SENEGAL'S FOREIGN POLICY: CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRATIZATION AND MARGINALIZATION

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(WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF NEFERTITI GAYE)

ABSTRACT
The analysis demonstrates that classic dependency, Cold War, and personal rule-oriented explanations of Senegalese foreign policy constitute at best, exaggerations, and at worst, mere caricatures of more complex and dynamic foreign policy processes. Even during the Cold War era, Senegal's foreign policy could not be explained by mere reference to the foreign policy actions of the superpowers, or by the personal beliefs of the first two Senegalese presidents, Léopold Sédar Senghor (1960–80) and Abdou Diouf (1981–present). Other, often neglected or downplayed factors, such as religion, regional interests, and traditional culture must be examined if one wishes to achieve a more complex, nuanced, and valid understanding of Senegalese foreign policy. One can moreover argue that these and other factors are even more salient in a post-Cold War era in which Senegalese policy makers are confronted with the twin challenges of responding to rising popular demands for the further democratization of the Senegalese political system, and to the dilemma of growing marginalization within an increasingly competitive international system.

In the early 1960s, Senegalese Foreign Minister Doudou Thiam wrote one of the first scholarly books on African foreign policy in which he expressed the hope that African policymakers could avoid involvement in the ‘intense ideological conflict’ between the former Soviet Union and the United States.\(^1\) He also questioned whether several cherished foreign policy goals—pan-Africanism, African cultural consciousness, African socialism, and neutralism—would remain unfulfilled due to what he perceived as the institutional shortcomings of African foreign policy establishments: the lack of a foreign policy tradition within the newly independent states; largely untested, imported foreign policy structures; and, perhaps most important, the lack of a democratic culture capable of serving as a counterweight to the ‘personal idiosyncrasies’ of individual

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leaders. Thiam’s book served as the precursor of a body of literature that all too often sought to explain the formulation and implementation of African foreign policies by focusing on one of three sets of narrowly defined arguments: the continuation of ‘dependency’ relationships between the newly independent African states and their former colonial powers; the positions of African states within the larger geopolitical setting of the Cold War struggle; or the overriding importance of the personal whims of authoritarian African leaders—the so-called ‘big man’ theory of foreign policy.

The following analysis of Senegalese foreign policy demonstrates that these classic dependency, Cold War, and personal rule-oriented explanations constituted at best, exaggerations, and at worst, mere caricatures of more complex and dynamic foreign policy processes. Even during the Cold War era, Senegal’s foreign policy could not be explained by mere reference to the foreign policy actions of the superpowers, or by the personal beliefs of the first two Senegalese presidents, Léopold Sédar Senghor (1960–80) and Abdou Diouf (1981–present). Other often neglected or downplayed factors, such as religion, regional interests, and traditional culture, must be examined if one wishes to achieve a more complex, nuanced, and valid understanding of Senegalese foreign policy. One can, moreover, argue that these and other factors are even more salient in a post-Cold War era in which Senegalese policymakers are confronted with the twin challenges of responding to rising popular demands for the further democratization of the Senegalese political system, and to the dilemma of growing marginalization within an increasingly competitive international system.

The remainder of this article is divided into five sections. The first section outlines the variety of factors one must take into account when analyzing Senegalese foreign policy. Section two describes continuity and

2. Thiam, La politique étrangère, pp. 2, 116.
change in Senegalese foreign policy principles. Section three describes the evolution of changes in decision-making structures and processes. Section four analyzes the evolving nature of Senegalese foreign policy toward specific groups of countries. A concluding section considers the implications of democratization and marginalization for our understanding of African foreign policy in the post-Cold War era.

Origins of Senegalese foreign policy

Several factors are important to understanding the context of the formulation and implementation of Senegalese foreign policy. First, Senegal is a former French colony which has maintained strong links with the former metropole. The resilience of this cultural factor is demonstrated by the recognition of French in the Senegalese constitution as the 'official language' of all government activity, and the self-classification of the Senegalese elite as belonging to a greater French-speaking community (la francophonie) whose cultural centre is France. Consider, for example, the extreme but telling example of former President Senghor: revered by Senegalese as one of the 'Founding Fathers' of an independent Senegal but sometimes chided as being 'more French than Senegalese', Senghor married a French woman (his second wife), retired to a home in Versoix, France, and carries the distinction of being the only African inducted into France's highly prestigious and selective Académie Française, the national guardian of the purity of the French language. Although the once privileged status of French is gradually being eroded by a 'national languages' movement intent upon making indigenous languages more integral to government business (e.g. should members of the National Assembly be allowed to give speeches in their local languages?), as well as by the increasing numbers of elite children who are learning English as a second language in Senegal and at universities abroad, the commitment of the French elite to la francophonie remains very strong.

The French connection is also important as concerns the ideological context of Senegalese foreign policy. As succinctly noted by Sheldon Gellar, a prominent observer of Senegalese politics and international relations, it is 'difficult' to understand Senegalese politics 'without some appreciation of the influence of the French left on Senegalese intellectuals particularly during the postwar era (1945–1960)' when most of the Senegalese elite attended school in France and adopted various forms of socialism as their guiding philosophies. During the Senghor years, an

5. Stated in Article 1 of the constitution. Six languages—Diola, Malinke, Pulaar, Serer, Soninke, and Wolof—are recognized in the same article as 'national' languages.


African socialism derivative of the French experience, and described by Foreign Minister Doudou Thiam as the ‘middle way’ between Soviet Marxism and American liberalism, served as one of the cornerstones of Senegalese foreign policy. Although adopting classic elements of liberalism, such as reducing the role of the state and enhancing the role of the private sector, in their quest to restructure the Senegalese economy during the 1980s and the 1990s, President Diouf and his principal advisors nonetheless remain the standard bearers of the ruling Parti Socialiste (PS) and continue to maintain Senegal’s privileged ties within the Socialist International.

