Politics and Religion, **8** (2015), 305–333
© Religion and Politics Section of the American Political Science Association, 2015
doi:10.1017/S1755048315000176 1755-0483/15

Cautious Democrats: Religious Actors and Democratization Processes in Senegal

Leonardo A. Villalón
University of Florida

Abstract: This article analyzes the role of religious actors at different stages in the long and gradual processes of democratization in Senegal. It examines the transformations in their political influence from pillars of the stable (but non-democratic) post-independence state, to a more ambiguous posture in the decade of democratic opening. A discussion of the interactive relationship between religious change and the transition to democracy over the course of the 1990s leads us to an analysis of the role of religious actors in debating the substantive content of Senegalese democracy in the decade that followed. The article concludes that while *procedurally* religious actors are playing an important role in the development of the democratic system in Senegal, *substantively* they are doing so in part by calling into question some understandings of what democracy entails. The ultimate evaluation of their contribution to the consolidation of democracy hinges at least in part on our conceptualization of democracy itself.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of single party regimes and personal rule that characterized the first three decades of African independence (1960–1990), Senegal was one of only two or three countries periodically labeled "democracies," and optimistically invoked to suggest the possibilities of democratic

I would like to thank Mirjam Künkler and Julia Leininger, the conveners of the research project on "Religious Actors in Democratization Processes: Evidence from the five Muslim Democracies," for their comments, and patience. I also thank the anonymous reviewers of earlier drafts of this article. The article builds on very long and on-going conversations about the dynamics of religion and politics in Senegal with a large number of colleagues, some over many years. I would like to acknowledge, in particular, Cheikh Anta Babou, Mamadou Bodian, Soulaymane Bachir Diagne, Mamadou Diouf, Ousmane Kane, Abdoul Aziz Kébé, Penda Mbow, Bakary Sambe, and Elhadji Sarr.

Address correspondence and reprint requests to: Leonardo A. Villalón, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. E-mail: villalon@ufl.edu

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

regimes on the continent. Today, however, it would be hard to defend the label of "democracy" for that regime. While Senegal in those years was indeed exceptional in many ways, it was not a democracy.

Rather, for the first three decades of independence, Senegal was politically noteworthy in the African context due to several distinctive features: relatively stable, consistently civilian-ruled, largely non-repressive, and tolerant of a certain pluralism and contestation. Beyond these political features, Senegal was also frequently described as an exceptional case for its unique and extensive socio-religious system, built on Sufi Islam, to which the vast majority of the population adheres. The co-existence of these twin distinct characteristics — the political and the religious — attracted significant scholarly interest, and raised the question of whether they were causally related. Various observers of Senegal, myself included, argued that indeed they were, and I think the weight of evidence still strongly supports this conclusion (Villalón 1995). Senegal's religious society has historically been a stabilizing force in politics, and a check on arbitrary state power, and thus its Sufi system is key to explaining its political exceptionalism. By providing powerful and cohesive forms of social organization capable of both engaging with state power and of marking a distance from it, the Sufi orders have introduced a measure of balance in state-society relations that has underpinned the country's stability.

If we shift our focus from the issue of stability, however, to consider the role of religious actors in the dynamic processes of democratization, our analysis must be rather different. In the long and gradual process spanning the decade of the 1990s that we might call the "democratic transition" in Senegal, religious actors played a more ambiguous and evolving role. Over the period of consolidation, initiated with the electoral transition in 2000 and reinforced — perhaps completed — with a second transition in 2012, the majority has come to embrace the institutions of democracy, while simultaneously demonstrating an increased willingness to attempt to shape Senegalese democracy to their religious values and preferences. While religious actors have thus supported democratization, they have done so cautiously, and with a willingness to contest — in the name of Islam but couched in a democratic idiom — issues that other actors have presented as essential characteristics of democracy. Attempting to examine the role of religious actors in Senegal's democratic evolution, therefore, is a rather more complicated endeavor.

This article will explore the cautious and contingent role of religious actors at different stages in the development of Senegalese democracy. It builds on an analytic framework that distinguishes between the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

phases of authoritarian erosion, transition, and consolidation, and adapts it to the historical specificities of the Senegalese case. I thus first examine the evolution of a system that, while clearly not democratic by most standards, was nevertheless never fully "authoritarian." The article then turns to the incremental erosion of Senegal's dominant-party system that might in retrospect be identified as the democratic "transition" in Senegal, examining both the positions of religious actors in that process and the reciprocal effects of political reform on religious society. I then examine the contested role of religious actors in the first democratic electoral transition in 2000, leading to the circumscribed political role they played in what might be considered the consolidating elections of 2012. The discussion will highlight the ambivalent position of religious actors in each phase, as they maneuvered to minimize risks to themselves, or to seize opportunities.

Central to my argument is the assumption that religious actors are motivated not only by ideology but by interests. As religious actors find themselves obliged to position themselves in evolving contexts of political change, calculations of costs and benefits to themselves are central to the positions they take. The effort to determine the level of ideological commitment to democracy among religious actors thus yields little explanatory power in analyzing their positions vis-à-vis democratization efforts. Rather I would argue that we need to consider the pragmatic behavior of religious actors as they maneuver both to maintain positions of religious authority and to advance policies and agendas compatible with their religious preferences.

Throughout the discussion I argue that an analysis of the impact of religious actors on democratization must also account for influence in the other direction: political processes have themselves had an impact on Senegal's religious society, leading to the emergence of new religious voices and to a redistribution of religious power and influence. This new dispensation of religious actors in turn shapes the substantive content of Senegal's democracy, and thus raises questions about their role as agents of "consolidation" or of "deconsolidation."

The Senegalese case also suggests broader conclusions about the inherent tension in the relationship of religion to democracy, as each tries to contain the other. This leads me to argue that any empirical analysis of the relationship is ultimately inseparable from broader normative issues about the meaning and limits of democracy itself. The dawn of the "Third Wave" of democratization revived an extensive debate among political scientists about the meaning and content of democracy (see, e.g.,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Schmitter and Karl 1991). Rather quickly, concerns about countries that adopted democratic procedures but seemed to embrace policies that did not conform to prevailing notions of the democratic raised concerns about the "rise of illiberal democracy" (Zakaria 1997). As I will suggest below, however, there is significant empirical and normative variation in conceptions of the appropriately liberal content of democracies. Indeed, debates about this issue are inherently an aspect of democratic political debate itself, though framed in various ways. In Senegal (as in much of the Francophone world), this translates into arguments about the substantive requirements of *laïcité*, or "secularism." This, I suggest, is a tension inherent in democracy, and which must be understood as such. An examination of the specific ways in which this has played out over several decades in Senegal, I suggest, has significant implications for our understanding of the relationship between religious actors and democratization efforts more broadly across the Muslim world (see e.g., Villalón 2010).

SENEGAL'S RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE: THE CENTRALITY OF SUFI ORGANIZATION

Senegal is a deeply religious country, perhaps the most religious on earth. A 2010 survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life comparing religious belief and practice in 19 African countries found that fully 98% of Senegalese answered that religion was "very important to their lives," the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, a region which — in the findings of the report — is "clearly among the most religious places in the world" (Pew Forum 2010). As we shall see, this deep and virtually universal religiosity allows religious actors in Senegal to embrace democratic procedures, confident that the subsequent policies that will follow will be largely congruent with religious values.

The most widespread forms of religious allegiance in Senegal are mediated through the major Sufi orders (*tarixas*), to which the vast majority of Senegal's 94% Muslim population adhere today. Following some initial conflicts, the French colonial regime gradually found accommodations with the leaders of the major Sufi orders, which not only coexisted with, but became significant pillars of, the colonial system (Robinson 2000; Triaud and Robinson 2000). Throughout the colonial period, Sufi leaders oversaw a peaceful expansion of Islam in the region, building on their capacity to simultaneously localize religion by incorporating

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

existing practices and institutions and at the same time provide ties to the broader Muslim world.

