

# DAKAR



# 3 DAKAR

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During the 20th century, the city of Dakar figured as the capital city of several territories, including countries such as Mali and Gambia. This attests to the central role it has played, and continues to play, in West Africa. Today, Dakar is firmly established as the capital of Senegal. A port city with a population of over 2.5 million and a location on a peninsula which continues to attract people from the country's hinterland, Dakar has grown rapidly. It is administratively known as the Dakar Region, and comprises four *départements* (administrative districts) (see Figure 3.1) – Dakar, the original old city with a population of 1 million; Pikine, a large, sprawling department with a population of some 850 000; and Guédiawaye and Rufisque, two smaller departments of some 300 000 residents each (Diop 2008). The latter two represent the most recent peri-urban incorporation of settlements in the Dakar Region. Each of the four departments, in turn, comprise a number of communes, or smaller administrative units.

This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first, 'The urban geology of Dakar', commences with a short history of the establishment and growth of the city, its economy and population. Subsequent sections discuss urban-planning activities before and after independence, government attempts through policy and practice to address the urban housing and urban transport challenges, and attempts to plan secondary commercial centres in the Dakar Region as more and more urban settlements are developed at some distance from the city centre of Dakar. These sections deal with the major governmental and private-sector challenges posed by the massive urban migration streams that flow into the city and its peri-urban areas. The last section of this part discusses the notion of symbolic power that the government and the three presidents of Senegal since independence have invested in the built environment of the capital city. This includes the construction of public buildings, statues and monuments, as well as changes to the nomenclature of streets and other public areas, which serve as indicators of new ideological approaches, particularly after independence from colonial rule.

The second part, 'Dakar in the national context', begins with a discussion on the comparative demography of the capital city within the national framework. This section examines the ethno-linguistic characteristics of Dakar in the national context. Subsequent discussion addresses national governance and the role it plays in the capital city, in terms of both policy and practice. The third section describes events of counter-power or opposition to the actions of national governments that have taken place in the capital. Attention is paid both to the organisations that have asserted their counter-power and to where their actions have taken place.

## The urban geology of Dakar

### The creation of Senegal's capital

In the pre-colonial period, traditional power was in the hands of the Lébou community, who settled in the Dakar region in the 15th century. At that time, the region was organised as a republic, with Ndakarou (on the site of present-day Dakar) as the capital. This settlement entered into trade relations with European colonial powers and was incorporated by the French into a military settlement during the 19th century. Members of the Lébou community, however, managed to maintain their identity and draw the attention of the various state authorities to their interests. Today, the Lébou continue to practise their mystical powers through collective sacrifices in some areas of the capital.

The post-independence political ascendancy of Dakar is often considered to coincide with the end of the occupation of the country by the French colonialists and with reconciliation between competing groups beyond the city in the interior of Senegal. Events were more complex than this, however. Formal French recognition of Gorée Island and Dakar dates from the late 19th century and the island was incorporated into the city in the 1920s. The first black mayor of the city, Blaise Diagne, was elected during that decade. At that time, infrastructural and urban development, which mark the true beginning of Dakar's political significance, included the building of a wharf and port, and the construction of a railway station and railway line. These developments led to the city replacing Saint Louis as the capital of French West Africa in 1902, and to the construction in Dakar of the palace of the governor general. Ernest Roume, the first governor, also undertook numerous other infrastructural projects in the city. Reasons for the transfer of the colonial capital included the relatively small size of St Louis, the evident economic development of Dakar and the establishment of this infrastructure.

During World War II, the control of French West Africa – as it was then called – and its capital, Dakar, was a strategic military objective for the warring nations. A tentative allied landing in 1940 led to the memorable Battle of Dakar. One should not overlook the successive visits of two colonial French Presidents to Dakar: Vincent Auriol and, during the 1958 referendum, General de Gaulle, who gave the Senegalese the opportunity to vote either for independence or to remain under French sovereignty. De Gaulle's historic speech, which took place on what is today known as Independence Square, was an important political moment for the French West African capital. Senegal chose to remain within the French community in the context of a legal framework that granted the country a substantial measure of decision-making autonomy. Independence was granted in 1960 after the short-lived establishment of the Mali Federation – an attempt at the union of Mali and Senegal with Dakar as its capital – which collapsed soon after its formation.

