DECENTRALIZATION AND THE POLITICS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

DECENTRALIZATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN EST AFRICA: AN INTRODUCTION

RICHARD STREN AND DICKSON EYOH

THE CITIES OF WEST AFRICA

Urbanization is one of the most powerful, and insistent, emerging realities of the early twenty-first century. Although the developed countries have been largely urbanized for many years, developing regions are quickly narrowing the gap. Africa, one of the least urbanized continents, is urbanizing rapidly. In 2003, Africa's total population (estimated at 851 million) was 38.7 percent urbanized—the lowest of any major continental region. During the next five years, however, the United Nations projects an annual average growth rate for urban Africa of 3.35 percent, the highest in the world by a substantial margin for the same period. Dividing Africa according to its five subregions (Eastern, Middle, Northern, Southern, and Western Africa), Middle Africa will grow at the highest rate, followed in order by Eastern, Western, Northern, and Southern Africa. This order is the inverse of the current levels at which these subregions are urban.

West Africa—or Western Africa in the demographic tables—is conventionally made up of 17 countries. In 2003, the subregion had an aggregate population of 244,381,000, with an overall urban population of 42.2 percent of that total. (Sometime between 2015 and 2020, the subregion will have over half of its population living in urban centers.) The seven largest countries in the West African group are (in order) Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal. The first two are Anglophone; the last five are Francophone countries. In these major countries in the subregion, levels of urbanization vary from a high of 49.6 percent in Senegal to a low of 22.2 percent in Niger (United Nations 2004, Table A1).

Unlike the pattern in most developed countries, urban growth in individual African countries has not always been accompanied by parallel economic growth for the country as a whole. And for the continent in the aggregate, over the last two decades, total factor productivity, labor productivity, and agricultural productivity per worker have been either declining or stagnant,

while real GDP growth in per-capita terms has been only marginally positive (Kessides 2005, 1–2). There have been some positive stories (which include Ghana, Senegal, Benin, and Burkina Faso), although most countries "are mired in place" economically (ibid., 1). As is well known, civil strife, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, natural disasters, and adverse terms of trade have not helped. At the same time, to the extent that growth is taking place, it is mainly urban based (ibid., 11). In Ghana, for example, where 45.4 percent of the population lived in cities and towns in 2003, the average GDP growth per capita from 1990 to 2003 was 1.9 percent, of which 71.3 percent was explained by growth in the (largely) urban sectors of industry and services. For Senegal, another country that showed net growth during the same period, 86.8 percent of its 1 percent yearly growth can be explained by urban sectors (ibid., 71). In order to be more precise, one could calculate the proportion of the total population represented by a particular city, and compare this with an estimate of the proportion of the GNP for that city. The figures so calculated would invariably show that large cities contribute disproportionately to national income, although this does not "prove" that the cities alone are responsible for that income. Nevertheless, it is legitimate to argue that, at the very least, cities are a necessary condition for innovation, social change, and economic growth (Freire and Polèse 2003). How this happens in each case is a complex story.

As cities have become a more prominent part of the social and economic landscape in West Africa, as in other parts of the developing world, the changes they have ushered in have—at least in part—contributed to and interacted with a number of other major trends. One of these trends, decentralization, is the subject of this volume. This collection is a selection of papers that were presented and discussed at a two-day workshop in Dakar, Senegal, on 8 and 9 December 2003. The workshop was entitled, *Decentralisation et politique de développement urbain en Afrique de l'Ouest* (Decentralization and the Politics of Urban Development in West Africa). Supported generously by USAID, the workshop was organized jointly by the Comparative Urban Studies Program of the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC, and the African Institute for Urban Management (IAGU), based in Dakar. Over the two days of the workshop, attended by 64 participants (most of them local), there was constructive and vigorous discussion of the issues of decentralization as they affect West African cities. The high level of interest in this seminar is partly a function of the fact that, although the theme of decentralization has been part of the development discourse for

some time, its application to local and, especially, urban policy issues has been largely unexplored—both in the scholarly literature and in terms of more practical implications.

There is no doubt that decentralization has made an impression on African countries, and on their cities. Although there is general agreement among scholars that, following James Manor, decentralization "has quietly become a fashion of our time" (Manor 1999, 1), the dynamics and application of this apparently straightforward policy initiative are by no means straightforward or self-evident. Like other major tendencies of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, such as globalization, democratization, and the growth of major international movements such as environmentalism and human rights, decentralization has operated at many different levels and in different ways in particular local contextual situations.

We can argue that, from the perspective of African countries, there have been different "waves" or periods of decentralization beginning almost a century ago. Here, we define decentralization as the transfer of significant powers and functions, along with the fiscal responsibility to carry out these powers and functions, from the national to the local level of government. (Some writers distinguish among political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization, but for us the three aspects relate in an interconnected fashion.) Understood in this way, there have been three historical periods of decentralization—at least since the beginning of colonization.

THREE WAVES OF DECENTRALIZATION

The whole colonization period in Africa, from the late nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century, was an almost uninterrupted period of centralized administrative rule for Africans. *The first decentralization period (or "wave") consolidated itself just before and at the point of independence* (from the late 1940s through the early 1960s), when local (and state) authorities were being established by mutual agreement between the nationalists and the departing colonial authorities. These local authorities were attempts at formalizing existing understandings about the democratic delivery of local services in the form of institutions that closely resembled local governments and communes in the metropole. To the British, local government was a "school for democracy," while for the French the commune was the arena for the exercise of rational civic rights on the part of both urban and rural citizens. In the

local problems can remain, and fester, while local people who are aware of them are prevented from using their initiative in finding solutions.

Following Nyerere's guidance, Tanzania's solution was to abolish existing local government institutions in both the rural and urban areas, and to replace them with councils that combined both central government officials and local political representatives. Tanzania also took the decision in 1973 to move its capital and accompanying central government agencies to the town of Dodoma, away from the coast and close to the physical center of the country. Commentators soon noted that the official side dominated the proceedings of the new decentralized councils. And in spite of the extensive planning and building that took place in Dodoma, most civil servants stayed in Dar es Salaam, which also remained the commercial capital of the country. A cen-

(This was the "second wave" of decentralization on the continent.) Except in South Africa, which followed a different historical trajectory, the years of the 1960s and 1970s were a period of central government ascendancy and local government decline in much of Africa, both Anglophone and Francophone. As in other parts of the developing world, political initiatives came from the center, and a discourse of development planning—supported by international assistance—concentrated on large-scale formal projects, extensive state and parastatal employment, and widespread regulation of the economy.

Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the system began to break down economically, as formal employment through government and import substitution-led industrialization reached its limits. The informal sector, in both urban and rural areas, grew dramatically in importance. If by the late 1970s, some 60 percent of the African urban population was operating in the informal sector (ILO 1985), the figure was much higher in the 1980s. A sociologist from Côte d'Ivoire estimated that between 1976 and 1985, the number of people working on the street in a variety of informal activities had risen from 25,000 to 53,850 in Abidjan alone. During the same period, the central

(such as housing, water, and sanitation) and catering for the more immediate needs of the expanding urban informal settlements through associations ranging from community security societies to religious and other spiritual associations" (Tostensen, Tvedtenn and Vaa 2001, 22). Women have been particularly active in forming these associations, perhaps because their economic importance, through an expanded informal sector, has been enhanced. Swazi women in the city, for example, have organized savings groups, burial societies, wedding groups, and land and housing acquisition groups (Miles 2001, 66). A study of women's participation in informal economic activities in Dar es Salaam from the late 1980s through the early 1990s shows how, on a personal level, women confronted state harassment, networked with each other for support, and generally engaged in "everyday forms of resistance" in order to provide for their families during difficult times. The result of this spontaneous action was to effect a number of important local and national government policies (Tripp 1997). By the turn of the century, when Africa's urban population is estimated to have grown to some 37.9 percent of the total, informal associations and civil society were playing an increasing role in urban life. A French writer, commenting on the imagination and organizational innovation that has resulted from survival challenges among urban Africans, talks of the emergence of "social energy" among the poor (Le Pape 1997).

THE DEMOCRATIZATION FACTOR

Reinforcing the tendency, in many countries, toward an increasingly active urban civil society has been another trend: democratization. Since the 1970s, we have witnessed a worldwide "wave" of democratization according, at least, to Samuel Huntington's definition of democracy as a system in which the "most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote" (Huntington 1991, 7). As such, democracy implies the concurrent existence of freedoms to speak, publish, assemble, and organize and of the active functioning of more than one major political party in order to give voters a choice of alternative leadership groups. Beginning in 1974 in Portugal, and eventually spreading outward, democratic reforms swept over more than 30 countries in both industrial and developing areas. This overall trend was particularly marked during the 1970s and early 1980s in Latin America, where democratic transitions

took place in many major countries, and in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The process continued during the 1990s, to the point where the well-known NGO, Freedom House, estimated that by 1999, 88 of the world's 191 sovereign states could be considered democratic by their deTw1l0c0 1nthe late 198pr-ersid-

aggregate evaluative work indicates that, by the early years of the twenty-first century, Africa—and West Africa as well—is firmly set in a politically pluralistic and rights-based culture, even if there are derogations from this pattern from time to time (Chege 2005). There are at least three reasons for this: greater experience with the reasons for failure in the earlier attempts; the increased interest of civil society groups in decentralized institutions, especially at the local level; and the spread of a culture of democracy. The individual papers in this volume explore these issues in the particular contextual settings of West Africa.

Until now, in spite of a very well-documented analysis of the political economy of Africa from a variety of points of view (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Lewis 1998; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Joseph 1999; Herbst 2000; Sandbrook 2000; Schraeder 2000; Villalón and VonDoepp 2005; Hyden 2006), overviews of African politics rarely make any mention of local politics, let alone urban governance. And although there are a number of good recent studies that focus on decentralization and local governance in Africa (Crook and Manor 1998; Parnell, Pieterse, Swilling, and Wooldridge 2002; Totté, Dahou and Billaz 2003; Olowu and Wunsch 2004), the attention given to *urban* governance has tended to be minimal. Although there are some outstanding exceptions to the facile generalization that excellent urban governance studies are lacking for Africa (Jaglin and Dubresson 1993; Cameron 1999; Simone 2004), few are done by political economists, and none is regional in scope. But as the participation in our workshop indicated, the subject matter of local urban development evokes considerable interest and attention in Africa. We hope that this volume will help to generate even more attention to a subject—urban governance in a context of decentralization—that has become a central issue of development today.

ORGANIZATION OF THE VOLUME

The articles in this volume—all which were originally presented at the Dakar workshop—are organized in four sections. The first section looks at the current challenges of decentralization in West Africa. There are three chapters in this section: one dealing with urban governance in West Africa by Dele Olowu, one on the history of municipal government in Cameroon by Charles Nach Mback, and a chapter on the financial aspects of decentralization in Senegal by Abdoul Wahab Ba.

Senegal. Senegal has a long history of decentralization, going back as for as 1848, according to the author, when the coastal towns of Saint-Louis and Gorée were communes. A number of other laws followed after independence in 1960, but the 1996 legislation was a major accomplishment. Still, more than eight years after the promulgation of these laws, the administrative system of local taxation is still strongly centralized. The chapter concludes by considering some principles that might change this situation; but at the very least more experience with the process is probably needed.

The second section of this collection looks at citizenship, identity, and participation in urban West Africa. The opening chapter by Mamadou Diouf begins by interrogating the idea of African cities in crisis. But how have West African cities developed their own histories and their own particular geographies? A key group in the development of a specific African urban identity is youth, who have burst on the political scene in recent years. Active urban youth are a very large demographic group, all having been born in the years since independence. But they are seeking new ways to express their political objectives in urban public space. Since the state has been discredited in West African societies, the youth are only one of a number of other social movements contending for influence. Here we must take account of the popular local economies of cities and their intersection with urban planning (if it actually exists) and the segmentation of the urban population in economic and spatial terms. Here, the *Mourides* are a good example of an effective local

tion: in countries with low levels of urbanization it has led to nonsustainable decentralized development; but in more urbanized countries, such as Thailand and the Philippines, rapid urbanization has led to a more sustainable decentralization because urban areas to which power and authority were devolved have had the financial, managerial, and institutional capabilities to manage new responsibilities. These two patterns confirm that in Asia, as across the world, the degree of autonomy exercised by local government units tends to be greater in countries with higher levels of economic development. Although decentralization has enhanced liberal democracy in some countries, in others it has resulted in the replacement of central government control with the tyrannical rule of local despots and family dynasties. Laquian's conclusions suggest three lessons for West African states. First, countries with low levels of urbanization need to be careful about how far they promote decentralization. Second, urban civil society groups have a critical role in pressuring government for better services and political representation. And third, local governments need to cooperate among themselves to solve common problems, as towns grow into cities and cities grow into metropolitan areas.

Until this point, the papers edited for this volume have been largely academic in tone and origin—with the exception of the paper by Abdoul Wahab Ba, a policy adviser in Senegal. Even his paper, however, is written in a classic academic form—consisting of a general argument, illustrative case study material, and a discussion of wider implications of the analysis. But the discussion of decentralization in West Africa at which we were privileged to be present included many local activists and government representatives who both expressed, and were directly involved in, the everyday practice of decentralization. To give some flavor to this discussion, we have translated and included two documents: one written by the former Mayor of Dakar, and the second written by a local NGO activist. The first, chapter 9, by Mamadou Diop, the current mayor of Yoff (a suburb of Dakar) and the former mayor of metropolitan Dakar, explains the position of the mayor in the process of decentralization in Senegal. A reading of this document will yield a precise understanding of the legal and institutional basis for local authority in Senegal. We learn of the mayor's dual functions as executive agent of the municipality and as agent of the state; and we learn of his (or her) duties regarding municipal functions, the police, and other state responsibilities. As a decorated French academic in the field of jurisprudence, Mayor Diop has great authority to speak on these matters.

The second document (and the last chapter in the volume) was written for the workshop by El Housseynou Ly, a "specialist in participation" who worked with our co-host organization, IAGU. Ly's point of departure in this analysis is the question of how local associations (read: community-based groups (CBOs) and NGOs) should operate in order to best achieve their development objectives. One of the problems many of these organizations have, in the writer's opinion, is that they come under the influence of groups living on the periphery and not in the center of the cities in which they are working. They also have problems of equity in terms of how they operate internally. Internal questions may often disturb their cohesion, which in turn fractures their stability. When to this is added the undue influence of local religious leaders, they can easily lose their independence. Other elements in this structural analysis of the problems of local associations include their capacity vis-à-vis outside organizations and the state, their economic viability, and their ability to fend off takeover by militants in favor of more responsible leadership groups. In general, they can benefit from principles of empowerment, which involve participation, communication, a critical collective, social and political conscience, and the development of capacity. Because local associations are so much a part of the developmental experience in West African cities, these observations by an experienced organizer illustrate many of the issues such groups are facing. Since decentralization ultimately involves local people working to solve their own problems, internal organizational issues need to be taken into account.

Decentralization in West Africa, as in other major world regions, is a work in progress. These papers illustrate some of the key parameters of the current process. But in the dynamic interaction of urbanization and public policy, we can be sure of surprises in the future.

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II. CHALLENGES OF DECENTRALIZATION IN EST AFRICA

DECENTRALIZATION AND URBAN GOVERNANCE IN   EST AFRICA

Dele Olowu

Culture matters. And to understand culture, we must understand both the present and the past. History matters.

—Ismail Serageldin, *Culture and Development in Africa*

Overview

West Africa has always been a center of great urban civilizations—the coastal cities of Abomey, Dakar, Lagos, and Freetown have played roles in more recent history similar to but of much less prominence compared to the cities of the Sahel—Kano, Bamako, Timbuktu, Jenne, and Sokoto. Today, cities in the region are regarded as part of the problem of governance and development rather than as part of the possible solutions to the problems that citizens of these countries face in these twin areas. In this chapter, I try to provide an alternative view: cities could become the center of economic growth, development, and better governance. This will require fundamental changes in the approach to decentralization in the region.

The chapter is developed in four parts:

- The current wave of democratic decentralization and urbanization,
- The major problems of democratic decentralization (DD)—fact and fiction;
- The challenge of financing democratic decentralization; and
- Toward a new approach to urban governance and democratic decentralization—the critical importance of urban property taxation.

Most of the material for this chapter is taken from two recent research projects in which I have been involved. One is an assessment of decentralization in the 1990s in seven African countries—including Chad, Ghana,

and Nigeria (Olowu and Wunsch 2003). The other is a study of property taxation in Nigeria and a few developing Commonwealth countries.

