Edward W. Said, literature theorist, states that even though the colonies have been independent, many of the imperial attitudes are still present.<sup>31</sup> According to Said, imperialism is practice, theory and attitudes in a dominating metropole that controls a distant territory.<sup>32</sup> He argues that the controlling of a society can be caused by violence, political co-operation, economic-, social- or cultural dependency. Wallerstein argues concerning cultural imperialism, that strong states force weak states to accept a cultural policy like issues about languages, media and education, with the purpose to strengthen the bands between them.<sup>33</sup>

### **3.4 MIDDLE RANGE THEORIES**

The book, reading, libraries, and formal education were introduced into Africa by the colonizer for reasons [...] as a tool for Christianizing the heathens and teaching them the way to salvation; means for educating the target people in order to achieve the social, political, and economic objectives of the colony, and to acculturate or brainwash the natives into European ways. Both libraries and educational institutions, seen against this background, became weapons for the entrenchment and institutionalization of the Western tradition.<sup>34</sup>

In this section researchers having conducted research on public libraries in Africa are presented. All scholars that have been referred to in this study have pointed out that libraries in Africa are facing problems that are linked to colonialism and/or to dependencies which are ideas within the postcolonial theoretical framework of this study.

Even though these scholars are Anglophone and not specifically speaking about Mali, they give ideas about libraries and information in Africa in general. This is relevant though they are all arguing about countries that have been affected by European colonisers even though they are English, French or others. I have here chosen scholars that I consider relevant for the subject of my own study and also relevant for the theoretical framework in this thesis.

#### **3.4.1 Adolphe O. Amadi**

Adolphe O. Amadi, doctor at Imo State University, Nigeria, argues that one of colonialism's major legacies to Africa was the introduction of a new knowledge economy like “bookish” information as a weapon of social mobility and development.<sup>35</sup> Educational technology as

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<sup>29</sup> Amadi 1981, s. 98-99.

<sup>30</sup> Eriksson, Catharina, Eriksson Baaz, Maria, Thörn, Håkan red. 1999. *Globaliseringens kultur: den postkoloniala paradoxen, rasismen och det mångkulturella samhället*, s. 14.

<sup>31</sup> Said, Edward W. 1993. *Kultur och imperialism*, s. 51.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., s. 42.

<sup>33</sup> Wallerstein 2004, s. 91.

<sup>34</sup> Amadi 1981, s. 61.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., s. 75.

buildings full of books requiring literacy skills as a precondition for access to their contents, were programmed to alienate, subordinate and brainwash Africans from their “primitive” oral tradition to a dubious acceptance of the European tradition.<sup>36</sup> Since colonialism, the book has been sanctioned as a tool for “getting up” and has therefore become a social necessity in Africa according to Amadi.<sup>37</sup> Amadi goes so far as to describe the library as a veritable tool of imperialism, as the colonial imposition of a written tradition as well as the emphasis on alphabetic literacy as a precondition for obtaining information.<sup>38</sup> Later on he argues that the world’s greatest weapon of imperialism is ‘publishing’. He states that the book, next to the sword, has constituted a weapon for the cultural devastation and psychological harassment of the non-book areas of the world.<sup>39</sup> The consequences this has had on Africa, he states:

By imposing a written tradition upon an oral one, colonial penetration into a viable system of diffuse authority - - informal, flexible and authentic political and social norms based on shared rights of decision and enforcement - - resulted in the modification or total abrogation of a vital cultural element on traditional African society.<sup>40</sup>

Amadi considers after all that Africa has an urgent need for libraries to save its heritage and in order to preserve both its written and oral traditions in interests of cultural, economic and social well-being.<sup>41</sup>

A true African library would be one into which Africans and others could walk in order to experience the realities of the African world view.<sup>42</sup>

What has to be done now is to investigate the reality and situation of the libraries in Africa in the present. Adolphe O. Amadi identifies six major problems in West African libraries of today and refers to Andrew deHeer, New York public library, who states: “the high rate of illiteracy, the strong oral tradition, the lack of government support, the primitive nature of the book publishing industry, the apathy of the public, and a government-controlled press”.<sup>43</sup> Amadi finds almost the same problems in Rosemary Murray-Lachapelles writings who states that in francophone African countries the problems are: “insufficient number of libraries, against a massive contingent of book-hungry Africans, limited collections, shortage of personnel, the problem of illiteracy and the lack of access to materials and service in the rural areas”.<sup>44</sup> Amadi further explains that the problem is that:

we define what the library is or ought to become, rather than the information needs are and how they ought to be met. In the case of African libraries and educational developments, the assumption tends to be that the very history and existence of Africa itself began only with the so-called “discovery” and subsequent settlement by Europeans.<sup>45</sup>

Now he argues that the libraries in Africa are remains of the colonial mentality. He compares by telling that “American libraries exist to meet the needs of Americans, British libraries exist for the British, while African libraries - - because they are both American and British - - have

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<sup>36</sup> Amadi 1981, s. 95.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., s. 177.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., s. 141.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., s. 195.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., s. 143.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., s. 144.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., s. 99.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., s. 49.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., s. 49.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., s. 51.

neither an African clientele nor service.”<sup>46</sup> This is an example that might clarify a situation which might be the same in French former colonies.

Amadi’s research is from 1981. His book *African Libraries: Western Tradition and Colonial Brainwashing* is after all used and referred to in this study as his research has a postcolonial theoretic approach.

### 3.4.2 Aissa Issak

Aissa Issak is the director of the Mondlane University Library in Mozambique. She has compiled and analysed the public libraries in some English ex-colonies in Africa in a literature review. She is not specifically arguing about libraries in Mali but her résumé is interesting for the understanding of why libraries in Africa have failed.

The role of the public libraries within society has failed because they were built for few users, those with access to formal education. She states that the situation of public libraries in Africa is deteriorating partly because there is no definition of the role of the libraries. Further more she also states that a “lack of recognition of the role and importance of the libraries by government authorities is also affecting the development of the services.”<sup>47</sup> The material is often irrelevant as it is often acquired through donations from abroad states Issak.<sup>48</sup> There is also an absence of defined policies for the public library sector that would have been crucial for developing it. Issak argues that the various services in public libraries have to be clearly defined as well as targeting specific groups of users. If these institutions are willing to contribute to the development of society, a redesign of public library services in Africa is urgent.<sup>49</sup>

### 2.4.3 Paul Sturges

Paul Sturges is a professor of Library Studies in the Department of Information Science, Loughborough University in England. He has been working on LIS in African contexts in universities in Botswana, USA, Zimbabwe and Croatia.

The main problem according to Paul Sturges is that the implantation of public libraries in African countries is not adapted to the needs in its context. He asserts that the African public were not get consulted when the libraries were put in to service.<sup>50</sup> At that time knowledge of the needs and the composition of African library clientele did not exist, he states. What has to be done now, according to Sturges, is to urgently break with the North as the dependency of Northern values continues to retard the development in Africa. He put it:

To be poor is bad, but to be locked into relationships that limit the opinions for breaking out of that poverty is worse.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Amadi 1981, s. 205.

<sup>47</sup> Issak 2000, s. 12.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., s. 12.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., s. 12.

<sup>50</sup> Sturges 1998, s. 92.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., s. 113.

Sturges is proposing a shift from an emphasis on libraries to an emphasis on total information provision.<sup>52</sup> There is now a need for a new paradigm. Sturges proposes information based on the following conceptions:

- Financial realism

It has to be realised that poverty is a central preoccupation in Africa. It is not only about the financial poverty in institutions but poverty is in a great majority of potential and actual beneficiaries of services. It is also about poverty in information skills. Sturges argues that there is no point in designing services that do not reflect the circumstances of the people and of the national budget.<sup>53</sup>

- Self-reliance

Appropriate services for Africa's needs have to emerge from Africa's own intellectual and physical resources. It is also about economic, cultural and political self-reliance and nations that do not have that could be victims of other more powerful nations. Now the ideas and forms of library services in Africa are imported from the Northern industrialized countries. Information specialists should be concerned about the interests of their clients and their country. Sturges argues that it could be good for the donors if they pay because of the exploitation of Africa. On the contrary it is not good for Africa that donors pay as it distorts the decision-making process and gives the control back to the donors.<sup>54</sup>

- Sustainability

True sustainability emerges from the needs, opinions and actions of a community of users themselves. Sturges states that this ensures that they will seek to keep it as they feel that it is theirs. An institution that starts from a demand may have the dynamic that enables it to struggle which gives it a chance of true survival.<sup>55</sup>

- Democracy

Democracy is the principle that all citizens should have the information that will enable them to accept the full responsibility of political participation, according to Sturges. This creates a requirement for service to the whole of the people, rather than minorities that are literate, articulate, influential, geographically accessible and able to pay. He states therefore that a truly democratic information service has to build on the assumption that while not every citizen is either literate or computer literate, all have some skills which enables them to function in society. For example, services in an isolated rural community might be provided by oral communication.<sup>56</sup>

- Responsiveness

Responsiveness is when information is provided according to what people want, when and where they want it. It is vital to listen to what people say about their needs and the services they obtain and to give feedback to the system. A service can be provided which is rooted in clear ideas about users and potential users of information. The totality of information has to be taken out to the public, wherever they are and offering a full range of opportunities that can be taken up by those who have specific needs.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Sturges 1998, s. 136-141.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., s. 137.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., s. 138.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., s. 138.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., s. 139.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., s. 140.



- Communication

It is crucial that there should be a dialogue or an opportunity for a dialogue, to deliver the response in an oral environment or to contextualize, interpret and maybe modify or substitute some form of information package in a computer environment. It is the mix and balance between documentary and communication which is important.<sup>58</sup>

These concepts are the suggestions that Sturges proposes for a new paradigm in LIS of Africa. They present the kinds of problems that information and libraries in Africa are confronted with and what needs to be done according to Sturges.

The middle range theories explain the problematic situation of public libraries in Africa. These LIS theories are found within the postcolonial theoretical framework. They will increase our understanding of the situation of public libraries in Africa as well as in Mali. My own study will directly be anchored in these middle range theories where I have chosen problematic concepts that will constitute the tools for the analysing of the empirical material. These concepts are: adaptation to its context, fulfilling user demands, illiteracy and oral tradition, apathy of the public, lack of recognition and poverty. These concepts are frequent in the middle-range theories and can be seen in most researches on LIS in Africa. They are also the concepts that are nearer the reality of the public libraries' situation in Mali which is the reason that I choose these specific concepts. They constitute different problems that public libraries in Mali are facing. They also relate to each other in different ways as the problems are all linked to one another.

## 4. METHOD AND MATERIAL

A ten weeks field study has been implemented in Mali where libraries have been investigated in Bougouni, Tombouctou and Koulikoro. I spent two weeks in each location of Bougouni and Tombouctou, while in Koulikoro I could only stay for three days.

For the realization of this study I have collected information in three contexts of Mali by observations and interviews. For a better understanding and richer results, quantitative observations and qualitative interviews are combined.

The aim of this study is to clarify the situations of three public libraries in Mali and to fulfil this aim the following questions are asked:

- What is a public library according to users, librarians, library employers and decision makers in Mali?
- How is the public library used by the Malian population?
- Which obstacles might the public library face?
- Does postcolonialism explain the situation of the three investigated libraries?

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<sup>58</sup> Sturges 1998, s. 140.

The first question is to be answered by interviews with users, librarians, employers and decision makers. The second question will clarify how the library is used and that will be answered both by observations at libraries and by interviews. The third question is also going to be answered by both observations and by interviews.

Unstructured observations are also effectuated for presenting a description of the libraries.

## **4.1 OBSERVATIONS**

A convenient method for observing the behaviour of individuals is structured observations. With this method one systematically observes individuals in terms of a schedule of categories.<sup>59</sup> The observation schedule, that specifies the categories of behaviour, serves to record each participant's behaviour systematically which makes it possible to aggregate their behaviours.<sup>60</sup>

### **4.1.1 Executed Observations**

Structured observations were executed in two of the three studied libraries were, namely in Bougouni and Tombouctou. In each location the observations were made during opening hours for two weeks. The observations partly answer the two last questions.

By using an observation schedule, that is included in the appendices,<sup>61</sup> the participants' ages, sexes, domiciles and occupations were recorded to investigate by whom the library is used. Their behaviours such as loan, reading on the spot, conversation, information research etc was recorded to investigate how the library is used. Every person who entered the library was observed and the person's demographic information and behaviour was ticked off in the appropriate category in the observation schedule, as seen on the example of observation schedule in the appendices.

When information could not be drawn by the appearance of the person I asked for it. For example I would ask them for their domicile, occupation and age. The purpose was to record if it was a child, teenager, adult or old person, and level of education. In the beginning I asked everybody for their age but when I realised that some people were not sure about their age I felt it was more appropriate to not ask for it. Approximate age was enough to guess in which level of education they were. To every user I asked questions I started by introducing myself and told them what I was doing there and for what reason. My role as an observer was therefore open and that fact may have had an influence on the library visitors' behaviours.

In Koulikoro where only three days were spent, notes on the behaviour of the library users could not be collected for more than three days. Instead the library's own statistics on the frequentation have been used for information in variables such as sex and age. These statistics give almost equivalent information as the similar structured observations that were made in Bougouni and Tombouctou.

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<sup>59</sup> Bryman, Alan 2001. *Social research methods*, s. 160.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., s. 162.

<sup>61</sup> Observation schedule, see Appendices.

Besides the structured observations, notes on number of registered users, opening hours, and number of books in different categories were made by asking the librarian and counting the shelves.

Unstructured observations were also effectuated in every location to present descriptions of each library and its surroundings.

## **4.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Qualitative semi-structured interviews as a method for collecting qualitative data, is a highly attractive alternative, according to Alan Bryman.<sup>62</sup> That implies that the main focus is on the interviewee's own apprehensions and point of view.<sup>63</sup> The interview is framed by different adequate topics and it is very much up to the informant to direct the interview. Bryman states that qualitative interviewing gives an insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important.<sup>64</sup> It is open for the interviewee to talk freely about the themes that are asked for, at the same time it follows some kind of structure on themes relevant for the thesis' aim. It is also possible for the interviewer to ask new questions that follow up interviewees' replies and can vary the order of questions.<sup>65</sup> It is therefore a flexible method.

### **4.2.1 Executed Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews enable us to learn about the interviewee's own opinion and apprehension of the public library. The interviewees in this study could speak openly about the roles of the library in general and also about their own personal use of it.

The interviews are made from the same interview guide that is found in the appendices.<sup>66</sup> The difference is that some questions were asked to the decision makers about their position in the library system and their responsibilities for the public library. The fact that the same interview guide was used for interviews with different people in different positions is so as to know their different points of view on the same topics.

The interview guide is divided into two themes, of which the first one has questions about the use of the library. The second part of the guide is about the roles and missions of the library. Every interview was concluded by voluntary ads from the interviewee. In each library one interview with the librarian was made. The number of interviews with library users was seven in each location of Bougouni and of Tombouctou. In Koulikoro only three interviews with users were made because some informants declined and lack of time. The choice of informants is a crucial part of the investigation.<sup>67</sup> The choice of library users was therefore made from those who often frequented the library. They were asked to be interviewed to contribute in the study. Almost every person accepted, except a few users in Koulikoro. In every location one interview with the librarian's employer were made, who was either the

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<sup>62</sup> Bryman 2001, s. 312.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., s. 313.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., s. 313.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., s. 313.

<sup>66</sup> Interview guide, see Appendices.

<sup>67</sup> Holme, Idar Magne, Krohn Solvang, Bernt 1997. *Forskningsmetodik: Om kvalitativa och kvantitativa metoder*. s. 101.

president of the cercle or the mayor of the city. One or two others in responsible positions for the library were also interviewed in each location. They were people in political- or administrative posts such as cultural bosses of the city or region or other people in posts of influence on the library. All interviews covered people connected to the library in the local context, from the decision makers to the receivers of the libraries' services in the quality of user. The purpose of the study is to investigate the situation of the public library locally. Even though it would be interesting to also investigate the opinions of decision makers on a national and/or central level, it would have been beyond a study of this magnitude.

As the intention is to create a better understanding of the users, librarians, employers and decision makers' apprehensions of the library and its importance, the interviews give good return as the informants talk about their own opinions and conceptions according to the study's questions.

