Democratic transitions have been noted in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, Tunisia, Bangladesh and Senegal. The latter is 96 percent Muslim, 3 percent Christian and 1 percent ‘other religions’ including the indigenous ones. In Senegal, Sufi orders (Tijānīyya, Qāḍīrīyya, Lāhīnīyya and Murādīyya) are the most expressive forms of Islam. These religious entities have correlatively played a considerable role in the pacification of the political space. This chapter is less about the formation and modes of organisations of political parties and more about how they play out in the electoral game for significant democratic advancement or sometimes its regression. Since 1960, in Senegal there have been ten presidential, 12 legislative and two senatorial elections, as well as five referendums. For the purpose of this chapter, we build on the expertise of law, politics, democracy and constitutional reforms achieved by scholars from the École de Dakar, especially researchers of the Department of Law and Political Sciences and the Centre for Research, Studies and Documentation on African Institutions and Legislations (CREDILA) of the University of Dakar. Authors such as Kanté (1989), Diop (2017) and Fall (2011) have collectively shown that the Senegalese democratic system is made up of political stability and institutional instability.

Senegal’s political stability is well-known, frequently asserted by the international media and various centres for democracy assessment, such as Afrobarometer, Polity IV and Freedom House. The country has free and fair elections, peaceful transitions of power, freedom of thought, of religion and of expression. In addition, public order and rule of law exist in the country. All these factors are the long-term work of the ruling party, which is not at all separated from the state. The Senegalese secular tradition has slowly accommodated the post-colonial project of democratisation.

The government, state institutions, political parties and religious institutions (marabouts and priests) are a key component of Senegal’s democracy. In parallel to the concept of political stability, institutional instability is related to the fact that the president’s party strives in general to stay in power at all costs and at the expense of opposition parties. That is why any election is preceded or followed by protest and sometimes by ambient violence. In general, the ruling party plays with institutions such as the National Assembly wherein it is often the majority, the Senate which it controls or other state institutions. Opposition parties are symbolically dominated and sometimes systematically quelled. Religious men either distance themselves from the state – for example, leaders of the Roman Catholic Church most of the time – or support those in power, as often seen with many marabouts from different brotherhoods.
The chapter provides examples of political stability for the consolidation of democracy, especially in the context of organising elections. In addition, it offers examples of institutional instability that contribute to deconsolidating Senegal’s democracy, notably by frequent constitutional changes. The aim here is to push the opposition parties out of the circles of power. The chapter shows that in this context, religious leaders can help to consolidate or deconsolidate democracy. All depends on their interests and the stake of the ongoing election (presidential, legislative, senatorial, local, etc.) or the significance of the laws passed by the state. First, we discuss briefly how Senegal’s first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, restricted political parties to four currents of thoughts and, later on, revised the Constitution to easily allow his prime minister, Abdou Diouf, to succeed him as the second president of Senegal. Nevertheless, Diouf proposed a bill limiting political parties. Like his political mentor Senghor, Diouf and the Socialist Party (PS) leaders set different sorts of law to prevent the opposition from achieving power. If the government is flexible, it is only because the opposition has forced them, including a key figure, Abdoulaye Wade, exhibiting both political talent and rhetorical skill. Achieving power in 2000, Wade worked hard to change the Constitution, managing to do so 15 times. In addition, Wade’s successor and rival, President Macky Sall, also did so, but in a more limited way. All in all, in Senegal politicians tend to try to pass laws weakening democracy while many citizens seek to defend their democratic achievements.

**Political parties and the emergence of religious movements between 1980 and 2000**

Religion is an integral part of politics in Senegal. Even if some political actors or candidates in elections do not exhibit their religious affiliations in public, it is important to understand the religious beliefs or spiritual inspirations that are guiding their actions. Léopold Sédar Senghor, a renowned Roman Catholic, was nominated president of Senegal in 1960. He was able to secure four consecutive electoral terms in 1963, 1968, 1973 (as a single candidate), and again in 1978.\(^5\)Fall (2011: 142) notes that Senghor changed the Constitution eight times with some revisory amendments consolidating democracy and others that rolled back democratic principles. The appreciation of what democratic consolidation means, what is for the people and what is not, depends on the view of the analyst/beholder because the opposition always criticises the amendments but once in power they do the same to stay in power longer.

