

THE INFORMAL RECYCLING SECTOR IN BRAZIL

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BRAZIL

- **Latin America's Giant:**

 - 5th Largest Country in the World

 - Most Populous in LA: 190 million

 - LA's Largest Economy and 10th in the World

- **Sharp Income Inequality**

 - Richest 5% get $> 1/3$ of national income

BRAZIL

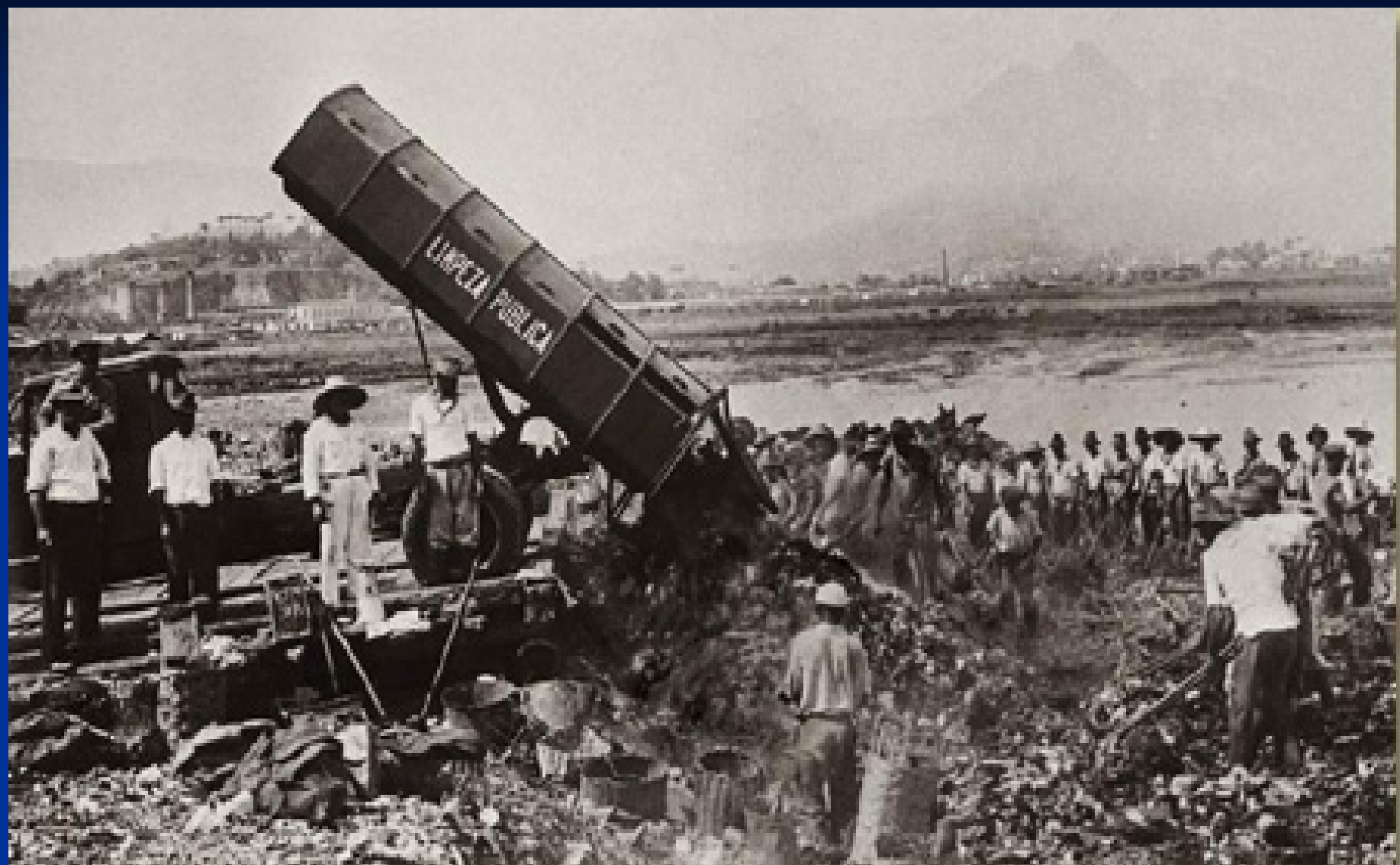
- **Poverty: more than 40 million live below the poverty line**
- **Unemployment exceeds 9%**
- **The Informal Sector employs 60% of the labor force: 36 million**

BRAZILIAN WASTE PICKERS

- Popularly known as
 - “Catadores”
 - “Catadores de Lixo”
 - “Catadores de Papel”
- 500,000 Catadores Nationwide

BRAZILIAN WASTE PICKERS

- Traditionally poor, neglected, ignored or repressed by the authorities
- Rejected by society, perceived as criminals
- UNICEF: 45,000 waste picker children in 1998, 30 % of them had no schooling



