

Ecosystem of Waste: The Role of Waste Pickers and Street Vendors in Curbing Coastal Pollution at Carnival in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil



Prepared by **Brittany A. Thomas, Sonia M. Dias, Cynthia Deng and Mariana Pereira Guimarães**
for WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing)

WIEGO Resource Documents

WIEGO Resource Documents include WIEGO-generated literature reviews, annotated bibliographies, and papers reflecting the findings from new empirical work. They provide detail to support advocacy, policy or research on specific issues.

About the Authors

Brittany Ayana Thomas, Environment Officer, United States Agency for International Development (study not affiliated with USAID) (brittayanathomas@gmail.com)

Sonia Maria Dias, Waste Specialist, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (sonia.dias@wiego.org)

Cynthia Deng, Spatial Maps and Visualizations, cdeng@gsd.harvard.edu

Mariana Pereira Guimarães, Spatial Maps and Visualizations, mpereira@gsd.harvard.edu

Acknowledgements

The Yale University¹ Hixon Center for Urban Ecology provided partial funding support for the field research completed in 2017, while study co-author Brittany Thomas was a Master of Environmental Management candidate at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. This publication results from collaborations between different researchers involved in the WIEGO team's Brazil-engaged scholarship laboratory, which offers researchers opportunities for research-action with informal workers in Brazil.

Publication date: March 2021

ISBN number: 978-92-95106-20-8

Please cite this publication as: Thomas, Brittany A., Sonia M. Dias, Cynthia Deng and Mariana Pereira Guimarães. 2021. *The Ecosystem of Waste: Exploring the Connections between Consumerism, Street Vending and Waste Management during Carnival in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil*. WIEGO Resource Document No. 18. Manchester, UK: WIEGO

Published by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee – Company N°. 6273538, Registered Charity N°. 1143510

WIEGO Limited
521 Royal Exchange
Manchester, M2 7EN
United Kingdom
www.wiego.org

Series editor: Caroline Skinner
Copy editor: Karen McCabe
Layout: Julian Luckham
All photographs courtesy of Cata Bahia

[Curbing Coastal Pollution: Informal Workers' Critical Role](#) is a WIEGO short report based on the findings in this Resource Document.

Copyright © WIEGO. This report can be replicated for educational, organizing and policy purposes as long as the source is acknowledged.

¹ The Yale University Human Subjects Committee deemed this study exempt from IRB review (IRB Protocol ID: 2000020563).

1. Introduction

This paper provides visualizations depicting the network of waste management during Carnaval in the Barra neighbourhood of Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, based on field work conducted in 2017. Researchers, Brittany A. Thomas and Sonia M. Dias, collaborated with urban planners, Cynthia Deng and Mariana Pereira Guimarães, to illustrate the relationships between actors within the waste management structure during the Carnaval circuit in Barra.

Through this paper, readers will gain an understanding of the interlinkages between consumers, waste pickers, street vendors and other municipal actors who enable the municipality of Salvador to adequately manage waste and avoid uncontrolled marine plastic pollution during Carnaval in this coastal city. In addition to the depiction of the logistical nature of the waste management system, the authors will explore socioeconomic realities impacting the core waste actors during this massive event and beyond, as well as opportunities for promoting the empowerment of informal workers.

While there is a tremendous literature base documenting the music, costumes, catharsis and cultural origins of Carnaval, there is limited information available on the frameworks guiding the success of the event. This paper is the result of a case study on the management of waste during Carnaval in the Barra neighbourhood of Salvador da Bahia.

Although Rio de Janeiro is often cited as the city hosting the world's biggest street party, Carnaval in Salvador da Bahia has often rivalled this claim due to its welcoming as many as 700,000 attendees per day for this week-long series of parades, and covering nearly 25km of the city (Sandy, 2016; Withnall, 2014). Official records have indicated that Carnaval generates between US\$200 million and US\$250 million in business for the city, demonstrating why so many stakeholders are engaged in its management (Cabral et al, 2011). Salvador's Carnaval events take place in two main areas, Campo Grande and Barra-Ondina. While these zones have similarities in their structures, both supporting large crowds of people following *trios elétricos* (large trucks carrying powerful sound systems and performers), this study will focus on the event as it occurs in the Barra neighbourhood. The Barra-Ondina coastal route of the parade runs along Avenida Oceânica from Barra, a popular tourist destination and residential community, to Ondina, one of the wealthiest neighbourhoods in Salvador.

Ecosystem Services

Salvador's status as the fourth largest Brazilian city with an estimated population of over 2.95 million people secures its status as a booming coastal city with its location on the Bay of All Saints (*Baía de Todos os Santos*) (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics-IBGE n.d.). As areas within the city become more congested with businesses, visitors, and residents, there is a need to improve provisions for treating industrial and domestic wastes to prevent them from being dumped into coastal waters (Tibbetts, 2002). These challenges are extended during Carnaval due to the construction of temporary facilities, installation of latrines, accumulation of waste, and influx of visitors to Salvador. Considering the growing international commitments to reduce ocean plastic pollution, effective waste management during Carnaval is essential to preserving

the natural ecosystem surrounding Salvador. In addition, this festival is crucial for the livelihoods of the working poor as it is an opportunity to increase income given the increase in consumption of food and beverage and, consequently, the increase in discarded materials.



