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5 | Devaluing the dirty work: gendered trash work in participatory Dakar

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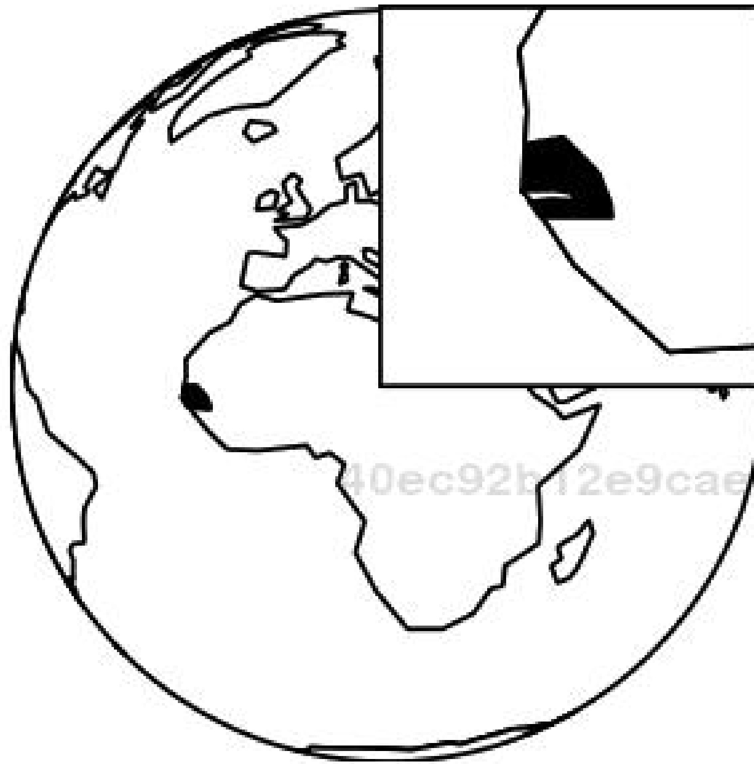

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Introduction

In the spring of 2003, the clogged transfer station for the Yoff community-based trash collection project had transformed into an enormous, unruly garbage pile (*dépôt sauvage*). Putrefying under the uncompromising West African sun, the stinking edifice of waste provided visceral testimony to all that had gone wrong with the project. It stood in dramatic contradistinction, moreover, to the often celebratory images of participatory trash management in the scholarly and non-government organization (NGO) literature. In the end, because of its location on the road to Dakar's airport, the clogged station was a politically untenable eyesore. When flocks of birds began swarming over the pile and interfering with planes' flight paths, the writing was on the wall. The national aviation authority stepped in to order the transfer station's closure, thereby signalling the end to one chapter in Yoff's participatory trash history. For the women who had been the central labour force on the project, its abrupt closure was bittersweet. On the one hand, it put an end to a contentious initiative that had starkly increased their dirty labour burden with little reward. On the other hand, it foreclosed the opportunities they hoped might eventually develop from their exemplary acts of 'participatory citizenship'.

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The last twenty years have seen a withdrawal of state provision of urban public services enforced by structural adjustment, state budgetary crises and a paradigm shift in development policy towards participatory development across the global South. Part and parcel of the turn

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to participatory development has been an explosion of community-based waste management projects across Africa. Underpinned by a discourse of empowerment and entrepreneurial citizenship, participatory development projects in general have come under fire from a broad critical literature contesting their theoretical justification, efficacy and ethics. Though much less intensely studied, participatory waste management has been revealed to be especially problematic, given the onerous nature of the labour itself (Miraftab 2004a; Samson 2007). This chapter draws from ethnographic research conducted on one of the most notable experiments in community-based trash management in Dakar to probe the function and implications of this new paradigm of urban governance in Senegal. Indeed, garbage collection has been a front-running sector of community-based management strategies in Dakar, but there has been little critical analysis of how these projects have worked, nor of their impact on community members. In a critique of associated empowerment claims, the chapter interrogates the way these projects deploy exclusive notions of community and reconfigure the responsibility and reward for those who do the 'dirty work'.
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Specifically, the chapter explores the community-based trash management project spearheaded by one of Senegal's best-known NGOs, ENDA,[2] in the early 2000s in the Tonghor neighbourhood of Dakar's Yoff district (*commune d'arrondissement*). More generally, ENDA's community-based garbage projects have been hailed as 'best practices' of participatory urban governance in Africa. Relying almost exclusively on neighbourhood women's free (or low-paid) labour as a replacement for municipal garbage services, they attempted to convert neighbourhood garbage management into a community responsibility. Drawing from project documents and interviews with participants, residents and those local government, NGO and community-based organization (CBO) officials involved, the analysis makes two, interconnected, interventions on the moral and material moves made by these projects. To begin, it explores how the 'images of community' (see Li 1996) that were produced in these projects through the space of participation turned on ethnic difference. The osmosis between 'formal' and 'informal' trash labour introduced through participatory trash management is thus revealed to solidify existing community hierarchies through reinforcing specific divisions and power relations. A key part of the justification for devolving trash management to the community level, moreover, is found to be a discourse of green values backing so-called appropriate technologies and environmental stewards.
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Secondly, the chapter interrogates notions of empowerment in these

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projects through considering the way they instrumentalized gendered associations with household waste management in order to convert poor women into ideal participants and thereby extend their social reproductive duties into the neighbourhood space. It fleshes out the disciplinary particularities of trash work, given all of the loaded associations with waste, and the difficulties posed by the institution of a user fee for service. This allows for an exploration of the way in which the household politics of trash inform and reconfigure the landscape of neighbourhood trash politics and the role that women play as key transformatory figures in new governance agendas.

