

VENTANA III: A CONFERENCE ON LATIN AMERICA
Glocal Reactions and Responses

**IMAGINING THE POST-PANDEMIC FUTURE:
EXPLORATORY RESEARCH OF SOLIDARITY
ECONOMY ORGANIZATIONS OF WASTE
PICKERS IN BELO HORIZONTE**

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Social and Solidarity Economy, International Cooperation and
Community Engagement

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the topic of your study and its future?

THE SUBJECT: THE CATADOR



THE CONTEXT: COVID-19

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY STATE IN BRAZIL

03 February 2020 - 33 days after the official notification from China to the World Health Organization and 04 days after the organization declared COVID-19 an international emergency.

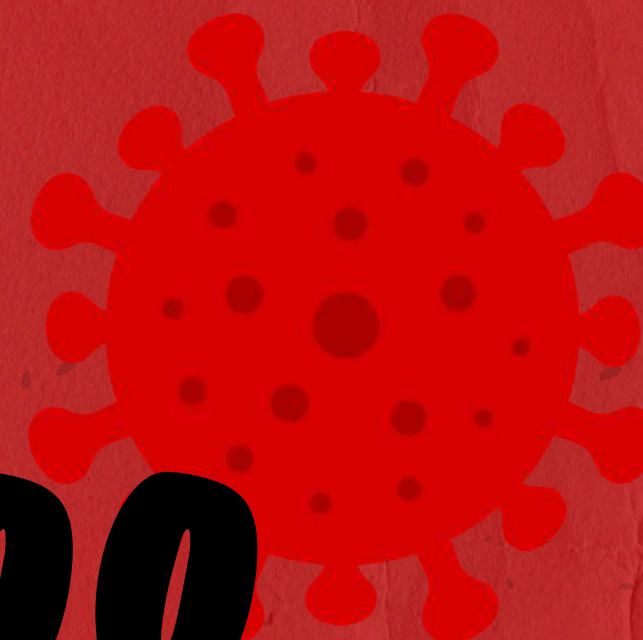
DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY STATE IN BRAZIL

Most affected groups are, beyond age, vulnerable groups. In the Brazilian reality, this includes: black people, women, immigrants and poor people, because of the limited access to sanitary services and proper healthcare.

R\$600.00

OF "EMERGENCY ASSITANCE"

The measure was highly criticized. More than 55 million people (informal workers, autonomous and unemployed people in Brazil) had to rely on this money, which corresponds to less than 60% of the minimum wage.