Senghor did not complete his term: he resigned on 31 December 1980, after having amended the Constitution (Article 35) to be replaced by his Prime Minister, Abdou Diouf. Diouf was born from a Tijānī family of Louga in Central Senegal but known to be an ‘ordinary’ Muslim. On 1 January 1981, Diouf was sworn in and conducted a structural reorganisation of the PS. Diouf paved the way for opposition parties which were legally denied by his predecessor. The constitutional law of 6 May 1981 was on ‘integral multipartyism’ (multipartisme intégral). In the presidential and legislative elections of 27 February 1983, despite challenges related to Diouf’s legitimacy and his decreasing popularity, the results gave the advantage to the PS with 83.45 percent of the votes, and the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS), represented by Abdoulaye Wade, came second with 14.79 percent. Coalitions of parties were outlawed, which is one of the reasons why three other candidates did not cross the 2 percent threshold.

Except for deadly riots on 1 December 1963 (with 12 dead) and on 26 February 2012 elections (with 18 dead), the presidential and legislative elections of 28 February 1988 were among the most violent in Senegal’s contemporary political history. With the publication of the results, Abdou Diouf obtained 73.2 percent of the votes, while the PDS of Abdoulaye...
Wade gained 25.8 percent. For the elections of 1983 and 1988, many marabouts supported the incumbent candidate Diouf, boosted by a ndigal from the Khalifà General of the Murids (henceforth KGM), Abdoul Lahat Mbacké (1905–1990). He talked to his taalibe (followers) through this call: ‘Whoever does not vote for Abdou Diouf has therefore betrayed Sení Toubà.’ This is translated literally but means that Diouf did a lot for the holy city of Touba and if his actions were not rewarded by the Murids, then they were disloyal to Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, and by extension to the KGM who represents his father’s religious brotherhood. Despite tensions, suspicions of electoral frauds, university students’ strikes, impecuniosity in the country, youth unemployment, a crisis in many rural areas, and threats from opposition parties to the state officials, Diouf was re-elected president with the support of some marabouts and political movements. After the elections, results were contested and there was some violent retaliation against the ruling party. A few years later, the opposition liberal PDS, the left-wing Party for African Independence (PIT) and the Democratic League–Labour Party Movement (LD/MPT) entered the PS government and started right away to work on a new Consensual Electoral Code led by Judge Kéba Mbaye in 1992. They took great lengths to implement Senegalese democracy with different measures including reducing voting age from 21 to 18 years. Over time, Diouf revised the Constitution 14 times (Fall, 2011: 142).

For the presidential and legislative elections of 9 May 1993 there were nine candidates. Abdou Diouf received 58.4 percent of the suffrages while Abdoulaye Wade (PDS) came second with 32.03 percent. The remaining votes were scattered across opposition parties which had difficulties exceeding the 2 percent threshold. For these elections, the most prominent religious group in the Senegalese public space was the Dahiratul Mustarshídina Wal Mustarshidatí (Community of the Rightly Guided Men and Women, henceforth DMWM). The Diouf regime applied a heavy policy of maintaining public order, repressing any movement likely to call into question the legitimacy of his power. The assassination of Judge Babacar Sèye, Vice–President of the Constitutional Council on 15 May 1993, exacerbated political tensions between the state and the opposition.

The Mustarshidins leader, Moustapha Sy, claimed to know the mastermind of the murder. He was arrested a few months later and imprisoned at Rebeuss in Dakar. A crowd armed with machetes, clubs and axes embarked on a protest and attacked police officers present on the scene. Those policemen wanted to prevent them from reaching the presidential palace and the central prison of Dakar where Moustapha Sy was detained. On 16 February 1994, at a rally of the opposition parties mixed together with the Mustarshidins, six policemen were killed on Charles de Gaulle Boulevard in Dakar. More than 150 members of the DMWM were arrested and on 17 February 1994, Djibo Kâ, then Minister of the Interior, banned the movement throughout the national territory by Decree No. 001123. Today the DMWM has at its disposal the Party of Unity and Rally (PUR), created under the receipt No. 9515 on 3 February 1998 by Khalifà Diouf, one of their disciples (Diallo, 2010: 431).

