INTRODUCTION. Trash Matters

1. See Sharad Chari’s (2013, 133) similar notion of “refusal to be detritus.”
2. I’m drawing on and reconfiguring AbdouMaliq Simone’s (2004b) notion of people as infrastructure.
3. For some notable exceptions, see Blundo and Meur (2009) and Chalfin (2010) as well as the political infrastructures literatures discussed later in the chapter.
4. The city is a major financial center, home to a dozen national and regional banks (including la Banque Centrale des états de l’Afrique de l’ouest [Central Bank of the West African States] which manages the unified West African franc [CFA] currency) and numerous international organizations, NGOS, and international research centers, and it is the center of the country’s tourist economy.
5. Among other interventions, these literatures have contributed pathbreaking insight toward understanding gendered and generational access to resources, migration and rural-urban connection, and the persistence of “custom” (e.g., Berry 1993; Carney and Watts 1990; Ferguson 1994; Isaacman 1996).
6. Africanist research has been foundational in political ecology (e.g., Bassett and Crummey 1993; Fairhead and Leach 1996; Ribot 1998; Schroeder 1999; Tiffen, Mortimore, and Gichuki 1994; Watts 1983). Though most of the early political ecology scholarship was focused on the rural sphere, there is a growing literature refracting urban political-ecological questions through the lens of African cities (e.g., Lawhon, Ernstson, and Silver 2014; Loftus 2012; McFarlane and Silver 2017; Myers 2005; Njeru 2006).
7. See footnote 12 for a brief discussion of Africanist urban political ecology (upe).
8. There is a long, important tradition of Africanist urban historiography and ethnography that shifted the rural focus of labor studies to grapple with the transformation of work and labor organizing in the city. For instance, Luise White’s ground-
breaking *Comforts of Home* explored the role of prostitution as a means of capital accumulation in colonial Nairobi (1990). Research on urbanism in the Copperbelt, a copper-mining region in Central Africa mostly centered in Zambia’s Copperbelt Province, moreover, was central to a new paradigm in urban studies emerging in the middle of the century (see early research coming out of the Rhodes-Livingston Institute [e.g., Gluckman 1961; J. C. Mitchell 1961] and the discussion by J. Robinson [2006]). More recent scholarship on the urban labor question has recalibrated understandings of urban informality (K. Hart 1973), the challenges of economic decline (Ferguson 1999), new patterns of migration (Buggenhagen 2001; Cooper 1983; M. Diouf 2000), the gendered politics of work (Clark 1994; G. Hart 2002), and questions of labor mobilization and unionization (Cooper 1996; Lubeck 1986; Parpart 1983)—to name a few central contributions.

9. For instance, Gillian Hart’s (2002) important monograph examines the cultural politics of labor fomented by industrial globalization in black townships in KwaZulu-Natal faced with ongoing legacies of racial dispossession.


11. For instance, Brenda Chalfin, Daniel Mains, and Antina von Schnitzler have been at the forefront of ethnographic discussions of infrastructural change in the neoliberal era for their work in Ghana, Ethiopia, and South Africa, respectively (Chalfin 2016; Mains 2012; von Schnitzler 2016).

12. These concerns have animated broad swathes of urban geographical debate for some time. Some key foundational texts include Castells (1979), D. Harvey (1996), and Smith (1984). Urban political ecology (*upe*) research has made especially important contributions toward emphasizing the socio-power geometries surrounding human-environment relations, the materiality of urban nature, and the key role of urban infrastructures in uneven environment-development relations (e.g., the collection by Heynen et al. [2007]). However, I join with Lawhon, Ernstson, and Silver (2014) in arguing for a provincialization of *upe*. African urbanisms offer new insights for *upe*, which, to date, has been narrow in theoretical scope and dominated by Global North perspectives. This book shares in Lawhon et al.’s call for a more situated *upe* that draws on more heterogeneous theoretical influences (especially feminist and postcolonial), particularly through exploring how notions of people as infrastructure, embodied experiences, and situated knowledges are central to urban political ecologies. For some examples of urban political-ecological scholarship that may fall outside the purview of conventional *upe*, see Loftus (2012), Myers (2011, 2014), Rademacher and Sivaramakrishnan (2013), and Truelove (2011).