Two Sufi orders dominate religious organization in Senegal: the numerically superior Tijaniyya, divided among several branches owing allegiance to different religious families, and the indigenous Mouride order, which has maintained a cohesive and dynamic religious movement around the descendants of the founder, *Cheikh* Amadou Bamba (Cruise O'Brien 1971; Babou 2007).[1] While Sufism as religious practice is important across West Africa, Senegal is distinctive for the degree of organization and institutionalization of the Sufi orders, in striking contrast even to its immediate neighbors such as Mali (see Leininger in this issue). For the vast majority of Senegalese Muslims, affiliation with one of the Sufi orders is central to their identity and to participation in social networks. Allegiance to one of the orders is mediated by an attachment to a *cheikh* or guide, known as a *marabout* in Francophone Africa. For most Senegalese, the relationship to a marabout is a centrally important component of all aspects of life.

In theory, maraboutic stature is earned via a reputation for piety, knowledge, and a mastery of the esoteric secrets of an order. In contemporary Senegal, however, genealogy is centrally important; most major marabouts in the country are the direct descendants of important religious figures from the colonial period, and those families remain at the center of Senegalese religious organization. Increasingly, however, there are significant rivalries for religious leadership both from new sources and — most strikingly with each generation — among the many heirs to potential authority within religious families (Villalón 1999; Samson 2009). Marabouts thus need to constantly cultivate and project their reputations in order to ensure a following. This fact introduces an element of "democracy" into the Sufi orders, in the sense that religious leaders find it necessary — to some degree — to reflect the sentiments of their followers.[2]

A unique aspect of the Senegalese Sufi model is its organizational infrastructure. This is based on an institution known as the *daaira*, which unites followers of a particular marabout in a well-organized local cell, in turn linked through hierarchical networks to other such cells (Villalón 1995, 149–199). This system has placed marabouts at the center of very highly structured and dynamic social networks, with clear implications for social, political, and economic action. The mobilizational potential of the orders was at the root of French unease as the system gradually took form in the colonial period, but after a period of some tension a peaceful and even collaborative relationship between the marabouts and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the colonial state was developed, which was to be inherited largely intact by the post-colonial state. The very close relationship of the two systems which make Senegal distinctive in the region — the political and the religious — is the product of the extraordinary degree of institutionalization of the Sufi model as a historical process which took place simultaneously, and in interaction with, the development of the colonial state and its successor.

RELIGIOUS ACTORS IN THE RISE AND DECLINE OF SENEGAL'S DOMINANT-PARTY SYSTEM

Beginning with the advent of party politics in the 1950s, the (Catholic) politician Léopold Sédar Senghor built the political bases of what was to be his independent regime by following the colonial state in courting close ties with the Sufi religious elite. The *Parti Socialiste*'s (PS) 40-year rule, with Senghor as president for the first two decades of independence and then under his hand-picked successor, Abdou Diouf, was intricately tied to relations with religious actors.[3] Throughout Senghor's presidency, and into Diouf's, this involved mutually beneficial relations based on state concessions to religious authorities in exchange for their political support — most famously in the form of maraboutic religious injunctions known as *ndigals* in Wolof (Senegal's *lingua franca*), and regularly invoked at election time as voting instructions to the faithful in favor of the ruling party. As this not-quite-authoritarian system began to erode in the late 1980s under pressures for further democratization, however, the role of religious actors was to gradually shift.

The historical relationship between the political and religious elite in Senegal has been much studied and hotly debated, both by academic analysts and by Senegalese intellectuals. At times it has been described as a mutually beneficial collusion between state and religious elite to ensure the dominance of their respective spheres of influence, and hence a system of exploitation of the population in the name of religion (See, most famously, Copans 1980). Other observers have suggested a more benign view, seeing the orders as providing a mode of organizing and vehicles for transmitting popular sentiment so as to allow for a more productive societal engagement with the state than was possible in much of Africa. Thus one of the keenest observers of the Mouride order could describe the marabouts as "spokesmen and organizers of rural interests," and famously characterize the Mouride order as "well on the way to

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

become Africa's first independent peasant trade union" (Cruise O'Brien 2003, 37–38).

Whatever their merits on other grounds, these relationships served Senghor well politically for two decades, and were to be inherited by Abdou Diouf, at least for the first decade or so of his own rule. Though religious authorities in Senegal thus weighed heavily on politics, and despite the fact that they were occasionally to mobilize popular support in an effort to force political decisions in conformity with their religious preferences, they primarily maintained an overt accommodation with an explicitly secular state and supported a regime that was able to wrap itself in at least some of the trappings of "democracy." Courting maraboutic loyalty by various concessions, the ruling party's position was comforted in return by the regular pronouncements of support by religious actors.

Thus Senegal — in contrast to virtually every other country in the region — maintained a regular cycle of elections in five-year intervals. It is true that like other "founding father" presidents Senghor quickly moved to consolidate his hold on power, establishing a *de facto* (if never *de jure*) single party system following the first post-independence elections in 1963. Thus in the elections of 1968 and 1973 the ruling party ran unopposed. Bucking the trend in Africa, however, in the mid-1970s Senghor partially reversed himself, gradually allowing the reemergence of opposition political parties. In 1976, the constitution was in fact amended to specifically mandate a three-party system. Elections continued to be regularly held, although given assured maraboutic support for the ruling party — along with the regime's additional precaution of keeping the rules and procedures carefully controlled and circumscribed — elections never threatened the ruling party's hold on power.[4]

In another unprecedented move in Africa, at the end of 1980 Senghor announced his retirement from public office in the middle of his presidential term, and constitutionally turned over power to his carefully groomed successor, Prime Minister Abdou Diouf. The change was widely welcome, and the young Diouf enjoyed an initial measure of popular support. Discretely distancing himself from some statements critical of religious influence that he had made in his student days, the Muslim Diouf carefully followed Senghor in cultivating close ties with the major marabouts of all of the orders. Thus when he stood as a candidate for reelection in 1983, though opposition candidates ran freely, Diouf was easily declared the winner. Well into the third decade of independence, then, religious actors in the form of the leadership of the Sufi orders remained pillars

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of the regime's historical stability, and important contributors to its largely non-repressive nature.

Like elsewhere across Africa, however, by the mid-1980s persistent economic decline and the effects of structural adjustment policies began to produce intense dissatisfaction with the status quo in Senegal. As the dominant-party system came under significant stress due to growing political frustration fed by the economic situation, religious actors found themselves under pressure to reposition themselves politically. In this context, the 1988 elections in Senegal were marked by what was to prove to be the last major electoral *ndigal* by one of the caliphs of the orders, the Mouride Abdoul Ahat Mbacké, who instructed his disciples that voting for any candidate other than Abdou Diouf would be a betrayal of the order's founder.

Following a heated and intense campaign, the hasty official declaration of Diouf's victory over the main opposition candidate, Abdoulaye Wade, sparked the most significant political protests Senegal had ever known. As results were announced the very night of the election, a wave of violence and destruction led by angry youth swept urban areas. With only a tenuous social hold and deeply weakened legitimacy, Diouf's government was forced to declare a curfew and state of emergency, which was to last three months (Young and Kanté 1992). Opposition leaders were quickly arrested, tried, and convicted of having incited the violence. Although they were eventually granted amnesty, the tense situation in the country dragged on as the opposition refused to back down from its demands for fundamental changes, particularly to the electoral system.

The degenerated social climate was worsened by other events as the decade drew to an end, most notably when tense relations with neighboring Mauritania provoked unprecedented waves of ethnic violence in both countries in April 1989, during the month of Ramadan. By the end of the decade, therefore, Senegal's claim to being an oasis of stability and "democracy" seemed completely lost, and the country appeared strikingly similar to many of its neighbors at the time: an unpopular and weakened regime faced with massive social protests demanding fundamental political change in the name of "democracy."

What are we to make of the role of religious actors in this trajectory, and particularly in the erosion of a regime that, if not fully authoritarian, was clearly less-than-democratic? On one hand, it is true that maraboutic power forced some accountability on the regime historically and thus helped to maintain a state that was among the least repressive and most stable in the region. At the same time, the support of religious actors had also clearly shielded the regime from much popular discontent, and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

allowed it to maintain its dominance rather cheaply. Long described by various observers as a religious system that helped to maintain a "quasi-democracy," then, we began instead to hear Senegalese intellectuals and political figures contend that the major religious actors, by supporting the unpopular regime, had actually been an anti-democratic force. While their religious authority remained overwhelmingly intact, marabouts in the 1980s increasingly found their disciples insisting that they should stay out of politics. Their consequent willingness to distance themselves from the ruling party was thus a significant factor in the erosion of its dominance.

