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DEMOCRATIZATION AND ISLAM: THE SENEGALESE EXCEPTION

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ABSTRACT: This thesis analyzes the factors conducive to secularism in Senegal. It shows that Islam is in fact compatible with democracy and freedom. Indeed, despite the persistence of authoritarianism in many Islamic societies, Senegal, with a 94% Muslim population, experienced a successful political transition from 1960 to 2000. The articulation between religion and politics differs from the scenario observed in other Muslim countries like Algeria, Sudan, Iraq and Syria. Senegal is a secular state with a democratic political culture that stemmed from the colonial era.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Senegal is located in West Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean and has five neighboring Muslim countries, Mauritania, Mali, Gambia, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. The country was under French domination until 1960. It is a secular state with a strong presidency but has a reputation for transparency in governance. The current president, Abdoulaye Wade, was elected in 2000 following free and fair elections. The country now has a multiparty political regime with more than 65 political parties. The most notorious parties are the Democratic Party, the Socialist Party, the APR (Alliance Pour la Republique) or Alliance for the Republic, REWMI (meaning the Nation) and The APDS (African Party for Democracy and Socialism). Recently, many influential religious leaders such as Serigne Modou Kara Mbacke and Bess Dou Niakk, who have many followers within the Murid and Tijania Muslim brotherhoods, decided to register their movement as a political party. While many political experts did not think that his party would be proper within the political arena, Serigne Modou Kara Mbacke was able to have two seats at the House of Representatives during the last legislative elections of 2014. Meanwhile, a strong civil society in Senegal, which includes ethnic and religious institutions, has consistently participated in the political decision-making process. Since colonization, these social organizations have prevented authoritarianism and contributed to the consolidation of the secular Senegalese state. However, in many other Muslim countries like Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, Sudan and Iraq, religious sects created political chaos as a result of a systematic marginalization sometimes by a minority group who controls the State power.

This case is worth examining. In fact, democracy and secularism are problematic for many Islamic societies. Yet, they worked in Senegal. For R. Barro (1997), Professor of Economics at Harvard University, there is a positive connection between economic

development and democracy. He states that GDP per capita and life expectancy influence democracy and civil liberties in a country. However, Senegal is one of the least developed countries and has experienced a democratic transition in a period of economic crisis¹. Political change in Senegal stemmed from a particular colonial and post-colonial experience. There were three elements that favored the emergence of democracy including 1) a representative government 2) the creation of an important civil society, and 3) the organization of free and fair elections in 2000. This was also the result of a significant role played by the Muslim Brotherhood which participated in democracy building rather than opposing secular values. Finally, the presence of a religious and ethnic tolerance paved the way for political dialogue, compromise, and political stability.

For Samuel P. Huntington, a former Political Science professor at Harvard University, these factors are significant in order to understand democratic transitions in the third world. He has analyzed the dynamics of political change in thirty-five countries in Asia and Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s. The most predictive aspects of democracy in Huntington's theory, also significant in our case, are the transformation in religious and social institutions and the rise of civic values (Huntington, 1991). In Senegal, Muslim Brotherhoods groups like the Mouride and the Tijanya², and ethnic groupings like the Lebou³, played the role of political allies for the state and the role of a civil society as well. The country experienced many moments of instability especially during and after elections. Political opponents usually advocated chaos and instability when they lose political battles and every time religious leaders were very vocal about not obeying any leaders who promoted violence and political instability. The Mourides contributed to the economic improvement of the country by modernizing the

¹ The 2000 presidential elections coincided with the devaluation of Senegal's currency: the CFA

² These are the principal Muslim sects in Senegal.

³ The Lebou are the most important ethnic group in the capital, Dakar.

most important economic sector which is agriculture (Copans, 1980). Religious and social institutions also prevented authoritarianism because of their ability to influence the decision-making process and they stressed the primacy of civic values, mutual understanding, and the necessity of having a representative government in a pluralist society. Many authoritarian Muslim nations like Egypt, Pakistan, Mauritania, or Algeria lack at least one of these factors. Egypt for instance experienced a long political unrest as a result of the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood and its elected president Mohamed Morsi, to sustain a democratic ruling of the country. In Pakistan, the Talibans, who consider themselves as an Islamic organization, still remain hostile to any collaboration with the government which they consider pro-west. Similarly, the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front undertook one of the deadliest war against the Algerian government and its supporters following their defeat during the general elections in 1991. According to Earl Conteh-Morgan (1997), a Professor of International Studies at the University of South Florida, a country reaches democracy if a regime change occurs through free and fair elections but free and fair elections are principal challenges for democracy in Muslim countries.

Many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa experienced military coups as a result of social and economic failure but also as a result of a lack of support from various pressure groups within the political landscape. Indeed, on August 4, 1983 in Burkina Faso, Captain Blaise Compaoré overthrew President Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo, replacing him with Captain Thomas Sankara. On October 15, 1987, himself was overthrown by Captain Blaise Compaore. On September 3, 1987 in Burundi, Pierre Buyoya overthrew Jean-Baptiste Bagaza and on March 15, 2003 in the Central African Republic François Bozizé overthrew Ange-Félix Patassé. Similarly in Chad, where 85% of the population is Muslim, Idriss Déby overthrew Hissène Habré in 1990. There are just few examples among many to illustrate how many countries in Africa

experienced military coups as an option for change instead of democratic elections. Meanwhile, between 2000 and 2012, Senegal, with more than 95% of Muslims, democratically elected three presidents and experienced completed regime change. The 2000 election represented a major event in Senegal's political history as it marked the end of a forty years of Socialist regime and also undermined the assumptions that a predominantly Muslim country is somewhat unable to evolve into a secular and democratic state.

This thesis is composed of five chapters. The first chapter introduces Senegal and explains the reasons why it is important to analyze this example of democratic success. The second chapter of this study is devoted to the contributions given by prominent scholars in the field of democracy such as Robert Dahl, Carol Pateman, Earl Conteh-Morgan, Samuel Huntington, Arendt Lijphart, Vadim Volkov, and Bora Konra. This chapter will also examine challenges for democracy in the Muslim world, examined by Arab scholars such as Abdelwahab El Affendi, Ahmet Shafaat, Makhlof Obermeyer, and Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im. The third chapter will examine the lack of democracy in other Muslim countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Pakistan, and Sudan. Chapter four is devoted to analyzing political events such as constitutional reforms and elections that show the existence of a democratic culture in Senegal.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars approach democratization from different perspectives. Robert Dahl, Professor of Political Science at Yale University, values the principle of equal participation as a fundamental condition for democracy. His concern is that the people to whom political power belongs must retain it. He contends that a state is democratic when it widens suffrage to everyone in the decision making process (Dahl, 1956). Dahl's conception of democracy is shared by other scholars. Carole Pateman, Professor of Political Science at the University of California at Los Angeles, defines democracy as the rule of the people by means of the maximum participation of all (Pateman, 1970).