The results from the interviews are the fundamental material for the analysis in this study and they will be analysed by postcolonial theoretic approaches.

All interviews have been audio recorded, transcribed and conserved and they are all confidential. The interviewees were being told that their names will not appear in the thesis so that they could feel secure to talk freely about their apprehensions. The informants are therefore here given fictitious names in alphabetical order. The girls' names always end with A, the librarians names begin with L, the employers names begin with M, and the decision makers names begin with D. The same principle is used in all three contexts.

### Conducted Interviews

Location	Users	Librarians	Employers	Decision makers
Bougouni	6	1	1	1
Tombouctou	8	1	1	1
Koulikoro	3	1	1	2

## 4.3 ANALYSING

The results of the interviews will in the discussion chapter be text analysed. There are several kinds of text analyses as for example discourse analysis and ideology analysis. None of these usual text analyses are conducted for my study but instead a text analysis inspired by post-colonialism. The interviews make sense when they are placed in the contexts where they were made.<sup>68</sup> For this study the context is postcolonialism. Postcolonialism is also the theoretical framework for the study. In the discussion chapter, central concepts found in the middle range theories will be used as tools for analysing the empirical material. The analysing will then be systematic. Relevant parts from the empirical material will get a closer examination.<sup>69</sup> In this study it will be the parts that treat topics affected by colonialism and the parts that answer my questions at issues. I allow topics from the empirical material to emerge and then I classify them according to the categories chosen from the middle range theories. These categories are:

<sup>68</sup> Holme 1997, s. 101.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., s. 142.

fulfilling users demand, illiteracy and oral tradition, apathy of the public, lack of recognition and poverty. The analysis will then, in a concluding chapter, try to be understood in a greater context by means of the grand theories of postcolonialism including dependency theory and world-system analysis.

#### ***4.4 BACKGROUND MATERIALS***

For the understanding of the public library system as a whole in Mali, documents and statistics on these topics have been studied. This data is not for analysing but for background and understanding of the public library situation in Mali. Sources that have been consulted for this purpose are, among others; the web site of the Malian ministry of culture as the library service falls from the Malian ministry of culture, web pages from co-operation organisations, NGO's and others that have connections with Mali or the public libraries in Mali, and other documents that treats the public library situation in Mali for example former theses.

Statistics on demography are collected from a few different sources. The latest statistics on demography accessible from Sweden are from 1993. These statistics are elaborated from the perspectives of the Malian population, made by Ministère de l'économie des finances et du plan, in Mali. As these statistics are based upon perspectives there are no exact numbers but estimations. In Mali, all people are not national registered, which is another reason why we can not get exact information on demographic information. Newer statistics on the Sikasso and Koulikoro region from 1998-1999 was accessible from Sweden, which have been used in some matters in the study. When the statistics are not sufficient or not even found they are, in some exceptional cases, utilized information from Wikipedia. As Wikipedia is a free encyclopaedia written and edited by any person who wants to collaborate, referring to it is problematic in allusion to source criticism. The information from Wikipedia can be compared with the continent from other sources to be surer about its validity. One has to be conscious about source criticism for all types of sources, not only free encyclopaedias.

#### ***4.5 CHOICES OF LIBRARIES***

After having chosen three regions in different parts of Mali for my study, my local advisors pointed out what they thought to be three interesting public libraries. My choice of regions in different parts of Mali was to get a geographical spread of the three contexts which might give different results. The locations of these libraries are more precisely Bougouni in the Sikasso region in the south, Tombouctou in the Tombouctou region in the north and Koulikoro in the Koulikoro region near the capital. Using three different locations might show that the importance of the public libraries is different in different regions. It is only attempted to give three examples of the importance of the public libraries. It is essential to study cases in these three different parts of Mali as they are considered very different in matters of culture, language, nature, history and so on. It is not aimed to do comparisons between the regions but to objectively give examples of the public libraries' importance in different regions of Mali. The fact that the three studied libraries were suggested by two people who have important positions in the Malian public library system may have an impact on their choice of example libraries which might also have an impact on the result of the study.

## 4.6 FALLING OFF

The investigation in Koulikoro could only last for three days which means the time was shorter than in Bougouni and Tombouctou. There were also in Koulikoro some interviews that could not be carried through as some informants did not have the time to take part in the study during these three days.

In spite of the fact that the study of the Koulikoro public library was shorter and that a fewer number of interviews were effectuated than in the other locations, it is essential to enrich the complete study with the empiric from Koulikoro. The people I met there, the interviews and the observations that I effectuated deepened my knowledge about public libraries in Mali. The case of Koulikoro was different from the others, as we will see later on in the study, which makes the complete study more interesting and rich.

As the time in Koulikoro was short I could only do structured observations during three days while it was made during two weeks in the two other localities. But in this case of Koulikoro I use the libraries own statistics on the frequentation, which tell us about how many people frequented the library each day and on demographic information such as sex and if it is an adult or a child. These statistics are recorded every day by the library staff in order to know the frequentation of the library. What I observed during the three days confirms that the library's own statistics approximately correspond to the reality.

## 5. CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

This chapter serves to give the reader who does not know much about Mali an idea about the nation. It will also give general background information on the situation of libraries in Mali. These sections serve to give the reader the context of the study.

Information is collected from different sources for example the yearly book on regional surveys of the world; *Africa south of Sahara*,<sup>70</sup> the country guide of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Landguiden<sup>71</sup>, the Human Development Report 2006<sup>72</sup> and from the library of congress' country profile on Mali.<sup>73</sup> It has also utilized information from encyclopædias such as Encyclopædia Britannica Online,<sup>74</sup> Nationalencyclopædien<sup>75</sup> and Wikipedia<sup>76</sup> when information could not be found anywhere else. I am aware of the fact that information from Wikipedia is not necessarily reliable as it is written and edited by any visitor. Wikipedia may though be in possession of information that is interesting for my thesis. Concerning source criticism in general, no sources are reliable. Even controlled encyclopædias may be untrustworthy as producers may have interests.

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<sup>70</sup> Regional surveys of the world 2006. *Africa south of the Sahara*.

<sup>71</sup> [http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country\\_id=103&subject\\_id=0](http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country_id=103&subject_id=0) [2006-08-16].

<sup>72</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/> [2007-03-26].

<sup>73</sup> <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Mali.pdf> [2007-02-10].

<sup>74</sup> <http://search.eb.com.lib.costello.pub.hb.se/> [2007-03-13].

<sup>75</sup> [http://www.ne.se.lib.costello.pub.hb.se/jsp/notice\\_board.jsp?i\\_type=1](http://www.ne.se.lib.costello.pub.hb.se/jsp/notice_board.jsp?i_type=1) [2007-02-24].

<sup>76</sup> <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accueil> [2007-03-11].

## 5.1 MALI

The republic of Mali is one of the largest countries in West Africa, 1,2 million km<sup>2</sup> that is almost three times bigger than Sweden, with only 13,9 (2006) inhabitants<sup>77</sup>. Surrounded by seven countries it has no coastline. Mali is divided into three bio-climatic areas: the Sahara desert in the north that covers over half of the country, the Sahel in the middle part and the vegetation area in the south. It is in the south most people live, especially near the Niger River. See map in the appendences.

### 5.1.1 Population

The population is predominately rural, 68 percent, (2002), and 5-10% is considered as nomadic.<sup>78</sup> The nomads are mainly the Touaregs that live in the Sahara desert. The Malians are very young at age. 47 percents are less than 15 years old (2004).<sup>79</sup>

There are many different ethnic groups living in Mali. Bambara is the dominating culture and language. About 50% of the Malians belong to the Mande language group of which the Bambara dominates, together with the Malinké and Soninké.<sup>80</sup> Bambara can be communicated by about 80% of the Malians, while French as the official language is spoken by 40% of the population.<sup>81</sup> Other significant groups in Mali are Fulani, Sénoufo, Dogon, Songhai, Diola, Bozo, Bobo, Oulé, Touareg and Moor.

The dominating religion in Mali is Islam. Around 80 percent of the population are Muslims, while 18 percent adhere to animist beliefs and 2 percent are Christians.<sup>82</sup>

### 5.1.2 Politics

Mali became independent from the former French colony in 1960. President Modibo Keita had a Marxist regime that was deposed in an army coup d'état in 1968.<sup>83</sup> Moussa Traoré replaced the power with his military dictatorship and also won the elections in 1979 with 99% of the votes. Traoré made a more market economy politics than Keita but the country's economics did not improve.<sup>84</sup> Dissatisfaction increased and opposition movements began. During the mass demonstrations in Bamako 1990 hundreds of people were killed by security forces.<sup>85</sup> Traoré was deposed in a coup by a troop lead by Lieutenant Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré. Free elections started to be held in Mali and Alpha Oumar Konaré became the first president. He was re-elected a second time in spite of the fact that there were many conflicts during his time.<sup>86</sup> In the elections 2002 Amadou Toumani Touré, who lead the coup d'état in 1991, became president of the republic of Mali. Touré, also known as ATT in Mali,

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<sup>77</sup> [http://www.ne.se.lib.costello.pub.hb.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i\\_art\\_id=249481&i\\_word=mali](http://www.ne.se.lib.costello.pub.hb.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i_art_id=249481&i_word=mali) [2007-03-13].

<sup>78</sup> <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Mali.pdf> [2007-02-10].

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Regional surveys of the world 2006, s. 751.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., s. 733.

<sup>84</sup> [http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country\\_id=103&subject\\_id=0](http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country_id=103&subject_id=0) [2006-08-16].

<sup>85</sup> [http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country\\_id=103&subject\\_id=0](http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country_id=103&subject_id=0) [2006-08-16].

<sup>86</sup> [http://www.ne.se.lib.costello.pub.hb.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i\\_art\\_id=249481&i\\_word=mali](http://www.ne.se.lib.costello.pub.hb.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i_art_id=249481&i_word=mali) [2007-02-24].

does not belong to any political party but is supported by many groups. Touré had a good reputation as he left the power after overthrowing the dictator Moussa Traoré in 1991.<sup>87</sup> In 2007 ATT is still the president of the republic of Mali but the government resigned in 2004 on the request of the president.

Mali has known conflicts regarding the rights of the Touaregs. During the 1990's Touaregs wanted to be independent and started to rebel but were answered by reprisals. They escaped to neighbouring countries. An agreement was signed in 1991 between Traoré and two of the Touaregs organisations and the fighting stopped. In May 2006, Touareg rebels took Kidal and some army locations in the north. Motives were again about having more independency. Some months later a peace agreement was signed which included more independency for the Kidal region.

Mali's cultural policy is focused on developing the cultures of Mali. The missions of the cultural ministry are:

- to promote and to develop a culture anchored in the values of the Malian society as well as in the universal civilization.
- the developing of the national creation of artistic- and cultural works.
- the protection, the conservation and the valorisation of the national cultural- and artistic heritage.
- the working- and carrying out of measurement that should contribute to the radiation of Malian culture and to favouring the exchange with the other cultures.<sup>88</sup>

### **5.1.3 Poverty**

Mali is one of the poorest nations in the world, 175th of 177 in the Human Development Report.<sup>89</sup> It is estimated that over 90% of the population lives on less than two dollars per day. These facts put Mali as a very aid-dependent nation. The amount of aid from all countries together in 2004 was \$567. 4 which is 11. 7% of Mali's total GDP.<sup>90</sup> All investments are paid by co-operation aid.<sup>91</sup> France is the superior in bilateral aid for Mali. Another very important support for Mali is the money that is sent there from around 3 million Malians who live and work abroad. Poverty, malnutrition and lack of medical services make the life expectancy in Mali also one of the lowest in the world.<sup>92</sup>

### **5.1.4 Literacy and Education**

The literacy rates in Mali are very low. The Human Development Report states that 19 percent of the adult population are literate in 2004.<sup>93</sup> Adult means people over 15 years. Among youths, 15 – 24 years old, the rates are a bit higher. 32.3 percent of the men and 16.9 percent of the women are literate. The same year 44 percent of children completed primary

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<sup>87</sup> [http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country\\_id=103&subject\\_id=0](http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country_id=103&subject_id=0) [2006-08-16].

<sup>88</sup> [http://www.maliculture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=53](http://www.maliculture.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=53) [2007-04-23].

<sup>89</sup> <http://origin-hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/> [2007-04-24]

<sup>90</sup> <http://sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=283&a=1010> [2007-04-24]

<sup>91</sup> [http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country\\_id=103&subject\\_id=0](http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country_id=103&subject_id=0) [2006-08-16].

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> [http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data\\_sheets/cty\\_ds\\_MLI.html](http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_MLI.html) [2007-05-10].



school.<sup>94</sup> School in Mali is compulsory for nine years. One of the reasons that not all children go to school, even though it is obligatory, is that they have to pay for materials and uniforms.<sup>95</sup> There is also a lack of schools in the rural areas, as well as a shortage of teachers and materials.<sup>96</sup> Generally in primary schools the teaching language is French but sometimes in Malian languages, as well as Arabic in Koran schools.<sup>97</sup> In secondary schools French is the teaching languages with some exceptions for Arabic. French as an educational language might be an obstacle, as French is not people's mother tongue. A new method of pedagogies in Mali is "pédagogie convergente", which has as objective to use the mother tongue of the pupils that would make it easier for them to learn a foreign language such as French.<sup>98</sup> English is the obligatory second language in all primary schools of Mali. It is stated that the education system in Mali is in crisis since the state have been giving priority to higher education.<sup>99</sup> Bamako also has, since the 1990's, a national university.

### 5.1.5 Cultural Richness

In spite of the economical poverty, Mali is very rich in cultural matters. It has a vast diversity of cultural expressions as different forms of art of which the musical one is very important, also international. The musical scene in Mali has a great diversity of different genres. Some of the most famous musicians are Salif Keita, Ali Farka Touré (blues), Boubacar Traoré (blues), Toumani Diabaté (cora), Oumou Sangaré (wassoulou), Amadou et Mariam (popular), Neba Solo (balafon), Tinariwen (rock touareg), Habib Koité and many many others. Every year a lot of music festivals are arranged throughout Mali. The most well known internationally are *Festival au desert* in Essakane, Tombouctou and *Festival sur le Niger* in Ségou.

Concerning literature, Amadou Hampâté Bâ is a Malian author who wrote among others the classics *Amkoullel* and *The fortunes of Wangrin*. Massa Makan Diabaté wrote the trilogy about the lieutenant from Kouta.

Filmmaking is also a cultural expression one devotes oneself to in Mali. Famous directors are for example Souleyman Cissé who made among many others *Yeelen*, and Cheikh Oumar Sissoko who is also the present minister of culture in Mali whose most well known movie probably is *La Genèse*.

### 5.1.6 Administrative Divisions

The republic of Mali is divided into eight regions which are Gao, Kayes, Kidal, Koulikoro, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso and Tombouctou. See map in the appendices. The area of the capital is called Bamako capital district. The eight regions are divided into 49 cercles<sup>100</sup> and the cercles are divided into 703 communes.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>94</sup> [http://www.uis.unesco.org/profiles/EN/EDU/countryProfile\\_en.aspx?code=4660](http://www.uis.unesco.org/profiles/EN/EDU/countryProfile_en.aspx?code=4660) [2007-02-10].

<sup>95</sup> [http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country\\_id=103&subject\\_id=0](http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country_id=103&subject_id=0) [2006-08-16].

<sup>96</sup> <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Mali.pdf> [2007-02-11].

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.tlfg.ulaval.ca/AXL/AFRIQUE/mali.htm> [2007-02-12].

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.tlfg.ulaval.ca/AXL/AFRIQUE/mali.htm> [2007-02-12].

<sup>99</sup> [http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country\\_id=103&subject\\_id=0](http://www.landguiden.se/pubCountryText.asp?country_id=103&subject_id=0) [2006-08-16].

<sup>100</sup> Cercle = Administration unit composed by members elected from the communes.

<sup>101</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cercle> [2007-02-01].

## ***5.2 HISTORY OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN MALI***

During the colonial period there were not really any libraries in Mali accessible to all the public. There existed a few, either open only for the French people, or missionary's pedagogic libraries.