The Current Wave of Democratic Decentralization: Interface with Urbanization

Whether measured by expenditure or employee size, local governments in developing countries are weaker than their counterparts in industrialized countries. And among the developing countries, African countries are the weakest. Available data show that central governments in industrialized (OECD) countries engage twice the number of employees as the developing countries of Asia and Latin America but they engage four times the number of local government employees. The difference is similarly reflected in total government expenditures as a ratio of local government expenditures.[1]

Political leaders in Africa (as in many other developing countries) inherited and preferred highly centralized modes of governance. This mode is reinforced by a culture of the politics of patrimonialism in which all powers and resources flow from the ruler ('the father of the nation') to clients who shore up the regime. This pattern of unequal power and resource distribution was strongly supported by both domestic and external actors until the late 1970s. Reasons for favoring this approach included rapid economic and social development actualized through centralized planning, unity and national integration, containment of corruption, and political stability. This *monocentric* governance model affected the manner in which decentralization was approached— administrative decentralization or deconcentration appro0.NN

1987; E. Ostrom 1990). Different patterns of polycentricity are observable among Western countries, with variations in form reflecting peculiar national cultures (Andrew and Goldsmith 1998).

What makes this difference paradoxical is that governance in African countries is organized primarily in the communities of trust whose boundaries coincide with the informal structures of village, ethnic group, or sect. On the other hand, formal (modern) governance systems, inherited from colonial times, are organized on the basis of top-down notions of governance that assume universality of values and interests that are crystallized around political parties, interest groups, and public services organized around a virtual nation state. The outcomes of this contradiction between small, face-to-face community governance and national modes of governance have been largely negative. Some of its worst manifestations include political instability and marginalization, systemic and grand corruption, and political institutions— legislative, executive, judiciary, and indeed civic institutions—that lack legitimacy. This is the groundswell for the flashpoints of perennial conflict in the West Africa subregion (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d' Ivoire) as elsewhere in the continent (Sudan, Rwanda, Congo, Angola, etc.).

In the last decade, however, many developing countries have changed course dramatically. They have abandoned the monocentric political model and sought to replace it with its exact opposite—a polycentric structure of governance, the idea of multiple centers of power within a state— which was denied by the monocentric state.

The evidence of a paradigm shift can be found in the increasing emphasis on local governance as a part of policies and programs of democratic governance reform in several countries (Dillinger 1993; UNDP 2002; Ndegwa 2002). The extent of change has been more massive and sustained over time than witnessed in the past. In fact, some of these countries have defied the 'pendulum model' (Mawhood 1983, 8) by which a decade of democratic decentralization is followed by another decade of centralization. Responsibilities and financial resources—revenue sourcing and transfers, powers to borrow—as well as human resources and accountability arrangements have been transferred from central governments to local communities in many countries (Crook and Manor 1998; Fiszbein 1997; Olowu and Wunsch 2004).

These decentralization programs of the late 1980s and 1990s are substantially different from past efforts in at least three important respects.

national government and distributed among the 110 local governments as a form of revenue sharing. DAs enjoyed also enjoyed a major influx of funds from the constitutional provision of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) of at least 5 percent of nationally collected revenues. In 1994, this

Decentralization in Chad has been by default rather than by formal top-down public policy. The result has been a shift of public services from the state to ordinary citizens through local governance institutions that organize to pay for such services:

Chad, with a central government apparatus too weakened by three decades of recurrent fighting to provide much in the way of services…built Africa's most decentralized systems of health, water supply, and other public services. In education, for instance, indigenous local associations have financed the increase of more than 835,000 school seats during the last 25 years. Government, in contrast, supplied less than 45,000 places. Communities now contribute more than 3.6 bil-

of local financing. The argument is supported on two grounds. First, the preponderant population in developing countries is poor and therefore services must be provided for them by central agencies. Moreover and more importantly, the distributive function—which is at the heart of poverty alleviation—is a central rather than local government function (Proud'homme 1995, 202; for a rebuttal see Smoke 1994).

A World Bank (1998) report on the subject noted that transfers constitute the largest source of revenue for local governments and suggested ways in which this can be improved. The preference for transfers is based on a number of other factors, which include the relative ease with which national governments can collect personal and nonpersonal taxes, the perception that there exists no taxable capacity within local communities, and the difficulties traditionally associated with collecting local revenues by local authorities.

In spite of these advantages, there are serious problems with this approach. The first is that many central governments are themselves revenue short—as a result of high debt servicing, excessive employee payments, war, mismanagement, or graft. Second, the approach is not likely to enhance local governments' effectiveness or sustainability as it opens them up to the vagaries and instabilities of central government funding. Indeed, in many developing

even making allowance for inflation. However, within the same period, local government's internally generated revenue (IGR) as a share of total revenue (TR) fell from 40.3 percent to almost a half that (22.5 percent). Explanations for a decline in IGR when TR is increasing hinges on the huge increase in the share of the federation account going to local governments—and the poor accounting for the use of these resources by powerful local government chairmen who operate as governors and presidents at state and federal levels, respectively.

• Property rates[5] as a proportion of LG's internally generated revenues also fell for most of the sample LGs within the period. Factors respon-

control of new construction; across-the-board cuts in all depart-
ments; cutting budgets of least-efficient departments; laying off
personnel; shifting responsibilities to other units of government;
and reducing overtime.

• None of the MGs had made a survey of how economic development
  impacted on the LG, but occasional project analysis was conducted
  to test the feasibility. Generally, the influx of huge resources into
  local governments had also been associated with more cases of fiscal
  malpractice and greater citizen apathy toward the local government
  system. Their citizens perceived many councilors and in particular
  LG chairmen to be corrupt. On the other hand, there were also
  some that distinguished themselves by serving their communities—
  especially in Lagos, Ado-Odo, and Jos.

• All MGs except Lafia and Kano were collecting property rates (PRs).
  PR confronts six major obstacles, according to their chief finance
  officers: lack of support from councilors; poor house numbering
  (and street naming); lack of personnel—in quantity and quality;
  public criticism; lack of incentives to taxpayers; lack of support from
  state government. As to be expected, the extent of these problems
  varied from one MG to another. In some MGs, the responsibility for
  collecting PR had been passed on to Urban Development Authorities
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the MGs had an incentive system for encouraging ratepayers to pay promptly or to pay at all.

It became evident from the findings that if property rating is to become a major revenue source for Nigerian municipal governments, a number of important policy and administrative measures must be undertaken at each of the various governmental levels—federal, state, and local. Some of the policy measures would include the promulgation of model legislation on landed property and property taxation that each state can adapt to suit its own peculiar conditions. The model law should apply to all urban and semi-urban centers in Nigeria and, inevitably, a definition and classification of Nigerian cities will be necessary. The model law must also identify local governments as property rating authorities, indicate the assessment base, liability, valuation and revaluation procedures, and exemptions as well as enforcement mechanisms. Citizen representatives (based on community or civil structures) should also be actively involved in property assessments.

The administrative measures involve political, technical, and institutional matters. Political executives must be persuaded of the need to develop the tax and must be ready to 'sell' it to their electorate. The most important technical issue is the development of a land cadastre that incorporates the identification, registration, and mapping of land titles. Land policy—in the direction of full marketization—should be pursued in the cities, while the case for redistribution might be strong in the rural areas. New or modified institutional mechanisms may also be required, especially in setting up and effectively staffing a rating office.

Finally, federal and state governments must adopt a policy on the payment of grants-in-lieu of rates for their properties. Furthermore, the compliance by urban and semi-urban local governments with efforts to develop the property tax should form important criteria (up to 20 percent of the amount distributed) for disbursing allocated revenues to local governments.

CONCLUSION

A paradigm shift has occurred in Africa and many other developing countries in favor of local governance, especially since the 1990s. The most intractable problem confronting this experiment everywhere has been to find a suitable and reliable local revenue base. Central government transfers

in many countries have been the major source for financing local government revitalization. Although this is a welcome development, we highlighted some of its dangers. Of the possible forms of local revenues in many developing countries, the property tax is the most highly recommended—not only because of its potential for raising financial resources but for refocusing decentralization strategy on the local realities of people, culture, and governance. Other alternatives, such as the poll tax in East and West Africa, have been abused and are regressive in terms of their impact.

Three major problems are usually emphasized concerning property tax in developing countries—valuation, assessment, and collection (Proud'homme 1989). All three problems are compounded by the fact that land titles and cadastres are poorly developed in most of these societies. The idea that land is government or communally owned has only aggravated the problem.

The fact that the big players in politics at the center are also the substantial property owners and are likely therefore to be the ones to pay the tax when they are levied further aggravates the situation. One can understand why there will be strong opposition to the tax in many developing countries. Nevertheless, these problems are not insurmountable. For instance, at the national level, some breakthroughs have been recorded in improved revenue mobilization through the creation of revenue authorities in many African countries. The few such experiments in developing countries aimed at property taxation have been quite outstanding—as in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Accra in the 1970s and 1980s, besides the Nigerian cases described above (Bahl and Linn 1992; Keith 1993).

The task of raising substantial revenues from the property tax turns on two critical considerations. These are political *willingness* of the crucial stakeholders, and *opportunity* as presented by the economic base and size of urban centers. The capacity to implement the tax, often regarded by some as key, is actually dependent on the other two variables. If there is a willingness on the part of the key stakeholders—the political players at the central and local levels, private and civil society actors, and donors—and with many countries increasingly having cities of substantial size and economic base, all the problems associated with the tax—valuation, assessment and collection—can be tackled with conventional technologies, but new technologies promise to enhance this capacity.

Political willingness can only materialize if there are real incentives to those who wield power. There has to be an acceptance that the property tax
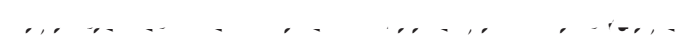
represents an important investment over time to finance urban infrastructures, which are presently in crisis in much of the developing world. Given the problem of financing urban infrastructures in many cities and the breakdown in social cohesion, real threats to security of the rich and powerful, a program of civic engagement on this subject can help to bring about a sea change in attitudes toward the tax. Donors that make the development of the property tax a condition for grants and loans can further enhance this. Although inequality is particularly high in both Latin America and Africa, Latin America has embarked on strong decentralization programs that have led to huge increases in property tax revenues in many cities. Even then, the contrast between the developing countries generally and the OECD countries, for instance, remains stark. The linkage between infrastructure and development is well established in the literature and it is not surprising to note that Africa's position on the poverty, equity, and effective local taxation levels are consistent.

In the meantime, Africa's cities are growing by leaps and bounds. Urban centers remain the preponderant centers of opportunity and growth in the developing world. And urban land is a major source of investment in these countries and is therefore a veritable source of mobilizing resources for declining infrastructures in many developing countries. But this will be dependent on the ability to tackle the cultural/political issues embedded in capitalizing urban land and transforming it from what it is presently—dead capital (see below).

The property tax will not be the only tax to finance urban development in LDCs, but it will be one of the most important. This is not only in terms of its own independent contribution to municipal revenues but because it will also stimulate other sources, such as loans for capital development decentralization especially in countries such as those in Africa where capital development projects are heavily dependent on donor funding. Second, it will help the region to benefit from its rich past in managing change suc-

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INTRODUCTION

The territorial administration system in Cameroon is made up of two components: decentralization and deconcentration. The latter divides the national territory into administrative circumscriptions that are the extension of the central authority into the periphery. The former organizes the national territory and the populations into autonomous administrative units, within which the people have some right and capacity to decide for themselves on some public affairs, called "affairs of proximity." The communal institution (or the municipality) depends on this component of territorial administration. In the Cameroonian context, it is to a large extent only a simple element of the administrative machinery applied to the territory. As it has been since its inception, this has been a complete deformation of the meaning of communal institution.

Indeed, since the European Middle Ages, the commune was born as the institutional translation of the idea of community and of the desire for solidarity that inspires those it brings together. The history of institutions tells us that the notion of commune has taken root in human acts of solidarity, which all happened on the margins of the power of central governments. Thus the Canadian commune started as a gathering of the faithful of a same parish around an official they themselves named to take care of their affairs. This practice, which began in 1673, foreshadows the current commune that had to adapt to the demographic, political, and economic mutations of the country (Morel 1968). The current municipal institution in Switzerland claims to have inherited, in the European Middle Ages, urban franchises and lordly liberalities at the expense of the central government (Perrin 1968; de Vevey 1947). We witness, *mutatis mutandis*

tion of the faithful, grouped into parishes, led them to take on the secular interests of the villagers against the lords and the king.

Thus, in the sixteenth century, in most French regions, the community of rural inhabitants was managed by its notables and a general assembly represented by an official and, was granted its own legal status. Later on, the French commune overlapped the Revolution and resisted in adjusting to all the postrevolutionary convulsions to arrive at what it is today.[1] In all these examples, the commune appears as the legal personification of a network of human solidarities that had preceded it. It is a "human collectivity sharing its problems, its history, its interests, which is contained in a defined portion of the national territory" (Nlep 1986, 119). The commune is thus characterized by Francis-Paul Benoît (1968, 140):

> [B]ecause it constitutes a sociological reality easy to perceive physically, at least globally, and because it is close to the inhabitants…because it is a natural collectivity…and is therefore a human group before it is an administrative entity; which implies that the functions of this administration are strictly speaking determined by the needs of the group, and not likely to be arbitrarily set by a legislative decision.

This is the institution that the British and French colonizers introduced in Cameroon.

Yet, the commune that was introduced in Cameroon as part of the colonial project has none of this communitarian character. The urban and rural populations are not able to organize themselves around points of interest or to obtain rights. The French as well as the British claimed the right to create communes using unilaterally defined criteria; thus, the communes became an

toward rural areas and, on the other hand, it does not grant the same local freedoms to the two zones. Depending on the periods, either local democracy is instituted in rural areas and forbidden in the cities, or the other way around. Even if these tendencies also vary depending on whether in the Francophone or the Anglophone part of the country, they structure the acclimatization of the institution by the colonizer, before being renewed by the independent state.[2] From one period to the other, the commune is not truly conceived as the basis of social initiative for the development of the population.

UNTIL 1974: THE DOUBLE ACCLIMATIZATION OF AN IMPORTED INSTITUTION

The agreement between France and Britain on the division of the German colony of Kamerun was signed in March 1916.[3] The French inherited a space equivalent to three quarters of the loot, and the British were content with what was left, the western part of the territory, with the Moungo River as a frontier. This agreement was ratified by the Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1918. The League of Nations conferred a mandate to France and Great Britain, the new occupying powers, allowing them to administer the territory, each one in the area it occupied. In reality, each of these powers applied to its area the same administrative rules as in the rest of their colonial empire. The part of Cameroon under British mandate was assimilated into the colony of Nigeria. The French part was governed by the same rules that were applied to Afrique Equatoriale Française, a vast French colonial area.[4] The politics of decentralization would consequently be applied differently in Cameroon.

Although each ruling authority imported its communal system into Cameroon, its application would be marked by the demands of strict control of the territory for its economic exploitation, for the benefit of the metropoli-

chiefs would henceforth be more than members of a council made up of other personalities: some of them were appointed by the colonial authority and oth-

the CMR, made up essentially of local populations.[9] Summing up this communal tendency, we can draw a direct relationship between the importance of the commune and the level of control exercised over the appointment of its governing bodies. Indeed, in the cities, they all are appointed, and in the rural municipalities all elected.

This tendency is confirmed with the progressive urbanization of rural areas. Thus, in middle-size cities, the designation of municipal council mixes elements of democracy with the technique of direct nomination. So, when in 1954, CMRs were created in Dschang, Bafang, Bafoussam, and Bouda, the

the promulgation of a reform on constitutional law was passed. With the new text, decentralization obtained constitutional status: the principle of autonomous administration for local governments was instituted. Cameroon now counted two decentralization tiers with the transformation of provinces into regions, which were decentralized communities in addition to the municipalities. However, local freedoms remained limited despite the new constitution.

The Ambiguities of the Constitutional Principle of Free Administration of Local Governments

The 1996 constitutional reform instituted the principle of free, or autonomous, administration for local governments. These are grouped into two categories: the commune and the region. This was a major innovation because it was the first time since independence that decentralization was made part of the constitution.[16] The principle of free administration for local governments is French in origin. It was notably instituted in article 72 of the Constitution of 4 October 1958. Mentioned in article 55 (para. 2), the Cameroonian formulation of the principle of free administration presented a few ambiguities. In particular, the French text diverges substantially from the English version, while the constitutional status of the equality between the two languages[17] gives the two versions the status of equally legitimate sz7.7

To administer oneself freely through elected councils is one thing. To self-administer freely within conditions set by the law is another. In the first proposition, the principle of the election of councils is automatically guaranteed. The councils responsible for the (free) administration of decentralized territorial governments must be elected.[19] On the other hand, the interpretation of the second proposition is less evident. The proposition "decentralized territorial municipalities self-administer freely within the conditions set by the law" implies at least two kinds of considerations: one, the freedom of administration is instituted for these municipalities; two, this freedom depends on conditions set by the law. In this sense, a law may restrict or extend this freedom. It may, for example, recommend that freedom of administration does not mean the free choice of the executive body by the council for that commune. On that basis, the 1974 law and the 1993 decree cannot be contested constitutionally and legally.