Despejo de lixo no aterro do Retiro Saudoso no Caju - Rio de Janeiro, 1930 - COMLURB/RJ















Catadores Get Organized

■ **ASMARE Waste Picker Cooperative**

(Associação dos Catadores de Papel, Papelão e Material Reaproveitável)

- **Funded in Belo Horizonte in 1988**
- **380 members, all former street waste pickers**
- **55% women**
- **Recycles 500 tons of materials / month, mostly paper, cardboard, plastics, and metals**

Catadores Get Organized

■ ASMARE Waste Picker Cooperative

- Collect source-separated materials at schools, businesses, residences, office buildings
- Members earn up to 6 times the minimum wage
4 times their income before ASMARE existed
- Members receive training and various benefits
- ASMARE is now a model for other cooperatives



Catadores Get Organized

- **COOPAMARE Waste Picker Cooperative**
(Cooperativa de Catadores Autônomos de Papel, Aparas e Materiais Reaproveitáveis)
 - **Funded in São Paulo in 1989**
 - **80 members and buys materials from 200**
 - **Collect 100 tons of recyclables / month, at a lower cost than the city recycling program**
 - **Members earn US \$ 300 / month, twice the minimum wage (half of labor force < US \$150)**

PALACIO ANCHIETA
CAMARA MUNICIPAL DE SAO PAULO
FLORESCER OUTRORA AS MARÇENS DO ANDEMI SOB A EGIDE DE SAO
PAULO APOSTOLADO A VILA DE ANCHIETA E NOROCCIA TRASCILLI EXPANDE SE
MENTE DOS AVENTUROSO BANDEIRANTES A BUSCA DO ORO POISS E TAMAN
NEM A DADA AS FRONTEIRAS DA PATRIA QUATRO SECTORES OS SAOS REEMERSE
DO PASSADO E A ESPERANÇA DE UM FUTURO DO PRESENTE

Campanha
Nacional de
Desarmamento

NOS CANTO
CANCELAMENTO DA LEI N 171
POR LEI CONQUISTADOS E AP
42290 DE 15/08

"Ele pelo VO
VO"

POSTO D
QUINTE

ASSOCIACAO
RA - PR

"D
OS-PR

**A COOPAMARE é parte da história de Pinheiros a 15 anos.
QUEREMOS CONTINUAR PRESTANDO NOSSO
SERVIÇO DE COLETA SELETIVA A CIDADE.**

BRASILATAS

are
FACE

MOVIMENTO NACIONAL DOS CATADORES DE MATERIAIS RECICLÁVEIS (MNCR)

- Created in 1999, it is now the world's largest waste picker movement: 500 co-ops with 60,000 members
- National Congress of Catadores in 2001 → 1,700 waste pickers participated
- Latin American Congress of waste pickers in 2003
- MCNR leader in organizing a Latin American network of waste pickers

<http://www.movimentodoscataadores.org.br/>







7 1:00 PM





“ABAIXO À REPRESSÃO”
PELO DIREITO À CIDADE E AO TRABALHO!
MNCR - Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis





ABAIXO A REFORMA
CATADOR É PROFISSÃO

Comissão do Estado de São Paulo

PAULO

TADORES DE MATERIAS

ETA SELETIVA

do

UNESP
P.M. ASSIS





**NÃO ME
TRATE
COMO LIXO.**

**SOU
TRABALHADOR.
FAÇO COLETA
SELETIVA.**

The Authorities React

- National Program **WASTE AND CITIZENSHIP** (*Lixo e Cidadania*) was created in 1998
- Participation of wastepickers in integrated waste management programs at the local level, PPPs
- Closure of open dumps
- “No More Children in Dumps” National Campaign (*Bolsa Escola* Program)
- National Training Program to strengthen waste picker organizations

Waste and Citizenship Program

- Ministry of the Environment Fund to support wastepickers: US \$2.6 million in 2003
- More than 100 local Waste and Citizenship local forums have been created
- In 2001, São Paulo created the *Programa Coleta Seletiva Solidária*, a PPP that involves 14 local waste picker cooperatives

Lessons Learned

- External support needed to start waste picker cooperatives (NGOs, Industry, Foundations)
- Government support is crucial for their sustainability: legalization, PPPs, contracts, concessions
- UNICEF's involvement in creating the Waste and Citizenship Program was crucial

Lessons Learned

- **Marches, demonstrations, and educational campaigns bring attention to their cause**
- **Cooperatives can reduce poverty, empower their members, and improve their working and living conditions**
- **Highest priority to separation of materials at the source**

Challenges Ahead

- Globalization → Prices of materials (China and Economic Crises in South America)
- Legal gaps and lack of government support
- Lack of business skills among catadores
- Difficult to organize catadores, slow process
- Lack of solidarity, conflicts among catadores
- Scarcity of funds for projects
- Vulnerable to political changes?