13. The research on political infrastructures has exploded over the last few years. For

14. There is a wide and established body of urban scholarship, much of which is focused on Global South cities, that emphasizes the rising importance of the city as the key locus of citizenship accompanying the decline of nation-state-based citizenship. The shift to the urban scale is associated with the fading relevance of classic notions of citizenship focused on formal membership and participation in the national polity, and the rising importance of rights-based approaches which focus on access to substantive urban public goods like housing, sanitation, and employment. See the concise summary by Miraftab and Kudva (2015) as well as foundational texts including Holston and Appadurai (1999), J. Robinson (2006), and Roy (2009).


16. Geography has long made its mark on the academy through grappling with the relationship between human activity and material environments (Braun 2007). There has been a resurgence of interest in the last few years, influenced by wider new materialist debates and the rising influence of science studies and the “ontological turn” in anthropology, to bring materiality more fully back into the fold of cultural and political geographical inquiry.

17. See Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin’s influential Splintering Urbanism (2001). The implied progression in Graham and Marvin’s book from networked to individualized and privatized systems is less relevant in African cities. As Matthew Gandy (2006, 389) points out about Lagos, episodic aspirations by colonial and then postcolonial governments to modernize urban space have in reality been “little more than a chimera that characterized sketches, plans and isolated developments, but never constituted the majority experience.”

18. See Michael Watts’s (2005a) critique of Simone’s notion of people as infrastructure in the special issue of Public Culture on Johannesburg.


20. This study joins with a wider body of work in discard studies that pushes beyond Douglas’s structural-symbolic approach to foreground waste’s materiality (see Reno 2015).

21. Though the examples elaborated here are mostly in the postcolonial world, waste management has also been deeply implicated in city-planning policy and practice in
the West. For example, discourses of cleanliness and indiscipline resonate with a number of other long-running debates including the historic question of pollution and class that can be seen in the progressive era in the United States (Riis 1890).


23. Chakrabarty (1991, 18). D. Asher Ghertner (2010a) argues that such techniques undergird the function of what he terms aesthetic governmentality in the service of elite “world-city” aspirations in Delhi. As Ghertner and other scholars of India have observed, bourgeois environmental discourses are frequently invoked in elite projects for urban development, often through mobilizing discourses of order, nuisance, or contamination (Doshi 2013; Ghertner 2010b; McFarlane 2008). It is in this sense that Vinay Gidwani and Rajyashree N. Reddy (2011, 1425) describe contemporary metropolitan governance in India through zones of exclusion, enclosure, and neglect as an “eviscerating urbanism” which operates as a regime of disengagement “for managing bodies and spaces designated as ‘wasteful.’”

24. Mbembe (2001). For his part, Esty (1999) argues that the excremental is a governing trope in African and other postcolonial literature, but draws on African satires to emphasize the way that satirists’ scatological language fosters an incisive critique of the failures of colonial development and the corruptions of neocolonial politics. See also Lincoln (2008) on excremental allegory in postcolonial African literature.


26. This builds on a focus within critical development studies and urban geography as to how “life’s work” is restructured through the instrumentalization of participation in the interest of cheaper urban-development strategies, which roll back the provision of public goods (e.g., Katz 2001; Roberts 2008).


28. The discard process is only the beginning of the second life of garbage. A village of people lives at the city’s dump, Mbeubeuss, carving lives and value out of the remains left by their better-off neighbors. Although this research did not consider the politics of picking, my new research examines the social life of the dump.

29. Kaplan’s article, “The Coming Anarchy,” became one of the best-selling issues in The Atlantic Monthly’s history, was cited far and wide, and is considered an influential intervention on the current state of world affairs. In his dramatic account of his ride to the airport in Conakry, he described the city as “a nightmarish Dickensian spectacle . . . The streets were one long puddle of floating garbage” (1994, 54).

30. See also Diouf and Fredericks (2013, 2014), Myers (2011), and Roy and Ong (2011) for extended discussion and ethnographic research that resist these two tendencies.
ONE. Governing Disposability

1. Comprising fifty-seven nations, the OIC was formed in 1969 and aims at protecting Muslim interests worldwide.

2. The monument and many of the road projects were not completed for the event but a few key thoroughfares and exchanges were finished in the nick of time.


5. On international events, see Cavalcanti (2015) and Omezi (2014). On world-class city making and bourgeois environmentalisms, see Ghertner (2010b) and Roy and Ong (2011). Also relevant is research on how infrastructural crisis can be produced for political ends (Giglioli and Swyngedouw 2008), the production of anticipatory security events (Lakoff and Collier 2010), and infrastructural performances for an international-development gaze (Appadurai 2002).