Since independence in 1960 there were created some libraries in the foreign cultural centres in Bamako, open to all the public. They are The American Cultural Centre, The French Cultural Centre, The Soviet Cultural Centre and The Djoliba Centre that springs from the Catholic Church. These libraries are today still in service.

The public libraries started to be established in Mali around 1977 after an initiative by some people in the Malian state. After negotiations with the French co-operation agency, they established together a French-Malian project named OLP, *Opération Lecture Public*. Their objective was to raise a policy for decentralized reading in Mali.<sup>102</sup> OLP made an inquiry in every 49 cercles of Mali to inquire if there was any need for a public library in the cercles and if they wanted to have one there. The conditions for the cercle council were to supply with locality, equipment and a librarian. The responsibilities of the OLP were to support with books, train the librarians and to follow up the library. Every 49 cercle councils in Mali accepted the proposal. In a few years libraries in the 49 cercles were built as well as in the Bamako district, one library train, one children's library and 6 reading centres for children in the Bamako district.

## ***5.3 THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES TODAY***

The public reading libraries that were created by OLP in all the cercles of Mali in the 1970's are still today more or less in function. Those libraries are now attached to CNLP, which are the state service for public libraries in Mali. There are also public libraries created by other different NGO's and aid co-operations in Mali. For example the Association pour la lecture, l'éducation et le développement (ALED), which is an NGO attached to Organisation Canadienne pour l'Éducation au Service du Développement (OCED), and works for literacy among other activities by creating public libraries in Mali.

There is a public library train that goes from Bamako to Kayes three times a year. Every tour takes around one month and it stops in around 10 villages all along the way. In every village the train spends 2-3 days, lending books, changing the village's book depot and showing movies in the evenings. This public library train is under the management of CNLP and also supported by AFLAM.

There are school libraries in some compulsory- and high schools throughout Mali. These libraries are attached to the CNLP and supported by AFLAM. There are also other school libraries built by different NGO's.

There are existing libraries in national languages throughout Mali. Those libraries have collected and recorded traditional tales in the national languages. In ten localities in Mali, these libraries are put into the public's service. There are different languages in every

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<sup>102</sup> Diakité, Fatogoma 1999. *Les services des bibliothèques et la lecture au Mali*. 65th IFLA Council and General Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, August 20 – August 28, 1999.

different location as follows: Bambara in Diola, Sénofo in Sikasso, Mianka in Koutiala, Dogon in Bandiagara, Fulani in Sevare, Bozo in Djenné and Bobo in Touminian. These libraries are also managed by the state, through CNLP with support from AFLAM.

The libraries in the foreign cultural centres in Bamako exist still today and are used by both Malians and foreigners. For example, in the French Cultural Centre, the literature is more aligned towards French literature than African. These libraries are however open to all the public but they are not state owned.

### **5.3.1 CNLP - Centre National de la Lecture Publique**

When OLP, the French-Malian co-operation project for a decentralized reading policy in Mali was dissolved, the public libraries became State-owned. Since 2001 it is the CNLP, a state service attached to Direction Nationale des Bibliothèques et de la Documentation (DNBD), in Mali who are responsible for the librarians' training, the libraries documentation and the libraries follows-ups.<sup>103</sup>

CNLP is composed of four departments of which one absorbs the public reading libraries: the department for the public libraries of local authorities and associations.

CNLP undertakes:

- 1) Raising a policy for reading by the creation of public libraries in the field of decentralization
- 2) Raising the national languages by developing a network of national languages libraries.
- 3) Evaluating the actions in the performance of the policy of public reading and exercising the technical control in the local authority's libraries, school libraries and association libraries.
- 4) Supporting the actions of cultural, institutional and non institutional operators that work for the book- and reading promotion.
- 5) Developing the co-operation with other countries and participating in international networks of this field and its competence.

CNLP undertakes also among other types of libraries in Mali, the technical follow ups of 64 public libraries.<sup>104</sup>

### **5.3.2 AFLAM - Appui à la Filière du Livre au Mali**

AFLAM which is a project financed by the French co-operation, has been supporting libraries and reading in Mali since 2000. They have 1,200,000 CFA<sup>105</sup> francs at their disposal.<sup>106</sup> The missions of this new structure are:

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<sup>103</sup> [http://www.maliculture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=97&Itemid=120](http://www.maliculture.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=97&Itemid=120) [2007-03-13].

<sup>104</sup> [http://www.maliculture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=97&Itemid=120](http://www.maliculture.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=97&Itemid=120) [2007-03-13].

<sup>105</sup> 1 200 000 CFA Franc = 1829.39 €

<sup>106</sup> [http://www.maliculture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=98&Itemid=120](http://www.maliculture.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=98&Itemid=120) [2007-02-07].

- 1) Strengthen and modernize the network of the public reading libraries and the school libraries.
- 2) Support the Malian book publishers and bookshops.
- 3) Train the actors in the book chain.

This project works accordingly on many parts of the book- and reading culture in Mali. Their impact on the public libraries is of course very important as it is because of AFLAM that CNLP has the means to provide new books and computers for the libraries and to organise training in library science.

## 6. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

It is meaningful to understand the context of the library before it is possible to understand its importance. Every location and public library will therefore first be described on information that could have a meaning for the library and an impact on the use of the library. This is information such as number of inhabitants, level of education, presentations of co-operation relations with other nations and also other information on eventually characteristics of the town. This information is collected by statistics and my own unstructured observations during my stay at these three locations.

After every location description a short presentation of the library will be accounted for. The description is in terms of administration, management, funds and physical situation in the town which might have an influence on its recognition. This data is collected by unstructured observations, guided tour in the library by the librarian as well as from conversations with librarians, employers and decision makers.

The empirical material from the structured observations and the semi-structured interviews will then be accounted for. The questions; what is a public library?, how is the public library used?, which obstacles might the public library face?, and does post-colonialism explain the situation of the libraries? will be answered and analysed by the middle-range concepts which are adapted to its context, fulfilling users demand, illiteracy, oral tradition, apathy of the public, lack of recognition and poverty. These concepts are close to the reality of the obstacles that these libraries are facing and are therefore compared with the results of the study.

The chapter is then concluded in a summarizing section.

### 6.1 BOUGOUNI

#### 6.1.1 The City

Bougouni is located in the region of Sikasso in the south of Mali, a distance of 163 km from the capital<sup>107</sup>. The cercle of Bougouni had in 1997 a population of 276,442<sup>108</sup> and the commune that is the administration centre of the cercle had in the same year, 27,819 people<sup>109</sup>.

<sup>107</sup> [http://www.ville-bamako.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=70&Itemid=64](http://www.ville-bamako.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=70&Itemid=64) [2007-02-03].

<sup>108</sup> *Perspectives de Population par cercle/arrondissement, 1993-1997*, s. 259.

<sup>109</sup> *Perspectives de Population par cercle/arrondissement, 1993-1997*, s. 259.

As higher education, Bougouni has an Institut de Formation des Maîtres (IFM), which is a post-graduate teacher training institute that takes students from all around Mali and also from the Ivory Coast, who come there for their studies as the IFM's in Mali has national recruitment. The IFM also has a small library accessible for the school's students. Bougouni has also an upper secondary school, Lycée Kalilou Fofana, which has a library supported by CNLP and AFLAM.

Bougouni is since 1985 a twin town of Aurillac in France. This is a French-Malian decentralization project in the scope of Association des Municipalités au Mali (AMM).

### 6.1.2 The Public Library

The public library of Bougouni was created in 1980 by OLP<sup>110</sup>. It is situated in the centre of the town. Access to the library is a bit difficult as it is surrounded by a wall that was built around it during 2003-2004. The purpose of this wall was to make the library more secure and quiet. In the yard is also placed the residence of the library guard. The library building was, the same year as the wall was built, enlarged and has now one big room for the collection with public access, one small office for the librarian and one air-conditioned room with one computerized catalogue that was installed in the library in 2006 by CNLP. The renovation and enlargement was organized and financed by the cercle council with support of AFLAM.

The library is administrated by the cercle council of Bougouni which also employs the librarian and the guard. The council is also accountable for the localities and the equipment. Documentation is provided by CNLP with support from AFLAM. There are also sometimes donations that are sent to the library through the local government from the twin town of Aurillac. They have sent around 500 books since the start.

The librarian is alone responsible for the management of the library. He performs the cataloguing, loaning, guiding, consultation and everything else that is to be done in the library. However, it is the guard who takes care of the cleaning of the locales.

Opening hours are Monday to Friday from 8.00 to 12.00 and from 15.00 to 17.00. This is the time when children normally spend their time in school which makes it practically impossible for them to come to the library. The librarian is flexible though and keeps the library open longer in the afternoons if there are visitors.

Entrance and consultation on the spot is free but for loans it is an annual fee of 1000 CFA-Francs<sup>111</sup> and 500 CFA-Francs for students. This is the same fact in all of the three locations of investigated libraries.

The library is divided into one adult section and one children section. The collection is composed of both fiction and non-fiction books. The documentation is almost exclusively in French with a very few exceptions of bilingual tales in French – Bambara.

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<sup>110</sup> Diakit , Fatogoma 1991. *L'op ration lecture publique du Mali : un exemple de d centralisation de la lecture en milieu rural*, s. 19.

<sup>111</sup> 1000 CFA Franc = 1.5  

The adult section has two set of shelves<sup>112</sup> of non-African fiction and a few shelves with African literature which is the most demanded literature. There are about two shelves of non-fiction that are composed of history, geography, mathematics, etcetera, and they are a bit out of date. In 2006 the library was given by the CNLP a set of shelves with new books of present interest, such as demanded African fiction and non-fiction that treat subjects that also better correspond to the users demand. The number of shelves on each type of literature was counted by me during the observation time.

The classification system used is a simplified version of the Dewey Decimal Classification System (DDC). The fiction is distinguished by letters e.g. R for novels, A for albums, BD for cartoons, B for biographies, TH for theatres and C for tales. The non-fiction has a three numbers code. DDC is the classification system that is used in all the public libraries that was observed.

### **6.1.3 Informants**

The informants are given fictitious names in alphabetical order. The girls' names end with A, the librarians names begin with L, the employers name begins with M, and the decision makers names begin with D. The same principle is used in all three contexts.

Amadou, student, 22 years  
Boubacar, student, 21 years  
Cheikh, student, 18 years  
Djénéba, student, 13 years  
Fanta, student, 15 years  
Gaoussou, professional, 52 years  
Lamine, librarian  
Mohammed, employer  
Djibril, decision maker

### **6.1.4 What Is A Public Library?**

The apprehensions of what a public library is are fairly similar to the users and the librarian in Bougouni. They understand it as a place where documentation is stored, a place where you can get knowledge and a place where you can borrow books. Lamine, the librarian defines it this way:

It is a place built to be able to keep documentation and put it into public service. That public could be students, public servants, all persons that desire to deepen a little bit their knowledge. (Lamine)

One of the users, Fanta, answers the question about what a public library is like this:

It is where one is arranging the books and where the children, the people can go to inform themselves and to have information, deepening their, our knowledge. (Fanta)

She, as well as other users and the librarian, argue that the library is a place for deepening ones own knowledge. It is a place where you can deepen your knowledge if you know reading

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<sup>112</sup> One shelf is estimated to around 30-40 books while a set of shelves is estimated to around 150-200 books.

because the documentation is almost all in written form except a few DVD films that are hardly ever consulted. The public library can therefore be seen as important for those who are literate and are interested in educating themselves.

Mohammed, the employer is more into the track of the adaptation into context of the library. He argues that the library is a place where one puts books adapted to the conditions of the culture of the population:

It is a building where one is placing books, not any book, but books that are adapted to the cultural needs, the needs of the population. [...] What we want to learn from others, it has to be interesting for us and it has to be adapted to our culture. (Mohammed)

The theories tell us that African libraries failed because they were not adapted to its context. Mohammed states here that the books in the library should be adapted to the culture and the population.

According to Djibril, the decision maker, a library is a treasure:

The library makes it possible for children, adults and the whole humanity to know about what has been, what is going on and what will happen, because it is the books that present this. Without knowledge about the books the things disappears, thus the library is for us a treasure. (Djibril)

This statement tells us that we can by the library learn about our past, present and future. But taking part in self education at the library requires that one is literate. People who read and write in Mali are a minority, 19 % of adult people.<sup>113</sup> Therefore only a fraction of the Malian population is a possible user of the library. That fact is a tendency of failure. As Issak states, the role of the public libraries in Africa failed because they were built for few users which are those with formal education. Those with formal education are relatively few in Mali. The target group of the public libraries is therefore a fairly small group.

### **6.1.5 How is the public library used?**

The public library in Bougouni was during the two weeks observation period frequented by four to fifteen people per day. During that time only five women used the library. The majority are men, and among them the majority are a very well motivated group of upper secondary school pupils and a few university students. Among those pupils a high rate stay in Bougouni because of their studies, but they are not all originated from Bougouni. As they have moved from their own homes to Bougouni for their studies, this could mean that they are fairly motivated in studying. For example they could be either IFM students who had come from another part of Mali or upper secondary school pupils from remote villages. Among these users, the majority are very regular users. That is to say that the same people frequented the library many days a week. Lamine, the librarian says, as well as some of the library's users, that the library is for everybody and not only students. That statement argues somehow that the library is in the first place for students but it is open also for other people. It is open for all other people but for consulting documents it is only useful for literate people as all documentation is in written form, except a few DVD's.

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<sup>113</sup> [http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data\\_sheets/cty\\_ds\\_MLI.html](http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_MLI.html) [2007-04-25].

The reason why people use the library is often because of deepening or to widen one's own knowledge. The library functions for example as a complement to pupils' school studies. Fanta explains to me why she is using the library:

I use the library to inform myself, to deepen my knowledge [...] and to get to know new books and to get to know the world, to evolve myself from authors, the new authors and the old, to educate myself about the literature. I use it also for the tales, to record the tales, to be able to say something to the small children [...] and then, I even love books, I love reading, that's why I come to the library. Simply, I love books and to read. (Fanta)

Fanta uses the library for two reasons; to deepen her knowledge as a complement to her school but also for her own personal pleasure because she simply loves reading. Another person of the very few girls that are using the library uses it mostly for educational reasons. Djénéba explains why she is using the public library like this:

Well, it does do something to me because I've learned many things [...] really it simplifies my schooling. Since I got registered at the library I know very well to read my lessons. If you don't know how to read your lessons you can not learn. But if you know how to read you can learn. Thanks to the library I've been the first in my class. (Djénéba)

Fanta and Djénéba as well as many other pupils, use the library mainly for their own education. Though many school pupils go there for learning, some are also using the public library because of fairly personal reasons. Cheikh is using the library to forget his personal problems. He states it this way:

Even if there is too much projects, me myself for example, if I have troubles at home I completely go to the library.[...] Yes, yes, if I have a problem I go to the library, even if there are nobody here, I come alone, I sit down at the table, I take a book like this. While reading I forget all the problems. (Cheikh)

Gaoussou says he uses the library in the first place to spend a nice time and then to complete his formation with the documentation and the researches he can do at the library.

According to Lamine the library is not really for people's own leisure but a means for people who want to deepen their knowledge and their intelligence. He argues that the library can add more to what one has already learned in school. Mohammed, the employer argues that the people are using the library as a mean to get public information while Djibril, the decision maker states that one uses the library because of the personal hunger to complement their schooling or working. He says:

I say for the personal hunger because there are pupils who are preparing for their exams, they don't have enough documents, they are often forced to go through the library to get the documents and to take advantage. It's that aspect. It is also the aspect that people wants to work for a service, the people who wants to work for the government, for the NGO's. It is in the library one finds what one does not have and what one can not find. (Djibril)

The main user behaviour is reading and consulting documents on the spot. The kinds of documents that are mostly consulted are Malian or other African fictions and tales and sometimes also French cartoons and specialist literature on such different subjects as colonisation and accountancy. Loans for home reading do not take place every day, and when it happens it is about one to four loans per day.

According to certain users, the library serves for deepening one's own knowledge and as a complement to school studies. Djénéba argues that the library can fill in more knowledge than



you already have. If you already know a lot of things, she says, the library adds even more. She argues that the library brings intelligence to the pupils and that it makes you courageous. What she apprehends as very important of the public library is that it authorizes all pupils to come and read here.

