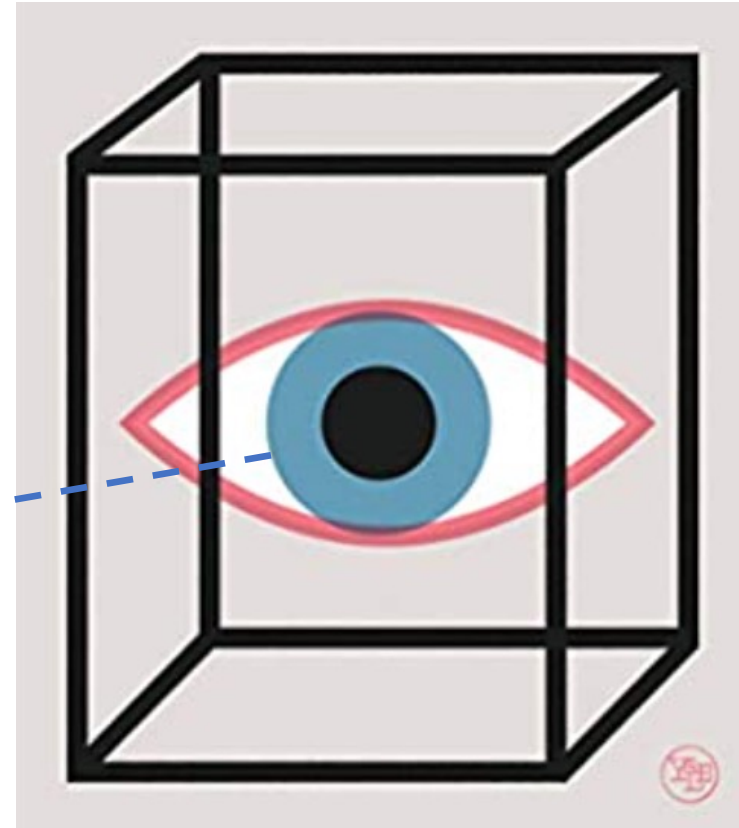
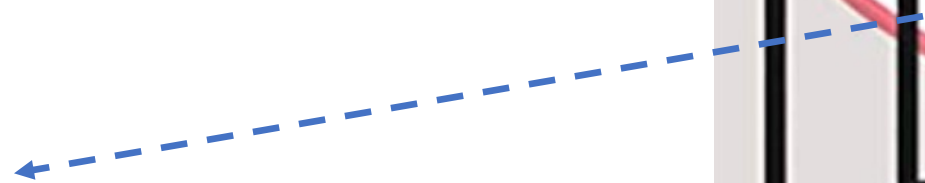