6. Performative practices around infrastructure have not been limited to the state. As we’ll see in chapter 4, garbage infrastructure is also the space through which rebellion has been performed by striking workers and ordinary residents through staging breakdowns and exteriorizing waste.

7. Dakar was originally founded by the French as a military base in 1857 at the Lebou village of Ndakarou on the tip of the Cape Verde Peninsula. The Cape Verde Peninsula was originally settled by Lebou—one of Senegal’s nine ethnic groups—fishermen no later than the fifteenth century (Sylla 1992). The Portuguese first landed on Gorée (a small island off the peninsula) in 1444, where they founded a settlement that was to become part of the slave trade network. The island, just off the mainland, changed hands between the Portuguese, Dutch, English, and French many times before the French finally took control of it near the end of the seventeenth century. First settling on the African coast in Saint-Louis in 1659, the French took definitive control of the colony of Senegal in 1817 after losing it to English occupation during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars.

8. Assimilation was the ideological basis for French colonial policy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, premised on the idea that colonial subjects could become French by adopting French language and culture.

9. Although sometimes used to include people of mixed African European descent, the term originaire generally referenced Africans living in the Quatre Communes. Demonstrating the required proof of at least five years’ residency in one of the communes was often quite complicated.

10. Substantial legal and social barriers prevented the full exercise of “citizens’” rights. These struggles lend significant insight into the contradictions intrinsic to
the ideals and practices of the French mission civilisatrice (civilizing mission), at once rooted in republican egalitarianism and premised on authoritarian violence and racism (Conklin 1997).

11. The concentration of investment and power in the coastal administrative cities and the hierarchies of citizenship established in the colonial period have had lasting impacts for the postcolony. A core legacy of colonial administration is the bifurcation between urban “citizens” and rural “subjects” (Mamdani 1996). Compared with rural areas and secondary cities, Dakar has long dominated planning and infrastructure development.


13. The Socialist Party was originally named the Union Progressiste Sénégalaise (Senegalese Progressive Union) until 1976.

14. After considerable growth in the 1960s, the public sector exploded in the 1970s, with thirty-three new public and state-owned enterprises created from 1973 to 1975 (Bellitto 2001, 79). The water sector was nationalized in 1971, followed by electricity two years later (Bellitto 2001, 94). The trash sector did not follow until 1985 with the creation of the parastatal corporation, la Société Industrielle d’aménagement urbain du Sénégal (Industrial Urban Planning Company of Senegal; Sias). By the 1980s the government was the sole or majority entity of eighty-six public and parastatal companies, representing 20 percent of GDP and employing thirty-five thousand workers (Somerville 1991, 153). Dakar’s graduates were particularly well placed for government jobs during this period (Zeilig and Ansell 2008).

15. Collignon (1984) discusses the déguerpissements (displacement) of urban residents seen as “overpopulating” the area, as well as specific marginalized members of the urban landscape, including talibé children (young boys, who in an extremely controversial practice, beg for money for their marabouts), handicapped people, and the mentally ill.

16. Cohen (2007, 148). The World Bank’s first urban development loan was US$8 million to Senegal for the Sites and Services Project, approved in 1972, to construct the Parcels Assainies district in Dakar. Despite the fanfare, the project was inadequate and failed to make much of a dent in Dakar’s housing crisis.

17. The management of household garbage was specified by the Code de l’administration communale (Municipal Administration Code, Law 66–64 of June 30, 1966, modified in 1969, 1970, and 1972). The financing of household waste management is covered by the Taxe d’enlèvement des ordures ménagères (Tax on the Removal of Household Waste; Teom), which dates back to the law of August 13, 1926, and an amendment from February 3, 1958, which required that all properties be subjected to
the TEOM, calculated based on the built property values. Household waste is collected by the Treasury Service of the Ministry of Finance. The recovery rates are infamously low and inadequate for covering service costs. For instance, in 1995, 18 percent of the total trash budget was covered by the TEOM, and in 2001, only 15 percent was covered (Chagnon 1996, 109; Direction des collectivités locales, personal communication, 2007).

18. In Diouf’s (1997, 308) words, the protection of the economy by the state had contributed to the “development of an attitude of total irresponsibility on the parts of those associated with power. In fact, political protection that guaranteed impunity generalized bad management, clientelism, corruption, and the total absence of sanctions, positive or negative.”