To Cheikh the library is very important. As he likes literature very much, the library makes him know about a lot of authors and literatures and that literature teaches him things about other countries. He argues that what he learns in school is not enough, but that one needs to read other authors to progress as he does in the library:

One can't study without reading other writers so one is forced. If you really want to progress, if you really want to be an intellectual it is needed to come to the library. It is there, it is the means that could support you to go elsewhere. (Cheikh)

To Cheikh the library is important not only for studying but also for private reasons. It helps him to forget all his personal problems he says.

The importance of the library to Fanta is that it helps her in many matters:

Instead of sitting down or making tea in group, talking, if you want to read, it will authorize you to know something. One can put this as usefulness. It helps us you know. It helps us a lot, really. I have a lot, since I started to frequent the library, it has allowed me to know a lot of things and then the explications of words. I have, it has developed my intelligence you know. (Fanta)

Access to the library is free as well as using it on the spot. Amadou argues that the library gives the young students a chance to have access to books without the need to have money:

You know that here one has not enough money to obtain all the necessary books, so the library is a chance for us where there are books that we can have easily without paying money you know, without, less expensive you know. [---] In the books one can get all the feasible information so one does not have to travel to know such or such thing. One has everything in the books in the libraries. So, one has to dare to read the books, that's all. [---] One learns a lot of things in the libraries so it opens up the eyes here. (Amadou)

You do not need money to use the library. It costs only if you want to make home loans. This is very important in a poor country such as Mali, because it enables everybody to use it, the rich and also the poor, even though the free use is finite on the spot only.

Gaoussou talks about the importance of education in developing countries and that the books are very important for that reason. The need of having a public library in Bougouni is clear, he states.

What is important of the library, according to Lamine, is that it is open to all types of public and that one can use that place for exchanging, learning, improving and discovering more. He says also that it could motivate illiterates to learn to read and write even if the library doesn't have that kind of documents.

Mohammed, the employer, argues that the library has missions of education and of information and that it enables the users to get knowledge about things that happen elsewhere. He argues also that it allows people to understand social relations, social life and even love of the next one. One reaches to welcome new competences, one reaches to strengthen one's own capacity to be a human. These factors play a very important role, according to him.

Djibril, the decision maker states that the fundamental work of the library is to give knowledge from all domains to the visitors and readers. He thinks there would be a lot of intellectuals in Mali if one could increase the number of library clients which he finds very important:

I invite all people to frequent the library because a library without readers is not any more a library. (Djibril)

Djibril relates the using of the public library to intellectuals which makes the public library fairly elitist.

It is to be said that the library is used mainly by pupils. They use it mostly as a complement to their schooling and deepening their knowledge, but also for their own leisure. Adult people use the library to inform themselves on something or simply by the pleasure to read, for example, novels.

### **6.1.6 Which obstacles might the public library face?**

The public library in Bougouni is not very much frequented except for the very motivated students that come here often. Lamine argues that people prefer to do other things than to read and he says that reading is not even in the Malian culture. The people think it is losing time to use the library, states Lamine:

They prefer to do other things that could maybe yield a little bit of money, or, in any case, create other relations apart from the book. [...] The people don't like reading very much, it is hard, i.e. it's a losing of time. (Lamine)

The problem is linked to poverty. To read a book does not give quick money but other activities can do. It is understandable that people devote themselves to activities that generate money that can help them and their families for the moment, than to spend time by reading in the public library. The decision maker, Djibril also says that the low frequentation of the library is because people don't like reading and that they don't know the importance of the library, while the employer, Mohammed says that people are using the library slightly because of the low level of literacy and the level of culture. He says that 40% of the population is in school while 60% are not, so these 60% of the population live outside the information of the library, which are farmers, breeders, shopkeepers and craftsmen for example, according to Mohammed. He says that those who use the library are students, state employees and retired state employees. So according to his statements one has to be literate to take part in the information in the libraries. Even some of the interviewed users say that young people don't like reading or that they don't have the courage to read.

The observation shows, as well as the interviewees tell me, that it is a very low number of female users that frequent the library, which is a problem. Several informants explain that this is because of lower rates of schooling for girls and also a lack of time because the girl's are obligated to do household work. Djénéba who is one of the very few female users has time to come to the library only once a week for a short while after her school day is finished. She tells me about the household work girls normally have to do in Mali:

The girls have household works to do at their homes. The girls don't have much time to go to the library. They do works for their mothers. Me too. When I will leave from here I will do the washing-up because my mum doesn't have maids. (Djénéba)

The fact that girls are using the library less than the boys may result in less success in school for the girls than for the boys. As Fanta puts it:

The boys are free to play what they want, they can come to the library when they want, inform themselves here, read, while the girls are busy at home. One doesn't have time and that is why the boys are overtaking the girls in school. (Fanta)

Male users explain this problem as the same reason. Boubacar for example states:

It could be a problem of time because if one sees the young girls when they are finishing school they go to their homes. It's for helping their mothers very usually. Well, except if they come to register here and they can get out with books, otherwise, the reading on the spot, I think one has not the time to come and read because after school, very usually the girls help their parents. (Boubacar)

Gaoussou, who has five daughters who are all students, says that they are reading less than boys. He argues that girls are more interested in visual medias like television and the internet for example. But there are also many negative factors that make women use the library less he says, like illiteracy and household works. Again we see the low library frequentation is related to illiteracy which also says that the library is not adapted to its context because there is no information for illiterate people in the library.

Boubacar also argues that time is a problem for everybody. Not only girls. As school pupils are in school at the same time as the library's opening hours, they can not go there when they have free time as it is closed. He thinks that much more people would come if the library was open on Saturdays and Sundays. Lamine suggests that one could change the current librarian's working days, for example to keep open from Tuesday to Saturday instead of Monday to Friday. To have more staff and longer opening hours would demand more financial resources and that is fairly difficult in a poor country as Mali. Again, we have a problem linked to poverty.

Fanta agrees with the statement that lack of time is the main problem for the girls as well as for herself. She gives also other reasons why people don't use the public library:

There are people that think that the library is not made for everybody. If you are not good, you can't come and read something here. They don't even know why one comes to the library. They don't know that. That's why they don't come. Because of lack of time and then [...] there are even people that says that reading and to inform oneself here is to lose time. [...] The people don't know the usefulness of the library [...] the children don't know why one go to the library and then they think that it is for the elderly you know [...] and that it is reserved only for people with more knowledge you know. (Fanta)

According to the statements of Fanta it seems like there is a lack of recognition of the library. She argues that people who don't use the library have misapprehended and think that it is only for adult-, intelligent- and rich people, which is not the fact in most of the interviewees' statements that say that the public library is for everybody. At the same time most informants argue that the library is for literate people only, because the library is based upon written documents. Amadou who is a very regular user of the library argues that illiterate people can not even know about the importance of the library because they don't know how to read.

Another problem to users is the selection of documents. There are for example no books in English which are demanded by some users. There are no books for learning to read and write which is also missing, according to Lamine who argues:

Books that could help them to read, to count, to write, well, unfortunately we don't have those documents here. [...] As it is people that haven't been in school, they haven't learned to read and write but they think while coming to the library that they will find a book, a model for a beginner. [...] Certain come but they are not satisfied because we don't have books for that. [...] There is a need. [...] If that book existed here, I could at least take 30 minutes of my time to explain them how to use that book. But as one doesn't have, so, it is a pity. (Lamine)

As Issak states, it is difficult for public libraries in Africa to fulfil their users demands and to provide relevant documentation and adequate materials. This is the case in Bougouni. Many times during the observation time people came to the library looking for specific documents that they could not find.

Djibril, the decision maker, argues that for learning to read and write the public library has to put itself in contact with the rural areas. In that case the library could play a role for literacy he thinks.

## **6.2 TOMBOUCTOU**

### **6.2.1 The City**

The city of Tombouctou is the administration centre of the Tombouctou region located in the north of Mali, situated 947 km<sup>114</sup> from the capital on the gateway to the Sahara desert. The population of the commune was in 1997 estimated at 36.493<sup>115</sup> and in the cercle the same year 75.383.<sup>116</sup>

Tombouctou was during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries a centre of Islamic studies that made people from all around the world come there for studying. It was also the centre of trades that made the deserts people meet here. These facts still have influences on the city. Known as “the city of 333 saints”, “the mysterious town” and by having three world famous mosques, Tombouctou is frequented by tourists from all around the world. The tourists normally don't stay very long though, which prevents them knowing the people in Tombouctou as well as it prevents the Tombouctou residents to know the foreigners. The contacts remain as passing.

Tombouctou has a very important collection of ancient manuscripts in Arabic on subjects such as Islamic religion, history and sciences. Those manuscripts are today presented in different libraries of Tombouctou. The privately-owned are Mamma Haidara Library, Fondo Kati Library, Al-Wangari Library, Mohamed Tahar Library, Al-Imam Essayouti Library and the State-owned is the Ahmed-Baba Library.

There is one well frequented library in one of the public schools (years 10 to 11), Yehya Alkaya and one library in the upper secondary school, Lycée Mahamane Alassane Haidara. Both are supported by CNLP and AFLAM.

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<sup>114</sup> [http://www.ville-bamako.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=70&Itemid=64](http://www.ville-bamako.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=70&Itemid=64) [2007-02-03].

<sup>115</sup> *Perspectives de Population par cercle/arrondissement, 1993-1997*, s. 281.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 281.

The city of Tombouctou has been a twin town with Saintes in France since 1978. The region of Tombouctou is a twin region with the region of Rhône-Alpes in France since 1984 and since 2000 they co-operate in a decentralization project.

### **6.2.2 The Public Library**

The public library of Tombouctou was created in 1979 by OLP.<sup>117</sup> It is located near the old town centre in a fairly calm neighbourhood. If you do not know the existence of the library, it is not easy to find as the building is placed in a backyard a bit away from the street. The library is quite big since it was enlarged in 2005. It has now one big room of documentation with many tables and chairs, one small office that is hardly used anymore, and one big office with the newly installed computer. That office is also used for registering loans, cataloguing, administration, conversations and so on.

The public library of Tombouctou is administrated by the state and the local cercle council. The library has two employees. The librarian is employed by the State service, and the library assistant is employed by the cercle council since 2005. The cercle council is also financially accountable for the localities.

Documents are provided by CNLP, AFLAM as well as by the twin town Saintes and twin region Rhône-Alpes in France which send books practically every year.

The collection is at the point of being computerized, but as it is an arduous task, work it is getting done progressively.

Opening hours are Tuesday to Saturday from morning to lunch, with the exception of Wednesday when it is also open in the afternoon. The purpose is to enable school children to come to the library when they are free from school on Wednesday afternoons and Saturdays.

The library has more than 4000 documents of which around 300 were given by the twin region Rhône-Alpes in France. Those given books were eliminated from libraries in the Rhône-Alpes region. Only once, the books were chosen by a Malian. It was when the librarian was on a study tour in France. He could at that time chose from the eliminated books in France. Which ones he found corresponded to the demand in Tombouctou, which is not always the case of the books that are sent from Rhône-Alpes.

The collection consists of non-fiction and fiction in one adult- and one children section. Novels from African authors are separated from other novels and are in this library considered as documentaries according to the librarian.

### **6.2.3 Informants**

Fodé, professional, 32 years  
Habib, student, 10 years  
Ibrahim, student, 8 years

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<sup>117</sup> Diakit  1991, s. 19.

Jalal, student, 14 years  
Kadialy, student, 16 years  
Naré, apprentice, 36 years  
Oumar, student, 11 years  
Papa, student, 10 years  
Ladji, librarian  
Mamadou, employer  
Dramame, decision maker

## 6.2.4 What Is a Public Library?

The public library in Tombouctou has many functions according to the Tombouctou users and the librarian. Most of the young users, the boys between 8 and 14 years old, argue that a library is a place where books are gathered and where one can read and borrow books. Kadialy, one of the frequent users, finds that the library is a great place because it serves as many things according to him:

One find books there, it authorizes to cultivate oneself, to understand, the autographs, one understands many things in the library [...] the explanations, one makes acquaintance there, one spends time and then it improves, and then the library is a meeting place, one meets people, even if one is more older than the other one exchanges ideas, one strikes up friendship- and brotherhood links. (Kadialy)

As we can see, the library has many functions according Kadialy. It is a meeting place for those who know how to read. But it is not any meeting place, but a meeting place where one improves and cultivates oneself while exchanging ideas with other peoples. According to Naré the public library is a place where people go to discover, to teach themselves things, and to cultivate themselves through the books. Ladji, the librarian is on the same track and puts it like this:

It is a place for information, for formation, for leisure, for meeting, for exchange between readers, that it is their first time they meet and it is an ideal place for exchange, to make acquaintance, and most of the time this is interesting for each other because in the future they know each other and they complement each other without to count on your own formation, to continue your formation you have all the works that is needed. (Ladji)

The library serves the public information and life-long learning, at the same time it is a place for leisure where people can create relationships as Ladji, the librarian, explains in the quotation above. That it is a public library explains itself by its name, Ladji states, while saying that a public library is for everybody, all public.

According to the employer Mamadou, the library is a cultural place that contains works, general teaching and teaching in all levels which is there to help everybody in reading and to strengthen the capacity in all domains.

Dramane, the decision maker argues that the library is about knowledge and culture:

It's completely a memory, it is completely knowledge, it is completely a culture, because when one talks about the library one talks about the knowledge, it is the base of knowledge. (Dramane)

The library is the base of knowledge according to Dramane. He even states that if one talks about the library one talks about knowledge. Why he thinks so will be explained in the next section about why one uses the library.

### **6.2.5 How is the public library used?**

The public library of Tombouctou is highly frequented by children, of which almost solely all are boys. It is a group of around 10 to 15 very reading motivated boys, often the same, age around 8 to 14 who come to the library many days a week to read books or to assist in reading activities organised for children by the librarian twice a week.

Most of the interviewed children tell me that they are using the library for reading. Papa loves the library and he frequents the library very often. He tells me why he is using the library:

I love too much the library. I go there every day. I take the books, I read and I understand. (Papa)

Jalal, another young user of the library says he comes to the library to learn things and to learn to read correctly. He uses books to be able to explain things in class.

Apart from the children, the library is also frequented by adults, often just a few per day, who either read on the spot or borrow books, if they are not coming for conversations.

Fodé use the library for reading. He states that one can not buy all the books one wants to read but that the library has a good number of books that one can consult sometimes. Naré tells me that he uses the library because it has documents that interest him and it is to teach himself and to cultivate himself through those books.

The librarian, Ladji, tells me his version of why people are using the library:

One use it [...] for ones own formation, to enjoy oneself, to forget certain troubles, to ask for advices sometimes because there are books from then you read them it is like someone came to give you an advice, to find your solution and your worries are running out. It is leisure because while you are reading you are absent-minded. You are alone but you are not alone. (Ladji)

According to the statement of Ladji the library is mainly used for two reasons; a complement for one's own education as well as for one's own personal leisure. Mamadou also explains that the library can be used for ones own individual formation. He argues that one can improve oneself on ones own without being helped by a teacher.

Dramane, the decision maker argues high flowing that the library is used for developing ones own mind, to cultivate oneself and to get new knowledge. He argues that humans become more cultivated while using the library and that a human who is cultivated is different from a human that is not cultivated. The statement of Dramane makes the public library a place of intellectuals and it is reminiscent of elitism.

The reading activities are organised and prepared by the librarian and frequented by children, of which the majority are boys aged between 8 and 14 years. These activities imply story time, reading aloud, charades, riddles, singing and so on that are really appreciated by these children. One aim of these reading activities is to prepare the children for better success in

school. It has an influence on the children according to the librarian who also says that these activities help them to be freer, to better express themselves, to be more satisfied and to feel more comfortable which makes it easier for them to pass their exams in school. In this sense the library works as a complement to the school.