But the English version of the same text does not seem to recommend such a restriction. The English text states: "the decentralized collectivities" are "administered freely, by councils elected under conditions lead by law." In this version, the two propositions of the French version are formulated differently: on the one hand, decentralized territorial municipalities are administered freely and, on the other, by elected councils within the conditions set by the law (by councils elected under conditions lead by law). In other words, it is not, contrary to what the French version implies, the free administration that takes place within the conditions set by the law, but the councils that are elected within the conditions set by the law ("councils elected under conditions lead by law"). It is in the election of the councils that law can interfere to set eventual limits, not in the free administration itself. This interpretation, which follows pure legal dogma, reveals a serious incoherence on the part of the lawmakers.[20]

187

The election of councils is one element of free administration. If the lawmaker may limit it, it is the same as saying that he may limit free administration. But the first proposition excludes the possibility that the lawmaker might limit free administration. How then may he limit the electoral principle of the councils without limiting free administration? How is it possible to reduce the content without leaving a void in the container? These questions were to have consequences after the 1996 municipal elections.

The 1996 Municipal Elections and the Avatars of Constitutional Reform

The 1996 municipal elections created a craze on the side of the political actors as well as on that of the populations. It is necessary here to emphasize how the many delays provoked great impatience. The last elections had taken place in 1988. The elected councils then should ea-ne eD(These [(The97 TD0.078o10.50n pladl. I)2)pulse ofuspiktific(mtemineathondopdsitiomupirip8dhixedti8surtnitthed)6tyasheennata)6(o)16(v)6(orstal

a "pre-emptive right" for local people.[23] The 1992 law, which set the conditions for the election of municipal councilors, recommended that the establishment of the list of candidates must "respect the sociological configuration of the constituency";[24] the Sawa elites understood this as demanding that the heads of lists, the future mayors, be chosen from within what they called "the local population."[25] Beyond this political aspect of the protest, the question of the legal significance of the demand for respect for the sociological configuration of the constituency needed to be clarified.

The doctrine was never approved unanimously. Roger Nlep had already brought up the problem ten years earlier in 1986. He could see—through the evolution of Cameroonian cities that had experienced, as a result of rural exodus, an intense mixing of populations from all corners of the country—the necessity to protect the people who had lived there the longest against the marginalization that threatened them. To him, this justified recourse to a process of specific determination of the composition of municipal councils in the urban municipalities (urban municipalities with special regime). It was the only way, according to him, of guaranteeing that the office of chief municipal executive be reserved to a "native of the locality" (Nlep 1986, 119ff). It is therefore this interpretation that the Sawa elites chose to give to the notion of the sociological component of the constituency. This vision is corroborated by Bopda (1993, 247–57).

However, some scholars wanted to widen the debate by integrating into the concept considerations that would be more compatible with democratic values. Alain Didier Olinga (1996, 69) sees in the notion of the sociological component of the constituency, among other things, the division of the population by age (where do youths fit?) and by socioprofessional categories. For Barthélemy Kom Tchuenté (1996, 13), one must add elements such as the necessity of gender parity in the composition of electoral lists. In these divergences, the doctrine gives elements that are essential to the (at least phenomenological) understanding of the notion. Whatever the case, a Cameroonian

judge had to intervene to settle the debate by giving a jurisprudential interpretation of this article of the 1992 law.

The judge was given an opportunity to decide on the electoral right on that question, after the numerous objections that followed the proclamation of the 1996 election results. But, each time the question was asked expressly, he avoided coming to a decision.[26] The question is still controversial in Cameroon and the new legislation has not dealt with it.

THE 2004 LAWS

Since the adoption of the 1996 constitutional reform, the government has placed among its priorities the implementation of decentralization. As such, it occupies a good position in the national program of governance. A subcommittee in charge of decentralization was created in its midst (see PNGC n.d., 8–9). Its work has led to the new laws of July 2004. The new legislation on decentralization is made up of three texts, all promulgated on 22 July 2004: Law no. 2004/17 on orientation and decentralization; Law no. 2004/18 setting up the rules applicable to municipalities; and Law no. 2004/19 setting up the rules applicable to regions. The senate abstained from signing.

A Few Timid Breakthroughs of the New Legislation

It is important to point out that this is the first time Cameroon has adopted decentralization laws, that is to say, those that plan to deal with decentralization in its diverse aspects. The orientation law sets the major principles of the transfer of powers. The areas concerned are: economy, society, health, education, culture, and sports. Municipal personnel were granted their own authority, which they had been waiting for since 1974. The transfers of powers envisaged were to go together with a transfer of resources in terms of taxation and financial grants; in addition, the political entitlements from the preceding regime were maintained.

Thus, local bodies continue to be elected by universal suffrage. Better still, the administrative relationship between the state and local govern-

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26. See, for example, CS/CA No. 24/95-96 of 29 March 1996, *Conseillers municipaux de la commune rurale de Nanga-Ekobo c/Etat du Cameroun;* CS/CA No. 31/95-96 of 19 April 1996, *RDPC (Commune rurale de Penja) c/Etat d Cameroun, SDF, UNDP, UFDC.*

ments evolves qualitatively, too. It goes from an a priori supervision to an a posteriori supervision under the control of a judge. This way, the decisions of local governments are implemented 15 days after they have been passed on to the state representative. In case of an objection about the legality of the decision, the state representative must refer it to the administrative jurisdiction, which settles contentious issues in the case of a disagreement.

Moreover, the law creates bodies for the follow up and evaluation of the implementation of decentralization: a national council on decentralization and an interministerial committee on local services. Unfortunately, all of these improvements are mitigated by restrictions and even serious setbacks.

The Limits of the New Legislation

The first limiting factor of the new legislation has to do with its relationship with its predecessor. The two-tier system persists at the level of local democracy. The law does indicate that local governments administer themselves through elected councils and that they have elected executive officials. But it also stipulates that it can bring about a few derogations. In terms of derogations in this area, experience has shown that the government will appoint municipal officials directly in urban centers and will limit local democracy to rural areas. This particular application of the orientation law is worrisome.

Then there is a new arrangement, which is in reality a step back from the previous situation. Indeed, the same law stipulates that "the powers transferred to territorial governments are not exclusive. They are exercised in a concurrent manner by the state and territorial governments, under the conditions and modalities provided by the law" (article 15[2]). This disposition excludes any clear distinction between the respective powers allocated to local governments and those retained by the state. We cannot therefore speak of an effective division of powers under these conditions. In the absence of a clear distinction between the respective powers at every level of governance, the risks of interference are great, as are the risks of conflicts.

In the same fashion, the abolition of the a priori supervision is only apparent in the relationship between the state and local governments. The law does cite a number of areas in which the decisions made by local governments can only be implemented after they have been approved by a state representative. On further examination, the areas in question form in fact the substance of local autonomy: the budget, loans, land management, del-

egations of public services, management of a certain category of personnel, and development planning. The state representative, in the exercise of his power of supervision, can delay up to 30 days before approving or rejecting the local decision submitted to him. To these restrictions, we must add the absence, for the moment, of a law governing the operations of the senate.

The Senate or the Elected Locals at the National Parliament

The introduction of a second chamber within parliaments is one of the major innovations of the recent institutional reforms currently taking place in Africa. As a general rule, African lawmakers of the first decades after independence did not give in to the two-chamber temptation, to which the European systems had exposed them, more specifically the French parliamentary system. The few exceptions to this rule in Francophone Africa applied to Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of Congo,[27] the kingdom of Morocco, and Burundi. The Republic of Dahomey (today Benin) had set up a consultative chamber whose members had been appointed by the chief of state but did not participate in the legislative process (Luchaire 1966, 342). In Cameroon, the experience of a two-chamber parliament began in 1961.

With the reunification of the two parts of the country (1961–72), Cameroon kept a sort of secondary two-chamber system. Only the parliament of the federated State of Western Cameroon (Anglophone) had a second chamber called the House of Chiefs, in addition to the legislative assembly (Kamto 1995, 7). This House of Chiefs brought together the representatives of traditional chiefs whose influence had remained quite strong in that part of the country. As for the federal parliament, it was constituted of a single chamber when one would have expected that the advent of federation might have brought about a political representation of federated entities. The 1972 unification put an end to this ambiguity. In any case, in all of these experiences, the intention never was to grant the second parliamentary chamber thus created a function of representation of local governments. In this, the 1996 reform constituted a major innovation.

The senate, born from the 1996 constitutional reform, had the responsibility to ensure the representation of local governments within the new parliament. The latter was therefore to be made up of two chambers: the national assembly, composed of deputies that were elected by direct universal suffrage, and the senate, composed of representatives of local governments. This is in keeping with the logic of decentralizing reforms that want to take into account the important place of local governments in the system of national governance. In doing so, local governments participated from then on in the exercise of state power through one of its main pillars: parliament. Though the effectiveness of the institution remained rather virtual in nature, the adopted text announced a major role for local governments in the national legislative process. It was an innovation in the country's institutional history.

The Formation of the Senate and the Question of Its Legitimacy

The second parliamentary chamber is made up of one hundred members, the senators, elected within the framework of departments. They are divided up throughout the country, with ten senators representing the local governments of each of the country's ten regions. The senators are divided into two categories: 70 percent are elected by indirect universal suffrage, and 30 percent are appointed by the President of the Republic. The constitution divides these two categories for each region into seven elected and three appointed senators, all with a five-year mandate. Many writers have criticized this system. However, even if it is not so democratic, it constitutes an advance compared to the initial project submitted to the national assembly.

Indeed, in the 1993 preparatory project for the constitution, only three-fifths of the senate's members were to be elected by indirect suffrage. The others were to be elected under conditions to be set by subsequent law. But in the constitutional review, finally submitted by the government to be examined by the national assembly,[28] the regional quota for senators was maintained at 10, although a novelty was introduced in the modalities of their designation. The President of the Republic appointed up to five of the ten senators in each region, or 50 percent of the national total. Moreover, the former chiefs of state were entitled to become members. During the parliamentary phase of the review the proportion of senators was reduced to 30 percent and the category of entitled members was cancelled. A senator's

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27. Which will become Zaïre in 1974 before returning to its previous name in 1997.

28. *Cameroon Tribune* (Youndé), 29 November 1995.

mandate lasted five years. The chamber must be completely renewed at the end of the mandate. But the fundamental problem was elsewhere. It had to do with the legitimacy of the senate itself as a democratic institution.

Indeed, the representativeness of an institution is generally dependent on the mode of recruiting its members. The degree of democratic legitimacy the nation grants depends on the manner in which senators are designated, and this legitimacy, in turn, greatly influences its real powers in terms of its hold on society and of its counterweight vis-à-vis the executive officials. Jean Grangé (1990, 5) summarizes this: "a large, unquestionable representativeness confers authority and calls for a real role. An uncertain or limited representativeness, on the contrary, tarnishes the image and the credibility of the institution and forbids it from claiming a major role. The system of representation, that is to say the mode of constitution of the assembly, determines the conditions for the exercise of its function." There are good reasons to worry about the powers of the future senate.

The Senate's Powers

The first political function of the senate is related to representative democracy. The intermediary bodies must be represented, and local governments are their most democratic symbol, since they encompass the whole population.[29] The new constitution has maintained for the senate this function of representation of local governments (article 20). They are at the same time the communes and the regions, as well as any other category of local governments the lawmaker might create. The initial proposal of a tripartite composition in the preparatory project was not retained. For the senate, it was a matter of gathering not only the representatives of local governments, but those of the traditional chiefs and the "great socioeconomic and cultural categories of the nation." This proposal had been reproduced as is in the project submitted by the government to be examined by the national assembly, which only retained the territorial governments as the intermediary bodies whose parliamentary representation had to be secured.

The senate's second political function is to participate in the legislative process. It is a normative function. Besides the adoption of the govern-

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29. In some countries, citizens abroad (France Sénégal) are added or economic or socioprofessional organizations (Burkina Faso).

ment budget, the senate has the same powers as the national assembly when it comes to making laws. The senate can, as well as the state, propose private bills. Projects and private bills are deposited at the same time on the desks of the two chambers. The texts are examined and adopted in turn by each chamber in order to be valid. But in the case of a disagreement, the national assembly has the last word. What is striking in this formulation of the senate's legislative powers is the absence of any specific reference to decentralization and the local governments it represents.

The organic representation of local governments guaranteed by the presence of their elected members in the senate is not enough to allow full participation by these local governments in the exercise of national sovereignty. If the senate effectively represents local governments, the specific interests of local governments and, more globally, those of the local authority, would have to be defended and protected through its function in the legislative process; as well, the senate should be able to ensure this essential task. Indeed, the necessity to guarantee parliamentary representation for local governments, in addition to popular representation, reveals an awareness of the respective specificities that identify the two categories of the nation's components. Entering this preoccupation in the definition of the powers of the senate would consolidate this differentiation.

Indeed, there cannot be true representation without substantive content. That is to say, representation must revolve around specific powers. Representation cannot be evaluated only according to quantitative criteria related to demography. The qualitative element must intervene in terms of powers in order to establish a relation with the interests of the subjects represented through organizations. Then, rather than make the senate a parliamentary chamber—which differs, from the point of view of the legislative process, from the chamber of deputies only in its style of recruiting members and in its weaker powers—one could well envisage distinguishing the two chambers by defining their powers in relation to the type of representation they ensure, respectively. The national assembly represents the people, and the senate the local governments. It is therefore possible to grant the latter special prerogatives in the legislative process, whenever projects or bills involve decentralization in general and the interests of local governments in particular. All that would then be required would be to respect the privileges of the chamber of deputies whenever the texts in question have an impact on taxes or the budget.

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Senegal began the most important phase of the decentralization process the country has known with the adoption, on 22 March 1996, of Law 96–06, dealing with Local Government Code, and of Law 96–07, dealing with the transfer of powers to regions, communes, and rural communities. Since then, many studies and seminars and much research have considered ways to establish the fiscal and financial decentralization that they view as an important milestone in the intensification of decentralization in Senegal.

Today, more than eight years after the adoption of the 1996 reforms, the administrative system of local taxation in Senegal is still strongly centralized and only minimally deconcentrated. This deprives the local politicians, responsible for the definition of local development politics, of an important lever in determining the financial needs for the implementation of their plans and programs. A major dimension of this reflection has to do with the definition of the real implications of fiscal decentralization in the current context of Senegal.

This paper is a contribution to the debate through an examination of the following points:

- The evolution of fiscal and financial decentralization in the decentralization process,
- The analysis of the impact of fiscal and financial decentralization in the decentralization system,

Neither Law 64-02 of 19 January 1964, which granted special status to the Dakar commune, nor the reforms that were precursor to decentralization, which succeeded each other until 1996, brought significant evolution in the attribution of power to local government in terms of fiscal and financial decentralization. Law 90-35 of 8 October 1990, which modified the Code of Communal Administration, then cancelled the special status that made Dakar a commune with special municipal regime, thus going against the rules of common law. This regime had progressively been extended to the communes and the main towns of the region.

Before all this, the reform instituted by Law 72-02 of 1 February 1972 and the Law 72-25 of 9 April 1972, on the creation of a new local government or rural community, granted the latter a major authority, in this instance, the land management of rural areas. In other words, it was the power of the allocation or dis-allocation of land. But since these land allocations were essentially intended for agriculture, they were not taxable.

The first step toward financial decentralization going together with political decentralization was the adoption of Law 90-37 of 8 October 1990, which codified the transfer of budget management of rural communities from the subprefect to the president of rural councils, who

izens; both the lack of interest in fiscal or financial obligations and the refusal to comply, as much on the part of locally elected politicians as on the part of the people; the state's lack of resources; bad governance; the inadequacies of decentralization; clientelism; and political and social nepotism.

One of the first questions the demand for integrity and transparency asks of fiscal decentralization is about fiscal potential. Local governments often do not know or cannot determine the revenue from the local business tax because of the changing size and mobility of the informal sector. Exemptions and discounts, which are generally granted at the center, can deprive local governments of important revenue. Information on these

local governments. The slow process of transferring funds, the low level of transfers, the impossibility to predict the amounts and the allocations of transfer funds, the revenues hardly able to cover the functioning expenses, the structural budgetary imbalances (salaries prevail over other things), the insufficient internal resources that would allow raising the level of investment in infrastructure in order to improve basic services (health, education, potable water supply, etc.), the lack of human resources qualified to manage the finances of local governments—all of these factors weigh heavily on the promotion of financial decentralization for local governments.[3]

The Programme de Développement des Infrastructures de la Santé (PDIS) and the Programme de Développement de l'Education et de la Formation (PDEF) have already started decentralizing budgetary implementation through the establishment of a Cadre des Dépenses à Moyen Terme (Framework for Middle-Term Expenses, CDMT) as well as the functions connected with expenses.

The state makes provision for budgetary decentralization by decentralizing its consolidated investment budget, extending to 2006 within the implementation framework of the Stratégie de Réduction de la Pauvreté et la Stratégie de Croissance Accélérée (Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty and Strategy of Accelerated Growth) program, based on an important infusion of capital that would allow both the creation of infrastructure, particularly at the local level, as well as the promotion of exports. The mechanism of budgetary support, adopted by several development partners (World Bank, European Union, UNDP, French Development Agency) fits into this framework and also reveals a will to make local governments more aware of their responsibilities when planning, transferring power to public markets, and controlling works, as well as managing the finances of investments at the local level.

## REQUIREMENTS OF FISCAL AND FINANCIAL DECENTRALIZATION

The debate over the modalities of effective implementation of fiscal and financial decentralization has not subsided. However, one can formulate a few guiding principles in the definition of fiscal decentralization policy.