A third factor—a profoundly nationalist spirit that seeks to make Senegal an influential regional foreign policy actor—is fuelled by at least two traditions: the once privileged place of Senegal within French colonial Africa and a vibrant traditional culture. What in essence constitutes a sense of regional superiority (e.g. the elite argues that Senegalese French is the ‘purest’ of francophone Africa) is first explained by the fact that the northern town of St. Louis, and subsequently the current capital of Dakar, served as the cultural and politico-military centre of Afrique Occidentale Française (AOF—French West Africa), the colonial unit which grouped together the currently independent nations of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. Indeed, the Senegalese perception of their country as a regional power, especially within the realm of regional integration, occasionally has irritated politicians and other elites in neighbouring states—especially Côte d’Ivoire.

Of even greater importance to understanding Senegalese aspirations to regional leadership is the fact that the physical location of the AOF capital and the current Republic of Senegal were built upon an extremely vibrant series of Wolof kingdoms that were expanding and incorporating less powerful local ethnic groups in a quest for regional hegemony. The ongoing ‘Wolofization’ of Senegalese society is underscored by 1988 census results: whereas the Wolof ethnic group comprises roughly 44 percent of the population, 71 percent of the overall population speaks Wolof as either

9. For example, see the special issue of Le Débat (26 February 1996), a Senegalese weekly newspaper, devoted to coverage of the 1996 visit to Senegal of Pierre Mauroy, the president of Socialist International.
10. During 16–30 June 1995, for example, the Senegalese government organized a major international conference, ‘L’ AOF: de la Création à la Balkanisation (1895–1960)’ (‘AOF: From Creation to Balkanization (1895–1960)’), that heralded the 100-year anniversary of the creation of the AOF. See also Joseph Roger de Benoist, L’Afrique Occidentale Française de la Conférence de Brazzaville (1944) à l’indépendance (1960) (Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines, Dakar, 1982).
their first or second language. It is precisely for this reason that, unlike the majority of African countries, ethnicity has not become a divisive factor in national politics, with the vast majority of Senegalese firmly embracing a ‘Senegalese’ national identity. Two significant exceptions to this trend discussed below are a guerrilla insurgency largely led by the Diola ethnic group that since 1982 has sought independence for Senegal’s southern Casamance region, and the bloody urban attacks against peoples of Mauritanian descent during the 1989 border conflict between Mauritania and Senegal.

Regional aspirations have been dampened, however, by a poor resource base and an economy marked by ‘stagnation and decline’. Despite well-intentioned efforts to diversify and modernize an economy heavily dependent on primary exports, most notably the groundnut trade which was the mainstay of the colonial economy, the net result has been a decline in real per capita income since independence. Even ‘after fifteen years of structural adjustment programs’, notes Gellar, ‘Senegal in the mid-1990s is still facing an uphill economic battle saddled by foreign debt, chronic government deficits, a poorly functioning banking system, and high unemployment rates, particularly among high school and college graduates’.

High unemployment rates among a rising urban population constitute one of the driving forces behind sometimes violent confrontations between government forces and heavily politicized student groups and workers unions. As captured by a film, La Génération Sacrifiée?, co-produced in 1995 by a Senegalese and an American film-maker, rising numbers of increasingly educated yet discouraged Senegalese youth are entering a job market that, in their eyes, offers them nothing but positions as street vendors and maids and cooks. The concept of a ‘sacrificed generation’ has become especially poignant in the aftermath of France’s decision in 1994 to unilaterally impose a 50 percent devaluation on the common currency (CFA franc) shared by Senegal and other members of the CFA Franc Zone, the net result of which was a 50 percent decline in the purchasing power of an already economically marginalized population. ‘It is a testament to the resilience of Senegalese culture, extended family relationships, and the strength of religious values, especially those of Islam’, explained a diplomat associated with the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1996, ‘that Senegalese society has been able to cope with

severe economic marginalization that has led other African countries such as Rwanda and Somalia to descend into political chaos and armed violence'. 17

The allusion to religious values in the previous statement is characteristic of the important and growing role of Islam in Senegalese domestic and international politics. 18 Senegalese policymakers are especially attentive to the concerns of the Islamic brotherhoods, the religious leaders of which—known as marabouts—are capable of mobilizing the Muslim faithful (approximately 94 per cent of the population) through an intricate series of patron-client ties in which thousands of lesser marabouts declare their allegiance to more senior leaders. 19 Two Muslim brotherhoods—the Mourides and the Tijaniyya based in the holy cities of Touba and Tivaouane, respectively—are especially powerful, and claim the allegiance of approximately two-thirds of the Senegalese faithful.

The power of the marabouts is derivative of the population’s belief in the spiritual and often magical powers of their personal religious guides (e.g. one can go to a marabout to seek gris-gris (amulets) providing protection from potential enemies). Most important, the marabouts enjoy almost complete financial autonomy from state control due to a highly complex system of alms collection by taalibe (disciples) who, depending on the charisma and power of the particular marabout in question, are capable of channelling enormous amounts of money into a designated cause. The marabouts therefore are capable of mobilizing a potent reaction to undesired state policies with little or any fear of state retribution. A dramatic case in point occurred in the mid-1980s when the Diouf administration was forced to withdraw an invitation to Pope John Paul II to visit the country due to the threats of leading marabouts to call upon their taalibe to occupy the runways at the international airport. Although the Pope was subsequently re-invited and visited Senegal several years later in 1991 to the wide acclaim of both Muslims and Christians, the marabouts had clearly served notice that sensitive issues had to be raised with them in advance if the Diouf administration wished to avoid embarrassing public confrontations.

A final important factor of the domestic environment which influences foreign policy stems from the fact that Senegal has enjoyed over 35 years of uninterrupted democratic rule. Whereas specialists rightfully underscore the imperfect nature of this democracy—e.g. a highly centralized presidential system has ensured the victory of the ruling PS party throughout the independence era—they equally underscore its special enduring character on a continent in which almost every country has experienced at least one

17. Personal interview.
military coup d'état. As succinctly noted by Leonardo A. Villalón, a specialist on Islam and democracy in Senegal, the sincere commitment of Senegalese policy makers to democratic principles 'has at the very least ensured that Senegalese society has never been subjected to the repression, exploitation, arbitrariness, or indeed terror at the hands of the state known by all too many of its neighbours'.