The public library in Tombouctou plays an important role according to a few of the users as well as the decision maker. But it is important only for those people who already went to school because it is only educated people who use and who can use the public library. The young boy Jalal says that the library plays a big role in the life of those who want to learn but for those who do not want to learn it doesn't play a role at all. Fodé states that the library in general plays an important role:

One can get certain information in the libraries that one didn't get in one's formation. That is a particular role that I count to the library. In general when one comes, one is interested by the books that are a few in the domain of your formation but one can also consult certain books that are not in your domain of formation, so that is a domain of opening for everybody. (Fodé)

Kadialy also finds the library very good because he states that the doors are open for everybody:

You can come, you don't have to pay, you don't have to be the son of a rich, son of a poor, to come from a social environment, come from another, everybody come here where a lot of things can be found... (Kadialy)

It seems very important to people that you don't have to pay for using the library. This is though only for consultation on the spot. Even though Kadialy says that the library is for everybody one can interpret it as it is for everybody of those who are literate.

According to most of the interviewed children the varied reading activities are very important. Some of the children come exclusively for those activities. But Oumar for example, he also finds the library important in other educating matters. He puts it:

If you come to the library you can understand a lot of things. [...] Even if you don't understand a word in the library, in school they don't have time to explain you, but here they tell you, they make you understand well. (Oumar)

To Naré the most important thing about the library is that it is a place of acquisition of knowledge and he argues that the mission of the library is to enable people to discover, to understand and to better apprehend. The knowledge one acquires can then be transferred to other people, he says. The library is a wealth according to Naré:

It's a wealth. The wealth is what? It's the knowledge, the culture, all the things that we are doing on this earth, and it is gathered in a library [...] when you come you are interested, you look and you will discover and you will inform yourself, you will cultivate yourself and you will inform the others about what are around in life. (Naré)

When I talked to Ladji about the most important missions of the library he argued that the most important thing is the welcoming. He argues that if you are well welcomed you will be happy to come back. He mentions that the librarian has to give help to the readers. When a librarian is open he also has a good welcoming. He says that a good librarian assures the readers, he tries to make them interested, he walks with them, helps them to understand and thanks to that, the readers will be happy to come back and they will bring other people to the library.



Ladji also apprehends that the library is a base of learning to read and write:

The best way to make people literate is to create the opportunity, the ease, the atmosphere in the libraries, the opportunity, the way to start, to give the occasion, the means to go there, well, while going there inevitably they will hunt the illiteracy because by dint of even look at pictures, you will express yourself, you will understand and you will learn other reasoning. [...] Even if you don't know how to read, in the end, little by little, even while listening to people talk between them, in the end you will get certain words, so, little by little you will teach yourself reading and writing. (Ladji)

He argues by these statements that by frequenting the public library people will automatically teach themselves to read and write while looking at pictures and while listening to other people speaking. As it is today, most of the library's users already know how to read and write. The problem is how to make illiterate people come to the public library if the library played a role for literacy.

The reading activities are important as they have an impact on the children's schooling, according to Ladji. He says that those children who come to the reading activities regularly manage to chase away a complex of silence. By participating in the reading activities enables the children to surmount certain obstacles:

They express themselves well, they are not longer cold, they are not longer afraid, they manage to ask questions. Perhaps in school they are a little bit uneasy to speak in front of the colleagues that will laugh or the master that doesn't accept certain questions, while in the library with the reading activities, the child manage to even leap his own nature, to be free, he express himself good, he is pleased, he sees himself a little bit at ease because he manage to express himself as he wants, so that's an impact. All those who frequent the library regularly among the children as for their exams, if it is in primary -, second- or fundamental level they succeed their exams. (Ladji)

The library plays therefore a role as a complement to school and education. The young boys learn to be more independent and they get self confidence by assisting in the reading activities of the public library.

Concerning development Ladji argues that the library plays a role in it. He states that to be developed one has at least to be educated which one can be by the library according to him. And as this library is the only public library there is in Tombouctou city it plays a very important role for development, especially in formation and information, he states.

Dramane, the decision maker, argues that the first mission of the public library is to help pupils by putting works that they need for school at their disposal. He argues that the library can contribute to schooling, to children's knowledge and to the master's knowledge. The second mission according the Dramane is the service to the population. He mentions that it is for intellectuals as well as for everybody. Furthermore he talks about the librarian's missions that he argues is to be welcoming, available, someone who loves his work, who loves books and who knows how to maintain the books. He states that the present librarian has these qualities and that this librarian knows how to attract people towards the library:

It's to devote oneself to the library, to give body and soul. It's his second wife, it's for that reason. After his wife, it's the library. They don't have anything but books, they don't have anything but reading, they don't have anything but children, they don't do anything but progressing their library. (Dramane)

According to Dramane it is not only the public library that has an importance but also the librarian who is managing it. In the case of Tombouctou he is very satisfied by the present librarian who he finds is a person who really devotes himself to his work as a librarian. According to Mamadou an important mission of the public library is to put works into public disposal.

Adult readers use the library mainly for consulting documents on the spot, home loans and for conversations while the children use it to complement their studies.

### **6.2.6 Which obstacles might the public library face?**

The general frequentation is fairly low in Tombouctou which could be explained by different reasons. Kadialy states that the low frequentation is because some people think it is a waste of time and some people do not actually have time. He argues also that some parents don't have consciousness to send their children to the library because they think that their children will not learn anything there. If the parents think that their children will not learn anything in the library means that there is a lack of recognition of the library. It tells us also that there is apathy of the parents as they are not conscious about the library and its importance according to certain informants.

Naré argues that the reason why people don't use the library is that they are lazy or that culture doesn't interest them that much. Later he makes me understand that poverty is a factor of the low frequentation. He says that the little time people have is spent in the search for money to provide for ones family. In the first place one has to feed ones family which makes little time left for reading.

Ladji thinks the low frequentation is because the distance is too far from ones home, unknowing, ignorance, complexity or lack of time. The hidden place where the library is placed may also have an impact on its low frequentation and Ladji regrets it:

This library is situated in a spot where it is not at all exposed to the general public, because one pass, it's a little bit timid, it's hidden, it's in a big enclosure. (Ladji)

One of the interviewed users, Fodé, had seen the sign of the library in the street but still he didn't think there was a library there. It is quite hidden and you have to know about the existence of it to find it. This statement also tells us that there is a lack of recognition of the existence of the library.

According to Dramane the library is not used by people who don't understand what a library is. He says:

To go to the library one has to be capable to read, one has to be capable to understand. But me, if I don't go the library, it's there, if I never went to school, I have nothing to search for in the library. (Dramane)

According to the statement of Dramane the low frequentation in Tombouctou is because of the problem of illiteracy and that is of course also linked to the problem of poverty.

The library of Tombouctou is like in Bougouni facing the problem of a very low rate of female users. A few of the male users tell me, just like in Bougouni, that the girls normally have to work in their homes.

## **6.3 KOULIKORO**

### **6.3.1 The City**

Koulikoro is situated only 60 km north of Bamako<sup>118</sup>. The population of the commune was in 1997 estimated at 25.538<sup>119</sup>, while the cercle had 157.950<sup>120</sup> inhabitants. The city is marked by their navigation industries that make people from all around Mali come there to work. The population of Koulikoro commune is quite highly educated in comparison with other cities in Mali. The rate of enrolment for 1<sup>st</sup> cycle in 2003 was 58.58% of the boys and 45.83% of the girls, while in the second cycle were 39.04% boys and 22.62% girls.

There are two senior high schools and four vocational schools in Koulikoro. Some of the schools in Koulikoro have libraries but they are less documented than the public library, which is the most important library in the town.

Koulikoro has a three town co-operation project with Quetigny in France since 1986 and with Bous in Germany since 1989. This is a development- and solidarity project that according to the two European towns tries to fulfil the demand of the Malian population<sup>121</sup>.

### **6.3.2 The Public Library**

The public library of Koulikoro was created in 1979 by OLP<sup>122</sup>. It is situated by the main road that goes through the drawn out city of Koulikoro. It is one of the buildings in the twin town centre of Koulikoro. The library is composed of one big room of documentation, one smaller room for bookbinding and one room that is the librarian's office that consist of the newly procured computer that among other uses will serve as a computerized catalogue.

The present public library building in Koulikoro was built by the three town co-operation project in 2000 as the old one was too small and too inadequate. It was named Bibliothèque municipale Alioune Blondin Beye.

This library has now got two employees. The librarian who is still the same librarian since the creation of the first library of Koulikoro is employed by the State service and the assistant is employed by the local government since 2003.

Opening hours are Tuesday to Friday from 9 till 17 and Saturday from 9 till 13.

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<sup>118</sup> [http://www.ville-bamako.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=70&Itemid=64](http://www.ville-bamako.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=70&Itemid=64) [2007-02-03].

<sup>119</sup> *Perspectives de Population par cercle/arrondissement, 1993-1997*, s. 251.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 251.

<sup>121</sup> [http://www.ville-quetigny.com/21/QUETIGNY/vivre\\_a\\_quetigny/jumelage/index\\_jumelage.php](http://www.ville-quetigny.com/21/QUETIGNY/vivre_a_quetigny/jumelage/index_jumelage.php) [2007-02-03].

<sup>122</sup> Diakité 1991, s. 19.

All loans and book administrations are manual and functions very well, though there is a computer for this purpose. The collection is supposed to be computerized in the near future.

The Koulikoro public library has the most numerous collections of the three studied libraries. The most important documents are fiction but there is also non-fiction. Both categories have documentations for both children and adults. The novels are classified into subdivisions in themes such as romance, science fiction, detective story and African novels made on the initiative of the librarian. This is to simplify the literature research for the users. Every theme supplies about two set of shelves to each one. Also here, the African novels are the most demanded literature but it is also the literature in most short supply.

The documentation is supplied by CNLP and AFLAM, but books are also sent by the twin towns. From Quetigny books are sent regularly and from Bous rarely.

### **6.3.3 Informants**

Ramata, student, 20 years

Salif, student, 27 years

Tata, student, 18 years

Lobi, librarian

Modibo, employer

Diallo, decision maker

Doudou, decision maker

### **6.3.4 What Is a Public Library?**

Two of the interviewed users of the Koulikoro library state that the library is a place that keeps books and knowledge. Tata expresses herself poetically when she declares what a library is:

It is, let us say, the source of knowing. It is an old man, let us say, because on our premises it is the old men that possess all the knowing. (Tata)

Further she explains that it is also a meeting place where one can meet all kinds of people as readers, authors, librarians and curious people.

Ramata, another girl who is using the library, tells me that the library is a place for intellectuals because reading demands patience and understanding. Furthermore she argues that the library is for all the people who are conscious about their future. She even states that it is vital to pass through the library if you want to manage to get somewhere. Ramata is on the track of describing the library as a place for intellectuals which is a fact that doesn't go hand in hand with many of the other informants' descriptions that say the library is for everybody.

According to the librarian Lobi, the library is a place that gathers documents, a place for information, formation and distraction. He states that there are books that help people to go through times pleasantly and in an instructive way.

Modibo, the employer, argues that the library is a cultural place that contributes to the current formation and to the continuous formation of people. In accordance with his statements the library is then a complement to education.

Diallo, one of the decision makers put it this way about what a library is:

First of all it represents a world window because it is plenty of thoughts inside, because it is the memory even, I can say, from the world, you know. (Diallo)

Further he says that it is a place for cultural exchange and a place for instruction where I instruct myself and where I inform myself.

Doudou, the other decision maker says that is a place of culture, of recreation and of leisure.

### **6.3.5 How is the public library used?**

The public library of Koulikoro has been the most frequented library in the Malian network of public libraries according to the statistics of CNLP. There is also a high variety of users. Children, adults, men, women, students, workers, unemployed people and others are represented here which has been proved by the observations and the statistics of the library. The library's own frequentation statistics show that during 2005 the library sometimes had a daily frequentation of up to 28 women, 25 girls, 89 men and 42 boys. Home loans were very frequent also. The most during 2005 was 52 loans on one day.

As industry is important in Koulikoro, some of those who come to work here are users of the library.

This library is highly frequented for conversations and discussions. Many people come there for these reasons. The library is therefore an important place of meeting in Koulikoro. Visitors spend sometimes the whole day talking, drinking tea and changing ideas with the librarian, the librarian assistant and with other visitors.

Salif tells me that he uses the library for the reason to create knowledge that he does not have. He thinks that people who do not use the library have other initiatives and ideas of how to get information. Salif also used to use the library for working on the synthesis of his thesis with his colleague. They had the bookbinding room at their disposal for more than one month. He says that this is very interesting about the library because it enables students to come and work there.

Ramata uses the library when teachers in her school ask her to search for something. Sometimes she goes there simply to enjoy herself, to read and to teach herself. She states that the books teach her a lot of things. But she reads also for the pleasure of reading. The library has therefore two important functions for her; education and leisure.

Tata uses the library in the first place simply for pleasure. She loves reading:

I use the library for specific searches. I use the library for its novels, for its cartoons, for its newspapers. Actually, the only thing that pushes me towards the library is the passion of reading, that's all. I like very much to read, except horror books. I don't really like and the science fictions

also. Actually, I don't even call that a book. The science fictions and the horror books that's, that's business. (Tata)

Lobi explains that people are using the library for three reasons: to teach oneself, to inform oneself and to enjoy oneself. Lobi, as well as Ladji, the librarian of Tombouctou give, by their different statements, after all the same reasons of why people are using the library; a complement to one's own education and for one's personal leisure.

Modibo thinks that people are using the library to form- and to cultivate oneself. Young people go there not only for the literature but also for talking, he says. So also in accordance with what he says, the public library plays a role for education as well as for leisure.

According to Salif the public library is very interesting in the sense that people can use the rooms for working and studying. The placement of the library in the centre of the town is also very good because everybody can go there. He states that it is good that it is close for most people. You don't need a vehicle to get there. But that depends of course where you live.

The fact that Koulikoro is rather close to Bamako has also an influence on the frequentation and importance of the library. Salif argues that people in Koulikoro try to adapt themselves to the reality of Bamako where the people are more educated than in the countryside which might make people use the public library more.

According to Ramata the public library plays an important role for intellectuals who wants to progress in their careers. Ramata argues that the library's missions are to give people knowledge and make people enjoy themselves with reading. To her it is very important to enjoy and have fun while reading. But that importance is implicitly for intellectual people. The Internet is also useful in searching for information but it can not replace the library according to Ramata.

The library's mission in general is to give pleasure, to give knowledge and to teach the past, according to Tata. Again we can see that the importance of the public library has to do with both education and leisure. To her personally the library plays a very important role. Almost all her outgoings are to the library or to activities organized by the library. She argues it helps her in her schooling. She states that she and those of her friends who are using the library are getting better notes in school.

According to Lobi, as we have already seen, the missions of the library are to inform, to educate and to amuse. These concepts have an importance for the users. Information and amusement in an informal place of education such as the library must be unique. Lobi states that the users of the library, which offer informal education, have a certain freedom, which is not the case in the formal schools. Beyond that, the library plays an important role for meetings. It is a meeting point in the centre of the town where people really come because the library is very accessible. Furthermore, he states that the library also has an important role for the youth. They come to the library, even if there is nobody there, they will find a book to enjoy themselves with. From the beginning there were not many people using the library but now it is well frequented. There are even people from the villages in the surrounding areas who come to the library nowadays which shows how important it is, he says. The library helps people to go through depressive moments and it helps students because they don't have all the documentation that is needed in their secondary school. Lobi describes the public library like this:

It is a place of meeting- and of conviviality that allow the citizens to really educate themselves and to enjoy themselves in a scope rather pleasant and in a scope instructive. So, the library is very important to me. Despite the situation of the reality, it really allows people to know a place where they can find people, where they can find things, speak, talk and enjoy themselves with elements in a place very precise. This is important for the society, to know where to go sometimes. [...] So, for me the library is very important in the society. If it wasn't there, one would have to find the means to create it. (Lobi)

Concerning the oral tradition, Lobi thinks that the written literature can reinforce the oral one which would be an important role for the library. I ask him if written literature might disturb the oral tradition, and he argues:

The oral tradition, one tells it, one listen to it. One can forget, transform it because one can listen to the same thing but understand it differently, but the text is there to establish the thing for what it is. It doesn't disturb the oral tradition too much, but it reinforces the oral tradition because what one say, if one writes it, it will last. But the oral tradition is transformed from mouth-to-mouth from year-to-year, one doesn't always have the true version in fact. Well, we have been wishing that the orality and the oral shall be more important than the written but the written reinforce what one tells and anyway it preserves it. (Lobi)

When I asked Modibo if there are any institutions that can replace the public library he says: "no, it is not possible" and he explains that the library plays a role of stabilisation in all levels of information research. He says that the library has to be there despite the financial difficulties. The absence of it could create frustration.