Another important Sufi and political youth group, the World Movement for the Unity of God (MMUD) of the Murid marabout Modou Kara Mbacké also supported the PS in the lead up to the elections. This movement has institutions and practices that resemble those of the Mustarshidins, and vice versa. The MMUD is correlativey managed with the Party for Truth and Development (PVD) that Modou Kara M’Backé created in 2004. Moustapha Sy, Modou Kara M’Backé and other religious leaders have been involved in politics for a long time. Of all the religious leaders mentioned above, Sidy Lamine Niasse (1950–2018) played the most important role of opinion maker and democratic vanguard in Senegalese politics, much better than many opposition parties. His radio and TV programme ‘Diine ak Jamono’ (‘Religion and Contemporary Issues’) continues to play a huge role in awakening political consciousnesses. ‘Diine ak Jamono’ has helped lead to the first alternation of power (or alternance) in Senegal in 2000.
For the presidential election on 26 February 2000, there were eight candidates. On 24 March 1999, the Archbishop of Dakar Monsignor Hyacinthe Thiandoum took a stand for Moustapha Niasse, a Tijānī, leader of the Alliance for Progressive Forces (AFP). Thiandoum maintained that Niasse would have been the best candidate if ever Diouf had to be followed in power (Fall, 2018: 294). In the second round of the elections, Moustapha Niasse and the Coalition Hope 2000 and the Islamic organisation Jamra all supported the so-called liberal candidate (A. Wade). He was elected in the second round with 58.49 percent against 41.51 percent for his Socialist rival, Abdou Diouf, who was supported by a coalition of social movements such as the Coordination of Republican Forces (COFORE) and the PAI. It was the end of 40 years of socialist rule in Senegal, and the advent of a new political era alongside coalitions of political parties, and a strong civil society including religious ones: the Catholic Church and the main Sufi orders.

Once Wade won the presidential election, he went to Touba and renewed his spiritual allegiance to his marabout the KGM, Saliou Mbacké (1914–2007). The president, gradually but increasingly, based his public speeches on a model of Murūd favouritism to the detriment of the Catholic Church and other Sufi orders (Diallo and Kelly, 2016: 10).

One can infer a few critical points from the 2000 elections. The distinction between the political and the religious is stated in the Constitution which, in a certain way, re-elaborates the French constitutional law of 1958 along with its many flaws. The Senegalese Constitution bans any political party based on religion, race, sex, province and ethnicity (Article 4). Did that apply to the presidential candidates who had religious programmes drawn from the Murūdiyya, as a viable alternative political system during the presidential election of 2000? The distinction between religion, secular and politics does not make sense at all because the Senegalese state is secular by its work to guarantee freedom of conscience and pluralism in religious practices, and not because the modern government is trying to secure the separation of state and religion. Thiandoum asked both Diouf and Wade to respect the results of the elections for a peaceful transition of power. As a reminder, the guide of the Mustarshidīn endorsed Wade’s candidacy for the 1993 presidential election.

The increasing role of religious leaders in politics from 2000 to 2012

What Buckley (2016: 24) has described as Senegalese ‘benevolent secularism’ is attributable to the role played by Sufi orders, considered as intermediaries between the state and the rural world. For Villalón, Sufi orders which belong to the civil society movements are at the foundation of the Senegalese state (1995: 150, 258). The cohabitation or the ‘social contract’ between the state and Sufi orders also serves to strengthen Senegal’s democracy. Yet, Wade broke this agreement between the state and other religious denominations since he established his tańqa as the best model for the Senegalese. Despite criticism by the civil society and opposition parties for example by putting the deposit for the election at 65 million FCFA instead of three million, Wade won the presidential election of 25 February 2007 in the first round with 55.9 percent of the votes.

