



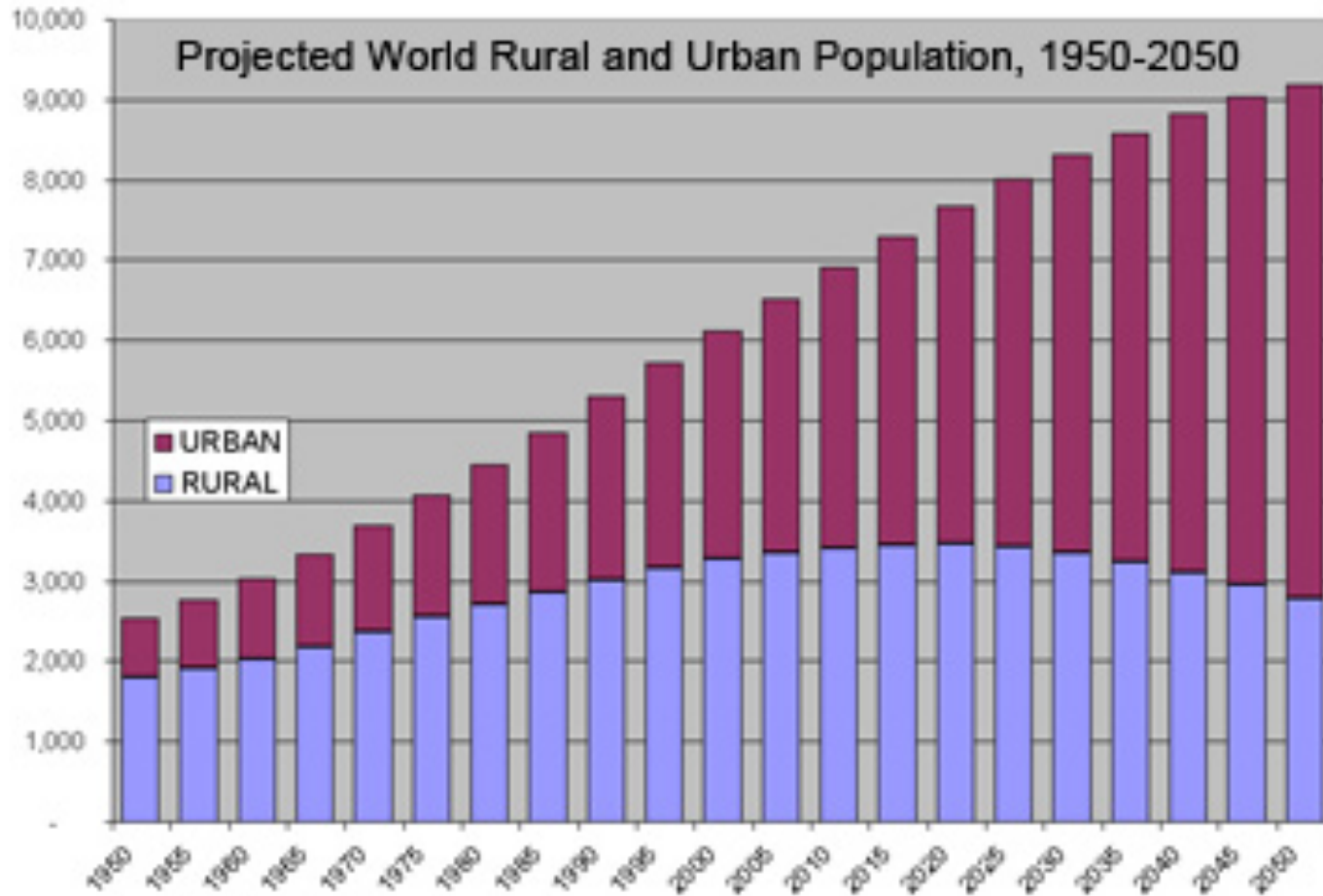
Waste picker organisations and grassroots innovation movements from the global South's informal settlements.