19. Whether continued economic decline in Africa was the result of the reforms themselves or the poor implementation of them is an extremely complicated question that has been the subject of vast debate over the last few decades (e.g., Mkandawire and Soludo 1999).

20. The CUD was created in 1983 as a governing structure over the greater Région de Dakar (region of Dakar) (joining the three départements [departments] of Dakar, Rufisque, and Pikine). As stipulated in Decree 83–1131 (October 1983), the CUD was responsible for household waste management in the region of Dakar.

21. At the onset of structural adjustment, the wage bill had reached 60 percent of government spending (B. Fall 2002, 52). Reform of the civil service was centered on several major strategies aimed at controlling recruitment practices and minimizing new hires (B. Fall 2002). The formal jobs that did remain became more flexible with the passage of more liberal labor regulations and policies that made it easier for employers to fire workers and use contract labor (Somerville 1991). Reform of the public sector was slow and sectoral at first, and some public and parastatal (“mixed economy”) companies continued to be created up until 1988.

22. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to explore in detail the origins of the industrial crisis in Senegal. For one particularly illuminating case, see Catherine Boone’s (1992) thorough and persuasive examination of the rise and fall of the Dakar textile industry.

23. Political reforms had begun in 1976 when President Senghor adopted a new constitution that transformed the one-party state into a tripartite political system. Although some scholars emphasize that the democratic gains in the 1980s only made Senegal a “quasi-democracy” that was really more about political consensus (Vengroff and Creevey 1997), real gains were made in opening up the political playing field. Robert Fatton (1986) argues that through deftly ushering in unlimited pluralism, Diouf was able to neutralize threats from the left opposition in order to retain popularity in the early 1980s. This popularity was, however, to be short lived. While political liberalization was to ensure the survival of the Socialist government into the late 1980s, this was to prove temporary in the face of the diminishing capacity of the state to shape and benefit from the economy.

24. Though first associated with Donal B. Cruise O’Brien, the Senegalese social contract theory has gained the attention of, and been revised by, a significant scholarly
field (see, for instance, Creevey 1985; Cruise O’Brien and Coulon 1988; Diop and Diouf 1990; Fatton 1987; D. Robinson 2000; Villalon 1995). For important recent interventions and revisions, see M. Diouf (2013), especially the chapter by Babou (2013).

25. See Cruise O’Brien (2003) on these factors, including the challenges to brotherhood authority stemming from generational differences, quarrels over succession, and competition between marabouts over shrinking resources.

26. Ironically, the evidence that this compulsion was fading first showed up in the 1983 elections even though the Socialist Party fared quite well. In those presidential elections, despite the Mouride leader’s preelection ndigal to vote for the Socialist Party, a significant number of Mouride voters appear to have defied these instructions and voted for the opposition party, even in the Mouride heartland (Cruise O’Brien 2003).

27. Diplomatic ties between the neighboring countries were severed, and several hundred people (estimates vary between a hundred and a thousand) were killed in April and May 1989 in a spate of looting, rioting, and reprisals in both Dakar and the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott, as well as in other towns on both sides of the border. The ethnic violence was allegedly sparked by a dispute over grazing rights along the Senegal River (Parker 1991).

28. Diop and Diouf (1992) describe mayors as “prisoners” dependent upon “mercenary support” from the central state. Despite new policies and agendas for decentralization stretching back to 1972, in practice these reforms were maneuvered to reinforce power in the central state and keep the municipalities hemmed in. A key restriction on the mayor of Dakar’s power is his lack of control over financial resources sufficient to the responsibilities of the post. Even local taxes (including the teom) are not automatically at the mayor’s disposal, but must, rather, be collected by the central treasury and sent back to the municipality, which is rarely assured. Poor recovery rates on local taxes and the politicization of their dispersal are just two of the financial challenges facing the mayor of Dakar.

29. Diop had served multiple posts as minister under Senghor. He served as mayor of Dakar from 1984 to 2002.

30. The devaluation precipitated widespread social dislocation, protests, and further economic inequality in the country (Creevey, Vengroff, and Gaye 1995).

31. Senegal received a comprehensive debt-reduction package from the World Bank and IMF under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative from 2000 to 2006 (World Bank 2000).

