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The Interaction between Popular Economy, Social Movements and Public Policies

A Case Study of the Waste Pickers' Movement

Angelique J.W.M. van Zeeland

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Acronyms

ARB	Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (<i>Waste Picker's Association of Bogotá, Colombia</i>)
BRL	Brazilian real
CIISC	Comitê Interministerial de Inclusão Social e Econômica dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis (<i>Interministerial Committee of Social And Economic Inclusion of Waste Pickers</i>)
COOTRACAR	Cooperativa dos Trabalhadores, Carroceiros e Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis (<i>Waste Pickers' Cooperative in Gravataí, Brazil</i>)
GDP	Gross domestic product
IBGE	Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (<i>Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics</i>)
KKPKP	Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (<i>Union Of Waste Pickers in Pune, India</i>)
MNCR	Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis (<i>Brazil's National Waste Pickers' Movement</i>)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PMIRS	Plan Maestro de Manejo Integral de Resíduos Sólidos (<i>Master Plan of Integrated Waste Management</i>)
PNAD	Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (<i>National Household Sample Survey</i>)
PNRS	Política Nacional de Resíduos Sólidos (<i>National Solid Waste Policy</i>)
SENAES	Secretaria Nacional de Economia Solidária (<i>National Secretary of Solidarity Economy</i>)
SIES	Sistema de Informações em Economia Solidária (<i>System of Information on Solidarity Economy</i>)
SSE	Social and Solidarity Economy
SWaCH	Solid Waste Collection Handling (<i>Waste Pickers' Cooperative in Pune, India</i>)
USD	United States dollar

Summary

This paper examines the challenges of expansion and sustainability of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), focusing on the interaction between popular economy and SSE, and stressing the importance of collective action and public policies to enable the transition from the informal economy toward SSE. The main focus is on the waste pickers' movement. Experiences from Latin America, Asia and Africa show the possibilities of incorporating a significant contingent of informal waste pickers in solidarity economy organizations. However the scaling up of SSE raises challenges for sustainability. The cases also show the need for political conditions to ensure an enabling environment as well as the need to strengthen SSE through effective capacity building to meet the demands that arise as a result of the newly shaped public policies.

Angelique van Zeeland is programme officer of Economic Justice at the Lutheran Foundation of Diakonia in Brazil, member of the National Council of Solidarity Economy and of the Advisory Group on Development Policy and Practice of ACT Alliance. She has a PhD in progress in Development Economics/UFRGS, researching evaluation and sustainability of solidarity economy.

Introduction: Challenges for Sustainability of SSE

The increasing urbanization in developing countries in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in a growing informal sector. In the 1980s, many popular economic organizations arose, especially in the big Latin American cities. With high levels of unemployment in the 1990s, the informal economy grew and Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) also gained greater significance. Although in the 2000s, some countries, such as Brazil, showed a decrease in the level of unemployment, SSE is starting to establish itself as a relevant social and economic sector. It is a response to poverty and inequality, and has the potential to contribute to an alternative, sustainable and transformational development model. However the expansion of SSE is full of contradictions and challenges, which have to be faced.

This paper examines the challenges of expansion and sustainability of SSE, focusing on the interaction between popular economy and SSE, stressing the importance of collective action and public policies to enable the transition from the informal economy toward SSE. While the paper looks more broadly at the role of collective action in informal economy/SSE transition and in fostering an enabling policy environment, the main focus will be on the waste pickers' movement. Experiences from Latin America, Asia and Africa demonstrate the possibilities of incorporating a significant contingent of informal waste pickers in solidarity economy organizations. However the scaling-up of SSE presents challenges for sustainability. A central question is how to guarantee the core characteristics of growing SSE organizations, especially regarding features such as collective ownership, democratic self-management and equitable distribution of surplus between its members.

The first part will address the challenge of formalization, regarding the approach between informal popular economy and SSE. The second part focuses on advocacy, claims making and policy influence of coalitions of community groups, social movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), examining the process of strengthening of national, regional and international movements of waste pickers, stressing the importance of participatory processes. The last part deals with the effective implementation of public policies through innovative institutional arrangements involving solidarity economy organizations in waste management systems. The cases demonstrate the potential of expanding SSE through collective action and effective public policies that support a process of social transformation. However, they also show the need for political conditions to ensure an enabling environment for SSE as well as the need to strengthen SSE through effective capacity building to meet the demands that arise as a result of the newly shaped public policies.

