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DEMOCRACY ASSESSMENT OF SENEGAL

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Written by

Guilan Denoeux

Management Systems International (MSI)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I Political Context

Senegal has long been presented as a model of African democracy or "semidemocracy." Of all the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, it has the oldest tradition of electoral politics. Although it experienced *de facto* single party rule from 1963 until 1974, its regime never relied primarily on repression and intimidation tactics to maintain power. Instead, a measure of political dissent was always tolerated, while civil liberties were better protected than in most countries on the continent. Furthermore, Senegal reinstated multiparty politics as early as 1974, at a time when single party regimes were still solidly entrenched across Africa.

Senegal's reputation as a relative political success story is also due to the political stability that the country has enjoyed since becoming independent in 1960. Senegal has experienced few incidents of mass-based political unrest and violence. It is not plagued by a tradition of military intervention in politics. And its many ethnic groups have been able to coexist peacefully.

In the democracy area, Senegal thus entered the 1990s with a clear edge over most African countries. Seven years later, however, it has failed to maintain its lead. The regime has not changed its rhetoric about Senegal being a "model of African democracy," but this discourse is increasingly out of tune with the country's and the region's realities. Senegal no longer stands out as an isolated case of multiparty politics. In fact, the pace of political reform seems significantly faster in several other countries in the region.

Certainly, one should not be too harsh when assessing Senegal's current political situation. The regime remains one of the least repressive in Africa. The legal-constitutional framework is relatively liberal, and offers numerous opportunities for actors to organize politically and articulate their interests. Moreover, important advances have taken place since 1991 in such areas as the development of civil society, the electoral code, the independence of the media, and the liberalization of economic life. Still, three central conclusions reached by the Democracy Assessment of Senegal report were as follows:

1. Senegal can currently be described as a "stalled semidemocracy." Since 1993, no significant progress has been made toward resolving key procedural matters -- most important among which is the issue of how elections should be organized and administered. While the rules of the political game are open enough to permit a significant degree of political contestation, elections continue to be marred by fraud and irregularities. This phenomenon lies at the root of the very serious crisis of legitimacy and credibility which afflicts the political system.

2. Government is increasingly perceived as a purely predatory institution that cannot be trusted, and which has failed to carry out even its most minimal obligations toward the population. Political institutions and processes are widely seen as completely disconnected from society. Popular disenchantment is reflected in very low and declining rates of participation in elections, despite the ruling party's massive efforts to turn out the vote. Particularly worrisome is the fact that political alienation is especially pronounced among young people, i.e., those who will shape Senegal's future. During interviews with donors, members of NGOs, and the media, the words that came back most

often to describe the current political situation in Senegal were "malaise," "demoralization," "deterioration," and "inertia." All assessments of the situation were bleak.

3 Reviving the democratic process in Senegal would require a qualitative break with existing political practices. The regime, however, appears to lack the political will to allow this to happen. There are sharp disagreements within the ruling party over the need for genuine political reforms (as opposed to cosmetic changes aimed at international public opinion in general, and at donors in particular). A generous assessment of the regime would stress its ambivalence toward the merits of further democratization. A more pessimistic (or perhaps more accurate) conclusion would be that ruling elites are unwilling to carry out fundamental changes in the way power and authority are exercised. Since at this point neither opposition parties nor civil society have enough bargaining power to extract major concessions from the regime, the most likely outcome is continued deadlock, and the development of what some observers describe as a dangerous political vacuum in the country.

II USAID/DAKAR'S 1998-2006 Country Strategic Plan

In May 1997, USAID/Dakar presented its proposed strategy for 1998-2006. To formulate it, the Mission had conducted an extensive customer survey that included (a) detailed interviews of USAID clients across Senegal's ten regions, (b) numerous meetings with USAID's governmental, private sector, and civil society partners, (c) the constitution of a "dream team" made up of USAID staff, Senegalese intellectuals, and development practitioners, to think collectively and imaginatively about Senegal's future, (d) a three-day workshop (April 28-30, 1997) that brought together some 200 guests, who reflected on the key developmental challenges facing Senegal.

This participatory process led to a proposed program of action built around two Strategic Objectives (SOs): decentralization and private sector promotion. More specifically, SO-1 is entitled "Create Effective and Sustainable Decentralization in Targeted Regions," while SO-2 aims to "Expand Employment Opportunities via Sustainable Private Initiatives in Targeted Areas." Since SO-1 is the one that relates most directly to D/G issues, it will be the focus of the recommendations that follow. In the Mission's proposed strategy, this SO will be pursued by concentrating on four key Intermediate Results (IRs):

- 1 Increased Local-level Technical and Management Capacity (IR-1)
- 2 Effective Implementation of Transferred State Authorities in the Health, Population, and Nutrition (HPN) and Natural Resources Management (NRM) Sectors (IR-2). Here, the new strategy builds on the experience derived from the Mission's 1992-97 Country Program Strategic Plan, which revolved around these two sectors.
- 3 Increased Access to, and Mobilization of, Financial Resources (IR-3)
- 4 Increased Popular Participation in Decision-making Processes (IR-4)

III Recommendations

The main recommendations contained in the Democracy Assessment of Senegal report can be summarized under three headings

(1) Strengthen the D/G component of the Mission's strategy

(2) Address the issue of election fairness

(3) Within the framework of the Mission's support for decentralization, focus on two types of activities: those that will increase the capacity of grassroots communities to exercise effective and sustained scrutiny of locally-elected officials and their staff, and those that will facilitate partnerships between grassroots associations and local government institutions

Strengthen D/G Aspects in the Mission's Strategy

The Mission should make D/G a more explicit component of its portfolio, perhaps as a Special Objective. Many of the activities that might be considered under this Special Objective can easily be reconciled with the Mission's two SOs (Decentralization and Private Sector Promotion). A D/G emphasis, however, would help USAID/Dakar give its decentralization SO greater focus and distinctiveness relative to the actions of other donors in the decentralization area. The recommendation is not to have a stand-alone D/G Special Objective, but to address D/G aspects -- more explicitly than seems to be the case at present -- within the context of the two new SOs selected by the mission.

The rationale for emphasizing D/G activities in the mission's portfolio can be traced back to what the assessment identified as the dominant sociopolitical phenomenon in Senegal today: the unprecedented crisis of confidence between masses and political elites (including the leadership of the main opposition parties). In this context, neither the stability of the country nor the democratic (or "semidemocratic") nature of its political system should be taken for granted. Thus far, Senegal has demonstrated remarkable resilience in preserving a multiparty, relatively liberal political order. But this democratic political system is increasingly operating in a vacuum. Too many people, especially among the youth, see this formal democracy as meaningless, and are becoming skeptical of its intrinsic value. If present trends continue, there will be little support left for the survival of the existing order. Therefore, consolidation of the gains already made by USAID/Senegal, as well as the likelihood of real, sustainable progress in the areas which the Mission has identified as its priorities for the next eight years, appear conditional upon significant advances in the D/G field.

Address the Electoral Issue

The assessment identified the lack of transparency in the organization and conduct of elections as the single most important D/G problem facing Senegal, and concluded that this issue must be tackled, in spite of its sensitive nature. After all, the debate over electoral fraud and the means to prevent it is the one fundamental question that remains unresolved among political elites. Moreover, Senegal will experience four elections in the coming six years: legislative in 1998, presidential in 2000, local and regional in 2001, and legislative again in 2003. In this context, the issue of the fairness of the electoral process deserves special attention, especially since every major election now raises the prospect of yet another outbreak of popular anger following the announcement of the results.

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Low and declining turnout constitutes yet another reason to address the issue of electoral fraud. It is not clear how long Senegal's formal democracy can survive when increasing numbers of people refrain from exercising their right to vote, and when the President owes his mandate to only about 18% of eligible voters (and about 29% of those who are registered). Low turnout reflects the absence of faith in the electoral process, which itself stems from the massive irregularities that characterize each election. The combination of electoral fraud and extremely low participation rates (particularly when measured against the number of eligible, as opposed to registered, voters) is a major drain on the system's legitimacy. The result is a widespread belief that the government -- whether at the local or national level -- does not deserve its mandate. This feeling that political authority is fundamentally illegitimate seems to be gaining ground, and it arguably fuels the increasing propensity to resort to violence.

The mixture of growing economic despair (created by deteriorating economic conditions) and rising alienation from the political system (fueled by electoral fraud, ruling party arrogance, and the complicity of most opposition elites) is potentially explosive. Demonstrations and random acts of violence are becoming routine. Exacerbating this situation is the fact that traditional channels of mediation and dialogue appear to be breaking down, in part as a result of rapid socioeconomic changes and the emergence of an increasingly complex, differentiated society. As Senegal's society continues to modernize, the old clientelist, village-based, and religious networks that used to provide mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution can no longer be relied upon to ensure sociopolitical stability. In this context, it is imperative to restore the legitimacy of political leadership, and this cannot be done in the absence of a more transparent electoral system. The assessment recommended that the following steps be considered:

- 1 Within the framework of its assistance to decentralization, the Mission might strengthen local-level mechanisms and institutions that enhance the capacity of populations to register, vote, monitor elections, and publicize instances of electoral fraud. From a D/G perspective, the success of Senegal's decentralization reforms cannot be separated from the need to restore the credibility of the electoral process. If local officials cannot be penalized by the populations they are supposed to serve, they will be less concerned with efficient government and with satisfying their constituencies than with maximizing personal benefits.
- 2 USAID/Dakar might also contribute to the financing of activities (workshop, conferences, etc.) that can indirectly step up pressure on the regime to make the conduct and organization of elections -- both national and local -- more transparent.
- 3 The mission should actively consult with other donors regarding what concerted action might be taken by the donor community to ensure more transparent elections. Only if a broad front exist among donors can the Government of Senegal be engaged in a critical dialogue on the sensitive, yet vital, matter of elections. Taking the lead in trying to develop such a donor consensus is a much-needed role that USAID should consider playing.

Taylor Support for Decentralization With a View to Maximizing D/G Benefits and USAID's Comparative Advantage

The assessment concurred with the Mission that Senegal's on-going decentralization program is worth supporting. Nevertheless, it argued that assistance in this area should be carefully calibrated if it is to translate into D/G benefits. After all, decentralization in Senegal is a process that has been going on since 1972. So far, it has not enhanced governance or broadened political participation at the local level. Nor has it translated into greater transparency of the policy process, or into real accountability of locally elected officials. Inefficient administration, corruption, and the isolation of the elite from its constituents appear to be as pronounced locally as they are nationally. It is not surprising, in this context, that the population has shown a great deal of skepticism toward the government's decentralization program. This lack of popular enthusiasm was reflected in disappointingly low turnout during the November 1996 local and regional elections. Much harder to understand is the excessive optimism displayed by some officials in the donor community, who seem to overestimate the ease with which decentralization can translate into D/G gains.

Decentralization will not deliver on its promises unless it is accompanied with the establishment or strengthening of mechanisms that enhance public scrutiny of local officials. If the population's capacity for effective and sustained monitoring of the performance and behavior of local officials does not increase significantly, decentralization will result merely in the reproduction, at the local and regional levels, of the "dysfunctions" that already plague the central government: corruption, nepotism, inefficiencies, rent-seeking practices, the plundering of public resources by officials, and the complicity between supposedly rival political elites. The result will be greater misallocation of resources, enhanced popular disenchantment with the political system, and perhaps even a diminished capacity of civil society to provide the population with ways of escaping the reach of government.

The assessment also showed that all the major donors in Senegal will be heavily involved in supporting decentralization for years to come, and that they will focus on two types of activities: (a) local government capacity-building (especially training of local officials and their staff), and (b) providing communes and regions with financial resources. The agency's support for decentralization, therefore, should not duplicate what other donors are already doing, and should not concentrate on strengthening the financial and technical capacity of institutions of local government. Such capacity is likely to be adequate, at least to begin with. The same cannot be said, however, for political oversight mechanisms. Accordingly, USAID/Dakar should consider the following emphasis within its support for decentralization:

1. Create or strengthen the mechanisms and institutions that will make local officials more accountable, and local government practices more transparent.
2. Facilitate partnerships between local government institutions and grassroots associations and NGOs.

Increasing Accountability and Transparency

Populations must become more capable of sanctioning mismanagement, corruption, and local elites that operate in disdainful isolation from their constituents. Unless progress is made in this area, there is a real danger that the funds which donors will pour into local and regional government councils will simply be wasted and siphoned off by local elites (just as they have, to a large extent, at the national level). Donors should aim to create and nurture an environment that is conducive to constant and

close supervision of local officials. Over time, the establishment of such an "environment of public scrutiny" at the local level might have beneficial consequences on national politics as well. Once individuals and communities realize that they can punish local officials for improper behavior or failure to perform, they are likely to become more demanding of national figures and central government institutions.

The assessment therefore suggested that, within its decentralization SO for 1998-2006, the Mission downplay IR-1 and IR-3 (see previous section), which are, or soon will be, the focus of many other donors' assistance programs. Instead, a new IR might be created entitled "Increased Transparency of Local Government Management and Improved Accountability of Local Officials and their Staff." As currently formulated, the mission's Decentralization SO does not give enough weight to the twin issues of transparency and accountability, which the assessment identified as central to the success of the decentralization program from a D/G perspective, and as areas in which other donors have not already invested significantly. Integrating transparency- and accountability-enhancing goals into the various projects implemented by the mission is important, but not enough. These goals should be the focus of separate, stand-alone activities by the mission.

While improving the capacity of local communities to monitor the behavior and performance of public officials relates mostly to the Mission's Decentralization SO, it should also facilitate the effective implementation of its Private Sector Promotion SO. Entrepreneurs need to make sure that municipalities and rural councils will not grant unfair advantages to certain economic actors, while denying them to others, on the basis of clientelistic and partisan considerations. Private economic actors who are interested in creating a more level playing field should welcome the strengthening of oversight mechanisms on local and regional government.

To increase public scrutiny of local officials, USAID/Dakar might consider the following activities:

- a. Systematically integrate civic education programs into the Mission's existing and forthcoming projects with community-based groups,
- b. Assist in the development and professionalization of local and regional media capable of providing critical coverage of electoral processes, the functioning of government institutions, and the behavior of elected officials,
- c. Support carefully selected local advocacy groups engaged in oversight of local government and in voter awareness campaigns,
- d. Support associations and NGOs that facilitate the involvement of women in the political process, and the assumption of leadership roles by women in local government institutions.

Facilitating partnerships between grassroots associations and local government institutions

It is imperative to restore a degree of trust and positive interaction between state and society. The best place to initiate this process is at the local level, by working toward local government - NGOs partnerships on issues of interest to the community, especially public service delivery. When interviewing donors, the assessment team heard little about such projects. Therefore, USAID might

be able to develop a comparative advantage in this field as well – the more so since Senegal displays few examples of meaningful institutionalized cooperation between municipal or rural councils and local associations. Overcoming this legacy will not be easy, considering the extent of the distrust that pervades state-society relations, and the reluctance of civil society organizations to become involved with government institutions. But this is where nudging and encouragement by USAID can make a difference. Decentralization provides a unique opportunity for state and society to invent new, more productive and mutually beneficial ways of relating to each other. Progressively, attitudes might be changed, and a new political culture might develop that will reverse the zero-sum game mentality that currently prevails, and is so inimical to the development of democratic practices. These attitudes cannot be changed through interventions that target central government institutions or national associations, but they might be altered at the local level. Local-level changes, in turn, might progressively influence the national arena.

Finally, the focus of USAID/Dakar's support for decentralization should be on the local, as opposed to the regional, level. The region is probably too large and diverse an entity for the D/G benefits expected of decentralization to materialize. The smaller the community, the more likely it is that actors involved in development initiatives will display a degree of mutual trust, as well as common values and norms. This is in part because individuals living in a village or urban neighborhood are more frequently interconnected by cross-cutting social networks than is the case for individuals living in a region. In addition, the gap between local government elites and the population is less wide at the local than at the regional level. Local communities, therefore, are far more conducive to government-NGOs partnerships than is the case at the regional level. Still, even in the rural communities that will be targeted, substantial efforts will have to be devoted to community-building considering the artificial way in which the boundaries of most rural communes were originally drawn.

INTRODUCTION

Senegal has long been presented as a model of African democracy or "semidemocracy." Of all the countries in Black Africa, it has the oldest tradition of electoral politics. Although it experienced *de facto* single party rule from 1963 until 1974, its regime never relied primarily on repression and intimidation tactics to maintain power. Instead, a measure of political dissent was always tolerated, while civil liberties were better protected than in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, Senegal renewed multiparty politics as early as 1974 at a time when single party regimes were still solidly entrenched on the African continent.

Senegal's reputation as a relative political success story is also due to the political stability that the country has enjoyed since becoming independent in 1960. Senegal has experienced few incidents of mass-based political unrest and violence. It is not plagued by a tradition of military intervention in politics. Its many ethnic groups have been able to coexist peacefully.

In the democracy area, Senegal entered the 1990's with a clear edge over most African countries. Seven years later, however, it has failed to maintain its lead. Thus, Senegal still endeavors to "sell" its democratic image to international public opinion and to donors in particular at a time when its "democratic momentum" is lagging behind that of other African countries. The regime has not changed its rhetoric about Senegal being a "model of African democracy" and a "pioneer." This official discourse, however, is increasingly out of tune with the region's realities. Senegal no longer stands out as an isolated case of multiparty politics. More importantly, the pace of political reform seems significantly faster in several other countries in the region. One might indeed describe Senegal as a case of "stalled semidemocracy." That the political elite, the population, and to a large extent donors appear to have become accustomed to this situation does not mean that it is stable.

One should not be too harsh when assessing Senegal's current political situation. The regime remains one of the least repressive in Africa. The legal-constitutional framework is relatively liberal, and offers numerous opportunities for actors to organize politically and articulate their interests. Moreover, important advances have taken place since 1991 in such areas as the development of civil society, the electoral code, the independence of the media, and the liberalization of economic life. Still, three central conclusions of this assessment are that

- a Senegal's "democratic experiment" is running out of steam,
- b A deepening of democracy would require a qualitative break with existing political practices,
- c The regime, however, appears to lack the political will to allow such a break to take place.

While the government has implemented significant reforms (e.g., the 1992 Electoral Code and the 1996 Decentralization Law), and while it has engaged in numerous negotiations with opposition leaders and representatives of civil society, it still seems unwilling to make meaningful concessions on some fundamental but contentious issues, most prominent among which is the question of the organization and supervision of elections. Yet, unless progress is made toward resolving these

issues, no real democratic advance will take place. And since at this point neither opposition parties nor civil society have enough bargaining power to extract major concessions from the regime in those areas, the most likely outcome is continued deadlock, and the development of what some observers describe as a dangerous political vacuum in the country.

The absence of clear momentum toward political reform creates serious constraints on what USAID and other donors can do in the democracy promotion area. One might even conclude that, in these conditions, Democracy and Governance (D/G) should not be a priority of USAID's action in Senegal. This assessment, however, reaches a very different conclusion. It recommends instead that D/G be made a more explicit goal of the mission, perhaps as a Special Objective that would complement the two Strategic Objectives -- decentralization and private sector promotion -- that USAID/Dakar has proposed as its focus for the 1998-2006 period. Such a D/G focus should be relatively easy to integrate with, or weave into, most of the activities that the mission might undertake as part of its decentralization and private sector promotion objectives.

The rationale for emphasizing D/G activities in the mission's portfolio can be traced back to what this assessment sees as the dominant sociopolitical phenomenon in Senegal today: the profound alienation of the population from the political system, and the unprecedented crisis of confidence between the masses and the political elite (not only the ruling elite, but also the leaders of the main opposition parties). Since independence, never perhaps has Senegal's democracy seemed as "formal" -- in the sense of being disconnected from what truly matters to the electorate -- as it is today. Government is increasingly perceived as a purely predatory institution that cannot be trusted and has failed to carry out even its most minimal obligations toward the population. The political system as a whole is widely seen as an artificial superstructure that floats above society, and has no meaningful, mutually beneficial relation with it. Several Senegalese observers interviewed while conducting this study pointed to the complete lack of congruence between the issues that political elites constantly wrangle about, and the problems that seem important to the population. The extent of popular alienation from the political system is reflected in very low and declining rates of participation in elections, despite the ruling party's massive efforts to turn out the vote. Particularly worrisome is the fact that political alienation is especially pronounced among young people, i.e., those who will shape Senegal's political and economic future. During interviews with donors, members of NGOs, and the media, the words that came back most often to describe the current political situation in Senegal were "malaise," "demoralization," "deterioration," and "inertia." All assessments of the situation were bleak.