32. At first named the Haute Autorité pour la propreté de Dakar (High Authority for the Cleanliness of Dakar; HAPD), transformed shortly after to Propreté de Dakar (Cleanliness of Dakar; PRODAK), the agency then became Agence pour la propreté de Dakar (Agency for the Cleanliness of Dakar; APRODAK) in 2001.

33. The Swiss company Alcyon was selected for the exclusive market of Dakar’s garbage collection in 2001 and the twenty-five-year contract was eventually ceded on November 11, 2003, to Alcyon’s main subcontractor, AMA. The company AMA-Senegal was created as a private subsidiary of the Italian AMA-Rome (République du Sénégal 2002). The story behind the choice of these contracting companies was the subject of enormous controversy, stemming from allegations of direct personal links discovered with
the president or his family. The conditions under which AMA, which had no previous experience in the developing world, was selected are extremely muddy.

34. Oumar Cissé and Salimata Seck Wone (2013) detail some of the troubling aspects of AMA’s shady equipment and managerial practices.

35. The government first broke the contract with AMA in October 2005, citing widespread corruption, mismanagement, and devastating public health consequences. Under pressure from the World Bank, the state quickly reinstated its contract with AMA, building in some new checks and balances. The World Bank pressured for the contract to be reinstated because AMA’s investments were insured by the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) (Project no. 5498). Although most trash workers were retained, the administrative and mechanical staff were fired with the rupture of the contract.

36. Officially titled the Entente CADAK-CAR, the acronym stands for Communauté d’agglomérations de Dakar–Communauté d’agglomérations de Rufisque (the agreement of the urban agglomerations of Dakar and Rufisque).

37. Remarkably, the expertise of the CUD did not form the basis for the creation of CADAK-CAR, as most of the staff, reports, etc., had been expunged in the shake-up after 2000. Symbolizing this erasure, only vestiges of CUD publications were found scattered across administrative offices and homes of former employees. In terms of leadership and charge, the mayor of Dakar served as the president of the CADAK-CAR, and its official mission revolved around the management of household garbage, the roadway network, and public street lighting.

38. The Code des collectivités locales (Decentralization Law) is Law 96–06 (March 22, 1996) and the addendum is Law 2002–16 (April 15, 2002).

39. See Cissé and Wone (2013) for critiques of Veolia’s contract.

40. They were hired and managed through a temping agency, did not receive benefits or formal contracts, and were paid the same salaries as those in the rest of the sector.

41. For media coverage of the trash strikes, see Dieng (2009) and Le Quotidien (2009).

42. The newly created Mutuelle de santé des travailleurs du nettoiement (Health Insurance for Cleaning Workers; MSTN) counted close to three thousand members in 2016 (trash workers and their families).

43. Monthly salaries for the average trash worker had stagnated between 65,000 and 80,000 CFA per month for some time. From 2009 to 2012, the base salary was gradually raised to between 90,000 and 95,000 CFA per month. In 2012, the union leader, Madany Sy, indicated that the union still did not consider this a liveable wage, and that they advocated for a minimum base salary of 150,000 CFA per month.


45. The new agency, la Société pour la propreté du Sénégal (Company for the Cleanliness of Senegal; SOPROSEN), was voted on by the National Assembly on August 16, 2011.

46. In removing this foundational element of the urban economy, he made it clear

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that access to work was about one’s ability to conform to specific aesthetic regimes. The forced removal of the vendors precipitated a major riot in November 2007 and proved a vexing and highly politicized issue for years to come (Tandian 2013).

47. The monument was despised because the family it portrays is viewed as culturally inappropriate, the cost of its production was exorbitant and did not rely on local labor, and all visitation proceeds went directly into the president’s pocket (see Roberts 2013).

48. On December 17, 2012, the National Assembly unanimously voted to dissolve soprosen and officially return the management of garbage to the Ministry of Local Governments.

49. The unit was created in 2011 under President Wade but was charged only with garbage management outside of Dakar.

50. Like its preceding organizations, the ucg has organized cleanup events with volontaires (day laborers), instead of recruiting more permanent workers into the sector. The union insists that new recruitment and increased salaries are necessary to keep up with increasing workloads and the rising cost of living in Dakar.

TWO. Vital Infrastructures of Labor

1. Associations sportives et culturelles (Sporting and Cultural Associations), Groupements d’intérêt economique (Economic Interest Groups), and Groupements promotion féminine (Women’s Interest Groups).