Figure 1 – Location of Salvador (Map edited by Mariana Pereira Guimarães using materials from: <http://www.cidade-salvador.com/>)

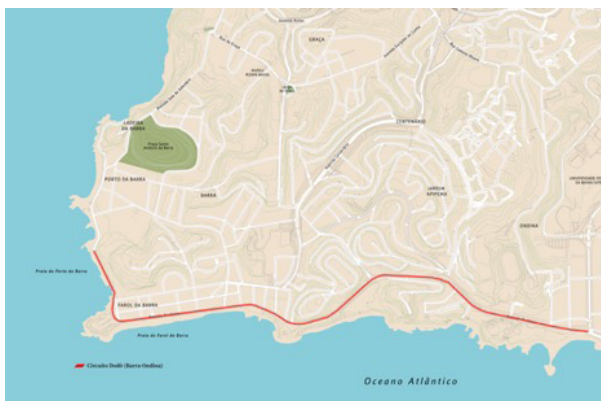


Figure 2 – Barra-Ondina circuit (Map edited by Mariana Pereira Guimarães using materials from: <http://www.cidade-salvador.com/>)

Methodology

The study was organized in two parts to develop an understanding of the structure of the waste collection system during the event: direct observation during the main Carnival activity period and subsequent interviews with individuals engaged in the waste management process, from both a consumer and a waste manager perspective.

The project study period was structured around the end of the Carnival period in Salvador da Bahia, with the initial observation period occurring on February 28, 2017 and interviews occurring within the second half of March 2017. Research contacts for the project were derived from existing collaborations within the informal waste picking sector and local community, and through interviews on the street.

In 2020, two of the authors, Cynthia Deng and Mariana Pereira Guimarães, developed visualizations depicting the nature of the waste management structure along the Barra circuit, informed by the original co-authored study by Thomas and Dias, outreach to local

waste picker advocacy groups, and waste-generation data released by cooperatives and the non-profit organization, Projeto Fundo Limpo.²

Vendors' Facilitation of the Waste Management Process

Despite the absence of physical bins supporting the collection of waste during the event, surprisingly, many beverage vendors collected cans from consumers. Although bags they used were not provided by the city, these vendors facilitated the management of waste during the event by providing convenient locations where consumers could deposit their waste (as shown in Figure 3). Some utilized small plastic bags left over from beverage packaging and others used large, stable bags.



Figure 3 – Examples of licensed vendors who voluntarily collected recyclables.

The collection of cans and other recyclable materials served a variety of functions for the vendors, namely providing an opportunity to generate additional income from the event and to make their stands more visually appealing to attendees which promoted increased sales by removing haphazardly scattered cans from walkways. However, from a merely logistical perspective, these vendors' collection of cans also humanized the importance of waste collection during the event and appeared to influence consumers' engagement with the proper disposal of waste. Thus, these vendors appeared to facilitate the citizen-oriented waste management process described in the literature about large-scale festivals and events, by offering consistent locations for waste disposal.

² The main source of data is a report produced by ANCAT (Associação Nacional dos Catadores e Catadoras de Materiais Recicláveis – National Association of *Catadores* and *Catadoras* of Recycling Materials) in 2019, computing data of recyclables collected during the 2019 Carnival in Salvador. Secondary sources were LIMPURB's website (Salvador's Waste Management and Collection Company) and Projeto Fundo Limpo (<http://projctofundolimpo.com.br/index.php>) – an NGO started by a diverse group aiming to promote environmental education through collective efforts of beach and sea waste cleaning, especially after holidays and major events such as Carnival.

Cleaning Process Following Carnival

The sequence of cleaning events, starting at 3 a.m., at the conclusion of the party (as depicted in Figure 4):

- 1) Municipal waste managers entered the cleaning landscape for the first time following the conclusion of the night's festivities, utilizing brooms to create piles of the waste that was scattered throughout the party area;
- 2) Waste pickers sorted through these piles, freely collecting recyclable items of value;
- 3) A procession of municipal garbage trucks entered the party area and municipal waste managers swept the scattered, large piles of waste closer to these trucks;
- 4) Waste pickers continued sorting through these piles for items of value and, once they were finished, municipal waste managers deposited all of the remaining waste (both non-recyclable and recyclable materials) into the garbage trucks; and
- 5) Finally, once all the waste was collected into the trucks, several water trucks entered the party area, and municipal waste managers hosed down the boardwalk area.

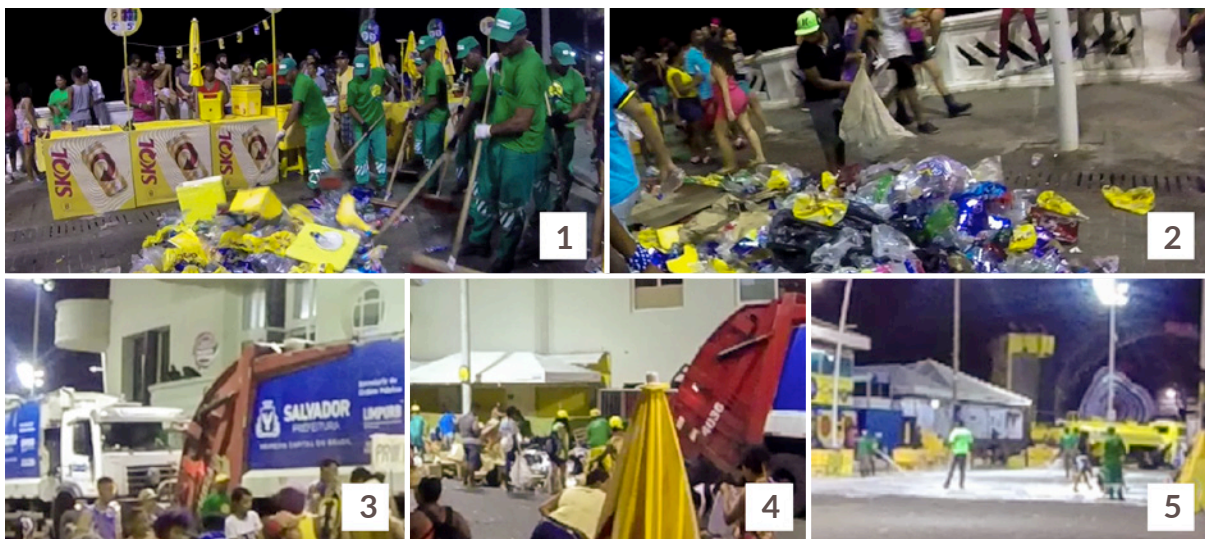


Figure 4 – Order of cleaning after the party.