Approaching Informal Popular Economy and Solidarity Economy

Since the early 1970s, the concept of informal economy appears in the international development debates, encompassing experiences of the large share of economic units and workers that develop economic activities outside the formal regulatory environment. The informal economy is a major provider of employment and of goods and services for lower-income groups. According to Martha Chen (2012) informal employment comprises one-half to three-quarters of non-agricultural employment in developing countries. One of the main challenges is formalization, taking into account different meanings of the actors: for

policymakers, the main interest is the licence and taxes; the self-employed expect to receive the benefits, such as legal ownership and incentives; while for the informal workers, it means social protection.

Milton Santos (2004) refers to the upper and the lower circuit, defined through the set of activities, the sector of the population that participates, the technology used and the form of organization. The upper circuit uses capital-intensive technology; profit is the motor of commercial activity, and it is mainly the rich and middle classes who participate. The lower circuit uses labour intensive technology, which is often created or adapted to the local context. The economic rationality is based on survival, addressing the current needs of the people living in poverty in terms of consumption and need for employment; therefore absorbing surplus labour. The two circuits are related to each other in an unequal relationship, wherein the lower circuit depends upon the upper one.

The concept of popular economy has similarities with the concept of the lower circuit; both include a wide range of economic activities, developed individually or at a family level by the lower-income classes, with a specific economic rationality aiming to provide subsistence and reproduction of life of the members and their families (Kraychete and Santana 2012). Most of the economic units and self-employed who make up the popular economy operate in the informal economy.

In the 1990s, literature on SSE emphasizes the response to overcome poverty and inequality. Luis Razeto (1997) stresses the central role of labour. Paul Singer (2000) highlights solidarity as the most important aspect of the economic praxis. According to José Luis Coraggio, social economy must be seen as a “transitory phase of economic practices of transformational actions” to create a socioeconomic system organized by the principle of “expanded reproduction of life” (2007:37). The community-oriented aspect is highlighted by Ash Amin (2009), focusing on the mobilization of local resources and capabilities to meet local and social needs as well as human development. However, some critics point out that the lack of conceptual clarity regarding SSE and the inference made that everyone joins SSE because they ascribe by the principles can mask the fact that people might join it due to a lack of alternatives.

Contributions from the human development and capability approach stress the importance that “poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of incomes” (Sen 2000:87) and propose a shift of focus from the concentration on the means of subsistence toward the “actual opportunities of living”, opportunities for people to pursue their objectives, meaning those things that they value (Sen 2011:233), considering development fundamentally as a process of empowerment. From this perspective, SSE could be a pathway toward integrated development, promoting not only local employment and economic development, but also social and environmental protection, cultural diversity and empowerment.

The different concepts have several aspects which converge; both the popular economy and the solidarity economy contain a huge number of informal enterprises. Data from the Sistema de Informações em Economia Solidária (SIES), the system of information on solidarity economy, show that at least one-third of all Brazilian solidarity economy

enterprises are informal¹ (SENAES 2007). In the urban areas, informality reaches two-thirds of the organizations (SENAES 2010). However solidarity economy corresponds only to 1 per cent of the popular economy.² This presents a huge challenge for the expansion of SSE. Under what conditions can a significant change in quality be established in informal popular economy organizations so as to converge to SSE? Most informal and popular economy initiatives are based on individual entrepreneurs motivated by increasing their income. One of the main distinctions of SSE is the transformative aspect of collective organizations based on values such as democratic and participatory decision making, cooperation, solidarity and influence on public policies. Another issue is whether and how to formalize the informal popular economy, taking into account the trade-offs for the organizations as well as the benefits for both the state and the organizations. The challenge of formalization involves a compromise, whereby the state gets a degree of control through registration, regulation and taxes. The informal economy agents, on the one hand, experience a rise in costs, due to regulation and taxes, putting pressure on their sustainability; on the other hand, they gain access to new markets, such as institutional markets, and get a degree of social services, social protection and access to support programmes.