SENEGAL'S LONG TRANSITION: A BRIEF ACCOUNT

In the tense political context in which the 1990s began, and with added international pressures as many African countries experimented with democratic transitions, the ruling *Parti Socialiste* found itself under extreme pressure to make concessions to opposition demands to alter the rules of the Senegalese political game. Early in 1991 the government undertook unprecedented negotiations with the opposition, culminating in a series of significant and profound reforms. The most important of these was the passage, in February 1992, of a new electoral code, the first to be accepted by all parties since the restoration of multi-party elections in the mid-1970s. The far-reaching nature of these reforms, and the fact that they reflected virtually all of the long-standing demands of the opposition, raised widespread expectations of a major breakthrough in Senegalese politics. The opposition, convinced that only the unfairness of the previous system had kept them out of power, further raised expectations by widely proclaiming the "perfection" of the new system and the inevitability of an opposition victory in the next elections (Villalón 1994).

As it turned out, this was not to be. The presidential elections of February 1993 proved to be a major disappointment for the opposition. The many safeguards in the system, so widely praised by all the parties, proved so cumbersome that the official counting process dragged on for weeks. And when it was finally done, the results produced continuity rather than change: Abdou Diouf was reelected, and in the legislative elections that followed in May the PS reclaimed its majority in the National Assembly. In the wake of this outcome, popular sentiment reflected widespread dissatisfaction with the entire political class. Given the opposition's claims that the new electoral system was a perfectly democratic one, the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

outcome also eroded the legitimacy of the idea that "democracy" would be the vehicle for the much-desired change. While this general cynicism and mistrust on the part of the public marked the prevailing political mood throughout the remainder of the 1990s, the opposition continued to work to revise its electoral strategies in anticipation of legislative elections in 1998 and then the crucial presidential ones in 2000.[5]

The 1998 legislative elections once again returned the PS majority to the National Assembly, but this time the margin was very thin, and most importantly it was clear that the results were largely an artifact of an electoral system that favored the single largest party.[6] Had presidential elections been held at the same time, the results clearly suggested the likelihood of an opposition victory in a second round. Recognizing the danger, the PS government quietly undertook a series of small changes to stop the erosion of its position, even further feeding public cynicism as the February 2000 presidential elections approached.

Among the eight candidates in the first round of that election, the incumbent Abdou Diouf managed to garner a thin plurality of the vote, but falling short of the required absolute majority. And in a remarkable second round, the opposition rallied around the second place candidate, and Abdou Diouf was defeated after 20 years in power as his long-time rival, Abdoulaye Wade of the *Parti Démocratique Sénégalais* (PDS), was elected Senegal's third president. Both the process of the elections, and the graceful and quick concession by Abdou Diouf followed by a smooth transition of power, were truly extraordinary events. After a prolonged struggled, and despite a number of significant challenges it continued to face, Senegal in 2000 appeared to have finally succeeded in a decade-long transition to a full democratic system.

RELIGIOUS ACTORS AND THE TRANSITION

Throughout this decade-long transition, the position of religious actors *vis-à-vis* the political was marked by increasing ambivalence and diversity. This ambivalence, however, cannot easily be explained in terms of any relative ideological attachment to the abstract notion of "democracy," but rather must be understood as a function of their differing structural positions and strategic calculations. Religious actors have their own interests, prime among them the maintenance of their religious authority and legitimacy with their followings, and their behavior reflects concerns to safeguard their positions.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The most noteworthy development in the political behavior of religious actors during the transition was in the electoral role of the caliphs of the dominant religious families, historically key pillars of the regime, regularly instructing their disciples to vote in favor of the ruling party. In 1988, in the last pre-transition election, the endorsement issued by the caliph of the Mouride order was strong and explicit: "Any Mouride who does not vote for Abdou Diouf," he proclaimed, would "betray" the founder, Amadou Bamba. "Voting for Abdou goes along with prayer" (cited in Villalón 1995, 197–198). Diouf was indeed re-elected — according to the official results — but the ensuing violence and protests demonstrated the deep unpopularity of the regime and mistrust of the results. Sensing the intense dissatisfaction, cracks began to show in the once virtually monolithic maraboutic support for the PS. Foreshadowing future developments, the marabout Khadim Mbacké, a well-known nephew of the caliph's, had initially issued an endorsement of the opposition candidate, Abdoulaye Wade. The younger marabout was eventually forced to retract his endorsement and issue an apology, but some other family members remained dissident. There were also widespread claims that large numbers of disciples had actually ignored the caliph's instructions.

While the predictable electoral outcome in 1988 had given the senior marabout some protection in making his pronouncement, it was clear that in terms of his relationship with many of the Mouride faithful he had made a strategic miscalculation in calling for a vote for a deeply unpopular regime, thus eroding his own credibility. Understood in this way, it is not surprising that in the subsequent elections of February 1993, following the reforms to the electoral system and in which the outcome was now by no means assured, there was complete silence on the part of the major caliphs. As the Islamic weekly *Wal Fadjri* noted in the run-up to the election: "At Touba as at Tivaouane [the respective seats of the Mouride and major Tijani families] the famous *ndigal* was not pronounced … the *xalifas-général* of the Tijans and of the Mourides placed themselves above the political *mêlée*. 1993 will therefore not be like 1988 with the categorical injunction of the late [Mouride caliph] to support Abdou Diouf" (cited in Villalón 1995, 198).

It is impossible to ascertain with any certainty whether the withdrawal of explicit support to the PS by the major marabouts was key to the eventual success of the transition, but it seems likely to have been an element in tilting the balance towards the opposition, or at least opening the door to the possibility of an opposition victory. Were the caliphs thus "democratic" religious actors in the transition? That is less clear. While they

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

certainly did not oppose the liberalization of the regime and the open competition for power, their behavior was also clearly self-interested. Following the 1988 elections it had become clear that their close relationship with the unpopular PS elite not only had the potential to undermine their authority vis-à-vis their followers, but was a risky strategy given the increased uncertainty of outcomes in the context of democratic reforms. Staying above the fray, praying publicly for peace, and receiving all political actors who came to pay their respects without endorsing any, became a much more rational strategy in the new political dispensation.

At the same time, the facts of a new competitive political terrain and uncertain outcomes also produced new opportunities for other claimants to religious authority attempting to carve out a space for themselves in a crowded religious marketplace. This was reinforced by generational tensions and leadership transitions within the large and increasingly diverse religious families.[7] Thus, during the transitional years of the 1990s we began to see for the first time significant public variation in political positions *within* religious families. Some younger members of maraboutic families were now willing and able to take independent stances, and to gamble on supporting one candidate or another in electoral contests. For the first time in Senegal, moreover, independent political movements organized around religious figures began to emerge. In a context of profound popular dissatisfaction with the political process, new religious entrepreneurs found it possible — and useful — to mobilize followings against the regime along the lines of religious affiliations.

The most significant of these movements was one known as the Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty or, more simply, the Moustarchidine. The movement had been founded in the early 1980s by Cheikh Tidiane Sy, a grandson of the founder of the most important Tijani lineage in Senegal. From the beginning it was in fact led by his son, the ambitious young marabout Moustapha Sy. The Moustarchidine represented a new kind of hybrid organization in the Senegalese Sufi landscape; while it built squarely on the maraboutic model, it "modernized" the formal organization by borrowing elements from state administrative structures, and it incorporated reformist themes and elements of "modernist" Islam (Villalón and Kane 1998; Villalón 2000; Samson 2005). The political crisis of the late 1980s provided an opportunity for Moustapha Sy to position himself in the realm of national politics. Claiming to speak as the voice of a crucial social category — disaffected urban youth — Moustapha Sy initially sought state sponsorship by undertaking such political activities as the 1989 organization of an "International

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Conference on Muslim Youth." While the effort won him some leverage with the state, in the period of deep dissatisfaction it also increasingly entailed the risk of alienating his following, and indeed in the early 1990s the movement began to lose momentum.