Classical examples of democratic practices are problematic for understanding modern democracies. The Athenian democracy, which involved a direct participation of citizens in the decision-making process, is an impractical ideal for most nation-states. Dahl's "Madisonian theory of democracy" expresses his idea of civic participation at a level different than the Greek city-states. The representative structures in the nation-states must serve the interests of all the people without oppressing any of them. Dahl's contribution is important when attempting to explain democratic transitions in the Third World. Indeed, among the democratic factors in that part of the world, economic improvement is one of the least plausible. According to Freedom House countries like Senegal, Benin, and Lesotho are considered free countries in its 2015 Freedom in the World report (Freedom House 2015 Freedom in the World Report). However, those countries attained democracy during an economic crisis. Regime change resulted from the renovation of political and social institutions in a more representative government.

Dahl shows that compromise and justice are central to the success of democracy. As he explains, democratization is: "An effort to bring off a compromise between the power of a majority and the power of minorities, between the political equality of all adult citizens on the one side, and the desire to limit their sovereignty on the other" (Dahl, 1956 p.4).

Earl Conteh-Morgan examines democratization unfolding in developing countries principally in Africa. His theory incorporates the key factors that help explain political transition in many developing countries. For him, a multiparty system, national conferences on political reforms and free and fair elections influence regime change, among other things (Conteh-Morgan, 1997). However, Dahl's principle of equal political civic participation is valued in this theory. He states that democracy results from a process of establishing a form of governance in which mechanisms are created to ensure participation at all levels of politics, responsible leadership, and civil liberties (Dahl, 1956). Nonetheless, the key factors of his theory are free and fair elections and the introduction of a multiparty system after a long period of single-party rule. This factor is significant in our case study. In fact, the Senegalese political development has been characterized by a shift from a one party system established by the first president Senghor in 1960, to a multiparty system extended by the second president, Abdou Diouf in 1981.

The idea of constructive democracy was also developed by Samuel P. Huntington who conducted a study on thirty five countries that achieved democracy. In the *Third Wave* (1991), he identifies the factors that led to change in those countries. For him, a stronger appeal for legitimacy and accountability by populations leads on many occasions to military coups which can overturn authoritarian regimes.

Economic development is also a significant factor for political improvement according to Huntington. Indeed, it improves living standards and creates more sophisticated societies

which are more prone to survive democratization. He gives the same importance to change in religious institutions such as the Muslim Brotherhood groups. He also believes that the more organized they are the less authoritarian is the government as officials will be forced to compromise with the brotherhoods. Huntington's contribution is central in understanding regime change in the Third World, where the majority of the populations are highly fragmented.

But, Arendt Lijphart, Political Science Professor at the University of California at San Diego, has also examined political transition in some fragmented societies in Europe. He uses the term "consociational democracy" in order to describe the political system of Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Democratization did not follow the traditional patterns of democratic transition in other free countries. In fact, Lijphart argues that the populations in each of those nations are deeply fragmented along ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, and ideological lines. In each case a "consociational" approach to power-sharing was adopted in order to minimize the chances of a potentially destabilizing implementation of straightforward majority rule (Lijphart, 1968). By the 1970s, the success of these states in negotiating their way to political unity despite their societal cleavages made them normative models for other segmented societies. Lijphart took the lead in advocating the "consociational model" as a blueprint for pluralistic and fragmented societies.

In the same perspective, Vadim Volkov (2005), Political Science Professor at the European University at St. Petersburg, conducted a study in Russia and South Africa. For him, the character of the state plays a major role in determining whether or not a democratic transition will be successful. In South Africa for instance, the state apparatus remained relatively intact through the transition, which affected its efficiency and capacity to control

crime and corruption. Meanwhile in Russia, the democratic transition created a crisis of the state. Private security forces, along with networks of organized crime, came to replace the state in many key areas (Volkov, 2005). In his study, Volkov examined the factors of democratization in Asia and Africa. He concludes that "power-sharing and cultural elements of low familism" turned out to be the strongest predictors of democracy while economic factors had limited effects (Volkov, 2005).

However, Bora Kanra, Professor at the University of Canberra in Australia, analyzes the success of democratic transition in Turkey. For him, political success results from a long-running emphasis on dialogue, particularly within the Muslim community (Kanra, 2005). In this case, democracy is contingent on the nature of the deliberative framework. The author uses Habermas's theory of communicative action and Dryzenk's theory on order to explain the implementation of a secular and democratic state in Turkey. The triumph of democratic ideals in Turkey answers the question of whether or not Islam can accommodate democratic values. In the Turkish society, deliberation is more than a decision-making process. It is regarded as a social learning process oriented to developing an understanding of other's claims. In fact, as he states:

Once participants acknowledge that they are interacting with representatives of other traditions, the purpose of deliberation becomes one of appropriation and evaluation other perspectives by mastering the skills of putting oneself into others shoes. (Kanra 2005. 515)

The prevalence of authoritarianism and poor governance in Muslim countries has attracted a large body of scholars. Some of them maintain that Islam is not compatible with democracy. Indeed, for Samuel Huntington, (1996), Islam is not compatible with democracy. With the exception of Turkey and Pakistan, which he considered very weak "democracies",

efforts to have an emergence of a secular state in the Muslim world has failed. For Huntington: “This failure has its source at least in part in the inhospitable nature of the Islamic culture and society to Western liberal concepts,” (Huntington, 1996. 114) resulting in a clash between the Muslim civilization and the western civilization. Others like Charfi, A. (2005), believes the negative aspect of Islam is promoted by ideological rather than religious motives and that certain radical organizations like Al-Qaeda and the terrorist group known as ISIL(Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) use the religion to implement their policies of hegemony and exploitation. His findings reinforces the argument that Islamic societies can accommodate democracy.

As a matter of fact, the following scholars examined the solutions to the lack of democracy in Muslim countries. *The Elusive Reformation (2005)* by Abdelwahab El Affendi stresses the issue of modern Islam. El Affendi is a Professor at the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of Westminster. He believes that the problem is not just the absence of democracy in the Muslim world, but there is an issue in consensual governance and that Islamic democratic movements should follow the western liberal democratic example. They should have an intra-Islamic tendency capable of promoting western democratic ideals. Certain Muslim communities (like the Ahmadis in Pakistan, the Bahais in Iran, the Republican Brothers in Sudan, or the Mourides in Senegal) gave a positive response to the western liberal democracy. In Senegal, the Mouride brotherhoods chose to collaborate with French colonizers rather than systematically oppose their economical project. Mouride leaders found some French expertise which could be benefit the Senegalese society. Some of those aspects are the importance of punctuality, the art of building solid and sustainable houses and hospitals, their

knowledge in the medical field, etc. In fact, western societies experienced long periods of democratic construction before a solid liberal and secular state could be implemented. Turkey and Iran, among others, could be taken as examples of countries that are in that critical stage of democratic construction. Over the past decade, Muslim leaders and experts of Sharia or Islamic law have been proving that Islam can advocate democratic ideals necessary for the peace and development in Muslim societies. In fact the prophet Mohamed (pbuh)⁴ first informed that a democratic decision making process is a fundamental aspect of the Qur'an. However, the application of Islamic teachings has been problematic in the Muslim world after the death of the prophet Mohamed (Peace Be unto Him). The antagonism toward secular values in the majority of the Arab world is due to the lack of a unanimous approach to understanding the Qu'ran.