Research developed in Chile among ten associations of informal micro-entrepreneurs in poor districts of Santiago shows the potential for popular economy initiatives to establish different forms of cooperation approaching SSE. Most of the associations are based on a geographical basis or sector of activity. On average they have 75 members; most of them constitute family enterprises acting on household level. According to Anemaria Marín, director of Asociación de Micoempresarios de Puente Alto, the association represents the economic and human needs of the members (Zeeland 1995). The associations promote economic, social and political cooperation. The economic cooperation is mainly through joint commercialization, collective access to credit and sometimes joint purchase of inputs. The social cooperation aims to establish some form of social protection for members, through solidarity funds that help associates in times of hardship, for example, illness or accident; or agreements for medical attendance with medical corporations or the local municipality. The political cooperation with municipalities involves formalization, with which comes legalization and tax arrangements, resulting in a higher burden for the small enterprises. In return they expect access to basic rights such as education, health and social protection, as well as access to fairs and institutional markets. Most associations were founded with the support of an NGO, and get training, organizational consultancy and access to microcredit. The networks established by the associations and their interaction with the community and NGOs, results in political power, which strengthens the negotiations with governmental actors to claim their economic and social rights and to influence public policies (Zeeland 2000). The experience shows the possibility of popular economy initiatives to develop relations based on cooperation and solidarity and thus approach SSE. One of the constraints is that most of the associations are supported by NGOs; therefore the scope is limited to their action radius. This leads to the question of how to scale up this experience.

¹ Data gathered in the period of 2005–2007 registered in the system of information on solidarity economy (SIES) of the National Secretariat of Solidarity Economy (SENAES) of the Brazilian Ministry of Labour. See www.sies.mte.gov.br.

² The scale of the popular economy is based on data available on the informal economy, and the scale of the solidarity economy is based on data from SIES.

Examples from Brazil show that with public support it might be possible to approach a significant part of the popular economy from the perspective of SSE. The first example is a public programme for social and productive inclusion for decent work³ and capacity building for the popular economy, Vida Melhor (“better life”) in Bahia, which started in 2011. According to Gabriel Kraychete and André Santana (2012), 60 per cent of the economically active population of the Metropolitan Region of Salvador can be considered as informal popular economy,⁴ only 1 per cent of the popular economy belongs to the SSE.⁵ This huge contingent expresses a matrix of inequality and poverty. The programme aims to reach 120,000 families in urban areas and 280,000 families in rural areas. The main activities focus on technical assistance, identifying the need for microcredit and stimulating collective action. Out of the information the entrepreneur can decide whether or not to formalize and have access to social protection. This is a bargain between the two parties: the formalization of the enterprises benefits the state, mainly through higher tax revenues, and in return the entrepreneurs get access to social services, capacity building and basic rights. Kraychete and Santana conclude that it is “insufficient to think of the sustainability of each popular economy enterprise in an isolated way”, sustainability of solidarity economy initiatives “supposes a process of development which promotes, together with this economy, other fundamental rights” (2012:61). The public programme has scope far beyond that of NGOs, and the possibility to promote a change in quality in a significant number of popular initiatives, through effective capacity building to bring them into SSE. The second example, a governmental programme for informal waste pickers’ inclusion in solid waste management, will be discussed afterwards.

The Interaction between Social Movements and Public Policies: A Case Study of the Waste Pickers’ Movement

The sustainability of SSE is not merely a technical or economic question, but is essentially a political one, depending on public policies that support a process of social transformation. To achieve significant shifts in public policies, collective action is required, through coalitions between community groups, social movements and NGOs. Here, the process of strengthening national, regional and international social movements of waste pickers and their influence on public policies will be analysed.

History of the waste pickers’ movement

To contextualize the history of the waste pickers’ movement, this paper will present some data regarding the recycling sector and waste pickers’ organizations in Brazil. Recycling generates a value of almost USD 2 billion and avoids 10 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions. Recycling of all the materials would be worth 0.3 per cent of GDP (UNEP 2011). Approximately 500 thousand people are employed in waste management, mostly as individual waste pickers in informal jobs under poor working conditions and with very low and unstable incomes (IPEA 2013). Approximately 50 thousand waste pickers are organized in associations and cooperatives; there are at least 1,100 waste pickers’

³ The International Labour Organization defines decent work as “work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.” See www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang-en/index.htm (accessed 8 August 2014)

⁴ Data based on the national household sample survey, Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD), executed by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) in 2009, compiled and prepared by Gabriel Kraychete and André Santana (2012).

