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# Strategies of Subversion in Vertically-Divided Contexts: *Decentralization and Urban Service Delivery in Senegal*

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# Overview

- The structure of local government plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of service delivery
- Local government operates in, and is affected by, the larger political environment in which it is situated
- Urban areas are especially politically contentious, given their role as opposition strongholds
- So, does vertically-divided authority have the same impact on service delivery in francophone Africa?

# Senegal in Context

- Approximately 50% of population in urban areas
- Defined by its urban primacy
- Competitive politics driven primarily by rural-urban divides
- Dakar is most financially stable but still receives considerable donor attention



# Central Argument

- Under President Wade, the central government preferred to limit autonomy of sub-national officials in instances of good performance while increasing their culpability for poor service delivery
- Manifested in three ways:
  - Backtracking on political decentralization
  - Reduce inter-governmental transfers and/or limitations on taxation or delays to approving donor funding
  - Exploitation of administrative ambiguity

# Decentralization

- PS government introduced Decentralization Laws in 1996
  - Divided country into 10 (14) regions;
  - Regions contain both communes (150) and rural communities (353)
  - In Dakar, mayor elected by 90 member council for a 5 year mandate
- Law number 96-97 stipulated the transfer of 9 competencies to local authorities but no exclusive domains
- CADAK/CAR responsible for trash management
- Article 58 of Law No.96-07 states no competency should be transferred without adequate resources
  - *Fonds de dotation de la décentralisation* (FDD)
- *Unicité de Caisse* limits autonomy over tax revenue
  - Dakar controls only 10 % of its own tax revenue

# Status of Urban Dakar

- 42% of Dakar's population lives below poverty line and 76% labor in informal sector
- Slums cover 35% of Dakar's land area and plagued by perennial flooding
- Approximately 25% of population has no organized trash collection and dumps in their own neighborhood
- Water and sanitation are an "island" of success
  - 80.0 % with flushing toilet and 91.3 % with water access through internal pipes or public tap

# PDS Victory in 2000

- Abdoulaye Wade's PDS defeats Abdou Diouf in 2000 presidential elections
- Main source of support was the urban poor and campaigned on "sanitation as a matter of dignity"



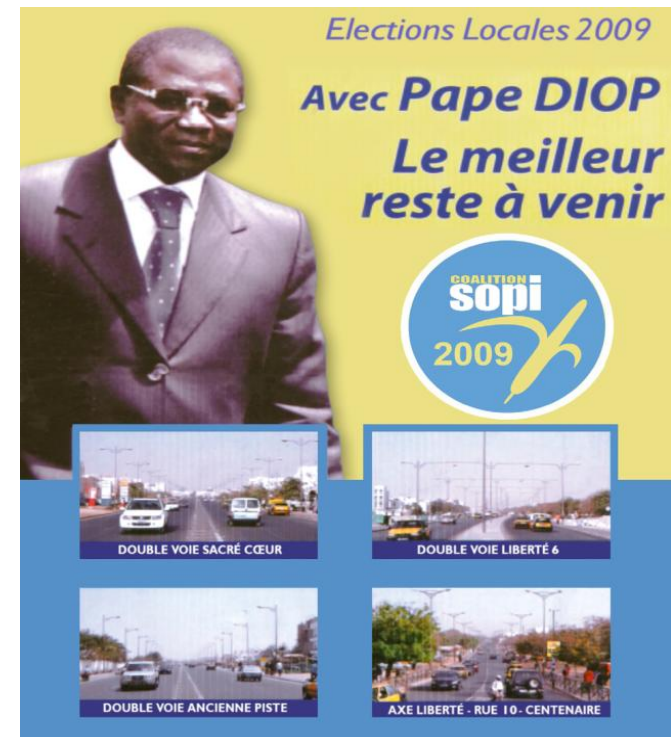
# Mixed Embrace of Political Decentralization

- Initially dismissed all local councilors from PS in 2001
- Local elections in 2002 brought Wade allies into key offices, including Pape Diop as Dakar's mayor
- But, growing political threats were dismissed as mayors (Idrissa Seck in Thies in 2004)
- Declining popularity of Wade after 2007 elections resulted in two postponements of local elections (until May 2008, then May 2009)