Multiple logics of negotiation-domestication were deployed in order to win the maraboutic cause. Wade exploited this logic with the most influential political marabouts such as the international Tijānī leader Mamoune Niasse (1944–2011) and his Rally for the People Party, and the Murūds, Modou Kara M’Backé and Béthio Thioune, during the 2007 elections. The Senegalese Catholic Church has always been, and is still today, an important component of Senegalese democracy. The Catholic Church, uncorrupted, or significantly less than a certain maraboutic class, weighs heavily on this democracy, and for that, deserves more attention in the scholarly interpretations on the Senegalese democratic system which is not exclusively based on the Sufi-state model.
There are also other social bodies, sometimes invisible but deeply involved in strengthening the foundations of this democracy. There is a civil society – as diverse as it is unified in tense situations – as well as various non-governmental, cultural, regional and continental organisations, which participate extensively in the political space. *Stricto sensu*, by reinforcing a neo-authoritarian regime and enriching its allies including many marabouts, Wade unintentionally created a ‘unified’ civil society (Fall, 2011: 142).

On 23 June 2011, after a day of demonstrations on the streets of Dakar, and in front of the National Assembly, demonstrators of various social strata and a youth movement called Y en a marre prevented MPs from voting on the ‘presidential ticket’ law. The ‘ticket’ consisted of a simultaneous election by universal suffrage of the president and the vice-president of the republic, to pass them only with 25 percent of the vote cast. The withdrawal of the ‘presidential ticket’ was due to the determination of the Senegalese to block President Wade’s undemocratic project. In addition, different Khalifa of Sufi orders asked Wade to withdraw his bill.

In the end, with a participation rate of 51.6 percent, the results of the first round of the election published by the Constitutional Council attributed 34.81 percent of the votes to Wade’s coalition (The Allied Forces 2012 or Fal 2012). If Wade had achieved his institutional coup on 23 June 2011, he would have won the presidential election in the first round. The Coalition Macky 2012 came second with 26.58 percent of the votes. Two candidates each had fewer than 2 percent of the votes, and seven other candidates each had fewer than 1 percent of the votes. What is important to note is that the religious or maraboutic factor (of the most visible candidates, here the Murid ones Fall and Dièye, or allegedly Tijani, Seck) was not ultimately decisive in the overall vote. The candidate Wade is an exception because he is the one who won polls in Touba (from 2000 until 2018). The holy city of Touba is the second largest demographic and electoral city in Senegal and is also the bastion of the Murdiyya.

In the second round, the 13 candidates of the first round all supported the best-positioned candidate, Macky Sall. Sall widely won the presidential election of 2012 with 65.8 percent of the vote cast. This was the end of Wade’s reign as president but not the end of his political life. Different political parties with religious connotations entered the Parliament in July 2012. The most important ones were The Citizen’s Movement for the National Refoundation/Tomorrow is a New Day or Bes du Êaak, spearheaded by the Tijani intellectual El Hadji Mansour Sy ‘Djamil’, the Movement for Reform and Social Development (MRDS) of Imam Mbaye Niang, the Senegalese Patriotic Movement (MPS-Faxas) of the Sufi disciples (or Ciantakon) led by Khadim Thioune, son of the influential Murid marabout Cheikh Béthio Thioune, and the PVD of Modou Kara M’Backé. These new ‘maraboutic’ or ‘Islamist’ parties included women, both Catholic and Muslim. Women’s participation in electoral politics is very important in Senegal, but they have few leadership positions in political parties and are likely to be dominated by their male counterparts. Reflecting development of the growing political power of females, in 2010, President Wade signed into law one of the most comprehensive and aggressive gender parity bills in Africa. The parity law was adopted on 28 May 2010: it calls for political parties to put forward candidate lists for local and national elections that are equally split between females and males.

In short, what Senegalese journalists have described as the ‘rise of the religious’ to warn about the possible Islamisation of the state, thus surfing on Islamophobia to sell newspapers is, in fact, a simple citizen expression of a demand for more social justice. As a result, a new democratic era has surfaced within which social movements led by men belonging to Christianity or Islamic Sufi orders will play a vanguard role in the management of public goods and institutions.
Catholic priests and marabouts have significantly contributed to the emergence and entrenchment of principles of social justice and sustainable civil peace in Senegal. President Sall’s new politics is the privatisation of religious affiliations and the equidistance of the state vis-à-vis religious institutions. Privatisation, however, does not mean removing religion from the political arena, and distancing does not mean neutrality or ignorance of religious values, leaders and organisations. Coming from the state, policies towards marabouts become legitimate and normal (such as support for their community projects).