⁵ Data based on SIES in 2005.

organizations in Brazil, of which about 60 per cent are operating at the lowest levels of efficiency; the average income of the waste pickers is less than a minimum wage, reaching between BRL 420.00 and BRL 520.00,⁶ and most have not finished primary education (IPEA 2012). The data show that only 10 per cent of the waste pickers participate in SSE organizations. Although this represents a small part, it is a higher proportion in relation to other urban sectors. However, 90 per cent of the waste pickers belong to the informal economy and are tied to middlemen; this puts a tremendous challenge on social movements and public policies to include them in solidarity economy organizations.

The first organizations of waste pickers were created during the 1980s and 1990s, with the support of NGOs, mainly in big capitals such as São Paulo, Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre. The first national meeting was promoted in 1999. Two years later, in 2001, Brazil's national waste pickers' movement (Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis/MNCR) was founded. More than 1,600 waste pickers participated in the national congress, which resulted in the Carta de Brasília (Letter of Brasília),⁷ presenting a proposal for recognition and regulation of the profession. In 2002, the profession *catador de material reciclável* (collector of recyclable material) was officially recognized by the federal government. This was one of the first results of the waste pickers' collective action and demonstrated the possibility for effective influence on public policies.

The First Latin American Congress of Waste Pickers took place in Caxias do Sul, Brazil, in 2003, with 800 waste pickers from Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. The Carta de Caxias (Letter of Caxias)⁸ proposes the exchange between Latin American waste pickers' organizations, strengthens claims toward governments to guarantee access to social programmes and waste management in partnership with waste pickers' organizations. The Second Latin American Congress of Waste Pickers took place in São Leopoldo, Brazil, in 2005, preceding the Fifth World Social Forum, with 1,050 participants from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay. The declaration of São Leopoldo⁹ includes public policies of housing for the waste pickers and a law regarding destination of recyclables of public institutions for waste pickers' organizations. The decree signed in Brazil attends this demand.¹⁰ A law that exempts waste pickers' organizations from the tendering process to carry out the selective collection was approved in 2007.¹¹

The First World Conference and Third Latin American Conference of Waste Pickers were held in Bogota, Colombia, in 2008, with 700 participants from 34 countries from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The result was a Global Alliance of Waste Pickers. The global declaration states the commitment to work for social and economic inclusion of waste pickers, strengthen their organizations to move forward in the value chain and reject incineration (WIEGO 2008). After the conference, several national waste pickers' movements have been founded, for instance in Kenya and South Africa.

⁶ USD 187.00 and USD 231.00 on an exchange rate of USD 1.00 = BRL 2.25, on 17 April 2014.

⁷ Available in Portuguese on the MNCR website: www.mncr.org.br/box_1/principios-e-objetivos/carta-de-brasilia.

⁸ Available at: www.mncr.org.br/box_1/principios-e-objetivos/carta-de-caxias-do-sul.

⁹ Available at: www.mncr.org.br/box_1/principios-e-objetivos/ii-congresso-latino-americano-de-catadores-as.

¹⁰ Decree no. 5940/2006 (Presidência da República do Brasil 2006).

¹¹ Law no. 11.445/2007 (Presidência da República do Brasil 2007).

Experiences in different countries and continents show the importance of participatory processes with social movements, civil society organizations and governments, to contribute to public policies which strengthen and expand SSE.

In the last decade, there have been “innovative institutional changes”, such as laws recognizing the originality of the solidarity economy initiatives (Laville 2009:240). Regarding the waste pickers, this has resulted in new laws and decrees, as well as innovative institutional arrangements involving waste pickers’ organizations in waste management systems.

Existing policies

Three key elements are considered in integrated sustainable waste management systems: waste collection to improve public health; waste disposal to diminish the adverse environmental impacts; and waste prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery of resources (UN-HABITAT 2010:87). Additionally there are three key governance features: inclusivity; financial sustainability; and sound institutions and proactive policies. Regarding inclusivity, it is important to affirm that solid waste management is a public service, and the informal sector is considered as a key stakeholder. According to estimates, urban waste systems in most low- and middle-income countries, provide a livelihood for about 0.5 per cent of the urban population (UN-HABITAT 2010).¹² For the waste pickers’ movement, social and economic inclusion of waste pickers is the main advocacy topic. The challenge to expand SSE and include informal waste pickers depends on the interaction between collective action and public policies, at federal, state and municipal levels.

