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TRANSITIONS:  
DECENTRALIZATION AND SENEGALESE POLITICAL PARTIES

by  
Megan Earline Norris

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements of the McDonnell-Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford  
April 2003

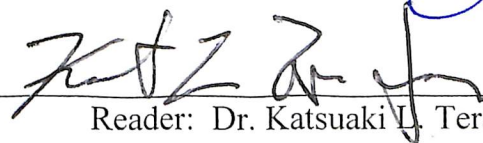
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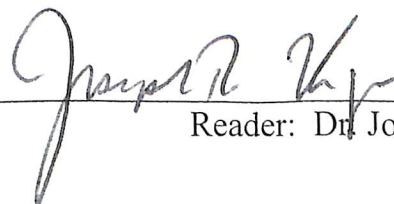
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This thesis is dedicated to my parents, John and Mitzi Norris.  
They always showed me the kind of student and the kind of person that I should be, an accomplishment that is far more difficult and far more effective than simply telling.

And above all else, I dedicate my work to the glory of God who gave me so much that my cup runs over with His blessings.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

MEGAN EARLINE NORRIS:

Transitions: Decentralization and Senegalese Political Parties  
(Under the direction of Timothy Nordstrom)

This thesis seeks to examine the role that decentralization and political parties have played in Senegalese democratization from colonial time to present. By examining five influential time periods in modern Senegalese history, this thesis investigates the evolving nature of the Senegalese political system in relation to its current democracy. The first chapter discusses Senegal's colonial background and the legacy of centralization left by the French. Chapter two explores the decolonization process in French West Africa and its specific impact on Senegal. The remainder of the thesis studies the terms of the three presidents that have led Senegal since its independence from France in 1960, beginning with Léopold Sédar Senghor and then his successor, Abdou Diouf. These two men ruled Senegal for forty years and consolidated political power in the hands of the Parti Socialiste with only nominal decentralization for most of their time in office. Towards the latter part of Diouf's rule, however, a gradual decentralization process was implemented, loosening the control of the Parti Socialiste and allowing for competition with other political parties, most importantly with the Parti Democratique Senegalais. The final section then considers the impact of Senegal's first transfer of power from the Parti Socialiste to the Parti Democratique Senegalais under leader Abdoulaye Wade. As this study reveals, Senegal underwent a gradual democratization process. Increased levels of democracy accompanied decentralization of government powers and increased party competition. The reforms of the current administration point towards further democratic consolidation in Senegal.

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## Introduction

This study of Senegalese political history from colonial times to present seeks to determine how the interplay between decentralization and the evolving role of political parties in Senegal has affected that country's ability to establish and consolidate a democracy. Senegal was once grouped with seven other West African colonies under French colonial rule as Afrique Occidentale Francaise (AOF). During this time, the Senegalese government was ordered around the French system, and much of this organization remained during the decolonization process and the following years during which Senegal worked to establish its own government. Senegal has been considered an electoral democracy for a number of years with a period of significant political reform beginning in 1975. But the government party remained strong and dominant, and it was not until March of 2000 that an opposition party was actually elected to government. The peaceful transfer of power that followed marked a significant milestone in Senegal's transition to a more comprehensive democracy. This thesis will examine how the shift from a centralized, single-party system to a more decentralized, multi-party system influenced Senegal's move towards democracy and its subsequent ability to consolidate that democracy.

A focus of this thesis will be the centralized nature of Senegal's governmental structures beginning with the colonial system through to the independent democratic system. The French colonial legacy is that of a highly centralized governmental system. Unfortunately, this centralization may be a deterrent to democracy, as Larry Diamond notes in *Developing Democracy* (1999). He proposes that delegating greater authority to local governments is a means of facilitating democratic development. Richard Vengroff

has investigated this connection between decentralization and democracy by examining the role of decentralization in Senegal's democratic transition ("Decentralization, Democratization and Development in Senegal" 2000; "Senegal: The Evolution of a Quasi Democracy" 1997). In this process, Senegal moved from the highly centralized system established during French colonial rule to a more decentralized system, allowing for greater governmental participation for more groups within the national framework. In keeping with these ideas, my thesis will examine exactly what types of changes have taken place and how these changes in governmental structures have affected Senegal's ability to consolidate democracy. My hypothesis is that the highly centralized, single-party system established after independence had a negative effect on democracy in Senegal but that moves towards a decentralized, multi-party system have improved conditions for democracy.

A second focus of this thesis is how party dynamics have influenced Senegal's gradual transition from colony to democracy. Political parties and elections are interconnected variables in the democratization process that reflect the democratic integrity of a system. According to Scott Mainwaring (1998) the institutionalization of political parties is key to establishing a solid democracy. He continues by asserting that institutionalized party systems show certain characteristics, among them regular patterns of party competition, strong societal party roots, a socially and politically legitimized party system, and organized and professionalized party organizations. Elections are a means of gauging the stability of the party system and hence of measuring a large component of the nation's level of democratic consolidation. Although different democracies may have varying levels of consolidation, for a nation to be considered a

consolidated democracy “elites, organizations, and the mass public must all believe that the political system [democracy] they actually have in their country is worth obeying and defending” (Diamond 1999, 66). Consolidation may develop quickly or gradually, and it is by no means a certain outcome even after the first steps to democracy have been taken (Mainwaring 1998). In the context of Senegal, political parties and elections are particularly interesting because of the contrast between Senegalese elections and those of other African nations. Senegal is one of the few nations in West Africa that has never experienced a military coup, and, in such company, a nation that holds free and fair elections followed by a peaceful transfer of power is truly remarkable. Because this outcome is relatively rare, an examination of the processes behind these events, beginning with the inception of these political parties in the early twentieth century, may be useful in determining their causes and Senegal’s potential to further consolidate its democracy.

This study is valuable in that it takes theories of decentralization and political party systems and applies them to the specific case of Senegal in order to determine how these ideas function in this case. When examining Senegal, this study will investigate the influences and obstacles in the way of a third wave democracy consolidating its government. This thesis is broken down into five main chapters, each focusing on a distinct chapter in Senegalese history. Each chapter begins with an historical overview of the period and then moves into an examination of Senegal’s governmental structure as it either remains centralized or moves towards decentralization. These chapters will also consider how political parties developed and the role they had in shaping the politics of the period.

The first period to consider is that of early colonialism, from the first French outpost in 1659 up through 1944 and the Vichy regime. This chapter sets the context for Senegal's development as a nation and the colonial government from which Senegal's modern government sprang. In examining France's assimilationist policies regarding Senegal, this chapter investigates Senegal's educational system, its governmental structure and the special privileges afforded the colony. During this period, Senegal's first political parties began to develop as Senegalese participated in both colonial and French politics. This chapter will examine the origins of these parties and the influence they had on Senegal's educated elites.

The second period in Senegalese history that this study will cover is the time from the Brazzaville Conference in 1944 through Senegalese independence in 1960. This period is marked by significant political wrangling both within the colonies and between the colonies and France. This chapter looks into the changing French policy towards Senegal as the French foreign empire began to crumble. As Senegal worked through the ideas of a French Union, the Loi Cadre, and its attempted federation with French Soudan, it fluctuated between policies of centralization and decentralization in its relations with France and with other West African nations. Also during this period, many African political parties appeared on the scene, vying for power and working to sort through the tangled maneuvers of decolonization. This second chapter seeks to examine the interplay between these forces of centralization and decentralization as varying political parties struggled for power.

Chapter three discusses the presidency of Léopold-Sédar Senghor, the first president of independent Senegal and the founder of the Parti Socialiste, the political

party that dominated Senegalese politics for over forty years. This chapter traces Senghor's consolidation of his power in Senegal from the withdrawal from the Mali Federation, through the 1963 constitution, to his establishment of Abdou Diouf as his chosen successor. Some political opposition was allowed during this period as Senghor somewhat eased restrictions on the formation of political parties, but this chapter will discuss the role Senghor's policies served on Senegal's road to democracy.

The fourth chapter concerns the presidency of Abdou Diouf, Senghor's handpicked successor to the Senegalese presidency. During this period Senegal faced mounting foreign pressure towards decentralization and political reform, and the Parti Socialiste's grip on Senegalese politics began to weaken in the face of economic difficulties. This chapter discusses the reforms instituted during Diouf's presidency as well as the emerging presence of Abdoulaye Wade and the Parti Democratique Senegalais.

