Wastepickers and the right to the city
Forging a New Conceptualization of “The Public” in Waste Management

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Let's talk about garbage

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Kowalski y Szczelina, Biennal Venezia, L'Arsenale, set 2016 (LF)
“We were sitting for decades over a pile of gold without really noticing....now they are aware of it and are coming for our waste” Alex Cardoso, brazilian catador (waste-picker) during Expocatadores, Brazil, 2013

“We should close all biggest dumpsites in the world” (conversation between Bill Clinton and Bill Gates, CGI, USA, 2010)
When technological systems are globalized, we are globalizing a series of *apparatus* with the ability and power to normalize planetary behaviours". (Pierron, 2009).
The public sphere is the site where struggles are decided by other means than war. Alexander Kluge (1972)

Space is not conceived as an abstraction, an scenario, but as an environment full of opportunities, people, objects, which has to be constantly rebuilt.

The right to the city then becomes the right to centrality, to use and appropriate public space, to not be excluded from the urban form.
Regulation, privatization and dispossession: territorial analysis

Chiffonniers “cities” during 1800-1860
(Fernandez, 2010)
Chiffonniers “cities” during 1860-1890
(idem)
Chiffonniers “cities” during 1890-1929
(idem)
Montevideo waste governmentality

2004: New OMB containers

2009: Resolution No. 4663 Packaging Law

2012: Resolution No. 5383 for large generators collection

2013: Resolution No. 12.089 for exclusion zones

2014: New set of containers, now anti-wps access
The concept of *commons* should then be framed not as an object but as what is produced collectively (Federici 2012; Heller, 2012), over which control or management is not delegated to an outside social body but is exercised directly by those who produce it.
A neighbor from Buceo called me and gave me a 29-inch TV that worked! If they take us off the street, people do not understand that we lose all these opportunities, which are not quantifiable at an economic level, but in our own quality of life and our relationship with our neighbors.”  
Juan Carlos Silva, wastepicker, president of the Union in Montevideo 30/11/2015

To territorialize these commons, to think of them from the urban space perspective, will imply the production of the same from the networks of actors and its bonds related to waste.
The recognition of the work and the contributions of the waste pickers in the city must be affirmed through a new type of community that manages their urban resources in a sustainable way.

Following the right to the city concept and a new understanding of the urban space, these principles and practice of communal ownership will help us frame a potentially radically different city waste governance that will interrogate other configurations of the public.

http://www.wiego.org/resources/video-right-city-and-privatization
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