

Captions:

RIO, RECYCLING THE RECYCLERS

Photographic essay by

Marie-Noëlle BERTRAND

Brazil 2012



Photo 01 - July 2012. The Rio Summit has just finished leaving much disillusion in its wake. In Jardim Gramacho, one month after the closure of the dump that harmed the locals as much as it helped them, the only trace of the summit that was to be seen was in the newspapers collected for recycling...



Photo 02 - In 2012, three co-operatives were running in Jardim Gramacho, with two others being planned, all trying to corner part of the rubbish collection and recycling market. They compete with private sector companies for a potentially huge market.



Photo 03 - Established in 2008, the ACAMJG cooperative was recognised officially only in the Spring of 2011. It started working in December of the same year.



Photo 04 - The three cooperatives pooled their resources to buy a common rubbish truck. They prospect companies and government administrations, winning contracts to recover their rubbish which they pick up on site.



Photo 05 - The rubbish trucks unload everything in a heap. The *catadores* then fill huge drums with rubbish which they then empty onto sorting benches.



Photo 06 - A truck has just dumped a pile of old school books. Ailton, fifteen years old, separates the pages from the covers – paper sells for 16 to 45 centavos (0,6 to 20 Euro cents) according to its quality. He started working in a *deposito* (sorting centre) before moving onto the *rampa*. When it closed, he joined the ACAMJG cooperative. Three adolescents work at the co-op, out of a total workforce of fifteen.



Photo 07 - Rubbish is sorted by category, weighed, and sold on to bulk buyers. In July 2012, plastic water containers were worth 70 centavos (less than 0,3 Euro cents) per kilo.



Photo 08 - The ACAMJG co-op, in the late afternoon. The bags are filled, ready to go to the bulk buyers who will pay by weight.



Photo 09 - What is the difference between working in a co-op and working “freelance” on the open dump? According to those who work there, the co-ops provide more job security and give access to social welfare.....but on the other hand, wages are not great and the co-ops limit your free time.



Photo 10 - *CataSonhos* (literally, “Dreams of Cata”...) is the latest of the co-ops to have started working. Access to social welfare, participative management, job stability...the cooperative model attracts many who seek to work there.



Photo 11 - Up until June 3rd last, the Skeleton *favela* lived in rhythm with the big dump. Every morning and evening, hundreds of people passed along Tocantins Street to get to the *cima*. Now you would think that the main street of the slum had been frozen in a block of amber. Some shopkeepers are thinking of leaving. Many come from the poorer Nordeste province.



Photo 12 - Baptists, Evangelists or Catholics... Christianity has left its mark everywhere, and most of the population here is religious.



Photo 13 - *Pipas* (kites) are always fluttering across the sky of the *favela*. Surrounded by haphazard electrical installations, they can prove fatal. Stories of electrocution abound.



Photo 14 - Horse-drawn carts are still a favoured means of transport, especially for building materials.



Photo 15 - In the Skeleton *favela*, huts cost around 100 reais (38,50€) per month, but a brick house nearly 300 reais (a little more than 115€)



Photo 16 - There are two streams close to the old dump, in which some residents catch some fish for dinner.



Photo 17 - Dona Kattia is not part of any cooperative, nor of any other company. She continues to collect whatever she finds in the streets and sells it on to whomever wants to buy it.



Photo 18 - Roughly every two months, a mobile administrative unit come to Jardim Gramacho. The residents seize the opportunity to marry officially.



Photo 19 - There are churches on almost every street corner. Sometimes in very makeshift buildings, they are as much places for residents to meet as for prayer. Handouts of food and clothing are organised there to help the residents of the *favela*. Here, at the Igreja do Nazareno, hairdressers and estheticians propose their services.

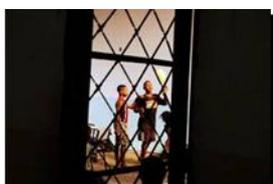


Photo 20 - Many women live alone, raising children that they had when still very young. The churches organise activities for them some afternoons.