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Sommario/riassunto	Providing an in-depth comparative study of democracy formation, Gellar traces Senegal's movement from a pre-colonial aristocratic order towards a modern democratic political order. Inspired by Tocqueville's methodology, he identifies social equality, ethnic and religious tolerance, popular participation in local affairs, and freedom of association and the press as vital components of any democratic system. He shows how centralized state structures and monopoly of political power stifled local initiative and perpetuated neo-patrimonial modes of governance.