Catadores in the neodevelopmental gaze



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April 21, 2023



PASSAGEM DA FAIXA PRESIDENCIAL PARA LULA

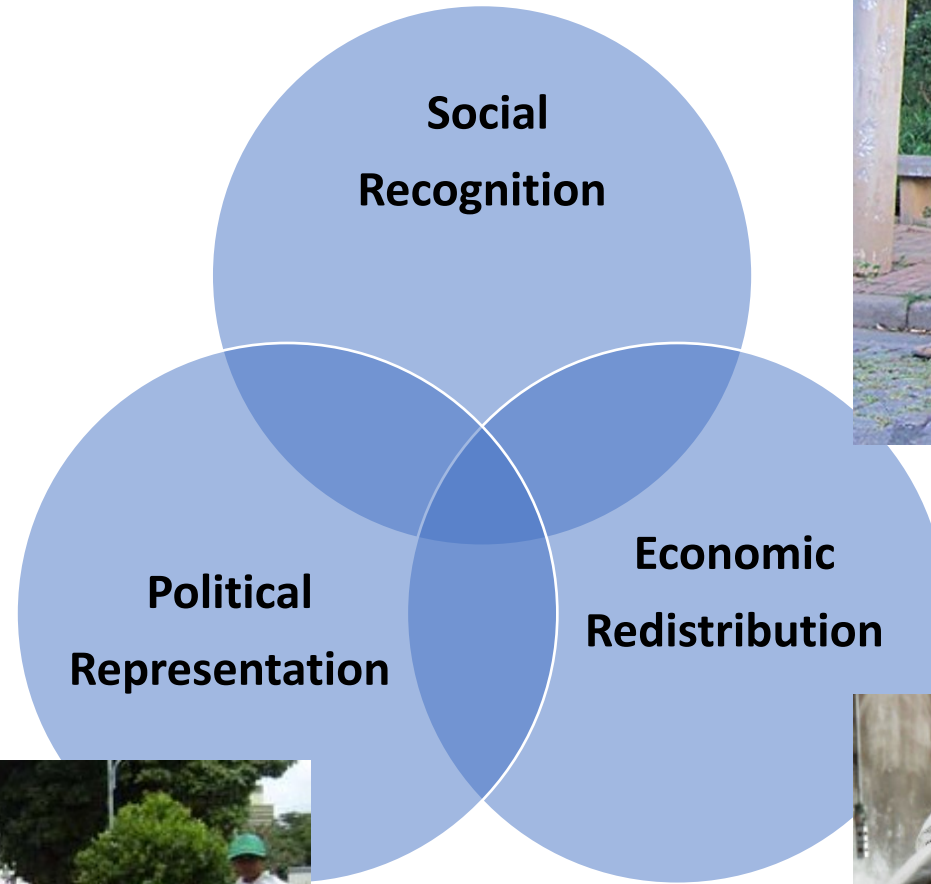


Presentation overview

1. How did the catador movement become symbolically important to Lula and the Workers' Party (PT)?
2. What are risks and potentials of the catador movements' alliance with Lula and the PT?



Catador Organizing Model



Latin American Developmentalism

● **Developmentalism
(1950s-70s)**
-Import Substitution
Industrialization
-Combat poverty and
underdevelopment
through state economic
planning and investment

● **Neo-developmentalism
(2000s)**
✓ -Social inclusion along lines of
class, race, and gender
✓ -Pro-poor redistributive
programs and labor policies
✓ -Institutionalized platforms for
social movement participation
✓ -Business friendly macro-
economic programs

● **Neo-neo-developmentalism
(2018-present)**
✓ -Move from extractive to
regenerative economies



Catador movement and Workers' Party (PT)

- 1990s: catador cooperatives become centerpiece of Workers' Party (PT) agenda for a solidarity economy on municipal level
- 2003-2010: President Lula works closely with catador movement, oversees national legislation requiring all municipalities to contract waste picker cooperatives to provide recycling services.
- 2010-2016: President Dilma Rouseff expands federal programs in support of catador cooperatives



Lula recria Pró-Catador em ato no Palácio do Planalto: "Vocês têm um amigo aqui dentro"

Decreto atualiza programa que beneficia catadores de materiais recicláveis e havia sido extinto pelo governo Bolsonaro