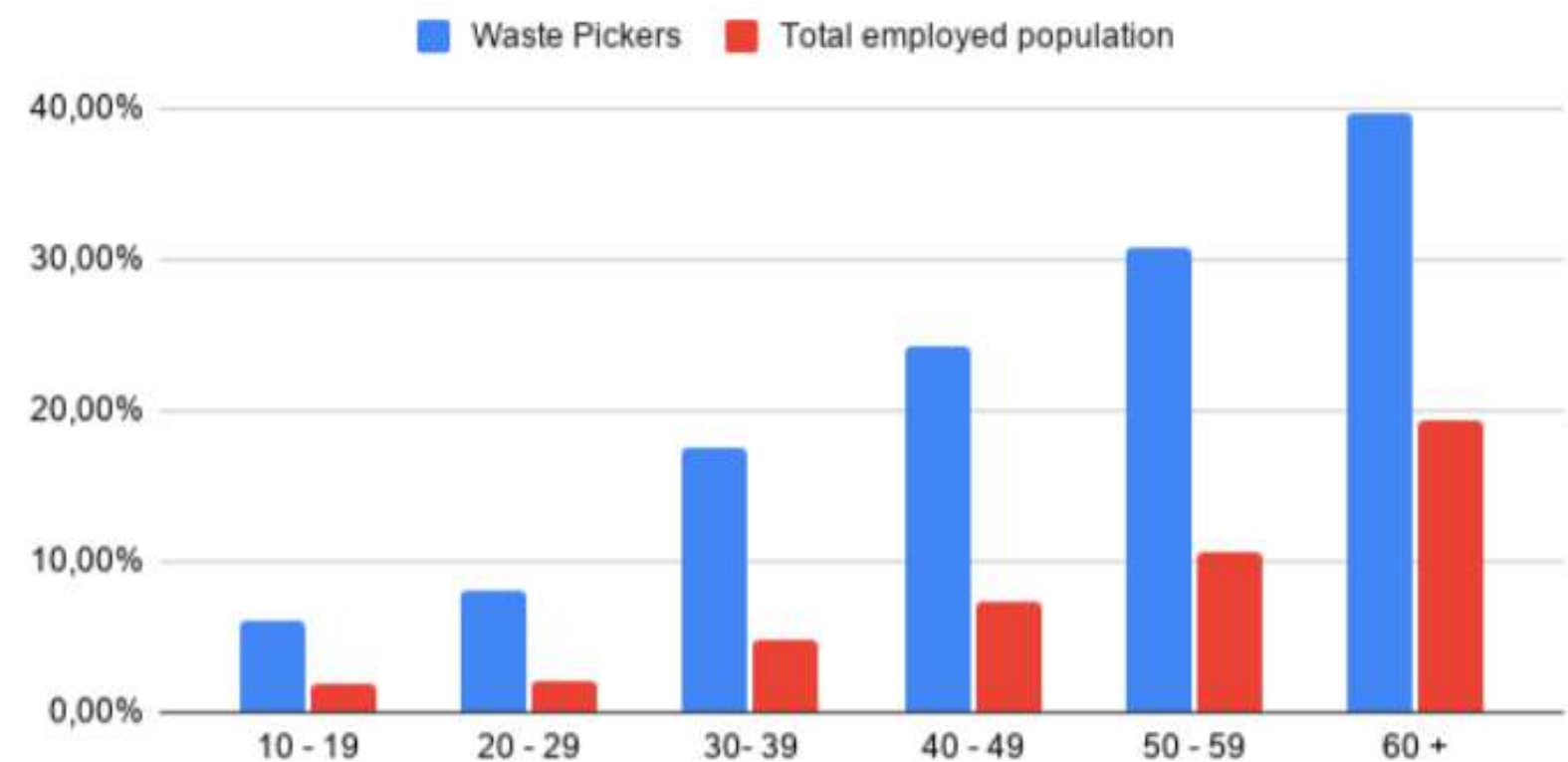
“The Beast”

**I saw an animal yesterday In the filth of the courtyard
Picking up food among the debris
When it founded something,
It neither examined nor smelled: He swallowed greedily.
The animal was not a dog, It wasn't a cat, It was not a rat.
The animal, my God, was a man.**

Manuel Bandeira (1947)

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

FIGURE 1: Brazil - illiteracy rate of total employed population and of waste pickers, by decennial age groups (2010)