2. This phenomenon varied by neighborhood and by flavor of the association. In more affluent neighborhoods, the youth tended to be more educated, for example, but because of the level of unemployment, often even these educated youth were very active in their youth groups. The implications of this phenomenon—and the strong presence of young intellectuals in Set/Setal—for the trash union battle are considered in chapter 4. In terms of ethnicity and other divisions, youth associations are quite representative of local demographics, so in some neighborhoods specific ethnic groups dominated (e.g., the Lebou in Yoff).

3. This quotation, and all other uncited quotations throughout this book, are from my own interviews with trash workers, residents, government officials, and waste experts in Dakar, conducted between 2006 and 2016. The majority of the more than two hundred fifty interviews I conducted took place in the course of my dissertation fieldwork, in 2007–8. The interviews were originally conducted in French and Wolof, some with the assistance of my Senegalese research assistant. She and two other assistants transcribed the interviews into French and, unless otherwise noted, I translated them into English. With the exception of government officials or those who explicitly asked that I use their real names, I have withheld the names of my respondents in the interest of confidentiality. The ethnographic research was centered in the department of Dakar although research into the institutional history of the sector covered the greater Dakar region. Trash workers at multiple sites across Dakar were interviewed, mainly on their collection routes or, most commonly, at the workers’ hangout spots where
they took their breaks. Two neighborhood ethnographies were conducted in HLM Fass and Tonghor, Yoff. These interviews were conducted in fifty households in each neighborhood, with a mixture of household members. The large majority took place within these respondents’ homes.

4. Women’s connection to ritual impurity through Islamic custom may reinforce their association with cleaning duties, but I did not explore this connection directly in the present research. For a discussion of the South Asian context, see Beall (1997).

5. Single women are of lower status than married women, and older wives are considered higher in social rank than younger wives.

6. Better-off families in Senegal have *bonnes* (household maids) who help with the domestic duties of cleaning, cooking, and child care.

7. Based in Dakar and intervening in areas related to urban livelihoods across the Global South, *ENDA* is one of the best-known NGOs in West Africa. The book’s full title is *Set Setal, Des Murs Qui Parlent: Nouvelle Culture Urbaine à Dakar* (*ENDA* 1991).

8. N’Dour and Le Super Étoile (1990). N’Dour is the father of the popular music genre *mbalax*, and is Senegal’s most famous musician. The original lyrics are in Wolof and the translation is provided by the author with the assistance of Sophie Coly.

9. The integration of the *sias* workers into the new system was not an easy one and those involved remember deep disagreement at the time between the older “professionals” from *sias* and the Set/Setal youth.

10. This project was actually the second of two major attempts in Senegal at quelling the social discontent unleashed by structural adjustment in the late 1980s. The first, *Délégation à l’insertion à la réinsertion et à l’emploi* (Delegation for Inclusion, Reintegration, and Employment; *DIRE*), though established in 1987, received more attention after the events of 1988. Funded by the state and international donors, *DIRE* was aimed at the people who were least happy with the economic reforms: parastatal workers who were laid off, civil servants who voluntarily retired, and university graduates. Designed primarily as an expensive “sweetener” for buying off these groups, *DIRE* was, for a variety of reasons, considered a failure (C. L. Graham 1994).

11. For the first phase of the *AGE TIP* project (1989–92), the World Bank dispersed a US$20 million loan, and there was additional cofinancing from the African Development Bank, other funders, and the Senegalese national and municipal governments. In the second phase (1993–97), the World Bank distributed $38 billion, and there was additional cofunding from other sources (World Bank 1997).

12. *SIAS* was officially dissolved on September 27, 1995, and the Nouveau Système de nettoiement (New Cleaning System; *NSN*) was codified in October (République du Sénégal, n.d.). It consisted of 109 *GIES* and their 1,542 members (Doucouré 2002). The *CAMCUD* was created to federate these associations as a new arm of Mayor Diop’s municipal organization, the *CUD*. The principal objectives of the new system were stated as follows: “1) the rationalization of the collection and transport system for solid municipal wastes; 2) the involvement of the population in the improvement and management of their quality of life; 3) the mastery of the collection and evacuation systems; 4) the reduction of the costs of collection and disposal” (République du Sénégal 1998, 27).
13. For a general document on the forum, see Whittaker (1995).

14. The term was originally used to describe the young oyster collectors of Mbour (buuj means “oyster” in Wolof) (Diop and Faye 2002, 698), but in present-day parlance is used to derogatorily describe informal recyclers and trash pickers and, at times, formal trash workers.