Perspectives from Waste Pickers

Study author Thomas interviewed Jeane dos Santos, a waste picker from the Cooper Brava Cooperative and Bahia Regional President of the National Movement of Waste Pickers (MNCR), who has worked within the Carnival circuits in Salvador for the past 15 years.

Jeane commented on the success of 2017's Carnival for waste pickers, as influenced by the CataBahia Network, a regional association of Salvador-metropolitan area waste picker cooperatives, and on MNCR's negotiation with the municipality for a daily wage

for waste pickers. Under this structure, waste pickers earned R\$60 each day (US\$11/day), during the seven days of the party, in addition to the profit earned from the amount of materials collected.

The local political system was also engaged in efforts addressing the status of waste pickers during Carnival through the provision of showers within the party areas, to be utilized by informal workers (vendors and waste pickers) during the event. Many waste pickers resorted to living outside, within camps, during the entire Carnival period as a result of the congestion of the city, difficulty in carrying their collected materials to and from cooperatives, and the intensity of the work. This year, the city's provision of showers enabled waste pickers to remain outside more comfortably; however, Jeane commented on the necessity for further investment to provide waste pickers with their own shower area located near their main camp given the increase in waste pickers working during the event.

“When I put my hand down, there were five more hands reaching for a can. This is because of unemployment which has increased greatly.”

– Jeane dos Santos, MNCR

Carnaval represents a window of opportunity for many workers. 2017's activities provided individuals with a chance to earn money and temporarily be relieved from the economic crisis impacting Salvador and Brazil. However, due to the changing nature of Carnival within the city, many Carnival-specific jobs, like *cordeiros* (shown in Figure 5), or cord-holders separating the different zones of the party, were eliminated. So, many residents capitalized on opportunity during Carnival by waste picking. Jeane commented that she saw more waste pickers than ever before within this year's circuit, and this was largely representative of the wide availability of materials during the event and the ease of engaging in waste picking activities.



Figure 5 – A small group of *cordeiros* (cord-holders) surrounding a performance vehicle.

Experiences of Street Vendors

During the weeks following Carnaval, Thomas conducted four interviews with ambulant street vendors to learn about their experiences and challenges during the event within the Barra neighbourhood. All of these participants asked to be anonymous in the final report. Many of these security concerns were attributed to the vulnerabilities they face as street vendors in Barra.

All the vendors acknowledged the lack of support provided to them by the municipality and they described the most challenging aspect of the experience as being the “*Rapa*” or commerce inspection process. During normal periods, and on an especially heightened basis during Carnaval, unlicensed street vendors are susceptible to being pursued by inspection police within their normal working areas. These municipal officers travel on large trucks and confiscate all of the merchandise and equipment of vendors who are not licensed by the municipality of Salvador, requiring these vendors to pay by weight and attend a court hearing to retrieve their items. Within the Carnaval circuit, the inspection control process was much more intensive, presenting a challenge to those who visited from distant cities within the Bahian interior and other vendors who were unable to receive a licence for the event.

The sponsorship of Carnaval by SKOL, a Brazilian beer company, was an additional challenge complicating the success of the vendors’ engagement within the circuit. As a result of SKOL’s sponsoring of the event, all vendors were prohibited from selling any of the other beer brands commonly served within Salvador, or other products that were not associated with SKOL (e.g. water products). This caused vendors to have to purchase additional merchandise, often being unable to utilize their existing reserves of other brands’ products. In addition to the expense of purchasing appropriately-branded products, vendors who received licences to sell within the boardwalk area of the Barra-Ondina circuit were also responsible for furnishing the ice within their SKOL-provided beer coolers. Vendors commented that these containers were poorly structured and did not transport well.

As a result of the challenge of movement with their merchandise, licensed and ambulant vendors often remained in the party area for 7-10 days within the Carnaval period, often sleeping outside and facing various environmental challenges during the event (including safety risks, vulnerability to rain, limited space for hygiene and privacy, isolation from children and families, etc.). These vendors were not afforded much space to facilitate their stays within the party areas, often being forced to sleep unsheltered on cardboard boxes and small blankets on the ground near their items (as demonstrated in Figure 6).

“The only thing that we, ambulant vendors, want is to be recognized and have a place to sell. We only want to be legalized.”

– Street Vendor in Barra



Figure 6 - Licensed vendors sleeping on the ground immediately following Carnival.

Although sponsorship influenced the employment protection for many vendors during the Carnival period, few were able to receive licences, especially those who specialized in food preparation. Concerns about appropriate food preparation methods and physical safety, because of the gas stoves used for cooking, led to many food vendors' failure to receive licences. Also, limited financial resources to support the purchase of beer and other licensed merchandise caused vendors to simply sell items illegally, at the risk of being stopped by inspection police. Salvador restricted licences for food vending due to the perceived increase in risk of foodborne illness, resulting from the rapid entry of temporary vendors to the city during this period and the difficulty in maintaining food safety standards.

Some ambulant vendors commented that their opportunities were greatly hindered by 2017's Carnival. Many failed to earn a sufficient profit from their efforts, caused by: a perceived reduction in attendance due to factors such as the relative elimination of *cordeiros*, which some attendees viewed as a heightened security risk; the cost of purchasing ice and sponsored beverages for the party, and SKOL's lowering of the price of their products to increase profits; and the economic crisis in Brazil which reduced travel to Salvador's Carnival, decreasing the presence of Brazilians from neighbouring states and cities, and vendors' consumer base.