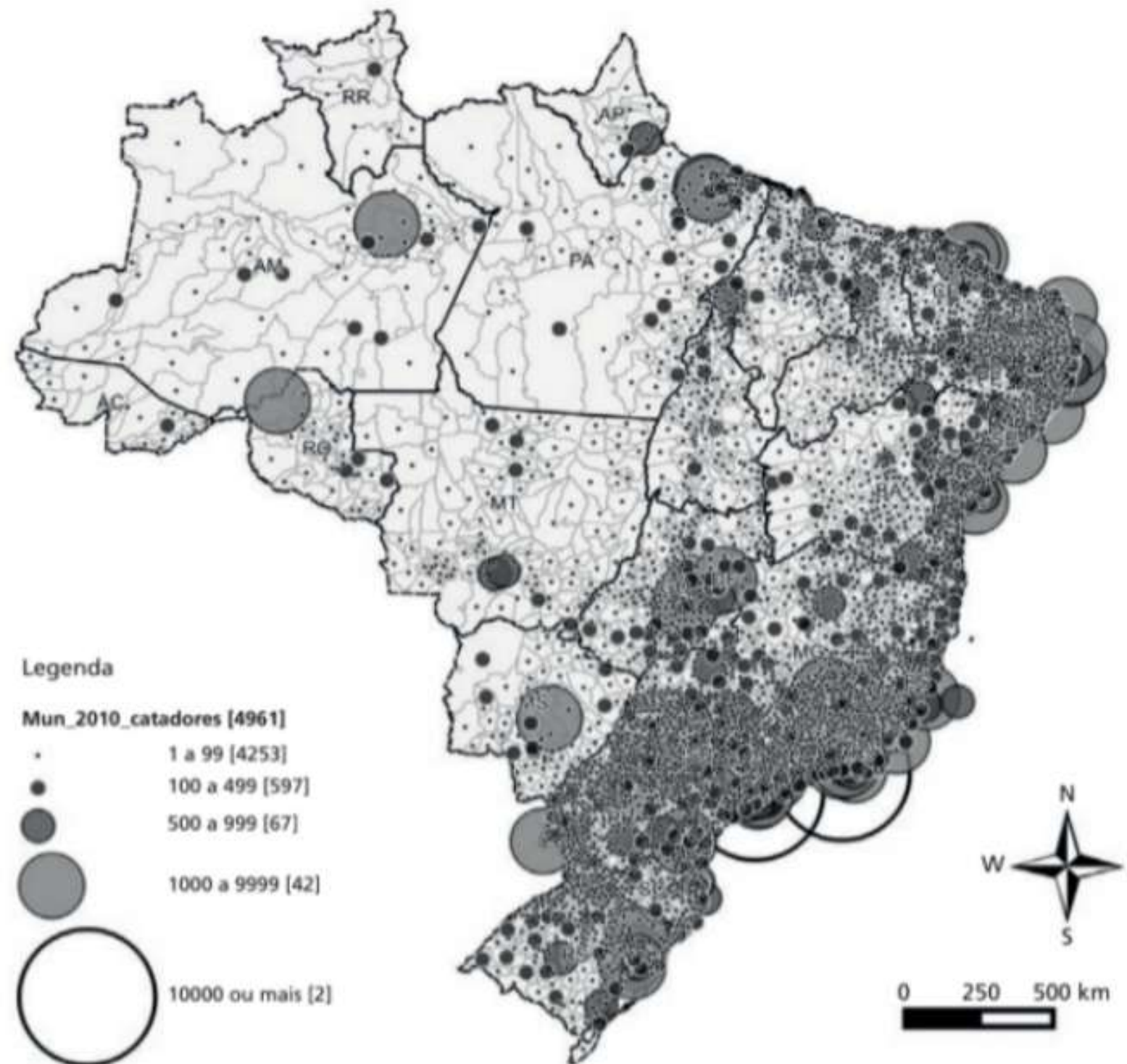


Adaptation from: Dagnino and Johansen, (p. 121, 2017) based on 2010 IBGE Census and CEM sample microdata (USP, 2016)

Where/who is
the catador in
Brazilian
reality?

MAPA 1

Brasil: distribuição espacial e volume de catadores, segundo o município de residência (2010)



THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

Organizational experience that follows a dynamic dedicated to answering local challenges through social, political and economic responses.