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Recycling Networks. Grassroot resilience tackling climate, environmental and poverty challenges , Swedish Research Council

Grassroots initiatives, institutional entrepreneurship and inclusive urban governance Swedish Research Centre for Local Democracy <https://gri.gu.se/english/research/managing-big-cities---recycling-networks>



– 2050: 75% of the world's people will be living in cities

AN URBAN WORLD, A PLANET OF SLUMS



REPLETE OF GRASSROOTS INNOVATIONS



Waste pickers, environmental stewards, grassroots innovations in informal settlements



Community clean-ups and waste youth group in Kisumu, Kenya



CBO, Dar Es Salaam



Recycling Dreams cooperative, Argentina



Cooperativa Nueva Vida Limpia, Nicaragua



Cooperativa Cidade Limpa in Santo Andre, Brazil

Aim, theory, methods

- Aim: to examine the creation of waste picker organisations as a grassroots innovation, born out of informal settlements and vulnerable groups.
- Theory: grassroots innovation movements (e.g. Smith et al 2017)
- Methods: cross national survey (105) and in-depth interviews (45) with waste picker organisations in Buenos Aires, Sao Paolo, Dar Es Salaam, Managua, Kisumu

Results: grassroots innovation movements in informal settlements

- Resources
- Rationales
- Relations



Rationales

- How the **context** shapes the rationales for the WPO conformation in informal settlements:
 - Shocking events and precipitating jolts
 - Cumulative changes e.g. context of scarcity complexity and uncertainty in informal settlements
 - Changes in legal frameworks
 - Global macro-discourses (e.g. socio economy movement)
- The **blending** of social, environmental and economic rationales (Gutberlet et al, 2016), which might lead to
- Complex and overlapping **identities** with the subsequent tensions (Holt and Littlewood, 2017), contradictions and struggles, as hybrids
 - Identities are also fluid and WPO develop a sense of belonging as environmental stewards, rather than criminals: From stigma to citizenship
 - *“the Association was the tool we found out to say ‘enough is enough’ and stop the police, showing that we are carreros (waste pickers with horses), but carreros that work, and no criminals, and that they (the police) had to leave us work in peace”*
- Organising is therefore transformative and help vulnerable groups in informal settlements, objects of policies, become agents of socio environmental change, creating spaces of experimentation (Kemp et al 1998)

Resources: WPO ability to mobilize resources in contexts of scarcity and uncertainty

- The securing of resources at minimal or no cost by commoning (Zapata Campos and Zapata, 2015, 2017), bootstrapping (Holt and Littlewood 2017) and bricolaging (Gutberlet et al 2016)
- Creating resilient organisations
- Drawing from economies of affection (Bratton, 1989) , and relations of trust, proximity, and reciprocity (crowdfunding, table banking, enrolling local members)



Resilient, dormant organization, Obunga RA



Table banking Manyatta

Resources, knowledge

- **Local and tacit** (e.g. youth groups enrolling local members and resources from NGOs)
- **Co-produced** by WPO in combination with other actors, *informally* (mentorship, storytelling, myth spreading practices) and *formally* (RedLacre, Instituto Catasampa in Brasil, local networks)
- Knowledge production is **dynamic and processual**, and it evolves from the ambition to solve a local problem of material needs towards more structural transformations: e.g. Reciplazas in Buenos Aires:

“The Reciplazas (recycled playgrounds) (was born out of) the pain of leaving in vulnerable neighbourhoods where children do not know what a playground is, only abandoned spaces where out children used to play, most of them were old open dumps... a dirty place full of dangers (...)... We see the Reciplazas with a lot of potential to grow by the municipality that has the responsibility to make these playgrounds in public spaces. But why not for Ramos Mejia (a rich neighbourhood) and only for KM 35 (the suburbs where they live?)



Relations

- Institutionalization of hybrid waste management models in informal settlements
- Insertion & mobilization strategies to engage with mainstream institutions:

- ✓ Historical pathways
- ✓ Global discourses, narratives and policies
- ✓ Intermediaries or mediators: networks transporting or shaping?





Thank you, asante sana,
errokamano, obrigada, gracias!