In 1998, the National Waste and Citizenship Forum was created in Brazil with support from UNICEF. State and municipal forums were also created. The forums are composed of civil society organizations, mainly NGOs and waste pickers’ organizations, governmental entities and private enterprises. The aim is to eradicate child labour at open dumps, eradicate open dumps and promote integral solid waste management systems with inclusion of waste pickers (Dias 2007). In 2003, the Interministerial Committee of Social and Economic Inclusion of Waste Pickers (Comitê Interministerial de Inclusão Social e Econômica dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis/CIISC) was created, with the aim of developing public policies to improve the socioeconomic conditions of waste pickers and enhance their autonomy. The MNCR is often invited to participate in this dialogue forum. The decree of 2006 and the law of 2007 are the main outcomes. Two other important outcomes are the Pro-Collector Programme, aiming at social and economic inclusion of waste pickers¹³ and the National Solid Waste Policy.¹⁴ The PNRS was established after a participatory process involving the government, recycling companies, civil society organizations, universities and the MNCR. The associations and cooperatives of waste pickers are referred to as the priority stakeholders in the integrated waste management system, especially regarding selective collection. In recent years, waste pickers’ cooperatives have established contracts with municipalities to perform part of the solid waste management. The Pro-Collector programme supports training, capacity building, technical assistance and acquisition of equipment. From 2010 until 2012, the

¹² These estimates are based on data gathered across 10 reference cities.

¹³ Decree no. 7405/2010 (Presidência da República do Brasil 2010b).

¹⁴ Política Nacional de Resíduos Sólidos (PNRS), Law no. 12305/2010 (Presidência da República do Brasil 2010a).

national project Cataforte¹⁵—implemented by NGOs and supported by the National Secretary of Solidarity Economy (Secretaria Nacional de Economia Solidária/SENAES) and aimed at capacity building of the waste pickers' organizations and networks—was attended by more than 10,600 waste pickers in 19 states of Brazil. One of the main results was the training of informal waste pickers and their participation in SSE organizations. In 2009, the cooperative, Cooperativa dos Trabalhadores, Carroceiros e Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis (COOTRACAR),¹⁶ in Gravataí, Rio Grande do Sul, had 40 members. During the project, 200 waste pickers were trained; in 2012, 60 informal waste pickers were integrated into the cooperative, and 100 are in process of integration (Zeeland 2013). Effective integration depends on the implementation of the PNRS by the municipality, to contract the services of COOTRACAR for the collective selection.

In Colombia, in 1990, the Waste Picker's Association (Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá/ARB) was formed, between four cooperatives, with the support of public institutions and NGOs. The main task was to organize informal waste pickers in cooperatives and to encourage their participation in the ARB (Samson 2009). The dialogue established between ARB and the municipal government of Bogota resulted in the Master Plan of Integrated Waste Management (Plan Maestro de Manejo Integral de Resíduos Sólidos/PMIRS) in 2004. The PMIRS establishes new modalities in service delivery with the inclusion of informal waste pickers in urban solid waste management (Turcotte and Gómez 2012). The persistent struggle of ARB finally resulted in the payment of the waste pickers as public service providers in 2013. The challenges will be discussed below.

In India, in the city of Pune, the informal self-employed waste pickers organized themselves into the union Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP) in 1993. The waste pickers' cooperative Solid Waste Collection Handling (SWaCH) was founded in 2007. The cooperative provides services to the municipality regarding solid waste management. Interventions and negotiation by KKPKP resulted in recognition by the municipality. A legal framework enabled the partnership. In 2000, the municipal solid waste rules were established, regarding the organization of door-to-door collection of waste and waste segregation. In 2002, the Maharashtra Government Resolution of the Department of Water Supply and Sanitation addressed the door-to-door collection of waste to cooperatives and organizations of waste pickers. In 2006, the Maharashtra Government Resolution of the Department of Urban Development established a target of 2007 for the implementation of 100 per cent door-to-door collection with preference for cooperatives of waste pickers, especially women, and defined a user fee for door-to-door collection (Chikarmane 2012).

The experiences of the organizations and national waste pickers' movement in Brazil, Colombia and India, part of the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers, show the importance of coalitions between community groups, social movements and NGOs to influence public policies and to strengthen SSE. The participatory processes have resulted in innovative institutional arrangements with the inclusion of informal waste pickers. However with new institutional arrangements come new challenges.

¹⁵ Fortalecimento do Associativismo e Cooperativismo dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis: formação para a autogestão, assistência técnica e mobilização - Strengthening of Associations and Cooperatives of Collectors of Recyclable Materials: self-management training, technical assistance and mobilization.