Continuity and change in foreign policy principles

A strong sense of the interconnectedness between domestic and foreign policies has been a hallmark of the Senegalese foreign policy establishment since independence. Writing from the perspective of the 1960s, Foreign Minister Doudou Thiam underscored that attempts at disengaging foreign from domestic policies was simply a matter of 'practical convenience', with each constituting 'two scales in the same balance, two aspects of the same indivisible reality'. More than 25 years later, Minister of Presidential Services and Affairs Ousmane Tanor Dieng, one of President Diouf's closest advisors, cited the momentous changes occurring in the international system in 1989 to reaffirm the necessity of understanding the interplay between domestic and international factors in the realm of foreign policy.

The statements of Thiam and Dieng suggest that any understanding of continuity and change in Senegalese foreign policy must be informed by domestic and international factors. Although policy changes have definitely occurred in the 36 years since independence, they have largely constituted gradual shifts in emphasis rather than radical breaks with the past. This tendency toward continuity or at best gradual change is primarily due to the relatively stable nature of Senegal's political system in which Senghor's dauphin (chosen successor) peacefully assumed power in 1981 when Senghor voluntarily retired from the political scene.

Four sets of principles or policy orientations are essential to a comprehensive understanding of Senegalese foreign policy. The first principle—promotion of la francophonie—is derivative of the colonial heritage and Senegal's unique standing within the francophone world. Originally conceived by Senghor as part of a wider, 'culturally' informed foreign policy that embraced the promotion of négritude (the celebration of the

23. Ousmane Tanor Dieng, 'Exposé sur la Politique Extérieure du Sénégal', speech delivered on 15 September 1989 to a meeting of PS members (text provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
uniqueness of black African culture), this principle led in 1966 to Senegal hosting the first meeting on African soil of the World Festival of Negro Arts, as well as Senghor’s personal involvement in the launching of what eventually would become regular Franco-African summits attended by the presidents of France and francophone Africa, the nineteenth of which was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in December 1996. Widely renowned as the ‘poet-President’—a reference to his voluminous writings and promotion of Dakar, as an artistic centre of West Africa—Senghor was a firm believer that ‘cultural liberation is the sine qua non of political liberation’. Although the wider cultural aspects of Senghor’s vision did not outlast his presidency, the Diouf administration has firmly embraced the promotion of la francophonie, and took a lead role in launching a regular, worldwide summit of francophone leaders, the third of which was held in Dakar in May 1989 (the most recent conference was held in Cotonou, Benin, in November 1995). It is notable that, in the aftermath of the death in 1993 of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d’Ivoire, President Diouf has emerged as one of the inheritors of the mantle of leadership within francophone Africa.

A firm commitment to African unity and integration constitutes a second consistent theme of Senegalese foreign policy. Diplomats from the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs offer three rationales for their country’s staunch support for regional cooperation schemes. The simplest reason is the firm belief that there is strength in numbers. In order to effectively compete within an increasingly competitive international economic system dominated by economic superpowers (e.g. the US and Japan) and powerful regional economic entities (e.g. the European Union and the North American Free Trade Association), West Africa must band together and pool its valuable resources. A second rationale revolves around the desire to promote the economic development (usually perceived as industrialization) of West Africa. Underscoring that most West African countries are economically impoverished and lacking the tools for the creation of advanced industries, Senegalese policymakers argue that West African policymakers must build upon the individual strengths of their neighbours to forge an integrated and self-sustaining regional economy. Most important, regional economic schemes are perceived by Senegalese policymakers as the best means for creating self-reliant development capable of reducing dependence on foreign actors. By strengthening ties with like-minded neighbours, a stronger, regional economic entity is expected to emerge which will be capable of reducing foreign

26. Personal interviews.
influence and strengthening West Africa’s collective ability to bargain with foreign entities on a more equal basis.

The seriousness with which the Senegalese policymaking elite approaches the issue of regional cooperation is demonstrated by the preamble of the Senegalese constitution which states that elected officials ‘must spare no effort in the fulfilment of African unity’. Far from constituting simple rhetoric, these words have served as the cornerstone of an extremely active quest by the Senegalese government to pursue regional cooperation schemes. These have ranged from the creation of formal federations with neighbouring countries, such as the extremely short-lived Mali Federation in 1960 and the longer but also unsuccessful federation with Gambia from 1982 to 1989, to several looser forms of regional cooperation and integration, most notably the Comité Inter-États de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS—The Inter-State Authority in the Fight Against Drought in the Sahel); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache (OCAM—The Joint African and Malagasy Organization); the Organisation de Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Gambie (OMVG—Organization for the Development of the Gambia River Valley); and the Organisation de Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal (OMVS—Organization for the Development of the Senegal River Valley). Although the reasons for the limited success of these cooperation schemes is beyond the scope of this article, suffice it to note here that difficulties have not resulted from a lack of interest or effort on the part of the Senegalese foreign policy establishment or their counterparts in other African countries.27

A third guiding principle of Senegalese foreign policy that evolved out of Senegal’s preferential relationship with France is adherence to the concept of non-alignment, albeit with a de facto pro-Western tilt during the 1960s and the 1970s that was gradually strengthened during the 1980s and the 1990s. During the Senghor administration, non-alignment was conceived of in the Gaullist sense of the term. ‘Like the French’, explains Gellar, ‘Senghor thus opposed the domination of world politics by the two major superpowers, regarded France as the natural leader of an independent Europe and a champion of Third World interests, and saw an alliance between Europe and Africa as the best hope for providing a “Third Force” to counteract superpower domination’.28 As underscored by other African leaders, such as Sekou Touré of Guinea, who were more sharply


28. Gellar, Senegal, p. 84.
critical of French involvement in Africa, the Senghor administration's brand of non-alignment was perceived as favouring Western interests at the expense of the Socialist Bloc nations allied with the former Soviet Union. Despite the fact that such a policy 'extended the Gaullist vision of the US as an imperialist power in Europe into Africa', it nonetheless promoted the shared interests of Washington and Paris in preventing the spread of communism to the African continent.29 As discussed below, the Diouf administration reinforced this Western tilt by gradually seeking closer ties with the US and other Western countries during the 1980s in a process that was accelerated in the aftermath of the Cold War's end.