A concluding discussion will critique participatory development and glean insights from the analysis towards better understanding changing state–society relations during Senegal's neoliberal experiment.[3] In particular, it emphasizes the foundation of neoliberal development strategies in reconstituting the relations of social reproduction and exposes the particularly troubling implications of engaging people in the management of their own waste.

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Description of the ENDA community-based trash project in Tonghor, Yoff

The ENDA community-based trash project in the Yoff district took place in the Lebou (one of Senegal's nine ethnic groups) neighbourhood of Tonghor. Dakar's Lebou neighbourhoods represent some of the self-proclaimed 'traditional' Lebou fishing villages that have occupied the Cape Verde peninsula for over five hundred years but which have now been absorbed into the rapidly growing capital city (Sylla 1992; UNESCO 2000). Uniquely situated as the 'original' inhabitants of the area, the Cape Verde Lebou have a long tradition of both incorporation into Dakar municipal politics as well as autonomy and self-determination in the face of urban development.[4] In certain areas – of which Yoff is an important example – the Lebou have retained an extremely insular and powerful customary authority base, even as their villages have been rapidly absorbed into the urban agglomeration of Dakar. This traditional political organization overlaps with the municipal authority with important effects.[5]

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Despite being officially incorporated into the Greater Dakar Municipality, these Lebou neighbourhoods are disadvantaged in terms of receiving Dakar-based public services owing to their location on the periphery of the city and their traditional village plan. Built around the family concession and spatially limited in their expansion, the neighbourhoods are extremely dense and irregular, and most areas have

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only narrow, sandy pedestrian paths. Combined with a fierce politics of land and resistance to change imposed by the local customary authorities, these features pose a number of challenges to infrastructural upgrading and waste management. Whereas wastes previously were disposed of in 'the bush' surrounding the villages, these neighbourhoods are now often plagued with sanitation problems (Gaye 1996; Abdoul 2002; Gaye and Diallo 1997). These challenges were part of the justification for choosing Lebou neighbourhoods as the main sites of the participatory waste management projects spearheaded by ENDA in the 1990s and early 2000s, in the context of the wider turn towards community-based strategies of urban public service provision.[6] These projects have been a central thrust of ENDA's activities to improve Dakar's urban environment and have earned the organization some notoriety in international development circles.[7]

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Tonghor is one of the oldest of Yoff's seven traditional neighbourhoods and had a population estimated at 6,891 out of Yoff's 53,200 inhabitants in 2002 (Ndoye 2005: 36). Though the majority of residents are employed in the fishing industry, declining fish stocks have contributed to widespread insecurity in that economic sector. Most of the residents of Tonghor are Lebou, though newcomers are moving into the area. A long-term population of *waa Geej Ndar*[8] fisherman of Sereer ethnicity have relocated to Yoff from Saint Louis for the fishing industry. Unlike most Lebou, who own their own property, most of the *waa Geej Ndar* do not own land, and they often live in even more cramped, irregular habitations near the water. They are generally understood to be the poorest, least educated members of the population and are still often seen as outsiders, despite having been in Yoff for generations in many cases.[9]

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Tonghor was chosen as a pilot because it has long been seen as one of the most garbage-challenged neighbourhoods in Yoff (Ndoye 2005; ENDA 1999). Tonghor's garbage management challenges are generally attributed to the distance from most houses to the paved road where the city's trash truck passes to collect garbage. The sandy roads in the interior are often impassable for these vehicles, so most households have to walk some distance to the road when they hear the honking of the trash truck. A study conducted in 1997 as a baseline for the community-based trash project estimated that 60 per cent of Tonghor households disposed of their garbage on the ground or by burying it; over half of these discarded their garbage on the beach or in the ocean (Zeitlin and Diouf 1998: 4).

ENDA launched the pilot community-based trash project in Tonghor

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in 2001 in collaboration with the neighbourhood's main CBO, the Tonghor Management Committee (CGT).[10] Seed funding would come from French and Canadian development funds, and the project was to be maintained through a revolving savings fund based on household contributions (a user fee). The local government (Commune d'Arrondissement de Yoff) and Yoff's main community association (APECSY[11]) were official, non-contributing, partners in the project. The project involved a door-to-door horse-drawn cart 'pre-collection' system targeting over six thousand residents that would (in principle) connect up with the city's trash system (ENDA 1999). Whereas, before, women disposed of their household garbage through dumping it on the beach or by the road to be collected by the city's garbage trucks, the project ushered in a more refined system in which select women would collect their neighbours' garbage. During the project's tenure, the municipal garbage trucks ceased to enter Tonghor.

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The project feasibility study performed by APECSY for ENDA emphasized the importance of local participation and the CGT was the main player at the neighbourhood level (ibid.). The CGT created a pilot committee and appointed a young male member as its volunteer coordinator. The most important element of community participation was the six women chosen as 'animators' (*animatrices*) of the project – or the liaison between the households and the three (male) horse cart (*charrette*) drivers.[12] Two *animatrices* accompanied each horse cart driver to collect the garbage from the homes and load it on to the cart. Originally entirely volunteers, these women received a small 'token'[13] of 15,000 CFA per month for a few months until community contributions waned and they received next to nothing. The drivers were hired at 30,000 CFA per month ($60).