Ultimately, a myriad of challenges impacting both temporarily licensed and ambulant workers led to many commenting that they hoped for more support from the municipal government and Salvador's mayor. One vendor noted that the only thing she sought from the city was to be recognized as a worker and given a licence to work in order to provide for her family.

Inefficiency and Excess Materials

Waste pickers and street vendors were limited in their potential to collect materials largely through inadequate availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and collection equipment. Thomas observed few waste pickers who were utilizing gloves and other PPE and assumed that, in addition to safety concerns, the lack of such protection may also contribute to operational inconveniences within the waste collection process. Most waste pickers and vendors who Thomas observed during the event relied on plastic bags to collect recyclables. Few possessed reinforced bags or *carroças* (carts) and their ability to profit from the event appeared to be inhibited by a lack of adequate containers and a challenge moving heavy items within this limited time period. Additionally, the heavy police presence, event monitoring and crowds made it nearly impossible for waste pickers to utilize carts to transport materials, which some waste pickers consistently employ in their normal collection activities.

On January 31, 2018, local Bahian newspaper *Correio24horas* reported that an initiative called “Operation Carolina de Jesus”³ would support waste pickers’ work during Carnaval by providing them with personal protective equipment kits. These kits included boots, gloves, hearing protection, pants, a shirt and a head covering. In addition to the physical equipment, waste pickers were also given water and daily meals within the “centres of support” (*centrais de apoio*), or locations where these workers are based during Carnaval. The five centres were Ladeira da Montanha, Politeama, Barra (the location of this study), Ondina and Nordeste de Amaralina. This initiative aimed to provide “dignity,” improved conditions of work and recognition to the men and women waste pickers whose service enhances the quality of the environment during Carnaval. It cost nearly 820,000 Brazilian Reals, or approximately US\$231,240 to furnish these kits for the 1,500 waste pickers who were working throughout the city.

This initiative demonstrates the sensitivity of this work and the increasing attention that organizations are paying to the intensive physical demands that waste collection has on waste pickers. Additionally, while this initiative has increased the visibility of waste pickers’ collection efforts during Carnaval, there was no comment included in the article from event organizers interviewed about street vendors’ engagement in recycling or the difficulties that these workers experience during the party period. Considering the large scale of this event and the widespread support that the Carolina de Jesus effort found from entertainers and local organizations, there is tremendous merit in offering similar support systems to street vendors. However, existing discrimination and barriers to the completion of vending activities may inhibit municipalities and local organizations’ support of their work, if there continues to be limited documentation and awareness about the diverse services they provide to consumers and the industry during the party period.

³ The organization Carolina de Jesus is named after the late writer and waste picker, who is recognized as one of the earliest and most important black writers in Brazil.

