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Senegal’s Foreign Policy: Responding to Internal and International Pressures for Change

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Scholars historically 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; and 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 were 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 superpowers or by the personal beliefs of the first two Senegalese presidents, Léopold Sédar Senghor (1960–1980) 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 twin challenges responding to rising popular demands for the further democratization of the political
system and reacting to the dilemma of growing marginalization within an increasingly competitive international system.

Foreign Policy Context:
Domestic and International Environments

Several factors are important in understanding the context of the formulation and implementation of Senegalese foreign policy. First, Senegal is a former French colony that has maintained strong links with the former metropole. The resilience of this cultural factor is demonstrated by the Senegalese constitution’s recognition of French as the “official language” of all government activity and the self-classification of the elite as belonging to a greater French-speaking community (la francophonie) whose cultural center is France. Although the privileged status of French is gradually being eroded by a “national languages” movement intent upon making indigenous languages more integral to government business, 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 in regard to the ideological context of foreign policy. As explained by Sheldon Gellar, 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 elite attended school in France and adopted various forms of socialism as their guiding philosophies. During the Senghor years, an African socialism derivative of the French experience and often presented as the “middle way” between Soviet Marxism and U.S. liberalism, served as one of the cornerstones of foreign policy. Although adopting classic elements of liberalism, such as reducing the role of the state and enhancing the private sector, in their quest to restructure the economy during the 1980s and 1990s, President Diouf and his principal advisers nonetheless remain the standard-bearers of the ruling Parti Socialiste (PS, Socialist Party) 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 fueled 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 center of Afrique Occidentale Française (AOF, French West Africa), the colonial unit that grouped to-
gather the currently independent states of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal.6

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.7 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 people speak Wolof as either their first or second language.8 It is precisely for this reason that ethnicity has not become a divisive factor in national politics, with the vast majority firmly embracing a “Senegalese” national identity.9 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 with Mauritania.

Regional aspirations have been dampened, however, by a poor resource base and an economy marked by “stagnation and decline.”10 Despite well-intentioned efforts to diversify and modernize an economy heavily dependent on primary exports, most notably groundnuts, the net result has been a decline in real per capita income since independence. Even “after fifteen years of structural adjustment programs,” explains 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.”11

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.12 As captured by the film La Génération Sacrifiée? (The Sacrificed Generation?), coproduced in 1995 by a Senegalese and a U.S. filmmaker, 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, 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 this move 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 perhaps of greatest importance, 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."13

This allusion to religious values is characteristic of the important and growing role of Islam.14 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 percent of the population) through an intricate series of patron-client ties in which thousands of lesser marabouts declare their allegiance to more senior leaders.15 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 derives from 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 potions 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 taliib (disciples) who are capable of channeling enormous amounts of money into a designated cause. The marabouts therefore can mobilize a potent reaction to undesired state policies with little or no 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 because leading marabouts threatened to have their taliib occupy the runways at the international airport. Although the pope was subsequently invited and actually visited Senegal 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.

A final important domestic factor that influences foreign policy stems from the fact that Senegal has enjoyed over thirty-five years of uninterrupted democratic rule. Whereas specialists rightfully underscore the imperfect nature of this democracy—for example, a highly centralized presidential system has ensured the victory of the ruling PS party throughout the independence era—they equally underscore its enduring character on a continent in which almost every country has experienced at least one military coup d’etat.16 As succinctly noted by Leonardo A. Villalón, a specialist of Islam and democracy in Senegal, the sincere commitment of policymakers 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 neighbors."17
Foreign Policy Continuity and Change

Although policy changes have definitely occurred in the decades 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, under 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 is promotion of la francophonie. Originally conceived by Senghor as part of a wider, “culturally” informed policy that embraced the promotion of nègritude (the celebration of the uniqueness of black African culture), this principle led in 1966 to Senegal’s hosting of 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. 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 it 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 Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in December 1996). 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.18

A firm commitment to African unity and integration constitutes a second consistent theme of foreign policy. Diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offer three rationales for their country’s staunch support for regional cooperation.19 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, West African states must band together and pool their 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, Senegalese policymakers argue that West Africa must forge an integrated and self-sustaining regional economy capable of reducing dependence on foreign actors. Third and most important, regional economic schemes are perceived by Senegalese policymakers as the best means for creating the self-reliant development needed to reduce this dependence on foreign actors. It is expected that by strengthening ties with like-minded neighbors, the stronger, regional economic entity that will emerge will be capable of re-
ducing foreign influence and strengthening West Africa’s collective ability to bargain with foreign entities on a more equal basis.