# Backtracking on Political Decentralization

- Opposition BSS gained control in 7 regions after 2009 local elections and took over Dakar
  - Captured 13 of Dakar's 19 *communes*
  - Khalifa Sall of the PS elected mayor



# Backtracking on Political Decentralization

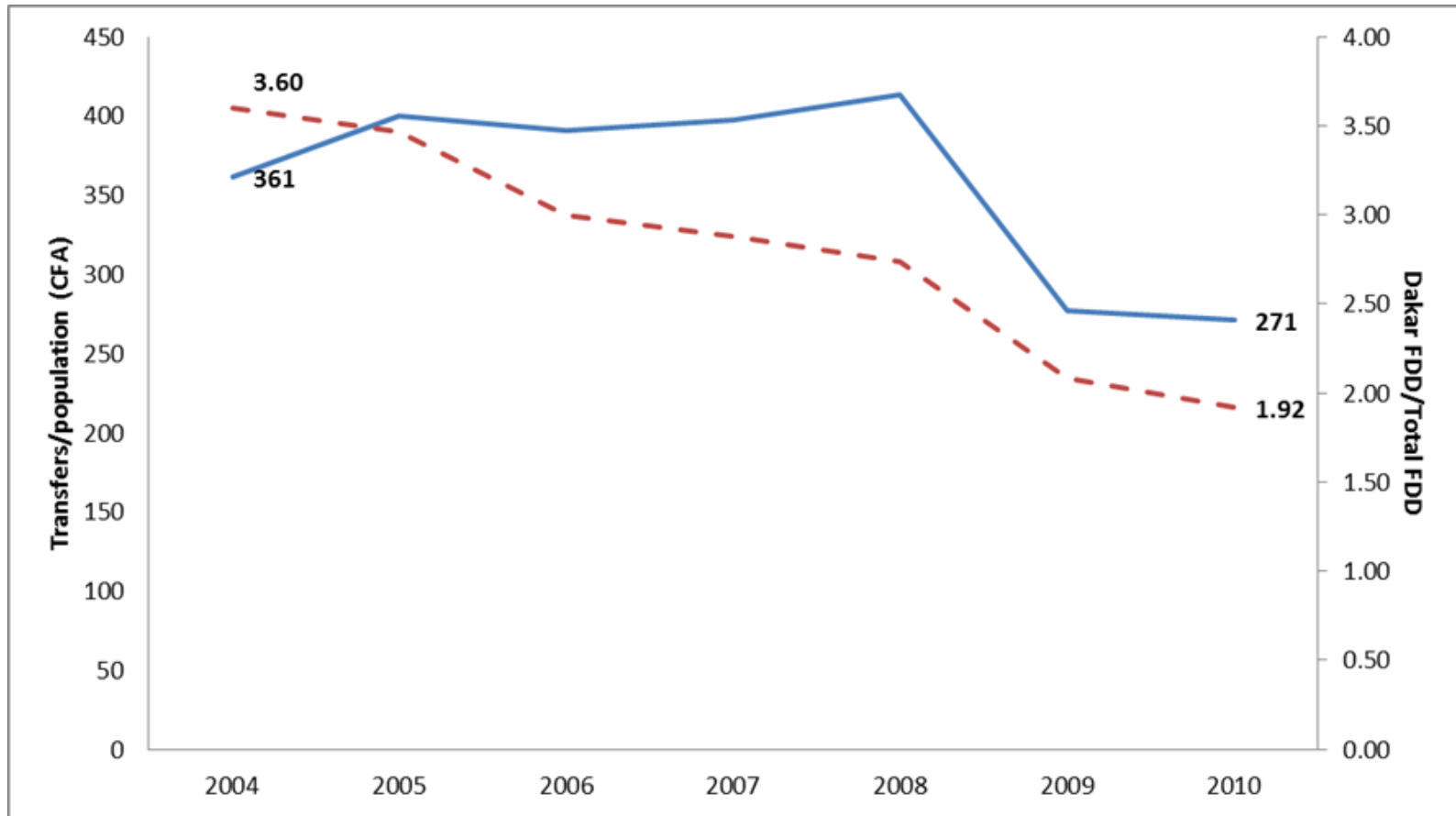
- Additional administrative *découpage*
  - Controversial because elected mayor is replaced by a “special delegation”
  - In April 2011, targeted mostly opposition collectivities, including Dakar, Fatick, and Kaolack
  - Justification was that smaller collectivities bring the people closer to the government, even though these collectivities lack necessary capacity