Chapter five examines the 2000 presidential election and Wade's victory over Diouf. The subsequent peaceful transfer of power was a significant milestone in Senegalese politics, and chapter five will analyze the events leading up to that change of power as well as the reforms that have taken place since Wade came to power. This chapter will study both the emergence of new political parties in Senegal and the structural reforms implemented by the new government.

In conclusion, this thesis seeks to take the theories surrounding the role of decentralization and political parties in a democracy and consider them in the light of Senegal's transition to democracy. By applying the ideas of decentralization and political

parties to their actual development in Senegal, we can obtain a clearer perspective on the validity of these arguments when they are applied to specific instead of general situations.

## Chapter One:

### French Colonialism: 1659-1944

#### *Historical Context*

The French first established a presence in Senegal in 1659 with their military outpost of St. Louis (Crowder 1967). In 1678 the island city of Goree was acquired from the Dutch (Hargreaves 1969), and the French established the settlements of Dakar and Rufisque. These four settlements formed the Quatre Communes that would serve as urban centers of government, education, and political privilege. The remainder of modern day Senegal was not brought under French control until 1854 when General Louis Faidherbe led his army in subduing the region, acquiring for France about one third of the territory that marks the current boundaries of Senegal and extending French rule into the hinterlands (Crowder 1967).

French settlement in Senegal was never very extensive, though the French soldiers living in Senegal did help create a mulatto population that would play a significant role in Senegalese politics. Settlement attempts were made in the areas surrounding St. Louis from 1819 through about 1827 as a part of agricultural experiments, but these attempts were largely unsuccessful, and the idea of large-scale settlement in Senegal was abandoned (Crowder 1967). As a result, Senegal did not face the racial problems of a large settler community that were encountered by many other colonies. Some Frenchmen did live in Senegal and participate in politics during the colonial era, but native Africans remained the vast majority of people living in Senegal.

Although many nineteenth century French preached the idea of the *mission civilitrice*, or civilizing mission, insisting that France's duty was to bring the light of

French civilization to the African natives, France's focus in its colonies remained predominantly economic and military. From an economic standpoint, Senegal provided France with the traditional colonial economy, exporting natural resources and importing manufactured goods. After the abolition of the slave trade in the 1820s, groundnut production became the core of the Senegalese economy. Under the direction of the *marabouts*, Muslim leaders who controlled villages in Senegal, peasant farming produced the groundnuts that were Senegal's chief export for France (Griffeth, Johnson ed. 1985). Thus, France sought to profit from its power in Senegal, even as it was preaching the values of the *mission civilitrice*.

### *Centralization*

The first issue to discuss within the context of the French presence in Senegal is that of centralization. Since this paper explores the ways in which decentralization has affected Senegal's transition from colony to democracy, it is important to first consider the centralized system with which Senegal began. In Senegal the nature of that centralization is embodied in the French policy of assimilation. Assimilation was the French way of accepting that the Senegalese had the potential to be equal human beings while still regarding their culture as inferior or nonexistent. The result of these opinions was the French *mission civilitrice* which sought to turn Africans into Frenchmen through education, economic development and democratic participation. Although this policy often met with opposition and was never fully applied, it formed the basis of French government in Senegal beginning in the early nineteenth century when France began expanding its colonial holdings in Senegal.



The French policy of assimilation was by nature highly centralized because it involved the native culture and governmental structure being completely subsumed by the colonizing culture in a direct instead of delegated system of governance. Unlike the British colonial system that utilized existing governmental structures, the French sought to completely replace the existing framework with the French system.

The French methods of assimilation took on several forms. First, the French sought to assimilate the Senegalese to their culture through education. Though this approach was limited to urban and upper-class elites, education proved a very effective means of shaping the Senegalese into the French mindset. At the outset of French-Senegalese interaction, the mulatto children of Frenchmen born in Senegal were educated by their fathers in the 1700s, and the resulting class of educated elites formed the basis for native Senegalese political power through the 1920s (Crowder 1967). During the mid-1800s, the education provided at such institutions as the Lycee Faidherbe and the Lycee Van Vollenhoven, as well as the Ecole Normale William Ponty, would develop the generation of Senegalese leaders who would question France's assimilation policy and even begin to agitate for independence (Crowder 1967). The education that was so key in developing this class of assimilated elites, however, was not necessarily available to the outlying areas of Senegal. Even in 1947, only 12.4 percent of school age children in Senegal were attending school, leaving the vast majority of the population uneducated. In comparison to other French colonies at the time, however, Senegal's education rate was significantly higher. In Guinea, the percentage of school age children actually attending school was only 1.3 percent, and in Soudan, that figure was only 5 percent (Crowder 1967). So, the French did make some headway in educating the Senegalese

population. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, conquering General Faidherbe did help to increase educational opportunities in Senegal by establishing a school for chiefs' sons, opening secular schools for Muslims, and even awarding scholarships for study in St. Louis and in France (Crowder 1967). All of these institutions allowed France to conquer through the education and assimilation of the native population, as well as through the more traditional means of military conquest.

A peculiarity in the French system that marked Senegal as a special target of the assimilationist policy was the granting of citizenship to inhabitants of the Quatre Communes in 1848. This law took great steps in assimilating the Quatre Communes to mainland France by declaring them *communes de plein exercice* (Crowder 1967). With this classification as a *citoyen* came certain privileges, such as voting. Indeed this status allowed citizens the full rights and privileges of any other French citizen, in theory at least, if not in practice. Furthermore, citizens of the Quatre Communes, unlike those who gained French citizenship through a naturalization process, were allowed to maintain their *statut personnel*, or traditional law in matters of marriage, inheritance and such (Crowder 1967). This right of citizenship was a significant concession because it increased the legal status of the inhabitants of the Quatre Communes, granting them rights that laid the groundwork for further experiments with the democratic process.

The generous assimilationist policy that was practiced in the Quatre Communes, however, can also be used to illustrate the deficiencies of the French policy. The granting of citizenship was limited to those residents of the Quatre Communes. Those Senegalese living outside of the Quatre Communes were considered merely *sujets*, subjects of French imperialism and not actively included citizens. This status of *sujet* predominated among

the peoples of French West Africa and carried with it certain restrictions and obligations. *Sujets* were required to perform forced labor up through the 1930s when France signed the Geneva Act prohibiting forced colonial labor. Unlike *citoyens* of the Quatre Communes, the *sujets* remained under the authority of their chiefs who acted as agents of the French government (Crowder 1967). This dual system created a great disparity in education and democracy between the urban elites of the Quatre Communes and the disenfranchised poor living in the countryside. France's half-implementation of its assimilation policy created a basis for democracy in the cities while keeping the countryside subdued. As a result, the Senegalese population was divided, and the democratic process was restricted in the colony in order to maintain the central power of France.

The French colonial government in Senegal was handled in the tradition of French imperialism. That is to say, it was highly centralized, with intensive involvement by French officials and by the government in Paris itself. This highly centralized system was first organized through a 1904 constitution for French West Africa. Under this constitution and subsequent decrees, France established a chain of command in Senegal and the rest of the AOF that formed the basis for a highly centralized colonial structure. Beginning in Paris, authority over the colonies officially rested with the Chamber of Deputies, but in reality this authority was delegated to the Colonial Minister who ruled by decree with the Conseil Supérieur de la France d'Outre-Mer. Under the Colonial Minister, the governor-general, advised by the Conseil de Gouvernement (but with no obligation to take its advice) ruled over the affairs of the Afrique Occidentale Française (French West Africa—AOF). The governor-general alone held the right of direct

correspondence with Paris, and all communication had to take place through him, including the presentation of colonial budgets. Under the governor-general was the lieutenant governor (made full governor after 1937) of each colony. In the other colonies of the AOF, this lieutenant governor was advised by a Conseil d'Administration that, like the other advisory councils in the colonial chain of command, had little real power. Senegal, however, was a significant exception to that rule, as it was granted the right to a Colonial Council that possessed certain quasi-legislative powers over finances (Folz 1965). This distinct privilege—though still greatly limited—that was afforded Senegal is another example of France's partially implemented policy of assimilation to French norms of democracy. The Colonial Council, however, is actually a later form of what had been called the General Council, representation on which had been limited to the *citoyens* of the Quatre Communes. When France transformed this body into the Colonial Council, the outlying regions of Senegal were also represented. Although on the surface this move gave greater representation to the *sujets* of the hinterlands, in actuality the chiefs who represented them were so aligned with the French government that they did little more than hamper the efforts of the *citoyens* of the Quatre Communes. This Council did give the Senegalese some first hand experience with democracy, though that experience was limited to the strict confines of the French hierarchy, and its actions were subject to the governor-general's veto (Crowder 1967). As a result, France maintained its highly centralized system of governance, but Senegal did get to experience the beginnings of democratic institutions.