In this context, and sensing the potential for change as the 1993 elections approached, Moustapha Sy switched positions, making a dramatic public break with the regime of Abdou Diouf in the middle of the electoral campaign.[8] The attack on Diouf placed the movement at the heart of the post-electoral political storm in Senegal, and it sided with the opposition political parties in denouncing the election results. In 1994 the movement was involved in a riot that left six policemen dead, and it was officially banned, though it continued to operate. As the political situation gradually returned to normal, the Moustarchidine maintained their high public profile via a series of massively attended public conferences. While these were all ostensibly on religious issues, gatherings of tens of thousands of devoted disciples around a religious figure carried clear political connotations in the tense context.

Again changing his position, by the mid-1990s Moustapha Sy had reconciled with the PS in a shift that appeared to be a purely pragmatic realignment, to re-position himself as an intermediary between his youthful followers and the resources of a regime that had managed to hang on to power. As the 2000 elections approached, however, this alliance again bore high risks given the widespread disenchantment with Diouf and the Parti Socialiste. Moustapha Sy's response was to take the unprecedented step of aligning his movement directly with a new party, the *Parti de l'Unité et du Rassemblement* (PUR), of which he became president. The PUR undertook a broad campaign of mobilizing young people to register on the electoral lists, feeding intense speculation about Moustapha's intentions and whether he would stand for election himself. In the end Moustapha stood cautiously on the sidelines, and instructed his followers to "vote their conscience." While building on the role of intermediary and the Sufi organizational model, the politicization of the Moustarchidine movement signaled a substantial departure from the established relations between maraboutic authorities and the political elite. Borrowing rhetorical and ideological postures as well as organizational tactics from the critics of the Sufi model, the movement was noteworthy in that it blurred the distinction between "Sufis" and "Islamists" or "reformists."

In another unprecedented event in Senegal, two of the eight candidates in the 2000 elections presented themselves as explicitly religious candidates,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

one linked to the Mouride order, and the other espousing a loosely "reformist" and Islamist agenda under the slogan "*Allahu wahidun*!" (God is one).[9] Strikingly, the two attracted virtually no popular support; the official results gave them each a meager 1% of the vote. The dynamics of the transition, then, for the first time produced direct participation in the electoral process by religious actors, but it in no way seems to have opened the door for significant religious appropriation of the process.

This, however, should not imply that democratization had produced any secularization in the sense of a divorce of religion and politics in Senegalese public opinion. On the contrary, the accession of Abdoulaye Wade to the presidency quickly reconfirmed the close ties of the religious and the state elite in Senegal. On the very day of his election, Wade made a much publicized trip to Touba, the holy city of the Mouride order with which he was affiliated, where he was photographed sitting at the feet of the caliph, in whose compound he then spent the night. This act, which Wade was to repeat with his entire new government following the April 2001 legislative elections, provoked a public outcry and became a major point of controversy.[10] Indeed, controversy about Wade's efforts to instrumentalize religious actors and symbols, especially of the Mouride order, were to remain a major feature of his contentious presidency (Babou 2013; 2015; Diouf 2013).

In sum, then, the role of religious actors in Senegal's long transition, while ambiguous, might nevertheless be described as largely supportive of the democratization process. Their stance, however, seems more rooted in self-interest than in any ideological commitment to democratic ideals. The withdrawal of overt support for the long-time incumbents by the major caliphs may have tilted the balance of power toward the opposition, and thus facilitated the transition. At the very least, they did not in any way interfere with the democratic reform process, and in many implicit ways they supported it symbolically in such acts as public prayers for all candidates and for peaceful elections. Their positions, however, were also clearly motivated by a concern for safeguarding their own religious authority in uncertain times.

While these key actors saw the advantages of distancing themselves from political battles, less established religious entrepreneurs in turn saw opportunities in seeking to play the new democratic game directly, and seized it. The divergent patterns of ambivalent and cautious involvement of religious actors in electoral processes that emerged during the period of transition have continued to mark the subsequent era of democratic politics in Senegal. As we will note further below, the presidential elections

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of 2012 were thus characterized by a cautious distance of the major marabouts from the campaign itself, while the legislative elections that followed were marked by the direct involvement of several entrepreneurial but less powerful religious actors as candidates. To some observers, both within and outside of Senegal, the direct involvement of religious actors in democratic politics seems to present an implicit threat of "political Islam." In effect, however, the participation of religious figures in the electoral process has served to further legitimate the system, paradoxically by results that reinforced the supremacy of secular parties in politics. Those parties themselves, however, have continued to go out of their way to show respect for religious authorities in their own domains.

RELIGIOUS CHANGE IN THE ERA OF DEMOCRACY

As the above discussion implies, while religious actors have had an impact on the political process, democratization in turn sparked significant transformations in the Senegalese religious landscape. Turning now to a consideration of the role religious actors have played in the post-transition phase, and whether their participation contributes to a consolidation and deepening of democracy, or rather to "de-democratization," we need first to examine how democratic politics have themselves reshaped religion in Senegal. To be sure, the extraordinary dominance of the institutionalized Sufi system in Senegal constrains the parameters of religious developments, and ensures much continuity. Nevertheless, it is also clear that two decades of democratic evolution have been marked by a new dynamism and fundamental changes in Senegalese religious society.

Political liberalization, by its very nature, opens the door to challenges to established authority in multiple domains, and can consequently also entail a democratization of social arenas, including the religious. Senegal has thus experienced the development of a new plurality of religious voices, both within established religious families as well as from new sources. These have been fed and encouraged by a changing social climate, reflected in a significant expansion of Islam in the public sphere and the increased public religiosity of the political elite who dominate the state apparatus. In a retrospective analysis of the transition to democracy, a long-time scholar of Senegal thus notes "the growing tolerance of religion on the part of Senegal's Western-educated intelligentsia who had embraced antireligious Marxist ideologies in their youth" (Gellar 2005, 112). The result is a new and expanded demand in the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

religious marketplace. Importantly, in this era of democratic debate and increased public religiosity, there has been a questioning of established religious practice and a search for new orthodoxies. Senegal has thus witnessed both the expansion of reformist, anti-Sufi, movements explicitly critical of the historical patterns, and the rise of new movements within the Sufi orders but that nevertheless borrowed from reformist critiques to push for changes in leadership and in organization (Gomez-Perez 2005; Villalón 2007; Samson 2009).

As elsewhere in the Muslim world, the main locus of the reformist movement has been within the universities. Since the 1980s we have thus seen the expansion of an organization known as the Jamatou Ibadou Rahmane, leading by 2002 to the founding of a formal student organization, the Mouvement des Etudiants et Elèves Jamaatou Ibadou Rahmane.[11] The new phenomenon of young university women who adopted a form of veiling (*hijab*) — virtually unseen in Senegal until the 1990s — was the most visible manifestation of the dynamism of these movements (Augis 2005). Notably, these reformist movements initially focused their activities primarily in the social realm, with virtually no direct political involvement.