# Preventing Fiscal Decentralization

- Inter-governmental transfers – FDD
  - Rules governing transfers not in constitution so distributed in an *ad-hoc* manner
  - Criteria decided on yearly basis during meeting of CNDCL, which is presided over by the President and Prime Minister
    - Transparency problematic – local citizens do not always realize that FDD comes from the central government (interview with USAID official)
  - FDD grew from 4.9 billion CFA to 14.9 billion CFA between 1997-2009 but, ....

# Preventing Fiscal Decentralization

## Evolution of FDD over time



Sources: Calculations based on FDD data (Gilbert and Taugourdeau, forthcoming), Dakar FDD and population data (ADM 2008b; Ville de Dakar 2010, 2011), and the Grand investment strategy for Dakar.

# Preventing Fiscal Decentralization

- Own tax revenue covers about 80% of revenue
  - Relatively small tax base with no ability to change tax laws
- Donor finance
  - Donors do not support FDD, only municipal contract with Dakar through PRECOL
  - Some attempts by central government to change the PRECOL program in aftermath of 2009 elections

“In a context where most of the cities are in the hands of the opposition, the State doesn’t have an incentive to help them increase their own resources. There’s not a large willingness of the State in this political context” (*official at the AFD*)

# Augmenting Administrative Ambiguity

- Already opaque nature of local responsibilities vis-à-vis the central government
  - Difficult for local authorities
    - “The population does not know the State. For the population, it’s the mayor. When the people have a problem, they go to the mayor.”  
(Mamadou Mbaye, mayor of Dakar’s Grand Yoff)
- At least three key areas have been affected:
  1. Urban flooding
  2. Trash removal
  3. Street hawking/informal sector

# Augmenting Administrative Ambiguity

- Urban flooding
  - Rainwater & urban environment are local government responsibilities
  - Prior to 2009, President saw flooding as natural disaster (e.g. Plan Jaxaay)
  - After mid-2009 floods, PDS spokesperson pointed to article 129 of the local collectivities



“Elected members of the opposition only have to declare their incapacity to take charge of the flooding in their jurisdiction. They only have to say out loud that they cannot and the government will see what it can do for the benefit of the population.”

*(Minister of Decentralization)*

# Augmenting Administrative Ambiguity

- Trash collection
  - Environment and natural resources are local responsibilities
  - Communes of Dakar execute this through CADAK/CAR, presided over by mayor
  - In 2010, CADAK/ CAR developed strategic plan for managing solid waste removal
  - President Wade issued decree to create SOPROSEN, a private agency to collect trash
  - By delaying payment of trash collectors in 2011, trash accumulation gave weight to Government's decree





# Conclusions on Senegal

PDS government engaged in strategies of subversion in all three domains of decentralization

- Autonomy undermined through appointments, resources distributed in discriminant manner & taxes limited, and offloads responsibilities that are less visible and stymies efforts that are more visible

“What I’m worried about is that Khalifa Sall will work well and a lot for the Dakarais” (Wade, Feb. 2011)



Evidence of new president, Macky Sall, reversing some of these policies, esp. on political decentralization

# Broader Conclusions

- Vertically-divided authority increases propensity to politicize service delivery and to reduce transparency around accountability
- Most prevalent with regards to political and administrative decentralization
- Intervention on fiscal matters worse in contexts of low levels of tax revenue and where inter-governmental transfers are not embedded into a formal legal structure
- Key factors that exacerbate these dimensions include regimes that are highly personalized and where there is a lack of performance incentives
- Implications for how decentralization is designed and for creating mechanisms of transparency for citizens

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