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COMMUNITY-BASED WASTE MANAGEMENT: DRIVERS OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE  
IN MORRO DOS PRAZERES AND BABILÔNIA, RIO DE JANEIRO

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**TITLE:** Community-based waste management: drivers of local institutional change in Morro dos Prazeres, Rio de Janeiro

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT:** Morro dos Prazeres, a *favela* located in the city center of Rio de Janeiro, constitutes a case of an ongoing community-based initiative related to a change in collective action towards waste disposal and management. The territory is characterized by a hilly topography, high density of poor housing settlements, high criminal violence rates and insufficient public services, especially sanitation, education and health, among others, which makes waste-related activities even more challenging. During decades, an inefficient top-down waste management system and the absence of community organized responses were prevalent. In addition, several factors (including attitudes and perceptions towards waste by local dwellers) interacting through negative feedbacks reinforced the status quo, resulting in ineffective waste collection, a dirty environment and a high incidence of health-related risks. However, in a given point in time, the system suffered a radical change, towards a model dominated by much more effective community-based waste management. Such shift (which took place in 2013) was triggered by the project called *Reciclação* (“recyclaction”). The project aims to introduce a different perspective on waste collection and destination, and to reduce the socio-environmental risk caused by wrong waste-related behavior. The project follows the guidelines of the National Policy on Solid Waste, in which different sectors of society - the government, companies and consumers - have shared responsibility towards waste disposal, aiming to reuse or recycle whenever possible. With one year of existence, this community-based waste management system managed to reduce by 50% the waste produced inside the community. Currently the project is collectively coordinated by a Working Group formed by different partners such as local institutions, the municipal urban sanitation company, a social investment institution, private companies, non-governmental organizations and the city hall. It has the goal of being the first *favela* that recycles 100% of the waste produced.

This paper aims to identify the drivers of local institutional change that have influenced community-based waste management, through an historical analysis of the context of that change. In particular, our goal is to characterize changes in attitudes that triggered collective action towards community-based waste management. The new situation (after the shift in the management system) is reinforced by positive feedbacks created by changes in waste-related practices. We were able to identify four dimensions of analysis: risks as the level of awareness of causes and consequences of health-related threats born by wastes (costs); incentives as the level of reinforcement of actions (benefits); the commons as the perception about the relationship between public/private spaces and material flow as the resulting material throughput.

First through an analysis of institutional change, we will characterize the old and new management systems, and describe how the formal vs. informal rules of the system have changed. Second, we will look at changes with regards risk perceptions, attitudes towards waste (perceptions about costs and benefits of waste management) and attitudes towards common spaces and shared responsibility for handling properly waste, and the implications such factors had for waste-management-related practices and behavior, in order to assess to what extent the change in the system of waste management has induced such changes. In addition, we will carry out a stakeholder analysis (including a leadership analysis), for assessing the role of different actors in steering institutional change.

Understanding the historical context where a community-based resource management system was born and is still successful in creating participatory alternatives for the problem of ineffectiveness of the public system can help to systematize the determinants of changes in the management system and how such shift induced changes in the attitudes and behavior of dwellers, thus creating the positive feedbacks necessary for the endurance of the new regime.