There has been an extremely active quest to pursue regional cooperation schemes. These have ranged from the creation of formal federations with neighboring 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 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; the Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache (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 chapter, suffice it to note that difficulties have not resulted from a lack of interest or effort on the part of the Senegalese foreign policy establishment.

A third guiding principle of 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 that was gradually strengthened during the 1980s and 1990s. During the Senghor administration, nonalignment 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.”

Despite the fact that such a policy “extended the Gaullist vision of the U.S. 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.

As discussed below, the Diouf administration reinforced this Western tilt by gradually seeking closer ties with the United States 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 foreign policy. Due to the rising influence of Islam within the Senegalese political system, especially as concerns the increased stature of the marabouts, it is only natural that this element would also express itself within the foreign policy realm. Senghor initiated a series of diplomatic overtures to the Arab world, such as inviting the PLO to open its first diplomatic mission in
sub-Saharan Africa in Dakar and taking the lead in seeking financial re-
dress from the oil-rich Gulf states in the aftermath of the dramatic oil-price
"shocks" of the mid-1970s. However, it was only under the Diouf adminis-
tration 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
Diouf’s extremely popular decision, just weeks after taking office on 1
January 1981, to attend the Third Islamic Conference held in Saudi Ara-
bia.24 “Words do not begin to describe the pride I felt in seeing the pres-
dent make the pilgrimage to Mecca as both a Muslim and as the President
of Senegal,” explained one diplomat associated with the Ministry of For-
gn Affairs. “This is something that Senhor as a Catholic could never do
nor truly understand.”25 To further strengthen Senegal’s image in this re-
gard, Diouf presided over the Sixth Islamic Conference held in Dakar in
December 1991. This conference was notable for two reasons: It marked
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 imme-
diate aftermath of the Gulf War, to which Senegal sent a contingent of
troops and achieved the sad distinction of losing the greatest number of
troops on the Allied side (ninety-three soldiers died in a tragic plane crash
after the cessation of hostilities).
The intertwining of numerous foreign policy interests or principles
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.26 Western-based scholars could of-
fer explanations that focus on Diouf’s desire to curry favor with the
United States 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. One could also focus on the religious factor: A Muslim
state had been invaded, and the guardian of the holy sites of Mecca
(Saudi Arabia) 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 derived from Senegal’s
regional relationships and domestic politics. Specifically, involvement in
the war constituted an extension of Senegal’s 1989 border conflict with
Mauritania. Iraq was one of the principal military suppliers of Mauritania,
and it had been viewed as a destabilizing threat to the region. By tak-
ing 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 end of the twentieth century approaches, diplomats associated
with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have underscored four important se-
curity challenges that either are the direct result of or have been intensified by the ending of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{27} First, officials have raised concerns over the rise of Islamist movements that are perceived as largely 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 dakh (khaki contagion)—that are threatening the democratization process in francophone Africa. During spring 1996, for example, Senegalese diplomats cautiously observed a successful coup in Niger and an unsuccessful mutiny in Guinea (not to mention a successful coup d'état in neighboring Gambia 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 SAPs imposed by the IFIs. Finally, 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, such as Senegal, that are attempting to reorganize their economic and political systems.

The common solution pursued by policymakers to resolve each of these perceived dilemmas has been the intensification of regional diplomacy. In regard to the perceived Islamist threat, Senegal has increasingly coordinated policy with Mauritania and Mali, most notably by sharing information and mounting joint activities against recognized threats to regional security. In response to the successful coup in Niger, President Diouf, together with Presidents Omar Bongo of Gabon and Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali, publicly denounced illegal seizures of power. Diouf also sent Prime Minister Habib Thiam to Guinea to offer a message of support to President Lansana Conte.\textsuperscript{28} As for combatting the negative effects of devaluation and the perceived marginalization of Africa, Diouf in March 1996 presided over the first preparatory meeting signaling the creation of L'Afrique Aide l'Afrique (AAA, Africa Aids Africa), a humanitarian mutual-aid society composed of African states and designed to offer African responses to African crises. In short, although Senegal is certainly not willing to forgo the pursuit of policy relationships outside of Africa, 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.