Established during the colonial period, Senegal's economy was focused on the processing of local products destined for metropolitan France. The construction of the railway enabled the transportation of products from the country's hinterland

and the export of raw materials. The harbour, a stone's throw away from the railway station, and close to the administration centre of the Plateau – where most ministries and state administrations have their headquarters – played a crucial role in trade with metropolitan France. An intensive period of public works ensured the concentration of trading activities in the harbour neighbourhood. This was the first location in Senegal where both economic and political power were sited in one place – an institutional arrangement that was preserved during the independence era of the early 1960s.

After independence, the Dakar region underwent sudden and rapid development for a second time. Dakar's population first soared after it became the capital. From 1960 to 1976, the annual population growth rate in the city was 5.1%, and between 1976 and 1988 it was 3.9%. Analysis of land occupation shows that the effects of urbanisation were well documented, but remained largely uncontrolled. The following figures (Diop 2004) show the rising urbanisation rates:

- 23% (1960)
- 30% (1970)
- 34% (1976)
- 39% (1988)

The last figure, which exceeds the sub-Saharan average of 29%, is a rate of urbanisation that is detrimental to rural areas – an issue of concern in a country which claims to have achieved food self-sufficiency. Within a 20-year period, the population in Dakar almost doubled, from 1 609 820 in 1990 to over 2.5 million in 2007 (Diop 2008). The rapid population growth was largely due to a massive rural exodus. Over the period 2003 to 2007, some 117 000 people are reported to have migrated to Dakar. In 2004, 54% of the national urban population lived in Dakar, as opposed to 52.6% in 2002 (ANSD 2008). Dakar appears to be the final destination for most migrants from rural areas, from other cities in the hinterland and from outside the country. An analysis of migrant profiles in the Dakar region reveals that one in two people under 25 were born outside the region, a statistic implying that large numbers of young people are migrating to Dakar, mainly, it would seem, for economic reasons. These enormous migrant streams pose serious challenges to such matters as the environment, sanitation, public security, management of public infrastructure, housing planning and employment.

### **Urban planning before and after independence<sup>1</sup>**

Urban development plans for the Dakar region date from 1862. In 1901, urbanisation levels in Senegal meant that the colonial administration was urged to design a new city development plan. The built-up area in Dakar at that time was no larger than 2 km<sup>2</sup>. Between 1914 and 1915, a development plan was designed for Plateau and for Médina, and in 1915, after an outbreak of plague, a Médina urban neighbourhood was declared. However, there was no integrated and credible planning programme in place for the city until the mid-1940s.

Half a dozen urban planning programmes were launched in Dakar between 1946 and 2001. Their model was the 1946 Urban Development Plan (PDU), which consolidated most of the aspects of previous urban policy, with a few changes to the planning rules and division of zones that had preceded it. The PDU aided the huge infrastructural programme entrusted to the Temporary Planning Service of Greater Dakar, which entered into operation soon after the PDU was initiated. Ten years after its approval, in 1961, the 1946 PDU was reviewed by the Housing and Planning Directorate, part of the national Ministry of Public Works, Planning and Transport. As a consequence of the review, a new PDU was compiled in 1967, based on a projected city population of approximately 1 million by 1981. (The census population figure in 1980 was found to be 1 161 677.) This plan included programmes aimed at addressing the burgeoning population of the city and identified as major issues to be addressed the lack of financial means to implement the PDU; the need for a 'once-off' solution for the relocation of illegally settled people; and the ineffective efforts to anticipate the occupation of undeveloped areas.

Dakar's 2001 PDU – also the result of a review of the previous city plan – aimed to offer a consultative framework to all urban stakeholders. It included the following four key objectives:

- To develop a balanced spatial plan for the three main *départements* of the region, Dakar, Pikine and Rufisque, while maintaining the centrality of Dakar.
- To prioritise public transport in a bid to improve urban traffic flows.
- To meet communities' expressed needs through planning that took into consideration the particular socio-economic and spatial characteristics of the various groups.
- To design a development programme tailored to the capacities of the local public authorities and households.