15. Sweeping (balayer in French and balé in Wolof) is a term used in Senegal to describe general cleaning activities.

16. Women represented over 25 percent of national candidates for most political parties, with the number of women elected to political office increasing at all levels of government (Beck 2003, 158). Amy S. Patterson (2002), however, demonstrates that despite the growing mobilization of women and some of the possibilities opened up by decentralization reforms, there were many blockages to women being equal participants in the political system in Senegal during this time.

17. This resonates with research in South Africa that found gendered discourses of waste to be instrumentalized in the service of cheap, exploitative labor (Miraftab 2004a; M. Samson 2008). See also chapter 3.

18. The social category youth (les jeunes) in Senegal is often coded male and separated from the category women (les femmes), in both official and popular discourse, as well as scholarly writing.

19. The French verb bricoler means to tinker, “do it yourself” (DIY), or cobble together. Bricolage, or the act of piecing something together from diverse elements, is usually seen as an informal activity associated with DIY or hacking systems and related to the art form of collage.

20. These are two common homemade juices in Senegal. Bissap is made as a tea from hibiscus leaves and bouye is made from the fruit of the baobab tree.

21. For instance, a cholera outbreak in 2005 was directly connected to a crisis in garbage collection. See N. Diouf (2005).

22. This is not an unusual predicament for African youth in the postcolonial period. Best understood as a relational, social category of persons, not a biological one, African youth’s passage into adulthood can be complicated and frustrated by their social, political, and/or economic situations. For a useful discussion of youth as a category of analysis, see Durham (2000). For a collection of essays on contemporary youth politics in Africa, see Honwana and De Boeck (2005).

23. A key element of the problem is that the trucks were (and still are) provided by a number of unregulated private contractors and employed at all levels of disrepair. Even the large international companies with whom the state has contracted at various moments to provide the collection materials have often failed to provide quality hardware.

24. See Chu (2014) and Mains (2007) for two other ethnographic perspectives on the lived effects of disrepair in very different settings.
THREE. Technologies of Community

1. As the city sprawls outward into its banlieue, Yoff represents a sort of inner periphery that is increasingly incorporated into central Dakar. Other similar projects were implemented in Pikine and Rufisque, outer departments within the region of Dakar.

2. Most of the community-based sanitation projects (including Tonghor) were coordinated by ENDA’s program Relais pour le développement urbain participé (Relay for Participatory Urban Development; rup).

3. For instance: in the Best Practices for Human Settlements report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (unesco), as a case study for the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Sussex (unesco, n.d.); and in the widely circulated article written by ENDA in Environment and Urbanization (Gaye and Diallo 1997).

4. 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 (M. Diouf 1998). Land has been a key element of their political influence and independence in the postcolonial era.

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 neighborhood governance structures.

6. The Tonghor project was patterned after a model developed by the same rup program at ENDA in the district of Rufisque on the far outskirts of Dakar (Gaye and Diallo 1997).

7. Waa Geejndar or Geejndar translates directly from the Wolof as “people from the Saint-Louis sea.” The Geejndar are the largest ethnic minority in Tonghor, and a rough estimate would put them at 10 percent of the population at least.

8. The pilot in Tonghor also had a liquid-sanitation element that was aimed at treating wastewater 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 3.3 is painted on the wall of one of the stations.

9. A study conducted in 1997 as a baseline for the community-based trash project estimated that 60 percent 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).

10. Horse-cart owners come in from the countryside to offer their services in the city on a seasonal basis. This rate was a regular rate for such a service. The drivers combined this work with other odd collection jobs in the city.


12. The conference was held from January 8 to 12, 1996. Over a hundred foreign participants attended from thirty countries, and local attendance topped two thousand at the opening ceremony. See Register and Peeks (1997) for a detailed report from the conference.
13. In practice, there is some overlap between customary authority and the Yoff district mayor’s office, which was founded in 1996 with the decentralization law. Many of the district’s municipal leaders are also members of Yoff’s powerful community association, APECXY. Tension still arises between the district government and the Yoff community associations. Disagreements and competition for authority are even more pronounced between the community authorities and Dakar-based local government and public services.


17. User fees, especially in health care and education, have been extremely controversial in low- and middle-income countries and communities for their lackluster revenue generation and disproportionate impact on the poor. By the mid-2000s, a number of development agencies and countries had begun to move away from user fees, especially in the health sector. See Nyanator and Kutzin (1999), M. Pearson (2004), WHO (2005), and R. Yates (2009).