Decisionmaking Structures and Processes

As underscored by Minister of Presidential Services and Affairs Ousmane Tanor Dieng in a 1989 speech, an important hallmark of the 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 laypersons alike that the president embodies certain unique characteristics that demand his “personal handling” of the “major foreign policy issues of the day.”

The president is indeed granted a wide array of foreign policy prerogatives under the 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) that require ratification by the National Assembly (Article 76). One must be careful, however, not to equate a system based on presidential dominance with the principal theme of early studies that foreign policy begins and ends with the desires of African presidents. Other formal and informal actors must be taken into account.

First, personal advisers 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. 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 also aid the president in providing directives to 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 Diouf is much less “restrictive” than was Senghor and therefore allows much more “dialogue” among his key advisers during working sessions at the Office of the President.

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 an adviser; therefore, he plays a potentially influential role in policymaking. 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 Senghor and Prime Minister Mahmoudou 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 long-standing professional and personal links with President Diouf, and he relies upon Paul Badji 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.\textsuperscript{32}

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 daily administration of foreign relations. 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 a far-reaching foreign affairs bureaucracy provide important tools to set the policy agenda.\textsuperscript{33} Indeed, according to Elhadji Mbojdj, director of the Institut des Droits de l’Homme et de la Paix (Institute of Human Rights and Peace) at Cheikh Anta Diop University, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrahima Fall was the driving force behind the Diouf administration’s more “progressive” stance toward African issues.\textsuperscript{34}

A second, often neglected 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 ideal of civilian control, the military nonetheless has played important behind-the-scenes roles in shaping Senegal’s political history.\textsuperscript{35} During the 1963 constitutional crisis between Senghor and Dia, 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 are indicative of an important institution that, according to Momor Coumba Diop and Moussa Paye, increased its influence during the 1980s and 1990s due to Senegal’s internal and external security problems.\textsuperscript{36} 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 intermittent guerrilla war in the Casamance region, and they have also strongly argued in favor of “hot pursuit” operations against neighboring countries (e.g., Gambia and Guinea-Bissau) that at worst have been accused of providing sanctuary to the rebels and at best of being unable to adequately control their national territories.\textsuperscript{37} Overall, the military has played an influential role as a tool of foreign policy throughout the Diouf administration, ranging from Senegal’s involvement in a number of peacekeeping operations, such as the ECOVAS-sponsored Ceasefire Monitoring Group in Liberia, to Diouf’s decision to use military force in 1981 to restore President Daouda Diawara to power in Gambia.\textsuperscript{38}

As is the case in many African countries that either democratized or increasingly liberalized their political systems during the 1990s, Senegal’s
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 multiparty 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 the country in question.

The willingness of representatives to challenge the executive branch in the realm of foreign policy remains relatively tepid, however, and when a challenge is made, it is largely restricted to issues related to the economy, typically the costs and impacts related to foreign-sponsored SAPs. In addition to embodying a weak constitutional role relative to that of the executive, as well as an ongoing negative public image as constituting nothing more than applaudisseurs (literally, "applauders" of government policies), the National Assembly is seriously hampered in regard to foreign affairs by the lack of economic resources 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 Sé-mou Pathé Guèye, a member of the opposition Parti de l’Indépendance et du Travail (PIT, Independence and Workers Party), "we must put an end to the disastrous conditions under which Representatives work." 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 constituency.

A variety of nongovernmental actors also influences 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 foreign policy stances, is now challenged by the daily publication of two rival newspapers, Le Sûd and Wal Fadjiri, as well as by a host of sporadically published newspapers such as Le Témoin and Démocraties. These private newspapers play an important agenda-setting role and, at the very least, offer a more critical perspective of foreign policy. For example, the German government’s March 1996 decision to include Senegal in the list of nondemocratic countries for which requests for political asylum would be routinely considered was picked up by the press and turned into a public debate, prompt-
ing Minister of Communication Serigne Diop to hold a widely reported special meeting with the German ambassador to Senegal.42

The growing numbers of Senegalese living and working abroad due to economic stagnation and decline at home 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 June 1993 decision to rename the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Senegalese Abroad. When one examines the growing tilt toward warmer relations with the United States, for example, one is left wondering to what degree this has been influenced by the large numbers of Senegalese who sought their fortune in the United States 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 United States as a unique means for attracting greater investment into Senegal and promoting expanding trade links between the two countries.