According to Diallo the most important missions of the library is the cultural diversities. All different writings transmit the messages, the knowledge, the cultures, the ideas. It is also a place for formation and education he states.

Doudou states that the library has a great documentation and good service. He argues that the library has an important role in Koulikoro as it serves as a complement for the problems of teaching and as recreation for the factory workers. He states that the educational establishment is not sufficient for educating. "The complement to education is in the level of the libraries", he states. It is also important for culture in general as there are organized conferences that debate important subjects he says. He argues that the themes that are discussed in those conferences are very important for the future generations. The themes are for example about marriage and family. The public library gets by his words described as a place for education as well as leisure. These themes are recurrent about the importance of these three Malian public libraries.

### **6.3.6 Which obstacles might the public library face?**

One of the major problems for the library according to Salif is that the library is poor. There is a need for African literature but Salif states that the readers can not find it here. The books are about France or about other environments he says. Salif does not mean that they are not good but:

they are books that talk a lot about a reality from another environment. (Salif)

This fact tells us about that there is a problem of adaptation of the library in its context. The collection of the library is not totally matching the needs of the population of Koulikoro. There are books in the library that are abandoned that nobody needs anymore:

Because those are books that are, that are not matching our environment, our reality. That are books that came from France and it's the French people that need them, while we have other, we need other knowledge that are near us. (Salif)

What one needs is African literature, he says, which enables them to know the African continent and their own environment. Salif also wishes that the library was better organized and that it had more documents in general. There are people coming to the library but they don't find anything that interests them he says. Lobi is on the same track in these matters. He also argues that the readers who come to the library don't always find what they are looking for and says:

The Malian libraries don't choose their books, they get sent to them. If the choice was made by the environment the number of readers would increase. (Lobi)

He argues that the books cannot correspond to the taste of the readers when the choice is made somewhere else. The Koulikoro readers want African literature that they do not have enough of in the library. The women often want women's magazines; the old people often want information magazines and Jeune Afrique and students want more education books he says. Most of this type of documentation is missing totally in their library. If they had it, the library would be terrific he says. Lobi wishes that they themselves could choose the documentation of their library. The case today is that most books have been sent to them from different co-operation organisations in France. At the moment the French co-operation has stopped supporting Koulikoro and the town council can not afford to support the library with books. They are already in charge of the staff and the care of the library but they are not motivated enough to buy books according to Lobi. He argues that the elected of the town hall think that people just go to the library but they are not aware of the role of it. Therefore he thinks that the co-operation can support them better than the town hall. He suggests that the staff of the Koulikoro public library choose which books they want and that the co-operators buy them. In the fight against poverty he states that humans need education and formation because an informed, good educated person has the possibility to leave the utter poverty. The co-operation could therefore support them in letting them buy the books that they want and need. The problem of not having enough documents that one wants is of course linked to poverty. The people in power of the town hall are not motivated enough to buy books for the library and the co-operation workers are at the moment not supporting the public library, probably because they want the public library and its financiers to be independent. It is difficult for the library to acquire books because of the lack of means or rather the lack of will to support. The problem of poverty remains.

Another reason for the low rate of utilisation of the library, according to Salif, is that the majority of the people, especially the young people don't like literature.

The fact that less women than men are using the library is not so obvious in Koulikoro as in Bougouni and Tombouctou. In Koulikoro there are many women using the library. This fact can be explained by the existence of a reading club in Koulikoro that is run by girls. This club works to provide young people to read and to use the public library. Among other activities they organize conferences together with the library. Salif still thinks that there are fewer documents that are interesting for women than for men and that it is because of that, that fewer women are using the library.



As Mali is a country where the tradition is rather oral than written makes, of course, literature less interesting than in countries where written tradition is stronger. Lobi states that in Mali one can find people talk everywhere which is not the case in European countries:

Here we have an open environment where you can find someone to exchange with everywhere, so this reduces the utilisation of the library. (Lobi)

At the same time this is a library that is rightly functioning like a meeting point, a place where people are talking and exchanging with other people.

Modibo is also arguing about the fact that people in Mali don't have a culture and social life where reading is usual, which is a reason they don't use the library so much. He argues that the economical problems they are facing make people read less. Leisure time is not sacrificed for reading but for trying to earn a bit of money.

Doudou thinks the reason why people don't use the library is a question of awareness and of education.

Diallo states that the reasons for not using the library are about poverty and illiteracy, which seems to be the main obstacles for all three investigated public libraries. But also the lack of time makes people not go there. For example when the children finish their school they often have to join their parents in the fields. So to Diallo there are many factors that make people not go to the library.

## **6.4 SUMMARY**

All of the three public libraries are created by the OLP project. They have therefore similar rules but they are all managed individually according to the librarian's management in each location.

A public library is, according to the informants in all three cases, a place where documentation is stored at the public's disposal. It is also a place for information, formation, leisure and meetings.

The public library is used differently in the three locations as they are frequented by different types of public. The purpose of the use of the library is, though, to deepen one's own knowledge in all of the three investigated libraries.

The obstacles that the libraries are facing are apprehended fairly similarly in the three cases. The informants say that people don't like reading very much and that the Malian people don't have time to go to the library. In Bougouni and Tombouctou the frequentation by girls was very low, which is a serious problem. The girls are in general less educated than the boys and they have obligations in the house-hold work which hinders them to study and to use the library. Providing relevant documentation is difficult, especially in Bougouni and Koulikoro where the choice often is made abroad. The lack of money is a problem in all three cases which hinders the libraries providing sufficient staff, materials and relevant documentation.

## 7. DISCUSSION

This chapter is devoted to a text analysis and discussion of the empirical material as the results from the interviews and the observations. The theoretical concepts from the middle-range theories for analysing the material constitute the sections' subheadings of this chapter. The last section is devoted to a discussion of the fourth question; does post-colonialism explain the situation of the three investigated libraries?

### 7.1 ADAPTATION TO ITS CONTEXT

When library models were imported to Africa it was without consideration of the situation and needs of its contexts according to statements from the middle-range theories. In Mali the public libraries emerged from first questioning the different locations. OLP asked every location if there was a need or not for a library in each city. Libraries were then built in every location where one had answered yes, of which was all of the locations. This means that there was a consideration of the situation and needs of a public library in Mali. I find, in spite of that fact, that the public libraries in Mali have some obstacles in the adaptation to its context. The majority of the library users in the three investigated libraries are an educated minority of the Malian population. Issak states that the public libraries in Africa were built for few users, those with access to formal education.<sup>123</sup> The public libraries in Mali are therefore not totally adapted to its context.

The employer Mohammed said that the adaptation into context of the library is important and that the books should be adapted to the conditions of the culture and of the population. It can be stated that they are, but for a minority of the population, those who are literate and educated. Some informants in Bougouni and Koulikoro made me understand that there is a problem of adaptation of the library in its context. Those libraries have problems to fulfil the users' demand which is also linked to the problem of the adaptation to its context. If one can not fulfil the users demand there is also a problem to adapt the library to the needs that exist in that context.

### 7.2 FULFILLING THE USERS DEMAND

The theories tell us that African libraries have problems to fulfil their users' demands because there is a lack of financial support and the choice of documents is often made in other countries. Issak states that materials often are irrelevant as it is often acquired through donations from abroad.<sup>124</sup> In Bougouni, Tombouctou and Koulikoro most documents are provided from AFLAM and CNLP which means that the acquisition of documents is made in Mali. More precisely from the centralized management but not by the library itself. They partly succeed in fulfilling the users demand. Bougouni has a regular frequentation of students. If there were no documents that interest them at the library they would not have been using it. The majority of the informants told me that the library helps them in educational matters and that it therefore is very important to them. Actually the public library is very important for those who use it, according to the informants. At the same time there is among the users a need for literature that the libraries do not possess. Some students told me that they need literature in English which according to them is fairly difficult to find in Mali. As Mali

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<sup>123</sup> Issak 2000, s. 12.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., s. 12.

was colonised by France and is now supported by French co-operation, most literature is in French and it seems like no consideration is taken to a demand for literature in other languages than French. Books in learning to read and write are also missing in the library. There have been some demands for that but it is not the kind of literature that is the most demanded.

The most demanded literature in the three investigated locations is Malian literature and African literature in general. It exists but it is in a short supply and it would have been adequate to hold more. Salif, one of the users in Koulikoro, says that it is because the library is poor that there is not enough African literature. He argues that the books that are sent do them from France for example are abandoned and not needed anymore so probably they are neither needed in Mali. Those books talk about another reality that is different from the reality he lives in Mali. What one needs in Mali are books that match the reality of the Mali people and books that are about knowledge that is near them according to Salif. In the providing of documents there seems to be no consideration taken in that what Malian people need is not what French people need. We can clearly see that there is a problem in fulfilling the users demand. Books made for a European market are being sent to Mali as if it were the same need for literature in Mali as in France. But it is not. The Malian readers need and want literature that talks about their reality and their contexts according to Salif. The public library of Tombouctou was the only investigated case where the choice of literature was made by someone in the locality. Tombouctou was also the only case where none of the informants complained about the documentation. That fact confirms that when the choice of literature is made by someone in the location it corresponds better to the users demand. The librarian Lobi in Koulikoro argues that the books can not correspond to the taste of the readers in Mali if the choice is made somewhere else. He argues that if the choice was made by the environment the number of readers would increase. According to Sturges who also argues that a library has the chance to survive if it emerges from the demand of the users.<sup>125</sup> Then the library will have sustainability and responsiveness. The public libraries in Mali would benefit and better succeed by letting the choice of literature be made by users and/or the librarian in each context who is more likely to know the users demand than the centralized organisations and/or the organisations from Europe.

### **7.3 ILLITERACY**

The public library is oriented towards written literature. There are a few traditional oral tales in the library but they are presented in written form. To use the library, consequently, you have to be literate. This fact is fairly problematic because Mali is a country where the rate of literacy among adults is only 19%,<sup>126</sup> which makes only a minority of the population able to use the library. This can be understood as a failure. Mohammed, the employer in Bougouni stated that 60% of the population lives outside the information of the library. Only students, state employees and retired state employers are, according to him, possible public library users. The low library frequentation is therefore related to the obstacle of illiteracy. The decision-maker Dramane in Tombouctou is almost on the same track and states that one has to be capable of reading and to understand if one wants to use the library. If one never went to school one has nothing to search for in the library he says. The libraries are, according to these informants, though only for literate people. Most informants state that the public library

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<sup>125</sup> Sturges 1998, s. 138.

<sup>126</sup> [http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data\\_sheets/cty\\_ds\\_MLI.html](http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_MLI.html) [2007-05-10].

is for everybody as it is called a public library. That *everybody* must, though, be everybody among those who are literate. The informants do not express distinctly that the library is for literate only. But some informants made me understand that it is a matter of course that the library is for literate people.

Ladji, the librarian in Tombouctou has another opinion and means that the library is an opportunity to learn to read and write. He says that by just being in the public library people can learn and hunt the illiteracy by looking at pictures and by listening to other people talking. The libraries in all three contexts have their doors open to everybody but it is rare that illiterate people take this opportunity. Therefore the obstacle remains. In addition to that, the public library in Tombouctou can with its reading activities function as a complement to school and education, according to Ladji. He means that the young boys assisting in the reading activities learn to be more independent and that it facilitates their schooling.

The low number of female users also has reasons to do with illiteracy. Fewer girls than boys are educated according to certain informants. Consequently a lower rate of females than males is in the target group of the public library.

#### **7.4 ORAL TRADITION**

The oral tradition is an obstacle for the low frequentation of the libraries. Lobi the librarian in Koulikoro stated that in Mali one can find a person to talk to everywhere which is not the case in Europe according to him, which might make people go less to the library in Mali than in Europe. Amadi states that it is important to save the heritage of both written and oral traditions.<sup>127</sup> The oral one can be saved by writing it. Lobi, the librarian in Koulikoro means that the written tales can reinforce the oral tradition and by writing it down one can save it, because if they are only oral, the versions will change in the transmissions, according to him.

I think it is important to save the oral tale traditions both in written and oral form. By the written form versions can be conserved. But I think it is also important to keep the culture and the art in the manifestation of oral story telling. Oral story telling continuing parallel with the written form would be preferable.

As Mali is a country where the oral tradition is strong it would be adequate to supply oral information in the public libraries. Sturges proposes, for example, that library service in rural areas might be provided by oral communication. It is, according to him, crucial to have the opportunity for a dialogue to deliver the response in an oral environment. In the three of the investigated libraries there are communications orally as they function as meeting places for talking and discussions. But there is neither special information nor services that are provided orally.

#### **7.5 APATHY OF THE PUBLIC**

Among the informants many state that Malian people do not like reading that much and that this is the reason behind the low frequentation. Lamine, the librarian in Bougouni, argues that it is not even in the Malian culture to read. Instead people prefer do other things. According to

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<sup>127</sup> Amadi 1981, s. 144.

many of the informants in the three locations, there are a lot of people who think that using the library is a waste of time. Some informants also mean that it is a question about awareness and consciousness of the parents who often think their children will not learn anything in the library. The apathy is rather of the parents than of the children according to those statements.

Naré said that people don't use the library because they are lazy and that culture doesn't interest them which are also forms of apathy. Ladj, the librarian in Tombouctou mention unknowing, ignorance, complexity and lack of time as reasons for the low frequentation. These reasons can be apprehended as apathy of the public.

## **7.6 LACK OF RECOGNITION**

Earlier researches on public libraries in Africa state that there is a lack of recognition of the role and importance of the libraries in Africa. Maybe decision-makers and other responsible people for the public libraries are not aware of what a public library should and could be. Concerning the users' lack of recognition, some informants in Bougouni argue that a lot of people don't even know there is a public library in Bougouni. Some informants also stated that among non-users who know there is a library in the town, many think the library is not for them. According to Fanta there are people who don't use the library because they think it is only for older people and for people with more knowledge. The public library's role is in that case not recognized because, according to Fanta, the library is not only for older people, nor for people with a lot of knowledge. The decision maker Djibril in Bougouni states that the low frequentation of the library is because people don't know the importance of the library. This is probably also related to the fact that reading is not a common activity in Mali.

I relate the libraries' lack of recognition to the apathy of the public. As the parents, according to a few users, are not aware of the importance of the public library this can be understood as a lack of recognition because those parents have not learned about what the library is.

There is also a physical lack of recognition of the public libraries. In Bougouni I rarely met people outside the library who knew there was a library in the town. In Tombouctou the public library is so hidden that it is difficult to find it. Fodé, one of the users didn't even believe there was a library there when a friend of his brought him there, even though he had seen the sign of the library in the street. Ladj, the librarian, also thinks the library is not exposed to the general public. In Koulikoro the public library is more known as it is situated in the twin town centre on the main road in the middle of the city.

## **7.7 POVERTY**

Previous concepts are all more or less related to the concept of poverty. According to Sturges poverty is a central preoccupation in Africa. Poverty affects the public library as an institution as well as it affects the potential users of the library according to him. As we can see by the results of this study this is also the case in Mali. The public libraries, as well as their potential users, are in different ways affected by poverty.

Concerning the potential users, the low frequentation has to do with poverty in all of the three investigated libraries. At least one informant in each location explains that the Malians in general have to search for money rather than go to read in the public library. Lamine, the

librarian in Bougouni says that people prefer to do things that might yield a little bit of money than to read a book. Also in Tombouctou the user Naré explained that poverty is a factor of the library's low frequentation. He says that people don't have time to go to the library as they have to search for money for themselves and for their families. In a poor country it is not likely that most people go to the public library for reading when one has to feed a family. This is a fact that may be an obstacle also in Bougouni and Koulikoro. Modibo, the employer in Koulikoro states that the economical problems that Mali is facing make people read less. He means that leisure time is not sacrificed for reading but for earning a little bit of money. Diallo, one of the decision-markers in Koulikoro also argues that poverty and illiteracy are obstacles that make people not use the library. As an example he states that the children have to join their parents to work in the fields after school. They have to help their family to earn their living. The low female frequentation can be related to poverty too. Parents can't afford to send all their children to school, which make them more often send their sons. In poor countries the household work requires a lot of effort because most household work is done by hand and the families are often big. Washing-up, cleaning, laundry, cooking, going to the market... In Mali these tasks are in most cases done by women, according to the informants.

