



Recycling Networks  
& Waste Governance

# Waste Pickers and social innovations in Canada

Experiences from Vancouver and Montreal

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# 1. Introduction: Waste issues in Canada



Illustration: Guy Parsons/Canadian Geographic

# Waste generation and waste diversion

- 2 kg waste generated per person/day
- 11% increase in solid waste collected between 2002 – 2014
- 77% of waste is landfilled

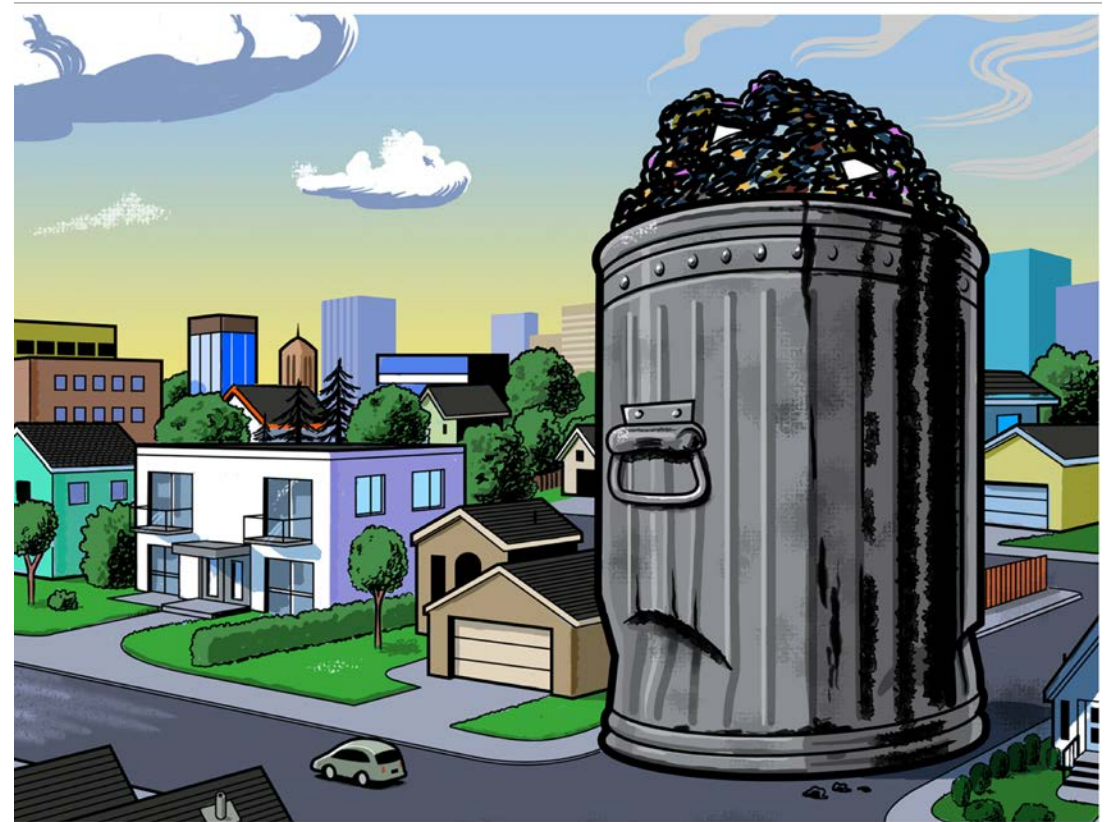


Illustration: Guy Parsons/Canadian Geographic



# Waste diversion: a solution?

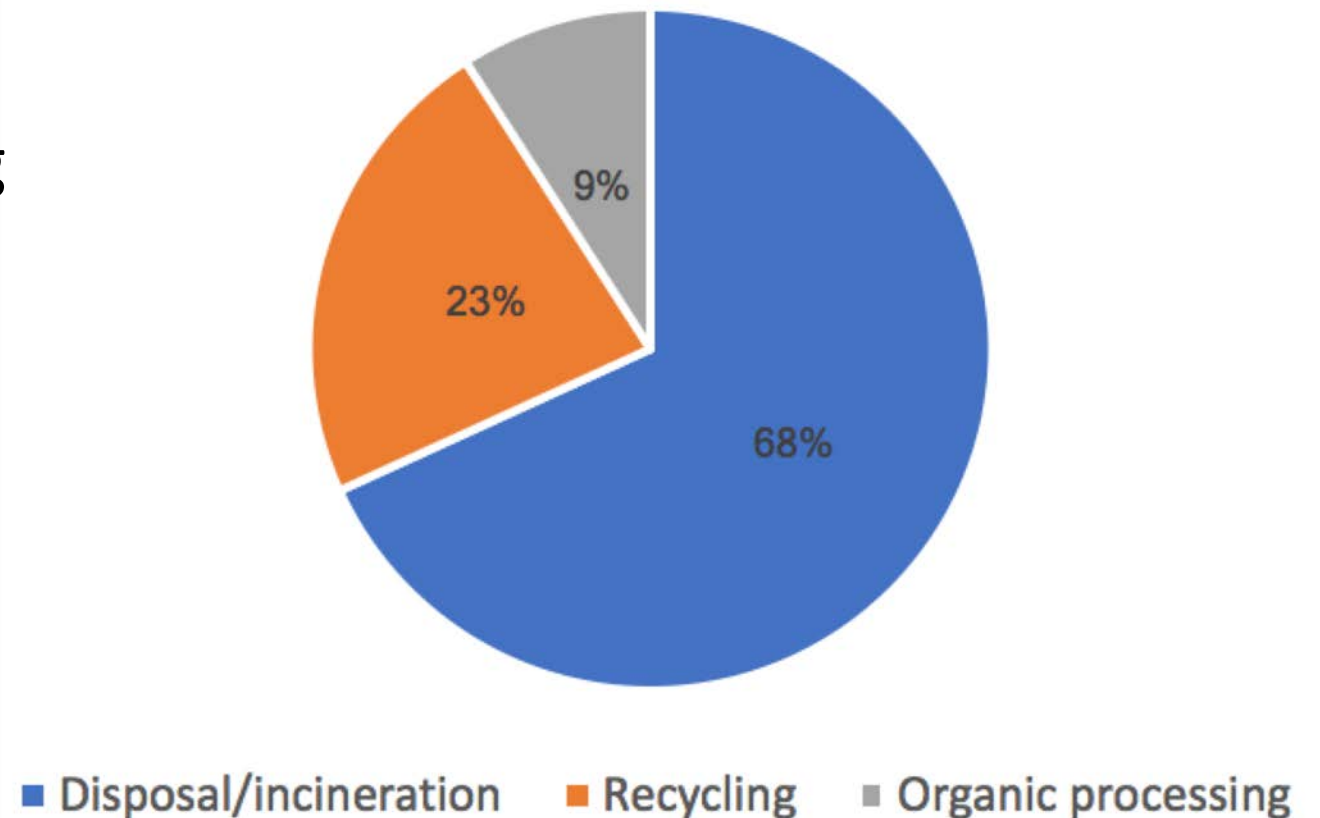


Illustration: Guy Parsons/Canadian Geographic

## 2. Waste governance

- Large differences in responsibilities and legal waste management framework
- Different authorities operating recycling programs
  - Public
  - Public/private
  - Private

Government spending in waste management





# Grassroots and waste governance

- Introduction
  - Binning = informal resource recovery
- Social grassroots innovations
  - Montreal
  - Vancouver



### 3. Case study: Montreal (*Les Valoristes*)

- Cooperative formed in 2012
- 2000 binners in M.
- Objective
  - Create awareness about the social, environmental, and economic impacts of binners
  - Give them a voice and power to address the problems and complaints they face in their everyday work.





# Scope of the project (*Les Valoristes*)

- services, awareness, education
- social recognition – trust