2. Visuals and Explanations

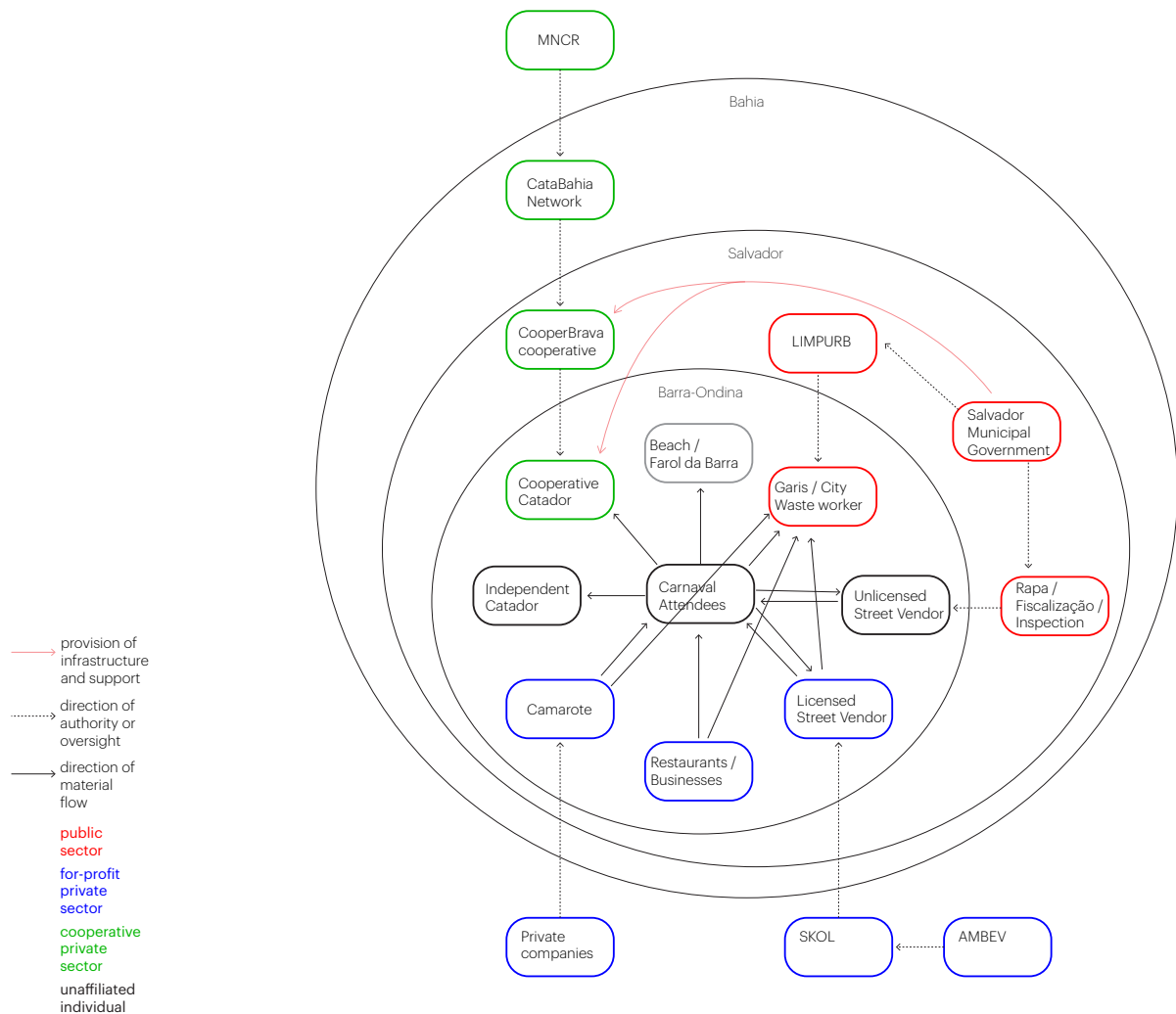


Figure 7 – Relationship Ecosystem Map

Based on the investigative work of Thomas and Dias, this visualization shows some of the relationships between public and private actors of the Barra-Ondina Carnival circuit, at multiple scales of influence. During the weeks of Carnival, an association of recycling cooperatives enters into an agreement with the Salvador municipal government to collect aluminum cans and recyclable materials at the party. The city provides some infrastructure like central material drop-off sites, outdoor shower facilities, and a degree of financial support. During Carnival, these actors working on behalf of the public sector enter a complex fray with actors working on behalf of SKOL and other businesses, with independent vendors and *catadores* (waste pickers), and with the party-going consumers, all involved in the generation and collection of waste material.

CARNAVAL 3 p.m. – 6 a.m.

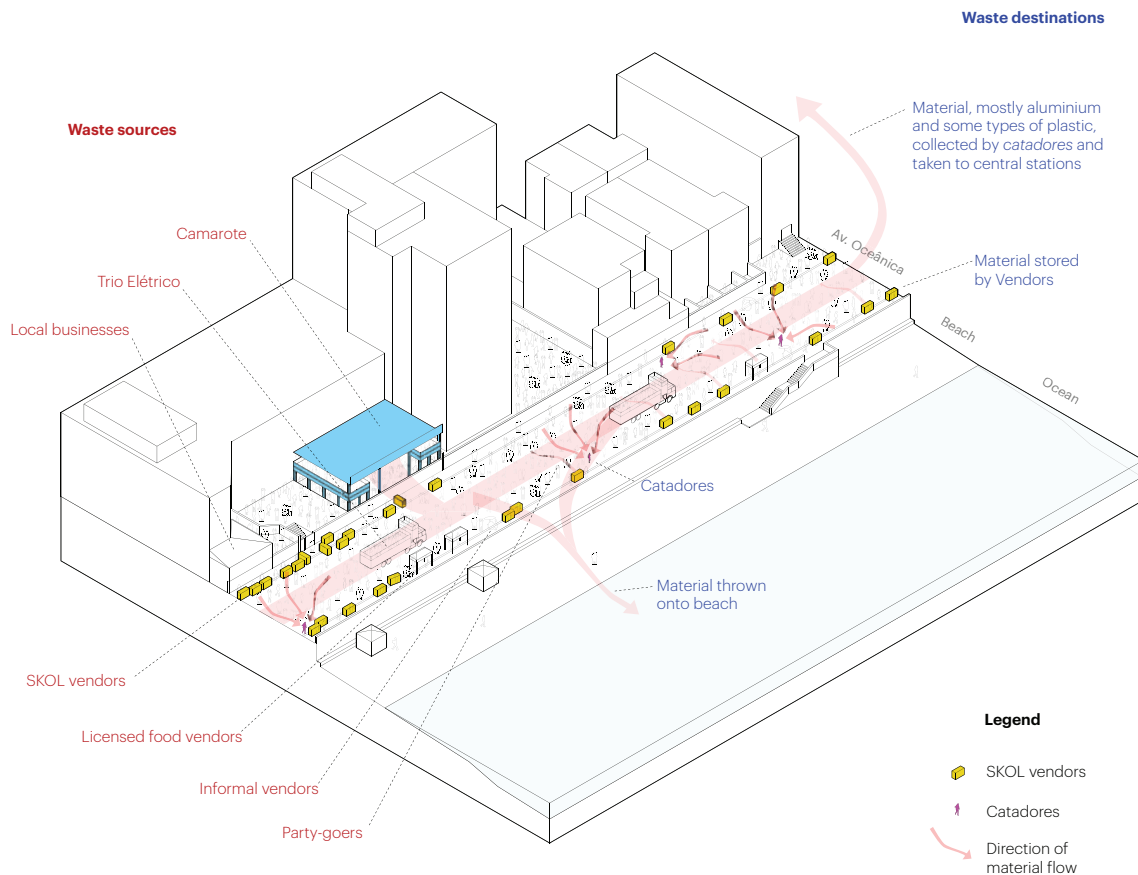


Figure 8a – Spatialization of Waste Actors: Carnival 3 p.m. – 6 a.m.

Due to the unique location of the Barra-Ondina Carnival circuit along a beachside boulevard that directly overlooks the beach and ocean, the local marine ecosystem is particularly vulnerable to pollution from waste material generated during Carnival. During the active celebration hours, waste is generated by party-goers on the street, in local businesses, in *trios eléctricos* (trucks bearing parade floats and dance floors) and in *camarotes* (exclusive viewing boxes). The material mostly comes from SKOL vendors, independent vendors, *camarotes* and local businesses selling food and drinks. During this time, both cooperative member *catadores* as well as independent *catadores* collect recyclable materials, mostly aluminium. Some vendors also collect materials (see Figure 3). Also, some waste material inevitably ends up on the beach.

CARNAVAL 6 a.m. – 2 p.m.