However, Senegalese laïcité (secularism) and democracy have two main weak points: the first is the significant grip of the main Sufi orders on the state. One example will suffice: non-application of the law on parity in Touba and other remote religious localities. This was a challenge to the state authorities and signifies that the state is weak or even non-existent in certain, remote areas of the country. There is also a second problem: the lack of equality of all citizens before the law. In general, the politicians, the rich and the well-known maraboutic family members are better treated by those in charge of the state’s authority (police and judges). This has been the case for different governments whether socialist or liberal.

**President Sall’s first term and the ‘tracking’ of opposition leaders (2012–2018)**

In the midst of euphoria between the two rounds of the 2012 presidential election, the candidate Sall promised that if ever elected he would reduce the presidential term from seven to five years. He claimed this would strengthen Senegal’s democracy. Once in power, Sall established a National Institutional Reform Commission (CNRI) by Presidential Decree No. 2013–730 on 28 May 2013. The Commission conducted consultations at the national level to engage the citizens. Finally, faced with political and especially economic difficulties, Sall changed his mind for fear of losing the elections, if they were to be held as planned in February 2017. Supported by the presidential coalition Benno Bokk Yaakar, Sall proposed a constitutional reform project. The Constitutional Council validated the project but rejected the reduction of the current term of office from seven to five years. In effect, the Council gave a blank cheque to the president – who waited a little longer to set the date for a referendum. In Senegal, the Constitution has no sacred value among politicians, and constitutional judges are not independent: they are often under the control of the president of the republic (Fall, 2011; Diop, 2017: 110). The instrumentalisation of the Senegalese Constitution by the ruling party (socialist or liberal) allows politicians to stay in power as long as they wish.

Macky Sall set the date of the referendum for 20 March 2016 and immediately began his campaign, leaving the Senegalese, whether the opposition or politicians in general, as well as international observers, uninformed of the issues. This was the first symbolic coup d’état of the Sall regime. Symbolic violence in Bourdieu’s sense (1997: 244, 246), and in this specific case, is related to the use of the constitutional text, and the interpretation of the following three sentences in French that the majority of Senegalese do not understand: ‘The term of office of the President of the Republic is five years. The mandate is renewable once. This disposition can only be revised by a referendum law.’ Abdoulaye Wade took the opportunity offered by the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of these clauses, and applied for a third term, validated by the Constitutional Council. To correct the confusion in the text, the constitutional law professor Ismaila Madior Fall, also President Sall’s juridical adviser for the referendum, revised it restrictively into two sentences: ‘The term of office of the President of the Republic is five years. No one can serve more than two consecutive terms.’ Fall intended to definitely make Article 27 unalterable as he already did for the Nigérien Constitution Law in 2011. The limiting clause on the number of mandates is a problem for many countries in Africa.
There were 2,203,062 votes cast in the referendum, of which 1,367,592 or 63 percent opted for ‘yes’ (Fall, 2017: 86). Yet, while the Senegalese people voted, it was not en masse – because the turnout was only 38 percent. Peripheral or minor marabouts, and the leader of Bes du Ňaak did campaign against the referendum but they were not sufficiently vocal or prominent for most voters.

After the referendum, Sall started to track down his main opponents for office: the most serious one was Khalîfâ Abâbacar Sall, the PS mayor of Dakar since 2009. He bears the name of the first Khalîfâ General of the Tijâns (Babacar Sy, 1883–1957), but does not exhibit his Sufi affiliation in public. On 7 March 2017, Sall and his associates were indicted by the senior judge of the High Court of Dakar for fraudulent use of municipal funds. The same day, he was taken to the prison of Rebeuss in Dakar where his son and party collaborators were imprisoned for a while. On 30 March 2018, Khalîfâ Abâbacar Sall was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment by the Court of First Instance. His associates also had various sentences ranging from six months to five years in prison. The most serious candidates dismissed by the Sall regime, the Alliance for the Republic (APR), launched the race for the 2017 legislative elections.

