

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA: SOURCES OF SENEGAL'S SUCCESS

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Senegal remains the only Francophone nation in Africa to have avoided a military intervention or a successful coup. The former French colony, previously merged with the French Sudan, was granted their independence in 1960. Senegal has continued to develop steadily as a nation by reducing its dependence on France and becoming increasingly democratized. In 2010, Freedom House gave Senegal a rating of three for both political rights and civil liberties, giving the nation a status of "partly free" (Freedom House, 2010). Senegal is one of over a dozen nations on the continent with this Freedom House status. The state has been associated with both Ghana and Tanzania as nations whose liberalization is on a gradual path of progress in comparison to nations such as South Africa or Mali whose liberalization pace is much faster (Clark, 2007). The nation's development is continuing to improve, but as demonstrated by Cote d'Ivoire, there is still the risk of succumbing to political regression. Senegal's success has no single point of origin. Plausible explanatory variables include government effectiveness, freedom of expression in the media, and, more recently, support of opposition parties. The dynamics of their liberation and the rapport between the state and their former colonizer form the foundation of Senegal's move towards democracy. This study consists of a comprehensive determination of the sources of the nation's political success based on an examination of existing literature on Senegal's political development.