From a programming perspective, the preceding observations have two main implications:

1. Neither the stability of the country nor the democratic (or "semidemocratic") nature of its political system should be taken for granted. Thus far, Senegal has indeed demonstrated remarkable resilience in preserving a multiparty, relatively liberal political order. But this democratic political system is increasingly operating in a vacuum. Too many people, especially among the youth, see this formal democracy as meaningless, or at least are becoming skeptical of its intrinsic value. Should present trends continue, support for the survival of such an order might become limited to urban elites. This situation contains very significant risk of destabilization. For example, one should not discount the possibility of

an explosion by the country's urban youth which could not be easily controlled by the regime and by political elites in general

- 2 In these conditions, the consolidation of the gains already made by USAID in Senegal, as well as the likelihood of further progress in the areas which the mission has identified as its priorities for the 1998-2006 period, appear conditional upon significant advances in the field of political reform. For example, decentralization will not deliver on its promises unless it goes hand in hand with the establishment, at the local and regional levels, of mechanisms that promote enhanced participation by populations, increased transparency of local government, and greater accountability of locally elected officials. If such mechanisms are not put into place, decentralization will result merely in the reproduction at the local and regional levels of the rent-seeking practices, corruption, and inefficiencies that already plague the central government. The result will be greater misallocation of resources, enhanced popular disenchantment with the political system, and perhaps even a diminished capacity of civil society (now more tightly controlled by a strengthened local government) to provide the population with much-needed economic and political outlets.

In this context, decentralization would create more problems than it would solve. The same observation applies to other political and economic processes which USAID may support. This is why this report recommends that D/G activities be more explicitly integrated into the mission's existing and forthcoming programs. This should be relatively easy for USAID/Dakar to do, as will be shown in Section III, which offers detailed recommendations for strategy and activities, as well as justifications for them.

SECTION ONE THE NATURE AND CURRENT STATUS OF SENEGAL'S TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

This section highlights some of the distinguishing features of Senegal's transition to democracy, particularly those that are relevant to the process of Democracy and Governance (D/G) programming. It proceeds in three steps. First, it identifies where Senegal currently finds itself in the process of moving from authoritarian to democratic rule. Then, it provides a historical overview of how Senegal reached this particular stage of democratization. This is intended to provide the reader with the "historical depth" needed to put in perspective Senegal's current political dynamics. Finally, an effort is made to assess Senegal's current political status by relying on three key indicators of democratic performance: the extent of open and fair political competition, the degree of popular participation in the political process, and the extent of consensus over the rules of the political game.

Where Is Senegal in The Process of Democratic Transition?

For heuristic purposes, one can distinguish between three different types of democratization processes: political liberalization, democratic transition, and democratic consolidation.

1 **Political liberalization** refers to a situation in which an authoritarian regime begins to relax political controls, and decides to grant greater freedoms in one or several of the following areas: freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of the press. Typically, a liberalizing regime displays enhanced respect for human rights and civil liberties. However, it shows little if any inclination to negotiate new, more democratic political rules with representatives of the political opposition or civil society. It simply "offers" more open and flexible political rules as a "gift" to the population.

2 **Democratic transition** refers to a more advanced process that presents two main characteristics. First, the regime no longer merely "grants" political concessions, but is engaged in negotiating new rules of the political game with the opposition and/or with spokesperson for civil society. One can distinguish between an "early" or "late" transition depending on whether this negotiating process is still incipient or is already well developed. The more institutionalized the process of negotiation over the rules, and the greater the agreement over these rules among key political actors, the more advanced the process of transition is. The second key characteristic of the process of democratic transition is that the rules themselves have changed. They can no longer be described as authoritarian (as is usually still the case with political liberalization). Although not yet fully democratic, the political system has become more competitive and/or participatory.

3 **Democratic consolidation**, finally, refers to the strengthening and institutionalization of democratic government. It is characterized by the "routinization" of political contestation, and by the expansion of political participation to include previously disenfranchised segments of the population (those that usually were not politically active during the process of democratic transition). In addition, consolidation involves the strengthening of the institutional capacity, political influence, autonomy, and representativeness of national legislatures and local government bodies.

Using the preceding typology, Senegal in 1997 can be described as a case of "early and stalled transition" The main characteristics of this kind of situation are as follows

1 The incumbent regime is nominally committed to a democratization agenda, but the actual extent of that commitment is questionable There are sharp disagreements within the ruling party over the need for genuine political reforms (as opposed to cosmetic changes aimed at international public opinion in general, and at donors in particular) A generous assessment of the regime would stress its ambivalence about the merits of further democratization A more pessimistic (or perhaps more accurate) conclusion would be that ruling elites are unwilling to carry out fundamental changes in the way power and authority are exercised

2 The rules of the political game are open enough to permit a significant degree of political contestation and political participation, but elections continue to be marred by serious electoral fraud and irregularities

3 Governing elites and opposition leaders have been engaged for several years in negotiations over the rules of the political game Progress has been significant in two areas the electoral code and the regulation of access to the audiovisual media But significant disagreements remain, especially with respect to the establishment of an independent electoral commission Regarding this particular issue, negotiations had reached a deadlock in June 1997

4 Disenchantment with the state and the political system in general is widespread and rising, especially among the youth There is a significant lack of enthusiasm for the electoral process Even the November 1996 local and regional elections were characterized by a disappointingly low turn-out

5 There is a growing feeling of political malaise, lack of political momentum, and lack of political will at the top to do what it would take to revive Senegal's "stalled semidemocracy "

Other characteristics of Senegal's transition that have implications for programming include

1 It is a transition from above It was initiated in 1974 by the regime, which on several occasions succeeded in reviving it, when it seemed to be running out of steam It is still led and tightly controlled by the incumbent elite Because the balance of power between state and society remains heavily skewed to the former's advantage, that regime can dictate the pace of democratic progress, as well as the nature and scope of the concessions it makes By June 1997, for instance, the four-month old discussions between the ruling party and opposition leaders about the possible establishment of an independent electoral commission had reached a dead-end because of the ruling party's unwillingness to allow such an institution, and because of the inability of opposition parties and civil society to force the regime's hand on this critical issue

2 The transition has been characterized by slow and gradual changes (at least until recently) It consists of an arduous and incremental process which displays few sudden, major leaps forward Senegal has been engaged in this transition for approximately two decades One might even point out that the way for this transition was paved by the country's long experience with electoral politics, which goes back to the beginning of the twentieth century At one level, the very slow

pace of the transition is frustrating. During an interview with the author, the Editor-in-Chief of a Senegalese weekly contended that the piecemeal concessions made by the regime over the past twenty years have allowed it to buy time and reduce the demand for a more fundamental restructuring of the political system. He then proceeded to describe this phenomenon as one of the major reasons why during the 1990's Senegal has seen far less momentum toward political reform than so many other African countries (where demands for democratization were not satisfied for a very long period of time, and then exploded to force the incumbent regime to drastically renegotiate the rules of the political game). At another level, however, the slow and gradual nature of Senegal's transition represents an asset in that it has given political opponents time to familiarize themselves with each other and test each other out. Such familiarity is -- in theory at least -- conducive to dialogue and compromise, and offers political opponents the possibility of experimenting with new modes of relating to each other.

3 The transition has been marked by both advances and setbacks. On several occasions, limited progress has generated unrealistic expectations about the possibility of a sudden breakthrough toward democracy. When these expectations have failed to materialize, the result has been a rise in cynicism and/or apathy toward the political process. One example of this phenomenon was the burst of optimism which followed the adoption of a new Electoral Code in 1992, only to be followed by widespread disappointment at the manner in which the 1993 elections were conducted.

4 Despite numerous setbacks, the overall trend from 1974 to 1993 was clearly positive. Since then, however, the situation has become far more difficult to assess. In the opinion of this writer, little significant progress has taken place toward addressing the central unresolved political issues. The system may have reached a threshold with respect to its capacity to overcome blockages and generate new momentum toward meaningful political reform. Beyond this point, no significant democratic progress might be able to take place considering the incumbent elite's unwillingness to break with existing patterns.

Senegal's Path to Semi-democracy

Having identified where Senegal finds itself in the transition process, this document now turns to an overview of how the country reached that point. A former French colony, Senegal became independent in 1960, around the same time as most countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Two features of the pre-independence period deserve to be mentioned briefly here, because of their decisive impact on Senegal's subsequent political development. First, Senegal's experience with electoral politics predated independence by several decades. Under colonial rule, a small segment of the population (African males born in the four communes of Dakar, Goree, Saint Louis, and Rufisque) had been allowed to take part in elections to municipal councils and in the selection of one Deputy to the French National Assembly. Thus, Senegal reached independence with the unusual benefit of some experience with competitive politics. Second, Senegal conquered its independence without resorting to violence. There was no mass-based popular uprising against the colonial power, no protracted and bloody struggle. Instead, independence was achieved smoothly, through negotiations, and by mutual consent. These two historical legacies, as well as the pragmatic and non-ideological leadership of Leopold Sedar Senghor from 1960 through 1980, were critical in the development of a political culture marked by tolerance and a propensity for political give-and-take. This culture, in turn, has been a critical factor supporting Senegal's political development.

The Authoritarian Era (1963-1974)

Shortly after independence, domestic and regional tensions combined to result in the emergence of a "soft authoritarian regime" in Senegal. Senegal had achieved independence on April 4, 1960 as part of the so-called "Mali Federation," which was composed of Senegal and the former French Sudan (now Mali), led by Modibo Keita. This federation did not survive independence by more than four months. Its dissolution was brought about by personal rivalries between Senghor and Keita, as well as by Senghor's apprehension that Senegal might not be able to maintain sufficient autonomy relative to its larger neighbor. By August 1960, Senegal had become an independent state. But even after the federation with Mali was disbanded, Senghor felt compelled to crack down on those -- including within his own party -- who had shown support for Keita. Laws allowing the government to rule by decree and various restrictions on freedom of movement and assembly were adopted in late 1960.

Domestically, the most important crisis erupted in 1962. It pitted Senghor, the president of the republic and secretary-general of the ruling party, against Mamadou Dia, who was prime minister and assistant secretary-general of the ruling party. Dia advocated a brand of socialism based on grass-roots mobilization of the rural masses. He favored a community-based model of development based on the constitution of peasant cooperatives. He was not well disposed toward western notions of pluralism, constitutionalism, and checks and balances. As other African leaders at the time, he felt that liberal democracy was a sham, and was not suited to the socioeconomic and political conditions prevailing in the region. He was also determined to limit French economic and political influence in Senegal.

Senghor advocated a more cautious approach to modernizing Senegalese society. In contrast with Dia's populist rhetoric and dogmatic style, he projected a pragmatic, moderate, and non-confrontational image. This was instrumental in his receiving the active support of the marabouts (the leaders of Muslim Sufi brotherhoods, who were extremely influential in the countryside, where seventy percent of the population lived) and the economic elite (which was still predominantly French or tied to French interests).

The power struggle between Dia and Senghor culminated in a showdown between the two men. The army sided with Senghor, who thus emerged with the upper hand. In December 1962, Dia was arrested. Together with several of his associates, he received a life sentence in jail.

Having put down Dia's challenge, Senghor adopted more authoritarian policies. He purged the party from Dia supporters. He changed the constitution, eliminating the office of prime minister and further concentrating power in the presidency. He ensured that the legislature would be entirely dominated by the ruling party through a change in the electoral law that created a single, nationwide constituency, with a winner-take-all system. Several opposition parties were outlawed, while others were progressively integrated into the ruling party. In addition, the government exercised great efforts to subordinate local government bodies to the authority of Dakar. Unions and professional syndicates were not spared. In the late 1960s, the National Union of Senegalese Workers (Union Nationale des Travailleurs Senegalais, or UNTS), which was linked to the ruling party, tried to assert its independence. It was immediately dissolved and replaced by a more compliant organization (the Confederation Nationale des Travailleurs Senegalais, which remains

the main union to this day). Similarly, in 1973, the government disbanded the teachers' union (Syndicat des Enseignants du Senegal) after the latter criticized the policies of the regime.

By the mid-1960's, therefore, a *de facto* one-party state was in place. But Senegal's brand of single-party rule was very different from that which prevailed elsewhere in the region.

1. It was *de facto*, not *de jure* single party rule. The hegemony of the ruling party stemmed primarily from its impressive infrastructure and capacity of absorption and co-optation of opposition elites.

2. Even at the height of the authoritarian era, the regime was never guilty of the kinds of massive human rights violations that plagued so many other African countries.

3. The state usually resorted to coercion only as a weapon of last resort, after trying to persuade, bribe, or intimidate its opponents. Critics of the regime did not "disappear," and they were often pardoned. Whenever repression was used, it was seen as a temporary expedient, not as a long term, viable, and sustainable method of government.

4. Opposition could always be heard. In urban areas at least, few were ever afraid of criticizing the regime in public. A "culture of fear" never took hold of Senegal.

5. The ruling party never developed into a monolithic structure. It remained riddled with conflicts between clans and factions. Furthermore, at the local and regional levels, party "caciques" always retained a measure of autonomy. For instance, it was always very difficult for the national leadership of the party to impose on cities or rural communities individuals who did not have a local base of support.

Political Liberalization (1974-1980)

In May and June of 1968, Senegal was rocked by a wave of student and trade union unrest. A few years later, a severe drought exacerbated popular discontent, including in the regime's stronghold, the countryside. Senghor responded to these developments by liberalizing the political system. In 1974, an opposition party -- the Democratic Senegalese Party (Parti Democratique Senegalais, or PDS) -- was officially recognized and allowed to operate. In 1978, the regime went one step further by passing a constitutional reform which allowed three parties. Senghor justified limiting the number of parties to three by invoking the need to prevent excessive and potentially dangerous political fragmentation. In addition, the reform attempted to structure this incipient multi-party system by stipulating that each of these parties had to represent one of the following ideological orientations: liberal and democratic, socialist and democratic, Marxist and communist. The PDS wanted to claim the socialist and democratic label, but was pre-empted by the ruling Parti Socialiste (PS), which claimed that description for itself. Reluctantly, the PDS accepted to identify itself with the "liberal and democratic" option. An older party on the left (the Parti Africain de l'Independance) claimed the marxist-communist banner. Shortly after the legalization of these three parties, another one on the center-right, the Mouvement Republicain Senegalais (MRS), was also allowed to operate.

Senegal thus renewed with multi-party politics more than a decade before most other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The first elections to take place in this significantly different political environment were held in 1978. In the presidential election, President Senghor was overwhelmingly reelected with 81.7 percent of the vote, while Abdoulaye Wade, the leader of the PDS, received 17.4 percent. In the legislative elections organized the same year, the ruling Socialist Party garnered 81.7 percent of the ballots, and received 82 of the 100 National Assembly seats. Still, by receiving the remaining 18 seats, the PDS was able to enter the legislature. For the first time in fifteen years, Senegal has a multiparty parliament. Side by side with these developments, the press became much freer. Criticisms of the government and its policies became more virulent. Senghor himself was not immune to the attacks of journalists.

Expanding the Process of Political Liberalization (1981-1988)

On December 31, 1980, Senghor retired from politics, and Abdou Diouf, his prime minister since 1971, assumed the presidency. Within a few months, Diouf gave new impetus to the political opening initiated by his predecessor. This process was in part a response to continuing unrest, particularly among students, and in part an attempt by Diouf to establish his own legitimacy. This seemed all the more necessary considering the widespread uncertainty about Diouf's ability to fill Senghor's shoes.

At Diouf's initiative, the National Assembly adopted in April 1981 a constitutional reform that abrogated the 1976 law that had limited the number of parties and ideological orientations to three. As a result, several new parties appeared, including one (the Mouvement Democratique Populaire) led by Mamadou Dia, Senghor's old rival and former prime minister. By the time elections took place in 1983, fourteen parties had been recognized. Eight competed for parliamentary seats, and five presented candidates for the presidency. Throughout both campaigns, the press was permitted to operate more freely than before. In addition, the opposition was granted a measure of access to the state-controlled radio and television. Although coverage by the electronic media still favored the Parti Socialiste and Diouf, biases against other candidates and parties were less pronounced than previously. The PS ended up winning 111 out of 129 seats, while Diouf won the presidency with an impressive 83.5%. Never again would his victory be as clear-cut.

From the mid-1980's onward, the political situation became increasingly tense. One reason was the growing socioeconomic discontent generated by the implementation of economic austerity policies. Another factor was Diouf's repeated refusals in 1986 and 1987 to consider reforming the electoral code so as to provide the opposition with reassurances against electoral fraud. It was in this volatile context that the 1988 presidential and legislative elections took place. Although Diouf and the PS won once again, they did so with significantly smaller margins. This was particularly the case for Diouf, who according to official results won with 73.2% of the vote to Wade's 25.8%. Many, however, believed that Wade had in fact won, and that only massive irregularities had enabled Diouf to retain the presidency. The opposition itself publicly challenged the validity of the results. In this context, street demonstrations organized to protest alleged electoral fraud degenerated into the most serious rioting and violence experienced by Senegal since independence. The regime responded by arresting Wade and several other opposition leaders.

Negotiating over the Rules of the Political Game (1989-1992)

The 1990-92 period witnessed a lessening of political tensions, due mostly to the more accommodationist stance displayed by the regime. This more open and flexible position was prompted by two main factors. The first was the 1988 unrest, which shook up the ruling elite and helped convince it that a renewed momentum toward democracy had become a necessity. A second reason was the spread of democratic aspirations following both the collapse of communism and the unprecedented moves toward political reform in several neighboring African countries.

In April 1991, Wade entered the cabinet as part of a "national unity government" that included four other PDS ministers. He was appointed Minister of State without portfolio, a position theoretically second only to that of prime minister. This uneasy government coalition survived only until October 1992, when, in preparation for the 1993 elections, all PDS ministers left the cabinet. Nevertheless, this short period of "cohabitation" produced significant political reforms. The most important was the adoption of a new electoral code in February 1992. This document, which came out of the work of a "National Commission on the Reform of the Electoral Code," incorporated most of the concerns that the opposition had voiced over the years. It was endorsed by all the most important political parties. Another key reform was the liberalization of the opposition's access to the state media in 1991.

Stalled Transition (1993-1997)?

Since 1993, the political situation in Senegal has shown many signs of deterioration. Certainly, there has been progress in several areas: the increasingly vibrant nature of civil society, greater political diversity within the press, and the legalization of independent radio stations in 1993 immediately come to mind. In addition, the decentralization law passed in 1996 offers potential for reducing the gap between the government and the population. But the overall political situation appears more fragile today than back in 1991 or 1992.

One disturbing phenomenon, mentioned by most of the people interviewed by the author, is the increasing evidence of violent behavior, whether in daily life or for political ends. The assassination of Babacar Seye may be mentioned in this context. Seye was the Vice-President of the Constitutional Council, which is responsible for settling disputes regarding election results. Following the legislative elections of May 9, 1993, Seye came under fire by the opposition, which complained about his handling of allegations of electoral fraud. Shortly afterward, on May 15, 1993, Seye was murdered in Dakar. His assassination was unprecedented in a country characterized by a long tradition of aversion to the use of violence to achieve political goals. Less than a year later, in February 1994, rioting in Dakar -- in which radical Islamic fundamentalists known as Moustarchidines played an important role -- resulted in the death of five policemen. The event highlighted the dangers created by the radicalization of discontented urban youth. In addition, the past three years have seen an increasing number of strikes and demonstrations by unions, university and high school students, and civil service employees. Many have led to violent clashes between demonstrators and the police, and have been accompanied by damage to property. Driving this unrest has been widespread and growing discontent over wages, benefits, job insecurity, cutbacks in student grants, and very limited public sector hiring. On several occasions, pressure

by rank-and-file union members has forced the dominant union, the CNTS, to protest government policies, despite its close ties to the ruling PS

Most worrisome is the growing disenchantment with formal politics. The roots of this phenomenon are not hard to understand. Each new election gives a sense of *deja vu*—the all-too-familiar Diouf versus Wade contest for the presidency, and the overarching rivalry between the PS and the PDS during legislative and local elections. Each round of voting seems to have a predetermined outcome, which is to confirm the hegemony of the ruling PS. And each election seems to follow the same general pattern:

- a In the months leading up to the vote, the regime multiplies assurances that the election will be fair,
- b The voter registration process, the campaign, the actual voting, and the processing of the results are nevertheless characterized by numerous irregularities,
- c Immediately after they are announced, official results are challenged publicly by the opposition, and
- d Despite their dissatisfaction with the handling of the elections, the most important opposition leaders either join the PS-dominated government (as Wade and the PDS did once again in March 1995) or refuse to abide by rank-and-file demands that they quit the cabinet (as was the case after the November 1996 local and regional elections)

Evaluating Senegal's Democratic Performance

Having summarized Senegal's political development, the document now turns to an assessment of the country's democratic performance, both as it stands today and as it has evolved over the past two decades. To conduct this analysis, three indicators are used: the extent of political competition, the nature and scope of political participation, and the degree of consensus over the rules of the political game.