### *Political Parties*

During this period of Senegalese history, political parties were just beginning to make their way into government. Several examples of early parties, however, can be found in examining the elections of early Senegalese politicians. The first of these nationally recognized politicians was Blaise Daigne, who was elected to the French National Assembly in 1914. The first African elected to such a post, Diagne was supported by a political group called the Young Senegalese. This group was made up of the expropriated landowners of Cap Vert, Muslim leaders, and French-educated intellectuals seeking to preserve the privileges of the Quatre Communes. Leaders such as these would rise to political power in Senegal throughout its history, both during colonization and after independence.

The most significant political party in modern Senegalese history found its roots in the 1930s with a young leader named Lamine Gueye. As a Dakar lawyer, Lamine Gueye was definitely from the upper class intelligentsia, but the socialist party that he worked to bring to Senegal served as an organization for combating the conservatism of Daigne's old age. Lamine Gueye defeated Daigne and was elected to the French National Assembly with the backing of the Senegalese socialist party. Once elected, Lamine Gueye proceeded to push for full political rights for all of the AOF and would continue to serve as an advocate for his country through the subsequent struggle for independence from France (Thompson, Adloff 1957). The socialist party that he organized would become the dominate party of Senegalese politics. Through party organizations such as these, Senegalese were beginning to take a more active role in their government, even while still under French colonial rule.

## *Conclusion*

Overall, the early colonial period in Senegal was a time of gradual French expansion into the region, and with that expansion came the increased involvement of the French government. This colonial government was built along the centralized system of the French using a policy of assimilation. The French did not merely want to conquer territory; they wanted to bring the peoples of that territory into French culture, to assimilate them to the French way of life. Because the French sought both cultural and military domination in Senegal, this process involved replacing the existing structures with French organizational structures. Education thus proved to be a vital tool for teaching French ideals to the native population because it trained the people from youth to accept French thinking.

The uneven application of the principles of assimilation, however, is also vital in understanding the French domination of the region. Residents of the Quatre Communes were citizens. Residents of rural areas remained subjects. Citizens could experiment with rudimentary forms of democracy. Subjects were left under the domination of local chiefs answering to French authority. This mixed heritage formed the basis upon which the Senegalese would build their nation. And they did begin to build a political identity during the latter years of this period through the proto-party the Young Senegalese and then through the organization of the Senegalese socialist party. The political legacy left to them by the French carried with it certain benefits as well as certain disadvantages. The Quatre Communes of Senegal were unique in their status as citizens and ability to participate in colonial government. This aspect of French rule helped shape a basis for democracy in Senegalese government. But the *sujets* of the countryside, along with the

citizens of the Quatre Communes, were still under the highly centralized rule of the French. And whatever influence the citizens of the Quatre Communes had was miniscule in comparison to the hierarchy established by the French for the rule of the AOF. It was from this highly centralized system that the Senegalese would begin to break away from French domination through the development of political parties and national politics.

## Chapter Two

### Transitions to Independence: 1944-1960

#### *Historical Context*

As the Allies were pushing towards victory in Europe in World War II, Charles de Gaulle began formulating policy for a post-war empire. A conference for determining this policy was held in Brazzaville in 1944. At the Brazzaville Conference, the Free French government decided that French colonial holdings would remain under French authority. As a result of this determination, the Brazzaville Conference established a Federal Assembly for France and the colonies and also allowed them representation at the assembly writing the Fourth Republic constitution (Crowder 1967). These actions were a significant move for France because they marked a change from the former policy of assimilation to a newer policy of association. France was determined to maintain its control in the region, but it did acknowledge that restructuring was necessary.

The decisions made at Brazzaville set the framework for the French Union. That Union was established with the constitution of the Fourth Republic. Both Lamine Gueye and Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal served as African representatives in the Constituent Assembly for drafting the French constitution. Two versions of the constitution were drafted. The first draft constitution endorsed by the African leaders took a liberal approach to the status of the colonies, that followed a highly assimilationist policy. But, many Frenchmen feared that France would become subject to her own colonies, should such a constitution pass, and it was defeated in metropolitan France. The second draft on the constitution was passed, and it took a much less liberal view of the colonies (Crowder 1967). The French Union replaced the former colonial system and



emphasized the French resolve to maintain control over the colonies of the AOF by insisting upon association instead of independence, while still retaining French authority (Thompson, Adloff 1957). As the French began to realize that full implementation of the assimilation policy could mean enormous powers for their African subjects, they abandoned that policy in favor of association so as to maintain French rule without sacrificing the power of the French people.

Another development in French-African relations was the *loi cadre*, issued by France to the AOF in June 1956. This law granted semi-autonomy and parliaments for the territories along with a general franchise, thus increasing the electorate in the AOF to over ten million people and forming rudimentary states from administrative districts (Wilson 1994). Although the *loi cadre* seemed to grant greater authority to the Africans themselves, the Senegalese leader Léopold Sédar Senghor was highly critical of the move, arguing that it undermined the ability of the territories to act jointly by denying a federalized executive. Without a federal structure, each territory was left to act independently, thereby undercutting the strength of a potential union. In effect, this division reduced the influence of the African territories in comparison with that of the French government (Crowder 1967). The *loi cadre* was prohibitive of African unity and therefore prevented effective organization in African dealings with France.

In 1958, the French Community under the new constitution of the Fifth Republic replaced the French Union of the old Fourth Republic. This transition, however, was not without contention. Under the direction of Charles de Gaulle, the West African states were bullied into either accepting the terms of the Fifth Republic constitution and French Community or being totally cut off from France. One of the most controversial aspects

of the French Community was that it divided what had been the colony of French West Africa into its individual territories and required the territories to work individually with France instead of allowing the territories to work together as a union. The divisive work that began with the *loi cadre* came to a head with the more extreme regulations of the Fifth Republic. A united French West Africa could have been strong and politically influential, so when de Gaulle forced the territories to remain separate, he effectively limited their potential for power. Senegal under Senghor's leadership did not agree with the way the French Community divided the AOF into its individual member states and accused France of trying to balkanize Africa and weaken African political influence. In the end, however, Senegal decided that it was not strong enough to become an enemy of France and so found it necessary to accept the terms of the Fifth Republic constitution. In the resulting French Community, member states practiced self-governance but came together in affairs such as foreign policy, defense, and the economy (Foltz 1965). The political division that arose from this arrangement would later have an impact on the shaping of post-colonial Africa as national parties and leaders emerged from these political structures.

In the years between World War II and independence, Senghor consistently fought for a federation of West African states so that the individual territories would stand together in their dealings with France and then eventually be able to form a viable economic unit after independence from France. His attempts to this end, however, were repeatedly blocked by the French government and by his rival Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire.

Even though a federation of all former AOF countries could not be formed, in January 1959 Senegal did manage to form a smaller federation known as the Mali Federation. This federation originally included Senegal, French Soudan, Upper Volta, and Dahomey. When Upper Volta and Dahomey withdrew from the union in February 1959, Senegal and Soudan remained (Foltz 1967). Senegal gained its independence from France as a part of this Mali Federation on June 20, 1960. After a few years of working with the French Community, de Gaulle and the French government proved to be more flexible in the granting of independence. After easing through the stages of the French Union and then the French Community, the terms of independence granted to Senegal as a part of the Mali Federation meant that the new nation could still depend on France for a certain amount of aid, and the transition was made without completely severing all ties between France and its former colonies (Foltz 1967). This gradual independence provided Senegal with a safety net from France, but it also kept Senegal under France's centralized control for a longer period of time.