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The collection process usually went as follows: each *animatrice* would complete their household duties to start the neighbourhood rounds by 7.30 or 8 a.m. They then walked door to door alongside the horse cart, and, in many cases, entered their neighbours' courtyards and homes to retrieve the garbage and load it on to the cart. In the beginning, they did the rounds every day, but they eventually reduced this to four days per week to lessen the burden. The cart drivers then dumped the garbage at the transfer station, where it was, theoretically, to be delivered to the city's dump, Mbeubeuss, by municipal trash trucks.[14] On certain days, the *animatrices* had to solicit each household's financial contribution (1,000 CFA per month) – a demand that was often discomforting and frequently unmet.

The *animatrices* were also charged with assisting leaders of the CGT

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5.1 An educational mural aimed at neighbourhood women on the wall of the eco-sanitation station in Tonghor, Yoff

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in community outreach to educate (*sensibiliser*) neighbourhood women on how to properly store, separate and dispose of their garbage (see Figure 5.1). A key element of the education campaign entailed discouraging women from dumping on the beach or burying their garbage. In the face of persistent recourse to the beach, an ordinance was eventually enacted which prohibited all beach dumping and fined all perpetrators. This effectively forced neighbourhood residents to use the fee-based horse-cart system through placing the *animatrices* in the role of policing their participation.

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Producing community and empowerment in the space of trash

The 'Community-based management of order and disorder'[15] Community-based waste management projects fit squarely within the 'revisionist' neoliberal discourse governing development policy in the 1990s and 2000s, claiming to enhance service delivery and local democracy by empowering the most marginalized, especially women (World Bank 1989; Mohan and Stokke 2000). Urban community groups are often hailed as the solution to urban problems for their potential to enhance operational performance and as a democratizing force challenging authoritarianism and stimulating new forms of inclusive citizenship

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(UNCHS 1996). This mainstream development discourse has received a strong scholarly critique that raises key questions about the impacts and implications of community-based development as potentially 'the new tyranny' of market-based strategies aimed at rolling back the state and exploiting the poor (Hickey and Mohan 2004; Cooke and Kothari 2001). A key concern of the critical scholarship has been to unpack the ideas of community produced in these projects and the ideas surrounding 'culture' they are premised upon (Watts 2006). Conceptualizations deployed within development discourse of communities as undifferentiated 'sites of consensus and sustainability' are revealed to naturalize their boundaries and obscure social divisions that structure internal power relations and different community members' relationships to the economy (Li 1996). The obsession with community, moreover, is centrally implicated in the reconfiguration and respatialization of the state (Li 1996, 2000).

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Drawing on these critiques, this research explored the work that the community-based waste management project in Yoff did towards producing a certain kind of community. The choice of the Lebou neighbourhoods, first and foremost, can be seen as much more than a simple choice based on sanitation challenges. Though these neighbourhoods on the city's periphery are among those most challenged by sanitation, they are not alone in this respect and their selection was explicitly made on ethnic terms.[16] Promotional literature on the ENDA projects often highlighted the historic legacy of Dakar's 'traditional neighbourhoods' and hailed the Lebou as a proud, independent people for whom community-driven development is a natural and long-standing truth. These images of tight-knit, traditional communities resisting the invasion of the metropolis have obvious charismatic appeal for funders. They also dovetailed with the Lebou elite's efforts to assert their autonomy and autochthonous ownership over Yoff.

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Newly-in-vogue green values were also mobilized as justification for the turn to the community solutions to waste management. ENDA has an explicit environmental focus to its work, and projects are specifically targeted at sustainable and alternative approaches for a more green development path. In this light, it presented the choice of the door-to-door horse-drawn cart collection system as a more appropriate technology for these neighbourhoods' particular challenges, as well as one that could draw from the deep history of sustainable practice among the Dakar Lebou. Lebou women, in particular, were constructed as natural environmental managers.

In practice, the community activated by the project was exclusively

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Lebou, despite the fact that the *waa Geej Ndar* areas are considered the dirtiest and most garbage-challenged areas in Tonghor. In fact, community-based organizations in Yoff almost always have an ethnic element to them that is rooted in the intent to preserve the Lebou's 'traditional' way of life – and hold on land – in the face of urbanization and settlement by non-Lebou.[17] Because autochthonous claims in Yoff are defined by ethnicity, claims to manage Yoff 'traditionally' yoke ethnicity with tradition. Although they do not explicitly exclude non-Lebou, both APECSY and CGT are understood to be Lebou organizations, in effect sidelining the *waa Geej Ndar* residents from most community decision-making processes. The waste project was no exception: the *waa Geej Ndar* were not consulted or involved in the project design. All of the *animatrices*, furthermore, were Lebou. This can be seen to stand in direct contrast to the inclusive rhetoric in ENDA's promotional literature and their supposed attention to the most marginalized members of society.

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Also important here is the work that the ethnic identity of the project did in the interests of the Lebou elite to assert their autonomy from the local state – its competitor for power and authority over the Yoff community. Engaging their women in neighbourhood trash collection offered a productive opportunity for the Lebou to solidify their tenacious hold on their neighbourhood through the symbolic ordering of the neighbourhood by these Lebou 'municipal housekeepers' (Miraftab 2004b). A public service for and by the community, in other words, contributed to the independence that the Lebou have asserted since their absorption into the city through the performance of self-management. Extending the domestic waste management activities of Lebou women into the space of the neighbourhood thus acted to entrench Lebou authority and existing community hierarchies.

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Interrogating empowerment: the production of trash labour value The production of community in participatory development is invariably anchored within a discourse of empowerment justifying the role of different community members. Just as notions of community deployed in participatory development have received significant scholarly critique, associated notions of empowerment have been revealed to be quite slippery as well. More often than not, the simple *fact* of participation is often conflated with empowerment (Mohan and Stokke 2000). Studies illuminate, furthermore, how discourses of community participation built upon constructions of women's traditional roles and spheres have often been indispensable in harnessing women's labour at little

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or no compensation (Miraftab 2004a; Cleaver 1999). A more robust analysis of empowerment benefits demands a consideration of the reconfiguration of labour value resulting from participation, within a specific cultural context.