### **The housing delivery system**

Given the massive migration streams into the Dakar region since independence, private-sector companies and the two main state organisations responsible for housing provision (the former Société Immobilière du Cap-Vert and the Société Nationale des Habitations à Loyers Modérés) had not been able to keep up with housing demand. By the early 1970s, it was estimated that less than 25 000 houses had been provided. Demand during this decade was actually established to be at least 25 000 houses annually. Accordingly, a significant change in the institutional arrangements set up for the provision of housing in the Dakar region took place from the late 1970s. In 1979, the Housing Bank of Senegal was established with the key role of securing savings intended for housing investment. In 1981, HAMO, a company specialising in the construction of prefabricated houses, was established and in 1988, an urban-development company (SCAT-URBAM) was created with the mandate to develop and sell plots. To support the many professional groups working for easy access to land, a local government assistance office for housing provision was created in 1989 within the Ministry of Housing and Planning. These various

organisations, which operated mainly, but not exclusively, in the Dakar region (with 40 000 members and 9 billion CFA francs saved in 1998), have helped bridge the housing gap, particularly for professionals and others in formal employment residing in Dakar. Moreover, given shortages of land available for residential development, the government has recently earmarked a 660-hectare area in Mbaou (between Pikine and Rufisque) for development, with professionals and private-sector employees as target customers.

There is a lack of adequate accommodation among poorer communities and migrants, most of whom operate in the informal economic sector. Put another way, there is a high and growing demand for social housing in Dakar, which neither the public, nor private, nor non-governmental sectors have been able to provide satisfactorily. The consequences have been wide-scale squatting, non-compliance with city planning regulations in terms of both the location of units, as well as the nature of the constructions themselves, and land speculation by individuals seeking illegal renting arrangements from squatters. Land invasions by residents desperate for plots have also taken place in, for example, Niayes, a fertile strip of land along the coast used for small-scale agriculture.

Government policy in Dakar between 1970 and 1980 was aimed at evicting squatters from settlements deemed to be illegal. On numerous occasions in that decade, squatters were physically removed and their shelters destroyed. Since 1985, a new policy has been emerging (though squatter shelters continued to be demolished until as recently as 1999). Elements of this emergent policy include the construction of units of shelter that are environmentally sound; the recognition by state authorities of selected squatter communities; and the installation and delivery of public services in these settlements. A number of squatter communities have also succeeded in obtaining support from local politicians to be officially recognised. A pilot squatter upgrade project in Dalifort, a community of about 7 000 inhabitants, located between Dakar and Pikine and composed of wooden shacks, is being implemented with the support of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). More generally, over the past decade, government authorities, with the support of foreign partners (GTZ, the French Development Agency, the European Union and the Fondation Droit à la Ville), have been attempting to address this huge challenge.

Implementation of this new policy faces a number of challenges. The nature of many self-built shacks and the manner that land was occupied make upgrading an uphill task. Households in many squatter communities tend to resettle when their immediate circumstances change. Often, the areas occupied by these communities suffer from inadequate drainage systems, which leads to inferior sanitation environments. Access to transport also tends to be restricted in such areas. Current estimates in the Dakar region of the number of residents living in squatter communities range from 36 to 40% of the total population, that is, some 900 000 to 1 million people (Diop 2008).