The promotion of a moderate brand of Islam through increased interaction with the Islamic world constitutes a fourth guiding principle of Senegalese foreign policy. Due to the rising influence of Islam within the Senegalese political system, especially as concerns the increased political stature of the marabouts during the post-Second World War era, it is only natural that this element would also express itself within the foreign policy realm.30 Yet whereas Senghor initiated a series of diplomatic overtures to the Arab world, such as inviting the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to open its first diplomatic mission in sub-Saharan Africa in Dakar, and taking the lead in seeking financial redress from the oil-rich Gulf states in the aftermath of the dramatic oil-price 'shocks' of the mid-1970s, it was only under the Diouf administration that Senegal achieved prominent international status as a Muslim country at the crossroads of sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.

The most notable indicator of this shift in Senegalese foreign policy was President Diouf's extremely popular decision just weeks after taking office on 1 January 1981 to attend the Third Islamic Conference held in Saudi Arabia.31 'Words do not begin to describe the pride I felt in seeing the president make the pilgrimage to Mecca as both a Muslim and as the president of Senegal', explained one diplomat associated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 'This is something that Senghor as a Catholic could never do nor truly understand.' To further strengthen Senegal's image in this regard, President Diouf presided over the Sixth Islamic Conference held in Dakar in December 1991. This conference was notable for two reasons: it was the first time that the conference had been held in sub-Saharan Africa since the organization's founding in 1973, and it took place in the immediate aftermath of the Allied victory over Iraq in the Gulf War—to which Senegal sent a contingent of troops and achieved the sad

31. See Diop and Diouf, Le Sénégal sous Abdou Diouf, p. 19.
distinction of losing the greatest number of troops on the Allied side (93 soldiers died in a tragic plane crash after the cessation of hostilities).

The intertwining of numerous foreign policy interests or principles at any given time potentially makes it difficult to clearly distinguish the origins of a particular policy. In the case of Senegalese involvement in the Gulf War, for example, one could conceivably cite several factors. Western-based scholars could offer simplistic explanations that focus on President Diouf's desire to curry favour with the US as the sole remaining superpower in the post-Cold War era, or the desire to take part in an operation in which France was also playing a leading role (and therefore rally around support for la francophonie). One could also focus on the religious factor: a Muslim state had been invaded and Saudi Arabia, the guardian of the Holy sites of Mecca, was also threatened. Although each of these reasons surely played a role in Senegal's final decision, the most important factor, as is usually the case in Senegalese foreign policy, was derivative of Senegal's regional relationships and internal domestic politics. Specifically, involvement in the United Nations-sanctioned war constituted an extension of Senegal's 1989 border conflict with Mauritania. Iraq under the leadership of Saddam Hussein was one of the principal military suppliers of Mauritania, and had been viewed as a destabilizing threat to the region of West Africa. By taking part in operations against the Iraqi regime, Senegalese leaders were in essence resolving one of their regional problems at its source. Indeed, Senegal's military involvement in the war was extremely popular at all levels of society precisely for this reason.

As the Senegalese foreign policy establishment approaches the end of the twentieth century, diplomats associated with the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs have underscored four important security challenges that either are the direct result of, or have been intensified by, the ending of the Cold War. First, officials have raised concerns over the rise of Islamist movements that are perceived as largely being funded by outside sources (Libya during the 1980s and Iran during the 1990s), and potentially capable of taking advantage of Senegal's unemployed and disaffected youth. Diplomats have also raised concerns over the recent rise in military coup d'états—the so-called contagion kaki—that are threatening the democratization process in francophone Africa. During 1996, for example, Senegalese diplomats cautiously observed a successful coup in Niger and unsuccessful mutinies in the Central African Republic and Guinea (not to mention a successful coup d'état in neighbouring Gambia.

32. Personal interviews.
33. Personal interviews.
during the previous year). Both the Islamist and military security challenges are perceived as closely related to a third dilemma of the 1990s: the devastating economic aftermath of the 1994 devaluation of the CFA Franc and the rising short-term costs associated with implementing structural adjustment programmes imposed by the international financial community. Finally, Senegalese officials correctly note that the end of the Cold War has ushered in a new set of international priorities in which foreign patrons are no longer willing to aid countries like Senegal which are attempting to reorganize their economic and political systems.

The common solution pursued by Senegalese policy makers to resolve each of these perceived dilemmas has been the intensification of regional diplomacy. As concerns the perceived Islamist threat, Senegal shares information with neighbouring Mauritania and Mali to mount joint activities against recognized threats to regional security. In response to the successful military coup in Niger, President Diouf, together with Presidents Omar Bongo of Gabon and Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali, publicly denounced illegal seizures of power. President Diouf also sent Prime Minister Habib Thiam to Guinea to offer a message of support to President Lansana Conte.35 As for combating the negative effects of devaluation and the perceived marginalization of Africa, President Diouf in March 1996 presided over the first preparatory meeting signaling the creation of ‘L’Afrique Aide l’Afrique’ (AAA): a humanitarian mutual-aid society composed of African states and designed to offer African responses to African crises. In short, although certainly not willing to forgo the pursuit of foreign policy relationships outside of the African continent, an important outgrowth of perceptions of marginalization within the international system is the rising tendency among Senegalese leaders to seek African solutions for what in essence are African problems.

Evolution of decision-making structures and processes

As underscored by Minister of Presidential Services and Affairs Dieng in a 1989 speech, an important hallmark of the Senegalese foreign policy establishment is the firm belief that foreign policy constitutes the domaine réservé (privileged realm) of the president. The legitimizing power of this belief, according to Dieng, is derivative of an ‘unwritten law’ shared by policymakers and lay persons alike that the president embodies certain unique characteristics (e.g. his role as head-of-state) which demand his ‘personal handling’ of the ‘major foreign policy issues of the day’.36

Following the model of France under the Fifth Republic, the president is indeed granted a wide array of foreign policy prerogatives under the

Senegalese constitution. He is recognized as the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces (Article 39), is empowered to name Senegalese diplomats abroad and accredit those from foreign countries (Article 40), and is granted the authority to negotiate, ratify, and approve international agreements (Article 75) except in certain specified realms (e.g. peace treaties and agreements with international organizations) which require ratification by the National Assembly (Article 76).\(^{37}\) One must be careful, however, not to equate a system based on presidential dominance with the principal theme of early studies of African foreign policy that foreign policy begins and ends with the desires of African presidents, and that one can therefore reduce the essence of this foreign policy to the personal beliefs and desires of an individual president. Other formal and informal actors must be taken into account.