- better quality material for higher value-added recycling
- waste reduction, effective recycling
- avoiding begging / illegal activities
- indirectly reducing the costs of municipal waste collection.





# Social grassroots innovation (*Les Valoristes*)

- Benefits

- Training in sorting
- Specific skills training with partnering organizations
- Increase in public awareness
- Resource recovery

- Challenges

- Official refund system in place does not support binners
- Lobby against binning

## 4. Case study Vancouver (*Binner's' Project*)

- Created in 2014
- Approximately 2000 binner's in V.
- Objectives
  - Improve economic opportunities for binner's
  - Reduce the stigma





# Scope of the project (*Binnners' Project*)

- Regular binnners' meetings
- Business partnerships
  - *Back-of-House Waste Sorting*
  - *Binnners' Hook*
- Public awareness
  - *Coffee Cup Revolution*
- Improving transportation
  - *Universal Cart Pilot*



# Social grassroots innovation (*Binner's' Project*)

- Benefits

- Partnership building with residents and business
- Public awareness increased
  - *53,783 cups off Vancouver streets in just 3 hours*

- Increase in female binner's

- Challenges

- Lack of public policy supporting the diversion of different beverage containers
- Stigma



## 5. Concluding remarks

- Waste is becoming an issue
- Opportunity for social inclusion
- Grassroots initiatives
- Major hurdles
  - Public policy in governance
  - Stigma
  - Public awareness