These movements were important, to be sure, but they also had a limited appeal beyond young intellectuals and university students. More significant were movements growing out of the maraboutic system itself, such as the Moustarchidine, discussed above. Parallel movements within the Mouride order were the Hizbut Tarqiyyah, which started as a Mouride students' association at the University of Dakar (Sène 2003, see also Villalón 1999), and the highly visible *Mouvement mondial pour l'unicité de Dieu* ("Worldwide movement for the Oneness of God") led by the unconventional and flamboyant marabout Modou Kara Mbacké (Audrain 2004; Samson 2009). These movements are born out of the new contexts ushered in by the transition, and thus are as much *products of* as *actors in* democracy. In an insightful consideration of this phenomenon, Fabienne Samson has described it as "a new Islamic trend emerging in Senegal," noting that "since the 2000 presidential election it has become more radical." Such movements, she adds, are "distinguished by their mass teaching and their active and direct participation in electoral debate with the goal of transforming both society and the world of politics" (2009, 257). They are noteworthy because they do not challenge the principle of the secular state, yet they engage fully in the political arena *within* the democratic context to pursue their goals of Islamizing society.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In response to these developments, there has also been an interesting emergence in the era of democracy of a new public debate about "Sufism" and its appropriate relation to the political. This is particularly striking given that despite the historical omnipresence of discourse about the various Sufi orders and their religious hierarchy, the abstract notion of "Sufism" has been notably absent from public debate, and the term itself rarely used in Senegal. A new and younger generation of marabouts, however, is now self-consciously discussing the "modernization" of Senegalese religious structures and practices by evoking Sufism as a guiding principle. Thus one might point to a young grandson of the founder of the Mouride order, *Seriñ* Fallou Dieng, who attracted significant media attention speaking in the name of a group calling itself the "Cercle des Intellectuels Soufis du Sénégal" (The Circle of Senegalese Sufi Intellectuals). Dieng both claims loyalty to and criticizes the Mouride order, insisting on his "true Sufism" as opposed to the corrupted prevailing practices in Senegal.[12] In a similar vein, a book by the caliph of an established Tijani lineage undertakes a discussion of the "advantages and inconveniences" of Sufism (Sall 2001). The author develops a striking critique of Senegalese Sufism, arguing that it has historically been *anti*-democratic because the close alliance and dependence of the religious elite on the state does not leave room for free religious debate able to challenge the state. The roll of religious actors in democracy, he suggests, is not to support specific politicians, but to engage freely in debates in defense of preferred policies.[13]

Within the parameters marked by its historical legacy of strongly institutionalized Sufi orders, Senegal thus gives every indication of experiencing a "democratization" of religious discourse in the sense of a new possibility for public challenges to established religious authority, and this phenomenon would itself appear to be directly linked to the democratization of the political sphere over the past two decades or so.[14] As a result, it should not be surprising that the political role of religious actors is moving from expressing support (or challenge) to politicians and parties, to embracing a direct engagement with substantive policies.

RELIGIOUS ACTORS POST-TRANSITION: AGENTS OF CONSOLIDATION OR OF DE-DEMOCRATIZATION?

Democratization in Senegal has been accompanied by change in the historically dominant religious institutions, and it has allowed the emergence

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and empowerment of new religious movements. In this changed landscape, what effect are religious actors in turn having on the prospects and nature of any emerging "consolidation" of Senegalese democracy? This question might be considered along two dimensions: in terms of a procedural and institutional understanding of democracy or in terms of the substantive content of democracy as it is evolving in Senegal.[15]

From a procedural perspective, as I have suggested throughout the discussion above, religious actors in Senegal have posed no notable challenge to the institutions of democracy, and indeed their actions have been largely supportive of the institutionalization of electoral politics. Most religious elites now treat the electoral process as a routine and normal aspect of politics, and implicitly endorse it by their appeals for peace and transparency. None have challenged the legitimacy of elections as the basis for democracy. Those occasional religious actors who have chosen to be directly involved in elections have overwhelmingly done so in accordance with the established rules, and have fully recognized the results. Despite much hand-wringing about religious actors who stood for the legislative elections of 2012, the results of that election very much confirmed this pattern. While this no doubt suggests that some "democratic values" have been accepted by religious actors, their positions must also be understood at least in part as a product of the fact that, in the highly religious context of Senegal, democracy is a very effective way to pursue policies in line with religious values.

That very fact about democracy, that it inevitably opens the door to religious influence in the political domain, feeds the debate about the impact of religious actors on the substantive content (sometimes expressed as the liberal nature) of democracy. In the period since the 1990s, Senegalese have had to confront the question of the meaning of democracy, and the types of policies to be pursued, in a country made up of overwhelmingly Muslim (and virtually universally believing) citizens. As religious actors become cognizant of the value of demographic advantages in elections, public opinion inevitably pushes politicians to advocate policies that can be depicted as congruent with religious sentiments. It is no accident that in the era of democracy, even the most secular one-time Marxist politicians of the older generation in Senegal now publicly declare their allegiance to a religious leader, and begin their rallies and meetings with religious invocations. Among the new generation there are none who would not clearly display the symbols of religiosity. For some secular observers within Senegal, and for many outside analysts of the country, this religious dynamic raises alarms about an "Islamic threat" to the survival of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Senegalese democracy. Ultimately, however, the question about whether the religious intrusion into policy domains helps or hinders consolidation depends in large part on our understanding of "democracy" — a point I will elaborate below.

There is abundant evidence that religious actors have seen the opportunities in the democratic context to shape public policy, and that this has motivated action. Thus, as we have seen, the Moustarchidine movement presented itself as an intermediary with urban youth, alternatively to support or to challenge the regime. Current leaders of the movement insist that its decision to take the further step of linking itself directly to a political party by the late 1990s, however, was made explicitly to take advantage of the opening provided by democratization. And they argue that while the party has not in fact contested any elections, it has stood ready to so do should it feel that none of the other alternatives are acceptable to their moral vision of society.[16] Similarly, the deputy in the National Assembly who is the most representative of an "Islamist" ideology, the *Imam* Mbaye Niang, explicitly attributes his decision to found a new party, the *Mouvement pour la Reforme et le Développement Sociale*, shortly after the 2000 transition, to his perception of a new opportunity for religious voices to be heard in political affairs.[17]

Indeed, in the transitional elections of 2000, openly religious political appeals were for the first time made, and tacitly tolerated. While officially religious candidacies were barred by the constitution, the fact that neither the incumbents nor the main opposition attempted to silence these parties must at least in part be attributed to a reluctance to be seen as anti-religious in the tightly contested elections. While one of the two religious candidates in that election was a political unknown with no notable following, the other, *Cheikh* Abdoulaye Dièye, was a longtime presence in Senegalese politics. While Dièye's movement posed little real threat in electoral terms, his long itinerary as a Mouride student activist and president of his own party, the *Front pour le Socialisme et la Démocratie* gave his candidacy a voice in shaping the agenda of the election. And under the Islamic slogan "Allahu wahidun!" (God is one!), Dièye took the unprecedented step of questioning two seemingly settled issues in Senegalese politics: the use of the word "*laïque*" (secular) in the constitution, and the long-established (1972) family law, which he called for reforming along Islamic lines. Strikingly, then, the "transitional" election of 2000 reopened issues that had long been considered foundation blocks of Senegal's secular democracy. Even more striking is the fact that both of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

these issues were to remain points of contention in the era of democracy following the transition.

The French republican description of the state as "*laïque, démocratique, et sociale*" has regularly been taken as a basic necessity in the writing of democratic constitutions in France's former colonies. In the religious context of Muslim Africa, however, the French vision of *laïcité* with its strongly anti-religious connotations has, inevitably, been controversial — and increasingly so in the age of democracy.[18] Indeed the word itself tends to provoke strong negative reactions among religious actors. In Mali, for example, the concept of "laïcité" was strongly challenged at the transition in 1991, and while the francophone secular groups who dominated the National Conference ensured the continuity of the principle of secularism and of the word "laïque" in the constitution, the issue remains hotly contested.

In the Senegalese context, laïcité has nevertheless historically been an unquestionable pillar of the state. Given the disjuncture between the connotations of the term and the religious powers on which their regimes were constructed, however, both Presidents Senghor and Diouf periodically found themselves obliged to insist on "the non-aggressive, and indeed non-militant — character of Senegalese secularism *["laïcité à la Sénégalaise"]* and especially that it does not smell of any anti-religious tendency, especially in political discourse."[19] The term itself, however, had historically been completely untouchable. It thus signaled a striking departure when, in the first draft of a proposed new constitution published by Abdoulaye Wade's government in 2001, the word *laïque* had been replaced by a statement about the "non-confessional" nature of the state. There was an immediate public outcry on the part of the intellectual elite in Senegal; "Senegalese of all confessions were frightened when at the phase of elaborating the new constitution the word "laïcité" was not included in the project," claimed one distinguished legal scholar (Ndoye 2001, 49). There are conflicting accounts of who made the decision to replace the term, and in the face of the ensuing outcry it was ultimately reinstated in the final draft. It is nevertheless striking that such a symbolically charged change could have been considered in the wake of the country's first democratic electoral transition, and it seems likely that it represented an effort to appeal to religious public opinion (Seck 2012).