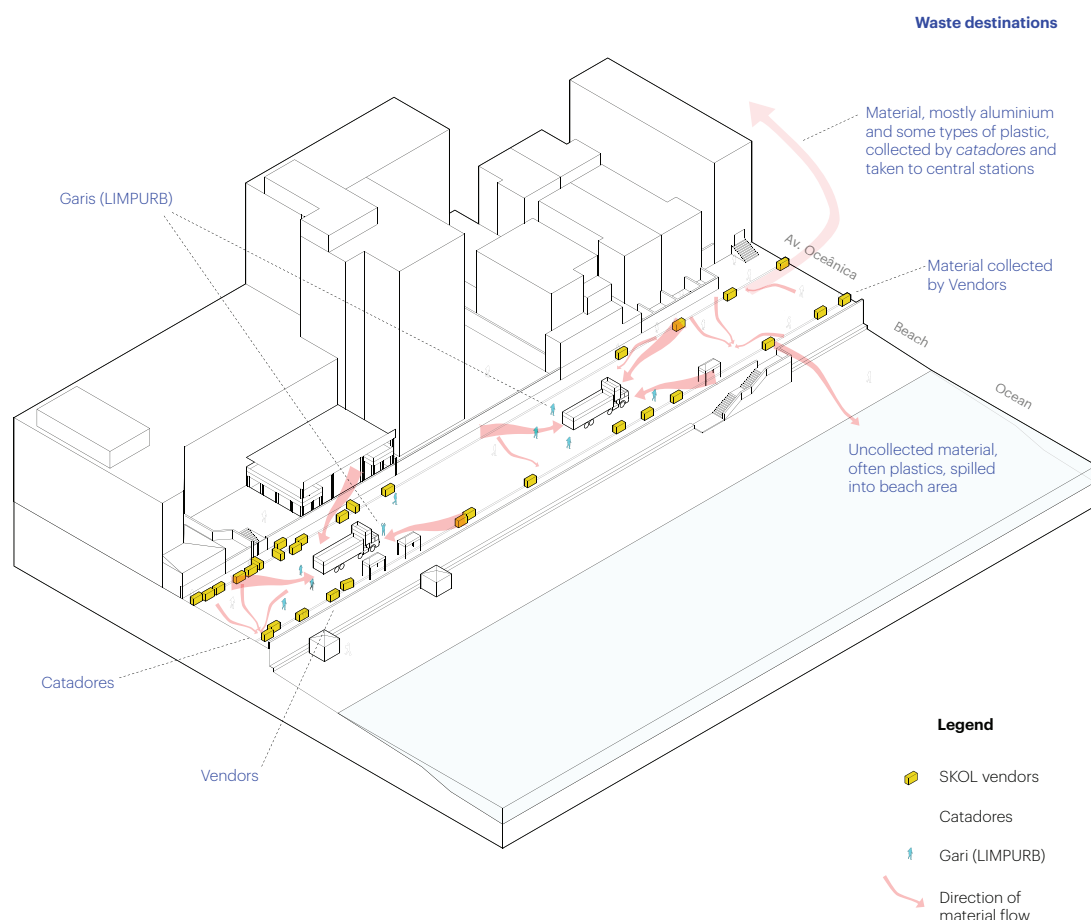


Figure 8b – Spatialization of Waste Actors: Carnival 6 a.m. – 2 p.m.

After the day’s celebrations wind down, *gari* (formal waste workers employed by the municipality’s LIMPURB urban sanitation department) arrive to sweep waste into piles. *Catadores* (waste pickers) continue to collect recyclables from these piles until LIMPURB trucks arrive to remove remaining waste material (see Figure 4). *Catadores* who are members of the cooperatives that have an agreement with the city bring their collected materials to the central LIMPURB drop-off points for redemption, while independent *catadores* must store and redeem materials elsewhere. At nearly all times of the day and night, material actively flows to and from the main parade street. Barra-Ondina is one of three Carnival circuits. In 2019, from all three circuits combined, LIMPURB collected 1,535 tons of waste⁴ and 135.5 tons of recyclables.⁵

⁴ Reported in “Agência de Notícias Salvador” in 2020: <http://www.agenciadenoticias.salvador.ba.gov.br/index.php/pt-br/releases-2/carnaval/12963-limpurb-coleta-mais-de-1-5-mil-toneladas-de-residuos-no-carnaval>

⁵ Relatório de Cooperação - Carnaval 2019 (ANCAT, 2019)