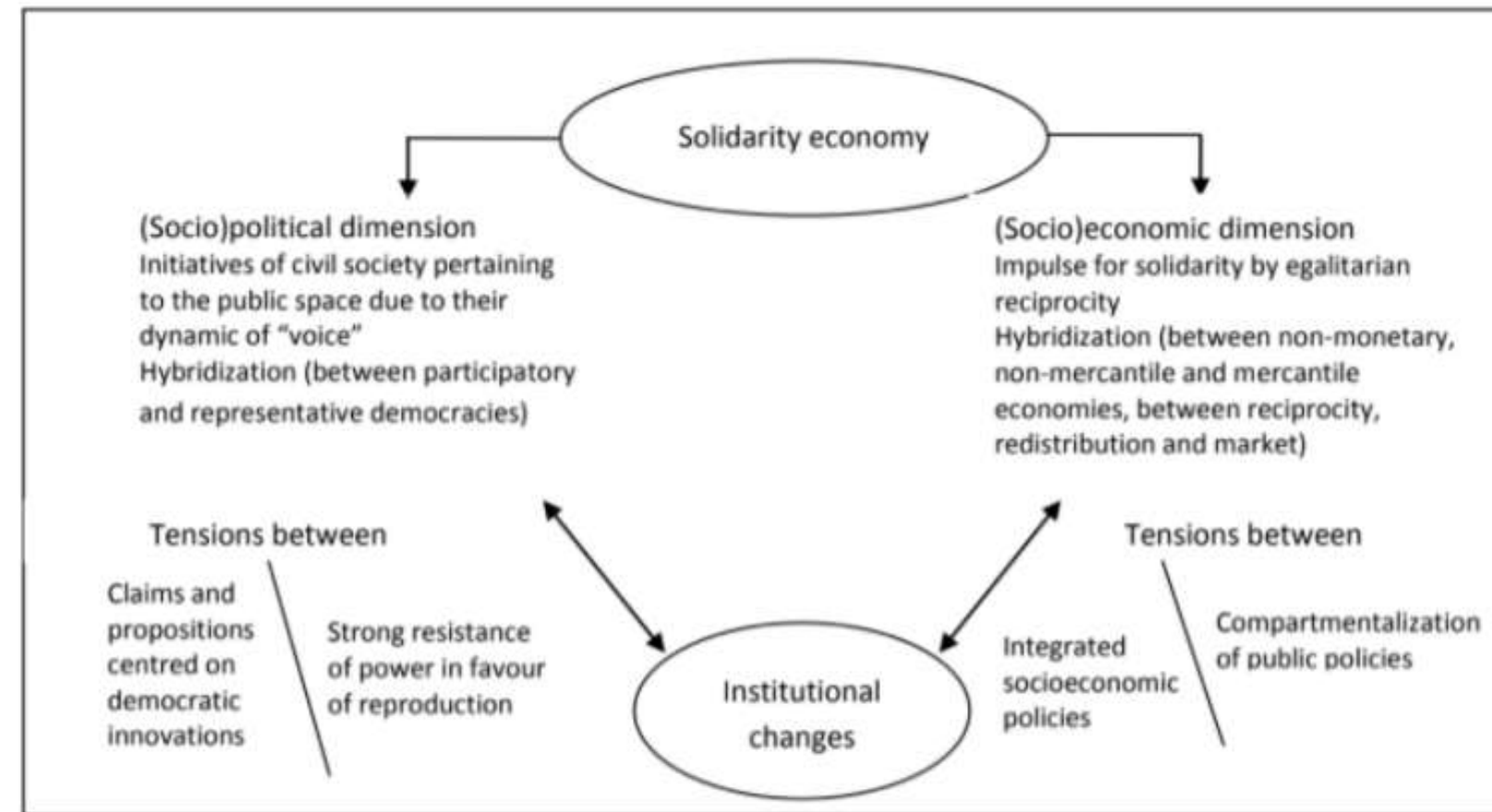
POWER TO THE PEOPLE

TIME TO RETHINK THE ECONOMY



Dimensions of the Solidarity Economy

Figure 3: the two dimensions of the Solidarity Economy



(Laville, p.37, 2010).

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY ORGANIZATIONS OF CATADORES: COOPERATIVES AND ASSOCIATIONS

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THE GOAL IS TO CREATE REVENUE THROUGH BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY TOWARDS CONTRIBUTING TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION (GUTBERLET, 2012).

The cooperatives have enabled the collectors with social inclusion and rescue of their citizenship (Bastos and Araújo, 2015), with an agenda based on the Solidarity Economy.

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NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENDA AS CONTRIBUTORS

We define associations and cooperatives as voluntary unions of people who organize themselves to accomplish common objectives through democratic and equitable administration.

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DESPITE THE BENEFITS, ONLY 10% OF BRAZIL'S CATADORES BELONG TO SEE ORGANIZATIONS.

The reasons may be: i) preference of many waste pickers to act alone; ii) misinformation; iii) necessary technical knowledge; iv) concern of cooperatives being managed by external agents.

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESPONSES

We need to rethink consumerism more sustainably and has given economic value to goods that would once be discarded.

WE NEED TO RETHINK THE WAY WE CONSUME



THE SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY

Aims to increase the value of a productive process through social-technical readjustment (Nascimento et al., 2018). This method can solve social problems in contexts of simplicity, low cost for application for social impact.

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The CE emerged in the literature challenging the "make, use, dispose" pattern as an alternative way of organizing production (Foster, p. 7, 2016), motivating the dissemination of three principles: reduction, reuse, and recycling (Ghisellini et al., 2016).