#### *Centralization/Decentralization*

In the years following World War II, France struggled to maintain its hold on its colonies, and the French Union was a redefinition of the colonial system in the face of nationalist demands. Although it replaced the old strict hierarchy, the French Union, also reasserted France's dominance in its overseas territories. In this way, the French Union was a cross between maintaining the old centralized order and creating a new decentralized system.

The Brazzaville Conference did, however, also take some steps towards decentralization as it recommended that assemblies should be established for each

territory along with extended suffrage for Africans (Crowder 1967). Under the new constitution in 1946, a General Council was established for all eight territories of French West Africa. While this was a new development for the other territories, it simply replaced the old Colonial Council that Senegal had previously known (Crowder 1967). Special concessions made to Senegal in revamping the structure of colonial politics included full municipal status for St. Louis, Dakar (which by then included Goree), and Rustifique. Also, Senegal retained its single college electorate instead of the dual system set in place in other colonies to ensure European representation. In Senegal Europeans and Africans competed in the same races for political office (Crowder 1967). This time period was one of great transition for most nations of French West Africa, but because of Senegal's unique historical status among the colonies, these reforms seemed less revolutionary in Senegal than in other West African nations.

Like the policies of the Brazzaville Conference, the *loi cadre* was also a mixed bag. If anything, the system it put in place maintained centralized rule through decentralizing certain aspects of African government. The *loi cadre* called for governments at the territorial level to form a federation with France. By dividing AOF into individual territories, the *loi cadre* diminished the influence of each territory in comparison to the weight of mainland France, thereby maintaining France's centralized power over its overseas holdings.

In the face of such division by the French government, the so-called "Balkanization" of the AOF, certain African groups protested the *loi cadre* and began working to form some African unity in an effort to increase the proportional influence of the African territories. Léopold Sédar Senghor was among the most vocal in protesting

the provisions of the *loi cadre* and began working to unite African politics through his party the Independents d'Outre-Mer (IOM). The Senegalese branch of this organization, the BDS (Bloc Democratique Senegalais) remained strong, but the IOM as a whole lacked the strength to stop the political maneuverings of the Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA), which maintained greater support in the rest of French West Africa. The RDA was headed by Houphouet-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire, a wealthy territory that had grown tired of contributing large sums of its money to the AOF budget (Foltz 1965). As a result, Houphouet-Boigny and Côte d'Ivoire often blocked Senghor's proposals for greater unification in the region, and the French policy of obtaining greater centralized power through the decentralization and fragmentation of its territories succeeded.

### *Political Parties*

The SFIO had been Senegal's first major party. With the SFIO, Lamine Gueye had been elected to the French National Assembly, and it was in the SFIO that Senghor first entered politics. Amid growing discontent with French assimilationist policies, the SFIO suffered in African politics because it sided too strongly with French interests. As a result, Senghor led a group in withdrawing from the party in 1947 and forming the *Bloc Democratique Senegalais* (BDS) (Crowder 1967). Upon his withdrawal from the SFIO, Senghor developed the BDS into an organization capable of defeating the incumbent Lamine Gueye for a seat in the National Assembly and reducing the SFIO from its dominant role in the territorial assembly to a meager nine out of fifty seats (Thompson, Adloff 1957). The BDS was distinctive in not being allied to any European party and so expressed the African ideals of *negritude*. The BDS promoted African socialism and

increased autonomy, though it shied away from actually demanding independence (Crowder 1967). The BDS had a more regional orientation than the SFIO did, and the granting of voting privileges to the countryside in 1951 allowed it to surge ahead of its predecessor with its swelling rural electorate (Thompson, Adloff 1957). As the BDS grew to include more socialist groups it took the name Union Progressiste Senegalaise in April 1958 to signify its changing character (Foltz 1965). The break the BDS made from its more international origin in the SFIO was significant because it expressed the increasingly decentralized nature of party politics in Senegal.

The struggle over a unified or divided West Africa was rooted in many conflicting debates. Senegal supported the idea of a strong and unified West Africa, but it did not always follow through with unification efforts. This conflict can be seen in Senegal's participation in political parties that spanned the entire region. The Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA) was a major political party throughout West Africa, uniting African representation in the French National Assembly and setting the tone for much of African politics. Senegal, however, was one of the few states not to support the RDA, refusing even to send its delegates to the RDA's initial meeting in Bamako. The RDA enjoyed widespread support throughout the AOF, but its deepening communist affiliations caused the withdrawal of Senegalese support (Aldoff, Thompson 1957). A major complication in Senegal's involvement with the RDA was its leader, Houphouet-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire. A personal rival of Senghor, Houphout-Boigny favored the division of the AOF into its individual states and repeatedly blocked Senghor's efforts to form a united West Africa. As a consequence, Senghor attempted to form his own interterritorial party, the Independents d'Outre-Mer (IOM) (Foltz 1965). During the

period following World War II, the RDA gained political dominance in French West Africa in every territory except for Senegal. In Senegal, the BDS managed to defeat the SFIO and to overshadow all other political parties in the territory. In this example, the increased localization of political parties in once again made clear. Even as Senghor was seeking to provide greater African unity, he was still contributing to the fragmentation that West Africa was experiencing.

The Parti de Regroupement Africain (PRA) was an interterritorial coalition party of nearly all major parties outside of the RDA. The PRA was dominated by its Senegalese contingent and aligned African politics into two main blocs: the RDA led by Houphouet-Boigny and the PRA led by Senegal. Thus, a sort of interterritorial two party system was established, though each large party was really a loose combination of local and territorial parties without a strongly centralized core. Houphout-Boigny favored a system of independent territories linked individually to France, while Senghor continued to lobby for a united West African government. It is difficult to say how these two parties would have held a united front for African politics, however, because two months after establishing this system, the French Fourth Republic fell, and Charles de Gaulle stepped in as president of France to write a new constitution. With the new constitution also came a new system for dealing with West Africa, and, as a member of de Gaulle's cabinet, Houphout-Boigny and his system of independent territories held sway in the new French constitution. Each territory was given the option of either accepting its individual status as a member of the French Community or of completely disassociating itself from France. Few nations were able to take such a drastic step as complete independence, and despite internal division and opposition to the terms of the agreement, all West African

states except for Guinea voted in favor of the French Community, Senegal approving the constitution with 97 percent of its voters (Foltz 1965). Thus, Senegal spent most of the period from 1944 to 1960 struggling between decentralization and subordination to France, on the one hand, and a centralized system that would allow greater African power, on the other. In the end, the decentralized system won out, and Senegal began making its own way, first as a member of the Mali Federation and then as a separate nation.

### *Conclusion*

This transition to independence marks a crucial portion of Senegalese history as its leaders struggled to shape Senegalese identity in the context of French demands and the needs of its African neighbors. Senegal had wanted greater independence through a unified Africa, but instead it got total independence with a fragmented Africa. Even as the Senegalese leader Senghor campaigned for unity, however, he moved farther away from it in order to protect his own political interests. The division of African parties into national parties furthered the fragmentation that African was experiencing in its dealings with France. Throughout this period, therefore, Senegal was involved in an unintentional decentralization process through its political parties and national organizations.



## Chapter Three

### Léopold Sédar Senghor: 1960-1981

#### *Historical Context*

Upon gaining independence from France in 1960, Senegal was still joined with the French Soudan in a union known as the Mali Federation. This union, however, proved to be short-lived. When faced with the increasingly centralized nature of the Mali Federation and the apparent domination of the Soudanese, Senegalese leaders began considering withdrawal from the federation. The leader of the Senegalese territory, Léopold Sédar Senghor, had spent his political career working towards African unity, and the Mali Federation was the best organization he had been able to produce, but when the politics of the federation began to turn against him, he began to reconsider his stance. After analyzing his political chances, Senghor realized that he would not be able to maintain power within the Mali Federation. His only hope of political dominance lay within Senegal itself and not the federation as a whole. As a result, Senghor compromised his ideal of African unity in order to preserve his own political power. Through a series of quick maneuvers for political and military support, Senghor claimed dominance within Senegal and sent the Soudanese leaders home without a fight. The 67 members of the Senegalese territorial assembly who were present at their midnight meeting in late August 1960 declared Senegal an independent republic, and on September 26 Senegal adopted a new constitution. One week later, Léopold Sédar Senghor was elected the first president of the independent Republic of Senegal (Foltz 1965). Senegal had finally gained independence from France only to fragment further by breaking its

union with Soudan. This division, however, would serve to strengthen the centralized, single-party state that Senghor was building around himself in Senegal.