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3. Many examples can illustrate these constraints; for instance, one local government implemented its budget and the funds allocated from the FDD program never arrived (MGP Afrique 2003).

1. Fiscal decentralization must not be considered outside of a global approach to taxation in the national economy; that is to say, its implementation must be consistent with the necessity to maintain macroeconomic and regional development balances. In other words, fiscal decentralization must not cause an excessive increase in local taxation, which could have negative effects on the global fiscal pressure on the economy and the taxpayers (Joumard and Mathis 2003).

2. Eventually, allowing local governments, particularly regional governments, to freely establish their own taxation systems presents a risk of creating important interregional disparities, which could lead to added imbalances in regional development. This equation, which is still current in countries with long experience in decentralization, like France, was examined by Laetitia Van Eekhoud (2002). She analyzes the eventuality of a decision by the French state aiming to allow their local governments to freely establish the rate of their main local taxes (such as property taxes, business taxes, land taxes on built properties as well as properties without buildings) as an attempt to free itself from the actual responsibility of making sure that the rate of these taxes would evolve in exactly the same way, creating thus a risk of loopholes and individual taxation inconsistencies.

   In Senegal, those who support the establishment of a taxation system adapted to the region, in the name of a full and complete implementation of the principle of free administration of finances in local governments, would likely agree with the adoption of a similar measure. By contrast, those in favor of the predominant role of the central state in fiscal affairs would not agree to this change. The implementation of a ceiling rate in order to avoid major disparities between local governments could be a compromise solution.

3. The allocation of resources to local governments must be rationalized, ensuring particularly an optimal distribution of employment and resources. In other words, it is preferable to get the users to pay for the management of infrastructure and commercial services of local governments (public lighting, upkeep of markets and public venues) through a direct tax mechanism, and to pay through local taxes for the management of noncommercial infrastructure and pub-
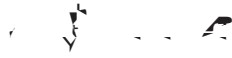
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United Nations Development Program (UNDP). 2004. *Human
    Development Report.* New York: UNDP.
Van Eekhoud, Laetitia. 2002. Matignon veut accroître l'autonomie fiscale
    des Collectivités locales (The French government wants to increase the
fiscal autonomy of local governments). *Le Monde,* 11 September.

III. CITIZENSHIP, IDENTITY AND PARTICIPATION IN URBAN   EST AFRICA

The most commonly used notion to characterize the African city is that of crisis. Is this a crisis of the models or of the analytical tools? Is it caused by the national economies or by the extraversion accompanying the economic slump? Does it arise from the inabilities of African cities to manage both their populations and their spaces, through the creation and the maintenance of infrastructure? Whatever the preferred answer might be, the crisis of the urban model poses the problem of the state. R. Pourtier observes "Nowhere else is the genetic link between the city and the state seen more clearly than in sub-Saharan Africa: the great majority of cities are indeed 'daughters of the state'" (Pourtier 1992, 87). And if the reproduction of the colonial model seems to have reached the point of no return, the Africanization (see Coquery-Vidrovitch 1993) of West-African cities inaugurated during the colonial era has accelerated with independence, and with the economic and financial crises of the 1970s and the end of the state as entrepreneur and planner. The problem it poses is that of the relevance of both concept and reality covered by the term *African city*.

How was this Africanization created and imagined and how did it impact the lives of communities, of individuals, and of both public and private institutions in the various historical situations and circumstances of these last thirty years (Anderson and Rathbone 2000, esp. the introductory chapter; De Latour 2000; Freund 2001; Enwezor 2002)? During that time and the years that followed, problems of employment and poverty among the masses that had grown much larger in the cities were added to the issues of infrastructure and social services and to the problems of institutions, financial capacities, and modes of governance of African cities (Evans 2002;

intervention are also at the root of many conflicts and the total absence of rational and coherent urban operation. On the contrary, they contribute to the privatization of the urban territory and to the fragmentation of civil society, thus making difficult the emergence of meaningful citizenship and of a civil society capable of a healthy spirit of competition. Such a strengthened civil society is indispensable to the kind of urban governance that would encourage the financing and management of African cities by Africans themselves (Simone 2004).

African urban societies have evolved in time and space. New dynamics are appearing with notably more young people playing a part and greater competition for resources (economic, land, symbolic resources, and so forth), that are becoming scarce, compartmentalized, and/or the object of dispute, faced with the state's retreat from larger and larger spheres of economic and social life. All this is combined with the emergence and/or the brutal affirmation of the logics of identity that negate the idea of cosmopolitanism, so naturally attached to the city in the Western philosophy of the nineteenth century.[1] Original commune or commune by nature, the identity stakes are currently the revealing factors of crises in the African city, while being confronted by state inertia and the disorders of political rebuilding and economic adjustments. They begin to forget their historical contingency to rely on prophecy (Moslem religious fundamentalisms, Christian charismatic movements), on the properties and natural appropriations of space, on ethnicity, and on the myths of origin and foundation. Thus the West African city participates in the selection between native and foreigner, a selection founded on memory.

Is it therefore necessary to specify that under the double pressure of both the demography—in a decade or so, the West African population will be mostly urban—and the crisis in its economic, social, political, moral, and

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1. In his refusal of the urban world, Spengler describes this situation very well, when praising the village; "on the one hand, a culture which roots itself in nature, on the other hand, an artificial world which takes everyone's place: with its silent roofs resembling hills, its evening smoke, its fountains, its paddocks, its cattle, the village is being completely lost, sleeping in the landscape. The landscape *confirms* the countryside and enhances its image, which will only be defied by the late arrival of the city. The city's silhouette contradicts the lines of nature. It *denies* all nature….Finally, the gigantic world city, the city seen as a world without any other world beside it, begins the destruction of the country's image" (Spengler 1981, 2:94). This reading of Spengler finds an echo in the African literature written between 1950 and 1980; see Laye (1953), C. H. Kane (1961), and Boto (1954).

ecological manifestations, the idea of the city as an extension of rural societies and villages, which follows the rhythm of nature, is about to disappear or at least is being seriously questioned? Do these new modalities and the modernity they put into question—mean ethnic, religious, technocratic modernity, and good governance—favor social integration or the scattering of forms of socialization and identification?

In any case, the profusion of means to do things, means to live and survive in an urban setting, as well as the loosening of technologies of surveillance and repression, the political instability, and the community-based management of order and disorder have given way to totally new situations in African societies that sink deeper and deeper into the economy of scarcity. Violence, prophecy, and informal practices proliferate concomitantly.

This paper intends to follow the contours of this geography of memory in West African cities, particularly in the Dakar area. The situation in this latter is all the more interesting since the liaison, memorization, and imagination of new logics of socialization have successively taken the form of political protest (1988; see Diop and Diouf 1990, 335–54), the deadly repression of Mauritanian shopkeepers (ibid., 387–404), cleaning up the city after violent storms on the monstrous piles of household garbage uncollected by the municipality, and finally of the representation in pictures of the *Set Setal* movement (1990)[2] on the walls of Dakar.

THE DYNAMICS OF URBANIZATION

Many factors need to be considered in the analysis of the issues of demographics and migration, all being particular variables of urban evolution in West African cities. In terms of demography, one notices the increasing importance of urban demography within the general demography of the region. In the very near future, cities will be places of concentration for the majority of the West African population. Senegal was the first country to have experienced this growth in urban population (see Becker, Diouf, and Mbodji 1994). Migration is the dynamic element for population phenomena in West Africa. Its main characteristic is the historical shift of popula-

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2. On this movement called *Set Setal* (cleanliness/making clean), which is the title of a song of one of the great Senegalese international stars, Youssou Ndour, see : Niane, Savané, and Diop (1991), Enda Third World (1991), and Diouf (1992).

tion of West Africa toward the coastal region. This movement, which is accelerating, is the result mainly of the extraversion of the economy, characteristic of the region since the colonial era.

However, one remarkable fact is that the internal politics of the country never favored either internal or external migratory movements. The hostility shown by the ruling classes toward migrants and migration appears in the term used to qualify it: rural exodus. Here are a few examples of their hostility: Benin had hampered the internal movement of its populations for 17 years, but today a great movement has begun in the direction of Cotonou, following democratization; the authorities have begun to require visas for foreigners and a living permit. A few years ago, Nigeria, despite international and regional treaties to which it had agreed, expelled several million foreigners to their countries of origin.

It should be noted that the interventions by the state, which have been as brutal as the ones taking place in Nigeria, do not discourage the candidates for migration. They have various ways of settling in an urban milieu and organizing themselves around both the relationship between old and new urban dwellers and the mechanisms allowing access to resources (work, housing, urban facilities, and the like.)[3] These relationships and competitions could get better treatment if they considered the following: migration modalities, government policies for people and national development, and decisions about migration (who leaves, when and how, who makes the decision, who chooses the migrant and at what level of authority [household, family, community, brotherhood, religious group]), itineraries, forms and times of migration, and so on). Indeed, relationships based on forms—the political, social, economic, and symbolic configurations—and stakes in the cities (points of arrival) and in the points of departure influence migration, since the economic situation is not the only cause for the decision to migrate. Following the crisis, the family again becomes the main focus for shelter, the almost exclusive place for the migrant in West African cities. Then we have the Christian religious sects, the Islamic brotherhoods, and other ethnic groups. The explosion of religious sects and Islamic associations, as well as the bloody demonstrations that have shaken Nigerian cities since the middle 1980s, has become the main manifestation of both the cri-

sis and the recrudescence in the new expression of identity (s) and in the almost exclusiv

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ous decline in the fertility rate in developed countries—radically transforms the terms of the African debate. Its consequences are economic as well as cultural, political, and social because each one of these cultural repertoires has an impact on the process of integration in society, as well in terms of civic responsibilities, as the sense of belonging. As well, young people are strongly influenced by the connections between local and global pressures that define contemporary Africa. These pressures are caught, on the one hand, between dissolution and/or national geographic fragmentation and its memories, and, on the other hand, by a return to local times that let themselves be carried by the impulsions of world time, whether religious, esthetic, and cultural or political and economic, or all of it at once.

Then there was the failed project of nationalist politics with its double objective of economic development and social justice. It manifested itself in the training of young people anatur

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ments offer, in most cases, new expressions, whether or not violent, whether or not formal, of political action, of a refusal of the self-righteous regimes of modern or traditional elites, in the face of the erosion of state and family responsibilities. These new expressions are often accompanied by new associative formulas of political commitments and esthetic formulations, on the margins of the institutions and traditional modes of conduct.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND URBAN POLITICS

The city is the place where Africa inserts itself into modernity. It is therefore capable of generating tensions, adaptations, and/or resistances to change. In situations of economic crises, we may note a resurgence of village behavior. Not everyone agrees on the meaning of this resurgence. The question is: Can the West African city function with village/rural values, even after they have been recycled? Asked like this, it indicates that urban development and modernity seem to shake up several of the social customs established in society, thus making the current big cities ungovernable. The electoral campaigns in Mali, in Senegal, and the phenomenon of the area boys, militias born in urban neighborhoods, have made it clear that they function as villages. Does village sociability allow the management of the tensions that seem inseparable from integration in an urban setting? Also, what happens to those practices with the second, essentially urban generation?

In general, the state has been discredited in West African societies. As partisan and clientelistic, it has abdicated its role as mediator, thus leaving conflicts and competition to take unusual forms, particularly in urban situations. The city, being the place where competition reigns between individuals, between groups, between ethnic groups, between urban old and new, is also the framework of competition between those capable of mobilizing resources, whatever their nature (financial, land, political, symbolic) and those who cannot. Poverty and its consequences in the degradation of the environment and the infrastructure are the best proof of it. Being the site of the modern economy and of the state, it is where general confrontation is deployed. Its main stake is access to urban resources, international aid, public functions, and economic and political incomes. Reduced trust in the state has had enormous consequences. Each time the state, under the pressure of financial assistance agencies or economic circumstances, abandons some of the prerogatives and domains that had always been its own, its

claim to govern is lessened. These "liberated zones" become areas of invention, dissidence, and dissonance, thus contributing to the renewal of daily life, to the spreading of violence, following the multiplication of competing versions of identity, thus overwhelming the state.

The strength of social movements is not revealed only through anti-establishment behavior, through protests and violence. The interlocking of living spaces with work, resourcefulness, and/or delinquency is an important aspect of the identity of West African cities. In between these various territorialities has blossomed what is called the "informal sector" or the "popular urban economy," which, like the unplanned section of the city, occupies the immense majority of the population. Its morphology seems to

Can urban public authorities contain the explosive potential of the competition between the most visible segments of society, since the accumulation of wealth occurs through a process of sedimentation? The new practices provoke a division of urban space into socially exclusive groups. The common good, the commune, disappear gradually for the benefit of clans and groups. The creation of local militias to secure order and discrimination in health and school community structures against those who do not pay and foreigners in Bamako (see Antoine 1992), for example, are illustrations of this trend. They are proof of the parceling up of social responsibility, of common interest.

The new forms of accumulation are different from those of the Western bourgeoisie and of businessmen, the clients of a state that undertakes projects, and distributes quotas and import licenses. They rest on community enterprises, for example, the Baol-Baol; on religious groupings such as the Mourides or the Pentecostal Nigerians; or on ethnic groups such as the Hausa, in Niger, the Peuls in Guinea, the Ibo in Nigeria, sharing housing and food, as they do in the village, their modest consumption supporting an impressive level of accumulation. The Baol-Baol are very powerful today and they can trade directly with the rest of the world without going through the national modern structures (such as banks); from this point of view, they bypass the authorities (see the work of Ebin, particularly 1992; and Salem (1981).

The relationship between the authorities and the informal sector is one of hostility, of control, and, sometimes, for street vendors and for the productive part of the informal sector (such as mechanics, welders, and so on), of repression (the confiscation of merchandise; clean-up operations on the sidewalks, public places, and the entrance to markets).

The function of the informal sector is to organize the process of urban development by creating employment, without growth in productivity. The growth of demand is satisfied by a corresponding growth in the number of producers of goods and services. It is a sector in transition with a rapidly increasing political weight. The informal sector plays a role in socializing those newly arrived in the city. But it is, in the current situation, a major constraint on urban policy, in terms of layout and cleanliness.

Indeed, if the city is a site favorable to accumulation, it is also the seat of power. It is the territory for the expression of indigenous logics and those of "passing visitors," all manifestations that are part of the struggle for power

neighborhood, summer classes for school children and secondary school students, and the building of urban infrastructure. More and more, they organize a resistance to and impose a dialogue on institutions and public authorities to discuss the occupation of urban space. Some of these associations try today to create public libraries and professional training centers as well as set up economic ventures in the form of a Groupement d'Intérêt Economique (GIE). These manifestations, mixing violence and good deeds, civility and incivility (or disobedience)[8], try more and more to take away from the state the physical, imaginary space, and from its institutions, the signs, parades, monuments, and commemorations.[9]

This evolution obliges us to rethink the state and citizenship, in response to two major changes: the crisis and democratization. On the one hand, the state is not able to carry on with its responsibilities, on the other, demonstrations aim to force it to accomplish some of the functions it neglects, such as garbage collection, cleaning up living spaces, and setting up infrastructure and well-functioning equipment. What are the political solutions currently available? At what level should public authority, local government,

INTRODUCTION

This paper comments on the politics of urban identity in Anglophone West Africa at a high level of abstraction. The main intention is to highlight some patterns that are salient in this group of states, and for that matter states across the continent. The countries that are usually designated as "Anglophone West Africa" include Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. This designation rests on their common use of English as the

were Kano, 3.33 million, Ibadan, 3.14 million, and Kaduna, 1.51 million. Lagos was ranked at 29 of 30 of the world's largest urban agglomerations by population size in 1995. It moved up to 23 in 2000, and is projected to climb to 15 in 2005 and 11 in 2015.[1]

These perfunctory observations should be sufficient to caution that, while the label "Anglophone West Africa" may be of some heuristic value in exploring regional patterns of urbanization and urban identity formation, a unity premised on common official language of state and shared colonial history can easily become a tempting excuse not to take seriously the particularities of their histories of urbanization and the unfolding of their politics of urban identity. After all, urban identities, like all social identities, are relational and dynamic. They are products of human agency, shaped and transformed by

politan" and "localist" cultural styles are not discontinuous nor do they map easily onto class hierarchies.

Significant to all of this is what can loosely be termed the prevailing "ideology of home" in these societies. For people the world over, home is a complicated and fragmented concept. For most West African urban dwellers, home in everyday language invokes both the place of current residence and a village or town that is one's ancestral place. Nothing expresses more powerfully the hold of this conception of home as ancestral community—an ethnically demarcated fragment of the nation-space—than the expectation of most that the ancestral home will be the final destination of life, regardless

There recently has been increased scholarly attention on African youth. In much of the current discourse (which remains heavily gendered as it is focused on young males), urban youth in particular are represented as a social category in crisis and of exclusion. Youth have been the most victimized by economic collapse and the majority exists without prospect of a meaningful future. Their responses to victimization and exclusion is, for many, the leading source of the pervasive social disorder and political instability that prevent the return of African states to more positive development trajectories.[8] This sort of framing of youth as simultaneously victims of development failure and agents of disorder constrains appreciation of how the identity-based politics of urban

rial circumstances, pushing them into even more inventive strategies of survival in the borderlands between lawful and criminal conduct.