In *Some Views on Dictator* (1985), Dr. Ahmat Shafaat explains how pro-dictatorship supporters justified the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes. According to the pro-dictatorship tenets, democracy is not suitable for the Middle East because it is for the educated and civilized world. However, Dr. Shafaat reminds us that: "God behaves to a people according to what they expect of Him ... God has both the good and evil to give. Lucky are we if we hope for good things from Him and unlucky are those who expect evil from Him." (Shafaat, 1985, 44). Indeed, political transformations have started to take place in some Muslim countries. Yet, these transformations are in their early stages. Scholars like Samuel P. Huntington examined this transformation and came up with significant findings. In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996), he explores the positive connection between Islam and authority. He states that the unusual degree of subordination of women and the difference

⁴ PBUH stands for Peace Be Upon Him

between male and female literacy rates, if not adjusted, will prevent Muslim countries from achieving democracy. For Huntington, the systematic oppression of women in Muslim countries prevents the oppressor's own development and freedom.

Other scholars consider individual rights as central to the political development in the Arab world. In *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Reproductive Rights (1995)*, Carla Makhoul Obermeyer explores the extent to which western principles of human rights are transposed into Muslim countries. Obermeyer is a Professor of Population and Anthropology in the Department of Population and International Health at Harvard University. She compares gender rights as defined in Islam to individual rights from a western perspective. When examining the two different sets of principles, she concludes that their concerns about men and women's rights can considerably bridge the gap between the two worlds.

In certain Muslim areas such as the Middle East, where the respect for women rights is still problematic, the author criticizes the incompatibility between the notions of universality and equality, fundamental aspects of human rights, and the persistence of the principle of complementarity rather than equality in gender roles. In fact, the values that are critical to one culture seem to conflict with the values of another culture. Yet, it does not mean that the same Arab picture appears when principles about female and male rights are taken into consideration from a purely Islamic perspective. Indeed, she notes that: "one has to distinguish between what is Muslim, that is, practiced by people who are considered Muslim, and what is Islamic, that is reflecting the essential values of the religion"(Obermeyer, 1995, 370). Human rights violations are often times due to local and international politics, not religious principles. The cases of Sudan, Algeria, and Ivory Coast serve as examples of this statement. Competition

for power degenerated into a massacre in each of these countries. Religion was taken as a pretext to perpetrate violence and intolerance.

The introduction of religion into politics has created instability elsewhere. The role of Islam in politics has been examined by Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im (2008), Professor of Law at Emory University Law School. He establishes the connection between secularism, human rights and Islam, and maintains that a pure separation of the state and religion is not possible because political leaders are also believers. However, they should not let their religious beliefs influence the decision-making process and this seems to be inevitable. Therefore, neutrality is the ideal that political and even religious actors must go by. The political success of countries like the USA, Britain, and Germany can be explained by that neutrality. In certain Muslim states neutrality has contributed to political stability. In Senegal, for instance, Muslim brotherhoods retain a sufficient power but have not interfered in the political sphere. The Muslim brotherhoods in Algeria, for instance, adopted a clear political position and showed that they wanted to compete for the control of the government. As a consequence, chaos, intolerance and dictatorship prevailed in the country. As the author noted, religion does not incite conflict, but does advocate compromise (An-Na'im, 2008).

These authors have influenced the understanding of democratic transition in Muslim states. Their contributions show that regime change is also contingent upon the particularities of the societies. In fact, in some states democracy was influenced by the same factors that prevailed in Western countries such as economic development, justice, bureaucratic rationality, and the rule of law. In others, such as Muslim states, these factors might not be as

significant when political dialogue, compromise, ethnic inclusion, and the consultation of religious sects are examined.

The majority of Muslim states that experienced democracy are still facing difficulties concerning justice, economic development, or the rule of law. But in some states like Senegal, Mali, or Turkey the difficulties have proven to be less of an obstacle to democratic reform.

CHAPTER THREE: THE LACK OF DEMOCRACY IN OTHER MUSLIM COUNTRIES

Democracy remains a dilemma in many Muslim countries. However, there is not enough evidence to prove that Islam is the cause. To better understand the lack of democracy, the Freedom House surveyed more than 157 countries in 2001. The report shows that the overwhelming majority of Muslim countries are democratic underachievers because of their history or their culture (Karatnycky, A, 2001). Economic and regional factors can also contribute to explain the problem. The study has been analyzed by researchers. For Adrian Karatnycky, former President of the Freedom House, there are no true democracies or free countries within the Arab world, and a low portion of partly free or democratic countries among all majority Muslim states (Karatnycky, 2002). Similarly, research shows that many countries that experienced dictatorships, tribal wars, and a rather difficult foreign occupation aimed at exploiting local natural resources without assimilating local population, have struggled to develop democratic political regimes.

In fact, improvement toward a more liberal political system is relatively insignificant regardless of the "Third Wave" of democratization launched in the 1970s and the 1980s. The majority of Muslim societies rejected democracy because they considered it a threat to their religion. Among the cases analyzed by Karatnycky (2002), there were 47 Muslim countries and 145 non-Muslim countries. He discovered that only 23% of Muslim countries are free and 76% of non-Muslim are democracies. In other words, a non-Muslim state is three times more likely to evolve into a secular state. The report also states that very few Muslim entities are free such as Mali and Senegal. He also found out that democratic improvement is more effective in western countries (Karatnycky, 2002). Indeed, 35 countries became democracies in the last twenty years while the democracy gap increased in Islamic societies because the number of

free Muslim countries did not change (The 2001 Freedom House survey). This lack of democratic improvement is explained by certain factors.

Human rights violations, one of the most visible characteristics of non-democratic Muslim countries, are often due to a lack of tolerance towards other religions. In Nigeria, for instance, the fundamentalist Islamic forces wanted to impose Sharia law (the Arabic word for Islamic Law) in all the states where Muslims predominate. This situation was seen as a violation of individual rights, particularly for minorities and women.

The Freedom House's report gives few examples of Muslim countries where extremism compromised democratic transition: the Philippines, Albania, Sudan, and Indonesia. The Armed Islamic movement launched several attacks in the Philippines and posed a threat to the political stability that has prevailed since Philippines independence in 1946 (McKenna, 1998). In 2001, a new insurgency by Albanian Muslims contributed to the deterioration of the stability in the democratic state of Macedonia. The democratic transition in Indonesia has also been significantly affected by Islamic fundamentalists. As a matter of fact, they led attacks on predominantly Christian Chinese minorities (Karatnycky, 2004). Despite the fact that many Arab states officially banned religious extremism on their soil, radical Islam still prevails. Extremist religious groups oppose any form of secularism as a political system and are ready to confront its advocates. They also deny any right for minority groups to be able to practice another religion or live another lifestyle. Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt have taken an official position that condemns any kind of violent extremist activity on their land. But, radical Islamic groups like Al Qaeda were still able to develop within those countries and pose a real threat to anyone who opposes their views inside and outside those countries. It is

interesting to know the reason why even some of the biggest Muslim countries experience violence from radical Islamist groups like the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria that was responsible for the death of thousands Algerians in the 1990s.