Social reproduction is a useful lens through which to consider the way formal and participatory labours are dialectically constituted. The categorical distinction between the realms of production and reproduction determines the nature and value of work through constructing labour taking place in the home in reproducing and maintaining labouring bodies as 'non-work' or work with no value. Katharyne Mitchell et al. term the 'compass of social practices and social relations' involved in maintaining households as 'life's work' (2004). These and other scholars explore the way in which neoliberalism has ushered in a crisis of social reproduction via the rollback of state welfare services across the globe. We can see how community-based waste management, as one element of the neoliberal turn in development discourse, is premised on tapping and reconfiguring relations of social reproduction, or the fabric of activities comprising 'life's work'. The Yoff project, more specifically, instrumentalized gendered associations with household waste management in order to idealize women as participants and thereby extend their social reproductive duties into the neighbourhood space.

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As an element of women's duties as managers of the domestic space, waste work in the home is naturalized as intrinsically women's work in Senegal.[18] Project managers deployed these connections in envisioning women as the most practical interface with household garbage managers in the Yoff project, and thus the ideal *animatrices*. In the words of Malick Gaye from ENDA, 'as it's women who do the separation at the source, that's what motivated us to place women as key links in the chain' of the project.[19] Interestingly, this exclusive focus on women represented a distinct turn from the focus on youth that had dominated an earlier phase of neighbourhood participation in Dakar's waste sector that took place in the early 1990s (see Fredericks 2009a). It dovetailed well with the overall turn in ENDA's priorities – and in the wider development discourse, for that matter – by the late 1990s towards a focus on women's participation.[20] Mayor Issa Ndiaye, who had observed the roll-out of the project in his dual role as mayor of Yoff (from 1996 to 2002) and member of APECSY's executive board, further explained:

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> [The participation of women] was good because women can speak to other women ... It was a question of organization ... And so, the women,

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> while the others went to the beach for money-making activities, they were taking care of the common interest! [They] had the capacity to withstand this work. Even if people spoke badly to them, they took it in [their] stride! They didn't create any problems. What interested them was the cleanliness of the neighbourhood ... So, whatever [community] reaction they received, they were incredibly diplomatic! Truly, they withstood lots of grief.[21]

The mayor's revealing statement echoes many of my interviews with those coordinating the project. Because household trash management is considered women's work, it was assumed that women would most easily influence the behaviour of other women. Also important was the notion of their role as community managers, or, in the description of the Rufisque project, 'their determining role in the education of children, the citizens of the future'.[22] Women's 'natural' attributes, including diplomacy, a non-confrontational style and their intimacy with the communities, as well as their altruistic choice to work for 'the common interest', were celebrated as their key skills as *animatrices*.

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The six women from Tonghor chosen as *animatrices*, for their part, seem to have been taken by surprise when they were notified at a community meeting of their new roles. When they enquired as to why they were chosen, they were asked: 'Do you want to do your part to support your neighbourhood, your country?' Two of the women chosen knew their selection was motivated by their past involvement in garbage collection. Both had been deeply involved in the youth-based neighbourhood clean-up movement that took place in the early 1990s (*Set/Setal*) and then had actually worked for the municipality as paid trash collectors in an earlier phase of trash management.[23] Importantly, both had been fired from the formal trash collection force in a round of downsizing that had occurred just a few years before the initiation of the ENDA projects. The CGT leaders also emphasized that the 'neediness' of the women was taken into account in choosing these participants. They stated that they had purposefully chosen less well-off women who could make use of such an 'opportunity'. Three of the women were divorced or widowed heads of household, and three were over fifty years of age.

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Despite a prevalent rhetoric in ENDA's promotional materials on its participatory waste projects that they were community designed and driven, furthermore, neighbourhood residents, including the *animatrices*, were in practice completely excluded from project design. In direct contrast with ENDA's emphasis on women's key roles as project

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leaders as a key metric of success, the *animatrices* were emphatic that they had not been consulted prior to the project's roll-out and that they would have designed it quite differently. The role of the community in designing the project was exclusively channelled through the two involved CBOs, CGT and APECSY, and took place between older male village elders and community leaders and ENDA's project managers. As such, the project reinforced existing community power dynamics.

The *animatrices* had no choice but to participate in the interests of preserving their reputations as good wives and housekeepers, but also out of a sense of obligation to their communities, as enforced by the power and authority of community leaders. In many respects, behaviour is tightly prescribed in Tonghor, and the intimacy of community gives the impression of neighbourly surveillance at all times. These women also participated, however, hoping that the work might translate into more lucrative opportunities. Because they lack the education and networks needed to land jobs, women in Dakar are at a stark disadvantage in terms of finding wage labour. The *animatrices* hoped that this project would be their ticket to paid work. In my interviews with all six participants, it was clear that their participation in the project had been quite onerous and that they were, in the end, deeply disappointed by the lack of compensation or other opportunities gained. One *animatrice* described her experience as follows:

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> I'd wake up early to do my duties around the house then go meet the horse cart operator to do our circuit with the other *animatrice*. We left our kids, left our work at the house, to go rid people's homes of garbage. I would follow behind the cart, whistling and letting everyone know we were coming so they would bring out their garbage ... The work was really hard ... We continued on because we wanted to work ... we kept working. Then, you find that even before the end of the month, you'd have a sore chest and then, finally, that what you're supposed to receive, no one gives it to you. What we wanted was to work and that's the chance that God gave us, so we said we would grab that chance ... but it didn't help to fulfil any of our needs. You would work all day, go home, wash, do the cleaning, do our work, then the next day get back up to do it again.[24]