First, personal advisors directly appointed by the president can have an important impact on the policymaking process. In the Office of the President, Babacar Carlos Mbaye and Amadou Diop are charged with overseeing bilateral and multilateral foreign affairs respectively.\(^{38}\) The often overlooked role of these two actors is potentially significant in that they not only serve as a sort of filter in terms of what information should reach the president’s desk, but they also aid the president in providing directives to the various ministries concerned with international affairs. Their impact is also dependent on the nature of presidential management style. Under the current administration, for example, it has been noted that President Diouf is much less ‘restrictive’ than was Senghor, and therefore allows for much greater ‘dialogue’ among his key advisors during working sessions at the Office of the President.\(^{39}\)

Appointed by the president primarily to manage the day-to-day functioning of the government (and therefore not beholden to the National Assembly), the prime minister also maintains a Diplomatic Cabinet under the guidance of a diplomatic advisor, and therefore plays a potentially influential role in the policymaking process. The current system constitutes a significant change from that of the early 1960s when the Office of the President and the Office of the Prime Minister were constitutionally independent of each other. During this period, an intensifying power struggle between President Senghor and Prime Minister Mamadou Dia led to the revision of the constitution in 1963 to create a system based on presidential dominance. The current prime minister, Habib Thiam, has longstanding professional and personal links with President Diouf, and

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38. Both received their training in the Faculty of Law and Political Science at Cheikh Anta Diop University, and subsequently in the ‘Diplomatic Section’ at the Ecole Nationale d’Administration et de Magistrature.
39. Personal interview.
relies upon Paul Badj to coordinate the Office of the Prime Minister’s involvement in foreign affairs in conjunction with the Office of the President and the foreign affairs bureaucracies.40

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the largest and most active of the foreign affairs bureaucracies within the policymaking establishment, taking responsibility for much of the day-to-day administration of foreign relations.41 Depending on his ‘personality’ and ‘special skills’, the Minister of Foreign Affairs (currently Moustapha Niasse) therefore is potentially a key player within the policymaking network. The combination of his access to the president and to a far-reaching foreign affairs bureaucracy provide important bureaucratic tools to set the foreign policy agenda.42

Indeed, according to Elhadj Mbojd, Director of the Institut des Droits de l’Homme et de la Paix at Cheikh Anta Diop University, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim Fall was the driving force behind the Diouf administration’s more ‘progressive’ stance toward African issues.43

A second, often neglected bureaucratic actor within the foreign affairs bureaucracy is the Senegalese military, currently headed by Minister of Armed Forces Cheikh Amadou Kane. Despite strong adherence to the republican ideal of civilian control over the military, the military nonetheless has played important behind-the-scenes roles in shaping Senegal’s political history.44 During the constitutional crisis between President Senghor and Prime Minister Mamadou Dia during 1963, pro-Senghor military forces prevailed over those wishing to depose the president. More recently, Army Chief of Staff General Taverez Da Souza was removed from office in 1988 amid charges that he had convened meetings with other high-ranking officers to discuss the potential necessity of military intervention to end the political disturbances following the 1988 presidential elections.

These examples are not unique, but instead indicative of a bureaucratically important institution that, according to Momar Coumba Diop and Moussa Paye, increased its influence during the 1980s and the 1990s due to Senegal’s internal and external security problems.45 For example, military officers have called for the strengthening of the armed forces (most notably the purchase of helicopters) to seek a military solution to the

41. For a description of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, see Skurnik, The Foreign Policy of Senegal, pp. 63–99.
42. Elhadj Mbojd, ‘Senegal’s Foreign Policy’. Typed notes of a presentation made at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.
43. Mbojd, ‘Senegal’s Foreign Policy’.
intermittent guerrilla war in the Casamance region of southern Senegal, and have also strongly argued in favour of ‘hot pursuit’ operations against neighbouring countries (e.g. Gambia and Guinea-Bissau) which at worst have been accused of providing sanctuary to the rebels and at best of being unable to adequately control their national territories. Overall the military has played an influential role as a tool of Senegalese foreign policy throughout the Diouf administration, ranging from Senegal’s involvement in a number of peace-keeping operations, such as the ECOWAS-sponsored Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia during the 1980s, to President Diouf’s decision to use military force in 1981 to restore President Daouda Diawara to power in Gambia.

As is the case in many African countries that either democratized or increasingly liberalized their political systems during the 1990s, the National Assembly became a more vocal arena of national debate under the Diouf administration. Largely reduced to the role of a ‘rubber stamp’ institution during the Senghor years (there was no opposition voice between 1964 and 1978), the National Assembly increasingly has questioned government policies since the lifting of multi-party restrictions in 1981, most notably in the aftermath of the 1993 legislative elections in which candidates from five opposition parties won a total of 36 seats in the 120-seat National Assembly. The two most important foreign affairs components of the National Assembly include the Committee on Foreign Affairs headed by Daouda Sow, and over twenty ‘Friendship Groups’ that promote formal and informal contacts between Senegalese representatives and foreign countries.