Concerning the public library as an institution, it is affected by poverty in different ways. In Bougouni the librarian Lamine wishes to have another colleague because he is all alone managing the library which would facilitate his work and time schedules. He means also that if a second colleague was there they could have more opening hours which would enable more people to use the library as the majority of the users normally are in school during the opening hours. But as there is a lack of financing sources it will not be easy for him to get a colleague.

In Koulikoro, Salif, one of the users, states that the library is poor. The readers can't find the African literature they are searching for. The library has not enough money to buy the books they want as it is explained in the section of fulfilling the users demand. The librarian is also sure that the library would get more users if they could buy the books they want. Now the question is how one will get money to finance the needs and demands. Sturges argues that it would be good if donors could pay because of the exploitation of Africa. On the other hand he states that it would be good if donors do not pay as it distorts the decision-making process and gives back the control to the donors and that is not good for the self-reliance of the institution which, in this case, is the public library. The problem of acquisition remains as Malian financiers cannot afford what is demanded and needed.

Poverty can be understood as an underlying cause for most of the obstacles the public libraries are facing. In a poor country it is difficult to fulfil the users demand and to adapt it to its context when there is a high rate of illiteracy as well as it being based on oral tradition. The lack of recognition and the apathy of the public can also be apprehended as a result of poverty. Poverty is therefore a main factor that has created many obstacles that the public libraries are facing today. Poverty is a result of colonialism and neo-colonialism which keeps holding Mali locked into unequal relationships that prevent the nation, as well as the public libraries, from getting out of poverty. As an involuntary part of the capitalistic world-system, the nation of Mali is also condemned to be a part of the exploited periphery.

Mali could get out of poverty in the long term with an educated population. Lobi, the librarian in Koulikoro, says that in the fight against poverty, humans need education. With education they will have the possibilities to leave the utter poverty, he says. So if the library could get aid in buying important books that could help the population to educate themselves, this

would be a step in the fight against poverty. As the conditions are now, the libraries do not have means enough to buy sufficient books that correspond to the demand and needs of the population. Poverty remains.

Poverty can also be a reason for using the library. As most people don't have enough money to buy their own books they can read books for free in the public library. Many of the informants much appreciated the free access. This fact is important in a country affected by poverty.

## ***7.8 DOES POST-COLONIALISM EXPLAIN THE SITUATION OF THE THREE INVESTIGATED LIBRARIES?***

One of the clearest issues that indicates postcolonial presence is the inadequate documentation that the investigated libraries are having sent to them. They are sent from abroad, often from France, the former coloniser of Mali, and the books are often old eliminated books not always relevant for the Malian readers. The way this type of co-operation is handled is based upon the fact that the Malian institutions are dependent on Northern values. French books for French readers are being sent to Mali for Malian readers because they are not needed anymore in France can be understood as a serious neo-colonial problem for these libraries. Another problem related to the documentation is that most books are in French in spite of the fact that there is a demand for books in other languages for example English. Books in the national languages are also underrepresented in the three studied libraries. French is more important than national languages, the Malian people's mother tongues, in Mali which is a result of colonialism. One has not chosen French as the official language in Mali but has been, and is, imposed to use French which is obvious in these investigated libraries. Amadi argued that in the coming together of African and European worlds, one culture was programmed to absorb, swallow, or mutilate the other and there were changes in social, psychological, political and cultural dimensions.<sup>128</sup> Said states that imperial attitudes are still present even though the colonies have been independent and he means that the controlling of a society can be caused by, for example, cultural dependency.<sup>129</sup> Wallerstein also argues that strong states force weak states to accept a cultural policy such as issues about, for example, languages, which strengthen the bonds between them.<sup>130</sup> So the strong presence of the French language in Mali's public libraries is a result of post-colonialism.

Other post-colonial issue concerning the documentation in the investigated libraries is that the African literature is underrepresented in spite that it is the most demanded literature. Holding Northern valued literature in Malian libraries is a sign of post-colonial attitudes.

The fact that poverty is a serious problem for the investigated libraries can be explained by global capitalism which prevents ex-colonies developing and is keeping them poor and dependent. This is a fact that also affects the public libraries in Mali as they are public institutions. All institutions have been created in the scope of the capitalistic global economy according to Wallerstein.<sup>131</sup> This is a fact that I apprehend as a result of colonialism and as that is the situation of the investigated libraries one can understand them as postcolonial.

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<sup>128</sup> Amadi 1981, s. 99

<sup>129</sup> Said 1993, s. 42

<sup>130</sup> Wallerstein 2004, s. 91

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., s. 50

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

The perspectives of what a public library is are rather similar among the informants of the three investigated locations. It can be stated that it is a place where documentation is stored at the disposal of the public according to the informants. Further it is explained that the public library is a place where one can read and borrow books, deepen ones knowledge, inform and form oneself, complete ones schooling, cultivate oneself, meet other people, discover, have leisure and recreation. It is also understood by the informants' apprehensions that there is apathy by the public. Some of the interviewees stated that Malian people don't like reading that much and that reading is not even in the Malian culture. Some parents are not aware of the existence and the significance of the public library which prevent them from letting their children go to the library. This apathy is linked to the lack of recognition of the library. Many people don't know what the library is and what it is useful for. A lot of people don't even know the existence of the library.

How the public library is used is fairly different in the three locations. In Bougouni the majority of the users are students from the senior level of compulsory school, upper secondary school and university. They use the library mainly to complement their studies and to deepen their own knowledge. The majority of them are boys. In Tombouctou the majority of the users are young school boys who distract themselves by reading and participating in the library's reading activities. These activities facilitate their schooling. In Koulikoro the users differ from the users of the two other locations. They are in Koulikoro more varied in age, sex and profession. The public library of Koulikoro is also more frequented than the other two libraries. What is common to the three investigated libraries is that the users in most cases are literate, educated, curious and motivated. According to some of the informants the public library users are intellectual people. The library is very important for that group of users as they, through the library, get free access to literature which enables them to complete their studies, deepen their knowledge and to distract themselves. Those qualities were by many informants apprehended as very important. The public library can for them play a role as a complement to schooling. The public library is the only formal institution that can play that role in Mali. All three investigated libraries function also as a place to meet and talk with other people. This was palpable in the Koulikoro library.

The obstacles that the public libraries face are fairly similar in each location. The public library's adaptation to the Malian society is difficult. The context is a society where the level of education is low and the rate of illiteracy is high which means that only a minority of the Malian population are possible users. None of the investigated libraries are adapted for users that need information orally. The illiteracy and the oral tradition is therefore an obstacle for the libraries adaptation to the Malian society. Fulfilling the users demand was apprehended as a problem by the informants in the locations of Bougouni and of Koulikoro. In Tombouctou there were no complaints about the library's documentation as it was expressed in the other locations. The users in Tombouctou might be satisfied with their public library's documentation perhaps because Tombouctou was the only library where the books had been selected by someone from the location even though these books were eliminated from a library in France. The fact that someone from the locality chose the documentation is an important concept for success. According to Issak the failure of public libraries in Africa is, because of irrelevant materials acquired through donations from abroad.<sup>132</sup> Sturges argues that

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<sup>132</sup> Issak 2000, s. 12.



true sustainability emerges from the needs and opinions of the users.<sup>133</sup> He says that institutions that start from a demand may have the dynamic of true survival. In Bougouni and Koulikoro where the choice of documentation was always made outside from the locality, there were inquiries for documentation that the libraries did not have.

The obstacles of the public libraries are linked to one another in different ways. To fulfil the users demand one has to have an adequate documentation which is possible only if one has enough financing resources. In a poor country it is also difficult to fulfil the users demand and to adapt it to its context when there is a high rate of illiteracy as well as an oral tradition. Poverty can be understood as an underlying cause of the obstacles that the public libraries are facing.

To answer the aim of this study I have explored that the public libraries' significances and obstacles in the Malian context are linked to underdevelopment and poverty. Those factors create problems for the public libraries and hinder them from fulfilling the users demand and from progress. Mali has been locked into unequal relationships in the world system since colonisation, which makes it very difficult for the nation to be independent and to develop. That problem also affects, naturally, the public libraries, which prevents them from being self-reliant and independent. It is very important for public libraries in Africa to be self-reliant according to Sturges. He means that if the library does not have self-reliance in economic, cultural and political matters it could be a victim of other more powerful nations.<sup>134</sup> Frank explained that contemporary underdevelopment is a historical product and that the economic, political, social, and cultural institutions and relations are products of the historical development of the capitalist system. He means that development can now only occur independently from the capitalist metropolises.<sup>135</sup> Mali should therefore, according to Frank, cut their relations with France and other capitalist metropolises to make it possible to independently develop the Mali nation and its institutions, including the public libraries. Sturges suggests an urgent break with the North to get out from these relationships where Northern values continue to retard the development in Africa and therefore also in Mali.<sup>136</sup>

Wallerstein argues that institutions have been created in the scope of the capitalistic global economy.<sup>137</sup> One can therefore understand that institutions like public libraries are not made without economical interests. The public library is, in spite of that, extremely important in Mali because it is the only institution where the population has free access to literature even though it is for a small audience. This small audience can generally be defined as an educated male minority of the Malian population. They use the public library mainly to complement their studies and to deepen their knowledge, but also simply for leisure and as a meeting place.

## 9. SUMMARY

This study has investigated the functions of and obstacles confronting three public libraries in Mali in the light of post-colonialism. On a local level in three different regions of Mali, observations and interviews have been conducted to answer my questions in fulfilling the aim

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<sup>133</sup> Sturges 1998, s. 138.

<sup>134</sup> Sturges 1998, s. 138.

<sup>135</sup> Frank 1966, s. 1785.

<sup>136</sup> Sturges 1998, s. 113.

<sup>137</sup> Wallerstein 2004, s. 50.

of this study: What is a public library according to users, librarians, library employers and decision makers in Mali? How is the public library used? Which obstacles might the public library face? Does post-colonialism explain the situation of the three investigated libraries? The results from the field study have been analysed with concepts from the middle range theories such as LIS in Africa within a post-colonial theoretic framework.

The study's results disclose that the majority of library users are educated boys. But there are also other categories of people who use it such as state-employees, pensioners and a few girls for example. The majority of them are, though, young pupils and students. The public libraries play a very important role for these users, according to the informants, as they use it for learning, for facilitating their schooling and also for leisure.

Obstacles facing these public libraries today are rooted in the effects of colonialism and hinder development. Problems are linked to poverty which inhibits public libraries from providing adequate documentation and, in consequence, from fulfilling users' requirements. Mali, situated in the periphery of the world-system, is exploited by the core states where France is the most important in this case. This also has affects on its public library service as the library service is dependent on foreign aid. When the documentation is chosen from abroad it often becomes irrelevant for the Malian readers as it not always corresponds to the needs of the context. Other obstacles that hinder these three Malian public libraries are, for example, oral tradition, lack of recognition, apathy of the public and illiteracy. To take part in the library's services and documentation one has to be literate. It is, though, problematic as less than 19% of adults in Mali know how to read and write while the public libraries' information provided is written.

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### ***10.3 NONE PUBLISHED RESOURCES***

#### **10.3.1 Tutors**

Fatogoma Diakité

Siaka Coulibaly

#### **10.3.2 Interviewees with Fictitious Names**

Amadou, student, 22 years, Bougouni [2006-11-09]

Boubacar, student, 21 years, Bougouni [2006-11-14]

Cheikh, student from Ivory Coast, 18 years, Bougouni [2006-11-10]

Djénéba, student, 13 years, Bougouni [2006-11-23]

Fanta, student, 15 years, Bougouni [2006-11-21]

Gaoussou, professional, 52 years, Bougouni [2006-11-13]

Lamine, librarian, Bougouni [2006-11-10]

Mohammed, employer, Bougouni [2006-11-18]

Djibril, decision maker, Bougouni [2006-11-17]

Fodé, breeding engineer, 32 years, Tombouctou [2006-12-20]

Habib, student, 10 years, Tombouctou [2006-12-16]

Ibrahim, student, 8 years, Tombouctou [2006-12-16]

Jalal, student, 14 years, Tombouctou [2006-12-16]

Kadialy, student, 16 years, Tombouctou [2006-12-16]

Naré, apprentice, 36 years, Tombouctou [2006-12-16]

Oumar, student, 11 years, Tombouctou [2006-12-16]

Papa, student, 10 years, Tombouctou [2006-12-16]

Ladji, librarian, Tombouctou [2006-12-14]

Mamadou, employer, Tombouctou [2006-12-19]

Dramane, decision maker, Tombouctou [2006-12-19]

Ramata, student in humanity science, 20 years, Koulikoro [2007-01-05]

Salif, student in sociology, 27 years, Koulikoro [2007-01-05]

Tata, student in English, 18 years, Koulikoro [2007-01-03]

Lobi, librarian, Koulikoro [2007-01-04  
Modibo, employer, Koulikoro [2007-01-05]  
Diallo, decision maker, Koulikoro [2007-01-04]  
Doudou, decision maker, Koulikoro [2007-01-04

## 11. APPENDICES

### *11.1 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS*

AFLAM	Appui à la Filière du Livre au Mali
ALED	Association pour la Lecture, l'Education et le Développement au Mali
AMM	Association des Municipalités du Mali
CNLP	Centre National de la Lecture Publique, which is a part of DNAC that is a part of the ministry of culture in Mali
CODE/OCED	Organisation Canadienne pour l'Éducation au Service du Développement
DDC	Dewey Decimal Classification System
DNBD	Direction Nationale des Bibliothèques et de la Documentation
DNAC	Direction National de l'Action Culturelle
EC	European Commission
FLASH	Faculté des Lettres, Langues, Arts et Sciences Humaines
IFM	Institut de Formation des Maîtres, which is a post-graduate teacher training institute
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
LIS	Library and Information Science
MFS	Minor Field Study
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OLP	Opération Lecture Publique
PLS	Public Library System
SIDA	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency



## ***11.2 INTERVIEW GUIDE***

Date and place of the interview:

### **USE**

- What is a library according to you?
  - In general
  - The public library
- Why do you use the library?
  - Reading
  - Information
  - Education
  - Meetings
  - Animations
  - Other
- Why do not people use the library?
  - Illiteracy
  - Preference of oral information
  - No need
  - No interest
  - No sufficient of access
  - No recognision
  - Other
- How can one change this?
  - Other missions
  - Other tasks

### **MISSIONS**

- Which are the most important missions of the library?
  - Democratization
  - Education
  - Information
  - Literating
  - Access to knowledges
  - Fight against poverty
  - Animations
  - Reading
  - Place of meeting
  - Other
- Does the public library play a specific role?
- What does the public library contribute with?
  - Reading

- Information
- Education
- What is the difference of a public library decentralised and a public library in Bamako?
- Could the library offer other services?
- If there were no public library in this city, is there any other institutions that could offer the same services?
- Volontairy adds

#### QUESTIONS TO EMPLOYERS AND OTHER RESPONSIBLE

- What is your mission for the public library?
- How does your position function in relation to the public library?
- Who is the target group?

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Name:  
Age:  
Occupation:  
Domicile:

#### SPECIFIC

Education:  
Years in the function:  
Responsability:

#### INFORMATION

### 11.3 OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Place.....

Date.....