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This reconfiguration of the space of household social reproductive activities into the community space built on the notion that women should be judged according to their skills and capacities as the managers of order and cleanliness in the home. This resonates with Dipesh Chakrabarty's observation in India of how 'housekeeping' – specifically

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household trash management – 'is meant to express the auspicious qualities of the mistress of the household' (1991: 20). These participatory trash projects extend the realm of that responsibility, to secure the cleanliness of the neighbourhood as the responsibility of its female residents – as a reflection of their 'auspicious qualities'. The notion that women in Tonghor are natural waste managers and community educators facilitated the negation of value of neighbourhood trash work as 'work' deserving of remuneration and placed the onus of neighbourhood waste work on women's skills as 'municipal housekeepers' (Miraftab 2004b). This resonates with other research on the instrumentalizaion of gender in cheap waste management solutions in neoliberal contexts, defended through a rhetoric of voluntarism, responsibility and skill acquisition (Samson 2007, 2008; Miraftab 2004a, 2004b).

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Central to the targeting of women in these projects was a repudiation of the labours they already perform – i.e. all of the 'life's work' duties that the *animatrices* left behind as they went about their neighbourhood trash job – in the home, as well an extension of those unpaid activities into the neighbourhood. In this sense, we can see how the jobs ended up doubling their unpaid activities by extending the realm of social reproduction into the public sphere. This extension also came as a fundamental rejection of the value of women's labour in the official trash sector. Fired from municipal trash collection because they were not deemed worthy of those jobs, these women were then installed in the community-based project as idealized volunteers.[25] Quite in contrast with the early experience of women municipal trash workers, whose labours were masculinized when they entered the public space to collect garbage, the labours of women in the community-based system were devalued.[26] Although they toiled day in and day out alongside the horse cart drivers, the payment of these men was never in question and was never justified through a narrative of community responsibility. The drivers were clearly seen as workers, whereas the women were seen as *participants*, whose neighbourhood trash management labour was rendered an empowering duty undeserving of compensation. In this light, the case of participatory waste management in Dakar thus resonates with the growing body of research into the way that the crisis of social reproduction has worked through differentially disciplining gendered bodies through the devaluation of certain spheres of work (Mitchell et al. 2004; Fakier and Cock 2009).

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What deserves further attention in the trash case, however, is the rooting of that discipline in the materiality of the labour itself. Drawing

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from Mary Douglas, we know that waste work is intensely stigmatizing, owing to the powerful symbolic associations around impurity (1966). Discourses around the danger of dirt produce social borders and classify people within a hierarchy of status (ibid.). The insidious power of these projects thus draws from the negative associations with waste and cleaning. Joining with the symbolic violence of being associated with waste was the arduous physicality of that labour process for the *animatrices*. Because standard trash receptacles are beyond the financial means of most Dakar residents, garbage is usually disposed of in small plastic bags or rice sacks, or dumped loose from an open plastic container. Owing to its high organic content, which included the stinking remains of the fish and other animals eaten the day before, and the intense heat of the uncompromising Senegalese sun, the garbage is often putrid. Supplied with only minimal equipment, if any at all, the *animatrices* did this work with their bare hands. By the end of a workday, they were filthy, forced to parade through their neighbourhood wearing the smelly remains of other people's waste. In an Islamic society where cleanliness of the body is of utmost importance in terms of spiritual and community standing, this is no small burden. Neither was the vulnerability to disease that came of this risky exposure for people with little or no access to healthcare. Despite their most fastidious attempts at staying clean, the work often led to infection and disease.

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Thus, in contrast with the mechanized garbage truck, the intimate technology of the door-to-door horse cart system introduced an entirely different relationship between collector and garbage and new forms of subjection to waste management's symbolic and material discipline. The deployment of gender stereotypes in these projects entrenched their connection to waste, dirt and disorder through reserving them the dirtiest tasks in the household and the neighbourhood.[27] It also literally burdened them with disease. This highlights how the reconfiguration of labour value through such projects must be considered in light of the specific materiality and symbolic import of the labour itself.

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Also important in interrogating the empowerment claims of the projects is the role of the user fee. The implementation of fees for service – or the devolution of the costs of basic services to the community – is one of the hallmark elements of the neoliberal model of urban public service reform and its associated reconfiguration of geographies of social reproduction. Consistent with wider trends, the Tonghor community-based trash project was rooted in the principle of the poor paying (more) for development or rescinding of the state's

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duty in reproducing the population. The project's feasibility study emphasized that the user fee for the door-to-door trash collection was as an important part of involving participants in a sustainable community-driven model of public service. Ironically, in this same document, only 43 per cent of Tonghor residents said that they would be willing to contribute financially to the project (ENDA 1999). Despite this early warning sign, the payment scheme was laid out in an appendix section entitled 'When the poor finance development' (ibid.: 136). Each household was asked to pay 1,000 CFA per month ($2), to be collected at the end of the month by the *animatrices*. A flat rate calculated per household, this fee was separate from the municipal Household Garbage Tax (*la Taxe d'Enlèvement des Ordures Ménagères*, TEOM), which is calculated based on property values.[28]

