



**AFRICA IN MOVIMENTO / AFRICA ON THE MOVE**

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**TITLE: COLONIAL EDUCATION IN MAURITANIA: A FAILURE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE**

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**ABSTRACT:**

In Mauritania French colonial schools produced a limited increase of the education rate. Nevertheless they had a relevant impact in the Mauritanian society because they showed how traditional Islamic schools were no longer suitable to create leaders and administrators of the modern State. If Arab-Berbers mostly refused French schools, some families of the traditional élites sent their sons to the “schools of the Infidels”, as it was for the future first president of Mauritania, Mokhtar Ould Daddah. Moreover, black-Mauritians used French schools to improve their social conditions by entering the public administration, and few village schools permitted education to some Haratines, former slaves of the Moorish society, who later became leaders of their community and fought against slavery still afflicting other Haratines. The paper uses primary sources of the French West Africa’s archives and secondary sources.

**ACADEMIC PROFILE**

*Giuseppe Maimone holds a Ph.D. in History and institutions of Africa. He collaborates with CoSMICA, University of Catania (Italy). His research focuses on the Haratines of Mauritania and West African Contemporary History.*