Competition

Since the 1980s, political competition in Senegal has increased regularly. One manifestation of this phenomenon can be found in the results of the last three presidential and legislative elections:

Legislative Elections

	1983		1988		1993	
	% of votes	Seats	% of votes	Seats	% of votes	Seats
PS	79.94	111	71.34	103	56.6	84
PDS	13.97	8	24.74	17	30.2	27

Others	6 11	1	3 83	0	13 2	9
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Presidential Elections

	1983	1988	1993
Abdou Diouf (PS)	83 45%	73 2%	58 4%
Abdoulaye Wade (PDS)	14 79%	25 8%	32%
Others	1 76%	2%	9 6%

These tables show that the percentages of votes received by the PS (in legislative elections) and by Abdou Diouf (in presidential elections) have decreased regularly and very significantly from one election to the next. Whether this is due to the greater electoral strength displayed by opposition candidates or by diminishing electoral fraud, it does translate into increased political competition. Moreover, the decline in the share of votes captured by the PS has benefitted not only the PDS and its candidate in the presidential elections, but also other candidates and parties. The latter have constantly improved their performance in both presidential and legislative contests. Non-PDS opposition candidates captured approximately 13% of the votes in both the 1993 parliamentary elections and the 1996 local and regional elections. They had only received only 1% or so of the vote in the 1983 legislative election.

To document the increase in political competition, one might also point to the rise in the number of political parties, and note as well the increase in the number of parties that contest elections. (One must however be careful not to infer too much from this phenomenon, as many parties are parties in name only, and lack substantial organization, resources, and following, especially outside the main cities.)

Number of officially recognized political parties in Senegal

1973	1974	1976	1978	1983	1994	1997
1	2	3	4	14	17	26

Number of parties contesting elections

1978 (legislative)	1983 (legislative)	1996 (regional and local)
4	8	14

The increase in political contestation is also reflected in the press and the radio. Less than 15 years ago, the semi-official *Le Soleil* (in which the state is the major shareholder) was the only daily, and there were no independent weeklies. In 1984, an independent weekly, *Wal Fadjri*, was born. Three years later, *Wal Fadjri* was joined by another independent weekly, *Sud*. In 1987 as well, an

independent bi-monthly *Le Cafard Libre*, was created. The following year, *Le Cafard Libre* became a weekly. In 1993, both *Wal I adjri* and *Sud* (renamed *Sud-Quotidien*) became dailies. Another independent weekly, *Le Nouvel Horizon*, was born in 1996. Finally, a new daily, *Le Matin*, began publication in 1997.

Number of independent dailies

1990	1993	1997
0	2	3

Number of independent Weeklies

1985	1988	1997
0	2	2

The development of independent radio stations has been an even more significant process for two reasons. First, a majority of the population remains illiterate. Second, the dominant culture is still very much an oral culture that discourages solitary activities such as reading, and favors instead group- or family-based modes of communication, such as listening to the radio or watching television. Following the 1993 elections, President Diouf allowed the creation of independent radio stations. As a result, in addition to the state-controlled radio station, Senegalese can now listen to four private national radio stations, and several regional ones. Particularly significant has been *Radio Sud* (part of the *Sud* holding, which publishes the daily *Sud-Quotidien*). The opening of broadcasting to private organizations has led to more independent political reporting, and to an intensification of political debates on the airwaves. Both national and regional radio stations have featured programs in which vigorous criticisms of the government and the political system can be heard. The state, however, remains far less flexible regarding the liberalization of television. There is only one TV channel, and it is controlled by the state. *Sud* has applied for the right to launch its own television station, but has not been allowed to do so yet. Still, the multiplication of satellite dishes provide more and more Senegalese with access to foreign programs (including *Canal France International*, *Tele 5*, and *CNN*).

Another indication of more intense political competition is the greater diversity within organized labor. The largest and most influential trade-union remains the *Confederation Nationale des Travailleurs Senegalais (CNTS)* which is close to the government. Nevertheless, the state can no longer take the support of that organization for granted. Since the early 1990's, furthermore, new and far more autonomous unions have multiplied. There are now more than 90 recognized unions in the country.

Along similar lines, the creation of the *UNACOIS (National Union of Senegalese Merchants and Industrialists)* in 1990, and the influence developed by that organization over the past seven years, represents an important increase in the competition of ideas on economic policy. The *UNACOIS*

is the organized voice of small and middle-sized traders in the informal sector. It is increasingly vocal in its criticism of state monopolies and the various advantages that the state confers upon its clients in the private sector.

Despite these important achievements, political competition in Senegal is still constrained by two critical factors. The first is the ambiguous position of the main opposition leaders and parties, most prominently Abdoulaye Wade and his PDS, who have been part of the government since March 1995 (and were also in it from April 1991 to October 1992). In this context, the very existence of an "opposition" is in doubt. At the very least, one might observe that the "true opposition" (parties that do not belong to the government) is very small indeed. Senegal is characterized by a somewhat bizarre situation in which opposition leaders participate as ministers in the Tuesday meetings of the cabinet, and then spend the rest of the week criticizing government policies or the actions of the PS, their main partner within the cabinet.

A second major brake on political competition is the electoral law, which prevents independent candidates from running in legislative, local, and regional elections. Only parties can present lists. Not surprisingly, opposition to a change in this system is an area over which the PS and PDS agree. The electoral law also discriminates against small parties, since in order to take part in legislative, regional, and local elections, parties must present complete electoral lists (i.e., lists that include as many candidates as the number of seats to be filled¹). A small party that cannot find enough candidates to place on its list disqualifies itself from the election.

Participation

It is in the area of participation that Senegal's political performance is most disappointing and worrisome. This is true despite a favorable institutional framework, which features a multiparty system and the organization of regular elections. Moreover, progress has been made to allow for the inclusion of a greater number of citizens in the political process: in 1992, the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18, and the 1996 decentralization law also offers the possibility of increased participation at the grass roots level. And yet, as shown by the following tables, rates of participation in elections are very low and have been declining significantly over time.

Participation in legislative elections (% of registered voters)

1978	1983	1988	1993
63	56	58	41

Participation in presidential elections (% of registered voters)

1983	1988	1993

¹ This does not mean that a party must present candidates in every one of the thirty departments into which the country is divided: a reform that is currently under discussion.

58.2	58.7	51.5
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The situation is actually bleaker than suggested by these figures, because so few eligible voters are registered to vote (which is due in part to the cumbersome, lengthy, and, for many families, costly process required to be inscribed on voter registries). The consequences of this phenomenon can be better understood by analyzing, for example, the results the February 1993 presidential election. Diouf won with 58.4 percent of the vote, but that represented only 29.7 percent of the registered voters (according to the 1992 electoral code, to be elected in the first round, a presidential candidate must receive not only more than 50 percent of the votes cast, but also at least 25 percent of registered voters). Furthermore, only about 2.5 million Senegalese had actually bothered to register to vote, out of approximately 4 million who were eligible. In the end, therefore, despite the massive effort of the PS to turn out the vote, only 18 percent or so of eligible voters reelected Diouf in 1993. In the legislative elections held three months later, only about 40 percent of registered voters took part, which was the lowest participation ever in a national election since the re-introduction of multiparty politics in the mid-1970s. Such figures shed an interesting light on the political dynamic of a country that is still sometimes presented as a "model of democracy" in Africa.

Consensus

In Senegal today, there are no fundamental disagreements among the key political actors over the nature of the rules of the political game. As everywhere else, certain criticisms of these rules can of course be heard. Many for instance would like to see the electoral law modified to allow independent candidates to run for office. Similarly, NGO leaders still frequently complain that the legal framework that regulates the formation and operation of NGOs remains too restrictive in several areas. But by and large, there is a widespread consensus over the basic rules of the political game. For instance, there is no major call for radical changes in the constitution or the electoral code.

Where there are enormous disagreements, however, is over the willingness of the regime to implement existing rules in a fair and consistent manner. Here, the most contentious issue is that of the organization of elections. The unanimous support of all the major parties for the 1992 Electoral Code demonstrated that there exists a consensus over the nature of electoral rules, but that certainly has not translated into a consensus over the way in which these rules are applied. In the wake of the 1993 elections, and again following the 1996 regional, rural, and municipal elections, opposition leaders charged massive electoral fraud by the regime. They pointed to numerous irregularities before, during, and after the elections took place. They concluded that the Ministry of the Interior, which is in charge of handling the elections, had once again proven that it could not discharge this function impartially. As recently as April 23, 1997, Wade, interviewed on the Africa No. 1 radio station, declared "For us, the November 1996 elections are still null and void."

Following the November 1996 regional and local elections, the opposition thus renewed its call for the establishment of an Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) to which the responsibility for supervising elections would be turned over. This is a longstanding demand of opposition parties -- and of increasingly large segments of civil society -- but it is also one that has

been staunchly resisted by the government. To support its claim that Senegal does not need an independent electoral commission, the regime has repeatedly invoked the example of France, where the Ministry of the Interior is also in charge of organizing the elections. The opposition, of course, has stressed the misleading nature of such a comparison, by noting that the neutrality of the French bureaucracy has no counterpart in Senegal, where officials rarely differentiate between the interests of the state and those of the ruling party. Many in Senegal believe that the refusal of the regime to see the establishment of a CENI reflects the ruling PS's awareness that it is in fact a minority party in the country.

In February 1997, at the suggestion of President Diouf, an *ad hoc* electoral law commission was formed to review the possibility of creating a CENI. This commission brought together representatives of the PS and of nineteen opposition parties (the spokesperson for which was PDS leader Abdoulaye Wade). By early June, 1997, however, after more than ten weeks of consultations, the PS and the opposition had reached a deadlock over the creation of a CENI.

SECTION TWO THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF REFORM

Having discussed Senegal's democratization status, the document now turns to a more detailed analysis of the political and socioeconomic context for USAID activities in that country. This section has two main goals:

- (a) to identify opportunities for, and constraints on, the deepening of democracy in Senegal,
- (b) to familiarize the reader with sectors and actors that are possible targets of USAID intervention in the D/G area.

The section proceeds in four steps. The first highlights certain background conditions that influence political processes in Senegal. The second describes the most important actors in the political system, and discusses their interests, resources, and strategies. The third analyzes the rules -- both formal and informal -- which shape political competition and contestation. Finally, key political arenas in which actors interact with each other are identified.

Background Conditions

Senegal's political course has been shaped by (a) a distinct historical legacy, (b) the country's poor endowment in natural resources and high dependency on foreign economic assistance, (c) demographic trends, (d) ethnic and religious features.

Historical Legacies

It may be helpful here to distinguish between those features of Senegal's political past that are supportive of democracy, and those that represent an obstacle to it. As discussed earlier, the most supportive factor is undeniably Senegal's long experience with electoral politics and municipal self-government. Of all their colonies in Black Africa, Senegal was the only one in which the French tried to make assimilation a reality. Thus, in the late nineteenth century, France decided to grant French citizenship rights to a segment of the population of what came to be known as "the four communes," i.e., the towns of Dakar, Saint Louis, Goree and Rufisque. Inhabitants of these four communes who qualified for French citizenship enjoyed voting privileges. They elected their municipal councils, and chose one Deputy to seat in the French National Assembly.

It is important to highlight the limited nature of this system of political participation. Only men qualified for French citizenship. In addition, they had to prove that they had been born in one of the four towns, and that they had resided in it for at least five years. Until World War II, all such individuals did not exceed five percent of Senegal's total population (the franchise was extended to the entire population in 1946). All other Senegalese were considered "subjects" and had no political or civil rights.

Despite its limited nature, this system fostered political habits and traditions which have been very supportive of democracy. Several decades before independence was achieved, an indigenous Senegalese political elite emerged that was well-versed in the skills of political contestation, debate, and mutual compromise. It was used to sitting in representative institutions, and had accumulated

substantial experience in municipal government. It knew how to muster support through alliance building, and by relying on persuasion as opposed to coercion. It was aware that, however narrow the number of people it represented, it had to cultivate and retain their support if it wanted to retain its power. This historical experience can be seen as one of the main reasons for the emergence of a political culture that values pragmatic leadership and dialogue.

Critical as well has been the legacy of Leopold Sedar Senghor. From independence through 1980, Senegal's political life was entirely dominated by the personality of its president, who thus exercised a decisive impact on the country's political course. As noted earlier, Senghor was a pragmatic, tolerant, and moderate leader. A world renowned poet, he was an active advocate of cross-cultural dialogue. He was also very sensitive to his image overseas, especially in Paris's political and intellectual circles, and did not want to be seen as an authoritarian figure. He became in December 1980 the first African leader to voluntarily resign his position as head of state.

Working at cross-purposes with these positive legacies have been three powerful forces. The first consists of an entrenched tradition of centralization. Senegal has been very influenced by the French propensity to think of policymaking as the rightful prerogative of a group of highly-trained civil servants who see themselves as the repository of the "national interest." This elite tends to operate at a distance from its constituents, and to look upon them with a mixture of condescension and contempt. It is also characterized by its distrust of community-based groups, which it often seeks to delegitimize by portraying as the representatives of narrow, parochial interests.

Another negative legacy of history has been the concentration of power in the presidency. This feature has discouraged the taking of initiatives by higher civil servants, and has led to the atrophy of decision-making structures such as the cabinet and the National Assembly. It has promoted a tendency for even senior political figures to wait for the president to take charge. As a result, even though President Diouf has recently attempted to force ministers to assume their own responsibilities, few significant decisions can be made without his personal intervention.

Finally, the active role that the government played during the 1960's and 1970's in providing social welfare services fueled a dependency mentality that is increasingly at odds with the current disengagement of the state from social sectors. As a result, there now exists a profound misunderstanding between the population and the ruling elite: many Senegalese still think along the lines of the old social contract (generous public services in exchange for political quiescence) whereas the political leadership is seeking to convince the population that it must now play a more direct and active role in providing for its own welfare.

Economic Scarcity and Aid Dependency

Senegal's socioeconomic context is not supportive of democratization. The country lacks significant natural resources. Because sixty percent of the population is still engaged in agricultural activities, an unfavorable rain season can have catastrophic effects on personal incomes, as well as on the country's exports (one-fifth of foreign exchange earnings come from agricultural products). The government has been unable to reduce widespread poverty. Economic inequalities are rising. Economic forecasts are gloomy, and the country is not performing well in the two areas -- health and education -- that are considered critical to long-term economic development.

Since the 1980s the implementation of painful economic austerity measures designed to reduce public debt and chronic budget deficits have resulted in growing socioeconomic discontent. Particularly hard hit have been public sector workers and university graduates. Deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and growing economic hardships have resulted in mounting social unrest, manifested by recurrent and increasingly violent strikes and demonstrations.

Foreign assistance has been a critical element in Senegal's ability to "muddle through." The country's reputation for stability and its longstanding image as a multiparty democracy have served it well in the competition for international aid. Foreign aid per capita is still three times the average for sub-Saharan African countries, and Senegal remains one of the main beneficiaries of French assistance. Considering, as discussed earlier, that Senegal no longer deserves its reputation as a "model of African democracy," it has done well in living off its "democratic image rent." This strategy, however, may not be sustainable in the long run, particularly in light of declining donor resources and the increasing number of "new democracies" in Africa.

Senegal's heavy dependence on foreign assistance suggests that the potential bargaining power of donors is higher than elsewhere. So far, however, donors do not appear to have tried to harness that leverage in order to influence developments in the D/G area. During the interviews conducted by the author, several donors regretted this situation. However, they did not believe that there was a collective will among donors to change the status quo, and expressed regrets about that as well.

Demographic Growth

The population continues to increase at a rate of approximately 2.8 percent a year. This phenomenon constitutes one of the most destabilizing forces in Senegal, because of the large and growing imbalance between population and resources. Because of population growth, meager gains in the areas of health and education cannot keep up with the increase in the demand for services in those areas. In the countryside, the gap between population and resources fuels a rural exodus which, in turn, exacerbates the deterioration of the already strained urban infrastructure. Approximately 20 percent of Senegal's population now lives in the Greater Dakar area.

Ethnic and Religious Features

Generally peaceful relations among ethnic and religious groups have greatly contributed to Senegal's stability and ability to maintain a pluralistic political system. Senegal is a multi-ethnic society. The largest ethnic group consists of the Wolof. Although the Wolof represent only about 40 percent of the population, their language is spoken and understood by about 80 percent of Senegalese. Wolof culture is generally dominant, particularly in urban areas, and Wolof customs and traditions have progressively infiltrated many of the other ethnic groups, which include the Peul, the Serer, the Diola, the Toucouleur, and the Manding.

As far as religion is concerned, more than 90 percent of Senegal's population is Muslim. The rest is Catholic (less than 5 percent) or animist (2 or 3 percent). Since the 1980s, the appeal of Islam and Muslim organizations has grown tremendously, which reflects in part a disenchantment with Western ways and ideologies, as well as the growing resentment that many ordinary Senegalese feel toward their westernized elite.

Despite its ethnic and religious pluralism, Senegal -- unless so many other countries on the African continent -- has experienced relatively little communal violence. The factors responsible for this situation include

1 Although a Catholic, Leopold Sedar Senghor was careful to cultivate the support of the Muslim brotherhoods (virtually all Muslims in Senegal are affiliated with one of the three main Sufi brotherhoods in the country: the Mourides, the Tijaniyya, and the Qadiriyya). Conversely, while President Diouf is a Muslim, he has made sure that Catholics have received a share of cabinet portfolios that is much higher than their percentage of the population. The fact that President Diouf's wife is a Catholic is also reassuring to many in Senegal's Catholic community. Senghor's Catholic background, combined with the goodwill that Diouf has shown toward the Catholic community, explains why the PS has usually won the Catholic vote.

2 The government has always been committed to the separation of church and state.

3 Militant Islamic movements that call for the establishment of an Islamic state have remained on the periphery of Senegal's political system. As a result, instead of being a divisive force, Islam in Senegal has acted predominantly as a unifying factor which creates cross-cutting bonds among individuals who belong to different ethnic communities.

4 The government has endeavored not to openly favor one ethnic group over the others. For example, although Wolof is the leading medium of oral communication in the country, it is not the only official language. Instead, there are seven official languages in Senegal: French and six African languages (Wolof, Serer, Pulaar, Manding, Diola, and Sarakole). French remains dominant in government because using Wolof (which would be the most logical choice among African languages) would likely exacerbate inter-ethnic relations.

The troubles in the Lower Casamance (region of Ziguinchor) have been the one major exception to this relative ethnic and religious harmony. The issue continues to threaten both the political stability and the economic well-being of the country, and thus deserves to be discussed here at some length.

The Casamance is Senegal's southernmost region, which is physically separated from the rest of the country by the Gambia. The Gambia's presence has created a natural obstacle to national integration, and reinforced particularistic tendencies in Casamance. For one, it helped insulate the Casamance from the wave of Islamization that spread across the rest of Senegal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Casamance was also the last region to be "pacified" by the French. Not until the 1920s did France gain control over that area.

Many Casamançais (as the people of Casamance are known) believe that their region has always been discriminated against in the allocation of public funds, especially in national development projects and the distribution of government jobs. They have long felt that government officials sent by Dakar to administer the region are neither sensitive to, nor respectful of, local customs and traditions. They also resent the presence in their midst of "northerners" who dominate local trade and are often large landowners. More generally, Casamançais see themselves engaged in a struggle to maintain their distinct identity and defend their economic interests against intruding, hostile

forces -- represented by northern ethnic groups and a state which acts as their agent -- that seek to marginalize them on their own land

It is not surprising, in this context, that Casamançais have always aspired to greater autonomy in running their own affairs. But in the early 1980's, a far more irredentist movement asking for outright independence began to take hold of the southernmost part (Ziguinchor region) of the Casamance. This region inhabited predominantly by Diolas, most of whom are Catholics who feel that the state is favoring Islam at the expense of both Catholicism and animist beliefs. In 1983, a Catholic priest named Diamacoune Senghor launched an armed insurrection, centered in the region of Ziguinchor, and nominally designed to secure Casamance's independence through armed struggle. A guerrilla war ensued that pitted the Senegalese army against the Mouvement des Forces Democratiques de Casamance (MFDC). The conflict lasted for about ten years, and was particularly bloody between 1990 and 1993. Excesses were committed by both sides. MFDC rebels, who are overwhelmingly Diolas (in a region where the Diolas represent only about 60 percent of the total population) often terrorized Wolof farmers who refused to join their movement. Meanwhile, the government engaged in very harsh reprisals against entire villages suspected of harboring MFDC members.