While the term "laïque" thus remains in the constitution, in the democratic context there is a frequent discussion about what it substantively entails. The broad consensus among both political and religious actors is that in the Senegalese context it must be understood to include the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

freedom to fully practice religion. And that, in turn, has gradual come to mean not only non-interference by the state in religious life, but proactive policies to support religion — what Dione (2013) has labeled a "collaborative secularism" (*laïcité de collaboration*) between the religious and the political.

The second issue raised by the candidate Abdoulaye Dièye and which was to continue to provoke discussion in the era of democracy was the future of Senegalese family law. Not surprisingly, family and sexuality issues are often domains that bring religious actors into the political sphere, and this may be particularly true in Muslim contexts, given the pride of place given to family issues in Islamic law. It is telling in this regard that the neighboring country of Mali has also witnessed a long and acrimonious debate about family law in the two decades of democracy (1992–2012) in that country (Soares 2009).

As opposed to much of the sub-region, Senegal in fact has a "family code" in place, a legacy of the years of single party rule. The law, which was heavily inspired by French legal traditions, was passed at President Senghor's insistence in 1972, with little popular support and against much religious sentiment. While the law was subsequently largely ignored in the real lives of the vast majority of Senegalese — and indeed the only critiques were from secular intellectual elites, primarily in legal and women's circles, who decried its non-application — it was also taken as an unquestionable given in the Senegalese legal system.

It thus signaled a major shift in the Senegalese political context when in 2002 — two years after the transition — a new group calling itself the *Comité Islamique pour la reforme du Code de la Famille au Sénégal* was formed specifically to attempt to reform the code along the lines of Islamic law (Brossier 2004). The campaign was spearheaded by the lawyer *Maître* Babacar Niang, a one-time presidential candidate and well-known political figure in Senegal. Tellingly, in his earlier years he had been active in radical left-wing parties, before gradually adopting an Islamic ideology. Under Niang's direction, a draft of a new code was proposed, entitled "*Code du Statut Personnel Islamique.*" The proposal was loudly criticized in secular circles as an "attack on secularism." Maître Niang did not refute this claim, but instead responded with a long article in the press provocatively entitled *"La laïcité? Parlons-en"* ("Secularism*?* Let's talk about it").[20]

The public debate, which carried significant negative implications for Senegal's image abroad, was cut off when President Wade unequivocally declared that the code would not be reformed during his presidency. The

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

issue, however, is not dead, and there is every reason to think that in the democratic context the question of how Muslim values should be inscribed in family law will continue to figure in public debate.

Democratization, then, put issues on the agenda that represented potentially fundamental changes in aspects of the Senegalese political system which are frequently presented as key elements of (liberal) democracy. In addition, the functioning of democracy has gradually led to other policy shifts in line with religious preferences, and with potentially significant long-term consequences. A prime example is an unprecedented set of changes in the relationship of the state to religious education on which Senegal has embarked since 2000.[21] All of these changes grow out of shifts in power relations between the partisans of the Francophone secular state and those with a more religious vision, shifts that have been driven by the process of public debate in the context of a liberalized political system in Senegal.

To be sure, these issues have been highly controversial in Senegal. And the tumultuous politics of Wade's tenure as president, particularly after his reelection in 2007 and as he maneuvered to justify standing for a third term in 2012, exacerbated tensions. Persistent controversies invoking religion marked Wade's rule: his relationship with the Mouride order, his effort to co-opt Imams who had emerged as spokesmen of urban popular discontent, and a number of other controversial initiatives — most notably the costly prestige expenditure of the massive monument to the "African Renaissance" in Dakar. As Smith (2013) rightly points out, however, many factors beyond the religious were at play in the controversial politics of Wade's tenure. Thus while religion was typically omnipresent in symbolic ways in the highly contentious 2012 presidential election, it was in no way a source of contestation. As in previous elections the major marabouts kept above the fray, while a few entrepreneurial ones risked political endorsements. Wade's defeat at the hands of his erstwhile Prime Minister, Macky Sall, and his ready concession of that loss, arguably marked the consolidation of Senegalese democracy, with no distinctive change in the officially secular nature of the state.

Nevertheless, as the legislative elections to follow approached, the press was filled with discussions of the candidacies of apparently religious actors, and suggestions of a new involvement of religion in politics. When the results came in, however, there was in fact little change in the previous pattern. The party of the Islamist deputy *Imam* Mbaye Niang won only two seats of the Assembly's 150 seats, as did the party of the flamboyant Mouride marabout *Seriñ* Modou Kara who appealed explicitly

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to his young followers. The most significant success — four seats — among parties which might be characterized as religiously inspired was that headed by the intellectual and diplomat Mansour Sy "Djamil," a grandson of the founder of the most important Senegalese Tijani lineage. Sy, however, insisted that his party was in no way based on his genealogy, nor had a religious agenda, a point underlined by his choice of a Christian woman as the second candidate on his party list.

Very clearly, the 2012 elections in Senegal confirmed the continuity of a role for religious actors in Senegalese democracy: highly respected and hence significant brokers of public sentiment, the major marabouts gave their blessings — literally and figuratively—to the candidates and to the electoral process, while remaining largely outside of the political battles. The new president, as well as the National Assembly in which his coalition holds a majority, continue to confront religious voices in governing, but they do so in the domain of policy choices within a democratic context.

RELIGIOUS ACTORS AND DEMOCRATIZATION? IMPLICATIONS OF THE SENEGALESE CASE

As in other Muslim countries, religious actors in Senegal have been centrally involved in political debates in the processes of democratization. They have also shown a high degree of willingness to play within electoral rules, and to support political institutions. A major part of the reason for this, however, is clearly the fact that they have seen that the democratic process, with the weight of deeply religious public opinion behind them, is an efficient and effective means of pursuing their goals of promoting religion in society. The potential implications of these various efforts — more support of religion by the state, family laws in line with Islamic preferences, state sponsorship of religious training for citizens — are such that critics both within and without worry about the potential for eroding the "liberal" nature of Senegalese democracy. But these policies are also highly popular, and would certainly bring the substance of Senegalese democracy closer to the values of the vast majority of the population.

Given that they advocate such changes — arguably less liberal, but more in line with popular majoritarian sentiment — shall we then speak of religious actors as contributing to the consolidation or the de-consolidation of Senegalese democracy, considered from a substantive

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

perspective? The answer to this question, I think, hinges on definitions of democracy: do we privilege a specific conception of liberalism or the representation of popular sentiment in declaring policies "democratic"? The issue I think is a broader one. While I cannot fully examine it here, I would like to suggest that it is central to any evaluation of the progress of democracy in the Muslim world today. Indeed, it may be impossible to address the question of the relationship between religion and democracy anywhere without examining our conception of the required liberal content of the democratic, and the parameters that we are willing to accept in a democratic system.

This is in constant tension everywhere. Thus we might ask, is the French or Turkish ban on public headscarves democratic, given that it is clearly illiberal? Was the fact that France before 2012 did not allow gay marriage, while Spain or Holland did, demonstrate a shortcoming of French democracy, or was it a product of that democracy — reflecting varying preferences and political outcomes given the institutions of those respective democratic systems? Stepan (2001, see also 2013) has usefully pointed to the broad empirical variation and much conceptual room in defining the acceptable bounds of religious relations with the state in democratic contexts. There is room, in this conception, for imagining different and even opposed policies as "democratic" in different political contexts.