If it is true that poverty and the lack of appropriate education exacerbate authoritarianism in Muslim societies, it is also significant to note that a common determinant of the rise of radicalism can be attributed to Islamic perception and historical and geographical background. In other words, Muslims have varied interpretations of their religion. In fact, understandings of Islam are shaped by both ethnicity and geography. Many Muslim states have had an unstable history. In these countries, certain interpretations of the Qur'an have led to violence against non-Muslims and non-believers. The majority of those countries have been involved in tribal wars for the sake of religious ideas or personal interests. Indeed, 72 out of the 207 episodes of major intrastate political violence took place in Muslim countries (Fish, 2002). But, the denial for Muslim societies to evolve into a secular state is not new. Indeed, Montesquieu, an eighteenth century writer believes that instability predisposed Muslim societies to authoritarianism. As he states:

The Christian religion is remote from pure despotism. The gentleness so recommended in the gospel stands opposed to the despotic fury with which a prince would mete out own justice and exercise his cruel ties ... The Mohammedan religion, which speaks only with a sword, continues to act on men with destructive spirit that founded it. (Cited by Fish 2002, 16)

Along the same lines, Samuel P. Huntington thinks that Muslim societies are prone to violence. He further disqualifies them for being able to evolve into successful democracies because of the absence of political stability (Huntington, 1996). The same thought is shared by Andrew Clark, who believes that the democracy gap can also be explained by the link between

religion and state (Clark, 1999). By comparing the Muslim culture to the western culture, Huntington states that "God and Caesar, church and state, spiritual and temporal authority, have been a prevailing dualism in western culture" (Cited by Fish, 2002, 20). However, the role of religion is very diverse in the many governments in countries where Islam is predominant. For instance, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria and Mauritania consider the Quran to be their constitution while Senegal, Mali and Niger have separation between State and religion. Nonetheless, it is significant to note that Islam advocate the link of them but does not advocate chaos and political upheaval in societies that do not have this link. Many scholars supports the idea that the link of religion and the state undermines democracy and Muslims have continued to believe that only a "religious leader" can provide good governance for their community, as Jamal Al Suwadi explains (Al Suwadi, 1995, 87). In fact, by releasing religious feelings from the political arena, secularization produces tolerance. It also allows for free expression of the entire community and the liberation of energies. As Marquand and Nettler put it:

The decline of religiosity actually strengthens citizens' capacities to live in less biased, more rational ways. God's departure from the world even promotes open minded tolerance, itself a vital ingredient of a pluralist democracy. (Marquand and Nettler, 2000, 5-6)

Bernard Lewis, Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, also wanted to show that poor governance in the Muslim world is due to the link between the state and religion. He explains that:

In Muslim theory church and state are not separate or separable institutions ... Such familiar pairs of words as lay and ecclesiastical, sacred and profane, spiritual and temporal ... have no equivalent in classical Arabic or in other Islamic languages, since the dichotomy they express, deeply rooted in Christian ..., was unknown in Islam until comparatively modern times. (Lewis, 1996, 62)

Steven Fish also did a cross national study of over 150 countries in order to determine the reason for the absence of secularism in Muslim societies. He came to the same conclusion that Muslim countries are democratic underachievers. The most significant factor in his study remains the subordination of women. There is no proof that the religion is the problem, he explains. However, his findings are important. High economic development results in a low level of social conflict, a more educated population, and consequently a stronger support for a secular state (Fish, 2002).

It exists cases where democratic transition occurred without significant economic development. From 1960 until 2000, Senegal has not experienced a regime change but successfully transitioned to secular state while under drastic economic constraints. Indeed, Senegal democratically elected President Abdoulaye Wade following an economic crisis caused by the devaluation of its currency. However, economic development allows a stronger and more sustainable democracy because poverty deteriorates the fabric of the society, which makes democracy much more difficult to achieve and solidify. The difference in colonial experiences also accounts for the state of democracy in a country. The British tradition of limiting governments by establishing codes of conduct for political leaders has influenced the emergence of democratic societies throughout the world such as in Ghana, Australia, or New Zealand.

By evolving within an unstable region, Muslims in the Middle East, for instance, are fighting for solutions to their political problems that stemmed from their historical background. In *Between Memory and Desire: the Middle East in a Troubled Age* (1999), Stephen Humphreys, a Professor of History and Islamic studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara, states that Middle Easterners are affected by their past, which is marked by wars and desperation.

Islam constitutes their only alternative and main basis for political action. It is often assumed that the association of Islam with Arab culture is the cause of radicalism among religious sects. Andrew Clark, professor of African and Global History at the University of North Carolina, claims that the link between Islam and Arab culture, explains the clash between state and religion in Muslim countries. He argues that the history of the Arab world is characterized by a predominance of tribal wars and massacres that have perpetrated radicalism and violence (Clark, 1999).

In addition, wars often explain why the Arabs have a strict interpretation of the Qur'an. For instance, Arab culture has been introduced in Algeria (a non-democratic country according to the Freedom House) since the 7th century as Numidians or Berbers occupied the country before the Ottoman Empire. However, Senegal has not really been in contact with Arab culture the way other societies have been and ethnic conflicts are quasi absent in the history of the country. Consequently, Jihad, commonly interpreted as a "war against non-Muslims", has a different meaning among Senegalese religious sects. Killing for the sake of Islam has been banned from the Senegalese Islamic society since 1913 (Berhman, 1970). The case of Senegal is in fact fascinating. The major Muslim Brotherhoods groups have been at the forefront of political and social stability in the country despite the fact that Senegal was under foreign domination. Religious leaders like Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Khadimou Rassoul and El hadji Malick Sy in fact have an interpretation of the Qur'an writing which is different from some religious leaders in the Arab world. To a large extent, their views of Islamic teaching and writings are influenced by their environment and history.

CHAPTER FOUR: DEMOCRACY IN SENEGAL

Senegal has improved considerably in terms of the practice of democracy since its independence in 1960. Regime change through free and fair elections, a rare phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa, has introduced a strong basis for good governance and the reinforcement of democratic principles in the country and the whole region.

In many Muslim societies like Algeria, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sudan, political violence is created by religious congregations, which either oppose the introduction of secular values or simply seek political power for the sake of their religion.

In contrast, Senegal has one of the most stable political environments in the Muslim countries, as its situation was encouraged by religious organizations. There is a peaceful cohabitation of elected officials and Muslim leaders, also called marabouts. A different situation is observed in each one of its neighboring countries. The chart below represents those countries and the percentage of Muslim population.