The willingness of representatives to challenge the Executive Branch in the realm of foreign policy remains relatively tepid, however, and when it does occur it is largely restricted to issues related to the Senegalese economy, most notably the domestic costs and impacts related to foreign-sponsored structural adjustment programmes. In addition to embodying a weak constitutional role relative to that of the Executive Branch, as well as an ongoing negative public image as constituting nothing more than applaudisseurs (literally, ‘applauders’ of government policies), the National Assembly’s role in foreign affairs is seriously hampered by the lack of economic resources, most notably the lack of a sufficient budget that would allow committees and representatives to hire staffs and independently conduct research and fact-finding missions. ‘If we want the National Assembly to truly play its constitutionally mandated role,’ explains representative Sémou Pathé Guèye, a member of the opposition Parti de

46. Personal interviews.
l'Indépendance et du Travail (PIT), 'we must put an end to the disastrous conditions under which Representatives work'.\(^{48}\) As further lamented by Iba Der Thiam, the head of the Jappoo (Wolof for 'union') party alliance, representatives do not even enjoy something as simple as individual offices within which they can work and privately receive members of their constituencies.\(^{49}\)

A variety of non-governmental actors also influence the policymaking process. Due to the liberalization of the print and broadcast media during the 1980s, for example, the daily government newspaper, *Le Soleil*, which serves as a good source for documenting official Senegalese foreign policy stances, is now challenged by the daily publication of two rival newspapers, *Le Sud* and *Wal Fadiri*, as well as by a host of sporadically published newspapers such as *Le Témoin* and *Démocraties*.\(^{50}\) These private newspapers play an important agenda-setting role and, at the very least, offer a more critical perspective on day-to-day issues of foreign policy. For example, the German government's March 1996 decision to include Senegal in the list of non-democratic countries for which requests for political asylum would be routinely considered was picked up by the press and turned into a public debate, prompting Minister of Communication Serigne Diop to hold a widely-reported special meeting with the German Ambassador to Senegal.\(^{51}\)

The growing number of Senegalese living and working abroad due to economic stagnation and decline at home during the 1980s and the 1990s have also affected the policymaking process. Although exact numbers are unavailable, the seriousness with which the government treats these groups is demonstrated by the simple yet telling decision in June 1993 to rename the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Senegalese Abroad. When one examines the growing Senegalese tilt toward warmer relations with the US, for example, one is left wondering to what degree this has been influenced by the large number of Senegalese who sought their fortunes in the US and are now capable of mobilizing financial resources for a variety of business undertakings in their country of birth. Indeed, the Senegalese government as of 1996 was attempting to facilitate the creation of an investment consortium of Senegalese living in the US as a unique means for attracting greater investment into Senegal and promoting expanding trade links between the two countries.

49. Sylla, 'Le travail', p. 5.
51. See the series of articles and op-ed pieces in *Le Soleil*, *Le Sud*, and *Wal Fadiri* during the week of 11–18 March 1996.
Public opinion has also exerted an influential, albeit intermittent influence on the policymaking process. As witnessed in other African countries, the strengthening of the democratization process portends greater popular input into the policy making process as the policies of a new generation of African leaders are increasingly held accountable to public opinion. In the case of Senegal, it has been argued that public opinion, fuelled primarily by radio broadcasts by Radio France Internationale, was the primary factor that led to bloody clashes between Senegal and Mauritania in 1989.\(^{52}\) Despite the fact that this conflict was neither desired nor promoted by President Diouf of Senegal or President Ould Taya of Mauritania, both of these leaders, despite their best efforts to contain public passions, were confronted by violent clashes that spiralled out of control. In a sense, both of these leaders, as well as the foreign policies of their respective countries, became ‘prisoners’ of public opinion.

Finally, one must also take into account the formal and informal roles played by marabouts within the foreign policy making process. The formal role of marabouts is marked by the fact they occupy important positions within the foreign policy establishment. For example, prominent marabouts, such as Cheikh Tidiane Sy of the Tijaniyya brotherhood, are often named as ambassadors to influential Muslim countries (in this case, Egypt). More important, the marabouts play an important informal role within the policy making process, most notably demonstrated by their ability to reduce tensions in the aftermath of the 1989 border conflict between Senegal and Mauritania by undertaking an unofficial form of shuttle diplomacy across the river that separates the two countries. In short, if one wants to completely understand the formulation and implementation of Senegal’s foreign policy, as well as that of other African countries with sizeable Muslim populations, one must take into account the role of religion.

**Continuity and change in foreign policy relationships**

Building upon President Senghor’s conceptualization of international relations as a series of cercles concentriques extending outward with Senegal at the middle, the Senegalese policymaking establishment usually cites four sets of countries as constituting the cornerstone of Senegalese foreign policy: (1) immediate neighbours; (2) the remainder of Africa; (3) the Arab world and other Muslim countries; and (4) the Western democracies. Although such an order suggests prioritization, it is doubtful that President Senghor would have placed France and the other Western democracies last, and policymakers are usually quick to note that it often depends upon

the issue to which one is speaking (e.g. the sharing of common border resources or the exigencies associated with structural adjustment).\textsuperscript{53} The first concentric circle of Senegalese foreign policy revolves around the promotion of stable and prosperous relationships with its immediate neighbours—Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Gambia. From the 1960s to the 1980s, however, the emergence of regimes perceived as threatening either \textit{la francophonie} or promoting the spread of ‘radical’ expansionism tied to the Eastern Bloc were viewed with suspicion and led to conflictual regional relationships. In three cases—Sekou Touré’s Guinea,\textsuperscript{54} Luiz Cabral’s Guinea-Bissau,\textsuperscript{55} and Modibo Keita’s Mali\textsuperscript{56}—Senegalese policymakers viewed ‘radical’ regimes that posed varying threats to Senegalese security, with often conflictual relations only improving after the regime in question was overthrown.

Senegalese concerns over the potential threat posed by radical neighbours reached its height in July 1981 when a self-proclaimed group of African-Marxists led by Samba Kukoi Sanyang took power through a military coup d’état in Gambia. The coup d’état was perceived as one of the first serious foreign policy ‘tests’ of the recently inaugurated Diouf administration, and raised concerns within the policy making establishment that a ‘radical cancer’ situated in the centre of Senegal could prove destabilizing to the entire subregion.\textsuperscript{57} At the very least, policy makers were fearful that the continued existence of a radical regime would politically embarrass the Diouf administration which would be put to the electoral test for the first time in 1983.\textsuperscript{58} As a result, President Diouf ordered the Senegalese military to intervene and to restore former President Dawda Jawara back to power. This military episode was followed by the creation of the Senegambia federation which eventually collapsed in 1989.