For these elections, there were 47 lists of nominations including many political coalitions. A few candidates listed ‘religious leader’ as their profession and this goes against the Constitution (Article 4). The number of registered voters was 6,219,446 with 3,337,494 total votes for 3,310,435 valid votes, and the turnout was 53.66 percent. Leaders of opposition parties lamented the organisation of the polls. Wade gives an illustrative example: President ‘Sall has arranged that in all places where he thinks that the opposition will win, there is no vote’.

The legislative elections of 30 July 2017

For the results of the legislative elections of 2017, we focus more on the large coalitions and the parties that have a close relationship with religion. The Coalition Gagnante/Wattu Taxawu Senegal led by former President Wade won 552,095 votes with 19 seats in the National Assembly. Benno Bokk Yakaar (BBY), the presidential coalition, received 1,637,761 votes for 125 seats of the 165 seats. The PVD received 22,769 votes and one MP in the National Assembly. The coalition Mankoo Taxawu Senegal (MTS) gained 388,188 votes and seven seats, while their leader Khalîfâ Abâbacar Sall was (and still is at the time of writing, February 2019) in prison. The PUR achieved 155,407 votes and three seats. Bes du Ňaak joined the MTS coalition. Khadim Thioune of MPS-Faxas joined the BBY coalition for these elections, probably because of his father’s rapprochement with the presidential party after being released from prison following an accusation of his complicity in the murder of two of his disciples.

One final important entry in the Senegalese National Assembly and in Senegalese politics was Ousmane Sonko, the leader of the Patriots of Senegal for Ethics, Work and Fraternity (PASTEF) who was fired from the state administration because he denounced irregularities in the state tax management system. He is said to belong to the Wahhabi Islamist movement, Jamât’at Iblîd al-Rahmân (Assembly of the Servants of Allah). This claim comes from his rivals who reminded Sufi leaders against the danger of his candidacy in the presidential election of 2019. Yet, his speeches were appealing to many among the Senegalese public because they highlighted the importance of the values of moral integrity, telling truth to power, fair management of state resources, and anti-French hegemony in the context of the Senegalese economy. Finally, both PASTEF and PUR have programmes influenced by religion (Islam) – yet are not religious political parties comparable to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

The PUR has more voters than any other party with religious connotations: its total is the highest in the parliamentary history of Senegal in this respect. PUR was able to gain votes in
the Murīd stronghold regions (Diourbel and Mbacké). This indicates that in their own bases, the Murīds can vote for non-Murīd candidates and that the Sufi order barriers are not as hermetic as people might think.\(^\text{13}\) Professor Issa Sall, who is the coordinator of PUR, explains that his party is secular because, in Senegal, the religious party is not allowed unlike in Germany where there is a Christian democratic party.\(^\text{14}\) However, this party identifies strongly with Moustapha Sy, the President of PUR, and his late father who is their spiritual guide. The above-mentioned examples show again that it is not easy to separate religion from politics in Senegal.

### The debates on the Sponsorship Act (or loi sur le parrainage)

In 2018, President Sall introduced a new bill.\(^\text{15}\) The revision or rewriting of the electoral code was entrusted to the minister Ismaila Madior Fall who is a constitutionalist, a leading African political scientist\(^\text{16}\) and, currently, Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Seals of the Republic of Senegal. Thus, Fall took charge of defending the bill, despite criticism from all sides. Indeed, the bill proposes that candidates in county, municipal legislative and presidential elections must collect sponsorship signatures amounting to 1 percent of the electoral register, in at least seven of the 14 regions of the country at the rate of 2,000 signatures per region. These are to be validated first by a commission receiving sponsor lists, supervised and controlled by the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENA), finally to be validated by the Constitutional Council.\(^\text{17}\) An elector must sponsor only one candidate which is difficult to do in a country with a low literacy rate (37.2 percent as of 2013). Once again, the inability of the majority to write or read is an electoral gain for those in power, in fact, facilitated by the constitutional judge, since signing for two candidates annuls the second signature. Some Senegalese have appreciated having a law on sponsorship for the country: the law has helped to decrease the number of candidates for the 2019 presidential election which makes things less complicated in choosing.