One of the factors that has complicated an already difficult situation has been the lack of control of the MFDC leadership over the movement's radical factions and dissidents. As a result, the MFDC does not speak with one voice, and cannot always deliver on its side of the agreements it reaches with the government. Although the situation in the Casamance has been relatively quiet since a cease-fire was signed in 1996, tensions have flared up periodically. Most recently, in March and early April 1997, there was a new outbreak of fighting between government troops and MFDC fighters.

A long term resolution of the Casamance issue is absolutely critical to Senegal's future well-being. Tensions in the Ziguinchor region constitute the most serious threat to national unity, and they undermine economic sectors that are major sources of foreign currencies: agriculture, fishing, and tourism. In addition, they make foreign investment and development projects in the region far more difficult. The Casamance is also believed to hold significant offshore oil reserves.

The Casamance (or rather Ziguinchor) issue has been one of the most important forces behind the adoption of the 1996 decentralization reform. It would have been difficult for the state to grant greater autonomy to the Casamance while denying it to Senegal's other regions. By the same token, the need for reducing tensions in the Lower Casamance is one of the reasons why it is imperative that decentralization work. It is not clear, however, that the transfer of responsibilities to local and regional bodies is extensive enough to satisfy Casamançais. The latter showed very little interest in the November 1996 local and regional elections, as was reflected in the low turnout. It remains likely that the people of the Casamance will demand far more autonomy than the government in Dakar is willing to grant them at this point.

KEY POLITICAL ACTORS

President Abdou Diouf

Diouf is by far the most powerful player in a system that remains very strongly presidential. Even someone such as Ousmane Tanor Dieng, the First Secretary of the ruling party, who in 1997 was often described as the "new strongman of the PS," lacks an independent power base, and ultimately owes his position to Diouf, who could remove him at a moment's notice.

When he assumed the presidency on January 1, 1981, Abdou Diouf lacked the historical legitimacy of his predecessor. Unlike Senghor, who enjoyed a reputation as a world-class intellectual and had demonstrated tremendous skills as a politician, Diouf had risen through the ranks as a technocrat and loyal servant of the former president. In 1968, when he was only 33, he became planning minister. Two years later, Senghor chose him as prime minister. He remained in that position through 1980.

Almost from the moment he became president, Diouf distanced himself from the old "barons" of the socialist party, who had accumulated considerable power under Senghor. The new president publicly criticized "la politique politicienne" (the "politics of wheeling-and-dealing politicians"). He denounced the "archaisms" and "fiefdoms" of the party, and called for a renewal of the PS and its structures. More importantly, instead of relying as heavily as his predecessor had on the party's senior figures, he began to surround himself with a new generation of young technocrats. In addition, he reached out to personalities not affiliated with the PS, and appointed several of them as ministers. This created enormous resentment among top PS leaders, who felt snubbed by Diouf, and were angry about having to share government positions with individuals who had never belonged to the ruling party. Since the 1988 elections, however, Diouf has been forced to rely more heavily on the party machine than he had previously, or than he probably would like.

Since approximately 1995, Diouf has tried to change the public perception of the presidency's role in the political process. He has endeavored to project a new image of himself as a "referee," who is above the fray of party politics, and who wants to leave the day-to-day management of governmental affairs to others. Significantly, in 1996 he resigned his position as Secretary General of the PS, and chose Ousmane Tanor Dieng to replace him. As importantly, he seems intent on forcing ministers and their social partners to resolve their differences without presidential involvement. For example, he has encouraged the ministers of education and labor to negotiate directly with union representatives to find a solution to the social conflicts that have multiplied over the past few years. The message he has sent is that he will intervene only when negotiations break down, in order to offer a compromise or settle the matter. Similarly, when, in the wake of the November 1996 local and regional elections, the PS refused the opposition's demand that an independent electoral commission be created, Diouf stepped in to propose the establishment of a commission in charge of reviewing the issue. He then appointed the commission's members, and effectively told them "You deal with this problem."

Thus far, Diouf's attempt to extricate himself from both partisan politics and day-to-day government matters has met with only moderate success, for at least three reasons. First, players are not used to making decisions on their own. They constantly ask Diouf to intervene. Because of this, and because the system remains very centralized, the president still must make thousands of small decisions for things to actually happen. Second, whenever negotiations between the government and its "social partners" reach a deadlock, much is expected from Diouf. In reality, the president's freedom of maneuver is usually very limited. One can take as an example the university crisis of

May-June 1997 University professors were demanding an increase in benefits. The government had made it clear that, for budgetary reasons, it could not satisfy this demand. And while many were expecting Diouf to offer a concession, the president's hands were actually tied because Senegal is committed to reducing government expenditures in the context of structural adjustment and the agreements signed with the World Bank and other donors. Finally, few Senegalese "buy" Diouf's attempt to publicly distance himself from the PS. Public opinion still sees the president as the real leader of the PS, in a country where party and state structures remain intertwined. Diouf's political future, in short, is still tied to that of the PS.

The PS

The ruling party's domination of the political system was confirmed by the regional and local elections of November 1996. The PS won all 10 regions, 56 municipalities out of 60, and 300 rural councils out of 320. Even in Dakar, where opposition parties are stronger than elsewhere, the PS won 38 out of the 43 *mairies d'arrondissement* (the various townships into which Dakar is divided). While the victory of the PS was anticipated, few expected it to be so complete. The extent of this victory, as well as the fraud and irregularities that accompanied it, have increased alienation from the political process, and led many to already question the extent to which decentralization will result in a democratization of political life.

The PS's two greatest strengths are its control of the state apparatus and its superior organization. State resources account for the party's tremendous capacity of co-optation, and in particular for its proven ability to entice opposition elites to defect to it. Most former opponents of the PS have been integrated over time into ruling party or state structures. For instance, several prominent leaders of Marxist groups during the 1960's and 1970's can now be found in top leadership positions within the PS. Such a phenomenon represents a tremendous asset for the regime, because it fuels the population's skepticism about opposition elites, and its cynicism toward the political process in general. It should be emphasized that the intermingling of party and state structures is as pronounced at the regional and local levels as it is in Dakar.

Critical to the continued power of the PS has been its ability to retain the backing of most of the main religious figures in the country, as well as that of rural notables. To reward them, the state gives their communities preferential treatment in the allocation of public services.

No other party comes even close to matching the PS's nationwide presence and impressive infrastructure. The party has a particularly strong advantage in the countryside, where most of the population still lives. The key to its electoral success has been its ability to mobilize rural support as a counterweight to the urban areas, particularly to the largest cities in which the opposition probably enjoys a majority (it is hard to know for sure because of electoral fraud). During electoral campaigns, the party also benefits from the absence of real separation between state and party structures, as state resources (vehicles, staff, etc.) are routinely placed at the disposal of PS candidates.

During elections, the PS mobilizes its impressive machine to ensure that its supporters will turn out to vote. By contrast, opposition parties suffer disproportionately from the low proportion of eligible voters who are actually registered. To be inscribed on voter registries, individuals need to obtain

a birth certificate and a proof of residence. The fees for these documents are not inconsequential for many Senegalese families, and they are automatically waived for PS members.

The PS is currently engaged in a major effort to modernize and revitalize itself. Its leadership is well aware that, in order to survive as Senegal's dominant party in the next century, the support of religious leaders and rural notables will be of diminishing utility in an increasingly urban and politicized society. Accordingly, the party has spared few efforts to reach out to leaders of NGOs, and to develop more influence among the youth and women. Accompanying this process is the emergence of a new, younger elite within the PS. Those who belong to this new elite are not necessarily more reform-minded than the older PS barons they are trying to displace (or have pushed aside already). Indeed, many of them are less well-disposed than older figures toward sharing power with opposition figures. They are also usually better skilled at waging modern-style, effective campaigns.

The PS's First Secretary, Ousmane Tanor Dieng, who also occupies one of the most influential positions in the cabinet as Minister of State for Presidential Services and Affairs, has emerged as Senegal's most controversial politician. In 1996 and 1997, he distinguished himself by the bluntness of his attacks on opposition politicians, including those, like Wade, who belong to the government. In the fall of 1996, during the regional and local elections campaign, he publicly stated that the objective of his party was to "dismantle" the opposition. He also declared that if opposition leaders who are ministers do not like the way the PS is running the country's affairs, they simply should resign their positions. He then proceeded to insult several of them, and added that he would personally expel from the government any opposition member who did not heed his warnings. These remarks provoked a public outcry, the more so since according to the constitution only the president and the prime minister have the authority to force a minister to resign. In addition, Dieng has consistently belittled the contribution of non-PS ministers to the work of the government. In 1996, he publicly derided several propositions put forward by Wade as Minister of State. Such behavior has earned him the ire of opposition leaders and of large segments of civil society, who see in him the embodiment of an arrogant and smug PS elite that looks upon the state as its personal property, and is determined to prevent any move toward greater political pluralism.

Tanor Dieng is widely seen as the *dauphin* (heir-apparent). His power is very significant, but Diouf could trim his wings at a moment's notice. Significantly, Ousmane Tanor Dieng is often referred to by his initials, "OTD," which some translate as "Ousmane Travaille pour Diouf" ("Ousmane Works for Diouf"). Furthermore, despite his considerable personal influence, OTD does not always get his way, even within the Socialist Party. For instance, he was unable to impose his favorite candidate, the former Minister of Sports Abdoulaye Mahtar Diop, as Mayor of Dakar. Instead, the outgoing Mayor, Mamadou Diop was reelected, thanks to the support of the opposition. Still, Dieng is undisputedly the Number 2 person in the regime. His position was strengthened by the November 1996 regional and local elections, which resulted in a triumph by the ruling PS.

Abdoulaye Wade and the PDS

Created in 1974 the Parti Democratique Senegalais (PDS) has remained the dominant "opposition" party. It is very closely identified with its leader, Abdoulaye Wade, as is the case of all political parties in the highly personalized environment of Senegalese politics. The PDS advocates a free-market economy, yet insists on the need for the state to maintain a social safety net. Beyond that, its platform is very vague, and it has failed to articulate clear positions on economic policy and social issues. Its discourse instead has focused on charges on corruption, mismanagement, and electoral fraud within the ruling party and the state bureaucracy.

The PDS's parliamentary group is currently the largest, with 27 deputies (all other opposition parties combined only have 9, against the PS's 87). In the last three presidential elections (1983, 1988, and 1993), Wade was Diouf's main rival. To someone not familiar with the vagaries of Senegalese politics, Wade's political trajectory might seem bizarre. For instance, after his defeat in the 1988 presidential elections, Wade encouraged his supporters to take to the streets. He was arrested and put on trial for inciting violence. Found guilty, he received a one-year suspended sentence. In 1991, however, he joined the government as Minister of State, only to leave it in October 1992, to prepare for yet another run against Diouf. After the May 1993 legislative elections, he was implicated in the assassination of Babacar Seye, the Vice-President of the Constitutional Council. Senegal's Appeals Court dismissed the charge against him in May 1994, but he was nevertheless detained by the authorities on charges of having instigated the February 1994 riots. After he began a hunger strike, he was finally released in late June 1994. In March 1995, he once again joined the government as Minister of State, and has been in the cabinet ever since, despite mounting opposition within his party to the PDS's presence in government.

Wade insists that his position is one of opposition to the Parti Socialiste, not to the government, but the distinction between the PS and the government eludes most observers. It is undeniably with Wade (among others) in mind that one of the journalists interviewed by the author declared "In this country, you know, opposition leaders are either in jail or in government." Since late 1996, the positions adopted by Wade have become increasingly contradictory. For instance, in early 1997, he suggested that his party would boycott the next elections if an independent electoral commission was not established. Yet in early June 1997 -- in the midst of negotiations between the PS and opposition parties over the possibility of creating such a commission -- he stated that he would participate in the 1998 legislative elections whether or not an independent electoral commission was put in place. To say the least, this position did not exactly strengthen the bargaining power of opposition parties. Shortly afterward, PS leader Dieng declared that there would be no electoral commission, and that this was final.

The PDS's main assets are its relative strength in Dakar and the other main urban centers (especially Thies), as well as in the Casamance. During the 1993 presidential and legislative elections, half of the votes in Dakar went to the PDS-affiliated candidates. In the presidential election in particular, Wade came out ahead of Diouf in Dakar. The PDS also has the best infrastructure of all opposition parties, and enjoys the backing of some Islamic brotherhood leaders.

The party's liabilities, however, clearly outweigh its strengths. First, the PDS revolves far too much around the personality of Wade, who tends to be unpredictable and is not accountable to the party's membership. Wade has carefully refrained from grooming a successor and from preparing a cadre of younger leaders who can take over after he passes from the political scene. Second, because of

his participation in the government. Wade is more and more discredited. Many no longer see him as a true alternative to the current PS-dominated order. This appears to have been a critical factor in the defection of many former supporters of the PDS to Landing Savane's And-Jef party. As a result, the PDS is also more and more divided. Mounting criticisms of Wade's leadership style can be heard within the party. In early June 1997, the Dakar branch of the PDS demanded that Wade withdraw from government.

Landing Savane and And-Jef

Fifty-two year old Landing Savane enjoys a certain aura as the most prominent nationally-known politician who has consistently remained in the opposition, and has resisted the PS's efforts to coopt him. He is seen as a man of principle, which sets him apart from the overwhelming majority of other opposition leaders. Born in the Casamance, where his party enjoys significant support, Savane has numerous connections to the NGO sector. His wife is a well-known activist for women's rights, and Savane made the condition of Senegalese women an important component of his run for the presidency in 1993. Other themes he has emphasized include corruption within the government and the PS, bad governance, electoral fraud, and the negative effects of structural adjustment policies. During the November 1996 local elections, his party, And-Jef, emerged as Senegal's third largest party. It is seen by some as a rising force, but still has a long way to go before it develops a truly nationwide infrastructure and membership.

The Marabouts

The marabouts are the leaders of the Sufi brotherhoods. As mentioned earlier, virtually all of Senegal's Muslims are affiliated with one of three main brotherhoods: the Mourides, the Tijaniyya, and the Qadiriyya. The Mourides remains the best organized and most influential brotherhood in the country. Estimates of its membership range from 1.2 to 1.5 million members. Even more Senegalese consider themselves Tijanis, but the Tijaniyya is divided into three main branches, or dynasties: the Sy, the Niasse, and the Tall. The Qadiriyya is Senegal's oldest, but also smallest, brotherhood.

Because of their spiritual and moral influence, and because of the goods and services that they can provide to their followers, the marabouts have long played an instrumental role in Senegalese politics. For at least two centuries, they have been the main intermediaries between the political center and its periphery. In discharging this function, they have helped preserve political and social stability.

It was during the colonial era that the marabouts emerged as the dominant social and political force in rural society. At first, their relation with the French was fraught with tensions. Soon, however, a tacit, pragmatic compromise was reached: in exchange for France's willingness to let them preach and build up their clientele and influence in the countryside, the marabouts convinced their followers to accept the French authorities. By the turn of the twentieth century, the marabouts dominated the peanut trade, which remained the foundation of Senegal's economy until independence. Their followers (*talibe*) would work their fields, and, in exchange, the marabouts would provide them with spiritual leadership and basic necessities, and intercede on their behalf with the French authorities.

After independence, Senghor also established close ties with the marabouts. He went out of his way to show respect for them, visiting them regularly and conferring state honors on them. He gave them large tracts of state-owned land, and allowed them to secure "loans" from state-owned banks (these loans were never repaid, nor were they intended to). He made sure that they received preferential access to agricultural inputs, as well as high prices for their peanuts. In exchange for such benefits, the marabouts supported the regime and the ruling party, especially during elections. They would issue instructions (known as *ndigel*) to their followers to vote for the PS's candidate.

The marabouts have shown tremendous resilience and adaptability in the face of rapid social and economic change. They remain a major force in the countryside, where they still dominate the peanut trade (the relative importance of which is decreasing). Since the 1980s, they also have emerged as a powerful socioeconomic force in urban society. The Mourides in particular have very close ties to the informal economy, which has experienced spectacular expansion. The Mourides' commercial networks are now international in scope, and reach as far as Europe and the United States.

The marabouts have also benefitted from certain cultural and political trends. For instance, the disillusionment of many young people with Western ways and ideologies has increased the appeal of Islam, on which the marabouts (among others) have been able to capitalize. Similarly, the growing discredit of the political elite has led many people to look at the marabout as the main source of moral authority in the country.

Since the early 1990s, the marabouts have also shown a much greater willingness to assert their independence from the state, which can no longer take their loyalty for granted. This was displayed in particular during the 1993 elections, when the marabouts (including the spiritual leader of the Mourides) refused to endorse any candidate for president. This phenomenon can be attributed to several factors. One is the marabouts' independent economic base, and the ties that many of them have to an informal sector that is very resentful of the advantages and protection which the state extends to an old French and Lebanese economic elite. Another factor is the marabouts' awareness that the regime is widely discredited. In this context, supporting the regime's candidates might undermine the marabouts' own authority and legitimacy. Third, the new electoral procedures put in place in the early 1990's provide for the secrecy of the vote, which was not ensured previously. As a result, the marabouts' followers can now disregard their spiritual guides' voting instructions, without incurring the risk of being punished for it. Finally, more and more brotherhood members differentiate between the marabouts' authority in religious matters, which they accept, and their authority in temporal matters, which they are not willing to recognize.

Despite such new developments, most of the marabouts remain behind the regime, although some of them openly back the PDS. The competition among party leaders for the support of the marabouts is as intense as ever. For instance, during the 1996 campaign for the regional, municipal, and rural councils, Ousmane Tanor Dieng worked very hard to secure the support of Cheikh Ahmed Tidiane Sy (the head of one of the three dominant maraboutic houses within the Tijaniyya). Based in Tavaouane, in the region of Thiès, the Sy family had traditionally been close to the PDS. Dieng was nevertheless able to secure its support, as well as that of the Baye Fall, a branch of the Mourides, and that of Cheikh Abdoul Aziz Aïda, the spiritual leader of the Qadiriyya. For his part,

Wade claimed the support of the Grand Caliph of the Mourides, Seigne Saliou Mbacke, who actually refrained from taking a clear public position

Civil Society

Since the 1980s, Senegal has experienced a tremendous development of civil society, as shown by the spectacular growth in the number and membership of associations, and the multiplicity of areas in which they are involved. Senegal's civil society is as dynamic as its political system is atrophied. There are hundreds of associations and NGOs engaged in development-oriented initiatives (especially the so-called Groupements d'Interêts Economiques, or GIEs), sports and cultural activities (the so-called Associations Sportives et Culturelles, or ASCs), advocacy (including the prevention of domestic violence, the sensitization to political and civil rights, the condition of women, consumer rights, the defense of the environment, the improvement of conditions in jail, the need to increase the autonomy of the legal profession and the rule of law), urban renewal projects, social relief and health services (aid to the disinherited, the handicapped, and orphans, or the fight against AIDS). Moreover, single associations are often involved in a multiplicity of areas. For instance, several associations began with a focus on supporting economic activities among women, but then branched out to include the promotion of women's rights.

A particularly important manifestation of the vitality and assertiveness of civil society has been the growth of the independent media, which was briefly touched upon earlier. The independent media in Senegal performs a critical watchdog function. They provide much-needed coverage of the government, the ruling party, opposition figures, and the political system in general. They have drawn attention to the enormous economic costs incurred by the country and the population as a result of the continued existence of monopolies that owe their survival to the collusion between private sector interests and state officials. In providing information about this phenomenon, and in mobilizing public opinion against it, they act as a pressure group for economic reform and the creation of a level-playing field among economic actors.