The break-up of the Mali Federation was not the only action Senghor had to take in order to consolidate his own political power within Senegal. He also had to establish his dominance over men within his own party. Mamadou Dia had served as a leading politician in Senegal alongside Senghor during the years leading up to and just following independence. Dia served as Minister of Defense during the Mali Federation (Foltz 1967) and as prime minister of independent Senegal. In December 1962, however, Dia launched an unsuccessful coup attempt against Senghor that resulted in the swift suppression of all opposition and Dia's imprisonment (Keesing's Record of World Events 1962). Following Prime Minister Mamadou Dia's unsuccessful coup attempt, Senghor took over the duties of prime minister and the Assembly granted him authority to present a revised constitution to the Senegalese people. Accordingly, in March 1963, Senegal voted to approve a new constitution. That constitution established a presidential system and abolished the post of prime minister, thus further centralizing executive authority for Senghor himself.

A few years after Senghor had done away with the post of prime minister as a part of his suppression of the opposition movement of Mamadou Dia, he altered his position on the topic. In 1969, Senghor himself presented an amendment to the 1963 constitution that would reestablish the office of prime minister. The amendment, passed by referendum in February 1970, allowed the president to nominate the prime minister. Therefore, instead of loosening Senghor's control of the political system, the constitutional amendment allowed him to use the office to begin grooming his chosen

successor, Abdou Diouf, whom he immediately named Senegal's new prime minister. In a 1976 constitutional amendment, Senghor then succeeded in changing the rules for succession to the presidency. The previous law had stated that the president of the National Assembly would serve as interim president in case of a presidential death or resignation and then hold elections within a two-month period. The new amendment made the Prime Minister the next in line for the presidency and allowed him to serve for the remainder of the existing presidential term. (Keesing's Record of World Events 1976) In this way, Senghor established Diouf as next in line for the presidency and assured him his first term in office. Then, when Senghor was ready to retire, he could simply resign mid-term and turn his power over to Diouf.

#### *Decentralization*

Although most of Senghor's rule was centered around consolidating political power in a unified government, Senghor did propose some moves towards decentralization during his time in office. The most notable example was his 1972 decision to delegate certain responsibilities to the local level by creating *communautés rurales* (rural communities-CR). These CR consisted of several villages that would oversee developing and providing services for the community. Three hundred and twenty CR were formed, each composed of between thirty and forty villages. While these *communautés* were a rudimentary form of decentralization, they were handicapped from inception. The CR councils had no permanent staff and were allotted very limited resources. What personnel they did have were representatives of the central government, and the budget had to be approved by an official of the central government (Vengroff 2000). As a result,

this move towards decentralization was more of a symbolic start than a truly effective measure.

### *Political Parties*

In the late 1960s, the UPS held complete political sway. So much so that in 1968, the UPS was the only party to present a candidate. Senghor had no opposition, and the electorate had no options but to simply affirm the candidates put forth by the government (Vengroff, Creevey 1997). In 1968, Senghor won reelection with 94.11 per cent of the electorate and 100 percent of the votes cast, while the UPS candidate list for the National Assembly received 92.58 per cent of the electorate and 100 per cent of votes cast (Keesing's Record of World Events 1968). Senghor had successfully ended political opposition to his regime.

By 1974, however, the UPS was facing problems of internal division and external unrest among the rural population. As a result, the government decided to allow a limited amount of political competition by allowing the establishment of the Parti Democratique Senegalais (PDS) under leader Abdoulaye Wade. The next concession came in 1976, when a constitutional amendment created a three-party system restricted to three set ideologies: Marxist-Leninist, democratic-socialist, and liberal-democratic (Vengroff, Creevey 1997). That same year, the UPS joined the Socialist International and officially changed its name to the Parti Socialiste (PS) (Keesing's Record of World Events 1974). The PS then took the democratic-socialist stance leaving two other parties, the Parti Africain de l'Independance (PAI) and the PDS with Marxist-Leninist and liberal-democratic positions respectively (Vengroff, Creevey 1997). In the 1978 election following these reforms, a certain level of competition existed, and the PDS was able to

win 18 seats in the National Assembly. The PS, however, maintained its hold on Senegalese politics with Senghor himself winning 82 per cent of the popular vote and PS candidates winning 82 seats in the National Assembly (Fatton 1987). This partial loosening of political restrictions gave Senegal an outlet for expressing discontent with government policies and as a consequence took some pressure off of the government while increasing its legitimacy abroad (Vengroff, Creevey 1997). As a result, Senghor was still able to maintain his political control.

### *Conclusion*

Léopold Sédar Senghor's term as president lasted from 1960 until his resignation in 1981, but his leadership in Senegal reached back into the colonial period and the post-World War II restructuring of French colonial holdings. Senghor remains one of Senegal's most influential leaders for his role in leading Senegal to independence and then establishing a working governmental system in the following years. The system that he established had an enduring influence on Senegalese politics. When Senghor first entered the political scene, Senegal was a part of the French colony of l'Afrique Occidentale Francaise (AOF), and when he left, it existed as an independent nation, separate from all other African territories. Though Senghor vocally espoused the ideals of African unity and advocated the establishment of an African federation, these dreams were never realized, and indeed Senghor's very actions seemed to lead towards the fragmentation of any potential union. The effect of Senghor's rule in Senegal was to pare down Senegal's interdependence with other territories until it existed as a single-party state under Senghor's personal rule. In following his own political interests, Senghor reduced Senegalese politics to the borders of Senegal and from there created his own

highly centralized government, squashing all opposition. During this time, however, Senghor did also make steps towards greater democratic liberty. He held regular elections throughout his rule, and, as the years progressed, even began allowing legitimate opposition parties to compete in elections and to win some offices. Though not exactly a liberal democracy, Senegal under Léopold Sédar Senghor did firmly establish itself as an independent nation and begin to lay the groundwork for future liberalization.

## Chapter Four:

### Abdou Diouf: 1981-2000

#### *Historical Context*

On January 1, 1981, Léopold Sédar Senghor voluntarily resigned his office as president, turning his government over to the prime minister and his chosen successor, Abdou Diouf. Diouf was a technocrat without a strong following in his own party, and he had not even been elected to his presidential office. The first moves Diouf would make as president were critical to the rest of his term in office. Thus, after Senghor's years of carefully controlled democracy and limited party systems, Diouf decided to take the next steps in liberalization by accepting unlimited pluralism of political parties. In this way, he usurped the major issue of the opposition parties and diminished some of the criticism of his regime, thus allowing himself to establish his own rule over the government. These moves towards liberalization greatly improved the level of democratic practice in Senegal, but they also had unintended consequences for the Diouf regime. Diouf may have hoped that removing limitations from political parties would fragment his opposition and give his government increased legitimacy in the international community. The development that he did not expect, however, was the increased support that the opposition parties would find among the population. The increasing strength of the opposition parties at the expense of the Parti Socialiste is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Diouf's regime.

#### *Decentralization*

In 1972, when Léopold Sédar Senghor announced a move towards decentralization with the *communautés rurales* (rural communities—CR), his apparent

steps towards decentralization actually masked his real intentions of further consolidating his regime. In the same way, the reforms enacted during Diouf's administration may also be of questionable origin. The intent of laws, however, is not always their effect, and so when Diouf's restructuring allowed the presence of opposition parties in government, the actual decentralization may have been greater than he originally planned (Vengroff 2000). This decentralization did not occur rapidly, but rather was the result of gradual reforms. The steady progression of these reforms, however, did have a significant impact on the Senegalese government.