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Although the vast majority of my respondents claimed to have regularly paid the user fee, the *animatrices* revealed that in practice they had faced intense resistance to paying. This impinged on their meagre salaries and those of the horse cart drivers, and was a key factor in the decline of the project. This resistance can be explained by exploring how the fee dramatically reconfigured the cost of waste disposal. For many, the amount demanded for garbage service was exorbitant for the lower- to lower-middle-class residents. Just before the project was launched these residents had benefited from trash collection by the municipality for 'free', given that the vast majority of the residents either did not pay the Garbage Tax or were unaware that they paid it. For those who actually do pay the tax, the new fee represented a doubling of their payment for garbage services. The fines imposed on those who continued dumping on the beach, moreover, acted to criminalize those who attempted to opt out. The user fee and efforts by the CGT to educate neighbourhood women on sorting methods most likely transformed the value and treatment of the garbage within the home as well. Charging for the garbage they put out – whereas before this service was taken for granted – in effect outsourced some of the burden of the new waste collection system on to the household members themselves, deepening their involvement in the management of their waste alongside their neighbourhood *animatrices*.[29]

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Beyond their ability to pay, furthermore, was a resistance to paying out of principle. Most residents firmly believed that garbage collection should be a free public service and thus took the user fee as just one more symbol of the state's negligence and incapacity to serve the needs of its citizens. This sentiment was particularly strong among the *waa Geej Ndar*, who were not only least able to pay but also distrusted the

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Lebou authorities. They viewed the project suspiciously as just one more scheme by the Lebou establishment and, as a result, exhibited the least buy-in of the Tonghor residents. The *waa Geej Ndar* residents' refusal to pay constituted a key reason that the project floundered. This highlights the fact that the ethnic definition of community deployed in this project in the end worked against its eventual sustainability. It also shows how unsuccessful the project was in actually winning over the community to the idea of individual and community responsibility for waste management.

The gendered landscape of household waste management and its connection to household bargaining power was also an important factor in the difficulties surrounding the user fee. As is to be expected, the gendered nature of domestic trash management informed household members' priorities regarding household expenditures and valuation of the service. Because they are in charge of managing and disposing of household garbage, women were more willing to pay for the door-to-door service as it alleviated their trash burden and obviated their need to risk dumping on the beach. However, because few women in Tonghor are financially independent, they found it difficult to make this contribution. On the other hand, asking husbands to pay for the service was often problematic because men did not prioritize the service as much as women. In this light, we can see how the user fee interfaced with family power dynamics to disproportionately burden women with the costs associated with maintaining the household.

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Finally, given the controversial nature of these fees and their widespread rejection by community members, the *animatrices'* role in soliciting the user fee was a sticking point, to put it mildly. In effect, it cast these women as the taxman, supposedly drawing on their intimacies in the community, but in truth locating them on difficult terrain with regard to their neighbours. As some of the most marginalized members of the community, being asked to solicit money from their neighbours was highly problematic. Add to this stress the entrenchment of women's responsibility for dirty labour and the complete elision of participants' feedback, and the empowerment claims are revealed to be deeply flawed indeed.

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Conclusions: a flurry of wings and the return of the trash truck

After less than a year of operation, the Tonghor community-based trash collection project was a shambles: many if not most residents refused to pay the user fee, the overworked *animatrices* were exhausted from – and no longer compensated for – their labours, and even the

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horse cart drivers were fed up with the increasingly irregular payment of their salaries. The dispute between the municipality and the neighbourhood authorities over the project, furthermore, precipitated disaster at the point of coordination near the airport. With the refusal of the municipality to participate, the transfer station had become a towering mountain of garbage. When the national aviation administration (ASECNA) weighed in over the bird problem, the project was definitively cancelled. Soon after the project dissolved, the municipal trash trucks began collecting along their usual circuit in Tonghor, with some changes made in an attempt to reach the hard-to-access areas. Much more recently, the service has improved markedly, tracking gains made by the municipal collectors' working conditions under the new mayor of Dakar since 2009.[30] Residents currently make do with this service, deploy creative strategies to manage their garbage, and periodically defy the ban and use the beach during collection crises. Besides occasional efforts by the neighbourhood's youth and women to clean specific areas when they become clogged with refuse, no comprehensive community-based project has been attempted since 2003. This chapter has aimed to expose how the project reconfigured the value of trash work and the image of the community, in the name of empowerment and efficiency, with key implications for local politics and state power in Senegal as well as participatory development in Senegal and beyond.

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A closer look at the Tonghor project reveals how participation interfaces with local histories and power struggles with important effects. Quite in contrast with the often glaring omission of politics within development discourse and policy, this highlights how new development and governance agendas often reinforce the power dynamics they purportedly seek to eliminate.[31] Through a complex interplay of ethnic, gender and class differences, the project worked precisely through the activation of a notion of community that was exclusive, by directly interfacing with customary authorities that represented only one vision of the community. As such, the participatory agenda buttressed the Lebou elite's project of asserting their autonomy from the municipal state. Though considerable research of late has exposed the increasing intensity of localized political contests in urban Africa, much less has explored the nexus of participatory development strategies – still the dominant development paradigm – and autochthonous claims in different settings (Geschiere and Jackson 2006; Nyamnjoh and Rowlands 1998; Marshall-Fratani 2006). This research indicates that these connections demand closer attention.

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Another striking feature of the turn to community seen here is the deployment of green values as part of a romanticization of the virtues of the 'local'. The discourse of community promoted by ENDA and reproduced by the local authorities endorses 'small is beautiful' and 'appropriate' technology solutions like horse-cart trash collection as the most natural and sustainable development approaches. Not only was the low-tech system assumed to be better suited to this particular type of community, but the Lebou were purported to be better suited for this green approach because of their historically and intrinsically 'green' lifestyles. The photos of horse carts might have looked good on ENDA's website, but the reality of women going door to door was less rosy. In the end, the project succeeded only in transferring the garbage from within the neighbourhood to a festering pile on its periphery. This raises the question of when green becomes greenwash in the service of projects which are no cleaner, more efficient or more sustainable than municipal services.

