schaft lokaler Akteure, die sich ihres gemeinsamen Standes zur fremden Gesellschaft bewusst sind. Die Komplizenschaft ist dabei Plessners Schlagworten Distanz, Zeremonie und Takt nicht grundsätzlich unähnlich. Sowohl die Reaktionen der Komplizenschaft als auch des Taktes betonen die Uneigentlichkeit der Kommunikation. Ihre Stoßrichtung ist jedoch eine andere: Während Höflichkeit und Takt die gesellschaftliche Interaktion ermöglichen, erhalten die Reaktionen der Komplizenschaft die gemeinschaftliche Interaktion aufrecht.

Die Indirektheiten und Uneigentlichkeit dieser Arten von Kommunikation beinhalten ein reflektives Element: Akteure müssen sich unterschiedlicher Sprachregister und Wertevorstellungen bewusst sein – beispielsweise der Gegensätze von offizieller Parteirhetorik und den Erwartungen von Nachbarn und Verwandten bei Familienfeiern. Wenn wir moralisches Handeln als Bezug auf Werte verstehen und Ethik als Reflektion der Moral, dann lassen sich die uneigentlichen Handlungen der Komplizenschaft als ethisch bezeichnen: Um Komplize zu werden bedarf es zwar keiner systematischen Reflektion verschiedener Moralsysteme, aber eine gewisse implizite, routinierte und verkörperte Reflektion ist notwendig. Zwischen Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft steht damit die Komplizenschaft für eine Ethik des Alltags – nicht ein von Philosophen erfordertes Ethos einer modernen Gesellschaft, sondern eine Ethik die ethnografisch gefunden wird.

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Recycling Entrepreneurs

Reflections on the Enterprise of "Scavenging" Beverage Containers in Berlin and New York

Judith Pajo

Introduction

This article proposes that the individuals, who earn their living through collecting, sorting, and redeeming the refund value beverage containers that are discarded as waste in many cities and towns across

Fig. 1: Refundable bottles and cans have been removed from this informal pile of litter in a busy commercial street in Berlin (© J. Pajo 2006).

several European Union countries as well as in the United States and elsewhere in the world, are not the scavengers they are commonly thought to be but should instead be understood as entrepreneurs.

I ground this proposition on formal research just as much as on informal empirical observations as well as on a series of reflections. On the end of formal research is the fieldwork I conducted in Berlin, Germany, largely in the years 2005 and 2006. On the informal end are ethnographic observations made in New York City since the year 2008, which, despite their informal status, played an important role in prompting the insights that led to this article and continued to support the proposition advanced here through the finalization of this writing. The very key to conceptualizing the proposition of the recycling entrepreneurs lies with reflections on ethnography as well as reflections on the theory of entrepreneurship.

Reflections on Fieldwork in Berlin

About a decade ago, I conducted fieldwork in Berlin for my dissertation in cultural anthropology. The focus of my dissertation, however, was not the informal economy of refund value containers but rather broadly the culture of recycling in Germany. As Germany stands out internationally on several environmental counts, and as I had been inspired by what I had read from George Marcus (1995) and Arjun Appadurai (1996) as a young graduate student, I had come up with the idea of going to a major urban site in Germany to "follow the garbage" in its complete routes from origination points in households to final destinations, that in Germany include not just landfills and incinerators but also composting plants and a range of sorting and recycling facilities.

After having done some preliminary work in 2003 and 2004, I went to Berlin in 2005 with a research plan as well as the full intention to follow it as best as I could. So week after week I pursued opportunities of participant observation and interviewees in the rather broad range of contexts involved in the routes of garbage. I got to see, how household garbage was disposed of and collected at the curb, and, though my greatest interest and attraction was in the garbage routes that concluded with recycling, I also got to ride on trucks of the BSR, the municipal sanitation department that cleans up the streets, take part in early morning street cleaning shifts near the KaDeWe, the famed department store, volunteer in the street clean up around the soccer stadium during the FIFA World Cup, not to mention eating green gummy-frogs at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for toad tunnels in the northeastern corner of Berlin. I also got to speak with a number of government technocrats, with aids to elected officials, with occupants of various roles at a number of non-governmental organizations and recycling businesses, as well as with a fair number of people who were members of the German recycling ecosystem by virtue of living in Berlin and having to dispose of their garbage on a regular basis. The collectors of refund value bottles and cans that I met and interviewed were but a small handful of the many people I encountered.