After nearly ten years in power, slipping control in rural areas necessitated Diouf's move to enact some sort of reform in both the communes and the *communautés rurales*. This action granted equal status to certain municipalities that had previously fallen under restricted categories. Additionally, the mayors were actually given authority over their budgets, while appointees from the national government who had formerly held budgetary power were placed under the mayor's control. In the same way, when these reforms were implemented in the rural communities, they resulted in budgetary control being moved from the *sous-prefet* of the national government to the president of the popularly elected council (Vengroff 2000). These reforms thus strengthened the influence that the rural population could have over their local governments. And since the PS had always dominated in the rural areas, this change could be very helpful in maintaining PS control in the country.

The next efforts at decentralization were announced by Diouf in 1992. These plans entailed the creation of regional councils, thereby creating a legislative voice at the regional level. The implementation of these councils, however, was slow and uncertain.



After rounds of studies and debates, the first of these regional councils did not actually begin operating until 1997. The major uncertainty surrounding these institutions is the role that the regional governors played in running their government. These governors were still appointed by the president, who rotated them among the regions to keep them from establishing a base of power from which to challenge the national government. Since the governors controlled the implementation of all national services within the regions, and the governors were controlled by the president, it was difficult for a vaguely defined legislative body to act outside of the governor's (and therefore the president's) permission (Vengroff 2000). Nevertheless, the creation of these regional councils was a significant move towards the decentralization of the Senegalese government, though they did not necessarily mean the decentralization of the power of the PS.

The power of the PS seemed threatened in 1996 when the PDS actually won the local election in Dakar. As a result, the PS began another decentralization program within the capital city itself, in an attempt to keep the PDS from controlling city government in the nation's capital. The restructuring that resulted from this plan created forty-three *communes d'arrondissement* or local municipal communes. These municipal communes replaced the original four communes that had constituted Dakar and its suburbs. Each of these new municipal communes had its own elected council. As the PS was drawing the districting lines, those lines were gerrymandered to ensure a PS victory. These municipal communes, however, had no real means of funding their operations or of hiring staff to take care of the organization. As a result, the *communes d'arrondissement* were confined to a precarious place in city politics, with some city mayors even refusing support altogether (Vengroff 2000). In this instance, the PS was

clearly attempting to defend its power in the cities through fragmenting the voting base of its opposition. This tactic, however, could not support the PS in its circumstances of declining popularity with the voters.

### *Political Parties*

Throughout Diouf's presidency, the opposition parties, particularly the PDS, continued to grow in strength. In 1983, the PS was still decidedly dominant in the legislature, winning 111 of 120 seats, but the PDS managed to take eight seats, and the Rassemblement National won one seat. Incumbent Abdou Diouf (PS) won 83.45% of the vote in the presidential election that same year with Abdoulaye Wade (PDS) taking 14.79% (Keesing's Record of World Events 1983). Over the next few years, the PDS continued to expand upon these small inroads into the dominance of the PS. In 1988, amid protests against electoral fraud by the government, the PS won 103 seats in the National Assembly and the PDS 17, while Diouf took 73% of the vote as compared to Wade's 25% (Keesing's Record of World Events 1988). In 1991, Wade and four other PDS members joined the PS in a national unity government. This arrangement was short lived, but resulted in significant electoral reforms, namely "a new electoral code providing for the representation of all parties at polling stations, a guaranteed secret ballot, a lowered voting age, an easier and expanded system of voter registration, guaranteed access to the state media for all parties and the acceptance of foreign election monitors" (Vengroff, Creevey 1997, 208). The PDS thus continued to chip away at the dominance of the PS.

The elections throughout the 1990s showed increased erosion of PS support and growing strength for the PDS. In the February 1993 presidential election Diouf only won

58.4% of the vote while Wade came in with 32%. In May of that same year, the PS won 84 legislative seats while the PDS jumped to 27, leaving 9 seats for four other opposition parties (Keesing's Record of World Events 1993). Throughout these years, the PS was able to hold onto its power through its good organizational networks in the rural areas that were more difficult for other parties to reach. As a consequence, the opposition parties dominated in urban areas while failing to win the rural vote (Vengroff, Creevey 1997). Thus, the PS maintained control of both the executive and legislative branches throughout the 1990s.

A closer look into the local politics of the 1990s provides an illustration of the trends in Senegalese government during Diouf's last years in office. In efforts to maintain his power and the power of his party throughout Senegal, Diouf made key concessions to opposition groups seeking greater representation in the government. Diouf saw these concessions as a means of appeasing the opposition parties in order to prevent more hostile resistance to his regime. Leading up to the planned 1995 local elections, the opposition parties sensed their weakness in the rural areas where the PS had traditionally maintained a strong organizational structure and hold on politics. The opposition parties therefore sought to improve their representation in local elections in preparation for elections to the National Assembly. In the past, the voting system in local elections had made it terribly difficult for any opposition to find a voice in local government, thus hampering attempts at national influence. Originally, that electoral system called for a closed list party bloc to be elected by a plurality. So, only one party would be represented on the council under this winner-take-all policy. Given the PS's superior rural organization, it was almost assured of a victory. Thus, the first priority for

the opposition parties was a reformed electoral code. The 1995 elections were actually postponed for a year during the political wrangling until this deal could be negotiated (Vengroff 2000). This political struggle illustrated the opposition's attempts to use the decentralization of Senegal to defeat the ruling PS.

The resulting compromise for the 1996 local elections allowed for more opposition party participation in local government while still maintaining the PS's dominance. Half of the representatives to the councils were still elected by the old winner-take-all system. The other half, however, were allocated by proportional representation with a simple quota and the remaining seats going to party lists by the system of the strongest remainder. That second half allowed room for opposition parties to be represented on the councils without taking power away from the PS. At the same time those electoral reforms were enacted, the number of seats on those councils was also greatly increased to insure that former PS representatives retained their seats. As a result of these reforms, the PS was able to gauge its actual support through reasonably fair and open elections while using the voting system to keep opposition parties from uniting against the government party (Vengroff 2000). Although these reforms still held the opposition parties at a disadvantage, they were a step in creating greater representation for political dissent.

As a result of the 1996 local elections, the opposition parties won almost 2500 seats in various councils throughout the nation, leaving the PS with over 10,500 seats. The PS only lost its control of seven municipal and eighteen rural councils and maintained its majority on all regional councils, though opposition parties were represented on every regional council. The average voter turnout in rural community

council elections was 45.6 percent, and it was 45.7 percent in the urban elections. Generally acknowledged to be free and fair, these elections gave the regime the democratic legitimacy that it needed (Vengroff 2000).

Despite its efforts to consolidate its own power throughout Senegal, the influence of the PS was fading, and the internal factions that emerged from within the party made it even more difficult to maintain party control. A major loss for the party came when Moustapha Niasse withdrew from the PS, taking a significant portion of party support along with him. These efforts on behalf of the PS to retain political control met with repeated frustrations of growing magnitude throughout Diouf's regime. Each advance of an opposition party or fragmentation within the PS itself placed the PS one step closer to losing its political dominance.

### *Conclusion*

Abdou Diouf came into the office of president as the chosen successor of Léopold Sédar Senghor. This status carried with it advantages as well as disadvantages. On the one hand, Diouf had the official backing of Senegal's most respected statesman. On the other hand, Diouf had no electoral mandate for himself. As a result of this situation, Diouf had to prove the legitimacy of his own government while seeking to maintain the political dominance of the PS that had been his legacy from Senghor. Diouf therefore sought to prove his electoral base through decentralizing the governmental structure as he simultaneously maneuvered to fragment his opposition. These efforts would produce mixed results.

In every instance that Diouf decentralized the government, reformed electoral codes or extended representation to opposition parties, the PS retained its electoral

dominance. Through his reforms of the *communautés rurales*, Diouf proved the strength of the rural support for the PS. The creation of regional councils gave greater representation to voters at a local level while the president (and thus the PS) retained the right to appoint the regional governors and maintain control in the regions. Even when Diouf allowed for the reform of the local elections laws, the PS continued to win over four times the number of seats won by all opposition parties combined. Despite these strengths, however, Diouf and the PS steadily lost support in national elections. The decentralization that proved the dominance of the PS also introduced an opposition that would continue to grow in strength and ultimately challenge the PS for control of the very office of president itself.