Redação

Brasil de Fato | Brasília (DF) | 13 de Fevereiro de 2023 às 14:27

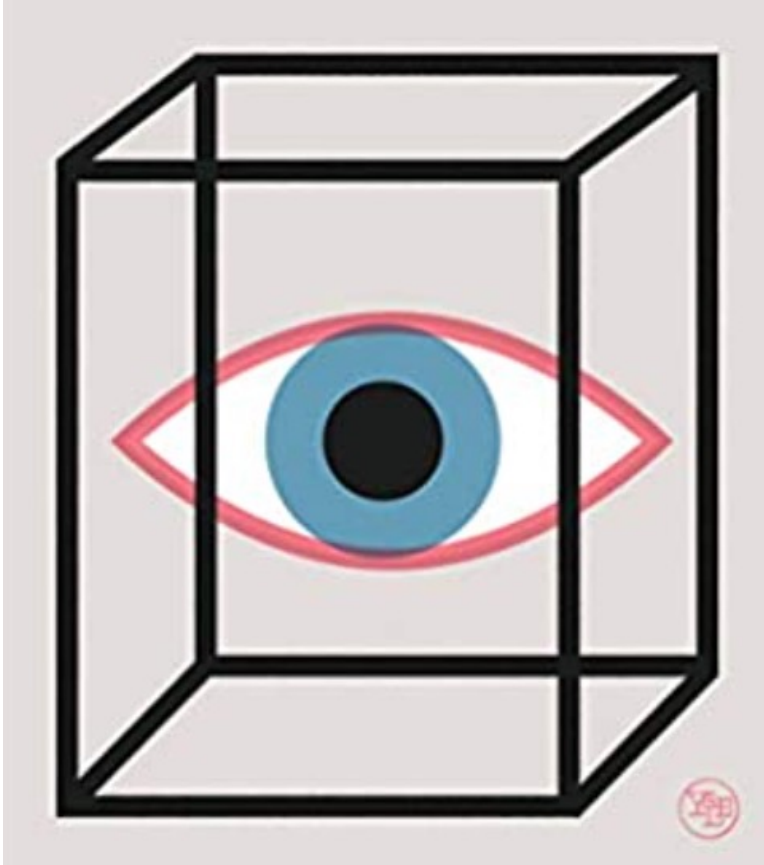


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The Developmental Gaze



What do liberal and leftist developmental traditions have in common?

- Ideologies of modernization, industrialization, proletarianization, and formalization.
- A tendency to dismiss informal and self-organized work as backward and marginal, while upholding waged industrial employment as modern and productive.



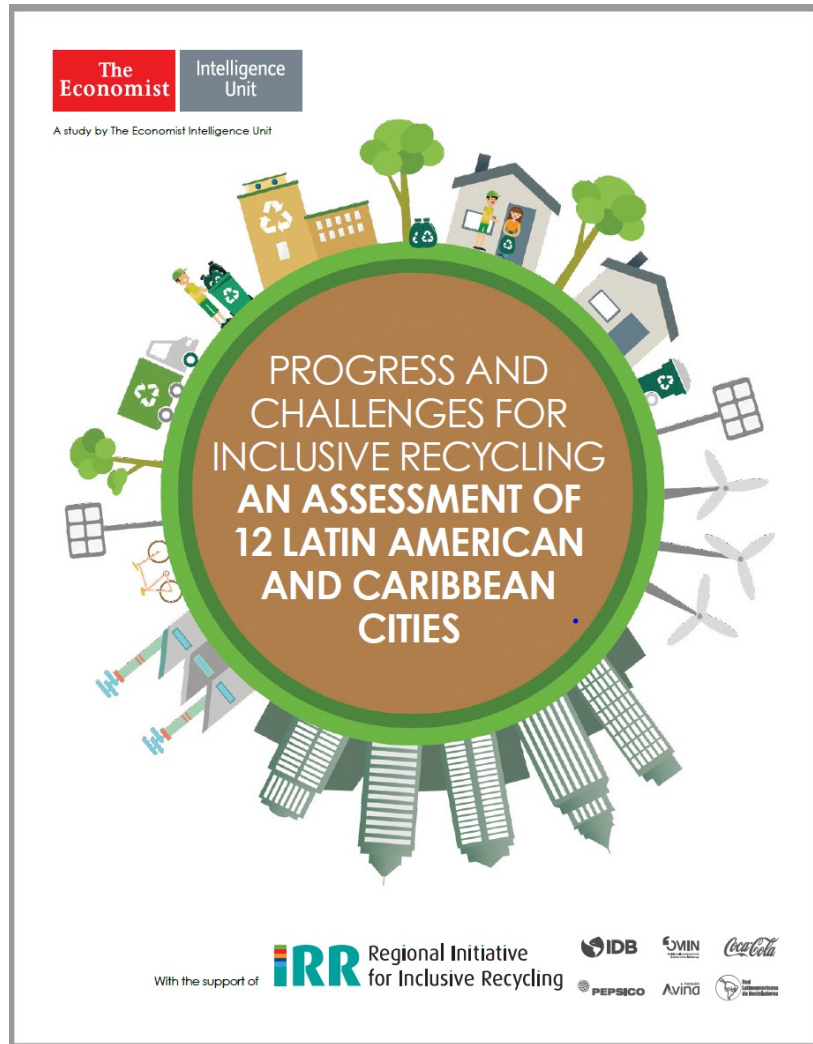
São Paulo: *Inclusive Recycling* (2002-present)