Unlike in many transitional countries, civil society is not a movement limited to urban elites. Over the past decade, Senegal has experienced an explosion of rural-based, grass-roots NGOs. In addition, it has seen the development of national structures of coordination, information, and mutual support among NGOs. The most influential and best organized of these is the CONGAD (Conseil des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales d'Appui au Developpement, or Council of NGOs Engaged in Development Activities). Created in 1982, the CONGAD brings together Senegalese NGOs as well as foreign-based NGOs active in Senegal. One of its functions is to operate as a data bank on the NGO sector in Senegal. It has a library and information center where one can access information on NGOs active in Senegal, the nature of their activities in the country as well as overseas, the regions of Senegal in which these NGOs operate, the source of their financing, how to contact them, etc. The CONGAD also facilitates coordination among NGOs, and the exchange of experiences among them. It is intended to help NGOs active in Senegal better understand and act on the challenges which they face. It assists individual NGOs in their dealings with the bureaucracy, and can provide technical assistance in several areas. Most importantly perhaps, the CONGAD sees itself as a lobby for the NGO sector, especially in areas such as the legislation pertaining to the creation, legalization, and operation of NGOs. It played an important role in the adoption of a new regulatory framework for NGOs in 1996. It is represented in the national

commission that grants NGO status as well as in the commission that bestows tax and customs duties exemptions to NGOs on a case-by-case basis. Finally, it seeks to facilitate contacts between local NGOs and donors.

The development of civil society has been driven by the disengagement of the state from social areas, and by the shrinking of its ability to dispense patronage. In the context of structural adjustment and the reduction of public expenditures, the regime depends increasingly on associations and foreign donors to meet community needs in the areas of economic development, health, education, and aid to the most disadvantaged. To allow this process to take place, the government has liberalized the regulations that govern associational life. The Government of Senegal, like others, was quick to take notice of the donors' desire to rely more on NGOs to channel resources to developing countries. It has adjusted its behavior accordingly and very skillfully.

Despite its strengths, Senegal's civil society should not be idealized. Many NGOs exist in name only. More importantly, both the regime and opposition parties have endeavored to instrumentalize associational life. Many associations were created at the initiative of political elites, or have lost their autonomy. For the government, the cooptation of community-based groups has been hardly more difficult to achieve at the local level than has the bribing of opposition leaders at the national level. Opposition parties, too, have frequently been successful in subordinating NGOs to their political agendas. As a result, even though many NGO leaders have tried very hard to maintain their autonomy, there has been growing grassroots suspicion toward the non-governmental organization movement. Before establishing relations with an NGO, donors should assess carefully the extent of that NGO's independence. Otherwise, they will become pawns in a game that they do not understand, and they may further agendas which they are not willing to support.

Finally, the actions that NGOs conduct at the local level rarely aim to facilitate broader citizenship-building changes at the national level. Advocacy work is still predominantly carried out by Dakar-based NGOs (which often have little popular support), while community associations active at the local level have only occasionally established effective linkages to the national arena. Such connections need to be further developed. Only in this fashion will popular involvement in associational life translate into gains in the area of political and civil rights.

The parasitic economic elite

Following independence, Senegal adopted a strategy of economic development that relied heavily on the "guiding hand" of the state, which was heavily involved in key economic sectors. Central planning and government control over the marketing of agricultural goods, as well as the expansion of the public sector through the 1970s, were all key aspects of Senegal's version of the French "dirigiste" tradition.

Side by side with this policy, however, the state worked out a tacit alliance with a group of private entrepreneurs, many of whom were of French or Lebanese origins. The regime granted them virtual monopolies, for example in the production and importation of rice and sugar. It protected them from foreign competition by establishing high tariffs and import quotas, or by prohibiting the import of certain goods. It made them the exclusive beneficiaries of state contracts. It extended tax

exemptions exclusive import licences, low-rate loans, and other special advantages to them. In exchange, this parasitic private sector became a key component of the regime's social base including by providing the PS with campaign funds

Senegal's parasitic bourgeoisie remains extremely influential. Its connections to state elites, including the president, are as strong as ever. The regime still appears committed to protecting it. In 1996, for instance, the government raised tariffs on imported rice to protect local producers tied to the regime

Still, Senegal's parasitic bourgeoisie is increasingly on the defensive. Since the mid-1980s, the adoption of the structural adjustment program has forced the state to reduce or eliminate some of the protections that it used to extend to its clients in the private sector. In addition, the spectacular development of the informal sector has resulted in intense lobbying on the state to reduce trade barriers and to create a more level-playing economic field. Finally, there has been a mobilization of public opinion against economic monopolies and the collusion of interests between state elites and a segments of the private sector. One example of this phenomenon was the public outburst of support for *Sud-Quotidien*, in the feud that has opposed this independent daily to the *Compagnie Sucrière Senegalaise (CSS)*, headed by multimillionaire Jean-Claude Mimran, perhaps the leading representative of Senegal's parasitic bourgeoisie. (This affair and its significance are discussed below.)

Informal Sector, new entrepreneurs, and the UNACOIS

Since the 1980's, Senegal has witnessed the emergence of a category of new, very dynamic entrepreneurs, active in what is usually described as "the informal sector." They are not tied to the old business elite or the state, but have very close connections to the Muslim brotherhoods

During the 1960's and 1970's, when Senegal's economy was still entirely dominated by the parasitic elite described above, these entrepreneurs found small niches on the periphery of Senegal's economy. They were usually involved in small-scale commercial and artisanal activities. One of their main objectives was to escape detection by the government, in order to avoid taxation or being caught in the state's rent-extracting networks. New opportunities suddenly arose for them when structural adjustment began in the late 1970's-early 1980's. It was then that the state found itself compelled to relax or eliminate many regulations on economic activities. It was also at that point that monopolies and the close relationship between the state and the old economic elite came under increasing criticism. Such changes allowed small and medium-sized traders in the informal sector to develop their activities and become more visible and assertive. Progressively, they began to take over entire sectors of the economy

In 1990 several of these businessmen created the UNACOIS (Union Nationale des Commerçants et Industriels Senegalais, or National Union of Senegalese Merchants and Industrialists). Since then, the UNACOIS has developed into a major pressure group for the further liberalization of the economy. It calls for the lifting of trade barriers and the elimination of the monopolies and other advantages conferred by the regime on its clients in the private sector. Its lobbying of the state and its mobilization of public opinion has been quite effective. On numerous occasions, the UNACOIS has forced the government to take its interests into account. With the marabouts, to whom it has

close ties the UNACOIS is one of only two major interest groups to have a significant autonomous economic base. The rise in its influence was shown most recently during the 1996 local elections when many candidates and parties actively sought to receive its endorsement.

The rise in the influence of UNACOIS is one of the most important political and economic trends of the 1990s. It has paralleled and contributed to the process of economic liberalization. For the first time, a truly indigenous business community is challenging the power of an older economic elite which is still perceived as made up of expatriates, even though it has been operating in Senegal for decades. And by questioning the cozy relationship between the state and the old economic elite, the UNACOIS is also challenging one of the most important ways in which power and authority have been exercised in Senegal since independence.

Students

Since the 1980's, the influence of Marxist ideologies over high school and university students has declined dramatically. Students are now less concerned with remaking society than with gaining access to increasingly scarce grants and scholarships, with deteriorating study conditions in schools and universities, and with finding a job. But such concerns are precisely what makes students a potentially destabilizing force in Senegal. Job opportunities for university graduates are incapable of keeping up with the demand. This is due to a number of factors: the rapid growth in the number of university graduates, the shrinking of the public sector, which used to be the main outlet for university graduates, sluggish private sector growth, and the discrepancy between the training that the university gives, and the skills that the private sector requires.

Since 1994, student demonstrations have repeatedly turned into confrontations with the police. In late April 1997, protests by angry high school students degenerated into riots and acts of vandalism in Dakar and its suburbs. Students also frequently clash with each other over the proper negotiation strategies with the authorities, and these clashes can be violent. In early June 1997, for instance, there were serious tensions within the main student union, the Union Nationale des Eleves du Senegal (UNES, National Union of Senegalese Students), over an agreement signed by some UNES leaders with the government. At a UNES meeting held in Thies on June 3, 1997, these disagreements led to pitched battles between supporters and opponents of the accord. The incident left 20 wounded, including one in serious condition. In early June 1997 as well, student rioting in Saint Louis led to widespread damage to property. If no lasting solution is found to the extremely serious and structural crisis that afflicts the educational system, and if job prospects for high school and university graduates do not improve, a serious explosion of anger by the country's student body will become likely.

Institutional Setting

This section briefly reviews the formal and informal rules that shape political participation and contestation in Senegal. To facilitate the connection with programming, the presentation of these rules is organized along the lines of USAID's four programming categories in the D/G area: rule of law and human rights, competitive political processes, institutions of governance, and civil society.

A central theme underpinning this discussion is the discrepancy between the written and the unwritten rules that structure the interaction of political actors. Senegal's legal and constitutional framework provides for a remarkably open and liberal political system, which protects individual rights and personal freedoms, and makes it relatively easy to organize for political and social causes. The unwritten rules of Senegalese politics, however, are at significant variance with the legal-constitutional ones. They tend to seriously constrain political competition and participation in ways that have created increasing discontent and alienation from the political system.

Formal and Informal Rules in the Human Rights/Rule of Law Area

Human Rights

Senegal's legal and constitutional framework does not constitute an obstacle to the protection of human rights. In fact, Senegal's constitution is unusually explicit and detailed in the guarantees it provides for personal freedoms and civil liberties. It specifically states that all individuals are equal before the law, regardless of sex and family or ethnic origins, that the state must respect and protect the personal security of its citizens, that the home is inviolable, and a search of it requires a warrant, and that religious practice is to remain free from state control. Human rights violations in Senegal cannot be attributed to the absence of constitutional and legal protections.

Even in practice, human rights abuses are not a major issue in Senegal, especially by the standards of transitional countries. Still, there are areas of concern, including

a The Casamance human rights violations there have been committed not only by the Senegalese army, but also by the MFDC

b The situation of women the principle of the equality of men and women is far from being applied consistently, in both the private and public spheres. Domestic violence and discrimination against women remains pervasive.

c Police beatings of prisoners and suspects although the constitution specifically prohibits such practices, they do take place. Furthermore, police officers guilty of such abuses are rarely if ever prosecuted.

d Detention without trial lengthy pretrial detention remains far too common. Individuals can be held in jail for years, only to be proven innocent by the courts later on. In a well-publicized case, three defendants were acquitted by a court in October 1996 after they had spent between five and seven years behind bars. One factor contributing to this phenomenon is the lack of magistrates, which leads the judicial system to operate very slowly. On an average, two years lapse between the moment an individual is charged and the time when his or her case goes to trial.

e Poor prison conditions jails are characterized by overcrowding and inadequate food and health care. In addition, the rights of prisoners are routinely violated.

Rule of Law

The constitution proclaims the independence of the judiciary from both the executive and the legislature. Furthermore, President Diouf has repeatedly stated his determination to strengthen the legal system and ensure that the rule of law prevails in the country. In practice, however, the judicial system lacks autonomy and has repeatedly shown itself vulnerable to pressure by the executive branch. All judges are appointed by the president, who also presides over the *Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature* (High Council of the Judiciary). This helps explain why magistrates rarely rule against the government or its allies.

A critical institution within the judicial branch is the Constitutional Council, which was established in 1992 to replace the Supreme Court. The Constitutional Council is responsible for considering appeals in matters of national election disputes and the constitutionality of laws. Its independence has repeatedly been questioned. One reason is that it has consistently ruled on the side of the government in electoral disputes matters.

The lack of autonomy of the judiciary was also demonstrated during the legal conflict between the Sud Communications holding and Jean-Claude Mimran. Because of its significance, this affair -- which may have been to Senegal what the O J Simpson trial was to the United States -- deserves to be described at some length.

Mimran may well be the most influential and wealthiest businessperson in Senegal. He is also a leading representative of Senegal's state-protected, parasitic economic elite. The business empire over which he presides includes the *Compagnie Sucrière Sénégalaise* (Senegalese Sugar Company, or CSS). In October 1995, Sud-Quotidien, Senegal's foremost independent daily, publicized an incident in which the CSS had been accused of deliberately mislabelling as "unrefined" a shipment of 16,500 tons of actually refined sugar imported from Brazil, in order to benefit from lower customs duties (customs duties on unrefined sugar are 26 percent, as opposed to 48 percent on refined sugar). The amount of the presumed fraud was 1.7 billion francs CFA (or about US\$3.4 million). When charges against Mimran were dropped, Sud-Quotidien saw in this yet another proof of the enormous behind-the-scenes influence of what it called "La Mimrandie," as well as an indication of the lack of autonomy of the judicial branch. Sud continued to multiply the attacks against Mimran, who then sued the paper for public defamation. The public prosecutor requested a sentence of only 1 million francs CFA (approximately US\$2,000) against Sud Communications, with a three-month suspended jail sentence for the five accused journalists. In June 1996, however, the judge delivered a much harsher verdict: a staggering 500 million francs CFA (or approximately \$1 million) fine, plus a firm one-month jail sentence for each of the journalists. The unexpected severity of the verdict was widely interpreted as a result of the enormous political pressure that had come to bear on the judge. Sud Communication and the five journalists appealed the decisions. The latter, however, were confirmed by the Court of Appeals in early June 1997.

While the Sud-Mimran conflict was the most publicized component of Senegal's "sugar scandal," that scandal also led to the conviction of another Dakar newspaper, the monthly "Le Politicien." That monthly had accused Senegal's Foreign Minister, Moutapha Niasse, of having spurred Sud to launch its campaign against Mimran. Niasse sued the newspaper, which was

ordered to pay 10 million francs CIA (approximately US\$20,000). In this case as well, pressure on the courts was alleged to have played a role in the verdict.

The poor image and institutional limitations of the judicial system have led many citizens who feel that they have been wronged to seek redress by turning to other channels, especially the press. Distrustful of the courts, individuals have called on journalists to mobilize public opinion behind their cause. This explains why the Senegalese press has been described as a "wailing wall." Playing the role of a substitute judiciary is of course a function that the press cannot perform. But this phenomenon is indicative of the shortcomings of Senegal's judiciary.

Formal and Informal Rules Affecting Institutions of Governance

The Executive Branch

The constitution concentrates power in the hands of a president whose prerogatives include setting the policies of the government, appointing and dismissing the prime minister, controlling the armed forces, ensuring that the laws passed by the legislature are carried out, appointing judges, ambassadors, and senior officers, and negotiating treaties.

The limited role which the constitution gives the prime minister has been even more circumscribed by actual practice. The prime minister does not make policy, but implements the policies formulated by the president. The lack of influence of the prime minister is reflected in part in the history of that office, which has been eliminated on several occasions (there was no prime minister between 1963 and 1970, and between 1983 and 1991). Nevertheless, a constitutional amendment adopted in April 1976 provides for the prime minister to assume the duties of the president in case of the latter's death or resignation. The prime minister then continues as president until the next scheduled presidential election. It was under this provision that Abdou Diouf became president after Senghor retired on December 31, 1980.

As discussed earlier, Diouf has recently endeavored to give somewhat more responsibility to the prime minister and the cabinet for managing the day-to-day affairs of government. Still, the current prime minister, Habib Thiam, is not a very visible figure, even though he has occupied the office since April 1991. Thiam is much less influential than Tanor Dieng, the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs (and First Secretary of the PS).

The Legislature

The legislature consists of a unicameral chamber called the National Assembly (NA). Members of the NA are called Deputies and they are elected by universal suffrage every five years. The constitution endows the NA with very significant prerogatives.

- It must pass the laws (although under exceptional circumstances, specified under the constitution, legislative power can be delegated to the president, and bills can be referred to the people)
- It must debate and pass the budget

- Deputies can ask written and oral questions from individual ministers. Ministers are constitutionally mandated to answer such questions. When parliament is in session, one session a week (on Wednesday afternoon) is devoted to questions-and-answers.
- The NA is empowered to create commissions of investigation.
- It can force the cabinet to step down through a vote of no-confidence.
- It can impeach the president, ministers, and state secretaries.

In short, the constitution gives the NA very significant prerogatives. In practice, however, the legislature has rarely played an important and autonomous political role. There was a brief exception to this rule, between 1960 and 1962, when the NA forcefully asserted its prerogatives. But after Senghor concentrated powers in the presidency in 1963, the NA was reduced to a "*chambre d'emergence*" (a rubber stamp legislature), in which the ruling party occupied all the seats. The legalization of a multiparty system was followed by the entry of opposition members in the NA in 1978, which made the chamber more pluralistic. More importantly, the 1980s saw a weakening of ruling party discipline, which increased somewhat the ability of the NA to operate, occasionally, as a forum for debate of public policy issues.

The NA can compel the executive to amend the bills it introduces. This was the case in 1995-96, when debates in the NA led to some 300 amendments to the original decentralization bill. Similarly, PS Deputies with strong ties to the unions frequently vote against projects of law (bills introduced by the government) that hurt the interests of rank-and-file union members. The defection of some PS members, however, has never thus far prevented the executive from getting its way in the NA.

Since 1996, President Diouf and the ruling Socialist Party have been floating the idea of creating a sixty-member Senate. Senators would be elected indirectly, by regional, municipal, and rural councilors meeting in an electoral college. Since the PS already dominate regional and local councils, it would have an overwhelming majority within the Senate as well. Like the 1996 decentralization bill, which established regional assemblies and expanded the prerogatives of municipal and rural councils, the Senate would provide yet another outlet for PS elites incapable of securing cabinet positions or a seat in the National Assembly, and for old party bosses whom Ousmane Tanor Dieng has been trying to push aside.

Senators would have eight year terms, with half the members being elected every four years. Some seats might be reserved for representatives of organized interest groups, and/or for certain socioeconomic strata of the population. In that case, the Senate would perform many of the functions currently carried out by the Economic and Social Council, which might therefore be abolished. The Senate's prerogatives would include reviewing the bills passed by the National Assembly, and returning to it those of which it does not approve.

Local Government

For purposes of self-government, the country is divided into 10 regions, 60 municipalities, 43 *arrondissements* (districts) in the Greater Dakar area, and 320 rural communities. The decentralization bill passed by the National Assembly in February 1996 introduced major changes in Senegal's governmental structure.

1 It provided for the country's ten administrative regions to be governed by elected regional assemblies, and to enjoy financial autonomy. Nine areas of competence that used to be the prerogative of the central government have been transferred to the regional councils:

- a Land tenure
- b Environment and natural resources
- c Cultural affairs
- d Health and population policies
- e Sports and youth affairs
- f Education
- g Regional development
- h Urban planning
- i Housing

Regional assemblies have 42 members for regions with fewer than 800,000 residents, 52 members for regions with a population between 800,000 and 1,500,000, and 62 members for regions with a population over 1,500,000.

2 The 1996 decentralization bill also expanded the prerogatives of municipal and rural councils, giving them *de facto* responsibility for the provision of most public services, including garbage collection, sanitation and the maintenance of roads, public spaces, school buildings, and health facilities.

From a D/G perspective, the most important problems facing local government institutions include:

a Lack of transparency of local government management

By and large, local populations are left in the dark regarding the operation of municipalities and rural councils. There is little interest in monitoring local government performance, or capacity to do so. As a result, local officials are often more accountable to the PS hierarchy in Dakar than to their constituents.

There is little effective financial oversight over local government. In theory, this function is exercised by the central administration (jointly by specialized oversight agencies within the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance). In practice, however, complicitous relationships between central government administrators and municipal officials limit the effectiveness of official financial oversight mechanisms. The extent and nature of central oversight over municipalities and rural communes is shaped primarily not by the performance of local government institutions, but by personal and political relations between local officials and national figures. Public funds and resources are known to be used to ensure the reelection of outgoing councilors, mayors, and presidents of communes, or to support the PS's candidate in legislative and presidential elections.

b Lack of interaction between councilors and their constituents By and large, local government institutions are too insulated from their environment.

c Lack of adequate funding This is a longstanding problem that may have been compounded by the 1996 decentralization law, which transferred new responsibilities to municipalities and rural councils, without providing them with enhanced resources

d Lack of qualified personnel Elected officials themselves are often illiterates. By contrast, municipalities and rural councils often have on their payroll a plethora of unqualified staff

Formal and Informal Rules Affecting the Competitiveness of Political Processes

All men and women 18 years or older are allowed to vote. The electoral code adopted in 1992 also provides for

- The involvement of all legal political parties in the elaboration of voter registries,
- The presence of representatives of political parties at polling stations during the vote,
- Secret ballots, to avoid potential pressure by local notables or ruling party officials,
- The presence of opposition party members in the verification of the vote tally

The electoral code reflects a broad consensus among the main political parties. The two key features of electoral processes that are still contested are

- (a) The organization of elections by the Ministry of the Interior (which is responsible for, among others, the interpretation of relevant laws, the printing of ballots, the provision of voting equipment, the opening and closing of voting stations, the processing of the returns, and the proclamation of the results), and
- (b) The ban on independent candidates for local, regional, and legislative elected seats

Presidential Elections Rules

The president is elected by direct universal suffrage. His term is seven years, and since the adoption of the 1992 Electoral Code, presidential terms are limited to two (President Diouf, who was re-elected in 1993, can theoretically serve another ten years if he runs and is re-elected in 2000). Since 1996, the PS has been floating the idea of abolishing the presidential term limit. This may be intended to benefit not President Diouf (who is believed not to want to serve beyond 2007), but Ousmane Tanor Dieng, who is currently expected to be Diouf's successor.