18. The district mayor quoted earlier, Issa Ndiaye, had been involved in the rollout of the project in his capacity with APECXY and agreed with the idea of enlisting neighborhood women in neighborhood cleaning activities, but he too saw problems with this model of public service provision.

Four. The Piety of Refusal

1. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for some thoughts on this idea.


3. See for example Masquelier (2002). This is part of a broader Africanist literature (much of which is not reactionary in the same way) exploring the “modernity of witchcraft” (Geschiere 1997). See also Comaroff and Comaroff (1999).


7. For instance, Mike Davis (2004, 33–34), in his widely read “Planet of Slums,” suggests that religious movements in the “slums” of Africa represent the apocalyptic visions of what has been rendered “a surplus humanity” and not the possible building blocks for an alternative future.


10. Although a few smaller unions did form over the next few years, my research focuses on sntn, as it represented the majority of workers (around thirteen hundred in 2008) and was to lead the other unions in a number of mobilizations.

11. The Socialist Party state had long tried to rein in organized labor through its doctrine of state-affiliated unionism or “responsible participation,” but as this lost steam, two major poles of autonomous unions emerged in 1989. During the 1990s, although a certain level of unity and compromise was reached between the unions through federations as they rallied against the common cause of structural adjustment and its devastating impacts, labor was weakened by the state’s attempt to infiltrate autonomous unions (Ndiaye 2002, 2010). In the face of de-unionization and the weakening of unions in the 1990s due to their internal fragmentation, politicization, and the informalization of labor, the unions attempted to regroup into federations after 1990 as a survival strategy (Diallo 2002). Two major trends were under way: (1) the formation of intersyndicales (union federations or umbrella organizations grouping together existing unions); and (2) the growing number and power of syndicats autonomes (independent or “autonomous” unions). This period ushered in more conflictual mobilization: two general strikes were held in the 1990s (1993 and 1999), whereas there had not been any in the 1970s or 1980s. With the election of opposition candidate Abdoulaye Wade in 2000, “responsible participation” was officially rendered meaningless, and the main union—la Confédération Nationale des travailleurs du Sénégal (National Confederation of Trade Unions of Senegal; CNTS)—finally officially disaffiliated itself from the Socialist Party. In spite of this, political tendencies and party connections persisted within the major union federations (including the officially “independent” unions) during the Wade era. The 2000s were an even more conflictual period with frequent strikes taking place, especially in the health and education sectors (Ndiaye 2013).

12. For more details on the institutional reconfigurations, see chapter 1. For more details on the workers’ labor conditions in the mid-2000s, see chapter 2.

13. Their relationship with labor activists in Italy, for instance, led to widespread Italian press coverage in 2007 and even protests in Rome—the home base of the company AMA, which had left Dakar trash workers in limbo when it lost its contract with the state of Senegal in 2006. These connections eventually led to the trash-workers union
going on a diplomatic mission to Rome in the summer of 2007, where the leaders were warmly received by Italian unionists and government officials.

15. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for development of this point.
16. Excerpt from an article in the newspaper *Sud Quotidien* (2007); my translation.
17. There were thirteen candidates for president in the final round, which greatly diminished any chance for the opposition to get enough support to rival Wade.
18. Kuscular (2007). A growing body of scholarship and philosophy explores Islamic views on nature and the roots of environmental ethics and justice in Islamic thought. Scholars of ecology and Islam point to a number of injunctions against pollution, wasteful consumption, and the general abuse of nature to highlight foundational guidelines within Islam for the faithful stewardship of the environment. For a collection of essays aimed at both a scholarly and lay audience, see *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust* (Foltz, Frederick, and Baharuddin 2003). Some other resources include Haleem (1998), Khalid and O’Brien (1992), and Nasr (1996).
20. The Zabaleen traditionally fed organic material that they collected to pigs, which were then later sold for meat. However, in the fear surrounding the so-called swine flu or H1N1 virus, the pigs were all killed in a massive cull in 2009. Bound up with associations of impurity and contagion, the slaughter appears to have represented more discrimination against the Copts than a rational policy (see Leach and Tadros 2014).
21. In 2016 it was estimated that about one-fifth of garbage workers were women. The numbers have been slowly declining since Set/Setal.

**CONCLUSION. Garbage Citizenship**

1. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for clarifying this point.