- Treats informal waste picking as a degraded and degrading form of work, and an anarchic and premodern way to organize recycling services.
- Seeks to create a modern recycling system in which to *include* the old catadores.



“Recycling Lives”





Economist Intelligence Unit (EIO) 2017

Study of inclusive recycling regulatory frameworks in 12 Latin American and Caribbean cities awards #1 ranking to São Paulo, where “..the interaction between users, [waste pickers] and privately owned waste management companies have been perfected...” (EIO, 2017, pp. 64)

MY FINDINGS: less than 1% of street catadores have been integrated into waste picker cooperatives.

WHY DO CATADORES REJECT JOBS IN “SORTER COOPERATIVES”?

- 1. *Quantity of jobs*
- 2. *Quality of jobs*



93% no previous experience in sector



7% former street catadores



Why street catadores reject sorter cooperatives?



The dude who says you have to get rid of waste pickers is a damn idiot who doesn't know what it means to push a cart through the street, to experience the freedom of working without having to kiss your boss's butt, without having someone talking down to you all the time... A real catador doesn't accept being ordered, not just because he wants to do things the way he thinks they should be done, but because he really knows how to work, you understand? And his income is a lot more than the person who works in a sorter cooperative—that's for sure!

Alexandre Souza, street waste picker from the *Zona Leste*

Conclusions

1. How did the Brazilian waste picker movement achieve symbolic importance to Lula and the Worker's Party (PT)?

The movement publicly recast *catadores* as excluded workers and unsung environmental heroes—a framing that aligned well with the PT's Neodevelopmentalist projects. This has enabled the movement to win some of the world's most ambitious waste pickers' rights policy.

2. What are risks and potentials of the catadores' alliance with the PT?

In many cases developmentalist ideology has led PT leaders to attempt to transfer waste pickers off of the street into jobs in industrial recycling plants, which clash with the catadores' capacities, needs, and realities.

The most successful catador rights policies do not treat waste picking as a *source* of vulnerability, but rather as a *resource* that people in vulnerable circumstances create to survive and sometimes salvage a measure of dignity. They therefore seek to recognize, defend, and gradually improve catador livelihoods, rather than to erase and replace them.

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Why street waste pickers reject sorter cooperatives?



The way I think about how we should treat waste pickers has changed since I started working with them, 15 or 20 years ago... At that time, we thought that all the waste pickers had to work inside a shed... inside of a little square box. We thought, naturally, inside of the warehouses, they are going to earn more and be in a more secure place. But then we saw that the waste pickers would leave the cooperatives, or they wouldn't even enter.