To be elected in the first round, a candidate needs an absolute majority of the ballots cast, and that majority must also equal or exceed one-fourth of the total number of registered voters. If no candidate meets these requirements (which has never been the case in Senegal, where presidents have always been elected or re-elected in the first round), a second round takes place.

Rules Governing Elections to the National Assembly

The electoral law provides for a list-based system that combines majority and proportional representation. Each political party presents a national list, as well as separate lists in each of the departments where it competes (there are 30 departments)

- 70 of the 120 National Assembly seats are allocated according to the results of the national competition among party lists, on a proportional representation basis. For instance, a party winning 60 percent of the national vote would receive 42 seats (60 percent of 70 seats)
- The remaining 50 seats are allocated according to the results in each department, on a winner-take-all basis. In practice, the PS usually takes all 50 seats

The official rationale behind this system is that it reconciles the competing imperatives of governability (the main benefit of a winner-take-all system) and representativeness (the primary advantage of proportional representation). Still, the system clearly favors the ruling party, which in the last election received 84 seats or 70 percent of the total, with only 56.6 percent of the vote.

Since the spring of 1997, the Parti Socialiste has been floating the idea of making two important changes in the electoral law, both of which would reduce the number of opposition Deputies in the National Assembly. The first modification would alter the ratio of proportional and majority representation from 70 seats / 50 seats to 60 / 60. The second change would force any party that wants to participate in legislative elections to present candidates in all the departments. The PS's argument is that such a reform would disqualify regionalist and ethnically-based parties. But this change would also make it much harder for any small party to take part in the elections, and this may well be the real agenda behind the PS's propositions. That the PS leadership is putting forward such suggestions in an already tense political situation has been described by opposition leaders as a sign of the ruling party's "arrogance" and determination to marginalize the opposition.

Rules Governing Local and Regional Elections

Regional, municipal, and rural council elections are held every five years (the first regional elections took place in November 1996). The electorate selects councilors, the number of whom varies depending on the size of the community. As of 1997, there were

- 826 seats for all 10 regional councils,
- 4,214 seats for all 60 municipal councils,
- 3,559 seats for all 43 *arrondissements* (urban districts within the Greater Dakar area) councils,
- 15,386 seats for all 320 rural community councils

Once elected, rural and regional councils select a President and Vice President from within their ranks. Similarly, municipal councils and the councils of the various *mairies d'arrondissement*

choose mayors. Presidents, Vice Presidents, and mayors must belong to the party list that has won the largest number of seats. Councilors can serve no more than two consecutive five-year terms.

The electoral system now mixes majority and proportional representation. 50 percent of the seats on the various councils are allocated according to a list-based, simple majority, winner-take-all system, while the other half are allocated on the basis of a list-based, proportional representation system. Thus, each party presents two lists (one for the winner-take-all contest, and one for the proportional representation system).

Until 1996, opposition parties had boycotted local elections (in part because the electoral system at that time was winner-take-all). As a result, the opposition was not represented in local government bodies. This is no longer the case. The change in the electoral law (to provide for a measure of proportional representation) facilitated the decision of opposition parties to take part in the November 1996 elections. That, in turn, has led to the presence of opposition representatives on virtually all municipal, rural, and regional councils in place since January 1, 1997. It is too early to know how this will affect local government. The optimistic scenario is that members of the councils who are affiliated with the opposition will carefully monitor the actions of the majority party and be prompt to publicize abuses of power and authority if only to better position themselves for the next election. If this is true, then the new situation will ensure greater transparency and accountability. But one should not dismiss the possibility that far more pessimistic scenarios may materialize. One such scenario is that the opposition on the various councils will be marginalized and kept in the dark by the ruling party. Alternatively, majority and opposition members might develop complicitous relationships and merely divide the spoils of office among them, in defiance of standards of accountability and transparency. These issues have important programming implications that will be considered in Section III.

It should be noted that low turn-out afflicts local elections as much as national ones. The November 1996 local and regional elections were no exception, even though the opposition had decided to take part in them, and even though the campaign was taking place in the wake of a much publicized decentralization reform presented by the government as a major step in the democratization of political life and the empowerment of populations. The disappointingly low percentage of people who bothered to vote highlights once again the lack of legitimacy of the electoral process, even at the local level, and suggests as well a lack of popular enthusiasm for the government's decentralization program. One might take as an example the city of Thies, one of the major urban centers in the country. For the November 1996 elections, Thies's eligible population was about 90,000. Of these, only approximately 55,000 were registered, and only approximately 25,000 actually voted. In the end, the PS received about 10,000 ballots, despite a massive effort on its part to mobilize its supporters. Therefore, with approximately 11 percent of eligible voters, the PS won control over a municipality of about 220,000 people.

The November 1996 regional and local elections were marred by gerrymandering, voter lists manipulations, and other forms of electoral fraud. The government proceeded unilaterally in determining the boundaries of the various *communes d'arrondissement*, which were drawn so

as to minimize losses by the ruling party (areas dominated by the opposition were spread across several districts) During the campaign, government resources such as vehicles and staff were used by the PS In areas leaning toward the opposition, many registered voters did not receive their voting cards On voting day, not enough ballots had been printed for the smaller parties, and many polling places in the capital opened late or not at all Elsewhere in the country, in districts known to favor the opposition, the equipment required for voting never arrived In the Dakar area, irregularities were so widespread that results were cancelled in 100 of the 1100 voting stations, and an exceptional, new round of voting had to be organized three days later, on November 27

Formal and Informal Rules Governing Civil Society

Party laws

The only major barrier on the legalization and operation of political parties is the constitutional ban on parties that are explicitly based on religious, regional, or ethnic solidarities In all other cases, parties merely need to apply for official recognition, which is usually forthcoming Legalization however, can be a slow process For instance, as of June 1997, the last political party to be legalized (the Rally of African Workers-Senegal, or Rassemblement des Travailleurs Africains-Senegal) had to wait one year before being legalized

Laws Governing Associations and NGOs

Senegal's constitution guarantees the right to form associations (Article 9) The latter must simply register with the Ministry of the Interior's Directorate of General Affairs and Territorial Administration (*Direction des Affaires Generales et de l'Administration Territoriale*) by submitting copies of their statutes, the minutes of their constitutive assembly, and the list of their members

To be recognized as an NGO (which opens the door to tax exemptions and waivers of customs duties on imported equipment and materials), an association must have been in operation for two years and must register with the Ministry of Woman, Child and Family The application file must include copies of the statutes, a list of members, a program of activities (with possible financing sources), and a copy of the earlier declaration as an association Within two months of the submission of the application, the file is examined by a commission composed of representatives of

- (a) The Ministry of Woman, Child and Family,
- (b) The Ministry of Finance,
- (c) The Ministry of the Interior,
- (d) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- (e) Networks of NGOs (the Congad for instance is a member of that commission)

Even after an association is recognized as an NGO, tax and customs waivers are granted on a case-by-case basis, as is indicated in Article 14 of the 1996 decree governing NGOs

Laws Governing the Media

Senegal's constitution and media laws do not constitute an obstacle to freedom of expression. The country now features a vocal press and several independent radio stations which are often critical of the government and the ruling party. Newspapers and magazines document and publicize phenomena such as electoral fraud, corruption in high places, and abuses of power and authority by officials. There is apparently very little press self-censorship. From a legal perspective, the creation of a newspaper or magazine is relatively easy, as one merely needs to register with the appropriate authorities prior to starting publication. The government has been remarkably tolerant of criticisms of its policies voiced in the press and on the radio.

One should nevertheless note that control over television is a prerogative that the government has been unwilling to relinquish thus far. In addition, the previously discussed verdicts against Sud Communication (in the conflict which opposed it to Jean-Claude Mimran) was widely interpreted as an effort to make Senegal's independent press think twice about taking on a prominent figure associated with the regime. The same comment applies to the verdicts against the newspaper "Le Politicien."

Organizational Arenas

Having reviewed the historical and socioeconomic background against which political action takes place in Senegal, the country's key political actors, and the formal and informal rules that structure their interaction, this section now concludes with an overview of the main arenas in which political actors interact with each other.

The PS

The primary arena for political competition remains the ruling PS party, which is more than ever riddled with divisions. These internal rivalries reflect both personal ambitions and disagreements over strategy (in particular over how to deal with opposition parties). The coming years should see an intensification of power struggles within the party in anticipation of Diouf's retirement from the political scene. The three main and overlapping divisions within the PS are

1 Supporters versus opponents of the current First Secretary, Ousmane Tanor Dieng

Dieng's supporters clearly have the upper hand at the present time. Since the last Congress of the party, held in March 1996, the PS's highest decision-making body, the *Bureau Politique*, includes 30 supporters of Dieng among its 35 members.

2 Those who oppose the presence of opposition leaders in government, versus those who are not against it

The former usually favor a harsh line toward opposition parties (especially the PDS), and they benefit from the support of Ousmane Tanor Dieng. The latter's ranks include figures who advocate greater pluralism and dialogue with the opposition.

The widespread resentment -- within both the PS leadership and the party's rank-and-file -- of President Diouf's decision to include opposition members in the government is due in part to the fact that several PS candidates have found themselves running against well-financed opposition (especially PDS) politicians, who have used their party's presence in government to secure perks and material advantages to advance their campaign objectives

3 The central party hierarchy in Dakar (the *Bureau Politique* of the PS) versus prominent local PS politicians

PS leaders with a local base of support often find themselves at odds with the central party hierarchy in Dakar. Attempts by the PS's *Bureau Politique* to dictate which candidate will represent the PS in a particular constituency can lead to vicious intra-party infighting. Prominent PS politicians with a local base of support can prevail over the national leadership. Following the November 1996 local elections, for instance, the outgoing Mayor of Dakar, Mamadou Diop, was reelected against the wishes of Ousmane Tanor Dieng, who favored Abdoulaye Makhtar Drop. Similarly, in Saint Louis, incumbent PS baron Abdoulaye Chimere Diaw entered an alliance with opposition parties to defeat Minister of Tourism Tijane Sylla, the local PS leader and the candidate favored by the party's national leadership to replace Diaw as mayor of the city.

The National Assembly

The legislature does not yet operate as forum for sustained dialogue between the regime and the opposition, as well as among members of the ruling party. In many transitional countries, parliament has emerged as a central political arena in which regime and opposition elites bargain over the rules of the game, that is not the case in Senegal. Senegal's National Assembly (NA) lacks autonomy, institutional capacity, and visibility. It is still widely perceived as a "rubber stamp" legislature ("*chambre d'emergissement*"), which merely ratifies the legislative initiatives (*projets de loi*) of the executive. It makes little significant contribution to the policy debate. Even in a situation of protracted social unrest, such as the one through which the country is currently going, the NA seems incapable of playing a meaningful role of arbitration and conciliation among the various parties involved. For instance, one can only be struck by the lack of any meaningful parliamentary initiatives and debates on two of the most controversial issues currently facing the country: the crisis of the educational system, and the organization and conduct of elections. Disappointment with the NA's influence and performance has led some of the most capable members of the opposition to disengage from Assembly work. On June 13, 1997 -- in the midst of a very serious crisis of the educational system marked by strikes and violent clashes (both between students and the police and among students) -- only 23 out of 120 Deputies were in attendance to listen to the answers that the Minister of Education, Mr. Andre Sonko, was to give to the questions he had been asked.

The NA's limited ability to serve as an arena for debate, dialogue and arbitration has led to the creation of extra-parliamentary structures to try to find solutions to the most controversial and politically sensitive issues facing the country. These commissions tend to be created on an *ad-hoc* basis, usually at the initiative of the President. Two such examples are the commission established in 1991 to study the reform of the electoral code (*Commission Cellulaire de la*

Reforme du Code Electoral) the membership of which was drawn from 14 political parties, and, more recently, the commission set up in February 1997 to review the possibility of creating an independent electoral commission

The NA remains too insulated from society as a whole it has few institutional contacts with the media, research organizations, and universities for instance Meanwhile, civil society groups do not seek to lobby or exercise pressure on the NA because of their perception that it lacks influence on decision-making

Still, since the 1993 legislative elections, the NA is no longer quite the rubber stamp that it used to be This is due in part to the presence of 33 opposition deputies, and in part to the increased activism shown by PS parliamentarians Over the past few years, the legislature has been able to force important amendments to the legislation introduced by the government For instance, a 1994 project of law that aimed to change the status of the state-owned railway company (*Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer*) had to be altered under the pressure of PS-affiliated Deputies More recently, the decentralization bill introduced by the government underwent some 300 amendments before it was adopted by the NA Most of these amendments were pushed by PS Deputies

Some observers have argued that, as a result of these trends, the political system has been undergoing "parliamentarization " The fact that the president is trying to extricate himself from both party politics and the day-to-day management of governmental affairs could result in a greater role for the legislature This phenomenon should thus be monitored carefully, because it has programmatic implications

The Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council (*Conseil Economique et Social*, or CES) was created in 1963 as an advisory body designed to allow organized interest groups such as businesspersons, unions, employers, and agriculturalists to voice their opinions on matters of economic and social policy The constitution states that the government must consult the CES on all major economic and social activities, as well as on planning projects Projects of law (bills introduced by the government) must be presented to the CES before they are sent to the NA Although its opinions are purely advisory, the CES has played at times an important role in the making of economic and social policy This for instance was the case under Senghor During the 1980s, the role and influence of the CES declined sharply However, since its presidency was given to former Finance Minister Famara Sagna in June 1993, the CES's influence has risen very significantly Energized by the dynamic leadership of its new leader, the CES currently functions as one of the most important forums in which the government engages in negotiations and dialogue with its "social partners "

SECTION THREE PROGRAMMING IMPLICATIONS

The objective of this final section is to outline a cost-effective strategy to enable USAID to strengthen democratic forces in Senegal. In considering possible actions in each of USAID's four programming categories in the D/G area -- Rule of Law and Human Rights, Competitive Political Processes, Institutions of Governance, and Civil Society -- particular attention is paid to five variables:

- 1 The areas in which Senegal displays the greatest need for progress (as suggested by Sections I and II),
- 2 The constraints on possible D/G activities that stem from Senegal's political system and dynamics (as suggested by Sections I and II),
- 3 The "windows of opportunity" created by current political developments and the priorities of the Government of Senegal (as suggested by Sections I and II),
- 4 The priorities which USAID/Dakar has set for itself (as summarized below),
- 5 The D/G-related activities of the most important other donors in Senegal (as described below)

Variables Two through Five are used to "filter out" strategies which might

- (a) not be practical, considering Senegal's political and socioeconomic environment,
- (b) conflict with, or, alternatively, duplicate the actions of other donors,
- (c) be incompatible with the priorities that the mission has already established for itself

A particular effort is made to identify what USAID's "comparative advantage" might be in the area of democracy promotion, and to envision activities which would maximize linkages with USAID/Dakar's priorities and strengths. This is why, before making specific programmatic recommendations, it is imperative to conduct a brief overview of

- (a) the coverage of D/G in the current interventions of USAID/Dakar, as well as in its proposed strategy for the 1998-2006 period
- (b) the ongoing and forthcoming activities that the most important donors in Senegal are carrying out in the D/G area

D/G Activities in USAID/Dakar's Current And Forthcoming (1998-2006) Strategies

The US Embassy in Dakar lacks significant funding for D/G activities. The only financial resources at its disposal consist of the \$75,000 Democracy and Human Rights Fund, which the Embassy disburses through small grants to support projects in such areas as women's rights, children's rights, prison conditions, and journalist training. All other D/G activities by the United States in Senegal are carried out by USAID.

USAID/Senegal is currently in the final stage of the implementation of its 1992-1997 Country Program Strategic Plan (CPSP). The rationale behind this CPSP was the fundamental imbalance between Senegal's rising population and its limited resources. To address this problem, the mission had identified two Strategic Objectives (SOs) and one Special Objective. The two Strategic Objectives were in the Health, Population, and Nutrition sector (SO1), and in the Management of Natural Resources area (SO2). The Special Objective was in D/G.

The Special D/G Objective, however, was not conceived as a stand-alone, autonomous objective, supported by specific activities. Instead, D/G issues were addressed primarily through the activities pertaining to SO1 and SO2. In this context, the main initiative by the mission which might be considered to have a D/G component is the Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) Project (1993-2001), one of the main activities supporting the mission's SO2. The CBNRM project seeks to increase community participation in the management of local resources. It has targeted 15 rural communities. In each of them, the project helps establish a Natural Resources Management (NRM) Committee, responsible for coordinating NRM activities. Through policy dialogue with the Government of Senegal, these committees are legally recognized.

In May 1997, USAID/Dakar defined its new strategy for the 1998-2006 period. To formulate this strategy, the mission conducted an extensive customer survey to identify how Senegalese themselves perceive the key developmental challenges facing their country, and what they believe the most effective strategies for overcoming these challenges might be. This process included the following activities:

- a Detailed interviews (conducted between January 12 and January 19) of USAID clients across Senegal's ten regions
- b Meetings with USAID's governmental, private sector, and civil society partners, to discuss their views of, and aspirations for Senegal in the twenty-first century
- c The constitution of a "dream team" made up of USAID staff, Senegalese intellectuals, and development practitioners, to think collectively and imaginatively about Senegal's future
- d A three-day workshop (April 28-30, 1997), which brought together some 200 guests, to further explore possibilities for USAID activities for the coming eight years

This participatory process resulted in the adoption of a proposed program of action built around two strategic objectives: Support for Senegal's decentralization process (SO1) and Support for the Private Sector (SO2). Of these two objectives, SO1 is the one that relates most directly to D/G issues.

Other Donors' Portfolio in The D/g Area

The French Government

France remains the main donor in Senegal, both in terms of the amount of funds disbursed, and in terms of political influence in the country. With Gabon and the Ivory Coast, Senegal is one of the three main beneficiaries of French assistance in sub-Saharan Africa. Still, there is a trend toward the reduction of French assistance. This trend should continue in the future.

In the D/G area, the French have made a conscious choice to give priority to good governance over democracy-promotion. Their central objective is to improve government performance, transparency and accountability, not to promote broader political participation, increase contestation, or facilitate greater consensus over the rules of the game. More specifically, France's D/G activities in Senegal focus on three areas: reform of the judicial system, the decentralization process, and the strengthening of executive branch agencies that aim to increase transparency of government practices and greater accountability of public officials.

With respect to the reform of the judicial system, the French government is engaged in the following areas:

- 1 Training of magistrates, law professors, and lawyers
- 2 Strengthening of the central oversight capacity of the Ministry of Justice
- 3 Support for the establishment and upgrading of legal documentation centers
- 4 Assistance to NGOs and associations engaged in civic awareness programs and the sensitization of the population to human, civil, and political rights
- 5 Support for the rehabilitation or upgrading of physical facilities (courthouses and tribunals)
- 6 Support for the improvement of conditions in jail, including by preparing prisoners for their post-detention future. Pilot projects have been implemented in three prisons.

The French also provide financial assistance to the OHADA (Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires, or Organization for the Harmonization in Africa of Commercial Law Codes). Created in 1996, the OHADA brings together eighteen countries, both in French- and English-speaking Africa. Other major donors involved in supporting OHADA include the European Union, the World Bank, the United Nations (through the UNDP), and Belgium.

The second main priority of the French consists of support for the decentralization process. Like the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the French government was associated very early on to the elaboration of the legislation on decentralization. It now envisions projects that will strengthen the institutional capability of municipal and rural councils. One such project is known as the *Projet d'Appui à la Décentralisation et au Développement Urbain du Sénégal* (PADDUS). It will involve training local officials and providing them with the resources that they need to discharge their functions effectively. The French government is also considering supporting activities that will facilitate partnerships between local government councils on the one hand, and the private sector and NGOs on the other.

Finally, the French government is working in close cooperation with the GOS to strengthen oversight agencies within the executive bureaucracy, particularly those in charge of reviewing financial accounts and personnel hiring and promotion. One such agency targeted by the French is the *Commission de Vérification des Comptes de l'Etat et des Entreprises Publiques* (State Administration and Public Enterprises Audit Commission).

In addition to its focus on the rule of law, decentralization, and the strengthening of oversight agencies within the executive bureaucracy, the French government also seeks, whenever possible, to involve civil society organizations in its activities.