Countries	Percentage
Gambia	90
Guinea	95
Guinea-Bissau	70
Mali	90
Mauritania	100

Source: *CIA Factbook*

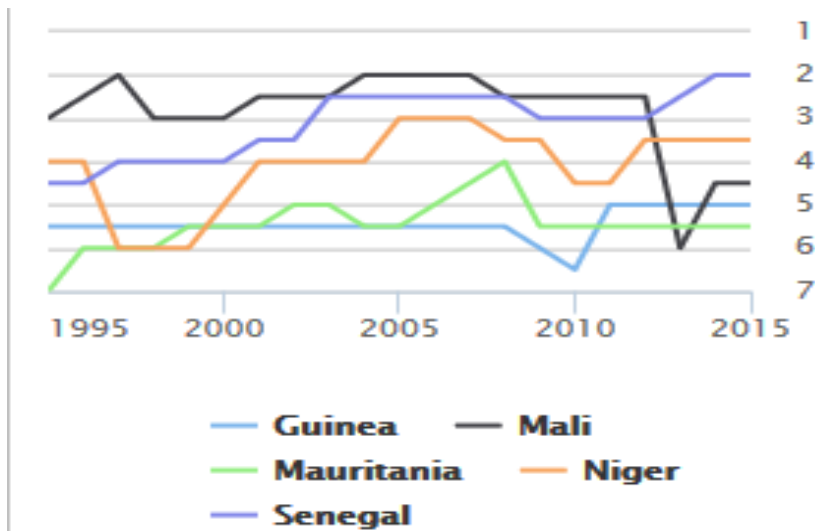
All of them experienced a military coup after the so-called third wave of democratization experienced in the majority of the African countries in the 1980s. For example, Gambia experience a military coup. , Yahya Jammeh, a young army officer seized power on July 22 1994, ousting Dawda Jawara who had been President of Gambia since 1970.

In April 1984, there was a military coup in Guinea staged by a group of colonels that wanted "to liberate the country" by eliminating political actors favorable to Sekou Toure.

During President Toure's presidency from 1958 to 1984, Guinea experienced one of the bloodiest periods of its history. In 2000, Kumba Yalla from Guinea Bissau was elected President through free elections. However, he was held hostage by General Correia who made himself head of state. In March 1991, Lieutenant Moussa Traore, also a dictator who had led Mali since 1968, left the presidency following a military coup perpetrated by General Amadou Toumani Toure. In August 03, 2005, the Mauritanian President Ould Taya was ousted and replaced by the Military Council for Justice and Democracy.

Yet, it has been possible to talk about a positive political transition since the Third Wave of democratization in some Muslim countries in Africa. Senegal is a secular state that embraces all religions. However, Islam is predominant and Muslims cohabit with Christians in a peaceful environment. Political leaders have large support from the Muslim Brotherhood group, especially the Mouride, which is the second largest sect in the country.

Social scientists have developed indices to measure the extent to which a country is democratic. The Freedom House measures democracy according to two main categories: political rights and civil liberties. According to the Freedom House, political rights represent the ability to participate freely in the political process, including voting, competition for public office, and election of representatives. And, civil liberties enable people to express their ideas and beliefs and allow them to have associational and organizational rights, a guaranteed rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state (Freedom House, 2004). The Freedom House rates political rights and civil liberties based on a scale from one to seven. One represents the freest countries and seven characterizes the most authoritarian entities. The following chart represents the evolution of freedom and democracy for the last twenty years of Senegal and its neighboring countries and all of them are predominately Muslim.



Source: <https://freedomhouse.org>

In this chart, the highest number represents the less democratic country. Senegal was ranked a partly free country until 2001. The establishment of democracy stems from a relatively long process. As early as 1970 Senghor, the first President of Senegal, started a process of democratization of the political sphere by allowing the formation of more political parties. Six years later, a four political-party system was replaced by multiparty system. Under President Abdou Diouf from 1981 to 2000, freedom of press, freedom of association and speech were expanded and anonymous voting was adopted. Currently, freedom of speech and association are highly institutionalized. Important constitutional reforms, a new electoral code and an independent election commission ONEL (Observatoire Nationale des Elections du Senegal) guarantee democracy. For Inge Amundsen, Political Science Professor at the University of Tromso in Norway, the Senegalese case illustrates the fact that African leaders and ruling parties are not easy to overturn. For instance, President Diouf was elected in 1983 and re-elected in 1988 and 1993. He stepped down in 2000. He also states that the example of Senegal contradicts the hypothesis that economic development is a precondition of democracy (Amundsen, 2001). Indeed, a major economic crisis affected Senegal after the devaluation of

its currency in 1994. In addition, the regime change of 2000 was mainly carried out by the lowest economic class.

Senegal has escaped military and authoritarian rule since its independence in 1960. In reality, the strategies of the ruling political leaders which consisted in consulting political opponents, sometimes giving them political responsibilities within the government and securing the support and allegiance of religious and ethnic leaders, prevented social and political violence for forty years, from 1960 to 2000. These practices were not systematically conducive to the emergence of the Senegalese secular state but they laid the foundation of a stable environment and a political dialogue which contributed to the establishment of a secular state. As a matter of fact, the battle for the control of political power was organized through legal procedures such as referendum and elections. But, political decisions and practices such as the ones described above, often contradicted the principles of democracy as it seems like political leaders used corruption methods for the purpose of maintaining themselves in power.

In fact, The Centre for Democracy and Development, a non-governmental organization which aims to promote the values of democracy, peace and human rights in Africa, reported that corruption and political graft have been at the root of success of the Diouf presidency for twenty years (The CDD, 2000). With large legislative support, Diouf obtained the approval of constitutional laws that were to the detriment of democratic principles. For instance, the presidency term was fixed at seven years. This law approved by the deputies discouraged many political leaders and citizens from participating in politics. The Senegalese civil society has though been fighting for a more democratic political system including a five-year term. The

majority of the citizens ceased to believe that a democratic election would lead to a regime change.

In 1993 the presidential election, attorney general Babacar Seye, who was in charge of the proclamation of the results, was murdered. The governing leaders were accused because they did not want to turn over power to Abdoulaye Wade, the current president. Finally, the regime change that confirmed democracy in Senegal occurred in 2000, with the election of Abdoulaye Wade with 58.5% of the vote (Galvan, 2002). According to the Bureau of African Affairs in the US Department of State, Senegal is a secular republic and is among the few African countries with a stable political system and a reasonably independent judiciary. The Bureau mentioned that political power was transferred peacefully, if not altogether democratically, from Senghor the first President, to Diouf in 1981. Once again, through fully democratic elections change occurred from Diouf to Wade in March 2000. The constitutional reforms that followed Wade's election have limited the presidency to two terms with only five years each. President Wade has chosen a liberal agenda for the country, with the privatization of the strategic economic areas like the distribution of water and electricity. There are sixty five political parties in Senegal and an important independent media that contribute to the democratic process (The US Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs, August 2005).

Richard Vengroff and Michael Magala are respectively Professor of Political Science at the University of Connecticut and Economics professor at Springfield Technical Community College. They believe that Senegal's democratic transition is interesting. Indeed, the transition was a result of solid and effective democratic reforms that took place during a relatively long process (Vengroff and Magala, 2001). This unique situation makes Senegal a case worthy of study. Vengroff and Magala also found the relevant factors that led to the successful transition in Senegal. Among those factors, there is the institutional transformation that has occurred in

Senegal during the last twenty years. In fact, the basis for a democratic regime change was facilitated by the fact that religious groups and social institutions chose to accommodate colonial policies (Robinson, 2000). Also, it was necessary to redefine the role of political institutions in order to make them more representative.