-Fabio Luiz Cardoso, NGO worker

Bogotá: *Waste Picker Recognition (2012-15)*



‘If we start with inclusion, it’s as if we were starting from zero. But, as it turns out, we’re not at zero: 20,000 waste pickers already collect 1,400 tons of material daily, a quarter of the waste that the city produces, without any help from the state. That’s nothing to sneeze at”

-Nohra Padilla, President of Bogota Association of Waste Pickers

Bogota: *Waste Picker Recognition*

- Treats waste picking as a *resource* that vulnerable people create in order to survive and sometimes salvage a measure of dignity
- Seeks to legally, socially, and economically recognize waste pickers' work and contributions



Bogota: waste picker recognition (2012-2015)



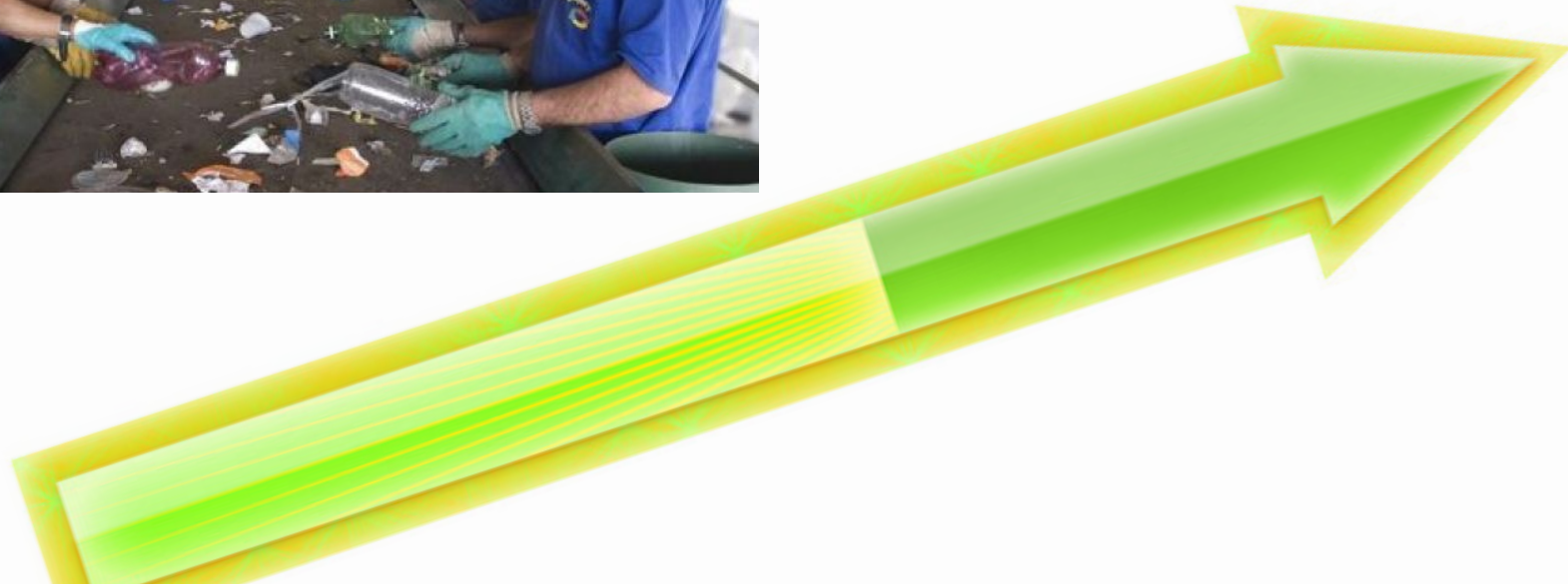
- 18,000 waste pickers identified
- 13,000 waste pickers remunerated
- 18,000 official city uniforms distributed
- 3,000 recycling trucks distributed

Disclaimer

	São Paulo “Inclusive Recycling”	Bogotá “Waste Picker Recognition”
Total number of informal waste pickers	20,000	18,000
Number of waste pickers in official inclusive waste program	1,500	13,500
Percentage of “street waste pickers” in waste picker rights programs	7%	~100%*
Percentage of informal waste pickers integrated into official service	Less than 1%	72%

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Catadores (waste pickers)

- Salvage recyclable materials from dumps, streets, and buildings
- Face exploitation, hazardous conditions, stigma, harassment
- Yet also face barriers to collectively organizing to improve their conditions