The European Union

The European Union intends to make support for decentralization a priority of its assistance to Senegal in the coming decade. It has not yet finalized its strategy in this area, but is considering, or has already initiated, the following activities:

- a Developing a better understanding of the fiscal challenges that regions, municipalities, and rural communes face. Efforts in this area will be undertaken in cooperation with Canada.
- b Providing support for the design and financing of local and regional economic development plans across Senegal.
- c Establishing and financing a Regional Investment Fund.
- d Training local officials and the technical staff of regions, municipalities, and rural communes.

The European Union also supports the financing of elections (in particular the printing of ballots). It is involved in the "Media in Democracy" project of the African Institute for Democracy (AID). Finally, it strives to involve civil society organizations in all of its activities.

The World Bank

The World Bank is actively supporting the process of judicial reform -- especially the upgrading and modernization of commercial codes -- with a view to creating a more conducive environment for the private sector (domestic and foreign). It too endeavors to involve NGOs

in most of its projects, and organizes numerous activities (seminars, training sessions, and overseas visits) to improve media reporting on economic matters. The World Bank intends to make support for decentralization a priority of its action in the next few years. Projects planned in this area include funding of investments in social and physical infrastructures, local government capacity-building (including through training of local officials), technical assistance to help rural communes and municipalities identify problems and address them.

Canada

Canada's activities in the D/G area revolve around two main projects. The first, launched in 1993 and completed in 1996, was entitled "Improvement of the Social Position of Women." Its central goal was to facilitate the emergence of a network of organizations capable of promoting more egalitarian relationships between men and women. Canada provided both financial and technical assistance to achieve this objective, which materialized with the establishment of a national organization (called Siggil Jigeen) of women's associations. Siggil Jigeen has been active in publicizing women's issues. It organized two panels on "Violence against Women" and "Women and Politics," published and diffused very widely a "Women's Guide" that describes women's rights, and issues a quarterly as well as various pamphlets on women's issues.

Canada's second focus in D/G -- and a priority of its action in that area for years to come -- is support for Senegal's decentralization process. Planned interventions in this field include

- a A comprehensive study of the fiscal situation of municipalities and rural communes
- b Strengthening the institutional capacity of rural and municipal councils, especially through the training of local officials
- c Financing basic infrastructures in selected rural communes and municipalities

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation

With a permanent representation in Senegal since 1976, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FEF) is engaged in several democracy-supporting activities, including

1 Support for Senegal's decentralization program

The FEF played a leading role in the design of Senegal's decentralization program. It is currently experimenting with pilot projects in the following areas:

- a Assisting regions and municipalities in the design and implementation of local and regional economic policies
- b Training local officials (in the six national languages), in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Decentralization

c Helping civil society organizations take ownership of the decentralization process

2 Human and women's rights promotion, in cooperation with local NGOs

The IEI helped disseminate the African Charter of Human Rights in Senegal's national languages. It assisted in the creation of the *Conseil Senegalais des Femmes* (Senegalese Council for Women), and was a co-founder, with the African Institute for Democracy (IAD), of the Caucus of Women Parliamentarians. In general, it cooperates very closely with the IAD in promoting women's issues and the involvement of women in public life.

3 Parliamentary assistance

Legislative development is a frequent focus of the FEF, especially in Africa. In this area, the FEF cooperates closely with the IAD, both in Senegal and West Africa in general. For example, the IAD and the FEF jointly organized in November 1996 a workshop entitled "Role, Rights, and Responsibilities of Opposition Parties in African Parliaments" in Ouagadougou (Burkina-Fasso). Together with the IAD, the FEF also works closely with the caucus of women parliamentarians (16 Deputies, 12 belonging to the PS and 4 to the PDS), particularly on matters related to the legal status of women in the country. The FEF and the IAD have organized workshops during which women parliamentarians were briefed on specific issues, and were able to meet with civil society groups (such as associations that aim to combat violence against women) on matters of common interest.

4 Civic education activities

The FEF has sought to contribute to the development of a democratic culture through the organization of workshops, conferences, and financial support for publications. It also cooperates with the IAD to increase and improve media coverage of democracy- and human rights related issues (see below).

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation

In addition to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Germany is also active in D/G activities through the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF). In Senegal, the FNF focuses on economic liberalization (the foundation has a regional program of support for economic liberalization for all of French-speaking West Africa). In addition, the FNF seeks to promote the rule of law through civic education. It does so by collaborating with several human rights organizations, especially the *Institut des Droits de l'Homme et de la Paix* (IDHP, Institute for Human Rights and Peace), which is affiliated with the University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar.

The United Nations

The United Nations are active in the D/G area primarily through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s sponsorship of the African Institute for Democracy (AID). Created at the initiative of the UNDP in 1993 and headquartered in Dakar, the IAD is a nongovernmental organization. Its activities extend throughout West Africa. The United

Nations Special Initiative for Africa for the Decade 1996-2006 designated the AID as the institutional support for programs promoting good governance and conflict prevention and resolution in West Africa. The AID seeks to further democratization in West Africa by

1 Providing technical assistance to associations, NGOs, the media, parliaments, unions, and professional syndicates

2 Operating civic education programs

3 Facilitating dialogue, coordination and cooperation among national and international organizations active in the D/G area in West Africa

4 Monitoring and analyzing developments in the democracy and human rights areas in Africa, and diffusing information on all aspects of democracy-building in Africa. The IAD publishes a quarterly, called *Democraties Africaines*, which includes generally good articles in French and English on current political and economic developments in Africa. The AID thus works as a regional political observatory.

In Senegal, the IAD's efforts have concentrated on sensitizing the population to its civil and political rights, and on enhancing popular understanding and public discussion of issues related to democracy, human rights, and good governance. The IAD has organized numerous workshops, seminars and conferences. It also works in close cooperation with youth and women's groups, unions and syndicates, and human rights associations.

Two IAD projects deserve special mention: "Strengthening of the Political Capacity of Women" and "Media and Democracy." The former consists of activities that aim to increase women's involvement in public life, and to promote greater attention to women's issues. It has led to numerous meetings that have brought together women parliamentarians, representatives of women's groups, women journalists, and women active in trade unions and professional syndicates. These gatherings are designed to facilitate contacts and create mutual support networks, and to promote a better understanding of issues of common interest.

"Media and Democracy" is a project undertaken jointly by the IAD, the independent Sud Communication holding, and the semi-official *Le Soleil* daily. The objective of this project is twofold: (a) to improve the skills of journalists in reporting on matters related to democracy, governance, and human rights, (b) to develop new media-related projects (including radio programs) that will increase media coverage of D/G issues in Senegal. The ultimate goal is to make civic and political education a more explicit component of the activities of the Senegalese media.

The IAD also intends to assist in the decentralization process by contributing to the training of local officials. Pilot projects to determine needs in this area, and to formulate strategies to address these needs, are currently under way or will soon be launched in four cities: Dakar, Saint Louis, Thies, and Ziguinchor.

In addition to its continued support for the IAD, the UNDP is scheduled to launch in July 1997 a pilot project of assistance to Senegal's decentralization program. This project will target municipalities and rural councils in the Kedougou department (in the southeastern region of Tambacounda). Activities planned include institutional capacity building (especially the training of elected officials in both basic literacy skills and management techniques) and technical and financial assistance for the design and implementation of local development plans. By the end of 1997, the UNDP will also launch its new Regional Civil Society Support Program, which has three main facets: institutional development (assistance in the training and management of projects), the facilitation of experience-sharing among NGOs at the regional level, and support for the establishment of a network of civil society organizations.

The Netherlands

Until 1997, the Netherlands' development assistance in the D/G area was very limited, and no financial resources were allocated specifically for D/G interventions. In 1997, however, a budget was put in place to support D/G activities in Senegal. Although the Netherlands' D/G strategy is not yet fully defined, its main focus will be on Rule of Law, Civil Society, and Decentralization. With respect to the first two objectives, the embassy is providing financial support for two human rights organizations (the RADDHO, *Reseau Africain de Defense des Droits de l'Homme*, and the CADHD, *Comite Africain pour les Droits de l'Homme et le Developpement*) and will also fund the Regional Delegation for Africa of the International Observatory of Prisons. As for decentralization, the Netherlands Embassy is a member of the Informal Donor Committee on Decentralization. Although as of June 1997 it had not yet decided on specific interventions, it already had received ten funding requests from newly elected councils (regional, municipal, and rural) and was intent on responding positively to several of them.

Enda

Based in Dakar for more than a quarter-century, Enda is an important player in the community of donors, and one that enjoys a very favorable image in the country. It is heavily involved in grass-roots development issues (in both urban and rural settings), but not in the D/G area. Some of its activities, however, have a D/G component, they include

a Efforts to sensitize the most marginalized and disinherited components of the population to their rights

Enda for instance provides legal and material support to slum- or inner city dwellers who are threatened with eviction by municipal authorities. Enda/Dakar also has targeted for special assistance young maids ("*petites bonnes*," most of whom are recent rural migrants in their teens, who have left their families in the village). These domestic employees are frequently physically abused by their employers, or summarily dismissed (typically at the end of the month, before they are to receive their wages). Enda has sought to sensitize these populations to their civil rights, and helped them form associations to defend these rights. It has intervened as a mediator in disputes with employers. It also has helped them develop savings and credit associations, cooperatives, and mutual support networks.

b Improvement of conditions in jail

Enda has sought to improve conditions in jail, particularly for children and women. It has organized basic literacy skills programs among inmates, to better prepare them for the post-detention period. Occasionally, in cases going to an appeals court, it has provided legal support for individuals who could not afford it. Enda is also represented in several working groups that bring together representatives of the government, the judicial system, and civil society, and which are designed to reflect on possible reforms of the penal code.

c Empowering populations

Enda has sought to empower marginalized, underprivileged populations, and to enable them to become self-sufficient over time. It has done so through the following activities:

- Support for small-scale credit associations among impoverished women,
- Organization of basic literacy skills campaigns,
- Helping the populations of impoverished quarters develop their capacity to provide services in areas such as health, access to water, trash collection, and education
- Providing lower-class women with the technical assistance that they need to engage in income-generating activities

STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations in The Rule of Law/Human Rights Area

Human Rights

As mentioned earlier, human rights violations are not a major issue in Senegal. Furthermore, Senegalese human rights organizations appear to be doing well -- whether on their own or with the support of other donors -- in pushing for improvements in areas of particular need (e.g., women's rights, pretrial detention, prison conditions). Therefore, it does not appear necessary for USAID/Dakar to increase its activities in the human rights area. The mission is already active in promoting women's rights by integrating that objective into its various projects. This should continue to be a priority of the mission.

Rule of Law

Senegal faces enormous needs in the rule of law area.

1. There is a complete lack of confidence in the judicial system, which is widely seen as subservient to ruling elites, and manipulated by them.
2. There are not enough magistrates. More generally, the judicial apparatus suffers from meager financial and human resources.
3. The judicial system's physical infrastructure (courthouses, libraries, legal data bases, etc.) is in very poor condition and deteriorating.
4. Commercial codes are inadequate. They must be upgraded and modernized in order to permit greater foreign and domestic investment. This is absolutely essential from a D/G perspective, because
 - (a) Real, sustainable democratization is unlikely until there is greater economic growth,
 - (b) There will be no significant economic growth until private investment (both domestic and foreign) increases sharply,
 - (c) Private investment will not increase significantly without a legal framework that provides potential investors with guarantees of predictability, transparency, and accountability in economic practices.

Despite Senegal's pressing needs in the rule of law area, this assessment does not recommend that USAID engage in significant activities in that field for three main reasons:

First, it is not clear that there is enough political will to genuinely reform the judiciary and make it more independent from interference by the executive branch and/or the ruling party. Working in this area might embroil USAID in very sensitive issues.

Second, Senegal's legal system is French-inspired. Law codes as well as the organization of the judicial apparatus are built on the French model. It is not clear that USAID can mobilize the legal expertise required to work on upgrading and modernizing such a system.

Third, other donors -- especially the major ones in Senegal (the French, the European Union, the World Bank, and the United Nations) -- are already heavily involved in the rule of law/judicial reform area. USAID activities in this field might be redundant. Furthermore, even if initiated rapidly, they would begin at a time when other donors are already well-advanced in their own assistance programs.

Recommendations in the Area of Competitive Political Processes

This assessment has identified the manner in which elections are conducted as the single most important issue facing Senegal in the D/G area. Certainly, elections do not a democracy make. In the socioeconomic and political context of many transitional countries, insisting on free elections is not by itself a viable democracy-supporting strategy, and it can even very easily backfire. Rarely are free elections the key to a deepening of democracy. Yet, in Senegal, the lack of transparency in the organization and conduct of the electoral process is a major issue. Despite its sensitive nature, it must be addressed. To support this claim, several of the assessment's main findings may be restated briefly here.

First, the debate over electoral fraud and the means to prevent it is the one fundamental question that remains unresolved among political elites. Second, Senegal will experience four elections in the coming six years: legislative in 1998, presidential in 2000, local and regional in 2001, and legislative again in 2003. In this context, the issue of the fairness of the electoral process appears to deserve special attention, especially since every single election now raises the prospect of a new outbreak of popular anger following the announcement of the results. No one has forgotten the violent riots that followed the 1988 elections. In 1993, the assassination of Babacar Seye and the issue of Wade's possible involvement in the murder were directly linked to the controversy over electoral fraud. Most recently, in May 1997, the private residences of several newly elected mayors and/or high-ranking government officials were set on fire or attacked, allegedly because of popular anger at the way these individuals -- the Minister of Justice and Mayor of Dioubel (Jacques Baudin), the Minister of Decentralization and Mayor of Tambacounda (Souty Toure), and the Mayor of Rufisque (Mbaye Jacques Diop) -- "stole" their election in November 1996. It is significant that the homes of the ministers of Justice and Decentralization should be attacked within six months of local and regional elections which were supposed to demonstrate the regime's commitment to the democratization of political life. Without reading too much into these events, one may see them as yet another indication that

(a) The first local and regional elections to take place after the adoption of the decentralization law were not particularly well received,

- (b) the population feels that leaders cannot be sanctioned through democratic elections, and
- (c) violence is increasingly seen as the only outlet left to express discontent with the system

Low and declining rates of participation in elections constitute yet another reason to address the issue of electoral fraud. It is not clear how long Senegal's formal democracy can survive when increasing numbers of people refrain from exercising their right to vote, and when the President owes his mandate to only about 18% of eligible voters (and about 29% of those who are registered). Low turnout can be traced back, to a large extent, to the absence of faith in the electoral process, which itself is a product of the widespread irregularities that characterize each election.

The combination of electoral fraud and extremely low participation rates (particularly when measured against the number of eligible, as opposed to registered, voters) is a major drain on the government's legitimacy. The result is a widespread belief that the government -- whether at the local or national level -- does not deserve its mandate. This feeling that political authority is fundamentally illegitimate seems to be gaining ground, and it arguably fuels the increasing propensity to resort to violence.

The mixture of growing economic despair (created by deteriorating economic conditions) and rising alienation from the political system (fueled by electoral fraud, ruling party arrogance, and the complicity of most opposition elites) is potentially explosive. Demonstrations and random acts of violence are becoming routine. Exacerbating this situation is the fact that traditional channels of mediation and dialogue appear to be breaking down, in part as a result of rapid socioeconomic changes and the emergence of an increasingly complex, differentiated society. As Senegal's society continues to modernize, the old clientelist, village-based, and religious networks that used to provide mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution can no longer be relied upon to ensure sociopolitical stability. In this context, it is imperative to restore the legitimacy of political leadership, and this cannot be done in the absence of a more transparent electoral system.

The issue of the organization and conduct of elections is of course a sensitive one. Clearly, the Government of Senegal (GOS) would not welcome donor initiatives in this area. For their part, donors have repeatedly invoked the sensitivity argument to justify their unwillingness to tackle the question. This is usually accompanied with expressions of skepticism that pressures on the GOS would be effective.

This assessment reaches somewhat different conclusions. First, leaving the electoral question unaddressed is tantamount to refusing to deal with the key issue from a D/G perspective. Second, it may be that donors underestimate their influence over the GOS. It is worth remembering that donor pressures were decisive in prompting the GOS to adopt a structural adjustment program in the early 1980s. Since then, there would have been little additional progress in the area of economic liberalization without donor conditionality and dialogue with the GOS. One needs only remember steps which, only fifteen years ago, many felt that the GOS would never undertake: the liberalization of the rice sector, the privatization of state-owned enterprises, and the end to the preferential treatment that the GOS had long granted to selected

private enterprises. That the GOS did eventually act on all these fronts was largely a result of sustained donor pressure. And the changes brought about by donor pressures have been critical to the intensification of domestic lobbying for market-oriented reforms, in particular by UNACOIS. One should keep in mind this recent experience when invoking the "impossibility" of exercising any real leverage over the electoral issue. One should also remember that the reform of the Electoral Code adopted in February 1992 incorporated most of the concerns that had been identified in a 1991 report by the National Democratic Institute.

In light of the previous observations, this assessment suggests that the following steps be considered:

1. Within the context of its assistance to decentralization, the mission might pay particular attention to the strengthening of mechanisms and institutions that can contribute to:
 - (a) an enhanced capacity to monitor local elections and publicize abuses, and
 - (b) an increased propensity by populations to register and vote during local elections.

Possible activities in these areas should be discussed and coordinated with the other major donors involved in supporting decentralization. Other potential partners of USAID in this field include (a) the Organisation Nationale des Droits de l'Homme (ONDH), which has established regional leagues (in the regions of Thies, Ziguinchor, Saint Louis, Diourbel, and Tamba) to engage in civic awareness programs, and (b) the African Institute for Democracy, the "Media and Democracy" program of which might help improve coverage of local electoral processes (including by independent radio stations, which in the November 1996 local and regional elections were instrumental in reporting irregularities).

2. USAID/Dakar might also contribute to the financing of activities (workshop, conferences, etc.) that can indirectly step up pressure on the regime to make the conduct and organization of elections (both national and local) more transparent.

3. The mission might wish to initiate with other donors a discreet dialogue over what might be done, in a concerted fashion, to ensure more transparent electoral processes.

Recommendations in The Institutions of Governance Area

There are three potential targets of assistance in the institutions of governance area:

- (a) Oversight agencies within the executive branch,
- (b) The legislature,
- (c) Local government institutions and processes.

Executive Branch Transparency and Accountability

The lack of transparency and accountability within the executive branch is a major problem, which constantly erodes the legitimacy of the state. Nevertheless, it is not clear that USAID ought to work in this area, for three main reasons:

First, the assessment suggests that, as a general rule, USAID should refrain from targeting central government institutions for D/G assistance. One can be skeptical about the existence, at the apex of the political system, of a genuine will to see the executive bureaucracy operate with greater transparency and accountability. Moreover, donors have little control over aid that targets central bureaucracy agencies. Over the years, the regime has demonstrated remarkable skills at diverting such aid away from what it is intended to achieve.

Second, there already exists in Senegal a plethora of executive branch agencies that are designed to improve transparency and accountability, including:

- a. The Ministry for the Modernization of the State (the official responsibility of which is to make public administration more effective),
- b. The *Commission de Verification des Comptes de l'Etat et des Entreprises Publiques* (State Administration and Public Enterprises Audit Commission), which is currently attached to the *Conseil d'Etat* (Council of State), but which the regime is actively considering turning into a full-fledged *Court des Comptes* (Audit Commission), on the French model
- c. The *Bureau Organisation et Methodes*, which is directly attached to the President's Office, and is in charge of increasing performance within the public administration. By all accounts, its own performance to-date has been far from stellar.

Despite the presence of such agencies, there has been no clear trend toward greater transparency within the executive bureaucracy. One can doubt that USAID investments in this area would yield significant returns -- the political context in which these institutions operate being what it is.

Third and finally, other donors who have a comparative advantage in this area -- most notably the French -- are already heavily involved in strengthening mechanisms to create greater transparency within the bureaucracy, and they are doing so at the request of the Senegalese authorities.

The Role of the Legislature

The assessment has shown that the National Assembly (NA) does not yet play a significant and autonomous role in the political process. In terms of both institutional capacity and political influence, Senegal's legislature lags far behind those of countries located at a similar level of political development. Because of its lack of power, the NA has not yet developed into a focus of lobbying by interest groups.

This assessment does not suggest that assistance to parliament be made a focus of D/C activities in Senegal. The fundamental reason for this conclusion is that as long as the regime does not display the political will required to turn the NA into a more influential, representative, and visible political arena, there is little donors can do to bring this change about.