Unlike many other Muslim countries that faced a deterioration of their political and social environment as a result of the destabilizing actions of religious groups, Senegal was able to transition to a democratic and secular political regime largely facilitated by Muslim Brotherhood groups. In fact, rather than politicizing their Islamic beliefs and ideal, they advocated dialogue, peace and negotiation with the ruling political leaders.

Democracy in Senegal can be explained by three main factors, which are the influence of colonization, the particular role played by Muslim brotherhood organizations in politics, and the place of tolerance in Senegal's multi-polar society.

Senegal was colonized by France from 1816 to 1960. Unlike other French colonies such as Algeria, Senegal had a particular colonial experience that paved the way for the present democratic situation. The French colonies usually faced a harsh colonial administration either because France wanted to settle the colony as an extension of its territory, or because it was necessary to undermine religious groups to achieve economic goals⁵. In contrast, Senegal's experience was limited to economic exploitation in Senegal.

In order to facilitate that task, a policy of "assimilation" was applied in four of the biggest cities (also known as the Four Communes) which are Dakar, the current capital; Saint Louis, the first capital of Senegal founded at the beginning of the 19th century and located in

⁵ Muslim groups were considered capable to compromise the foreign power's objectives.

the north part of the country; Rufisque, located about thirty miles east of Dakar; and Goree island.

The policy implemented in the early 1800s consisted of giving French citizenship to the natives of the four Communes and this slowly introduced a democratic political culture in the country. At an early stage, the natives of the four Communes now French citizens, were able to elect their representative in the French Congress through fair and democratic elections. This new culture favored the creation of small political communities and the emergence of prominent political activists like Lamine Gueye and Leopold Sedar Senghor. Both political leaders and were elected to represent Senegal in the French National Assembly in 1945.

According to Dennis Galvan, Professor of International Studies and Political Science at the University of Oregon, granting French citizenship to the natives of the four Communes as early as 1945 was part of a colonial strategy designed to implement policies of assimilation. These policies ended up enhancing the sense of civic association, civic engagement, and political interaction. Therefore, the Senegalese leaders in choosing their representatives experienced political discourse, electoral campaigns and democratic elections. This phenomenon positively impacted the quality of political life and performance of social institutions (Galvan, 2002).

Colonization also allowed the emergence of democracy in Senegal through the geographical setting imposed by France. As part of their administrative strategy, the French arbitrarily divided most of their possessions into small territories. This practice exacerbated the ethnic cleavages, which are major obstacles to democracy as they undermine the development of social capital (Putnam, 2000). Indeed, many ethnic rivalries that prevailed in pre-colonial Africa were exacerbated by the arbitrary divisions of the continent. Despite historical fragmentation, Senegal maintained the same social structure.

Muslim brotherhood organizations are well entrenched in the Senegalese society and their leaders have a strong influence over the majority of the population. The French colonialists recognized that power and also decided not to clash with religious dignitaries. In this perspective, political dialogue and compromise have been used to accommodate social realities. This "decentralized despotism" as Mahmoud Mamdani puts it, has significantly influenced collaboration between state officials and religious leaders in Senegal (Mamdani, 1996).

According Linda J. Beck, Political Science Professor at Columbia University, the political partnership between French officials and local dignitaries was very instrumental in the emergence of democratic ideals in the post-independence era. The colonial legacy of empowerment of indigenous people, or decentralized despotism, is significant in explaining democratization (Beck, 2001). Mahmood Mamdani, Professor of Government, International Affairs, and Anthropology at Columbia University, believes that the failure of democratization efforts elsewhere in Africa, is due to the absence of the colonial legacy of decentralized despotism and the empowerment of indigenous elites. Nonetheless, the French administrators put in place measures and strategies aimed at preventing violence coming from religious congregations. According to Lucy E. Berhman, a Political Science Professor at Harvard University, rather than prohibiting the practice of Islam, or systematically destroying Muslim symbols like the French did in Algeria, French policy then was to be neutral. But it did not give Muslims the chance to spread their religion as they wished because it was primarily a question of spreading out French culture (Berhman, 1970). The French officially wished to eliminate any symbol of Muslim identification in Senegal, according to the nature of their policies. In fact, the teaching of Qur'an was subject to approval first, and a reward of 300 Francs was given to any marabou that spent two hours a day teaching French (Berhman, 1970, 39).

However, the restrictions against Islam were not totally applied as the political situation in Senegal would have been similar to the Algerian one. For Berhman "it would have demolished the power and influence of the marabouts, restricted the area of Muslim proselytization and even undermined the faith of those who remained Muslim." (Berhman, 1970, 43). As a matter of fact, Danielle Monty-Mara shows that the successful invasion of the French in Algeria resulted in an increased importance of the Sufi brotherhoods in the resistance. In 1943, most of the insurgents were killed or captured by the French colonial army. Unlike in Senegal where Islamic teaching was not a problem for France, the religious schools and the Muslim foundation, were banned by the colonial administration in Algeria and an entirely French based educational system was established for the indigenous people.

In Senegal, religious orders and the colonial administration cooperated more than they clashed. Leonardo Villalon, Political Science professor at the University of Kansas at Lawrence, recognizes that the current political stability and the peaceful cooperation between Sufi leaders and government officials in Senegal are a legacy of the empowerment of religious leaders by the colonial administration (Villalon, 1995, p. 357). In fact, the colonial policy makers implemented a system of cooperation, which acknowledges the political clout of brotherhoods in Senegal. By maintaining the societal status-quo in the countryside, colonial administrators instituted "paths of accommodations" that gave considerable advantages to the Muslim brotherhoods. Among the benefits enjoyed by these organizations, there is the control of important agricultural regions and the expansion of Islamic religion. In return, they facilitated the implementation of colonial policies, which were necessary to the realization of French economic objectives. According to Burchard, (2006), the colonization movement was structured to produce what was most profitable for the colonizers. She further explained that the economy was streamlined to produce groundnuts, primarily peanuts, which were a cash

crop in France. This led to the destruction of other agricultural products, such as rice, that were used daily by local populations.

Unlike other Muslim countries like Sudan or Algeria where brotherhoods contributed to political chaos, they played a significant role in the making of democracy in Senegal. There are five brotherhoods in Senegal: the Mouride, the Tijanya, Quadrya, the Layene and the Niassene, but the Mouride and the Tijania are the most important. Many scholars like David Robinson, Political Science Professor at Michigan State University, Christian Coulon, Political Science Professor at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques at Bordeaux in France, Leonardo Villalon and Lucy E. Berhman, illustrate the role of brotherhoods through the Mouride example not because of their dynamism in the social, political and economic fields, but also for the nature of the Mouride's relations with both the French and the current political leaders.

The role of the Mouride in the making of democracy in Senegal can be traced back to the end of colonialism. For Robinson, (2000), they showed amazing capacities in mobilizing the human and economic resources necessary to put into effect viable social projects. For instance, they have the monopoly in the cultivation of peanuts, which is one of the most important economic fields in Senegal. They also have a considerable influence over the Senegalese Muslim community, which clearly indicated that they were capable of undermining the French authority (Robinson, 2000). Almost everyone in Senegal is affiliated to a Sufi order. In certain rural areas, citizens recognized their marabouts as the only authority to obey.