AFTER CARNAVAL ENDS

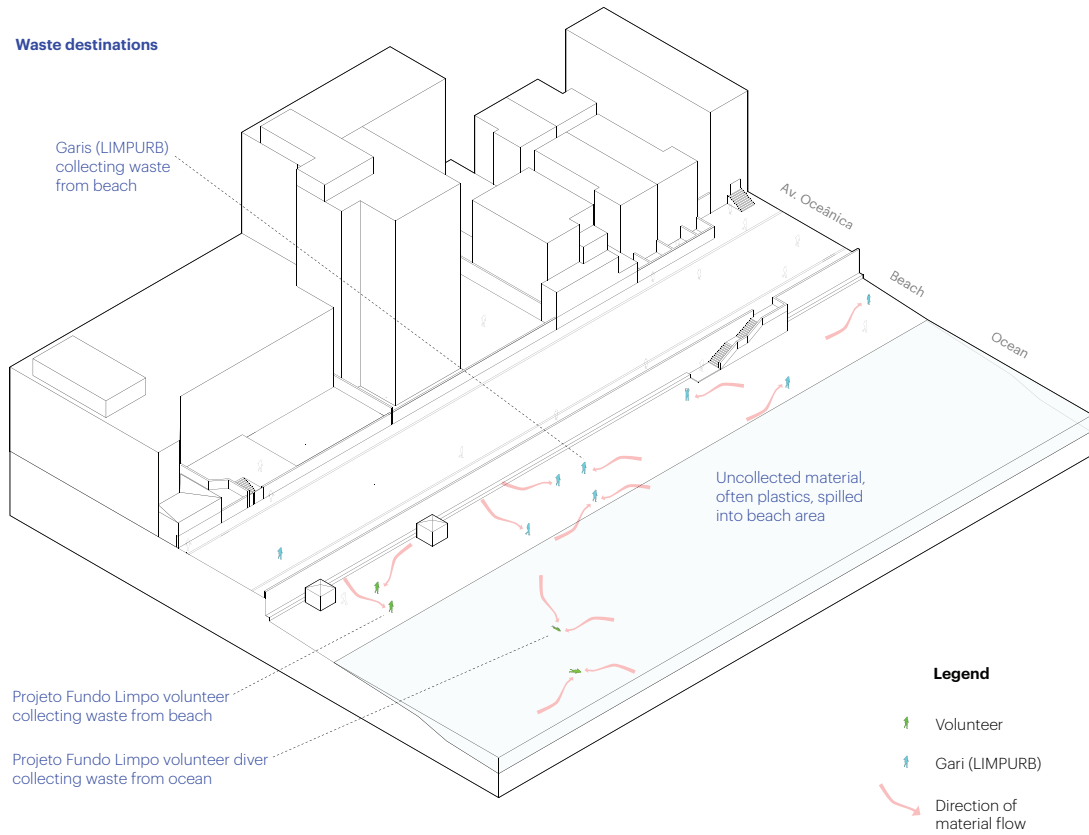


Figure 8c – Spatialization of Waste Actors: After Carnival

After the week-long festival is over, waste material collection continues. *Garis* collect material from the beaches, and volunteers in the non-profit Projeto Fundo Limpo collect waste from the beach as well as from the ocean waters. According to Projeto Fundo Limpo, in 2019 the organization collected 215 kg (.24 tons) of trash from Barra-Ondina.⁶

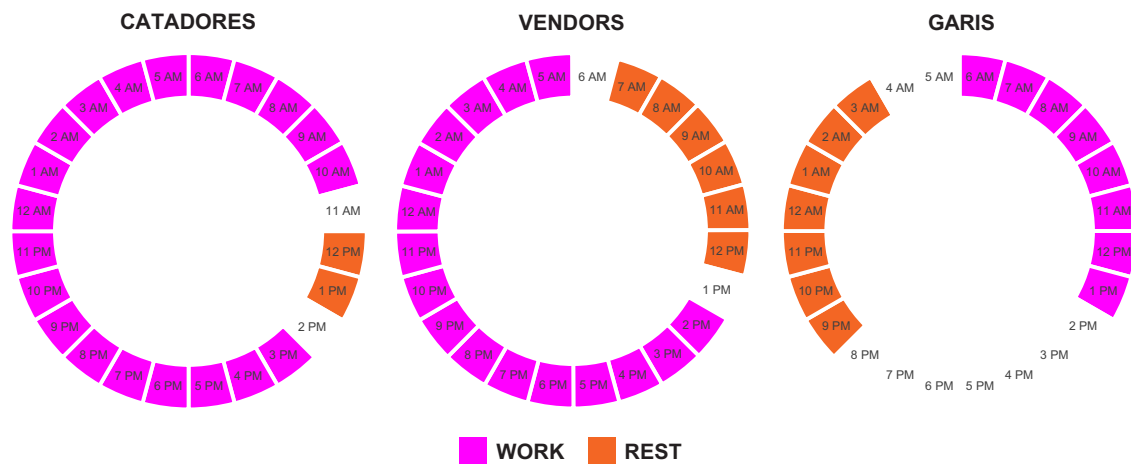


Figure 9 – Work/rest clocks

⁶ Source: <https://www.correio24horas.com.br/noticia/nid/voluntarios-limpam-praias-e-tiram-215-quilos-de-lixo-do-mar/>

The work/rest clocks show the relationship between the work and rest schedules for the three main actors responsible for street cleaning in Barra-Ondina: *catadores*, vendors, and *garis*. The workers who get the least rest are the *catadores* followed by the vendors (see Figure 9). *Garis* are formally employed by the municipality and, although they must start work in the early morning (6 a.m.), they maintain the best work/rest balance. Data about *catadores* is based on a phone interview with Jeane dos Santos (MNCR), conducted by Sonia Dias on October 15th, 2019. Data about vendors is based on observation and interviews conducted by Brittany Thomas during Salvador's Carnival, 2017. Lastly, data about *garis* is from the LIMPURB website.



Figure 10 – Material collected by cooperatives (Graphic generated with app.flourish.studio)

Based on data from the ANCAT report (Associação Nacional dos Catadores e Catadoras de Materiais Recicláveis), this diagram shows the amount of recyclable material collected by each of the five cooperatives that were part of the collection agreement with the municipality of Salvador. In 2019, the five cooperatives (shown on the left) together collected 51,386.38 kg of recyclable material at four central drop-off locations, two in Barra-Ondina and two in Campo Grande/Centro. Most of the material collected was aluminium (44,841 kg), but PET and PEBD were also collected (5,452 kg and 1093 kg, respectively). Plastic was collected less because of the low value for redemption relative to volume. LIMPURB indicated that in 2019, 135.5 tons (122,924 kg) of recyclables were collected during Carnival, so there are 71,538 kg not accounted for in this diagram.⁷

⁷ Quantities of materials tabulated from ANCAT's Salvador Carnival Report 2019.

3. Lessons/Opportunities

Street Vendors as Facilitators of the Recycling Process

A surprising finding from the study was the direct engagement of street vendors within waste collection during Carnival. Continued investigation could provide an understanding of the factors influencing vendors' involvement in this process. Is this merely a question of opportunity, as a result of the economic challenges impacting many individuals, or a new role within the recycling management structure of the event? Also, while questioning the potential of the government and other entities to support vendors' engagement with recycling, careful consideration should be made of the implications of increasing competition and potentially complicating the availability of resources for waste pickers.



Figure 11 – Throughout the festival, waste pickers (catadores) collect recyclable materials.