Public opinion has also exerted an influential, albeit intermittent, influence on the policymaking process. The strengthening of the democratization process portends greater popular input on policymaking as policies are increasingly held accountable to public opinion. It has been argued that public opinion, fueled primarily by radio broadcasts by Radio France Internationale, was the primary factor that led to bloody clashes between Senegal and Mauritania in 1989.43 Despite the fact that this conflict was neither desired nor promoted by Diouf or President Ould Taya of Mauritania, both of these leaders, despite efforts to contain public passions, were confronted by violent clashes that spiraled out of control.

Finally, one must also take into account the formal and informal roles played by marabouts within the policymaking process. The formal role of marabouts is marked by the fact that 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 Sy's case, Egypt). More important, the marabouts play a significant informal role within the policymaking process, most notably demonstrated by their ability to reduce tensions in the aftermath of the 1989 border conflict between Senegal and Mauritania via an unofficial form of shuttle diplomacy across the river that separates these two countries.

Foreign Policy Relationships

Building upon Senghor's conceptualization of international relations as a series of cercles concentriques (concentric circles) extending outward with
Senegal at the middle, four sets of countries are usually cited as constituting the cornerstone of Senegalese foreign policy: (1) immediate neighbors, (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 Senghor would have placed France and other Western democracies last, and policymakers are usually quick to note that priority often depends upon the issue to which one is speaking.44

The first circle of foreign policy revolves around the promotion of stable and prosperous relationships with immediate neighbors—Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Gambia. Until the 1980s, however, regimes perceived either as threatening la francophonie or as 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, Luiz Cabral’s Guinea-Bissau, and Modibo Keita’s Mali—Senegalese policymakers viewed “radical” regimes as posing varying threats to Senegalese security; often, conflictual relations only improved after the regime in question was overthrown.

Concerns over the potential threat posed by radical neighbors reached its height in July 1981 when a self-proclaimed group of African Marxists led by Samba Kukoï Sanyang took power through a coup d’état in Gambia. The coup was perceived as one of the first serious foreign policy “tests” of the recently inaugurated Diouf administration, and it raised concerns within the policymaking establishment that a “radical cancer” situated in the center of Senegal could prove destabilizing to the entire subregion.45 At the very least, policymakers were fearful that the continued existence of a radical regime would embarrass the Diouf administration, which would be put to the electoral test for the first time in 1983.46 As a result, 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 collapsed in 1989.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the winding down of the Cold War was accompanied by a new period of regional instability in which Senegalese policymakers were confronted by two overarching security issues.47 The most pressing security concern—maintenance of the territorial integrity of the Senegalese state—was pushed to the forefront by the emergence in 1982 of an ongoing guerrilla insurgency in the Casamance region, led by the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC, Movement of Casamance Democratic Forces); in the extreme, the insurgency has called for secession and the creation of a separate Casamance nation. The response to this armed movement has fluctuated between aggressive military campaigns (1990–1992 and 1994), as favored by the Ministry of Defense, 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 unraveled.

A second source of conflict with regional neighbors has stemmed from the management and development of shared border resources. In addition to the 1989 border conflict between Senegal and Mauritania, which 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 (but subsequently rejected) international arbitration that twice ruled in Senegal’s favor, 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 called for the Guinea-Bissau government to take, in return for a portion of the oil profits, 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. This accord is indicative of a rising consensus within the policymaking establishment that resolution of the Casamance issue is “central” to the fashioning of stable, long-term regional relationships.