Leaders of opposition parties, such as Mamadou Diop Decroix (African Party for Democracy and Nationalism/And Jëf (AJ/PADS)), was one of the leaders gathered in a new platform called the Democratic and Social Front of National Resistance Against Constitutional and Electoral Manipulations in Senegal. They ruled out any negotiations with those in power and called on the people to mobilise in front of the National Assembly on 19 April 2018, the day of the vote on the law. Nonetheless, the law was adopted on 18 June 2018, and on 9 May 2018, by Décision No. 1/C/2018, the seven judges of the Senegalese Constitutional Council declared their institution incompetent, as they usually do, to rule on the appeal introduced by some members of the opposition asking for the annulment of the sponsorship law. According to the opposition parties, the power seeks through the Sponsorship Act to eliminate some of the candidates, and give more chances to the current serving President Sall to be re-elected in the presidential election of 24 February 2019.

Uncertain about his re-election in 2017, President Sall solicited the expertise of law specialists to stifle the presidential ambitions of his rivals. The discrediting and weakening of opposition leaders such as his former prime minister Abdoul Mbaye, the son of Judge Kéba Mbaye and leader of the Alliance for Citizenship and Labor (ACT), his former Socialist allies, such as Barthélemy Dias and especially the mayor of Dakar (Khalifa Ababacar Sall), went through appropriate court proceedings all controlled and supervised from above by the presidency. What the candidate Sall once decried as ‘institutional violence’ (Fall, 2018: 414) is Wade’s use of institutions and laws to stay in power. Yet, the same symbolic violence was adopted by Sall via the referendum and the Sponsorship Act, continuing his mentor’s strategies of destabilising political institutions.
Conclusion

This chapter sought to trace the political history of Senegal in regards to major religions, especially Islam, from 1980 to 2018. In December 1980, Abdou Diouf became the designated successor of Senghor, but he was also supported by some marabouts to secure three terms. Yet, his regime was unable to contain the rise of opposition parties and many political protests, especially in the streets of major cities, so he was forced to co-opt some religious figures between 1983 and 2000. Without being successful in the long run, Diouf adopted neo-authoritarian practices during his time in power. Later, Wade and the PDS, the most prominent party in the public space since Senghor’s time, with coalitions of political parties, prompted the first political alternation of power in Senegal in 2000.

Wade became a Muridi-president who collaborated with leaders of the two largest Sufi orders, the Muridiyya and the Tijaniyya. The first time he visited the head of the Catholic Church, the Archbishop of Dakar, Monsignor Theodore Adrien Sarr was between the two rounds of the 2012 elections. He had limited or no actions vis-à-vis representatives of traditional religions and the so-called Islamism movements such as the leaders of Ibadu Rahmān or the Al-Falāh Salafī Movement for Islamic Culture. Wade also experienced predatory and authoritarian practices that undesirably put together the opposition as a single political movement which finally supported the candidate Macky Sall in the 2012 presidential election.

Sall tried to change the institutions but maintained the ‘Senegalese social contract’ (between the state and Sufi orders). His regime continued to work with religious leaders by investing in both Muslim and Christian religious cities. He also tracked down opposition leaders (President Wade’s son, Karim, among others) and put some in jail, and also instructed his advisers to rewrite the constitution and submit it to the people in a referendum. The president used an uncertain but more legitimate and democratic way to stay in power, not involving the Parliament where the vote might pass easily but be widely perceived as illegitimate. This subterfuge allowed him to break his word to change his presidential term from seven to five years and stay two more years according to the Constitution. Finally, for the opposition, President Sall set the Sponsorship Act to dismiss many candidates in the presidential election of 24 February 2019 (with only five candidates including himself). For all these institutional reforms, religious leaders remain divided: sometimes they denounce the undemocratic practices and sometimes they accept the policies of the head of state, because Sall has invested billions of local CFA francs in religious cities through his Programme of Rehabilitation of Religious Cities.

The Catholic Church is constant in giving democratic lessons to the Senegalese in general and politicians in particular. For the Christmas Eve celebration of 2018, the Archbishop of Dakar, Monsignor Benjamin Ndiaye, made a patriotic speech, galvanising political actors and the Senegalese citizens in general.