## Chapter Five

### Abdoulaye Wade: 2000-Present

#### *Historical Context*

Abdoulaye Wade first surfaced in Senegalese politics in 1974 when the loosening of Senegal's political party laws allowed opposition parties to organize. Over the years, he labored with the opposition, occasionally joining coalition governments, but never for long. Throughout the 1990s, he was steadily gaining at the polls in presidential races. Finally, in 2000, Wade forced Diouf into a runoff for the presidential election and then managed to win the race with 58.49% of the vote with his coalition party, Sopi (Keesing's Record of World Events 2000). This steady strengthening of the opposition parties for over thirty years illustrates Senegal's process of institutionalizing its political parties and developing a solid base for democracy in the years leading up to the actual transfer of power. Since that transfer, the government of Abdoulaye Wade has faced a number of challenges, particularly a poor economy and violence in the Casamance region. Wade's ability to maintain the democratic structures of his government in light of these challenges will determine the future course of Senegalese democracy.

#### *Decentralization*

When Abdoulaye Wade was elected president of Senegal, he was faced with the daunting task of revamping Senegal's political system in order to bring greater democratic participation to the Senegalese people. Because of his advanced years—Wade was 74 years old when he was elected to the presidency (Centre for Democracy and Development 2000)—Abdoulaye Wade must form his presidential legacy, not

through a long-term regime and personal power, but rather through the establishment of a political system that will improve the quality of the Senegalese democracy.

Upon entering office, Wade began enacting numerous reforms, chief among these the rewriting of the Senegalese constitution. Proposed by Wade, the new constitution was passed by referendum on January 7, 2001. This new constitution instituted several key changes from the old system, both in the legislative and executive branches. In the legislative branch, the Senate was abolished, making the National Assembly of Senegal unicameral. Its 120 members (reduced from 140) are directly elected for five-year terms. The new constitution also places limits on shifting party allegiance while in office. The principle change that the 2001 constitution brought to the executive branch is term limits. The tenure of the Senegalese executive has gone through many revisions, changing from seven-year terms to five-year terms and alternating between having term limits and not having them with these fluctuations mostly depending upon the convenience of those in office. Under Senegal's current constitution, the president may serve a maximum of two, five-year terms ("People in Power: Senegal" 13 March 2003). These reforms served to streamline the legislative process and to prevent the presidency from once again reverting to dictatorial rule.

Among other reforms enacted under Wade's presidency are changes to the voting system. When electing representatives to the National Assembly, the candidates are divided into two lists: regional and national. Those running at the regional level are elected by a majority system while those running on the national level are elected by a proportional system. This system can be overly complex, however, as voters found in the



2001 legislative elections when they were faced with 25 different ballots (“Wade Coalition on Track for Big Majority” 2 May 2001).

At the regional level, Wade’s government had received some electoral validation of its national victory. In May 2002, the PDS and its coalition partners won control of nine out of eleven regional councils, forty-one communes (“Press Widely Comments” 18 May 2002) and the majority of Senegal’s 320 rural communities (“Ruling Party Leads in Senegal’s Municipal Elections”, 14 May 2002). This victory was significant for the PDS and its coalition because it had traditionally been weakest in the outlying areas of Senegal. Thus, its victory in these regional governments was evidence of strong support for the new government throughout the nation.

Though the new regime has enacted many reforms, it still faces many difficulties. Chief among these problems is the economic slump that Senegal continues to struggle through. In 2002, the United Nations released its Development Programme report on the poor Senegalese economy. President Wade sought to defend his government when the report was released, insisting that the problems described in the report were the result of the previous regime’s policies. According to that report, the poverty rate in Senegal has risen from 33 percent in 1990 to 65 percent in 1999. Droughts and poor harvests in rural areas are only exacerbating these problems as the majority of the Senegalese population depends on agriculture for its income. The UNDP report thus placed Senegal 158<sup>th</sup> according to the Human Development Index (“Senegal Not Concerned by UN Report, Says Wade, 26 July 2002). Despite Wade’s protests that these figures are a reflection of the previous regime, the poor economic situation that these numbers reflect still weighs heavily upon his time in office. Wade must take measures to improve the Senegalese

economy if he is to maintain the legitimacy of his government in the eyes of the Senegalese population.

Another significant challenge that the Wade presidency faces is that of the Casamance region. A long-time hotspot in Senegal, the Casamance is the southernmost region on the nation, nestled just below The Gambia. Guerilla fighters have been battling for the independence of the region since 1982 (West Africa: Forgotten Conflict Lingers On, 6 March 2003). Abdulaye Wade declared the problems in Casamance a top priority of his government when he was elected to office and even managed to sign a provisional peace agreement with the rebels in the Casamance in March 2001. Since that time, however, the leadership of the separatist fighters has splintered and various groups have continued the fighting, despite the cease-fire agreement. This ongoing rebellion has created turmoil in the region, killing 3000 since its start in 1982 ("Blood and Confusion in Casamance" 29 January 2003). This secessionist conflict is destabilizing the region and presenting a great challenge to Wade's ability to maintain a cohesive government.

#### *Political Parties*

In examining the party structure of Senegal, the system of political parties today remains strong, though it is facing some difficulties. After winning the presidential election in 2000, the Sopi coalition has won a majority in the legislature with 89 seats, leaving the Alliance of Progress Forces and the PS as the principle opposition parties with 11 and 10 seats respectively (Keesing's Record of World Events 2000). In the local elections of May 2002, the Sopi coalition won 9 out of 11 regional Councils, and 41 out of 67 communes ("Press Widely Comments" 18 May 2002). Thus, the government party

is still strong, but party competition remains, and no one party is allowed to dominate completely.

However, in considering some of the attributes of a fully institutionalized party system, Senegal has a mixed record. As far as regularity in patterns of party competition, Senegal was consistent throughout the late 1980s and 1990s until the election of 2000. Using Mainwaring's (1998) formula for measuring electoral volatility (adding the net change in percentage of votes gained or lost by each party from one election to the next and dividing by two) Senegal averaged around 10 throughout the 80s and 90s, and then jumped to over 20 with the 2000 election. In comparison to other third wave countries, however, these scores are reasonable, even with the 2000 score of 20. As Mainwaring (1998) discusses, the mean country volatility was 9.7 for industrial democracies and 20.5 for older Latin American democracies. Thus, Senegal scores reasonably well in the regularity of its patterns of competition.

Two other factors of an institutionalized party system are the consistency of party voting within the population and the longevity of the political parties themselves. Senegal scores fairly well on both of these counts. Although the Parti Socialiste has seen a dramatic drop in its voter support in comparison to its days of total dominance, this change was not sudden. Rather, over a period of nearly two decades, the Senegalese people shifted their loyalty from the PS to the PDS. This slow transition shows a certain consistency in party voting that changed over time as one party responded to the demands of the people whereas the other did not. Also, both of the main political parties, the Parti Democratique Senegalais and the Parti Socialiste, are fairly long-lived. The PS has its roots in the 1940s, pre-independence era, and the PDS was founded during the 1970s

(Vengroff, Creevey 1997). Although these tenures may be short in comparison to the political parties of much older democracies, they are fairly substantial for a nation with only 43 years of independence and three years of recognized democracy. Senegal may not score as well in these two categories when compared with much older democracies, but overall, it exhibits a solid performance above that of many other third wave democracies.

The main area in which Senegal may fall short is that of party vs. personality voting. Beginning with the Parti Socialist founder, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and now with current president and founder of the PDS, Abdoulaye Wade, the Senegalese tend to identify with the individuals of the party. A recent electoral controversy has centered around the PDS wanting to use Wade's name and picture on their ballots for the legislative election, even though Wade was not running for office himself ("Dakar Press Focuses Suit" 30 March 2001). Although this technique was struck down by the Senegalese Constitutional Court, this proposed strategy illustrates the pull that the personality of Abdoulaye Wade, and not just the PDS itself, has in elections. This practice of focusing on specific personalities instead of groups is deep rooted in Senegalese history, according to William J. Foltz, *From French West Africa to the Mali Federation* (1965). Foltz writes that this custom is practiced regularly on the local level as political interest groups are ruled by local personalities called clans. As Mainwaring describes it, "an election is personalistic if citizens cast their ballots more on the basis of a candidate's personal appeal than on the basis of party profile" (1998, 76). This practice of identifying with particular people may be a flaw in the institutionalization of Senegal's political parties.