## **Commercial centres and transport in the Dakar region: The challenge of decentralisation**

Senegal's capital is not only the most densely populated and fastest growing city of the country, but also the hub of trade and commerce. For most residents, markets provide their essential, everyday consumer activity. As a result of the highly centralised urban structure inherited from the colonial system, Plateau and Almadies – both in the heart of the old city – are the administrative, commercial and communication centres. Other minor commercial centres include the markets of Colobane, HLM, Tilène and Castors – all in communes belonging to the department of Dakar itself – as well as Ndiobentaye and the fish market of Pikine, both of which are further from the centre in the new departments of the Dakar region. Given the rapid increase in the urban population outside the original department of Dakar, it is apparent that decentralised commercial centres are required in the three other departments of the region. Four such new centres are being established: Sicap Liberté-Dieuppeul/ Derklé-Grand Yoff and Mermoz/Sacré Cœur in communes of the old department of Dakar, together with Keur Massar and Sébikhotane in the departments of Pikine and Rufisque, respectively. The Mermoz/Sacré Cœur centre is associated with the establishment of colleges and secondary schools close by, whereas the Keur Massar centre is associated with improved housing provision in that neighbourhood.

The Dakar region is geographically funnel-shaped, and this has moulded the transport system, the administration of which remains a great challenge. The transport sector is characterised by poor professional organisation, ageing vehicles and unwieldy companies. Urban transport and tarred roads originated in the old department of Dakar and communities established in the other newer departments have lost out accordingly. An improved, sustainable solution to this system is dependent on the willingness of the authorities to reduce the transport-flow density towards and within certain areas like Plateau in the old department of Dakar. This means that the local urban authorities in the other three departments, which are poorly equipped, need to be improved, as do the roads connecting the four departments. The public authorities responsible for roads and transport have been confronting this challenge since 2000. Private-sector initiatives and improved infrastructure in the communities beyond the old *département* of Dakar (to organise traffic and create business initiatives) seem to be another strategy to stem the flow of traffic into old Dakar. Another is to develop more secondary commercial centres in the departments of Pikine, Guédiawaye and Rufisque.

## **Urban manifestation of nationalism in the built environment**

Although the urban reality in Senegal since the country's independence has been characterised by uncontrolled occupation of land and inferior state provision of infrastructure and services, monuments and other physical symbols heralding a new post-independent nationalism are visible throughout Dakar's urban landscape. The new regime's interest in modernising the capital through such manifestations was often at the expense of the vital needs of urban residents. Different emphases in

the expression of this new nationalism through the built environment are apparent during the three presidential periods after independence.

During the first period, a preoccupation – which became a cultural passion – of the president of the republic, was the belief that nation building would succeed through the meeting, mix and free expression of Senegal's various cultures. President Léopold Senghor encouraged a standardisation in urban planning and architectural designs. Public buildings were constructed according to a particular design typical of African sculpture. He insisted on respect for the laws on land-use planning, and attempted to ensure that zoning and planning standards were adhered to. During his term, for instance, residential areas were limited to one-storey houses. This use of the built environment as a tool to exhibit the various aspects of the Senegalese way of life led to the construction of broad roads in which Independence Day could be celebrated. This approach to the built environment, however, did not succeed in opposing the forces of modernisation and probably contributed towards concerns regarding security during celebrations. Independence Day is now celebrated in Obélisque Square, also known as the Independence Memorial, on General Charles de Gaulle Avenue. The 30-metre-high memorial is one of the city's key symbols. Others include religious and sports venues. The central mosque, inaugurated in 1963, is one of the most conspicuous buildings in the city. The Demba Diop Stadium hosted one of the country's most memorable sporting events, when the Senegal national soccer team defeated the French for the first time in history. On the cultural side, Dakar's Daniel Sorano Theatre has hosted significant cultural events, including the World Black People's Arts festival in 1966.

As a result of the global economic crisis of the 1980s and Senegal's subsequent so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes, the Senegalese government scaled down the building of monuments nationally. The second president, Abdou Diouf, continued to change the names of roads, schools and public places in the capital. This was partly a strategy on his part to be seen to rid the capital of the vestiges of French imperialism and neocolonialism, which his political opponents accused him of supporting. As his mark of attachment to the national identity, many schools and streets with colonial names in Dakar and in other cities have been renamed after national heroes.

The third period, that of President Wade, saw a return to the construction of physical symbols manifesting Senegalese nationalism in Dakar. One example is the Millennium Gate, which opens to the ocean and which symbolises the beginning of a new era with a new political regime (see Figure 3.2). This monument represents the youth, who are said to have brought the president to power. A second symbol of political change is represented by a bronze statue of a young football player, which immortalises the country's various victories during the African Cup of Nations and the 2002 FIFA World Cup (Figure 3.3).