Yet, Sufi leaders such as Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Mbacke, founder of the Mouride brotherhood, and El Haji Malick Sy, founder of the Tijanya, convincingly showed that launching attacks against invaders is fundamentally against Muslim principles. In fact, Jihad was no longer

allowed in Islam, even though the circumstances that justified it in the time of the Prophet Mohamed (Peace Be Upon Him) could be seen as similar. El Haji Malick Sy stated in the speech he gave on behalf of the French war effort in 1914 that:

“Adhere completely to the French government. God... has chosen them to protect our persons and our goods. My brothers do not yourselves be seduced by the words of fools who say to you "the day of the defeat of French power is coming. These are pernicious shadows. An affirmed knowledge of God shows the opposite.” (Cited by Berman, 1970)

In fact, Muslim brotherhoods contributed to the introduction of secularism and westernization. In “Enjeux et role des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication dans les mutations urbaines: Le cas de Touba (Senegal)”⁶, Cheikh Gueye, a policy officer at the Executive Secretariat for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, shows that the Mouride brotherhood compensated for the stresses caused by globalization and the world economy in Senegal (Gueye, 2002, p.85). During the post-colonial era, they adopted a participatory approach to the new information and communication technologies, a means to perpetrate western hegemony in other Muslim countries. While the United Nation's 2004 report denounces the absence of a knowledge society in the Arab world which contributes to explain its lack of democracy, Cheikh Gueye shows that two sub-groups of the Mouride brotherhood are amazingly taking advantage of these new transformations. One of them is the Mouride businessmen and the other is the Dahiras, which started to develop a transnational and Universalist vision of the world. Yet, the Sufi orders have a strong consultative role in Senegal's politics. In reality, they play the role of a civil society and have more than once prevented an authoritarian shift of the political power. Indeed, a tacit approval

⁶ Challenges and role of new information and communications technology in urban areas: The case of Touba (Senegal)

is often needed for most the political decisions that concern the major religious cities of Touba, Tivaouane, and Kaolack.

The 1993 presidential elections ended with massive protests and many voters believed that the elections were not fair and transparent. The majority of the population believed that the demand for change was not a reflection of the results. Incumbent President Abdou Diouf of the Socialist Party (in power since 1960) defeated seven other candidates, winning 58.4% of the vote. Agitations in many cities like Dakar, Thies, Rufisque and Saint Louis predicted violence and political unrest as the government declared a state of emergency. But, the Sufi leaders, to whom the majority of the population recognized as religious and political authority, called for peace and tolerance both from the populations and the elite class. It is important to highlight the role Muslim brotherhood leaders can play in the political stability of the country. The French understood this reality and chose not to fight them in order to maintain stability. Similarly, political leaders understand and acknowledge the role they play in the country's politics. As Donald Cruise O'Brien puts it: "When a socialist political program has the effect of expanding the state's power and bureaucracy, the governing Parti socialiste is as sensitive as any of its colonial predecessor" (O'Brien, 1983, 147).

Unlike other Muslim states like Algeria, where Sufi orders were attacked and dislocated, government officials in Senegal collaborated and compromised with them in order to obtain legitimacy from the population. Indeed, the marabouts or Sufi leaders are so powerful and so well organized that the politician cannot challenge them. Their exceptional participation in local, regional and national politics and their influence towards political parties justify their influence in politics. Leonardo A. Villalon is the Dean of the International Center and Professor of Political Science and African Studies at the University of Florida. He believes that Muslim brotherhood organizations have no intent to implement an Islamic State (Villalon, 1999).

The benefits they enjoy coming from the government are far more appealing. As early as 1963, government officials have perpetuated the colonial alliance by promoting Arabic teaching in Senegal, creating Franco-Arabic madrassas (a name attributed to the Quranic schools in the Arab world), implementing Arabic study in secondary school, and establishing the Arabic Institute at Dakar University. They also grant scholarships to Senegalese students to study Arabic in France and North Africa (Berhman, 1970).

This shows that the development of a secular State in Senegal has been facilitated by a non-violent relationship between the French power and the Muslim brotherhood organizations. The most prominent and influential Sufi leaders like Cheikh Ahmandou Bamba with the Mourides and Elhadj Malick Sy with the Tijanes advocated compromise and tolerance. One of the main obstacles for democratization in other predominantly Muslim countries like Mali, Guinea, Niger and Mauritania is the lack of these two elements which often resulted into violence and political unrest.

Political instability prevailed in the majority of the African states like Uganda, Congo, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia among others. Conflicts and coups d' Etat became the most common feature of politics in Sub-Saharan Africa. Democracy is hard to achieve in this part of the continent because of the persistence of ethnic and religious divisions. However, a basic consensus on the most sensitive political, economic, and social matters is necessary for political transition in these types of societies. As Ashutosh Varshley, Professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan, states: "they also lack an integrated civil society that cross-cuts ethnic and other divisions. This kind of civil society can provide an underlying basis for moderate politics and for democracy to occur" (Varshley, 2001, 395)

Unlike most African States, Senegal's political environment has been characterized by religious and ethnic compromise as well as tolerance which have made the country one of the most stable entities in Africa. Since independence, the country has enjoyed both relative stability and isolated incidents of ethnic and religious conflicts. As Dennis Galvan states: "The careful articulation of these two political cultures and their associated forms of social capital make Senegal's democracy stand out in sub-Saharan Africa for its stability, broad social base, and capacity to integrate otherwise potentially fragmentary ethnic communities" (Galvan, September, 2001, 5). Senegal has more than twenty ethnic groups. The main groups are the Wolof, the Serer, the Fulfulde (Peulh or Fula), the Jola (Diola), the Tukolor, the Lebou, the Niominka, the Bassari and the Bambara. Yet, tolerance has prevented destabilizing clashes in the country.

In her book *Safety Nets, Politics and the Poor: Transitions to Market Economies*, Carol Graham, Professor of Economics at Johns Hopkins University, mentioned the impact of ethnic and religious tolerance on the making of democracy in Senegal. As she states: "Senegal's political system, like its culture, is a complex mix of traditional and modern practices, religious fervor coupled with a high degree of tolerance" (Graham, 1994, 119). Ethnic divergences, even if they exist sometimes, have never paralyzed the functioning of the political and social institutions. In fact, the sense of unity provided by Islam has mitigated ethnic divisions (Graham, 1994). The understanding of Islamic texts is different in Senegal compared to other Muslim countries like Sudan, Afghanistan, and Mauritania. Senegalese society is influenced by an African tradition of community, and the religious leaders in their teaching of the religion have focus on that aspect of the Qu'ran. This is significant as it contributes to explaining why

certain countries like Senegal were able to avoid dictatorship and evolved in a secular State and others did not.