A self-acknowledged flaw in Senegal's party system is that it allows too many parties. In striking contrast to Senegalese politics a few decades ago, today's system is so open to new parties as to be overwhelming to the average voter. Around 60 political parties exist in Senegal today, 25 of which ran a candidate in the 2001 legislative election ("Senegalese President Wants Party Politics Regimented" 29 April 2001). Twenty-five ballots for a single election is excessive, especially when in the last parliamentary elections, only 8 parties and the Sopi coalition won seats. In answer to this problem, President Wade has proposed a system for limiting parties, requiring a minimum score at the previous election for parties that have participated in a previous election or a minimum number of endorsements for first-time parties. A more manageable number of parties would cut down on election expenses and organizational problems (Senegal Envisages Party Pre-Conditions for Elections" 28 May 2001). Though the large number of parties in Senegal can be harmful to its democratic consolidation, the current administration is taking steps to rectify this situation and improve the stability of Senegal's democratic future.

### *Conclusion*

Overall, political parties in Senegal are well institutionalized and are aiding in Senegal's democratic consolidation. Transitions to democracy are seldom flawless, and Senegal's has its faults, but for nearly thirty years the nation has been steadily progressing towards a more democratic system. Through continued vigilance and reform, Senegal should be able to continue this pattern with the help of its party system. Senegal's two main problems—personalistic elections and a multiplicity of parties—should come to a head in the next few years. The current administration is taking steps to rectify the difficulty of

excessive parties, and the next elections will reveal the efficacy of those efforts. Also, when the aging Wade turns over the leadership of his party, the Senegalese people will have the opportunity to show in the elections whether their support of PDS was based solely on Wade's personality or whether it will continue even as the party takes on new faces. Given Senegal's history of democratization and the solid base it has been growing in the past thirty years with its institutionalized party system, the nation should continue down its current path towards a more consolidated democracy.

## Conclusion

Decentralization and political parties have played a major role in shaping Senegalese government from the early twentieth century up to the present. Beginning with French colonialism, Senegal was arranged in a highly centralized system, with all authority coming directly from Paris. In a partial application of the French policy of assimilation, however, parts of Senegal were given citizen status and allowed to participate in some limited forms of elected government. This policy laid the groundwork for the Senegalese experience with democracy, started the process of decentralization and gave birth to Senegal's first modern political parties.

Throughout the decolonization process, Senegal's political parties grew in number and strength with the Bloc Democratique Senegalais (later to become the Parti Socialiste) rising to dominate all other political parties within Senegal. During this same time, however, French West Africa was becoming increasingly fragmented as policies from France forced the division of the large colony into its sub-units. Though Senegalese leader Léopold Sédar Senghor pushed for an African union, the decentralization set in motion by the French achieved a momentum too forceful to counter, and Senegal ended this period as an independent nation in 1960.

Despite the decentralization that occurred during the decolonization process as Senegal broke away from the larger colony and from France, the new nation of Senegal remained highly centralized within its own borders. For the next twenty years Senegalese president Léopold Sédar Senghor would work to create a highly centralized governmental system centered around his own single party—the Parti Socialiste (PS). Senghor's presidency was a time during which Senegal stabilized itself as an independent country

and established its own governmental structures. Though this period was vital in proving Senegal as an independent nation, this time did not see much democratic development as Senghor eliminated political opposition and cemented his own hold on political power in Senegal.

The next phase in Senegalese history is the presidency of Abdou Diouf, Senghor's chosen successor. During this period beginning in 1981, Diouf sought to maintain the dominance of the Parti Socialiste while also looking for electoral legitimacy for his own regime. As a result, Diouf introduced reforms that decentralized political power and allowed a greater number of opposition parties to enter the political arena. Though the Parti Socialiste retained control of government for another twenty years, Diouf's hold on power was slipping as the Parti Democratique Senegalais under leader Abdoulaye Wade challenged the dominance of the Parti Socialiste.

The final chapter of Senegalese history to be examined in this study begins with the transfer of power from the Parti Socialiste and Abdou Diouf to opposition candidate Abdoulaye Wade and the Sopi Coalition. This peaceful transfer of power in 2000 was the first time since Senegalese independence that leadership of the nation had left the hands of the Parti Socialiste. This change came about through the decentralization process that had begun under Diouf and through the increased organization and activism of opposition parties. Since that change in governments has taken place, Wade has struggled to improve the economic stability of the nation and to settle the conflict that has been raging in the southern region of Casamance. Throughout the period since Wade's election, however, the party system in Senegal has remained stable and is becoming institutionalized. The plurality of parties and the continued existence of opposition has



kept Senegal from reverting to the centralized nature of a one party system and helped its transition to a liberal democracy.

This process of democratization through decentralization and political parties has been a gradual one for Senegal, beginning in the colonial period and stretching into the present day. That transition has, however, been a steady one, and Senegal's current leadership is taking steps to continue increasing the level of democracy in Senegal. Senegal still struggles with economic difficulties, but the freedom of competition among political parties and the decentralization of control from the national government will continue to aid the development of liberal democracy in Senegal.

# Appendix I

## Tables of Presidential and Legislative Elections

# Presidential and Legislative Elections 1983-1993

## 1983 Legislative Election

Party	Seats in National Assembly
Parti Socialiste (PS)	111
Parti Democratique Senegalais (PDS)	8

## 1983 Presidential Election

Candidate (Party)	Percentage of national vote
Abdou Diouf (PS)	83%
Abdoulaye Wade (PDS)	14.79%

## 1988 Legislative Election

Party	Seats in National Assembly
Parti Socialiste (PS)	103
Parti Democratique Senegalais (PDS)	17

## 1988 Presidential Election

Candidate (Party)	Percentage of national vote
Abdou Diouf (PS)	73%
Abdoulaye Wade (PDS)	25%

## 1993 Legislative Election

Party	Seats in National Assembly
Parti Socialiste (PS)	84
Parti Democratique Senegalais (PDS)	27
other	9

## 1993 Presidential Election

Candidate (Party)	Percentage of national vote
Abdou Diouf (PS)	58%
Abdoulaye Wade (PDS)	32%

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Abdou Diouf and the Parti Socialiste met with declining electoral support as Abdoulaye Wade and the PDS increased in popularity.

Source: Keesing's Record of World Events

# Transfer of Power 2000

## 2000 Legislative Election

Party	Seats in National Assembly
Parti Socialiste (PS)	10
Parti Democratique Senegalais (PDS) and Sopi Coalition	89
Alliance for Progress	11

## 2000 Presidential Election

Candidate (Party)	Percentage of national vote
Abdou Diouf (PS)	41.50%
Abdoulaye Wade (PDS)	58.50%

The 2000 presidential and legislative elections marked the first transfer of power from the PS to a candidate from another party. In this election, Abdoulaye Wade became only the third president of independent Senegal.

Source: Keesing's Record of World Events

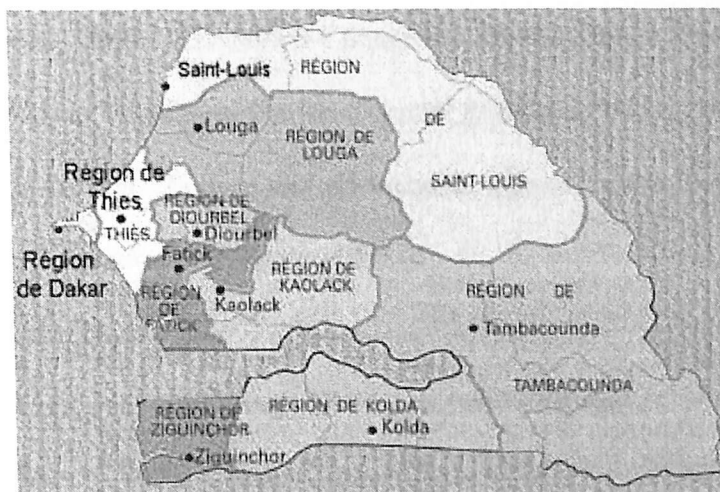
# Appendix II

## Maps of Senegal

# Maps of Senegal



Senegal with its major cities and neighboring countries



Senegalese Administrative Districts

Source: [www.senegal-online.com](http://www.senegal-online.com)

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