FIGURE 7: Belo Horizonte, Metropolitan Region and Metropolitan Collar



Caption
Strong orange: Belo Horizonte
Lighter orange: cities of the Metropolitan Region
Gray: cities of the Metropolitan Collar

IPEA, p. 9, 2012.

THE CASE STUDY: BELO HORIZONTE

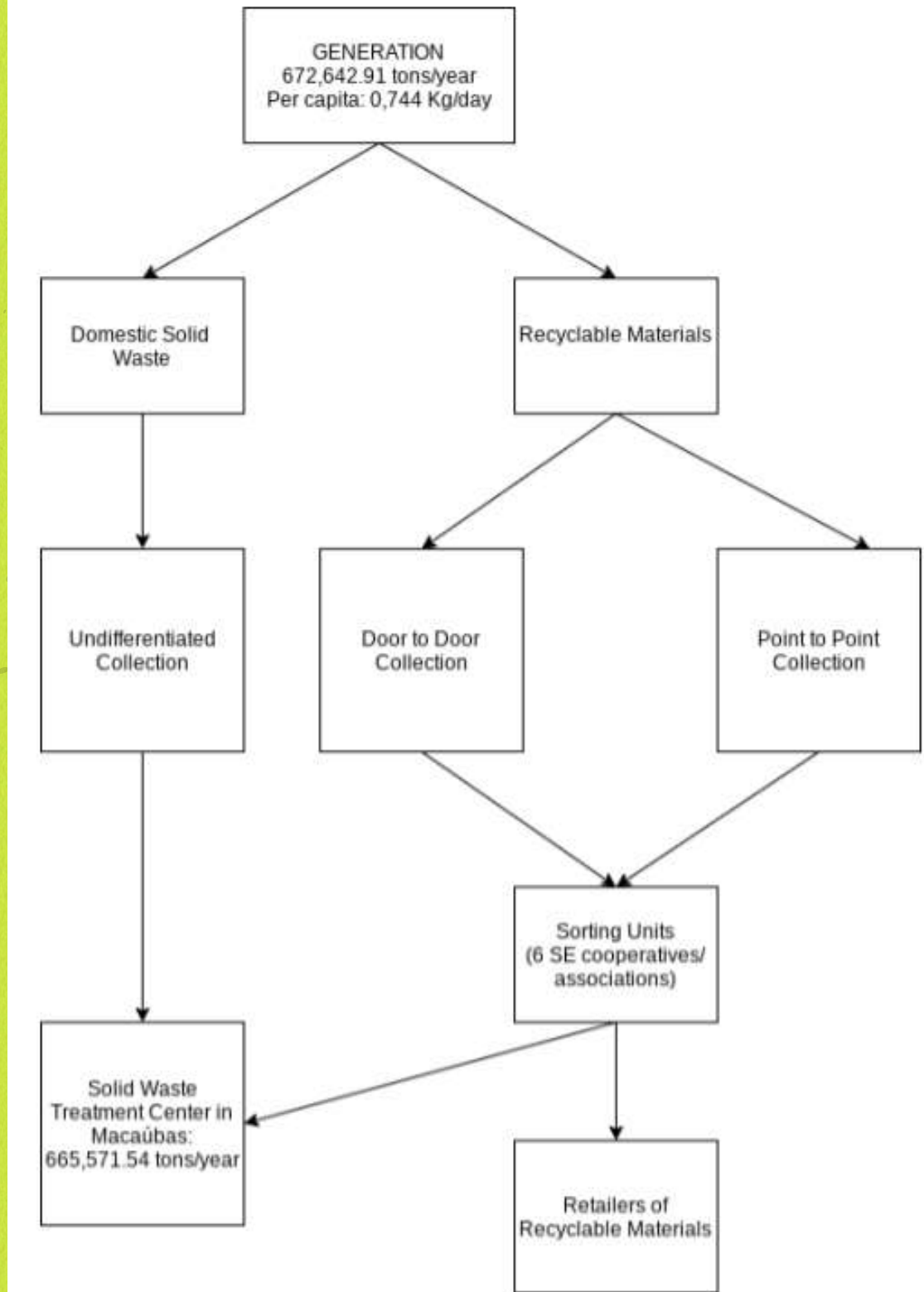
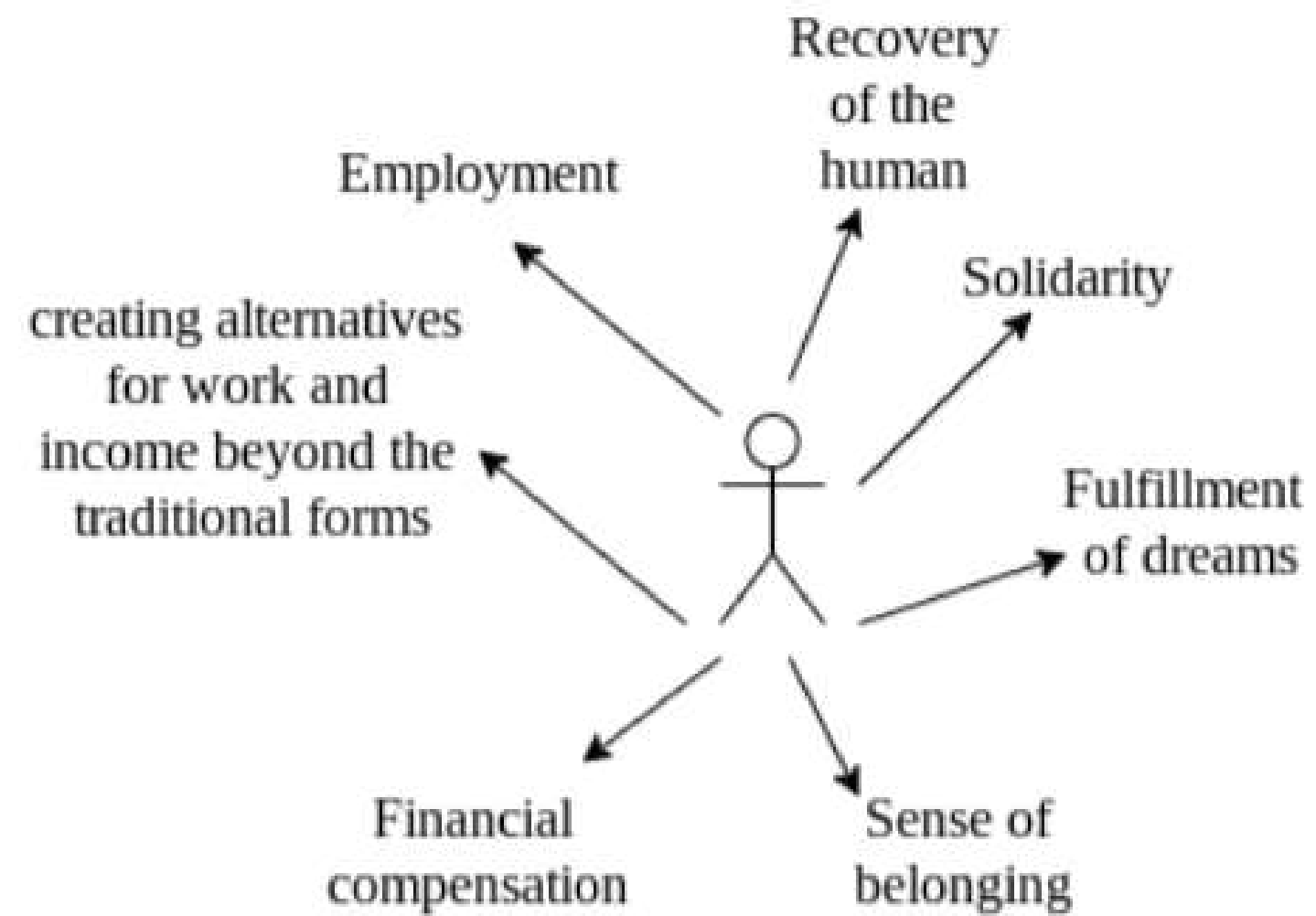


FIGURE 11: actions and functions related to the relationship with the Organizations of Catadores changed after Corona



Source: the author.