A second concentric circle of foreign policy revolves around Senegal’s involvement with other African states beyond its immediate frontiers. 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 Diouf’s tenure as chairman of the OAU in 1985–1986. Especially during the Senghor administration, however, these 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 clearly predominated: Senghor not only supported the Western-backed UNITA forces under the leadership of Jonas Savimbi (a highly unpopular decision due to Savimbi’s alliance with the South Africans) but also became the only African head of state who refused to recognize the Cuban and Soviet-backed 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. (For the Nigerian perspective, see Chapter 7.)
The inauguration of the Diouf administration in January 1981 heralded a more balanced approach to 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, 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 administration sought a closer partnership as the means for furthering regional integration in West Africa. In addition to serving as the president of ECOWAS in 1991–1992, 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 foreign policy. 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; Diouf has taken a particularly active role, as witnessed by his attendance at and subsequent chairmanship of the Islamic Conference. Diouf has sought 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 firmly embraced Morocco’s claims because of his ideological and regional rivalries with former Algerian President Houari Boumediene (the primary financial backer of guerrillas seeking independence), Diouf successfully sought to engage Boumediene’s successor, President Chadli Benjedid, in a dialogue that positioned Senegal as a moderate voice of caution within the Muslim world and a voice that needed to be taken seriously.

The Diouf administration’s pursuit of closer Arab ties has not been completely balanced, and it has not been free of conflict. Privileged links have been sought especially 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, that 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 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 West. Historically speaking, the pursuit of such ties was synonymous with maintaining privileged relations with France. In almost all spheres of 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; they favor the continued use of Senegalese territory for French military bases; they strongly support Senegal's continued adherence to the CPA franc zone; and they 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 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." President Diouf was one of over twenty heads of state who traveled to Paris to pay his last respects to a "personal friend" and "fellow combatant" for socialist ideals in Africa.\textsuperscript{52}

The inauguration of the Diouf administration heralded the beginning of a new era of seeking closer ties with the United States and other Western 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.\textsuperscript{53} 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 U.S. companies in 1995 to exploit oil fields discovered off the southwestern coast of Senegal.54

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 U.S. sphere of influence, a development that would be welcomed by Washington policymakers. In keeping with a trend toward “regionalization” in U.S. foreign policy, Senegal’s regional position, its deepwater port and international airport, and its respectable democratic practices make the country a likely choice for U.S. recognition as a pivotal state in West Africa, especially given the ongoing problems inside Nigeria.55

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 are inadequate and possibly misleading. A more complex and nuanced understanding is clearly in order. At least in the case of Senegal, this must incorporate understandings of the French colonial past, the initial elite acceptance of socialist ideology, the impact of traditional Wolof culture, the economic stagnation and decline, the role of Islam, and a democratic tradition that never experienced military rule.

Senegal’s democratic tradition is especially relevant to any understanding of the future evolution of 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 unofficial policy actors within a democratic setting.

This 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 1970s often were rooted in ideological differences that formed part of a larger international competition between the superpowers, the 1980s and 1990s have engendered direct challenges to the integrity of the Senegalese nation-state and the rise of regional competi-
tion 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 coups d’état 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 policymakers—is especially intriguing in that it confounds the classic argument that marginalization (especially in regard to 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 policymakers, marginalization has reinforced the tendency to look for solutions within the West African subregion, particularly among the countries that directly share borders with Senegal. It is therefore plausible to state that marginalization may actually be providing the impetus for greater regional cooperation and development, which were 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.

Notes
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2. Stated in Article I of the constitution. Six languages—Diola, Malinke, Pulaar, Serer, Soninke, and Wolof—are recognized in the same article as “national” languages.


5. 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.


13. Personal interview.


19. Personal interviews.


25. Personal interview.
26. Personal interviews.
27. Personal interviews.
31. Personal interview.
33. Elhadj Mbojdj, “Senegal’s Foreign Policy,” typed notes of a presentation made at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, nd.
34. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Personal interviews.
40. Ibid.
42. See the series of articles and op-ed pieces in Le Soleil, Le Sud, and Wal Fadji during the week of 11–18 March 1996.
44. 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.
45. Confidential interview.
46. Ibid.
50. Personal interviews.

52. For example, see the coverage of this event in Le Soleil, 9–14 January 1996.


54. For a more extended analysis, see Schraeder, "From Berlin 1884 to 1989."

55. For example, see Salih Booker, "Thinking Regionally: Priorities for U.S. Policy Toward Africa," Africa Policy Information Center, Background Paper #5, March 1996.

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