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The analysis has also seriously questioned the claims of empowerment underpinning the turn to participatory trash management through considering the way it reconfigured the value of women's labour. The instrumentalization of women's connections to domestic trash work and the deployment of discourses of community management and diplomacy were a convenient way to harness the labour of the *animatrices* with little reward. The project not only extended the realm of their social reproductive duties but also placed them in disempowering positions with regard to their communities. For the women who had once been paid as municipal trash workers, this directly reversed the gains made for their labour value in the official trash sector. In this light, the Tonghor case resonates with much of the critical literature on participatory trash management elsewhere, which highlights the way that gender can be mobilized in the service of exploitative labour, defended through a rhetoric of responsibility and empowerment (Miraftab 2004a, 2004b; Samson 2003, 2007). It also contrasts with AbdouMaliq Simone's observations of the ENDA community-based waste project in Thiaroye sur Mer, which he contends offered neighbourhood women a 'platform for reaching the larger world' (2003). As such, this study highlights how notions of empowerment must be analysed in relation to the particular way they reconfigure labour within specific local political settings.

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An analysis of empowerment must take on, furthermore, the expectations and experiences of those participating. The *animatrices* often articulated their motivation for participating in these projects

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as a hope for future 'opportunities' which might be made available. Instead, the *animatrices* witnessed a devaluation of their standing in the community because of the negation of their labour value, the nefarious implications of working with waste, and the uncomfortable tasks they were charged with as the new taxman. This experience stands in sharp contrast with the claims of empowerment that live on in the best-practices literature and highlights the way in which the crisis of social reproduction works through differently disciplining gendered bodies. And yet, as mentioned at the beginning, the end of the project was a bittersweet moment for the *animatrices* because of all of the sweat, hope and pride they had poured into their work. If we understand development to be 'the management of a promise', then 'what if the promise does not deliver?' (Pieterse 2000: 176). It is the mismanagement of hope which is perhaps the most disempowering element of these reconfigurations of value at Dakar's margins.

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This case also deserves attention because of its focus on garbage. In many respects, this story has been a classic case of the flexibilization of labour under a neoliberal development logic. And yet, the emphasis on engaging people in the management of their own waste is a particularly revealing instance of the new configurations of labour value in the contemporary development climate. Trash is a special case, deriving from the power that is imbued in garbage and cleaning, because trash work is deeply implicated in the ordering of people as well as spaces. These factors make the material and moral conversions implied by community-based trash projects even more troubling. If those who work in garbage are burdened by the negative associations of their work, then those asked to collect their own garbage for free are 'trashed' in a double sense. Viewed through a more global lens, the reconfiguration of trash labour value at the margins casts stark light on not only the neoliberal development paradigm, but also the uneven geographies of wealth it is involved in sustaining and producing.

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Finally, if community-based trash in Tonghor can be seen to extend women's social reproductive duties into the public space, then it was also part of a reconfiguration of the state's role in managing and sustaining the reproduction of labour power. In Senegal, structural adjustment and other neoliberal policies have resulted in a contentious struggle for power and resources between national and local authorities, and trash management has been at the centre of these struggles (Fredericks 2009a). Just as the battle to control Dakar's official trash sector reveals the contemporary political climate, this analysis prompts a discussion of the implications of the Tonghor project and

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participatory development in general for state power. Despite being an official partner, the Yoff local government was excluded from key project decisions and retaliated by ceasing to transfer the garbage to the dump. Rather than merely a 'technical problem', as labelled by ENDA, the transfer station disaster thus represents the tension between municipal and NGO-driven development agendas. Like many community-based initiatives, this project, in effect, cemented the neighbourhood's autonomy from the local state. This reveals that beyond a rhetoric of decentralization, outsourcing trash management to community organizations, which compete for power with the local state, may end up working against local state capacity and the decentralization of state power. This raises a host of questions about the implications of the turn to community for long-term governance agendas, given the short-term priorities and lack of accountability of NGO projects.

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This research thus illuminates the fact that empowerment discourses accompanying participatory development may serve projects which are no cleaner, greener or more effective then municipal services and which are, in fact, disempowering for specific community members. As the new mayor of Dakar seems to understand quite clearly, associated resources would be better targeted at enhancing the capacity and sustainability of the urban public service itself. Perhaps the most hopeful lesson to be drawn from the Tonghor project, then, lies in its failure – or the rejection of this model by the Tonghor community and Yoff local government. As just one element of the ways in which, across Dakar, the trash workers and the communities they serve alike have fought the devaluation of trash labour, participatory garbage collection in Yoff may indeed point to a wider resistance to the neoliberal ethics of urban management in Senegal.

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Notes

1 This chapter is based on research conducted between 2006 and 2010 in Dakar with funding from the National Science Foundation, Social Science Research Council, Fulbright-Hays as part of her doctoral dissertation research in the geography department at the University of California, Berkeley. The author would like to thank her research assistant, Ndeye Bineta Ndoye, for her valuable contributions to the research, transcription and Wolof–French translation. She is also indebted to Michael Dwyer, Asher Ghertner, Tracey Osborne, Sapana Doshi, Malini Ranganathan, Kendra Strauss and Michael Watts for comments on earlier versions of this chapter. A significantly shorter version was presented at the AAG annual meeting in Seattle

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in November 2010. Finally, this research would not have been possible without the time and patience of CBOs, ENDA and, especially, the *animatrices* of the Yoff project. The author provided translation from French to English. Any mistakes that remain in the text are exclusively the author's responsibility.