Graham (1994) also stressed that Muslims and Christians live together in peace and harmony. During the first twenty years of its independence, Senegal, although composed essentially of Muslims who form 95% of its population, was ruled by a Christian president. As Graham (1994) mentioned, the Islamist fundamentalist tendencies in Senegal seem to be tempered with the tolerance. Although only 5% of Senegalese are Catholics, the first president and leader of the independence movement, Leopold Senghor, was a Catholic, and the second president Abdou Diouf, a Muslim, is married to a Catholic (Graham, 1994). Abdoulaye Wade, the third president, elected since 2000 is also married to a Catholic. This illustrates that Senegal is a modern democratic country, opened to the world and marked by its population's profound sense of tolerance, and that the Muslim brotherhoods and the other important ethnic groups, although powerful, are less likely to initiate a government takeover.

Today Senegal has a democratic political culture, being part of one of the most successful democratic transitions in Africa. According to the Freedom House 2015 Freedom in the world report, Senegal has a rating of 2/7 in freedom with 1 being the best, a rating of 2/7 in civil liberties with 1 being the best, and a rating 2/7 in political rights with 1 being the best. The electoral process and the government are functioning with a rating of 11/12 and 9/12 respectively. The rule of law is being respected and freedom of expression and belief are protected. The last elections took place on February 26 2012 and resulted with a victory of President Macky Sall. This election represented a significant milestone in the country's political history as it confirmed that Senegal has had one of the most successful democratic transitions

in recent history. Indeed, despite relative violence and protests especially in the main cities like Dakar and Thies, there was a fifty five percent voter turnout nationally and 65.80% voted in favor of the current president.

Many religious leaders, even if they did not directly participate in the elections, manifested their support toward certain candidates. For instance, Cheikh Betio Thioune, who claimed to have a significant number of disciples and who is one of the most prominent religious leaders of the Mouride brotherhood, openly supported the defeated president Wade. Certainly, many of his followers voted for Wade as instructed but when the latter was defeated, he did not advocate violence or attempt to undermine the current president and his government. Serigne Modou Bousso Dieng is another prominent Mouride Marabout and also President of the Young Religious Leaders of Senegal. He was invited to the Presidential Palace to speak with Wade, whom he supported in the election but also respected the outcome. This shows that Senegal is an interesting example when it comes to the articulation between Islam and democracy. Indeed, this is a country where the majority of the population belongs to Muslim brotherhood organizations. Yet, every citizen is willing to express his political view and not let his vote influenced by religious leaders. It is also important to note the role played by religious leaders in making alliances with political leaders and continuing to be a stabilizing factor within the society. It is worth underlying that this is the same approach used by religious leaders when they were dealing with France during the colonization.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This thesis shows that the notion that Islam is not compatible with democracy and freedom has limits. Many Muslim countries, especially in the Middle East, where the State government failed to preserve freedom and civil liberties have the same history and the same social realities which explains their current political regime and their understanding of the Quran. For instance, countries such as Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia has a population dominated by Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds. The Shiites and Sunnis historically have deep religious and political differences which led to many sectarian wars in the region. For instance, Iraq as a minority Sunni Muslim population, but, Saddam Hussein, a Sunni, was able to prevent a war between religious sects because of his tyrannical ruling. His absence created a political and military vacuum which led to the resurgence of sectarian groups and the so-called Islamic State, all of whom competing to seize the power. The Kurds also are part of the social apparatus of the region and do not have the same religious and political views. Therefore, the whole region has been affected by political and religious differences for a long time. In fact, when the Prophet Mohamed (peace Be Upon Him) passed away, the different sects did not reach an agreement on how to choose his successor. This disagreement created frictions of the society and sectarian wars between the Sunni, Shiites and Kurds. In some States, like Iraq, Iran and Syria, ruling political leaders, who sometimes belong to a minority group, fail to create social projects that equally benefited all the different groups. This is the case in Iraq following the retreat of US forces. Indeed, Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki (2006-2014), a member of the Shiites minority group led the country but completely undermined the terms of the agreement with U.S.A and the Western coalition forces which

was to create the favorable conditions for peace and stability. Many Sunnis were marginalized and then became radicalized which led to the creation of many terrorist organizations like ISIL and Al Qaeda. However, democratization has worked in Senegal, a predominantly Muslim country. This example rejects the notion that Islam is not compatible with democracy. As a matter of fact, the peaceful Senegalese regime change is significant and could influence the political reforms underway in other Muslim countries. It introduces a democratic political culture and gives the voters the perception that long-term political leaders are not invincible and they can be democratically replaced and not always forced to leave the power by other means, like military coups.

Indeed, this thesis explained the main factors sustaining democracy in Senegal since independence. Three factors have been discussed. The historical elements that stemmed from the colonial experience are significant in explaining the emergence of democratic ideals. Colonial powers in Africa were primarily interested in economic exploitation as they were seeking new resources to accommodate their economic crisis. Large politically integrated societies were then disintegrated and transformed into smaller weak communities following the Berlin conference (1884-1885). Colonization also introduced social cleavages that never existed before. In the post-colonial period, these differentiations led to a lack of trust and compromise that often resulted in wars. As a matter of fact, Homer-Dixon and Percival (1996) state that the Hutu-Tutsi distinction, which led to the Rwandan genocide, derives from a pre-colonial social structure that distinguished between cultivators and pastoralists. Before the growth of central power and colonial domination, the boundaries between the Hutu and Tutsi were fluid and the Belgians aggravated this distinction through their colonial policy.

In Senegal, however, even though the French enterprise was also driven by economic needs, France was forced to use other means such as cooperation. In fact, the particularities of the social and religious groups found in place dictated the method of colonial administration. The French specifically realized that the Muslim congregations, to which the majority of the populations belong, had a different way of dealing with their colonial experience. The Muslim congregations jeopardized the colonial interests in Algeria, but cooperated with the colonial power in Senegal. This is significant insofar as it shows the lack of a willingness on the part of both Muslim brotherhood organizations and the colonial powers to negotiate and preserve political stability in Algeria. The French were then motivated to consider different models of colonial administration such as the "assimilation" one, which facilitated economic exploitation but also introduced the foundations of a democratic political culture. The existence of a political culture as well as a sense of compromise among the different ethnic and religious groups influenced the current political stability in Senegal.

Senegal is currently working toward the consolidation of democracy. As certain religious groups have recently been more involved in politics with the creation of political parties, like the PVD (Parti pour la Verite et le Developpement)⁷, and now compete for power, democracy seems to be challenged. However, a political takeover by Muslim groups is less likely to occur even if religious leaders appear so strong that elected officials seek their support in terms of legitimacy and influence. There has been one significant challenge for a redefinition of the political power, coming from religious organizations. Following the presidential elections of 1993, the Moustarchidines movement, a sub-group of the Tijania, initiated a political protest against the winning socialist party. The event suggested a potential threat of Islamic fundamentalism in Senegal (Vengroff and Creevey, 1997). Nevertheless, some scholars believe

⁷ PVD can be translated by Party for the Truth and Development. The leader is Serigne Modou Kara Mbacke, a leader in the Mouride brotherhood.

that it is just a change in the patterns of religion and politics in Senegal. This "evolution" as Leonardo Villalon puts it, has been the result of two situations. The first is the growing perception of illegitimacy of the socialist party as the political and economic situation stagnated and democracy was in crisis. The second is related to the generational pressures as some religious intellectuals were no longer willing to accept the model of the state and contested the leadership within their brotherhood (Villalon, 1999).

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