Youth alienation exploded in the late 1980s as university and high school students, together with young urban professionals, emerged at the forefront of the primarily urban-based movements demanding an end to authoritarian rule. These movements would culminate in returns to multiparty politics in Gambia, Nigeria, and Ghana. In the case of Sierra Leone, middle-class university students together with marginalized youth—styled "lumpen elements" by Abdullah (1997)—formed the initial core of the Revolutionary United Front

Youth vigilantes, such as the Lagos "area boys" and the "Bakassi boys" in South-Eastern sections, emerged as a major presence in Nigerian cities in the 1980s. As Momoh (2002) demonstrates, the organization of Lagos' area boys has been patterned on traditional Lagos neighborhood age-set groupings, which articulated a locality-based youth identity through

lected and victims of ecological degradation. The leaders of these movements, who style themselves as a new breed of "young politicians," have taken to screening local candidates for political office, and in a number of cases, had elected state governors publicly align themselves with their brand of youth politics.[13]

CONCLUSION

The need to empower citizens and local communities in the making of decisions that govern their lives is the normative thrust of the current concern with democratic decentralization. At the most basic, democratic participation is a framework for competition for power and access to resources among citizens who are bearers of multiple identities whose political salience varies across time and space. Decentralization tends to produce an increase in local politics as it reshapes old and opens up new arenas for political participation and competition for resources. The crisis of the postcolonial state in Africa and uneven processes of economic and political liberalization have engendered a resurgence of identity-based politics that represents enormous challenges to the development of democratic urban governance. Not least of these challenges is that identity-based politics tend to reinforce the politics of patronage that have bedeviled the quest for more accountable systems of governance and development-oriented states. The two axes of urban identities discussed here make evident the reality of multiple and oftentimes conflicting conceptions of citizenship that reflect the myriad of social identities borne by contemporary Africans. If there is a conclusion to this paper it is the imperative to transcend the narrow liberal conception of citizenship in order to design more effective and just systems of political representation and accountability. Taking identity-based politics seriously need not lead to endorsement of unbounded recognition of group rights; it does, however, suggest that the pursuit of democratic participation and accountability as frameworks for managing Western African cities will be handicapped by inattention to intertwined and competing notions of citizenship and the historical circumstances that have shaped them.

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13. For general discussion of this phenomenon, see Gore and Pratten (2003) and Reno (2002); on the OPC, see Akinyele (2001); on the Niger delta, see Obi (2001).

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Many countries in Francophone Africa are involved in the decentralization

tion was to bring closer together administrative and political services and the people. So much so that the criteria on which the support programs for the new territorial governments are evaluated, taking into account successes in matters of local development, could very well lead to a very weak outcome. All the more so since the time granted these new entities in order to acquire real legitimacy in the eyes of the people and to demonstrate their performance's efficiency is limited. One cannot reflect on the possible or the necessary contribution of territorial governments to local development or to the success of public policies without wondering about the true meaning of local or urban issues. What problems can the city handle on its own? Which problems should become the shared responsibility of various levels of territorial governments? The answers to these questions vary depending on the time and place. More particularly, the sharing of activities may have been, at certain times in history, the subject of lively debate. One only has to remember those who stirred up the Paris neighborhoods during the French Revolution. On what issues should laws be designed: on the ones concerning citizens or only on those previously authorized by the central power?

Today, particularly under the pressure of international assistance agencies, the "local affairs," the "powers" to be managed by the new local governments have been predefined without them being consulted; that is to say, according to a decision protocol that itself disrespects the autonomy supposed to be conferred on these local governments. Indeed, their ability to set up and take on social services and local infrastructure should allow them to consolidate their legitimacy with the people. However, reciprocally, they can only mobilize the populations to participate in the set-up and the upkeep, not to mention respect for the infrastructure the city needs, by virtue of their legitimacy. Therefore, the legitimacy of these territorial governments is both the consequence of and the condition for the success of public policies they must implement, even though they did not decide on them in the first place.

The funds granted by the international agencies in support of local development often cover up the deficit in tax collection, although there are programs conceived specifically to reduce this deficit and set up self-financing procedures. In addition, even if tax collection matched the amount given by theoretical estimates, it appears that local taxation cannot be enough in a number of cities to cover the expenses required to carry out the development plans local governments had to establish at the onset. Let us note that these plans are nothing but a list of needs without any sense of priorities (for exam-

ple, a commune in Mali listed in its priority requirements the reduction in the rain deficit). These plans resemble rather a grocery list for the international agencies with little or no strategy to self-finance infrastructure and services.

I have analyzed elsewhere the possible effects that the "methods" of these aid programs may have on the kind of legitimacy of these new local governments (Leclerc-Olive 2003a). I would like now to touch on the issue of the legitimacy of local governments from the point of view of their relationship with traditional authorities: Do they compete with each other or do they complement each other? It appears as if the social dynamic produced by some urban development projects contributes to reconfigure the local sociopolitical landscape, within which these traditional political authorities (which have likely been reinvented) play a role not always anticipated by the reforms. Not only is the durability of these institutions at stake, but, more radically, so is their capacity to ensure the *sustainability* of the local development they are supposed to boost and manage. Indeed, fiscal public-spiritedness cannot be the exclusive result of only the legitimacy of the new local governments. In Mali, for example, the mayors were made responsible for tax collection. This decision expressed a certain trust in a public-spiritedness that would not be forced on the people, but would be acquired thanks to a well-performing government. This conviction was shared when local governments started their first mandate. However, one cannot but notice the turnaround at the end of the mandate: the mayors running for re-election did not have the commitment required to convince their potential electorate to pay their taxes. The legitimacy of local governments seems an insufficient condition for their efficiency in a context of autonomy; however it is indispensable.

Below I will examine the case of a neighborhood of Bamako, Samé. There, some of the measures taken by the traditional sociopolitical organization were finally shown up by a program of neighborhood upgrading, which it had itself wished for and boosted. If the project has met with some success in the area of material achievements, this partial success has had its sociopolitical price.[1] In fact, the local customs of "making" politics

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1. The program, though it enjoyed its own private financing, was integrated into a program supported by the World Bank, "Save Our Neighborhood" (SNQ, Sauvons Notre Quartier), which provided for the restoration of 25 squatter areas in Bamako. The evaluation of the success rate of these 25 subprograms placed Samé at the top of the list.

applied to the allocation of plots. No vehicle can pass through this area. There is no sewage disposal, no public lighting, and, obviously, no basic public infrastructure. There is no school, no health center, no market. The population is young or poor; educated people without employment have settled there for lack of money to rent in downtown Bamako.

The issue of restructuring the neighborhood came up for the first time at the end of the 1980s. The general assembly of heads of households (the traditional authority responsible for neighborhood affairs) approached

1998: Replacing the Office of the ACDSK

In 1998, the office of the ACDSK was "fired" and all of its members were
replaced. The team that had started and seen to the implementation of the

stressed the obligation to carry out a new designation of officials. This recommendation, strongly supported by the NGO, led to the office's resignation and to the delegitimization of the neighborhood leader. The NGO then deserted the area, and the local political space changed style. It went from an assembly of heads of households, responsible for all local affairs, to an authority fragmenting the problems in a technical fashion. In so doing, the process helped disqualify all things political, if we understand the expression to mean a set of public deliberation procedures intended to manage the city's affairs. It has been replaced by a conception of politics reduced to power relations and to fashioning along purely clientelist lines.

The Urban Land Registry (Cadastre) in Porto-Novo

The Registre Foncier Urbain (RFU) project was started at the end of the 1980s by SERHAU[4] (and set up within the framework of an agreement between France and Bénin). It has as its objective to help cities have a minimum of resources before decentralization, with a budget for the functioning of collective infrastructure. It was initiated at a time when the collectivity (the urban constituency) was nothing but a decentralized territory of the state.[5] The RFU had two goals: to make an inventory of all urban data and to establish a database that would allow exploitation of the city's "taxable resources." Djougou, in the country's northwest, experimented with a simplified test project in 1991–92. The heads of households in that city rejected it; they gathered up all the tax notices and returned them to the tax collection offices and thus forced the government provisionally to give up using this tool. The establishment of the RFU in Porto-Novo was expected to take place at the start of the program, but the first surveys were only set up in 1995, after Cotonou had been properly equipped. Therefore this survey—collecting general urban data on house fittings (electricity, WC, water), infrastructure, building use (as housing, churches)—was conducted over a period of two months by a team of sixty peo-

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4. Société d' Études Régionales d'Habitat et d'Aménagement urbain, a parastatal organization
5. Neighborhood leaders and commune mayors do not have real decisional powers. In order to get an idea of the place given to them, we quote an RFU official: "The mayors of old communes did not have sufficient status to influence local decision. If we associate with them, it will mean that their point of view might eventually alter the position of SERHAU. And that is not possible.…I admit that some mayors may have been very useful in Porto-Novo. But it was all informal" (Leclerc-Olive 2003a).

ple (city council personnel assisted by outside qualified personnel provided by SERHAU). Later, thanks to data processing, two databases would be created, one for taxation, the other for urban management. The district of Zebou (Pineau-Jamous 1986), in the center of Porto-Novo, one of the oldest areas of the city, is made up of old houses, with narrow and winding streets. Its inhabitants do not have access to networks of urban services. Electricity works through collective connections, water is bought from those inhabitants in the area who have a meter, people use their neighbors' toilets, and so on. The renovation of these areas also ran up against the refusal to disturb the certain religious symbols, protectors of the "collectivity."

Before starting the survey, preliminary to setting up the RFU, a campaign was created, intending to sensitize the people and mobilize the district leaders,[6] with the particular aim of reconstituting the boundaries of districts and old communes.[7] Public meetings were convened to inform the population. Despite the promises to improve the standard of living in the poor districts, the ultimate purpose of the survey fooled no one. In Porto-Novo, a steering committee was set up, made up of technical cadres, local administrators, tax authorities, SERHAU, and the ministry of the interior.[8] Alongside this group, a committee for the city, including the district leaders and the elders' committees, was responsible for dealing with the people; however, it did not have the power to make any decisions. "It was only to help us better sensitize the people. We make suggestions, on the technical level, we explain things to them. Sometimes, they criticize, but they cannot change what we propose to them, *the work is so technical.*"[9] When maps and addresses were drawn up, the committee suggested naming the streets. One of the people in charge explained:

> They suggested street names to us, but we rejected them. This committee also contested the amount of taxes, while helping to explain to

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6. Local chiefs today are elected. This function is a source (often modest) of income: any contract or agreement, in order to be valid, must pass before the local chief who then collects a tax, the amount of which he fixes on the spot.
7. Along the system of administrative organization, before decentralization (elections in 2003).
8. Elsewhere (as in Dassa, for example) they opted for a specific space for decision making where they gathered SERHAU, the committee of the elders, associations, and local chiefs in order to discuss reform and sensitize people to the concept of "fiscal responsibility."
9. An official of the RFU department in Porto-Novo; emphasis added (Leclerc-Olive 2003a).

the new communes, set up in 2003, and to contribute consequently to the legitimization of these new local authorities.

On the one hand, this program did not contribute to strengthening "fiscal responsibility." Generally, the RFU succeeded in the three large cities of Cotonou, Parakou, and Porto-Novo. The RFU widened the tax base (in particular, the distribution of notices increased) and improved the aggregate amount of collections. However, the ratio between collection and distribution of notices has decreased considerably in Porto-Novo unlike in Cotonou and Parakou. This rate, calculated on the basis of data provided by the municipal development program, which can be considered an indicator of fiscal public spiritedness among the citizens, has gone from 66 percent in 1994 to 59 percent in 1995 and to 35 percent in 1999, four years after the creation of the RFU. In other words, this arrangement required that more citizens pay their

authority of the voodoo god Gbé-Loko. "I own the voodoo; I am the one who named the voodoo chief. We do not take care of the voodoo ourselves; we may be Moslems, Catholics, there are people destined to perpetuate our voodoo. They are prepared from father to son. We take an interest in it only for financial reasons." To manage the collectivity, Agboton is helped by a committee of sages, "people older than my father, who come to help me because they have the memory, the references to solve problems."[15]

When the French arrived, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the reigning monarchies lost some of their prerogatives and were nothing more than higher-level chiefs. Among the people they continued to receive the same veneration, but they did not have supreme power: they could not execute nor imprison a person, they could not raise taxes—that was the pre-rogative of the colonial authorities. The kings of the local communities never ceased to settle the numerous conflicts that arose in everyday life. In this role as "mediators" they preserved a legitimacy that, though not as

the King of Abomey, thus forcing the Toffa king of the time to turn to the French for assistance against the invasion.

This general context, favorable to the public expression of these old local authorities, is coupled with the effects caused by practices of the state and the city's institutions, like the setting up the RFU. This program's political style, the main goal of which is to legitimate and collect taxes, has led the people, and particularly the residents of the local communities, to seek ways to avoid this imposition. For instance, there are so many joint owners in the local communities of these old neighborhoods, that when the taxes are calculated, one arrives at very nominal figures. Some people live in rooms only two meters square, often made of mud; that gives a taxable amount of less than a dollar. Some suggest removing old Porto-Novo from the taxation area. Family members who have "succeeded" have left their original collectivity to start their oo fryomponra the four cae peoes are many and well articulated:ompdeed, there is provinter buttias we have seen, there is also the idea that some local communities are royal monarchies that, as such, should be exempt from tax, and that some dwellings are used for religious purposes and not as houses.

It is easy to see hoo frmodernizing" arrange a f intended to legitimize taxes (including charging amounts loo frer than collection costs
[18]) helps to awakyoand legitimize sociopolitical forms of organization that borro

simply memories, they are living memory, even if the idea one has of them has evolved considerably, has recreated itself in the curre f situation (Leclerc-Oo frlive 2003b) four caes, both alloo fred by the general contextoand almost caused by local political actions, are neither pure reminiscence nor invention. our caeform

processes taks them into account, particularly in the conception and expression of decisions. It is interesting to note the conception the Zébou local communities' king has of his role: "When the administration brings us together, we respond." He dos not himself address the administration to communicate the grievances of the people. "
selves. o15(When they ar)9(e not happy)85(, they [the administration] knoo fr) it, we can

a resource for them." The political style claimed by the king is that of the *sage* consulted by the authorities, not that of the *representative* of the population (Leclerc-Olive 2003b).

TOWARD AN ANALYSIS OF DISCONTINUITIES/CONTINUITIES OF POLITICAL LEGITIMACIES

In the ways of accessing power and making political decisions, it might be interesting to look at what confers on a political style a legitimacy that inspires respect for those decisions.

Let us look at some historical situations in which the populations themselves have been led to change both the rules of access to decision-making assemblies and the procedures that prevail in those assemblies, separate from intervention by outside actors. I offer two examples, one taken from a study on the forms of government in Circassia in the middle of the nineteenth century (Charachidzé 2003), the other among the Ochollo in Ethiopia (Abélès 2003).

Part of Circassian society went from a structure that had been rigid for two millennia—four categories, organized into a hierarchy (princes, nobles, free peasants, serfs and slaves)—to a social system in which "lineage and residence were used as *markers* and no more as *foundations* for society" (Charachidzé 2003, 203). Before reaching that point, two sets of assemblies were held, each leading to a transformation in the rules of access to power and the exercise of power. During the first set of assemblies, the Circassians adopted forms for the designation of delegates, which would legitimize the participation of the four categories in the assemblies (reserved in the old days to princes and the nobility), based on the rules of family relationship (one of the pillars in the reproduction of their society). These rules decided on "components" able to agree on the nomination of representatives for these assemblies.

But these groups were scattered over the various territories where the tribes lived. A new change was introduced, which inaugurated the following set of assemblies. The great "constituent" assembly, held for a year in Adagoum (1848–49). was established on very different foundations. "The real attempt to organize the Circassian people into a democratic union, based on a representative system that took into account the real compact residence rather than the division into lineages scattered all over the coun-

"The Bekero are chosen. This assembly's initiators are no older than thirty; they have only a distant memory of the old forums. It is revealing to see them reactivate the tradition and ask the few still-living dignitaries to organize the assembly, in accordance with *woga*, a ritual…an inaugural blessing." They could have organized it near their actual homes. When Abélès asked them why they chose to have the assemblies in a place now

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DECENTRALIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

RONALD K. VOGEL

"Although to date there has been little devolution, the era of federal aid and fed-eral policy-making for places—one that extended from the New Deal to the Great Society and elevated cities to the status of third partner in the federal sys-tem—is over."

— John Kincaid (1999)

INTRODUCTION

The study of urban politics in nations increases in importance in relation to the degree of decentralization. In very centralized states, urban politics has little relevance. As local autonomy increases, urban politics becomes more important (Muramatsu 1997; Stren 2003). The current trend worldwide toward decentralization (United Nations 2001; Dillinger 1994) suggests that urban politics, and by implication comparative urban politics, is becoming more salient. Scholars and practitioners alike must now look more closely at how the organization of local governance in a nation-state affects public policy-making and policy outcomes.