Recognition and Cooperation Essential for Waste Pickers and Street Vendors

The interviews conducted for this study revealed that more engagement has taken place between the municipal government and waste pickers than between the municipal government and unlicensed vendors. Several study interview participants emphasized that their primary goal is to be recognized as official workers, who are merely looking for secure spaces for work and licences for protection of their economic opportunities.

Considering the economic crisis impacting Brazil and the difficulty many mobile vendors face in their daily work environment, continued research should demonstrate which strategies can best support these workers' opportunities while prioritizing occupational health, appropriate food preparation techniques, and vending licences.

Waste pickers have experienced wide-scale legal recognition in Brazil and are acknowledged for their value as environmental stewards (Dias, 2011). This study illustrates that there may be potential to reframe the role of street vendors as further supporters of environmental stewardship, considering many vendors' collection of recyclable materials and maintenance of the consumer environment before the deployment of the municipal waste collector force upon the conclusion of the event. However, it is important to acknowledge that the legal recognition that waste pickers have gained in recent years may differ from the *de facto* recognition they receive from businesses and individuals.

An additional question that emerges from this study is the viability of utilizing the cooperative model to support legal and economic development within the informal, unlicensed street vending population, considering the cooperative model's role in enhancing the legal and economic development of the waste picking profession in Brazil. While there are vehicles for protection and advocacy organizations addressing many of the challenges inhibiting street vendors' economic gains, subsequent analysis should address the broader success of the cooperative workers' model in Brazil and the potential of this system for improving vendors' socioeconomic conditions. Additionally, advocacy for the development of a network of street vendors in Salvador may confer some of these association-based benefits. However, the question remains whether the association of unlicensed vendors may inadvertently expose them to other vulnerabilities (e.g. registration of vendors posing increased risks of facing legal consequences from the municipality).

As a result of the limited time for cleaning during the event, it became apparent that, although municipal cleaners successfully gathered consumer waste, there were not enough waste pickers or engaged street vendors to collect recyclables, leading to an abundance of these materials being thrown into garbage trucks or possibly finding their way to the ocean. The inability for all available recyclable materials to be collected during the event demonstrates an opportunity for the entry of additional waste pickers and increased facilitation of street vendors' collection of waste. Heightened advocacy efforts should support an improved relationship between the municipality of Salvador and unlicensed vendors to support their recognition as official workers and pursue further economic opportunities without being repeatedly penalized by the commerce inspection police (*Fiscalização or Rapa*).

Finally, the 2019-2021 COVID-19 pandemic has truly impacted informal workers and has shifted the nature of Carnival in Brazil, as municipalities, consumers, and workers alike had to adjust the nature of celebrating due to expected distancing and safety requirements. The 2021 street parades were cancelled which meant reduced financial opportunity for vendors, waste pickers, and other workers, as this event is a prime time for informal workers to increase earnings. The conglomerate of beer producers, AMBEV, has just announced two schemes to provide some compensation for loss of income for workers, one for waste pickers⁸ and one specifically for street vendors (through the

⁸ Waste pickers who engaged in last year's partnership between AMBEV and ANCAT (National Association of Catadores and Catadoras of Recycling Materials – linked to MNCR) will receive a cash grant of R\$100 benefitting 2,800 workers across five cities in Brazil including Salvador.

platform “help street vendors”).⁹ This is good news; however, it barely makes up for the loss of income workers used to earn at Carnival events. As hopes are raised with the advent of COVID-19 vaccines, workers look forward to the 2022 Carnival parade. Planning for 2022 should start now. Municipal leaders, the industry, and civil society organizations should start placing consideration on: how to improve work conditions of both waste pickers and vendors; new health protocols, adequate infrastructure, educational campaigns; and helping to bring the waste picker and street vendor groups together so they can strategize on how best to cooperate towards increased safety, secured income and ways to better fulfill their environmental role in curbing plastic pollution in the coastal city of Salvador.

References

ANCAT (2019) Relatório Final de Monitoramento das Centrais de Reciclagem do Carnaval de Salvador de 2019. (internal document).

“Brasil em Síntese: Salvador, Bahia.” IBGE. n.d. <<https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/ba/salvador/panorama>>

Cabral, Sandro, Dale Krane and Fagner Dantas. 2011. “Carnival in Salvador, Brazil: A Case Study of Inter-organizational Collaboration.” 2011 JCPA/ICPA-Forum Paper.

Dias, Sonia Maria. 2011. “Overview of the Legal Framework for Social Inclusion in Solid Waste Management in Brazil.” WIEGO Policy Brief (Urban Policies) N°6. <https://www.wiego.org/publications/overview-legal-framework-inclusion-informal-recyclers-solid-waste-management-brazil>

Sandy, Matt. 2016. “These 12 Facts Explain Why Rio’s Carnival is the World’s Biggest Party.” *Time Magazine*.

Tibbetts, John. 2002. “Coastal Cities: Living on the Edge.” *Environmental Health Perspectives* 110(11): A674-A681.

Withnall, Adam. 2014. “Rio Carnival 2014 in numbers: Brazil kicks off the greatest party on earth tomorrow – but where will the Samba parades take you?” *The Independent*.

⁹ Vendors can enroll in the platform which entitles them to receive R\$150 upfront and bonus tickers that can increase their grant to up R\$255. The scheme is expected to benefit 20,000 vendors across Brazil.



Figure 12 – The 2021 street parades were cancelled because of COVID-19 concerns, but it is recommended that planning for 2022 should start now.



About WIEGO

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) is a global network focused on empowering the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy to secure their livelihoods. We believe all workers should have equal economic opportunities, rights, protection and voice. WIEGO promotes change by improving statistics and expanding knowledge on the informal economy, building networks and capacity among informal worker organizations and, jointly with the networks and organizations, influencing local, national and international policies. Visit www.wiego.org