¹⁶ .

Challenges for Sustainability of SSE: Collective Action and Public Policies

Participation is a prominent feature of SSE, expressed in the social, economic and productive patterns and ways of organizing enterprise activities. But it is also fundamental to the process of decision making regarding development and public policies, based on the idea of inclusion of those most affected by the interventions and respective policies. Although policies and participatory mechanisms are sometimes in place, optimal implementation of those policies and effective participation depend on certain factors. Below some of these factors will be discussed, namely: gender, the role of trust and recognition of rights and the need for multiscale interactions. The case studies will point toward these and other challenges for sustainability of SSE.

The participatory processes do not necessarily involve and benefit all groups of a community. According to Bina Agarwal, important sections can be excluded within seemingly participatory institutions, for example women, resulting in “participatory exclusions” (Agarwal 2001:1623). This stresses the importance of gendered analysis, which evaluates participation not only in terms of citizenship and empowerment, but also for its potential effects on equity and efficiency, given pre-existing socioeconomic inequalities. The waste pickers’ organizations include a high percentage of women. Research in southern Brazil demonstrates that circa 80 per cent of the members are women (UFRGS 2010). Data from 26 waste pickers’ organizations, totalling 1,225 members, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, affirm women’s participation in the management; nearly 75 per cent of the governing committees are made up by women (Zeeland 2013). However, when it comes down to participation in forums and councils, especially at the national level, there is a predominance of men. This shows the importance for policy and practice to overcome the divisions in power relations related to gender.

From the 1980s onwards, several studies focus on how participatory processes arise and what makes them work, especially related to collective action in the context of natural resource management. Elinor Ostrom emphasizes the diversity of institutional arrangements for governing common-pool resources and public goods. Among the structural factors affecting the likelihood of increased cooperation, she highlights the central role of trust in coping with social dilemmas and the importance of “fitting institutional rules to a specific social-ecological setting” (Ostrom 2010:642). Another important aspect regarding the capability of community groups to develop an effective regime of governing common-pool resources is “recognition of the right to organize by a national or local government” (Ostrom 2005:268). The challenge to expand SSE and include informal agents in solidarity economy initiatives depends on the interaction between collective action and public policies at federal, state and municipal levels. The importance of recognition of the right to organize, context-specific legal frameworks, and trust will be illustrated by the examples of institutional arrangements involving waste pickers’ organizations who share solid waste management with local governments.

In 2009, the Ikageng Ditamating recycling and waste management group was founded in Metsimaholo in South Africa, with 49 members. This was a merging from two waste pickers' groups at the Sasolburg dump, Ikageng composed of women and older men, and Ditamating composed of young men. The union followed after a long process of building solidarity and mutual trust. The cooperative is divided into two groups, regarding the activities of collecting and of sorting materials. After the union, the income of the members has increased. However, the main challenge continues to be recognition and official participation in the municipal waste management system through a formal contract to recycle materials at the dump (Samson 2009). The case reinforces the importance of recognition and commitment of the municipal government for the sustainability of SSE.

In Pune, India, the municipal government recognized the importance of the waste pickers' organization and formalized a memorandum of understanding with the cooperative SWaCH regarding door-to-door collection of waste in 2008. SWaCH has 100 members, of which women constitute 78 per cent. The main activities are daily door-to-door waste collection from households, offices and shops, as well as sorting the materials and commercializing them. The members have more stable incomes than other waste pickers in India. Regularly, the three stakeholders, namely, the cooperative, the municipality and neighbourhood groups, meet to evaluate the service delivery and to reaffirm common goals. The service of waste collection is remunerated by a municipal grant as well as by a service user fee. The resistance against this fee of some users and the incineration of waste, which diminishes the recovery of recyclable materials and excludes the waste pickers, are the main threats for the system (Chikarmane 2012).

