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# The waste pickers : nothing gets lost ! ; Les récupérateurs de déchets : rien ne se perd !

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## Abstract (in French and/or English)

In 1975, the anthropologist Larissa Lomnitz compared the wastepickers of Mexico City to "hunters-gatherers" in the urban jungle who can face the problem of the survival only with their own skills, their capacity to use cunning and social solidarity. The marginal is a collector of the waste of urban and industrial system". We will question the relevance of this image while, today, the wastepickers are more and more integrated into local, national and international channels, a new category of "waste businessmen", often former scavengers themselves emerges progressively. Without entirely refuting the purpose of L. Lomnitz, the competition on the valuable waste as an economic resource, the interest of small or multinational companies, the "sustainable development" as an environmental ideology or the necessity to produce secondary raw materials overturn the positions, practices and discourses of the actors. Thus, the "informal" wastepickers try to adapt individually and to get organized collectively. They claim social rights, right to work, the right to the city locate them away from the figure of the hunter-gatherer. Based on a multiscale and qualitative and theoretical approach, with a comparative perspective, this communication proposes to specify and differentiate the roles, the positions and the places of those who are wrongly often perceived and classified in wrong way as a homogeneous group of wastepickers.

**Keywords:** wastepickers, marginal, hunters, gatherers

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