Still, USAID/Dakar might do well to consider limited, low cost activities directed at parliament, if only to "preposition" the mission for the time when the NA will assert its constitutionally-mandated prerogatives (which, as shown earlier, are very significant). There will be no significant progress toward democracy in Senegal as long as the legislature does not exercise greater oversight over the executive branch, and does not operate as a more influential body in debating and hammering out compromises over policy alternatives. Similarly, it is hard to see how the legitimacy of Senegal's political system might be significantly enhanced as long as the institutional credibility of the NA remains as low as it is. That few donors are significantly involved in legislative development assistance reflects widespread skepticism regarding the NA's current political role. However, it may also give USAID a comparative advantage in initiating activities aimed at parliament. The mission might wish to consider the following:

1. Strengthen lines of communication with parliament. Continue, as the mission has already been doing, to associate Deputies (from all parliamentary groups) to the workshops and conferences organized by USAID/Dakar.

2. Initiate or expand activities which might strengthen the NA's ties to the media, research institutes, universities, lobbies, etc. It is imperative that the Senegalese legislature overcome its current isolation, and that it develop its interface with civil society organizations in particular. As long as the NA appears to be functioning in a vacuum, and projects the image of an institution that has few organic ties to its environment, it will continue to suffer from a serious credibility gap.

3. Explore the possibility of funding regular briefings of parliamentarians and their staff on specific issues (ideally prior to the vote on such issues by the NA), using in-country expertise. Such activities would increase the skills of deputies and their staff, and enable them to develop a better grasp of issues before taking position. They also would foster ties between the NA and universities, research centers, and associations. Some parliamentarians have called for this type of enhanced connections to civil society institutions. The caucus of parliamentarian women, for instance, has expressed the desire to be better informed about the current legal status of women, and about possible ways to improve both the legislation on women's rights and the implementation of existing laws. In this context, USAID/Dakar might also assist in the strengthening of linkages between the caucus of women parliamentarians and organizations such as the Senegalese Council of Women (*Conseil Senegalais des Femmes*, or COSEF) and the Congad.

Before engaging in any legislative development assistance activity, USAID/Dakar might wish to discuss possible interventions with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the African Institute for Democracy, which have experience in this field, both in Senegal and in the West Africa region.

Local Government

Support for decentralization is one of USAID/Dakar's two proposed Strategic Objectives for the period 1998-2006. Similarly, all major donors in Senegal (the French Government, the European Union, the World Bank, the United Nations, the Canadian Agency for International Development, and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation) are either already assisting in Senegal's decentralization program, or will soon undertake activities in this area. Decentralization-support projects will be a major component of the portfolio of every leading donor in Senegal in the coming decade.

From a D/G perspective, the three key questions raised by Senegal's on-going decentralization process are:

- 1 To what extent can support for decentralization translate into progress toward greater democracy and good governance?
- 2 Within the overall framework of decentralization, what kinds of foci and activities might maximize the impact of decentralization on democracy?
- 3 Considering that other donors have already made decentralization a priority of their action in Senegal, what is USAID's comparative advantage in this area? Which activities by USAID would best complement the programs of other donors?

Decentralization and Democratization

Three main arguments can be invoked in favor of making support for decentralization a key D/G objective:

First, decentralization in Senegal is an on-going process, and it is much easier to support a process already in the making than to try to create momentum in other areas.

Second, considering -- as this assessment showed -- that there is not much political will and/or capacity to promote genuine reforms at the center of the political system, it might be easier to achieve progress by working at the local government level.

Third, working at the local level should make it easier for assistance to benefit the populations themselves, instead of being siphoned off by Dakar's political elites.

Still, in thinking about the extent to which decentralization can result in greater democracy, one must also consider the following constraints and lessons from the past. For one, decentralization in Senegal is a process that has been going on since 1972. The consensus among those interviewed by the author is that, so far, this process has not improved governance at the local level. It has not broadened political participation. And it has not translated into greater transparency of the policy process, or into greater accountability of locally elected officials. Misgovernance, corruption, and the isolation of the elite from its constituents appear to be as pronounced at the local level as they are at the national level.

Senegal is certainly not unique in this respect. The experience of the decentralization programs which international agencies have supported over the past decade in developing countries shows that rarely do such programs translate into greater political participation and more effective management of public resources. For decentralization to materialize in a democratization of political life and better governance, the required institutional mechanisms must be put in place. It may be on ensuring that this prerequisite is met that USAID/Dakar might wish to focus its efforts.

In the specific case of Senegal, there are certainly many other good reasons to believe that trying to harness the decentralization process to create greater democracy at the grassroots level will be an uphill battle. The overwhelming victory of the PS in the November 1996 local and regional elections means that the ruling party exercises near hegemony over local government institutions. Meanwhile the increased prerogatives and status of these institutions has potentially strengthened the capacity of the regime to exercise control over local populations. It may also be the case that the primary factor in prompting the regime to push for the 1996 decentralization law was less a desire to empower local communities than an attempt to achieve two goals:

a Create hundreds of new government positions (through the regional assemblies and the *maires d'arrondissement*) for PS elites who failed to qualify to represent their party in national elections. In this respect, decentralization becomes a way to heal intra-party wounds by creating consolation prizes for aspiring PS elites.

b Capture donor funds, by presenting decentralization as a breakthrough toward democracy and good governance. By relying on donors to provide regions, municipalities, and rural councils with the financing they need to engage in local development projects and deliver public services, the central government can rid itself of financial burdens it is no longer able to shoulder.

Fortunately, there is nothing inevitable about the lack of democracy- and governance-enhancing effects of decentralization programs. Project failures in this area often stem from insufficient attention to the need for mechanisms that will increase public scrutiny of local officials. Without the establishment or strengthening of such mechanisms, decentralization can actually result in a reduction of autonomous political space for local populations. The reason for this is as follows. As long as local government institutions have limited prerogatives and status, they also have little appeal to political elites. But when the visibility and influence of local government positions increase as a result of decentralization, political elites begin to see control over regional councils and municipalities as a stepping stone to national influence. Therefore, the attractiveness of local government positions increases, particularly for elites that have not yet been able to "make it" at the national level, but are trying to position themselves for the next legislative elections. And as national elites become more involved in local and regional politics, the corruption and rent-seeking behavior that has plagued national politics may become more prevalent at the local and regional levels as well. Furthermore, the enhanced prerogatives of local and regional government institutions may allow the political elites that control these institutions to establish tighter control over community-based associations, and divert to their benefit the resources that these associations (e.g., the *poste de sante*) sometimes control. To

prevent such an outcome the population's capacity to monitor local officials and force them to account for their actions must be increased

The Search for Comparative Advantage

As shown earlier, all the major donors in Senegal will be heavily involved in the decentralization area in the years to come. This calls for USAID to continue to coordinate very closely with these other donors, on a regular basis. It is important that donors do not concentrate on the same regions, municipalities, and rural councils, but that the benefits of their assistance be as widely distributed as possible.

The assessment showed that, in the decentralization area, most donors will focus on two types of activities:

- (a) Local government capacity-building (especially training of officials and staff, to better enable them to discharge their new prerogatives),
- (b) providing communes and regions with the financial resources that they need to engage in economic development activities, and to compensate for the lack of funds provided by the central government.

Considering both the number of donors who will be involved in these two types of activities, and the scope of the resources that they will devote to these activities, there does not appear to be a crying need for additional funding in these areas. In light of the number of international agencies that have already decided to engage in technical assistance, training, and the supply of funds to regions, municipalities, and rural councils, the most pressing need from a local government perspective should not lie in the strengthening of the financial and technical capacity of institutions of local government. Technical and financial capacity are likely to be adequate, at least to begin with, that, however, is unlikely to be the case for political oversight mechanisms. Accordingly, in order not to duplicate what other donors are doing, and to maximize the ability of the decentralization process to translate into greater democracy, the assessment recommends that USAID/Dakar consider the following emphasis within its support for decentralization:

1 Create or strengthen the mechanisms and institutions that will make local officials more accountable, and local government practices more transparent.

2 Facilitate partnerships between local government institutions and grassroots associations and NGOs.

Increasing Accountability and Transparency

That is absolutely essential if one is to ensure that the upgrading of the institutional capacity of local government institutions by other donors will translate (which, in the present conditions, appears very unlikely) into more effective governance and greater democracy. The objective should be to strengthen the capacity of grassroots communities to exercise effective, careful, and sustained scrutiny of locally-elected officials and their staff.

After all, from a D/G perspective, the rationale for supporting decentralization is that locally elected officials will be more concerned with effective management of public resources and more responsive to their constituents' needs. But for that to take place, the mechanisms that will ensure public monitoring of the performance and behavior of local and regional officials must exist. Populations must be reasonably well-informed to be able to sanction mismanagement, corruption, and local governing elites that operate in disdainful isolation from their constituents (as is often the case, even in the wake of the implementation of decentralization programs). Unless there is greater accountability of local officials, and greater transparency of government practices at the level of rural councils, municipalities, and regions, there is a real danger that the funds which donors will pour into local and regional government councils will simply be wasted and/or siphoned off by the elite (just as they have, to a large extent, at the national level).

In short, the core challenge, from a D/G perspective, is to make sure that decentralization will not result in the reproduction, at the local level, of the kinds of "dysfunctions" that already exist at the central level: rent-seeking behavior, nepotism, corruption, plundering of public resources by officials, complicity between supposedly rival political elites, and lack of democracy and transparency in decision-making processes. It is absolutely essential to raise the costs for local and regional elites to engage in such practices. To do so, donors should help create and nurture an environment conducive to constant and close public monitoring of the behavior and performance of government officials, and of the policy process at the local and regional levels. Over time, the establishment of an "environment of public scrutiny" at the local level might have beneficial consequences on the national level as well. Once individuals and communities become used to monitoring the actions of local officials, they will be more likely to extend such scrutiny to national figures and central government institutions as well.

In terms of how this recommendation might be integrated into the mission's proposed strategy, the following observations can be made. For 1998-2006, USAID/Dakar Strategic Objective entitled "Effective and Sustainable Decentralization in Targeted Regions" revolves around four key Intermediate Results (IRs)

- a Increased Local Level Technical and Management Capacity (IR-1)
- b Effective Implementation of Transferred State Authorities in the Health, Population, and Nutrition sectors, and in the Agriculture/Natural Resources Management area (IR-2)
- c Increased Access to and Mobilization of Financial Resources (IR-3)
- d Increased Popular Participation in Decision-making Processes (IR-4)

This assessment suggests that the mission might consider downplaying IR-1 and IR-3, which are, or will be, the focus of many other donors' assistance programs in the decentralization area. Instead, a new IR-5 might be created, the focus of which would be to increase the transparency of local government management and the accountability of local officials and their staff. As it is currently formulated, the mission's Decentralization Strategic Objective does not appear to give enough weight to the twin issues of transparency and accountability, which this assessment

identified as both central to the success of the decentralization program from a D/G perspective, and as areas in which other donors have not already invested significantly. Integrating the transparency and accountability goals into the various projects implemented by the mission is not enough. These goals should be the focus of separate, stand-alone activities by the mission.

To facilitate enhanced public scrutiny of local officials, USAID/Dakar might consider the following activities:

a. Integrate civic education programs into USAID's existing activities with community-based groups. These programs should stress the importance of voting and the ability of individual citizens and communities to make a difference in the way local government operates. An effective, experienced partner in this area might be the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

b. Assist in the development and professionalization of local media capable of providing critical coverage of local electoral processes, the functioning of local government institutions, and the behavior of locally-elected officials. Identify other civil society organizations that might contribute to the dissemination of information about local government performance. Discuss possible interventions in this area with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the African Institute for Democracy, which are in the process of developing related activities.

c. Support carefully selected local advocacy groups engaged in oversight of local government practices and voter awareness campaigns. The International Foundation for Elections Systems (IFES) mission sent to assess the November 1996 elections made it very clear in its report that voters had not been properly and adequately informed about the mechanics of voting. It stated that the blame for this should go not only to the Ministry of the Interior (which by law is responsible for performing this function) but also to local NGOs and media, which could have been more active and effective in this area. The report noted specifically that the PS engaged in a massive effort to make sure that its supporters would vote, and it speculated that the Ministry of the Interior might have deliberately refrained from engaging in a strong voter awareness and public information campaign in order to give the PS an edge over the other parties. It is important to make sure that this situation is not repeated by the time the next local and regional elections come around (2001).

d. Among both advocacy and service-oriented local NGOs, identify and provide assistance to women's associations that seem most likely to create progress in the following areas:

- The involvement of women in the political process,
- The assumption of leadership roles by women in local government institutions,
- The lobbying of local government institutions to bring about greater gender equality and more effective implementation of the legislation pertaining to women's rights,

Since women's groups constitute one of the most dynamic and capable segments of civil society, Senegal provides an environment that is particularly conducive to the kinds of actions envisioned here. One should also note that the number of women represented in rural and municipal councils jumped significantly in the last local elections. USAID/Dakar might wish to make support for this trend a key objective of its action in the decentralization area.

Finally, increasing the capacity of communities to monitor local officials should also contribute to the mission's second proposed Strategic Objective (promotion of the private sector). Small and medium entrepreneurs at the local and regional levels need to make sure that municipalities and rural councils will not grant unfair advantages to certain economic actors, while denying them to others, on the basis of clientelistic and partisan considerations. Private economic actors who are interested in creating a more level-playing field should welcome the strengthening of oversight mechanisms of local government.

Facilitating partnerships between grassroots associations and local government institutions

The assessment has identified the widening gap between state and society, between *le pays legal* and *le pays réel*, as the central political problem in Senegal today. The state is increasingly seen as a predatory superstructure that has no organic links to society. Interactions between the government and the population are widely perceived as a zero-sum game. This is why society is deliberately trying to escape the reach of the state, while the latter no less relentlessly seeks to establish control over society. As noted in Section One, it is imperative to restore a degree of trust and positive interaction between the state and the population.

The best place to initiate this process might be at the local level, by working toward local government - NGOs and associations partnerships on issues of interest to the community. When interviewing donors, this writer heard little about such projects. Therefore, USAID might be able to develop a comparative advantage in this field as well. Yet, that will not be an easy goal to achieve, considering the extent of the distrust that pervades state-society relations, and the reluctance of civil society organizations to become involved with government institutions. This explains why there are so few examples in Senegal of meaningful, institutionalized cooperation between municipal councils and local associations for the delivery of public services. This is where nudging and encouragement by USAID might make a difference. Decentralization provides a unique opportunity for state and society to invent new, more productive and mutually beneficial ways of relating to each other. Progressively, attitudes might be changed, and a new political culture might develop that will reverse the zero-sum game mentality that is so inimical to the development of democratic practices. These attitudes cannot be changed through interventions that target central government institutions or national associations, but they might be altered at the local level. Local-level changes, in turn, might progressively filter up to the national arena.

Finally, the focus of USAID/Dakar's support for decentralization should be on the local, as opposed to the regional, level. The region is probably too large and diverse an entity for the democracy- and governance-related benefits expected of decentralization to manifest themselves. The smaller the community, the more likely it is that actors involved in development initiatives will display a degree of mutual trust as well as common values and norms. In addition, individuals living in a village or urban neighborhood are more frequently interconnected by cross-cutting social networks than is the case for individuals living in a region. Finally, the gap between local government elites and the population should be less wide at the local than at the regional level.

The local environment therefore appears to be far more conducive to the kinds of local government-local NGOs/associations partnerships envisioned in this section than is likely to be the case at the regional level. Still, even in the rural communities that will be targeted, substantial efforts should be devoted to community-building, considering the artificial way in which the boundaries of most rural communes were originally drawn.

Recommendations in the Civil Society Area

This assessment showed that civil society has experienced spectacular growth since the mid-1980s. Overall, most components of civil society seem to be doing rather well on their own, or with the assistance of other donors. Therefore, USAID's assistance in this area should be carefully calibrated, in order not to be redundant.

In general, this assessment concludes that support for civil society should be carried out in a manner that complements the mission's proposed Decentralization Strategic Objective, and that it should focus on increasing transparency of local elections and local government management, as well as accountability of local officials. Possible activities in this area have already been discussed above. To summarize, they include:

- 1 Support for local and regional independent medias capable of improving reporting on local elections, local government performance, and the behavior of local officials
- 2 Integrating civic education programs into USAID projects that involve community-based groups
- 3 Support for local advocacy groups that stress voter awareness and the monitoring of local government institutions
- 4 Support for service-oriented NGOs capable of engaging in partnerships with local government institutions. The specific areas in which these NGOs are active will vary depending on the particular needs of the municipality or rural commune involved.

A frequent target for intervention in the civil society area is support for political parties and trade unions. This assessment, however, suggests that initiatives in this field are not appropriate. It would be diplomatically impossible to support parties without providing part of that assistance to the *Parti Socialiste* -- something that is hardly needed from the perspective of democracy-building. One can even question the extent to which providing assistance to the PDS and other "opposition" parties currently represented in government would be productive from a D/G perspective. At this particular historical juncture, Senegal's political parties do not operate as important vehicles to broaden participation and make the elite more accountable. Furthermore, interventions at the level of political parties might be too sensitive to implement. Similar considerations apply to trade unions and professional syndicates, several of which in any event are being assisted by other donors (especially the Friedrich Ebert Foundation).

CONCLUSION

The general conclusion which this assessment reaches is that the range of possible democracy-supporting activities in Senegal is not particularly broad. Nevertheless, initiatives in the D/G area are very much needed to support USAID/Dakar's programs in other sectors. Real and sustainable progress cannot be achieved -- including in the mission's two proposed strategic objectives for the 1998-2006 period -- without greater diffusion of political power, broadened political participation, increased transparency of the policymaking process, and greater accountability of government officials.

The assessment therefore suggests that the mission consider making D/G activities a more explicit component of its portfolio, perhaps as a Special Objective. Many of the activities that might be considered under this special objective can easily be reconciled with the mission's two SOs (Decentralization and Private Sector Promotion). A D/G emphasis, however, might help USAID/Dakar give its decentralization objective greater focus and distinctiveness relative to the actions of other donors in the decentralization area. The recommendation is not to have a D/G Special Objective that is de-linked from other parts of the Mission's strategy, but rather to address D/G aspects more explicitly than seems to be the case at present within the context of the two new SOs selected by the mission.

APPENDIX
PERSONS INTERVIEWED
(OUTSIDE OF USAID/DAKAR)

US Embassy

James Ledesma, Deputy Chief of Mission

David Wagner, Political Officer

USIS

Khalil Gueye, Information Specialist

Donors

Cadman Atta Mills, Representative, World Bank

Clemens H F Rode, Head Representative, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Jacques Bugnicourt, Director and Founder, Enda ("Environment, development, action")

Mr Jean-Jacques Guibert, Enda

Mr Biram Owens Ndiaye, Canadian Agency for International Development (Agence Canadienne de Developpement International)

Mr Gilles Desesquelles, Administrator and Economic Adviser, European Union (Delegation of the European Commission in Senegal)

Ms Louise Avon, Chief of the French Mission of Cooperation and Cultural Action

Mr Eric Lamouroux, French Embassy

Ms Desmidt, Embassy of the Netherlands

Ms Assitan Thioune, United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

Civil Society

Maître Sidiki Kaba Avocat Président de l'Organisation nationale des droits de l'homme du Senegal

Mr Abdou Salam Fall, President, CONGAD (Conseil des organisation non-gouvernementale d'appui au developpement)

Mr Malamine Savane, Secetaire General, CONGAD

Mme Deme Ouleye Demba, Administrateur, Rencontre africaine pour la defense des droits de l'homme (RADDHO)

Mr Djibril Gueye, Reseau ANAFA-Senegal

Aissata De, Researcher, African Institute for Democracy

Babacar Sine, Coordinator, African Institute for Democracy (Mr Sine is also a member of the *Bureau Politique* of the PS, the ruling party's highest policymaking body)

Mireille Eza, Head of the Training and Internships Division, African Institute for Democracy

El Hadj Mbodj, Director, Institutc for Human Rights and Peace (Institut des Droits de l'Homme et de la Paix, Faculte des Sciences Juridiques et Politiques)

Presse and Media

Vicux Savane, Editor-in-Chief Groupe Sud

Sidi Lamine Niasse, Director, Wal-Fadjiri

Mr Laye Bamba Diallo, Editor-in-Chief Le Nouvel Horizon

Government of Senegal

Mr Raoul Ndiaye, Ministry of Interior

Ms Maty Cisse-Samb, Ministry of Health, Decentralization division

Opposition Parties

Mr Landing Savane, And-Jef