During the 1980s and the 1990s, the winding down of the Cold War was accompanied by a new period of regional instability in which Senegalese policy makers were confronted by two overarching security issues.\textsuperscript{59} The most pressing security concern—maintenance of the territorial integrity of the Senegalese state—was pushed to the forefront by the emergence in

\textsuperscript{53} Indeed, other regions (e.g. Latin America and South Asia) are considered important to the future of Senegalese foreign policy, although they are not usually cited when discussing Senegalese foreign policy priorities.
\textsuperscript{57} Personal interview.
\textsuperscript{58} Personal interview.
1982 of an ongoing guerrilla insurgency in the Casamance region led by the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC) that in the extreme has called for secession and the creation of a separate Casamance nation. The response of the Senegalese government to this armed movement has fluctuated between aggressive military campaigns (1990–92 and 1994) as favoured by the Ministry of Defence, and a series of diplomatic initiatives seeking to politically isolate the most radical elements of the MFDC, as was the case with short-lived truces and peace accords that were signed in May 1990, April 1992, and July 1993. During 1996 the Senegalese government and the MFDC agreed to another cease fire which quickly unravelled in the face of conflicting claims and interests.

A second source of conflict with regional neighbours has stemmed from the management and development of shared border resources. In addition to the already discussed 1989 border conflict between Senegal and Mauritania that has its origins in the ownership and control of the rich wetlands on Senegal’s northern border, a border dispute that emerged with Guinea-Bissau during the 1980s took on added urgency due to the discovery of oil within the disputed area. After Guinea-Bissau agreed to, and subsequently rejected, international arbitration that twice ruled in Senegal’s favour, Senegalese authorities took the unexpected step of offering Guinea-Bissau a percentage of the oil profits if they recognized Senegalese sovereignty over the territory. Guinea-Bissau accepted and a formal protocol between the two nations was signed on 12 June 1995.

The primary reason for Senegalese generosity was an unstated linkage that, in return for a portion of the oil profits, the Guinea-Bissau government would take a much more active role in denying the Casamance insurgents both access to illegally transhipped weapons and safe havens on the Guinea-Bissau side of the border with the Casamance. According to diplomats associated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this accord is indicative of a rising consensus within the policy making establishment that resolution of the Casamance issue is ‘central’ to the fashioning of stable, long-term regional relationships. It is at least partially due to this belief that the Diouf administration is seriously pursuing a programme of ‘decentralization’ in which regions such as the Casamance will assume control over a variety of administrative responsibilities currently handled by the central government.

A second concentric circle of foreign policy revolves around Senegal’s involvement with other African nations beyond its immediate frontiers.

62. Personal interviews.
Throughout the Senghor and Diouf administrations, one of the cornerstones of this continental approach has been the desire to take a lead role in a variety of organizations committed to promoting regional integration and African unity, as perhaps best noted by President Diouf's tenure as chairman of the Organization of African Unity in 1985–86. Especially during the Senghor administration, however, these more distant relationships had a tendency to reflect larger Cold War and francophone-anglophone rivalries. In the case of the Angolan civil war, for example, ideological concerns associated with the Cold War clearly predominated: President Senghor not only supported the Western-backed National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) forces under the leadership of Jonas Savimbi (a highly unpopular decision due to Savimbi's military alliance with the South Africans), but became the only African Head-of-State who refused to recognize the Cuban and Soviet-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government that assumed power in 1975. In addition to backing different sides in the Angolan civil war, Senegal and Nigeria suffered strained relations due to larger francophone-anglophone rivalries. Adopting the stance of both France and Côte d'Ivoire, the Senghor administration had a tendency to treat Nigeria as an expansionist anglophone threat to francophone interests in West Africa.63

The inauguration of the Diouf administration in January 1981 heralded a more balanced approach to Senegal's bilateral relationships with those African nations beyond its immediate frontiers. Although clearly supportive of la francophonie and eager to maintain close ties with the West, President Diouf's approach toward Angola and Nigeria suggested that larger issues of African unity would also be taken into consideration. In the case of Angola, the Diouf administration ordered the closure of UNITA's office in Dakar and diplomatically recognized the MPLA government. In the case of Nigeria, the Diouf administration sought a closer partnership with Nigeria as the means for furthering regional integration in West Africa. In addition to serving as the President of ECOWAS in 1991–92, President Diouf took the important step of committing a contingent of Senegalese troops to the Nigerian-dominated ECOMOG peacekeeping effort in Liberia.

The promotion of links with the Arab world and other Muslim countries constitutes a third concentric circle of Senegalese foreign policy interests. Building upon Senegal's heritage as a Muslim nation at the crossroads of North and sub-Saharan Africa, both the Senghor and Diouf administrations have sought to make Senegal a pivotal link between these two worlds,

with Diouf taking a particularly active role as witnessed by his attendance and subsequent chairmanship of the Islamic Conference. As was the case concerning Senegal’s relationship with Sub-Saharan African nations, President Diouf has sought to seek a more balanced set of relationships even with those powers that were the target of often strident critiques during the Senghor years. The ongoing civil conflict over the future disposition of the former Western Sahara (claimed and annexed by Morocco with a small portion also falling under Mauritanian sovereignty) offers a telling insight: whereas Senghor’s ideological and regional rivalries with former Algerian President Houari Boumedienne led him to firmly embrace Morocco’s claims (Boumedienne was the primary financial backer of guerrillas seeking independence), President Diouf successfully sought to engage Boumedienne’s successor, President Chadli, in a dialogue that positioned Senegal as a moderate voice of caution within the Muslim world that needed to be taken seriously.

The Diouf administration’s pursuit of closer Arab ties has not been completely balanced, nor has it been conflict free. Privileged links especially have been sought with Morocco, due to that country’s unique position as the birthplace of Senegal’s politically powerful Tijaniyya brotherhood. Special ties have also been sought with ‘moderate’ Arab nations, such as Saudi Arabia, which serve as important sources of foreign assistance. Yet despite a willingness to seek closer ties or at the very least maintain a diplomatic dialogue with the so-called ‘radical’ Arab states, including Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Libya, and the Sudan, a variety of security concerns—most notably a fear of the rise of Islamist movements—has strained Senegalese relations with several of these nations at different points in time. In January 1984, for example, the Diouf administration expelled Iranian diplomats and broke diplomatic ties amid charges that the Iranian government was illegally funding Islamist movements on Senegalese territory. Regardless of these conflicts, the Diouf administration nonetheless has consistently pursued its policy of dialogue in the hopes of promoting a more moderate brand of Islam conducive to Senegal’s unique stature as a predominantly Muslim country that maintains a constitutionally mandated separation between church and state. In the case of Iran, this policy of dialogue resulted in the renewal of diplomatic links in February 1989.