In Senegal religions, political parties and the central state have all contributed to strengthening democracy. But the citizens are the ones who are seeking to make the Senegalese model exemplary in the world. For example, they can resist any anti-democratic regime (that is, by dismissal of such a regime), as well as make a change through their votes (that is, election of a new regime). A residual problem for developing the country is that Senegalese tend to vote against a candidate rather than vote for a politician or his or her policies. As a result, candidates are not generally elected because of their party programmes but because of social, religious, political and economic affinities and, as a result, the more things change the more they stay the same.
Notes

1 As of 29 December 2018, there were 309 political parties in Senegal, if we trust the Minister of the Interior, Aly Ngouille Ndiaye, who was talking in Wolof on a political show ‘Face aux citoyens’ on the National Television Channel (RTS), available on YouTube.

2 All the results of the elections from 1980 to 2012 are sourced from the African Elections Database (AED), retrieved from http://africanelections.tripod.com/sn.html.

3 My translation from Wolof, see also Villalón (1995: 263). A political ndigal is a vote order, a voting recommendation, a vote instruction or a vote consign pronounced by a marabout to ask his disciples to vote for a candidate. From 1988 onwards there is no ndigal from central caliphs of Sufi orders, nevertheless marabouts can support or predict the victory of their candidates.

4 The Dahiratoul Moustarchidine Wal Moustarchidati (French spelling) is the branch of the Tijaniyya whose ‘moral leader’ (or responsible moral) is Moustapha Sy, and his father Cheikh Tidiane Sy (1925–2017) is their spiritual guide. For more details on this vast Islamic movement, see Samson (2014) and Diallo (2010).

5 For the journalist Coulibaly, Wade was the mastermind of the murder of Judge Babacar Sèye who was a former member of the Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS) which became the PS in 1976. He is also a Tijani adept from Saint Louis, disciple of the KGT El Hadji Abdoul Aziz Sy (1900–1997). Not only did Wade release the so-called murderers of the judge, he also offered them economic projects, ‘compensated Sèye family without informing the people’, and finally passed an amnesty law for the murderers, validated by the Constitutional Council. For more details on Sèye’s assassination, see Coulibaly (2005). It is important to recall the context in which the judge was murdered. Kéba Mbaye was the president of the Constitutional Council: he stepped down on 2 March 1993 without, for the first time, asking the advice of his spiritual guide the KGT (Sy) before taking his decision as he usually would do (Fall, 2018: 268).

6 Murid candidates Ousseynou Fall and his Republican Party of Senegal (PRS) received 1.11 percent of the votes, and Cheikh Abdoulaye Dièye and his Front for Socialism and Democracy-Benno Jubel (FSD-BJ) received 0.97 percent in the first round of the presidential election in 2000. Dièye’s slogan was Allahu Wahiidin (He is Allah, the One).

7 Ibrahima Fall and his coalition Taxaw Tem (1.81 percent) and Cheikh Bamba Dièye, the mayor of Saint-Louis (1.93 percent). Idrissa Seck was born into a Tijani family but was not publicly submitted to a marabout. He recently joined the Muridiyya, whether for electoral gains or personal convictions, it is difficult to tell.

8 Sall was born into a Tijani family but recently embraced the Muridiyya, one of the most powerful Sufi orders in the country. He resigned from all his official positions won through the PDS and, on 5 December 2008, created his own party (Alliance for the Republic–Hope or APR–Yaakar).

9 This was the Constitution of 2001.

10 The complete results of the elections according to the Constitutional Council can be retrieved from: www.lesoleil.sn/images/Docs/Resultats_Legislatives_2017_2.pdf.

11 Mbaye Thiandoum, ‘Catastrophe électorale (sic): les opposants crient au scandale: Macky Sall se réjouit de la bonne organisation’, Les Échos, No. 199 of 1 August 2017, p. 7. The opposition claims that the APR leaders supported and financed some opposition parties. The constitutional expert Diop notes that in Senegal, there are no laws on the financing of political parties even less legal or regulatory device setting a strict control of the limits of campaign expenses (2011: 301, my translation).


13 See also Dagne (2017: 150).

14 Mor Tall Gaye: ‘El Hadji Issa Sall, tête de liste nationale du Parti de l’Unité et du Rassemblement (PUR): “Nous nous attendions à être majoritaires à l’Assemblée si…”’, L’Observateur No. 4156 of 1 August 2017, p. 5.


References


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