Nations differ in their degree of decentralization. There are three ideal types of decentralization: *political decentralization*, *administrative decentraliza-tion*, and *deconcentration* (Muramatsu 1997). In the case of political decen-tralization, the central government and lower governments are equal under the constitution. Here, local governments enjoy a great deal of a fiscal auton-omy and independence. Administrative decentralization exists where local governments derive their powers from laws passed by the central government, which delegate functions and powers. In these systems, local governments still may have a high degree of financial autonomy and independence.

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third moment of decentralization in developing countries with unitary systems may result in local governments objectively operating under the deconcentration pattern, realizing significant local autonomy because it serves national interests or the interests of the ruling regime.

Gauging the success of decentralization policies requires an operational definition of decentralization. Essential features of local self-governance include:

- Authority: local governments have a high degree of independent authority or power to act on behalf of the public interest and set their own priorities over a broad range of functions.
- Fiscal resources: local governments have a reliable revenue stream adequate to provide basic public services and to support local priorities.
- Technical capacity: local governments have a high degree of technical expertise, organizational competence, and management skills to administer efficiently and effectively the programs for which they are responsible.
- Legitimacy: local government leaders are selected democratically and are primarily accountable to local citizens. Poor service delivery will lead to low citizen satisfaction levels and undermine support for local government.

If decentralization is intended to substantially bolster local self-government, then it is referred to as *devolution* (Kincaid 1999). Central policies aimed at greater administrative discretion being assigned to subnational governments but not significantly altering the intergovernmental relationship would still be viewed as decentralization policies but fall short of devolution. Analysts must be cautious in assessing the degree of decentralization. It is possible that decentralization policies are more rhetoric than reality (Boone 2003) or that official devolution policies may disguise other policy goals. In addition, national policies often lack coherence. Some national policies promote decentralization while others may lead to greater central-

United States, leading to misunderstandings and misclassification. For example, earlier in the paper, the distinction among political decentraliza-

ited. In addition, the rise of the postindustrial economy and the increasing mobility of capital leads local leaders to compete for business while keeping taxes and regulations low. At the same time, the federal government has greatly reduced federal aid to cities (see Figure 1 and next section). Why then do many view American cities as having quite a lot of local autonomy?

Figure 1. Trends in State and Federal Aid to Cities
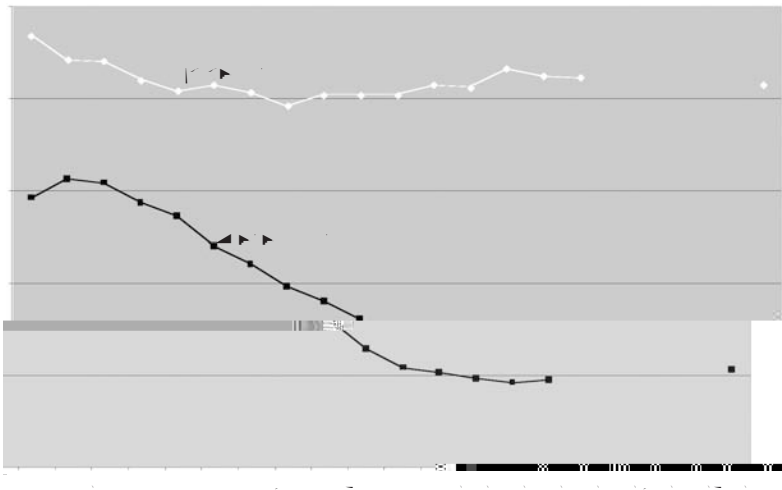
This is partly explained by a comparative perspective in which the degree of local self-governance is stronger in the United States than in many other nations. For example, the system of local revenue generation and discretionary spending provides a strong base for local self-governance (see Figure 2). Indeed local governments generate well over 60 percent of their revenue from their own sources. Local authorities may operate within constraints set by state governments but they do have significant leeway in what they fund, how they provide services, and what they do with their revenues.

Other features of the American political system and culture also help override structural legal limits of local government. One factor is the strong regard for localism in the American system. Officials in higher-level governments have a healthy respect for local preferences and values. This is reinforced by a weak party system alongside a system of representation organized around local voting districts. The national Democratic and Republican Parties are an aggregation of the 50 state Democratic and Republican Parties, which are themselves an aggregation of the more than 3000 local county Democratic and Republican Parties. The county Democratic and Republican Parties themselves are selected by precinct elections or caucuses held in ward or neighborhood voting districts. Naturally, this leads most legislators and party leaders to view themselves as representatives of local communities rather than the state or the nation.

Public leaders will seek to mobilize private interests to support their agendas and supplement their resources (Stone 1989). Private leaders also recognize that they need a strong government as well (Vogel 1992). Without adequate public infrastructure and services, business cannot operate. Local government must train and educate the workforce, provide for

Under Ronald Reagan (1980–88), *New Federalism II* took a sharp turn to the right. Citizen attitudes had changed, with few still believing in an active and positive national government (Self 2000). Markets, not governments, were seen as contributing to an improved standard of living. This called for privatization, deregulation, and tax cutting leading to a federal withdrawal from the concerns of cities. The national policy agenda emphasized deficit reduction, budget policy, and eliminating bureaucracy. This meshed well with the suburban electorate and growing population shift to the South and West, benefiting Republicans.

John Kincaid (1999) refers to "de facto devolution" in the United States as the federal government withdraws financial support from cities (see Figure 1). Here, devolution is not a deliberate policy to bolster local autonomy; rather, the federal government is moving away from cities and their problems. Eisinger (1998) argues that in the "new federal order," city politics in the United States is changing because of this devolution. Cities must be more fiscally and administratively self-reliant. Thus, local public management takes on increasing importance. This leads urban managers to focus less on issues of social justice and racial equality. Larger cities in the United States operate under the strong-mayor model of city government. Thus, mayors in cities like New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago embraced the new public management policies and our now hailed for saving the cities (Savitch and Vogel 2005).

Local governments, including older central cities, thrived in the 1990s in the United States as the economy boomed and revenues grew. In this climate, it is easy to see how mayors were successfully managing devolution. Even if mayors were less inclined to pursue redistributive policies, the stronger economy produced jobs and income for all levels of the workforce. However, the current period of economic recession has changed that. As the National League of Cities reports, "A federal and state fiscal crisis that is the largest the nation has experienced in decades is trickling down to city governments, making it increasingly difficult for city officials to balance their own budgets" (Hoene and Pagano 2003, 1). The report points out that nearly half the states cut revenue for cities in 2003 and 2004, resulting in a 9.2 percent drop in state aid to cities.

Although there has been a de facto devolution in American cities with mixed effects, the national government has continued to play a strong role in domestic policy. The entitlement programs that aid *people* instead of

places continue to account for a large share of the national budget. This includes programs such as Social Security and Medicare. The welfare program has been converted from an entitlement program to a block grant to states. Overall, the evidence actually indicates that in spite of the language of devolution and decentralization, the national government has actually centralized policy-making even in areas the Constitution traditionally reserves to the states (Bowman and Krause 2003).

THE US CASE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Decentralization and devolution have been undertaken for different reasons in different countries. There is a sense that this agenda has been pushed on developing countries by globalization or external actors, such as the World Bank. Richard Stren (2003) examines whether decentralization is a function of internal political dynamics or external pressure in the developing world. He finds that current decentralization processes underway are indeed a function of internal political dynamics rather than external forces. Similarly, Takashi Tsukamoto and Ronald Vogel (2007) looked at whether decentralization processes in the 20 highest ranked world cities are the result of globalization or politics. Surprisingly, political decentralization was not the overwhelming trend as expected. Rather, there was clear evidence of decentralization processes in just over half the cases (11 of 20 cases). Moreover, in the cases where decentralization occurred, most were due to internal political dynamics (8 of 11 cases).

In the United States we saw that political decentralization and devolution are a function of a federal withdrawal from the plight of cities. This withdrawal itself is a function of changing political realities as the liberal democratic coalition that governed America from the 1930s through the 1970s has come under challenge. Increasingly, Republicans have been able to forge a neoconservative coalition based in the suburbs and the South and West. A major policy orientation tying this coalition together is a neoconservative market orientation and a more limited view of the role of government, especially the national government in domestic affairs.

This results in a de facto devolution. Cities and their leaders adjust to changing realities by becoming more entrepreneurial and eschewing social justice and redistribution policies in favor of economic development to generate revenue and promote job creation. The American city, although chal-

state governments have provided substantial local discretion over revenue generation and organization of local public service delivery. Moreover, local governments have fully developed local bureaucracies with considerable in-house expertise as well as the resources to contract for outside consultants when necessary. Although local governments in the United States are not as autonomous as outside viewers sometimes claim, in practice, local governments and especially cities have substantial local autonomy.

Third, decentralization has significant policy consequences. In the United States, city mayors found they needed to forge public-private partnerships

Moreover, there is a price to be paid for the federal withdrawal from urban policy-making. In a federal system, as Peterson (1981) points out, redistributive policies generally are the province of the national government. If higher-level governments are not serious about decentralization and devolution, then urban services may be compromised as lower-level m0 0 Tfdrn Pohn Hc

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DECENTRALIZATION AND URBAN POLITICAL EXPERIENCES IN OTHER REGIONS: ASIA

APRODICIO A. LAQUIAN

Asia, the most populous region in the world (with 3.6 billion people), is divided into four subregions:

(a) *Eastern Asia*—China, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Mongolia, and Japan;

(b) S*outh Central Asia*—Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan;

(c) *South-eastern Asia*—Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam; and

(d) *Western Asia*—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Gaza Strip, Georgia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirate, and Yemen (United Nations 2001a).

The 49 countries within the Asian region represent a great variety of economic, political and cultural conditions. The countries range from the completely urbanized city-state of Singapore, with its 3 million people, to the People's Republic of China, the most populous country in the world with 1.3 billion inhabitants, 465 million of them urban. The two largest Asian countries, China and India, together make up 38 percent of the total world population. Asian countries also include those with ancient urban traditions as well as the most recent addition to the family of nations.

Because of this great variety of countries in Asia, this paper is confined to a few selected Eastern, South Central, and South-eastern Asian countries that reflect main trends in decentralization and urban political develop-

ment. In particular, the analysis is focused on (a) countries in transition from centrally planned to more market-oriented economies (China and Vietnam); (b) countries that were former colonies but after gaining independence started emerging as liberal democracies (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka); and (c) countries that were never colonized but were nevertheless influenced by Western ideas (Japan, Thailand). This selection is guided by the view that the socialist experience (or lack of it) is a significant factor that influences decentralization and urban political development. It is the qualitative differences between socialist and nonsocialist countries that make the Asian political situation unique and interesting.

DECENTRALIZATION DEFINED

In Asian jurisprudence, decentralization is generally defined as:

- The *devolution* or transfer of formal authority and power from central governments to local governments through constitutional provisions and/or statutory enactments.
- The administrative *delegation* of authority and power from central government agencies to local government units where local officials continue to be responsible and accountable to their central government superiors.
- The *privatization* of governmental functions where the central government transfers authority and power to private-sector instrumentalities that perform specific functions and services.

In highly centralized nation-states in Asia, decentralization is also sometimes seen as the *deconcentration* of authority and power geographically from the national capital to local units in the hinterland.

The main characteristics of decentralization as a governmental process are embodied in the concept of "local autonomy," which has been defined as "the state of self-determination of local governments and their relative freedom from central government control over local affairs and other community concerns" (Sosmena 1991, 62). Local autonomy is based on the principle of "home rule," which argues that sovereignty in a liberal democratic regime resides in the people and that, therefore, citizens living in a

particular community should have the right to decide public affairs on the basis of their own free will. The paramount nature of home rule is thought to be especially effective when the people rely on their own capabilities rather than on resources from the central government.

It must be clarified that as understood in Asia, delegation of authority as well as privatization do not mean absolute loss of authority and power by the central government to local authorities or enterprises. This is particularly the case when it comes to delegation of authority to local officials who continue to have the status of central government functionaries, as has been the case in India, Pakistan, and Thailand. Here, the governing management principle is: "what has been delegated can be taken back." Furthermore, even in the case of devolution of authority and powers to local units (true decentralization), the central government does not completely lose power and influence over local units. The central government can continue to wield this power and influence through such steps as (a) setting policy goals that local government units and enterprises have to follow as parts of the nation-state; (b) imposing performance standards that have to be lived up to by local government units; and (c) selectively making financial and other resources available to local governments for programs and projects that it favors.

THE ASIAN SITUATION

It is interesting that, historically, the political situation in Asia has not been too different from West Africa in a number of ways. In both regions, political development has been characterized by two conceptually divergent trends. First, a number of factors have strongly encouraged centralization of authority and power in dominant central governments. At the same time, however, there have also been many features of Asian and West African political cultures that have encouraged greater decentralization of authority and power to local government units.

In almost all Asian countries at present, decentralization programs have been adopted devolving authority and power to local governments. Constitutions have been amended in India, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines to provide greater autonomy to local units. New laws have been passed implementing decentralization programs. A number of public functions have also been privatized, especially in urban areas. To get a better appreciation of the effects and impact of decentralization on the politics of urban development in

ernized and urbanized elites, reasserted the authority and power of the nation-state to suppress these antagonisms. These national elites simply employed the centralist institutions used by the colonizers. In some instances, in their efforts to maintain national unity under threats of local secession, they became even more ruthless in their imposition of central government dominance.

Fourth, in China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Mongolia, the adoption of communism as the dominant ideology made the nation-state the paramount factor in society and politics. The communist rulers used a single political party, the military, central planning, state ownership of land and

In the face of these ethnic and religious identities that challenge the government, central government authorities have sometimes been forced to decentralize authority to local units dominated by specific ethnic groups. Thus, in the southern Philippines, the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has been created as a local government unit. The ARMM, as constituted, has jurisdiction over all governmental functions

government officials in Beijing had to give city mayors and provincial governors more authority to manage local affairs to enable these local officials to respond more effectively and efficiently to local economic development needs. In the Philippines, the Local Government Code of 1991 devolved authority and power to local officials from the village to the provincial levels to help accelerate economic development. In India, centrally appointed local officials in charge of progressive cities and municipalities were "superceded" by a revision of the constitution and made elective. All these decentralist moves were influenced by the fact that sustained economic development required empowerment of local officials to enable them to manage economic affairs effectively and efficiently.

Finally, high rates and levels of urbanization in many Asian countries served to accelerate the movement toward decentralization as local government units started proving that they had the financial, managerial, and institutional capabilities to handle their own affairs. As towns became cities and cities turned into metropolitan regions, the problems faced by such expanding agglomerations became too burdensome for central government authorities. Better-educated and well-informed urban citizens asked for and expected better urban services. They became more actively involved in public affairs, and they demanded more power to manage their own affairs. The growth of nongovernmental organizations, civic associations, and other elements of civil society in many Asian cities served to encourage greater decentralization.

Among the five factors enhancing decentralization mentioned above, it is useful to focus on three that have a direct bearing on the decentralization process. These are urbanization, economic development, and the spread of liberal democracy.

Urbanization and Decentralization

The level of urbanization in Asia is relatively low (34.3 percent in 2002). This is lower than the urbanization level in Western Africa, which was 39.3 percent in 2000. Furthermore, the annual growth rate of urbanization in Western Africa, which is expected to reach 3.58 percent between 2000 and 2030, is much higher than the urban growth rate in Asia, estimated at 2.27 percent. These levels of urbanization and urban growth rates, however, need to be considered in the context of total population size. While the whole of Africa had a total population of 819.9 million in 2000, Asia had 3.7 billion,

about 60 percent of the total world population. Western Africa's total population of 241 million is relatively modest compared with Eastern Asia's 1.4 billion (United Nations 2001b). This aspect of population size is important because even a modest increase in the urbanization growth rate in Asia adds hundreds of millions to the population of towns and cities

The level of urbanization and annual rate of urban growth in Asia mask a very large diversity in country conditions. For example, highly urbanized countries such as Japan and South Korea have very low annual urban growth rates. Other large countries in South Central Asia have low levels of urbanization but relatively high rates of annual urban growth. India, for example, is only 29.5 percent urban but its towns and cities are growing at 2.41 percent per year. Similarly, Bangladesh is still largely rural (25.6 percent urban) but its annual urban population growth rate is 3.51 percent. Other Asian countries with high annual urban growth rates are Pakistan (3.49 percent), Vietnam (2.94), Indonesia (2.43), China (2.20), and the Philippines (2.15) (United Nations 2001b, 64).

Table 1. Urbanization Patterns in Asia and Western Africa

As seen in Table 1, the urban population in the Asia-Pacific region is expected to reach more than a billion by the year 2030. In fact, quite a number of Asian countries are represented among those that account for more than 75 percent of the world's urban population. According to the

United Nations, the levels of urbanization among Asian countries are as follows: Republic of Korea, 81.9 percent urban; Japan, 78.8; Philippines, 58.6; Indonesia, 41.0; China, 35.8; Pakistan, 33.1; India, 27.7; and Bangladesh, 25.0. In Western Africa, only Nigeria, which is 44.1 percent urban, is counted among the world's major contributors to urban populations (ibid.).