2 Environnement et Développement du Tiers Monde (ENDA) is an international non-profit organization founded in 1972 and based in Dakar.

3 This chapter considers Senegal's 'neoliberal' era as the country's particular experience of structural adjustment, which began in 1979, and the policies aimed at liberalization that have followed on its heels, especially under Abdoulaye Wade since 2000. In contrast with 'over-generalized accounts of a monolithic and omnipresent neoliberalism', this chapter joins with those approaches concerned with trajectories of *neoliberalization* in specific places, in light of their historical, cultural and political specificities (Peck and Tickell 2002: 381).

4 The Lebou declared their republic, independent of French authority, in 1790. The Lebou Republic lasted until 1857, when the Cape Verde peninsula was annexed into the French colony (Sylla 1992). Because of their claim to land on the peninsula, the Lebou constituted a large percentage of the *originaires* of the first four urban areas of Senegal, the *Quatres Communes* (Diouf 1998).

5 I use 'tradition' not to denote a static, unchanging nature, but, rather, to engage the discourse of tradition employed by the Lebou and the historical roots of their contemporary neighbourhood governance structures.

6 See Simone (2003); Soumaré (2002); Gaye and Diallo (1997); Gaye (1996).

7 For instance, the UNESCO Best Practices for Human Settlements report, as a case study for the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Sussex, and in the widely circulated article by Gaye and Diallo (1997).

8 '*Waa Geej Ndar*' translates directly from the Wolof to 'people from the Saint Louis sea'.

9 The *waa Geej Ndar* are the largest ethnic minority in Tonghor, and a very rough estimate would put them as constituting at least 10 per cent of the population.

10 ENDA's pilot in Tonghor also had a liquid sanitation element that was aimed at treating waste water with small-scale (off-grid) 'eco-sanitation stations'. Though this was not the subject of this research, it should be noted that the liquid waste project also experienced enormous problems and did not come to fruition. The mural in Figure 5.1 is painted on the wall of one of the stations.

11 Association pour la Promotion Social, Economique et Culturelle de Yoff (Association for the Social, Economic and Cultural Promotion of Yoff).

12 Though not originally from Yoff, the horse cart operators were locally based Sereer men who owned their own horse carts.

13 This is the language used by the project coordinators.

14 The project did not include a recycling element. All trash that makes it to the Mbeubeuss dump, however, is sorted by waste pickers and channelled into extensive informal recycling networks.

15 This phrase is taken from Diouf (1997).

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16 For instance, Dakar's sprawling, disadvantaged suburb Pikine faces enormous sanitation and waste challenges but it is generally seen as lacking the actionable assets imagined in the Lebou neighbourhoods.

17 This is consistent with observations in other African cities revealing that autochthony claims often become more intense with urbanization. See Geschiere and Jackson (2006).

18 Cutting across the gendered division of waste labour in the home is differentiation according to marital status, age and location within family hierarchies, with younger wives, girls and maids generally allocated the most onerous waste duties.

19 Malick Gaye was the head of ENDA's Relay for Participatory Urban Development programme (*Relais pour le développement urbain participé*) (RUP). Most of the community-based sanitation projects (including that at Tonghor) were coordinated by RUP (personal interview, 14 November 2007, ENDA offices, Dakar).

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20 For a concise overview of the history of 'mainstreaming' gender in development discourse, see Pearson (2005).

21 Personal interview, 25 November 2007, APECSY offices, Yoff.

22 This was taken from the 'Forum on household waste collection using carts: resolutions and action plans' for Rufisque, dated 22 December 1994, as reprinted in Gaye (1996: 122).

23 As discussed in Fredericks (2009a), the massive youth social movement *Set/Setal* aimed at cleaning up Dakar actually formed the foundations of the contemporary municipal trash sector when the youth were formalized into a new trash collection force. Having been active in the youth movement, these two women had become incorporated into the municipal trash sector alongside their male compatriots in the mid-1990s. See also Diouf (1996).

24 Personal interview with *animatrice*, 19 November 2007, Tonghor, Yoff.

25 All of the women trash workers in Yoff were fired when the system was downsized in the late 1990s. The gendered basis of the firing was justified by the notion that the women are not primary breadwinners. On the contrary, both *animatrices* were the main breadwinners in their families (Fredericks 2009b).

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26 Women brought into the municipal trash sector after *Set/Setal* actually experienced an increase in the value of their labour in material and moral terms. Because they were paid (albeit meagrely) for cleaning activities for the first time, and because they worked side by side with men, this worked to masculinize their labour (Fredericks 2009b).

27 This resonates with research on waste work and gender in other settings within the global South (Ali et al. 1998; Beall 1997; Miraftab 2004a, 2004b; Samson 2007, 2008). Though the concern here is primarily with the contemporary moment, parallels can also be drawn from other moments and spaces. Striking similarities can be found, for instance, with the notion of women as domestic angels, extending their care into the streets of the city, as part of the history of welfare in Britain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Alexander 2009).

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28 The TEOM has infamously low recovery rates and is generally inadequate for covering service costs.

29 Data were not collected on how this reconfigured the use and value of materials in the home but it is easy to see the incentive for households to avoid paying the fee by reusing, recycling and dumping elsewhere.

30 See Fredericks (forthcoming) for a discussion of the municipal trash workers' union movement and recent gains related to salaries, healthcare, legal status and equipment under Dakar mayor Khalifa Sall (elected in 2009).

31 See Ferguson's seminal work on the politics of development in Lesotho (1994).

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