#### DEMOGRAPHY

	Pers 1	Pers 2	Pers 3	Pers 4	Pers 5	Pers 6	Pers 7
Age							
Sex							
Domicile							
Occupation							

#### BEHAVIOUR

Loan	
Discussion	
Leisure	
Information	
research	
Consulting	
on the spot	
Working	
on the spot	
Meeting	
Inscription	
Information	

#### DEMOGRAPHY – Who use the public library?

	Pers 1	Pers 2	Pers 3	Pers 4	Pers 5	Pers 6	Pers 7
Age	18						
Sex	M						
Domicile	Bougouni						
Occupation	Student						

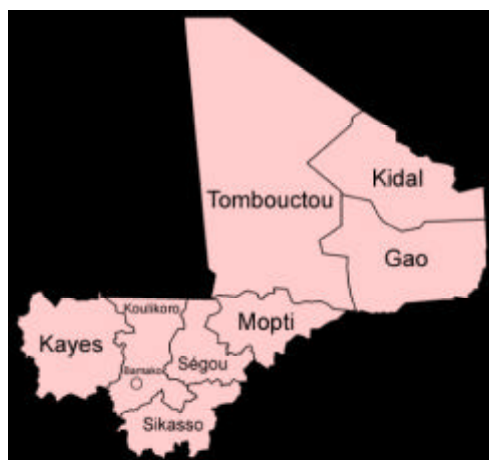
#### BEHAVIOUR – How is the public library used?

Loan	X
Discussion	X
Leisure	
Information	X
research	
Consulting	X
on the spot	
Working	
on the spot	
Meeting	
Inscription	
Information	

## 11.4 MAPS OF MALI



Mali with some important cities. © Greenwichmeantime



The eight regions and the district of Bamako. © Wikipedia

## 11.5 ORIGINAL QUOTATIONS

### 11.5.1 Quotations Bougouni

#### Page 26

C'est un endroit conçu pour pouvoir garder documentation et mettre au service publique, ce public peut être des élèves, des fonctionnaires, toutes personnes qui desirent d'approfondir un peu sa connaissance. (Lamine)

C'est là où on range les livres et là où les enfants, les gens peuvent venir s'informer et avoir des informations, améliorer ses, nos connaissances. (Fanta)

#### Page 27

C'est ce bâtiment dans lequel on loge ces livres, pas n'importe quels livres, mais les livres adaptés aux besoins culturelles, hein, besoin d'information de population. [...] Ce qu'on veut apprendre chez eux, qu'est-ce que ça nous intéresse et que ça soit aussi adapté à notre culture. (Mohammed)

La bibliothèque permet de faire connaître aux enfants, aux adultes et l'humanité entière, ce qui est passé et ce qui est en train de se faire et ce qui va se faire, parce que c'est les livres qui montrent ça. Sans connaissance des livres, les choses disparaissent, donc la bibliothèque est pour nous un trésor. (Djibril)

#### Page 28

J'utilise la bibliothèque pour m'informer, améliorer ma connaissance [...] et faire la connaissance des nouveaux livres, et puis connaître le monde, d'évoluer des écrivains, les nouveaux écrivains et les anciens, me former sur la littérature. Je le fais aussi pour les contes, pour enregistrer les contes, pour pouvoir dire quelques choses à des petits enfants [...] et puis, j'aime même des livres, j'aime la lecture, c'est pour cela que je viens à la bibliothèque. Tout simplement j'aime des livres et faire la lecture. (Fanta)

Bon, ça m'a fait quelque chose parce que j'ai connu beaucoup de choses [...] vraiment ça a facilité mon école. Depuis que je suis inscrite à la bibliothèque, je sais très bien lire mes leçons. Si tu ne sais pas lire tes leçons tu ne peux pas apprendre. Mais si tu sais lire tu peux apprendre. Grâce à la bibliothèque j'ai été la première de ma classe. (Djénéba)

Même si y'a trop des projets, moi-même par exemple, si j'ai des ennuis à la maison je viens carrément à la bibliothèque. [...] Oui, oui, si j'ai un problème je rends à la bibliothèque, même s'il n'y a personne ici, je viens seul, m'asseoir sur la table, je prends un livre comme ça. En lisant je oublie des problèmes. (Cheikh)

Je dit pour des raisons personnelles parce que y'a des élèves pour préparer leurs examens, ils n'ont pas assez de documents, ils sont obligés souvent de passer par la bibliothèque pour avoir des documents et pour tirer profit. Y'a cet aspect. Y'a l'aspect aussi des gens qui veulent travailler pour un service, y'a des gens qui veulent travailler pour le gouvernement, pour les ONG's. C'est dans la bibliothèque qu'on retrouve les choses qu'on n'a pas, qu'on trouve pas. (Djibril)

#### Page 29

On ne peut pas faire d'étude sans lire les autres écrivains donc on est obligé. Si tu veux vraiment avancer si tu veux vraiment être un intellectuel il faut venir à la bibliothèque. C'est là, c'est le moyen qui peut te soutenir à aller ailleurs. (Cheikh)

Comme au lieu de s'asseoir, ou fait du thé en groupe, bavarder, si tu viens pour lire ça va te permettre de connaître quelque chose. On peut mettre ça comme utilité. Ça nous aide quoi. Ça nous aide beaucoup vraiment. J'ai beaucoup, depuis que je fréquente la bibliothèque, ça m'a permis de connaître beaucoup de choses et puis en explications des mots. J'ai, ça a développé mon intelligence quoi. (Fanta)

Vous savez qu'ici on n'a pas assez de moyens de procurer tous les livres nécessaires, donc la bibliothèque ça serait une chance pour nous où il y a des livres qu'on peut avoir facilement sans donner de l'argent quoi, sans, moins cher quoi. [---] Dans les livres on peut avoir toutes les informations possibles, donc on a pas besoin de voyager pour connaître tel ou tel chose. On a tous dans les livres dans les bibliothèques. Donc il faut oser lire des livres, c'est tout. [---] On apprend beaucoup de choses dans les bibliothèques donc ça nous ouvre les yeux ici. (Amadou)

## Page 30

J'invite les gens à fréquenter la bibliothèque, parceque une bibliothèque sans lecteurs n'est plus une bibliothèque. (Djibril)

Ils preferent aller faire autres choses qui peut peut-être leur rapporter un peu d'argent, ou bien, en tous cas, creer autres relations apart le livre. [...] Les gens, ils n'aiment pas beaucoup de la lecture, c'est dur, c'est à dire que c'est une perte de temps. (Lamine)

## Page 31

Les filles ont des travaux ménagers à la maison. Les filles n'ont pas beaucoup de temps pour venir à la bibliothèque. Elles font des travaux pour leur mères. Moi aussi. Quand je quitte ici je vais faire la vaisselle, parceque ma maman n'a pas des servants. (Djénéba)

Les garçons sont libres de jouer ce qu'ils veulent, ils peuvent venir et s'informer ici, lire, faire des lectures, alors que les filles sont occupées à la maison. On n'a pas du temps et c'est pour cela que les garçons dépassent les filles à l'école. (Fanta)

Ca peut être un problème de temps parce que si on voit les jeunes filles lorsqu'elle quittent l'école, elles partent à la maison. C'est pour aider leur maman très generalement. Bon, sauf si elles viennent s'abonner ici et qu'elles sortent avec des livres, sinon, la lecture sur place, je pense qu'on a pas de temps, pour venir lire, parceque après l'école, très generalement, les filles aident leurs parents. (Boubacar)

Il y a des gens même qui croit que la bibliothèque n'est pas fait pour tout le monde. Si tu n'es pas fort, tu ne peux pas venir lire quelque chose ici. Ils ne savent même pas pourquoi on vient à la bibliothèque. Ils ne savent pas ça. C'est pour cela qu'ils ne viennent pas. Par manque du temps et puis [...] il y a des gens même qui disent que de lire, et s'informer ici, lire des livres, si c'est un perd du temps quoi. [...] Les gens ne connaissent pas l'utilité de la bibliothèque [...] les enfants ils ne savent pas pourquoi on vient à la bibliothèque et puis, ils croit que c'est pour les personnes agés quoi [...] et c'est reservé seulement aux gens qui ont plus de connaissance quoi. (Fanta)

## Page 32

Des livres qui pouvaient les aider à lire, à compter, à écrire, bon, malheureusement, nous on n'a pas ces documents là ici. [...] Comme c'est des gens qui n'ont pas été à l'école, ils n'ont pas été alphabétisé, mais, ils pensent quand venant ici, ils allaient avoir un livre, modèle, pour un débutant. [...] Il y a certains qui viennent mais ils ne sont pas satisfait parceque nous on n'a pas des livres pour ça. [...] Si le livre existait ici, je pouvait au moins le permet de prendre 30 minutes de mon temps pour les expliquer un peu comment on peut utiliser ce livre là. Mais comme on n'a pas, donc, c'est dommage. (Lamine)

## 11.5.2 Quotations Tombouctou

### Page 34

On y trouve beaucoup des livres, ça permet de se cultiver, de comprendre, les autographes, on comprends trop de choses à la bibliothèque [...] des explications, on y fait des connaissances, on passe le temps et puis ça cultive, et ensuite la bibliothèque c'est un lieu de rencontre, on se rencontre meme si on est plus agé que l'autre on se partage des idées, on se créer des liens d'amitié, de fraternité. (Kadialy)

C'est un lieu d'information, de formation, et de loisir, de rencontre, d'échange entre des lecteurs que c'est leur première fois qu'ils se rencontrent et c'est un lieu idéal pour echanger, pour se connaître, et la plupart de temps ça interesse les uns et les autres parce que dans l'avenir ils se connaissent et ils se complètent sans compter que pour ta propre formation, pour continuer ta formation tu as tous les ouvrages qu'il faut. (Ladji)

C'est toute une mémoire, c'est toute une connaissance, c'est toute une culture, parceque quand on parle de la bibliothèque, on parle de la connaissance, c'est de la base de la connaissance. (Dramane)

### Page 35

J'aime trop la bibliothèque. Je viens tous les jours. Je prends les livres, je lis et je comprends. (Papa)

On l'utilise [...] pour sa propre formation, pour se distraire, pour oublier certains ennues, demander conseils defois parce que y a des livres dès que vous les lisez c'est comme si quelqu'un est venu en conseil à vous à trouver votre solution, et vous soucis sont épuisés. C'est un loisir parce que en lisant tu es distrait. Tu es seule mais tu n'est pas seul. (Ladji)

### Page 36

On peut avoir certaines informations dans les bibliothèques, on n'as pas eu dans sa formation. Ça c'est un rôle particulier que moi je compte à la bibliothèque, en général quand on vient on est intéressé par les livres qui sont un peu de domain de formation mais on peut aussi consulter certains livres qui sont pas dans ton domain de formation, donc ça c'est un domain d'ouverture pour tout le monde. (Fodé)

Tu peux venir, tu n'as pas besoin de payer, tu n'as pas besoin d'être fils de riche, fils de pauvre, venir d'un mileu sociale, venir d'un autre, tout le monde y vient où se trouvent... (Kadialy)

Si tu viens à la bibliothèque tu peux comprendre beaucoup de choses. [...] Même si tu ne sais pas un mot à la bibliothèque, à l'école on n'a pas le temps de le te dire, mais ici on te dit, on te fait comprendre bien. (Oumar)

C'est une richesse. La richesse c'est koi ? C'est la connaissance, la culture, de tous ce que nous sommes en train de faire sur cette terre là, du tous se reunis dans une bibliotèque [...] quand tu viens tu t'intéresses, tu regardes, et là tu vas decouvrir, et tu vas informer, tu vas te cultiver et tu vas informer les autres sur tous qui est autour de la vie. (Naré)

### Page 37

La meilleure forme d'alphabétiser la population c'est de leur créer l'opportunité, la facilité, l'ambiance dans les bibliothèques, l'opportunité, la façon de partir, de donner l'occasion, le moyen de se rendre, alors là, en se rendant, obligatoirement ils vont chasser l'analphabétisme parce que à force de regarder même des images, tu vas t'exprimer, tu vas comprendre et tu vas apprendre

d'autres raisonnement. [...] Même si tu ne sais pas lire, finalement petit à petit, même en entendant les gens parlent entre eux, finalement tu capte certains mots, donc petit à petit tu vas être alphabétiser de toi même. (Ladji)

Ils s'expriment bien, ils n'ont plus froid, ils n'ont plus peur, ils arrivent à questionner. Peut-être à l'école ils ont un peu de gênes à parler devant les camerades qui vont rire, ou le maître qui n'accepte pas certains question, tandis qu'à la bibliothèque avec les animations enfantine, l'enfant arrive quand même à sauter son naturel, à être libre, il s'exprime bien, il est content, il se voit un peu à l'aise parcequ'il arrive à s'exprimer comme il veut, donc c'est un impact. Tous ceux qui fréquentent la bibliothèque régulièrement parmi des enfants au niveau de leurs examens que ça soit au niveau primaire, secondaire ou de fondamentale, ils réussissent ses examens. (Ladji)

C'est le fait de s'adonner à la bibliothèque, de se donner corps et ame. C'est sa deuxième femme, c'est pour cette raison. Après sa femme, c'est la bibliothèque. Ils n'ont que les livres, ils n'ont que la lecture, ils n'ont que les enfants, ils n'ont que faire progresser sa bibliothèque. (Dramane)

## Page 38

Cette bibliothèque est située dans un coin où elle n'est pas du tout exposée au grand public, parce qu'on passe, c'est un peu timide, c'est caché, c'est dans une grande enceinte. (Ladji)

Pour venir à la bibliothèque, il faudra être capable de lire, il faut être capable de comprendre. Mais moi, si je ne viens pas à la bibliothèque, c'est là, si je ne suis pas rentré à l'école, j'en ai rien à chercher à la bibliothèque. (Dramane)

## 11.5.3 Quotations Koulikoro

### Page 40

C'est, disons la source du savoir. C'est un vieillard, disons, parce que chez nous c'est des vieillards qui détiennent tout le savoir. (Tata)

### Page 41

Elle représente une vitrine mondiale d'abord, parce qu'il y a assez des pensées là-dedans, parce que c'est la mémoire même du, je peux dire du monde, quoi. (Diallo)

### Page 42

J'utilise la bibliothèque pour la recherche spécifique. J'utilise la bibliothèque pour ses romans, pour ses bandes-dessinées, pour ses journaux. En fait, la seule chose qui me pousse vers la bibliothèque c'est la passion de lire, c'est tout. J'aime, quelque soit des livres, j'aime bien lire, sauf des livres d'horreurs là. Je n'aime pas vraiment, et les sciences fictions. En fait, je n'appelle pas ça livre. Les sciences fictions et livres d'horreurs c'est, c'est du commerce. (Tata)

### Page 43

C'est un lieu de rencontre et de convivialité qui permet aux citoyens de vraiment s'instruire et se distraire dans un cadre assez agréable et dans un cadre instructif. Donc, la bibliothèque est vraiment importante pour moi. Malgré une situation de réalité, ça permet aux gens vraiment de savoir qu'il y a un endroit où on peut trouver des gens, où on peut trouver des choses, parler, causer et se distraire avec des éléments dans un lieu bien précis. Ça c'est important pour des sociétés, savoir



où aller parfois. [...] Donc, pour moi la bibliothèque est très importante dans la société. Si elle n'y est pas il fallait trouver un moyen de la créer. (Lobi)

La tradition orale, on le dit, on l'écote. On peut l'oublier, le transformer, parceque on peut écouter la même chose et le comprendre differentment, or le texte est là pour instituer la chose comme ça se voit. Ça ne derange pas trop la tradition orale, mais ça renforce la tradition orale parce que ce qu'on dit, si on l'écrit ça va rester, or la tradition orale est transformer de bouche à bouche, d'année à année, on n'a pas toujours la vrai version de fait. Bon, nous nous sommes souhaité de l'oralité et l'orale va être plus important que l'écrit, mais l'écrit renforce ce qu'on dit, et puis ca maintient, voila. (Lobi)

Ce sont des livres qui parlent beaucoup de la realité d'un autre milieu. (Salif)

#### Page 44

Parce que c'est des livres qui n'est, qui ne sont pas conformés à nos mileu, à nos réalité. Ce sont des livres qui sont venu de la France et que ce sont des français qui ont besoin de ça, alors que nous avons d'autres, nous avons besoin d'autres connaissances qui sont propre de chez nous. (Salif)

Les bibliothèques maliennes ne choisissent pas leur livres, on leur envoie. Si le choix était fait par le milieu, ça allait augmonter le nombre des lecteurs. (Lobi)

#### Page 45

Ici on a un milieu ouvert où partout tu peux trouver avec qui echanger, donc ca diminue l'utilisation des bibliothèques. (Lobi)

## ***11.6 PICTURES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN BOUGOUNI***



## ***11.7 PICTURES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN TOMBOUCTOU***