FIGURE 9: How cooperatives affect conditions from working people involved



Source: the author.

FIGURE 10: Word Cloud about the biggest lesson of the pandemic for SE organizations



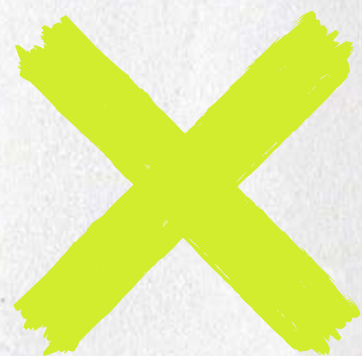
Source: the author.

TABLE 12: effects of the shutdown on SE organizations

COOPEMAR	Donors became competitors
COOPERSOLI	Donors became competitors
COOPERSOL	Majority of public servant donors
COMARP	The decrease in materials / paused partnerships
ASMARE	The decrease in materials / paused partnerships
COMARB	Increase in the price of materials
ASSOCIAÇÃO MÃOS AMIGAS	Paused partnerships
ACAMARES	Lost partnerships
UNICICLA	Lost partnerships

Source: the author.

HOW HAS THE SOLIDARITY ECONOMY IMPACTED THE FORMATION OF COLLECTIVES OF WASTE PICKERS?



We observed that the organizational experience was an important vector of economic inclusion from vulnerable groups, striving to be included in the formal economy



The Brazilian context gives an ideal environment for the sedimentation of SE among collectives of waste pickers: the political factor as a principle enhances the search for sources of income that allows them to have access to social services as guarantees.



Through SE organizations, the lack of support and basic resources that characterized them as individuals no longer exist: now, as part of an organized collective, the waste picker has gone from a condition of subordination to being an active builder of their own history. We consider, therefore, the SE as an enabler of direct democracy and economic inclusion.

We observed that the process of moving people from a situation of assistance to economic emancipation was impaired. The abrupt and unexpected form of the illness and its economic and social consequences did not allow the organizations to take proper measures to contain the damage and prepare their associates/co-operators.

Another major challenge was the performance of the work itself. From their work training, these individuals ran serious risks to their health and to the people around them, because discarded solid residues that were handled could be infected. To mitigate this effect, the city of Belo Horizonte, in partnership with research institutions and the cooperatives and associations, created a safety protocol that went into effect in November.

As an example of opportunity, it is worth mentioning that the entrepreneurial spirit and the search for alternatives incite the development of options linked to the circular economy and the growth of social technologies arising from periods of crisis are presented as great drivers of possibilities from this moment.

IDENTIFYING THE PANDEMIC CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ORGANIZATIONS OF WASTE PICKERS IN THE METROPOLITAN REGION OF BELO HORIZONTE.

TWO POSSIBLE SCENARIOS WHICH WILL REQUIRE COOPERATION

- (i) The first is that, with the increase of competitiveness or the rise of the obligations that are part of associations, the principles inherent to solidarity economies, such as direct democracy, horizontal and solidarity-based self-management, and the political appeal of collective demands, will be at risk.
- (ii) The second scenario is the imminent danger to the organizations' financial rewards by the expressive increase of competitors from the private field. Waste management is often considered a marginal profession. However, the pandemic has transformed this status quo, as the scarcity of recyclable materials on the market has driven up prices, making the market attractive to private companies.



STUDYING WASTE PICKERS AND SOLIDARITY HAS OPENED A RANGE OF REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CAPITALIST WORLD, RICH IN INEQUALITIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE CASE STUDY WITHIN THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT.

A ubiquitous expression is "within one Brazil, we have several Brazils": the premise is not only to mention the country's regional peculiarities but also to access the complex and diverse historical-economic-social reality within the same territory.

"If per ton sorted were paid life would be lighter
With guarantees assured
They only want to be heard
And also seen
They want visibility
And the importance established
So remunerate the sorted ton
For these warrior women
Beautiful as the jasmine
Who on the treadmill live
The daily battle
Seeking queens of themselves
For freedom so dreamed of
Manager my dear friend!
remunerate The sorted ton"

Nati Tonelo, catadora from the Esperança Recyclers Association
- Florianópolis - SC (2017)(own translation).

Obrigada!

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