President Wade also engaged in the implementation of an old project – the construction of road interchanges to ease traffic flows in Dakar – and supported the ongoing construction of a motorway from Dakar to Diamniadio. The building



of memorials also became a top priority. These included the Corniche, the commemorative monument of a ferry disaster (a government-owned ferry, the *Joola*, capsized in 2002, drowning close to 2 000 passengers); and the controversial statue, in a public station, by Dupont and Demba, erected in memory of the native Senegalese infantrymen who supported the French during World War II (Figure 3.4). These physical manifestations of nationalism have done little to challenge the built environment of the colonial era, and most are located downtown in the capital's old area, where the main roads converge, despite the growth of new decentralised commercial centres elsewhere in the Dakar region.

## Dakar in the national context

### Comparative demographic trends

Occupying an area of 550 km<sup>2</sup> (i.e. 0.3% of the country's total surface area), Dakar is home to a large portion of the national population: 14% at the time of independence, 17% in 1971, 18.8% in 1976 and 21.6% in 1988. Today, the city accounts for 25% of the country's population and generates over 80% of Senegal's economy. In 1960, the city's population density was 930 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> and 2 707 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> in 1998. By way of comparison, in the Tambacounda region south-east of Dakar, the averages were six inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> and 35/km<sup>2</sup>, respectively. Administrative, commercial, industrial and tertiary activities, among others, are all concentrated in Dakar. The Dakar region contains more than 46% of the country's civil servants, 97% of transport and trade staff, 96% of bank employees, 95% of industry and commerce and 87% of permanent urban workers. Dakar contributes 55% of the country's GDP, with an active, formally employed population of 591 790 (MUAT 2007).

Migration to Dakar has led to an ethnic mix of residents, with the Wolof group remaining prominent. Cruise O'Brien has argued convincingly that by shifting the centre of influence in Senegal into cities, the French colonial administration privileged the Wolof group, whose language has become the prevailing language of business in Dakar and in the country as a whole.<sup>2</sup> The residents of Dakar are a mixture of the Wolof, Mandinka, Peul, Diara, Soninke, Lebou and Serer ethnolinguistic groups. Nationally, the Wolof represent the largest group (followed by the Peul, the Serer and the Lebou). As discussed later, religion has also played an important role in the public life of the city.

### Character of the national state and city government

In discussing national governance in Senegal and the part Dakar plays within it, it is necessary to distinguish between the formal system of government and administration and the ways in which these operate in everyday life.

Officially, Senegal is a unitary state, with power decentralised to the local-government level. The country's 2001 constitution, approved through a national referendum, grants freedom of association and speech subject to safeguarding

territorial integrity and national security. Institutions have been put in place to guarantee the separation of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The supreme court was only recently established. Executive power is controlled by a parliament that is composed of a national assembly and a senate, with direct and indirect votes. In 2006, the number of members of parliament increased from 120 to 150. In terms of administration, Senegal is divided into regions headed by governors; each region is made up of departments managed by prefects; and each department is subdivided into districts (of which there are 94), controlled by sub-prefects. Together with state administration there are rural and urban local governments, which are legal entities with financial autonomy.

In Dakar, central government has delegated various responsibilities to the ten local authorities that operate in the region. Although each local authority ought in theory to be able to wield authority in its local jurisdiction, in reality, this authority is held by the political party in power at the national level. This is an unfortunate system, particularly during election campaigns. In effect, the local authorities have a restricted role, are beholden to the central government and are rarely able to be responsive to people's needs. This situation is particularly evident in the capital city, where central government has a monopoly over the public finances<sup>3</sup> and effectively manages local urban affairs with the involvement neither of local authorities nor of community groups. Such a system is rarely able to be responsive to urban residents' needs. Central government's control over the capital city is not only evident at the local-authority level, but its security strategy is also visible in the number of military camps throughout old Dakar – a concentration of power inherited from the colonial era. This strategy is reinforced by the presence of a home ministry office and two police stations. The state media, one of the key institutional tools for managing the state, are also headquartered in this department.