The dualism of society in Asia (the majority of people living in rural villages but a significant number living in very large metropolitan areas) has encouraged two types of decentralization patterns. First, in countries with a low level of urbanization, there has emerged what can be called a pattern *of nonsustainable decentralized development*. This is a type of decentralization where authority and power have been devolved to the smallest unit of local governance, such as the village, the urban community, or the street or neighborhood committee. However, granting authority and power to these small local government units has not actually allowed them to pursue significant development projects because they lacked the financial, managerial, and institutional resources to do this. Thus, in many Asian countries, some so-called decentralization schemes were not actually sustainable because the local units that were granted autonomy did not have financial viability. This nonsustainable decentralization has actually resulted in the further strengthening of central governments because the powerless local units had to look to the center for most developmental resources (Laquian 2001).

In other Asian countries, rapid urbanization resulted in *sustainable decentralization* because authority and power were devolved to urban settlements that had the necessary financial, human, and institutional resources to actually make things work. In particular, large cities and extended metropolitan areas required adequate decentralized authority to deliver urban services effectively and efficiently. They had to be allowed by the central government to plan and manage economic affairs within their jurisdictions to encourage economic development and effectively manage urban services. New institutions for metropolitan and regional planning and governance had to be established by provincial and central governments to meet the challenges posed by urbanization. In Indonesia, for example, the governmental unit called *Jakarta Raya* was set up to manage urban affairs within the country's capital. A comprehensive regional plan encompassing regencies was established (the so-called JABOTABEK planning region) (Argo 1998; Firman and Dharmapatni 1995).

In Thailand, the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority was also set up to coordinate urban development (Kaothien 1992). In the Philippines, the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) was created to manage urban services like water, sewerage, garbage disposal, and traffic management (Laquian 2001). Although these metropolitan and regional bodies were set up by central government authority and initially functioned as instrumentalities of the central government, they are now evolving into decentralized governance structures that are becoming more and more responsive to local needs rather than to central government priorities. Even in Chinese cities like Shanghai and Guangzhou, which have been placed under the direct supervision and control of the central government, some degree of local autonomy is already being exercised by local officials because they have to quickly respond to urban development issues.

A very important factor linking urbanization and decentralization in some Asian countries has been the *privatization* of basic services demanded by rapidly growing cities. Typically, services like clean water provision, sewerage and drainage, and garbage collection and disposal were provided by government agencies. In many Asian cities, government-owned or government-controlled corporations were often established to carry out these functions. As very large cities came into being, however, government agencies became ineffective, inefficient, and too corrupt to carry out these services. In a number of Asian metropolitan areas, these urban services were privatized. The water and sewerage systems for Greater Jakarta and Metro Manila, for example, have been turned over to private companies managed by local entrepreneurs linked up with international corporations such as Suez Lyonnaise de Eaux and Ondeo Water Services. Other basic urban services such as electric generation and distribution, transportation systems, telecommunication, and solid waste collection and disposal have also been largely privatized in many cities. In many Asian countries, "private-public partnership" is fast becoming the preferred mode for decentralizing authority and power.

Does the perceived relationship between urbanization and decentralization in Asia provide any guidance for West African countries? As far as this issue is concerned, there are at least three lessons that can be learned from the Asian experience.

First, the level of local government at which authority and power are decentralized is very important. The old practice in some Asian countries of decentralizing authority to rural villages and small communities does not

work. The reason for this is obvious. The local rural units do not have the necessary human, financial, and organizational resources to make decentralization work. To make matters worse, the central government and higher levels of local governments often engage in "downloading" their responsibilities to the lowest-level governmental unit without decentralizing appropriate financial and institutional resources that would enable these local units to meet their responsibilities.

Second, high rates and levels of urbanization are positively related to successful decentralization schemes. Rapidly growing urban areas call for basic urban services that directly affect the quality of life of people. If local government units fail to respond to the needs of the people, local citizens start demanding more effectiveness and efficiency. Urban citizens tend to be more educated, have access to more information, and tend to articulate their demands. They may form political parties and pressure groups to influence local officials. They may mobilize people and resources to have their own leaders elected to political office.

Third, as towns turn into cities and cities into metropolitan areas, local governments are forced to cooperate with each other to solve common problems. The emergence of metropolitan governance structures in a number of Asian cities has had important impacts on sustainable decentralization. Logically, there are a number of factors that tend to make decentralization of authority to metropolitan governments more successful. Such metropolitan governments usually have a stronger tax base and therefore are able to mobilize enough financial resources to pay for their service needs. Individual local government units in a metropolitan area realize quite early that urban problems, such as air and water pollution, traffic congestion, crime and violence, and epidemics, do not respect local government boundaries. If they do not cooperate and act together, they will not be successful in making the lives of their citizens better. As they learn to cooperate and coordinate their actions and show their capabilities to carry out governance functions, the central government becomes more willing to decentralize authority to such metropolitan structures, thus achieving sustainable decentralization (Laquian 2005).

Economic Development and Decentralization

In Asia, as in other regions of the world, there is a positive correlation between economic development and decentralization. In general, the high-

er the level of economic development in a country, the greater is the degree of local autonomy exercised by local government units. Countries with lower levels of per-capita income, quite often, are faced with tremendous problems, and many citizens tend to look to the central government to solve them. On the other hand, many richer countries tend to have strong local government units that provide basic services and pursue policies that enhance economic growth.

The case of China clearly reveals the direct relationship between economic development and decentralization. In that country, at least three policy initiatives pursued by the central government have helped to accelerate decentralization: the contract responsibility system; the expansion of demand for housing and basic urban services; and institutional changes focused on land policy.

The economic reforms that made it possible for China to achieve an average annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 8.5 percent since 1979 were initiated by the *contract responsibility system.* Under this system, Chinese farmers were allowed to grow whatever crops they chose and to carry out other nonagricultural activities provided they met production quotas set by the authorities in annual contracts. This system triggered massive productivity among farmers who were freed from the rigid management of rural communes. The success of the system in agriculture encouraged the government to extend it to township and village enterprises, state enterprises, and local government units.

The success of the contract responsibility system, of course, was founded on the fact that local entrepreneurs, enterprise leaders, and government officials were given sufficient authority and power to make their own decisions. In other words, the central government was forced to relax and later do away with centrally planned quotas. It had to decentralize authority and power to local units to enable them to meet the responsibilities set by their productivity contracts. Thus, to make it easier for some mayors and governors to keep their local units productive, they were granted the authority by the central government to approve projects costing US$30 million or less. Local officials were also given powers to pursue very large infrastructure projects. To do this, they were allowed to borrow money from domestic and foreign sources without the prior approval of the central government (Li 2000, 165).

Under the socialist regime, China declared housing and basic urban services a basic human right. With economic reform, the government launched

the most successful special economic zone in China. In Shenzhen, the city government decided that the Urban Planning Committee should be composed of elected officials, urban planners, professional experts, and representatives of civil society groups. The Urban Planning Committee was given "absolute powers" to decide on the implementation of the city's plans to prevent political officials from changing the plan's provisions arbitrarily. The committee also made all plan provisions and formal decisions available to the public in order to enlighten public discussions (Yan, Jia, Li, and Weng 2001).

People's Mobilization

One of the most important developments in Asian countries has been the effective mobilization of people as they participate in public processes such as regular elections of leaders. Historically, elections have been held in many Asian countries even during the colonial period. In the Philippines municipal elections for mayors and city council members were held as early as 1903 as the American colonizers attempted to introduce local autonomy in an attempt to encourage grass-roots democracy. In the beginning, of course, the right to vote was confined to people who were literate, possessed real property, and paid their taxes. Later, universal suffrage was introduced, and people who had reached the age of 18 were given the right to vote.

Advocates of liberal democracy take it as an article of faith that decentralization will result in the election of leaders who are genuinely committed to improving the public welfare, are intellectually capable to carry out their tasks, possess the organizational and managerial skills to run the affairs of the local government, are not beholden to any private interest or interest groups, and are morally upright and not tainted by corruption. This hope is based on the assumption that local citizens know their leaders well, that few secrets are kept from them, and that they expect the leaders they choose to be transparent and accountable for their deeds.

Studies of local politics in many Asian countries reveal, however, that decentralization does not automatically result in a shift from pursuance of

in Gujarat state (built on the ruins of a Muslim mosque razed by Hindus) were killed by Muslim militants. In retaliation, Hindu activists rioted, resulting in the killing of more than 2,000 *people.* The state government paid the relatives of each Muslim person killed $2,000. However, each Hindu person killed was compensated $4,000 (*The Manila Times,* 23 November 2003).

Deep religious schism also plagues local governance in Malaysia despite the commitment of the central government and the ruling party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), to principles of economic modernization, liberal democracy, and a secular constitution. In at least two states of the Malaysian federation, local officials belonging to the Pan Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS) passed legislation upholding the legality of traditional *shariah* law, challenging the secular mandate of the federal constitution. Under *shariah* law, adultery and illicit sex were criminalized (women found guilty of adultery were to be stoned to death) and draconian measures were imposed on theft (persons found guilty had their hands cut off). People who were caught drinking alcoholic beverages were severely fined and jailed. The central Malaysian government has questioned the legitimacy of these local laws but the state governments have argued for their local autonomy and are fighting the issue at the judicial and political levels (*The Manila Times,* 19 November 2003).

A particularly difficult problem in people's mobilization at the local level is the great importance of family, clan, and other ties in local politics. In the Philippines, for example, it has been estimated that no more than 60 political family "dynasties" actually control the whole national political process. The Philippine Constitution of 1987 outlawed "political dynasties" but the legislature has not passed any laws to actually implement this constitutional mandate. There are laws that limit the number of terms that an elected official can serve (a governor or mayor can be elected to a three-year term only three consecutive times); these laws, however, are easily circumvented by local officials who simply get their spouses or children to run for political office (Gutierrez, 1994).

From the Asian experience, it is clear that people's mobilization for political action at the local level is often influenced by familial, ethnic, religious, and other particularistic factors that do not necessarily enhance liberal democracy. Perhaps this is due to the fact that there is too much reliance on political office for achieving economic status and other benefits. Local governments, for example, are often regarded as mechanisms for employment

generation by local leaders. To some leaders, the economic returns on holding political office (often through corrupt means) serve as the main motivation for political involvement. In this regard, decentralization measures are still very weak mechanisms for achieving liberal democracy in Asia. Asian societies have to await the coming about of a true civil society where leaders and their followers pursue the public good rather than their own private interests to achieve true liberal democracy.

Resource Mobilization

People get the local government they deserve or, at least, what they are willing to pay for. A major argument for decentralization is that if local citizens see that their taxes are going to projects that enhance the public welfare, they will be willing to pay such taxes. Under the centralized system, local units collect taxes and then transfer the funds to the central government. They then get their financial allocations from the center in accordance with formulas based on total population, size of the territory, number of elected representatives, class of municipality, and so on. With a disjoint between taxes paid and benefits gained (and the suspicion that corruption at the central government level is wasting public funds), local citizens are naturally averse to paying taxes and other public charges.

To provide local government units the necessary resources to meet their responsibilities, many Asian governments have decentralized financial functions to local units. In India, close to half of the municipal governments in the 1990s were under "supercession"—that is, state governments appointed all chiefs executive that managed local finances. The 1992 Indian Constitution amended this law and made local executives elective and strengthened local autonomy.

The Decentralization Law of 1991 in the Philippines went even farther in decentralizing fiscal management. Before the passage of the law, local units collected taxes and sent these to the national treasury in Manila. In turn, they were granted quarterly "internal revenue allotments." The process of releasing such allotments, however, was greatly politicized. Local officials who belonged to the same party or faction as the president and the ruling party elites got their funds but those who did not usually got nothing or very little. In recent years, the decentralization law was amended so that as soon as the national budget was passed and the national treasurer and the bureau of the budget certified that funds were available, the share

repair and maintenance costs for aided self-help projects, with central and local governments putting up the cost for materials and the people them-

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INTRODUCTION

In a democratic regime, government belongs to the people, who can exercise it directly or through elected members. In that form, the notion of democratic government necessarily includes that of local government. Indeed, if state power, which corresponds to the inherited powers of the kings of yesteryear, comes from above, true democratic government, which aims to meet people's needs with their full participation, comes from below. This therefore draws in local government; indeed it constitutes the institutional framework of citizens' participation in local life. It grants them free expression in their diversity. It guarantees both citizens' rights to participate in the management of their own affairs, and political and social equality in the framework of direct and semidirect democratic institutions. These institutions rest essentially on the election of local bodies, which nowadays is the criterion defining free administration. Its aim is to stress general interest through the representation of all citizens who constitute the municipality. Consequently, it is the constitutional foundation for the legitimacy of representative bodies.

Local governments are therefore an important element of the body politic. The analysis of various French constitutions establishes clearly that municipalities entered into constitutional law and were integrated into the nation's

lary; and autonomy, in relation to the state, of the bodies responsible for the management of local affairs, which generally implies their local election. In practice, decentralization is subject to various modalities able to influence its degree of autonomy. The notion of local affairs may be understood more or less widely; financial means may be granted liberally or in a restrictive fashion; and elections may be planned for all local bodies or for only a few. In the same way, control exercised by the state may be strict or more flexible.

In Senegal, decentralization was conceived during colonial times as a way to attain two objectives: to achieve economic administration by representing the particular interests of secondary municipalities; and to constitute a French-style school of democracy. This is an already old movement: indeed, since as early as 1878, Saint-Louis had an elected mayor. Among all French-speaking African states, Senegal is the one with the oldest experience in matters of decentralized local administration.

The communal movement went through three successive stages: the first, a period of trial and error, went from the creation of the first four communes with full powers in the second half of the nineteenth century to the municipal reform of 18 November 1955. After that, the municipal movement experienced a development never seen before. The structures, better adapted to local realities, became more balanced. New communes were born. In addition to those with full powers, the number of which increased, and the so-called mixed communes, a new type of municipality was created—the commune with a medium range of powers. The three models coexisted until national independence in 1960. After February of that same year, a fundamental reform intervened to unify the communes' regimes, transforming them all into communes with full powers and increasing their number significantly. Thus, after Gorée was incorporated into Dakar in 1961, there were 33 communes with full powers in Senegal, all of them subject to the dispositions of the 18 November 1955 law. Two other stages in the evolution of the decentralization movement followed—in 1972, with the creation of the rural community, and in 1996, with regionalization. This latter institutional reform involved not only the regions, which it made into territorial governments, but also granted both municipalities and rural communities new powers that, until then, had been exercised by the central government.

The range of action of communes was therefore increased and strengthened. The current regime of the municipalities, established by Law 96-06 of 22 March 1996, concerning local governments, represents significant progress

compared with that instituted by the 30 June 1966 law, concerning municipal administration, modified by the 26 July 1972 law. The fundamental principle remains the management of municipal affairs by its elected bodies. These bodies, which constitute the municipality, have at their disposal the means of local governments and undertake actions on a daily basis to meet the general needs of the local community.
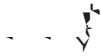
The municipality is made up of the municipal council, elected for five years by universal suffrage, and the mayor, elected indirectly by the municipal council, once it has been put in place, for the same length of time. Their respective powers and functions are defined in the Local Government Code (LGC). But, despite the statutory preeminence of the municipal council, it seems to be the mayor who is the real leader because of his personal stature, because of his important and multiple functions, and because he is free from accountability to the council that elects him.

The Legal Requirements for Mayor

The mayor must officially be 21 years of age. He is elected by the members of the municipal council (who can read and write). The election takes place during the first meeting following the election of the municipal council or the end of the outgoing mayor's term. The election is by secret ballot and requires an absolute majority. If, after two ballots, no candidate has obtained an absolute majority, a third ballot is allowed and the election is by relative majority; in the case of an equal number of votes, the older is declared the winner.

Article 106 of the LGC specifies that employees and financial agents cannot be mayors of the municipality in which they work. One particular case of ineligibility is that a mayor who had been dismissed from office must wait one year to stand for reelection.

In principle, the mayor does not get a salary. However, the accepted idea is that, if the elected members may not benefit from their function, neither should they have to pay local fees. Thus, the mayor and his deputies are granted "indemnities." The scale applied to the amount attached to a particular indemnity takes into account the size of the population of the commune or the municipality. The mayor and his deputies are entitled to reimbursement of their expenses when on mission. The municipality also pays for the reparation of any prejudice of a material or moral nature that might result from an accident the mayor or his deputies might suffer while in the exercise of their duties.

local administration put the position of mayor in this double function. Most frequently he acts on behalf of the municipality; sometimes he intervenes on behalf of the state.

The Mayor as Agent of the Municipality

The Mayor as President of the Municipal Council

In this function the mayor is preeminent. To understand the problem presented by this, we must review the various areas in which the municipal council can intervene. Article 88 of the LGC says that the municipal council, whose primary mission is to "ensure the best living conditions possible to the whole population, without discrimination, intervenes in the areas of planning and programming local development and the harmonizing of this programming with regional and national orientations." It can offer its opinion whenever it is required by rules and regulations or upon the state representative's request. The municipal council may also express its wishes in writing on any issues of local interest, particularly those concerning the economic and social development of the municipality (article 88, para. 4).