We have seen religious actors in democratic Senegal advocate for policies that increase religious influence in public life, and which reflect their values — on issues of public policy, sexuality, education, and more. Much scholarly work on democracy privileges an interpretation of liberalism with a decidedly secular bias; perhaps especially in the Muslim world we tend to portray such religious influence in politics as inherently undemocratic. Hence, say, efforts to make family law conform to more religious rather than secular values are presented as a "threat" to democracy. But, in fact political action, within the rules of the game, militating in favor of or against proposed laws and public policies might rather be read as a quintessentially democratic act. *Understood in this sense*, and insofar as they have used the democratic pressures inherent in elections to do so, then, I would suggest that religious actors in Senegal have largely embraced democracy, and are ultimately agents of consolidation. Of course, the final test will lie in their willingness to accept losing such battles, and in some domains that may remain to be seen. For the time being and the foreseeable future, however, the religious values of the major actors are shared by the vast majority of Senegalese. These are hence likely to

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

be reflected in policies that are largely accepted as "democratic" by most Senegalese citizens, even if they occasionally seem worryingly illiberal to some observers.

NOTES

1. In addition to these two, the *Qadiriyya* and another small indigenous order, the *Layène,* also claim significant numbers of disciples. A 1994 Census put the distribution of the three major orders in Senegal as: Tijans 47.4%, Mourides 30.1%, Qadirs 10.9%. See Loimeier (2009, 251).

2. For a particularly eloquent statement of this perspective on the orders see Cruise O'Brien (1986).

3. Until 1978 the party was known as the *Union Progréssiste Sénégalaise* (UPS). The name change was decided following the 1976 return to a multiparty system in Senegal, and with the party's subsequent admission to the Socialist International.

4. Among the provisions of the electoral code which strongly favored the ruling party: the secret ballot was "optional"; there was no standardized system for voter identification; and all polling places and vote counting were done completely by the Ministry of the Interior, without party or candidate representatives.

5. One of the concessions the opposition made to the government in the 1992 revisions to the electoral code was that, henceforth, the legislative mandate would remain at five years, but the presidential terms — while limited to two — would be extended to seven. Presidential and legislative elections would therefore no longer coincide.

6. Half of the seats in the Assembly were elected by proportional representation from a national list (thus favoring the emergence of a number of small parties) while the other half were elected on a plurality "winner-take-all" list basis at the level of departments. A party with a plurality, even if no majority, across the country could thus take one half of all seats plus a proportional share of the other half: precisely what the well-organized PS managed.

7. This phenomenon was produced by the natural transition to the third generation with the passing of the last sons of the major founders of religious lineages. In large polygamous families, each generation multiplies the potential claimants — and hence rivals — to religious authority. For a longer discussion of this see Villalón (1999).

8. The text of a French translation of the long and shocking speech in which Sy made the break is available in Kane and Villalón (1995).

9. Religious parties are constitutionally proscribed in Senegal, so that these candidates did not officially declare their parties "Islamic." Each, however, clearly signaled his religious agenda, provoking protests and occasional sanctions from the official agency charged with monitoring the state media's coverage of the campaign. Moustapha Sy's PUR party had argued that, although led by a religious figure, the party itself was not an "Islamic" one, and Sy insisted that he, while a marabout, was also a citizen, with all of the political rights of citizenship.

10. Among intellectuals the protest was about the perceived erosion of the secular republic, displayed symbolically by a president prostrate before religious authority. The much-quoted statement of this critique was in an article in the press by the philosophy professor Ousseynou Kane, "La République Couchée" in *Wal Fadjri* No. 2744, May 8, 2001. It bears noting that at the popular level, however, much of the protest was not at the public demonstration of Wade's personal ties to the marabout, but rather at the perception of a privileged relationship with one Sufi order at the expense of the others.

11. It must be emphasized that reformist movements have a long history in Senegal, but they had historically been distinguished primarily by being very small groups appealing primarily to a few intellectuals and French-trained professionals. The noteworthy development in the 1990s was their appearance as a public presence at the universities and some urban areas. For a discussion of their trajectory see Gomez-Perez (2005).

12. Interview with *Seriñ* Fallou Dieng, Dakar, January 10, 2008.

13. The thrust of the argument of his book was also developed by Sall in an interview with the author, January 7, 2008, Dakar.

14. The other inter-religious dynamic clearly linked to democratization in Senegal and which provoked much concern was the growing rivalry between the two major Sufi orders, the Mourides and the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Tijanes, the consequence of the apparent preference for the Mourides by President Abdoulaye Wade. This latent rivalry was in fact a major aspect of the politics of religion in Senegal under Wade. It is, however, very much a political rivalry rather than an ideological or theological one. For more on this dynamic see Babou (2015).

15. This distinction echoes the common distinction between "majoritarian" and "liberal" aspects of democracy, and there are indeed parallels. As discussed further below, however, I believe that there is much empirical and theoretical variation in the content of "liberal" democracy, and that the label thus involves normative choices about the acceptable limits of majority will. The controversy about the appropriate procedure for resolving the debate on gay marriage in the United States — by (majority) vote or by principled judicial decisions (regardless of majority sentiment) — reflects this ambiguity.
16. Interview with Moustarchidine leaders, Dakar, January 9, 2008.
17. Interview with *Imam* Mbaye Niang, Dakar, January 8, 2008.
18. See Holder and Sow (2013) for discussions of some of the debates.
19. This is the notion of laicité celebrated in Samb's (2005) book; quotes are from the cover.
20. Published in *Le Jour*, No. 65. Dakar, July 2003. This article is identified as "*Mensuel d'informations generals d'analyse, et de réflexions islamiques*." I thank Erin Augis for providing me with a copy of this article.
21. Space considerations preclude a discussion of this important issue here. For an extensive account of the issue see Villalón and Bodian (2012).

REFERENCES

Audrain, Xavier. 2004. "Du 'ndigël avorté' au Parti de la Verité: Evolution du rapport religion/politique à travers le parcours de Cheikh Modou Kara (1999–2004) (From 'aborted ndigël' to the Party of Truth: The Evolution of the Religion/Politics relationship via the Trajectory of Cheikh Modou Kara (1990–2004))". *Politique Africaine* 96:99–118.

Augis, Erin. 2005. "Dakar's Sunnite Women: The Politics of Person." In *L'Islam politique au sud du Sahara: Identités, discours et enjeux* (*Political Islam South of the Sahara: Identities, Discourses and Stakes*), ed. Gomez-Perez, Muriel. Paris: Karthala: 309–326.

Babou, Cheikh Anta. 2007. *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853–1913*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Babou, Cheikh Anta. 2013. "Entre Dieu et César: Abdoulaye Wade, la Mouridiyya et le pouvoir (Between God and Cesar: Aboulaye Wade, the Muridiyya, and Power)." In *Le Sénégal Sous Abdoulaye Wade: le Sopi à l'épreuve du pouvoir* (*Senegal under Abdoulaye Wade: Sopi and the Challenge of Power*), ed. Diop, Momar-Coumba. Paris: Karthala, 297–318.

Babou, Cheikh Anta. forthcoming. "Negotiating the Boundaries of Power: Abdoulaye Wade, the Muridiyya, and State Politics in Senegal, 2000–2012." *Journal of West African History*.

Brossier, Marie. 2004. "Les Débats sur la reforme du Code de la Famille au Sénégal: La Redéfinition de la laïcité comme enjeu du processus de démocratisation (The Debates on Family Code Reform in Senegal: The Redefinition of *laïcité* as Stake in the Process of Democratization)." Unpublished mémoire (thesis) for DEA in Etudes Africaines, option Science Politique. Université Paris I.

Copans, Jean. 1980. *Les Marabouts de l'arachide: La Confrérie Mouride et les paysans du Sénégal* (*The Peanut Marabouts: The Mouride Brotherhood and the Peasants of Senegal*). Paris: Le Sycomore.

Cruise O'Brien, Donal B. 1986. "Wails and Whispers: The People's Voice in West African Muslim Politics." In *Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power*, ed. Chabal, Patrick. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 71–83.

Cruise O'Brien, Donal B. 1971. *The Mourides of Senegal: The Political and Economic Organization of an Islamic Brotherhood*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Cruise O'Brien, Donal B. 2003. *Symbolic Confrontations: Muslims Imagining the State in Africa*. New York, NY: Palgrave.