The fourth concentric circle of Senegalese foreign policy revolves around the pursuit of close ties with the Western democracies. Historically speaking, the pursuit of such ties was synonymous with maintaining privileged relations with France. In almost all spheres of Senegalese foreign policy, the importance attached to maintaining these privileged ties is evident: Senegalese policymakers are among the strongest proponents within the francophone world of la francophonie and the strengthening of
Franco-African summits; favour the continued use of Senegalese territory for French military bases; strongly support Senegal's continued adherence to the CFA franc zone; and clearly recognize that France remains the largest foreign aid donor in both Senegal and francophone Africa in general. Perhaps the most poignant reminder of how deeply rooted France remains as an object of Senegalese foreign policy was demonstrated by the national response—at least among the urbanized elite—to the death of former French President François Mitterrand on 9 January 1996. For an entire week the front page headlines of newspapers and the primary story for all newscasts and radio shows revolved around paying homage to a man who was called 'a friend of Africa'. Indeed, President Diouf was one of over 20 heads-of-state who travelled to Paris to pay his last respects to a 'personal friend' and 'fellow combattant' for socialist ideals in Africa.64

The inauguration of the Diouf administration heralded the beginning of a new era of seeking closer ties with the US and other democracies, most notably Japan, that was subsequently reinforced by the end of the Cold War. As is the case in other examples of relatively peaceful transfers of power that primarily have occurred in Africa during the post-Cold War era, the emergence of what I elsewhere have referred to as a 'second generation' of African leadership inevitably leads to foreign policies that are much more independent of their former patrons within the international system.65 Similar to many of his second generation counterparts, President Diouf is taking advantage of growing economic competition among the industrialized Western democracies in the post-Cold War era to lessen his country's foreign policy dependence on France. In a sharp departure from Senegal's past tendency to provide preferential treatment to French companies within the highly protected oil industry in francophone Africa, President Diouf withstood intense French pressures and signed contracts with South African and American companies in 1995 to exploit oil fields discovered off the southwestern coast of Senegal.66

The Diouf administration's actions in this case are not unique—witness the emergence of Japan as the second major aid giver to Senegal during the 1990s and its growing role in the Senegalese automobile market—but rather indicative of a more open foreign policy that is less reflexive to the foreign policy interests of France. Some French observers might assess the direction of Senegal's foreign policy under Diouf as moving into the American sphere of influence, a development that would be welcomed by US policymakers. In keeping with a trend toward 'regionalization' in US

64. For example, see the coverage of this event in Le Soleil, 9–14 January 1996.
66. For a more extended analysis, see Schraeder, 'From Berlin 1884 to 1989'.
Foreign policy, Senegal’s regional position, deep water port and international airport, and respectable democratic practices make the country a likely choice for US recognition as a pivotal state in West Africa.67

Conclusion: the challenges of democratization and marginalization

The analysis of Senegalese foreign policy suggests that the dependency, Cold War, or personal-rule oriented explanations of African foreign policies constituted at best, exaggerations, and at worst, mere caricatures of dynamic foreign policy processes. A more complex and nuanced understanding is clearly in order that, at least in the case of Senegal, must incorporate understandings of the French colonial past, initial elite acceptance of socialist ideology, the impact of traditional Wolof culture, economic stagnation and decline, the role of Islam, and a proud democratic tradition that has never experienced military rule.

Senegal’s democratic tradition—classically viewed by scholars at the beginning of the 1980s as unique within a continent where a majority of countries has experienced at least one period of military rule—is especially relevant to understanding the future evolution of African foreign policies in a continent increasingly populated by democratic regimes. In a sense, Senegal’s uniqueness is increasingly becoming the norm, with important implications for our understanding of African foreign policy. Specifically, Senegal offers an important case study not only of the continuities and changes in the substance of foreign policy that occur when a peaceful transition of power takes place, but also of the evolving role of a variety of official and non-official foreign policy actors within a democratic setting. For example, the rise of religious marabouts as important actors within the Senegalese political system during the post-Second World War era provides at least one potential explanation for the Diouf administration’s decision to make Islam a more integral aspect of Senegal’s foreign policy in the 1980s and the 1990s. Equally important, as the Senegalese policy making establishment responds to rising internal demands for increased democratization of its political system, the solutions to these demands, such as the evolution of a more independent and effective National Assembly, will obviously have ramifications in the foreign policy realm.

The Senegalese case study also underscores the importance of the impact of the end of the Cold War on African foreign policies. Whereas conflicts during the 1960s and the 1970s often were rooted in ideological differences that formed part of a larger international competition between the former Soviet Union and the US, the 1980s and the 1990s have engendered direct challenges to the integrity of the Senegalese nation-state and the rise of regional competition over the management and development of shared

border resources. Senegalese policymakers themselves have cited several additional challenges, such as the rise of Islamist movements, the contagion effect of a renewed round of military coup d’états against nascent democracies, the economic impact of devaluation within the CFA Franc Zone countries, and the marginalization of Africa within the post-Cold War era.

The challenge posed by marginalization—and the response of the Senegalese policy making establishment—is especially intriguing in that it confounds the classic argument of African policy makers that marginalization (especially as concerns declining levels of foreign assistance) constitutes a negative trend within African international relations. Specifically, as witnessed by the actions (as opposed to the official statements) of Senegalese policy makers, marginalization has reinforced the tendency to look for solutions within the West African subregion, particularly among the countries which directly share borders with Senegal. It is therefore plausible to state that marginalization may actually be providing the impetus for greater levels of regional cooperation and development that was too often lacking when governments could more easily turn to their external benefactors. In essence, marginalization has promoted an African search for African solutions to African problems.