At a general level, from 1960 to 2008, populism appears to have characterised the management of both central and local public institutions. Many of the public successors of the pioneers of independence have been corrupt, which has damaged administrative structures and wasted national resources, and unfortunately, there appears to be no change in the speeches of political and religious leaders and of civil-society representatives. A good example of executive interference in the administration of justice was the delay in establishing who was culpable for the sinking of the *Joola* on 26 September 2002.<sup>4</sup> This ferry was state-owned and those responsible for the tragic event have yet to be identified and tried. A close analysis of Senegal's postcolonial history reveals the existence of a core group made up of public workers, businessmen, politicians and various brokers who have taken advantage of the postcolonial situation by means of populism. Alliances between these groups, and especially religious leaders among them, have brought about what may be called a 'confusion of powers.' Administrative reforms have not succeeded in reducing central control over local governments, and populism has prevailed over sound management and the creation of an effective administration.

## Power and counter-power

As the capital, Dakar has witnessed not only the institutional power of its various post-independence governments, but also meetings, rallies, demonstrations and violent confrontations symbolising opposition to these governments, or counter-power. This has been exhibited by opposition political parties and groups, trade unions and other economic groups, religious groups and informal traders. Demonstrations of counter-power have tended to take place at particular sites in the old city of Dakar.

Before the emergence in the 1990s of political parties as legitimate competitors at the polls, such opposition parties were weak and operated mainly in secret. University students based in Dakar had the main part to play in crystallising residents' concerns and translating them into public demands. These led in the 1970s and 1980s to a number of violent protests. Cheikh Anta Diop Avenue and Independence Square (where people had gathered to demand freedom from colonisation during General De Gaulle's visit in 1958) were popular sites for political protests. The growth of political parties from the 1990s onwards shifted opposition activities from the university to a number of densely settled neighbourhoods, mainly in Niary Tally, Colobane and Obélisque. Sites used for demonstrations in these neighbourhoods were places typically used by the communities for traditional wrestling shows and dances. Although 10% of city space in the Dakar region is set aside for parks and gardens, these are completely absent in the old city. In fact, during the 2002 FIFA World Cup, fear of demonstrations led the public authorities to instruct the ministries to develop space around Lycée Kennedy in order to prevent soccer fans from heading to the presidential palace in the event of the national team winning matches. In its urban-development policy, the state government seems to have created a mechanism for reducing the opposition's activities by significantly modifying the places where opposition parties mobilise and meet. For instance, Niary Tally was made into a public garden, complete with dustbins and parking lots, after opposition rallies took place there. Today, opposition groups generally meet at Obélisque Square around the national radio and TV station. Some demonstrations are also held in poorer areas.

Prior to multi-party democratic competition, introduced in the 1990s, public meetings were generally authorised, but rallies were not. Such provisions aimed to promote security in the city, but in reality only served to exacerbate the discontentment of people who, at that time, had limited channels to express their frustrations and seek solutions to their demands. As a consequence, demonstrations were typically spontaneous and often led to acts of vandalism. At the same time, the period of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (together with more recent rises in the prices of oil and other essential commodities) resulted in a flourishing informal sector as the only economic sector capable of providing work for the semi-skilled and unskilled. However, the city centre is designed to exclude these thousands of young informal traders from operating their small-scale businesses on which their livelihoods depend. This rapidly led to the unorganised and illegal occupation of land in the old city and to widespread non-compliance with urban regulations regarding the use of public roads and setting up commercial businesses. In October

2007, a major violent confrontation took place in the old city as state police clashed with informal traders operating small businesses in markets, stores and bus stations.