Thus, the municipal council is invested with important and diverse prerogatives. We can therefore better appreciate the role granted its president; among other things, he is expected to:

- Convene the municipal council in regular or extraordinary sessions;
- Set the agenda of the municipal council's various meetings (he may ask to be replaced by one of his deputies);
- Enforce order in the municipal council's sessions (article 158 of the LGC);
- Post the report of the municipal council's meetings and the attestation of that posting, which must be recorded in the minute book; and
- Be president by law of all commissions formed within the municipal council (article 162 of the LGC).

In the Anglo-Saxon systems, the distinction is generally made between the functions of the president of the local assembly and those of the chief executive; these distinct functions are handled by two separate individuals. It is totally different in the current system in Francophone countries like Senegal. According to the terms of article 155 of the LGC, "the mayor or the
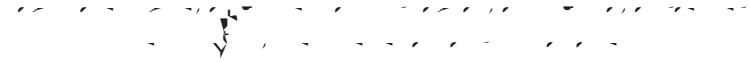
person replacing him chairs the municipal council." Paragraph 14 of article 116 of the same code specifies that the mayor is in charge of "implementing the policies of the municipal council." As a result of combining these two articles, the powers of the mayor as representative of the local community and as chief executive are extremely broad and varied.

The Mayor as Chief Municipal Executive

The mayor, kingpin of the municipal system, is chief of the local executive. He is assisted by deputies whose number varies according to the number of people in the municipality. The city of Dakar has 18 deputies in addition to the special deputy of Gorée. The term "municipality" is used familiarly to mean the group formed by the mayor and his deputies. However, the municipal executive is embodied in one person, the mayor; it is not a college. Even if the law meant to create a feeling of solidarity between the mayor and his deputies (they hold elections at the same time), the preponderance of the mayor is unquestionable. Indeed, the deputies have no attributes of their own. The mayor may only delegate to them, under his responsibility, some part of his powers. This gives a somewhat "presidential" character to the municipal regime.

The mayor is the supreme administrative authority. He is invested with the power of passing judicial acts on behalf of the institution. His attributions as administrator of the municipality grant him prerogatives that he exercises under the surveillance of the municipal council. Moreover, he may receive other attributions from the municipal council.

Powers and Functions under the Control of the Municipal Council

Article 116 of the LGC establishes a long list of these functions. As a representative of local government, the mayor must:

1. Keep, maintain, and administer the municipality's properties and assets and consequently create legal instruments upholding these rights;
2. Manage revenues, supervise municipal services and municipal accounting;
3. Prepare and propose the budget, organize the expenses, and prescribe the execution of receipts;
4. Organize public works;

a special police authority. Article 124 of the LGC provides that the mayor is invested with the power of municipal police and article 125 gives the mayor general authority to ensure "law and order, safety, peace, political security and health." In this last case, his concerns are:

- The security of and normal circulation in the streets, quays, public places, and roads;
- The mode of transport for deceased people, burials, and exhumations;
- The control of drinking establishments;
- The prevention of accidents, through suitable precautions and intervention and through the distribution of necessary help in cases of accidents and calamities;
- Necessary measures against the insane as well as the population's security and the preservation of properties;
- Animal control

These various measures are supplemented by others related to traffic and parking police in the cities (article 127), dangers to public health (article 128 of the code), and policies related to the supervision of swimming and light nautical activities practiced from the shore. Article 132 of the LGC establishes that, among other things, the mayor may appoint sworn agents under the control of the health services to carry out functions involving the municipality's health policies.

The mayor's powers do not hinder the right of the state to take measures involving public order, security, health, safety, and tranquility, for all the municipalities of a circumscription, or for one or several of them. Bear in mind that the central government is more particularly responsible for (1) repressing attempts to disturb public tranquility, tumult, crowds, night gatherings that may trouble people's rest; and (2) maintaining good order in places where and when people gather: fairs, markets, public ceremonies, shows, games, cafes, and religious gatherings.

In the exercise of his policy-making authority the mayor is restrained in two ways: he must submit to traditional rules of hierarchy in matters of policy and strict control of administrative jurisdiction; and the Council of State keeps an eye particularly on the proportionality of breaches to public free-
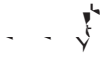
In his capacity as **municipal administrator**, the mayor is invested with the power to pass legal bills on behalf of the municipality. He is the hierarchical chief of municipal public services. He appoints agents, evaluates them, and directs their action. He assigns and manages the personnel placed under his authority.

The municipality has local public services at its disposal to ensure its mission, which is commonly called "municipal administration." They are the important services through which the will of the municipal authorities is executed: municipal roads, cemeteries and funeral parlors, markets, abattoirs, pick up and disposal of household garbage, registry office, and the like. The various municipal services can be put into two categories.

1. Administrative public services and industrial and commercial public services. The former are governed by administrative law, which results in putting users and proposed users in a legal and statutory situation; the latter are subject to public law in matters of organization, but the relationship with users and aspiring users are of a contractual nature—in other words, they are subject to private law.

2. Services managed directly by the municipality (local government control) and services managed by operators outside the municipality. The service assigned to a concessionary is subject to a legal, statutory regime; the relationship with local government is defined in a concession contract. By contrast, in the case of a company under government control, the municipality is responsible for the creation and the operation of the service.

As a general rule, the local government has freedom of choice when it comes to the management of its public services, which must absolutely be managed directly: municipal roads, social assistance, education. Some public services cannot be delegated by the local government: all the functions related to justice, police, defense, or foreign relations. By contrast, some services must absolutely be contracted out: water, electricity, and gas distribution.

In order to ensure the supervision of the various municipal services, the mayor may delegate, by decree, some of his functions to one or several deputies, and, in the absence of deputies, or if the deputies are not in a position to accept, to members of the municipal council. The delegations thus created subsist until their termination. However, they dissolve without being expressly canceled, when the mayor who set them up dies, is suspended, revoked, or declared as having resigned.
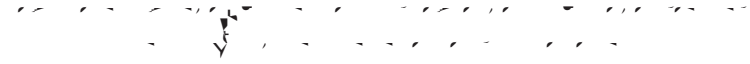
The Mayor as Agent of the State

The functions assumed by the mayor as agent of the state are essentially of an administrative and legal nature. His powers include:

- The publication and implementation of the state's laws and regulations and, particularly, the policy regulations and measures set up by state authorities;
- The functions of registry officer. In that capacity, he is responsible for the registry office under the control of the state prosecutor;
- Being officer of judicial policy according to the terms of criminal procedure.

He is responsible for the legalization of signatures, national (civil) defense, the delivery of authorizations, the supervising of primary school education, and so on.

Thus invested of all his functions, the mayor is a rung in the state territorial administration that he represents in his constituency. All the measures he is required to take involve the responsibility of the state, not that of the municipality. He is subject to the hierarchic power of the authority of the state, which, as such, can give him the necessary instructions that he must execute. In this case, he is not under the supervision of the representatives of the state (power of supervision) but really under their authority (hierarchical power).

CONCLUSION

In Senegal, the municipal movement has experienced a long period of maturation. Born in the second half of the nineteenth century with the creation of four municipalities granted full powers, it was strengthened as time went by to become an example for Africa today. The country's accession to national independence in 1960 has not broken from the tradition of local democracy instituted by the French colonial authorities.

Thus, in the image of the municipalities created on the territory of the old French metropolis, the Senegalese municipal system places the mayor at the center of an organization in which he is the main actor. As president of the municipal council and having at the same time executive power, the

This text is a collection of critical thoughts and questions on the workings of local associations in the context of decentralization in Senegal and, more specifically, on the partnership between municipal institutions and the associations through two initiatives dealing with research, training, and planning.

The first initiative, called the "social development of neighborhoods" (DSQ), involved Yeumbeul and Malika in the Dakar suburbs. The DSQ is part of a process of concerted strategic planning undertaken by ENDA Ecopop in the town of Pikine. In concrete terms, it meant setting up, in a first phase, a framework of social dialogue between the municipalities that were to benefit and the basic associations. In a second phase, the idea was to consolidate the practice of activities related to Alimentation en Eau Potable (AEP), the support and strengthening of the organizations' capacities, the promotion of hygiene, and the establishment of multipurpose centers. For all these initiatives, there was a process of consultation and participative planning between municipalities and associations that will eventually be responsible for setting up and organizing the activities.

The second initiative is the result of research conducted by the Réseau de recherches sur les politiques sociales au Sénégal [Research network on social policies in Senegal] (RRPS) set up at the Institut Africain de

structured associations with objectives of meeting the needs of the community (cleaning up the environment, infrastructure management, health, HIV-AIDS, supply of drinking water, culture, sports, improvement and organization of living quarters, and the like).

Their interventions have encouraged certain partners in development to strive for the strengthening of their capacities in order to ensure, on the one hand, the efficiency and the durability of the actions undertaken, and on the other, to turn these associations into levers of community participation. The "institutional participative diagnostic" (DIP) often marks the first movement

dynamic informal sector alongside a few industrial establishments. In the city of Pikine we find the most structured forms of urban poverty.

Local-level associations are highly developed and they have the capacity to negotiate with public authorities, city hall, and the communes of the district (such as Yeumbeul and Malika), NGOs, and other development partners. The evidence of that is in the profusion of local initiatives trying to bring answers to the various problems in the communities (such as HIV/AIDS, access to basic services, AEP, garbage collection, and waste-water management groups).

Thanks to the reliability of some organizations, the associative movement has been able to assert itself more and more as an inescapable actor in local development and in good governance involved with the function of local leadership attempts to make people socially conscious, to spread ideals of justice and active solidarity, and to promote the ideals of partnership and social intermediation. Several associations draw their social legitimacy from the quality of their members, and mainly from the permanence of the ideals of their founding mandate. Respect for the timetable for the reelection of local authorities also plays a role. Confrontations with politicians are common and quite serious in all local elections as well as in the implementation of projects set up by the government, the NGOs, and other development partners.

It is easy to understand why Senegalese and foreign political scientists call this urban microcosm a thermometer of social tensions. Thus, an official in Yeumbeul-South, a commune of the district of Pikine, declared that: "the city of Pikine is both worrisome and reassuring with its rhythms, its tensions, its growth, its potential for progress, culture and active solidarity, its social fractures and its conflicts. It harbors extreme solitudes and nurtures collective commitments. It is violent and civilizing. It is a paradox."

The reliability of some organizations appears also in the commitment made by the members whose motivation is the development and improvement of the living environment, but above all, the defense of disadvantaged groups—the poor, women, and children.3de ofn al for progrowth, i Tw[(set ulwth, i Tw[(seta

when practices are exclusive. The absence of equity, when resting on discriminatory rules and practices, is always the result either of the transposition to the association of collective standards of behavior that already exist in the cultural environment, or of an individual or collective attempt to protect its interests or to create or maintain positions of internal power.

When the absence of equity is the result of a cultural transfer, the autonomy of the entire association in relation to its environment is at stake; the structure cannot be considered a distinct entity, with specific realities. If, on the other hand, the lack of equity is caused by individual or collectively identified wishes, the unity and cohesion of the association are at stake, which antagonistic factions or opposing groups within it will then try to manipulate.

The problem of equity exists at three different levels:

- Transmission of information. Information may be totally or partially withheld or be distributed in a discriminatory way. Information not only allows gaining knowledge of the facts, it is also a form of power for the members of the association, since it allows the associations to formulate new strategies.
- Sharing the sacrifices to which the associations must agree. This can be divided according to questionable rules that bend the principles of members' equality. This occurs, for example, when leaders are asked to participate, through work or money, in taking more action than is required of simple members, when they already support, without compensation, their personal cost of volunteering.
- Sharing results or bonuses. Rules and practices for sharing, which are often too egalitarian, ignore the fact that there may be a strong differentiation in the level of personal commitment on the part of members when it comes to working in the association's interest. Thus, some "twidjtic ftoneady support, without
compensation, their personal NCꟷós to working in the association's interest. Thus,

As for the manner in which they are administered and function, health committees in Senegal are made up of two major elements: the general assembly and the office. The composition of the general assembly varies according to the system of reference (health post, health center, and hospitals) and to location (rural or urban):

- For health committees in rural areas—village chiefs or their representative and representatives of women's groups;
- For health committees in urban areas—neighborhood delegates and representatives of women's groups and women's associations;
- For the committees of health districts—the representatives of health post committees and those of river-front sanitary committees; and
- For hospital committees—the representatives of district committees.

The general assembly, which meets twice a year, elects members of the office for two years; they are re-eligible twice. The office meets once a month upon notification from the president, who sets up the expenses. The treasurer receives the accounts, which he deposits in bank or postal accounts. With that aim, he signs checks with the president and the person in charge of the health structure (nurse, doctor, health agent). The people pay for consultations, buy drugs, participate financially in the costs associated with childbirth, and so on. A 1999 report presented by the Pikine sanitary district indicated that the health committee of that district had total receipts worth 83,119,508 CFA francs (US$156,829), while expenses reached a total of 43,366,302 CFA francs (US$81,823).

The results of research conducted by IAGU on health committees underlined the lack of transparency in the way the actors involved answered questions. This situation is as decried by health agents as by the people. The following declaration by a health agent who was questioned in Pikine confirms this: "Members of health committees are only interested in money…they take care of managing receipts and do whatever is required to remain a member of the office for as long as possible." Moreover, in 1999, three-quarters of all health committees had not renewed their official appointments for a decade, in defiance of laws and regulations. As a result of a deficit or even an absence of communication with the members of health committees, the people have great difficulty in participating in meetings or general assemblies, at which they could give health committees a new dynamic.

The same phenomenon of perversion of objectives exists when the association, without the means to realize its ambitions, is forced in its quest for resources to change its objectives, areas, and fields of intervention. Such associations will remain viable only as long as they do not find their identity and the internal means to ensure their autonomy in relation to the outside world (that is to say, financing outlets). Organizational stability delicately exposes the organizations' autonomy but it also underlines the ability of organizations to maintain their identity when facing the solicitations and logic of the political class, for example, in the context, of local development at the level of the municipality.

Community organizations in Yeumbeul and Malika have been very involved both in the development and improvement of their living environment and in the fight against urban poverty, even before the intervention of ENDA-Ecopop in the context of the DSQ. However, initiatives could not progress for lack of a permanent consultation and of coordination of the activities between sectors. The list of weaknesses also includes an absence of long-term vision, the perversion of founding principles, the conflicting relationships with elected members, the lack of means that has often led to "a diversion of the objectives," and lack of understanding among associations, local governments, public services, the public sector, and so on.

From the onset of the project, ENDA-Ecopop established a number of activities aiming to reinforce the organizational stability of the
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imacy and becomes the object of an greater collective acknowledgment: the range for recruiting its members widens, its fame grows, and so on.

In the subregion today, more and more associations give first priority in the profits of their activities to their members, even when the stated objective is the promotion of the community. It becomes necessary, then, to judge the social utility of an association first with reference to who benefits from these results, as factors relating to promotion of the community.

Whatever their areas of intervention, associations bring benefits to their community when they obtain results more or less directly, either providing some of their members with employment (from which extended families benefit), or offering services free of charge or at affordable prices, which makes it possible to indirectly increase the buying power of local people.

If public interest means the municipality's exclusive interest, without any consideration for their members' interests, then the overwhelming majority of local associations do not operate in the public interest. Indeed, they all pursue objectives of economic, social, or cultural promotion for the benefit of their members or, outside the structure, for the benefit of clearly articulated social groups. Is it enough to *claim* to be defending the public interest? The notion of a general or public interest poses discreetly the problem of volunteers in associations in Senegal, where the crisis context makes the notion of volunteering even more obsolete. In the same way, actors have even less time

masked, they are directly or indirectly related to competition between the members engaged in a race to position themselves favorably. The function

People are more likely to trust the leaders of the associative movement who really work in the interest of the community than the political class that they consider manipulators of conscience or givers of quickly dashed hopes. However, association leaders risk being rejected as well as the politicians, if their actions and calls to mobilization do not produce positive results.

Elements in the Analysis of the Social Relevance of Activities and

such a progression in order for everyone to exercise their rights and take their responsibilities, participating in the decisions that affect their lives (for example, the distribution of services, the revision of goals, the utilization of local resources and the strategic planning of activities). This vision is based on principles of cooperation and solidarity that are the foundations of an approach structured by the concepts of "equity," "transparency," and "good governance."

2. Communication. At this level, empowerment offers something of a supply and regulatory system for interactive communication between the different participants in the projects, but also with the poles of decision and the bodies responsible for the execution at the

the necessity to remove the ambiguity that would exist, for example, between municipal and local development. If municipal development directly questions the organization, the management, and the means of the municipal institution as an apparatus, local development would be tied to community dynamics, whether or not this development is carried out by the municipality.

The basic community associations in Africa, south of the Sahara, have turned out to be real levers of development initiatives in the last few years. The institutionalization of spaces of consultation and social dialogue they have helped set up may secure the structural bases of a real participative management of the city.

The efficiency of local associations may be seen in their positioning of offi-

VI. ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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