Dione, Maurice Soudieck. "De la Réception-Réappropriation du concept de laïcité au Sénégal, ou la specificité d'une laïcité de collaboration entre le politique et le religieux (On the Reception/Re-appropriation of the Concept of *laïcité* in Senegal, or the Specificity of a Collaborative *laïcité* between the Political and the Religious)." In *L'Afrique des Laïcités: Etat, Religion et Pouvoirs au Sud du Sahara* (*African Secularisms: State, Religion and Power South of the Sahara*), eds. Holder, Gilles, and Moussa Sow. Bamako, Mali: Editions Tombouctou/Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, 111–124.

Diouf, Mamadou. 2013. "Préface. Abdoulaye Wade et le régime liberal à l'examen: Réalisations, mirages et abus d'une alternance démocratique (Preface: Abdoulaye Wade and the Liberal Regime Examined: Accomplishments, Mirages, and Abuses of a Democratic Transition)." In *Le Sénégal Sous Abdoulaye Wade: le Sopi à l'épreuve du pouvoir* (*Senegal under Abdoulaye Wade: Sopi and the Challenge of Power*), ed. Diop, Momar-Coumba. Paris: Karthala, 13–20.

Gellar, Sheldon. 2005. *Democracy in Senegal: Tocquevillian Analytics in Africa*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillian.

Gomez-Perez, Muriel. 2005 "Généalogie de l'islam réformiste au Sénégal des années 50 à nos jours : figures, savoirs et réseaux (Genealogy of Reformist Islam in Senegal from the 1950s to Today: Personalities, Knowledge and Networks)." In *Entreprises religieuses transnationales en Afrique de l'Ouest* (*Transnational Religious Enterprises in West Africa*), eds. Mary, André, L. Fourchard, and R. Otayek. Paris, Karthala, 193–222.

Holder, Gilles, and Moussa Sow, eds. 2013. *L'Afrique des Laïcités: Etat, Religion et Pouvoirs au Sud du Sahara* (*African Secularisms: State, Religion and Power South of the Sahara*). Bamako, Mali: Editions Tombouctou/Institut de Recherche pour le Développement.

Kane, Ousmane, and Leonardo A. Villalón. 1995. "Entre Confrérisme, Réformisme et Islamisme: Les Mustarshidin du Sénégal. Analyse et Traduction Commentée du Discours Electoral de Moustapha Sy et Réponse de Abdou Aziz Sy Junior (Between Brotherhood, Reformism and Islamism: The Moustarchidine of Senegal. An Analysis and Annotated Translation of the Electoral Speech of Moustapha Sy and the Response of Abdou Aziz Junior)." *Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara* 9:119–202.

Loimeier, Roman. 2009. "Dialectics of Religion and Politics in Senegal." In *New Perspectives on Islam in Senegal: Conversion, Migration, Wealth, Power and Femininity*, eds. Diouf, Mamadou, and Mara Leichtman. New York: Palgrave MacMillan: 237–256.

Ndoye, Doudou. 2001. *La Constitution sénégalaise du 7 Janvier 2001 commentée, et ses pactes internationaux annexés* (*The Senegalese Constitution of 7 January 2001 Annotated, and its International Pacts as Annexes*). Dakar: Les Editions Juridiques Africaines.

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. 2010. "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa." http://features.pewforum.org/africa/ (Accessed on March 20, 2015).

Robinson, David. 2000. 2000. *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880–1920*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Sall, Docteur Mouhamadou Al Mansour. 2001 *Le Soufisme: Avantages et Inconvenients* (*Sufism: Advantages and Inconveniences*). Dakar: NIS, Nouvelle Imprimerie du Sénégal.

Samb, Djibril. 2005. *Comprendre la laïcité* (*Understanding Laïcité*). Dakar: Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines du Sénégal.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Samson, Fabienne. 2005. *Les Marabouts de l'islam politique: Le Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty, un movement néo-confrérique sénégalais* (*The Marabouts of Political Islam: The Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty, a Senegalese neo-Brotherhood Movement*). Paris: Karthala.

Samson, Fabienne. 2009. "Islam, Protest, and Citizen Mobilization: New Sufi Movements." In *New Perspectives on Islam in Senegal: Conversion, Migration, Wealth, Power and Femininity*, eds. Diouf, Mamadou, and Mara Leichtman. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 257–272.

Schmitter, Philippe C., and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is, and Is Not." *The Journal of Democracy* 2:75–88.

Seck, Abdourahmane. 2012. "Le Sénégal sous Wade ou l'incertain retour de la question laïque (Senegal under Wade, or the Uncertain Return of the Secular Question)." In *Islam et Sociétés en Afrique subsaharienne à l'épreuve de l'histoire* (*Islam and Societies in Sub-Saharan Africa at the Test of History*), eds. Georg, Odile, and Anna Pondopoulo. Paris: Karthala, 355–378.

Sene, Ibra. 2003. "Islam as a Site of Agency, Mediation, and Resistance: Hizbut Tarqiyya (Senegal), 1975–2002". Presented at the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Washington, D.C.

Smith, Etienne. 2013. "Religious and Cultural Pluralism in Senegal: Accommodation through 'Proportional Equidistance'?" In *Tolerance, Democracy, and Sufis in Senegal*, ed. Diouf, Mamadou. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 147–179.

Soares, Benjamin. 2009. "The Attempt to Reform Family Law in Mali." *Die Welt des Islams* 49:398–428.

Stepan, Alfred. 2013. "Stateness, Democracy and Respect: Senegal in Comparative Perspective." In *Tolerance, Democracy, and Sufis in Senegal*, ed. Diouf, Mamadou. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 205–238.

Stepan, Alfred. 2001. "The World's Religious Systems and Democracy: Crafting the 'Twin Tolerations.'" In *Arguing Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 213–253.

Triaud, Jean-Louis, and David Robinson, eds. 2000. *La Tijaniyya: une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l'Afrique* (*The Tijaniyya: A Muslim Brotherhood Seeking the Conquest of Africa*). Paris: Karthala.

Villalón, Leonardo A. 1995. *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal: Disciples and Citizens in Fatick*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Villalón, Leonardo A. 1994. "Democratizing a (Quasi)democracy: The Senegalese elections of 1993." *African Affairs* 93:163–193.

Villalón, Leonardo A. 1999. "Generational Changes, Political Stagnation, and the Evolving Dynamics of Religion and Politics in Senegal." *Africa Today* 46:129–147.

Villalón, Leonardo A. 2000. "The Moustarchidine of Senegal: The Family Politics of a Contemporary Tijan Movement." In *La Tijâniyya: Une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l'Afrique* (*The Tijaniyya: A Muslim Brotherhood Seeking the Conquest of Africa*), eds. Triaud, Jean-Louis, and David Robinson. Paris: Karthala, 469–497.

Villalón, Leonardo A. 2007. "Senegal: Shades of Islamism on a Sufi landscape?" In *Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed*, ed. Miles, William F. S. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 161–182.

Villalón, Leonardo A. 2010. "From Argument to Negotiation: Constructing Democracies in Muslim West Africa." *Comparative Politics* 42:375–393.

Villalón, Leonardo A., and Mamadou Bodian. 2012. "Religion, demande sociale, et reformes éducatifs au Sénégal: Quand l'Etat introduit l'éducation arabo-islamique dans l'enseignement publique pour concurrencer l'école franco-arabe et capturer les *daara* (Religion, Social Demand, and Educational Reforms in Senegal: When the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press

State Introduces Arabo-Islamic Instruction into Public Education to Rival the Franco-Arabic Schools and to Capture the *daaras*)." http://www.institutions-africa.org/page/religious-education (Accessed on March 20, 2015).

Villalón, Leonardo A., and Ousmane Kane. 1998. "Senegal: The Crisis of Democracy and the Emergence of an Islamic Opposition." In *The African State at a Critical Juncture: Between Disintegration and Reconfiguration*, eds. Villalón, Leonardo A., and Phillip A. Huxtable. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 143–166.

Young, Crawford, and Babacar Kanté. 1992. "Governance, Democracy, and the 1988 Senegalese Elections." In *Governance and Politics in Africa*, eds. Hyden, Goran, and Michael Bratton. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 57–74.

Zakaria, Fareed. 1997. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." *Foreign Affairs* 76:22–43.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000176 Published online by Cambridge University Press