It would be inappropriate to neglect religious power in this discussion. Many forms of resistance against the colonial power were based on religious teachings. These included the creation of *zawiyas* (dedicated religious and prayer areas) – mainly in St Louis, Tivaouane, Rufisque and Dakar – which promoted peaceful negotiations with the colonial authority before independence. Zawiya Elhadj Malick and Dakar Cathedral are examples of sites where such mediation took place. These forms of peaceful mediation continued after the colonial era, and for years the Zawiya of Dakar has been used as a place where citizens and political parties meet to reconcile their differences. In the 1980s, for instance, this took place through the mediation of the religious leader Elhadj Abdoul Aziz Sy. Economic activities have also played a role in the exercise of religious power: close to the main market of the old city, Sandaga, an area owned by a religious leader has emerged. Keur Serigne bi has become a well-known site for selling traditional medicines. Many other such trading activities developed during the 1980s throughout the city.

Throughout the period after independence, trade unions have played a critical role in fashioning the development of presidential and central-government powers. Indeed, certain trade unions have been affiliated with the regime in power, whereas others have maintained their independence from government. To date, the government appears by and large to have succeeded in keeping political party and trade union opposition in check by using its experience in managing social conflicts without resorting to force. Two illustrations may be given.

The central government has consistently attempted to control the mass media, and there is accordingly a substantial gap between government statements and government action regarding state media. In reaction, protests both from the main media trade union (the Trade Union of Communication and Information Professionals) and from the National Conference of Opposition Party Leaders<sup>5</sup> led to the creation of the Radio and TV High Council in 1991 and the Audiovisual High Council<sup>6</sup> in 1998. Both these bodies are recognised by the central government as legitimate sites for negotiation. A second example is found in the establishment of an informal sector trade union, the National Trade and Industrial Union, which has successfully challenged public authorities on a number of occasions.<sup>7</sup> This was achieved after regular discussions between the two parties took place over a series of both local economic, as well as political, issues. It is worth noting that members of this union have become successful businessmen in their own rights, rather than through political patronage.

## Conclusion

Dakar accounts for 0.3% of the country's surface area, accommodates 25% of the population and provides goods and services that amount to well over half of the national economy. The key characteristics of this city are, as we have seen,

uncontrolled growth, unorganised and unbalanced land occupation, a marked housing crisis and a declining urban environment. In addition, state administration of the Dakar region is complex and based on different types of government systems involving local and national, as well as urban and rural authorities. This mix typically leads to fragmented planning and policy implementation and associated conflict between these authorities at various levels, partly because there is no consultative forum in place to bring together representatives of these bodies. It is appropriate, therefore, to conclude by identifying the strategy that is currently being followed in the Dakar region to address these various and daunting challenges.

The Dakar Region Development Strategy (*Stratégie de Développement Urbain du Grand-Dakar* [see [www.sendeveloppementlocal.com](http://www.sendeveloppementlocal.com)]) is a project that is designed with the support of the Cities Alliance – a global coalition of cities and their development partners – to improve metropolitan governance, ensure better access to basic urban services and stimulate the economy in order to assist in the reduction of urban poverty. This project envisages a new participative approach to urban management by involving different stakeholders in the identification of common solutions to these issues. A broad coalition has been established which includes the national government, a number of international organisations and the local governments of the Dakar region. In addition, a pilot project has been launched that aims to promote urban development across communal and departmental boundaries and may accordingly be seen as an exercise in coordination and collaborative analysis and planning. The potential of such initiatives engender hope about the future of the Dakar region.

## Notes

- 1 This section is partly derived from data drawn from Diop (2004).
- 2 See Cruise O'Brien (1979).
- 3 For further details, see the study by Mbow (1992), specifically the sections related to systems for allocating public funds in the urban sector. Mbow states that up to the late 1970s, unlike the local governments (*communes*), urban investments were relatively important, even though some specific expenditure was prioritised. The period 1981–1990 was earmarked for a significant reduction in the government's capital spending. For further details, see World Bank (1993).
- 4 See Lombard (2003) and Aïdara (2003).
- 5 See *Sud Hebdo* 131, 15 November 1990.
- 6 The Audiovisual High Council was replaced by the National Audiovisual Regulation Council in December 2005. For information about and the challenges faced by this council, see <http://www.osiris.sn/article2158.html> (Accessed August 2008).
- 7 See Diop, Thioub & Boone (1997).

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