The Master Plan of Integrated Waste Management of Bogota, Colombia, was planned in 2004 and the first phase was implemented between 2006 and 2008, including the waste pickers' cooperatives. The cooperatives commercialize the recyclables and try to advance in the production chain. However, "they compete at a disadvantage against other private sector actors" (Turcotte and Gómez 2012:30). In 2011, a public bidding system threatened the waste pickers' role in recycling. The ARB started to fight for their right to work, have access to waste and be remunerated for the service they provide and went to the Constitutional Court. They defeated the privatization of waste and ensured the inclusion of waste pickers in the waste management system. In 2013, 2,300 waste pickers were finally paid as public service providers, for their services in the areas of collection, transport and recycling incentives. The remaining challenge is to include all of the 14,000 informal waste pickers (Acosta and Ortiz 2013). The case study shows the importance of training and assistance for the cooperatives to acquire technical skills, as well as access to capital. It also reinforces that recognition and a context specific legal framework are fundamental to include informal waste pickers into urban solid waste management. This should be accompanied by public investment in training and acquisition of equipment and infrastructure by the cooperatives.

In Brazil, waste pickers' inclusion in waste management systems has advanced since the 1990s. Belo Horizonte was one of the first cities to adopt an integrated waste management system guaranteeing social and economic inclusion of waste pickers in 1993. The first waste pickers' association in Belo Horizonte, Associação dos Catadores de Papel Papelão e Material Reciclável, was constituted in 1990. Waste pickers' organizations are supported by the municipal government through the Department of Public Cleansing,

the Secretariat of Social Assistance and the participatory budget system. Although there are many challenges, this integrated approach of support guarantees the economic and social inclusion of waste pickers, as well as the sustainability of the SSE organizations. The case of COOTRACAR in Gravataí demonstrates the importance of public recognition as well as public support for capacity building and infrastructure. In 2009, the cooperative signed a contract with the municipality for selective collection. This contract opened the possibility of including a large share of informal waste pickers. Over 200 waste pickers were trained; during 2012 the cooperative had 100 members. However, a political change in the municipality led to instability regarding payment for the services and the continuity of the contract; this affected the membership of the cooperative, downsizing their number. To overcome dependency on the municipality, cooperation was established with schools, shops and community organizations. Besides the contract, the cooperative depends upon the commercialization of recyclables. However, one of the main challenges is entry into the capitalist market, where the cooperatives face competition from large capitalist companies, which are much better equipped. According to Gonçalves-Dias (2009), the waste pickers' cooperatives have limited conditions to establish the rules of the game and need to adjust themselves to the interests and technical demands of the large companies who buy the materials. The lack of capital to invest in equipment and reforms is one of the main bottlenecks. According to Alexandre Camboim, coordinator of COOTRACAR, another challenge is to combine service delivery at high quality standards with democratic management, cultivating relationships based on cooperation, trust and solidarity. The case demonstrates the vulnerability of the integrated solid waste management systems and reinforces the importance of collective action and of public policies together with transformation at the national, state and municipal level to guarantee the sustainability of SSE organizations.

Conclusion

The SSE experiences in integrated solid waste management demonstrates the importance of collective action and coalitions between community groups, social movements and NGOs. The sustainability of SSE depends on effective public policies and on a network of advocacy and intervention. The growing organization of the waste pickers' movements and their alliance with NGOs has made major progress through public policies that strengthen SSE. Examples from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, India and South Africa show that, with the aid and backing of NGOs and with public support, it might be possible to approach and promote a change in a significant part of the informal popular economy and to bring them into SSE. Multiscalar interactions are important for effective implementation of public policies, mobilization and coalition of the social movements and NGOs need to be sustained at federal, state and municipal level.

Sustainability of SSE organizations is not merely a technical or economic question, but is essentially a political one, depending on public policies which enhance autonomy, promote rights and are compromised with a process of social transformation. Significant shifts in public policies at all levels require collective action, to achieve the strengthening of SSE. The lack of effective implementation of public policies and programmes undermines the feasibility and sustainability of SSE organizations. Besides public policies, support through organizations, projects and social networking are other elements essential for sustainability. To expand SSE, public policies and supporting organizations

are needed to establish a significant change in quality in the organizations of the informal and popular economy, so as to converge to SSE.

The last decade has seen promising experiences of shared management of solid waste between municipal governments and waste pickers' cooperatives. The incipient experiences show the potential to expand SSE in important economic sectors in society, such as solid waste management. At the same time, with growing responsibility comes increasing challenges as, for example, the limited conditions of the waste pickers' organizations to establish the rules of the games, and having to adjust themselves to the interests of private companies. Another challenge is to combine economic feasibility with democratic management. This highlights the importance of public programmes directed toward strengthening SSE through effective capacity building to meet the demands that arise as a result of newly shaped public policies.

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