What is more, I also do not recall myself thinking about entrepreneurship while in the field in Germany. Even through the completion of my dissertation, I thought of the subset of my Berlin informants that share the focus of the present article with their New York counterparts as "the homeless." That is how the recycling entrepreneurs are generally viewed in Germany. I reflect that not only did I share that native understanding at the time; indeed, for a long time after the field I did not question it.

Occasionally, I might have thought of the German "homeless" when seeing people collect re-

cyclables in New York City. But it was not until the morning of the first day in the year 2012 that sights and sounds, which had by that time repeatedly entered through the window of my apartment in New York City for some years, hit the threshold of prompting me to reflect on the drive of the informal economy spun around the refund value beverage containers that well-off urban consumers freely discard as waste.

Having recognized the entrepreneurial drive and business rationality of those who selectively collect refund value containers from the curb refuse just on the spur of the moment, I eventually began to look into media reports and scholarly literature to see how these entrepreneurs were written about. I soon confirmed that I had indeed recognized a contraction. In the written coverage that they received, bottle and can collectors were conceptualized as "scavengers." But whereas scavenging, similar to homelessness, evokes states of lack, disruption, and decay, selectively removing refund value containers from the urban waste stream clearly earns people their keep. It even appears to be a kind of keep-earning activity that contributes to urban sustainability. And there also is that something else in the industrious activity that took place in front of my eyes both in New York and in Berlin, and that is dismissed in both the conceptual frameworks of both homelessness and of scavenging: industriousness itself.

Struck by these insights, I proceeded with spelling out the assumptions that are made in conceptualizing the collectors of refund value beverage containers as urban scavengers. Somehow I assumed that revisiting the ethnographic data I had saved from the days of my dissertation fieldwork would produce the evidence to counter many if not all of these assumptions. So over the course of the year 2012, besides working on different research, I reread the bulk of my fieldnotes from Berlin.

Instead of the evidence I sought, however, revisiting my old fieldnotes produced discomfort. As counter-evidence to entrenched views of scavenging, what I found scattered through my records seemed flaky at best. I was often even left with the feeling that, were I to conduct my dissertation fieldwork anew, a good deal of what I had done then I would now do differently. Rhetorical questions cropped up. How could I find the evidence I sought in my old fieldnotes if debunking the assumptions commonly made about the collectors of refund value containers had not been the aim of my research? Indeed, how could I find in my fieldnotes evidence against assumptions that back then I did not question myself?

As dissertation fieldwork felt distant and what eventually became this present article that fiercely resisted being written, I came to freshly appreciate the stream of alternate renditions of fieldwork in the anthropological canon. There was one significant difference, however. Starting with Malinowski's diaries (Malinowski 1989 [1967]), such alternative renditions of the fieldwork experience are deeply personal in nature, whether or not the diaries that are written for publication can always be taken "in the strict sense of the term." But in the case at hand, aside from my discomfort at facing the blunders and timidity of the inexperienced researcher that had once been myself, the reflections were anything but personal. And right in there was the tension. While the stylistic canon pushed this article in the direction of a diary, the argument I had come to through reflection and which I sought to spell out was that of "The Argonauts" (Malinowski 1984 [1922]). It was sometime around this point that I noticed that the word "enterprise," which is largely absent from contemporary anthropological discourses, appeared in the very subtitle of Malinowski's foundational text.

As my research standards had in between matured, for a brief time I considered collecting fresh data to write this article. Obviously, I could now conduct research in New York City: after all, the entrepreneurs were just out there on the street. Yet despite promising to produce the evidence I thought I needed, conducting fresh fieldwork in New York somehow felt odd and superfluous. After some reflection, I realized that the question at hand was not to empirically demonstrate that the recycling entrepreneurs act on their own volition, exercise rationality, and exhibit industriousness. Such facts, the "ethnographic data" that we normally go to the field to pursue, were out there for anyone to see. It was not the visuals that were missing from the picture that anyone could see; it was the meaning. What I needed to do was to show that the commonplace facts about the street collectors of refund value containers that anyone can observe at any time in New York and in Berlin meant that these recycling entrepreneurs should be understood as entrepreneurs. While the task could use descriptive ethnographic snippets, it depended most of all on conceptual reflection: understanding what makes an entrepreneur an entrepreneur.

I crossed the disciplinary boundaries and, over 2012 and 2013, continuously on the side of other research and writing, I read as much entrepreneurship theory as I could. Eventually I put together the elements that appeared to help make better sense of the informal economy that removes refund value beverage containers from the waste stream in cities like New York and Berlin. These theoretical threads then guided my interpretation of those scraps of em-

pirical data I had, both formal and informal, and, by 2014, finalize the article. The following paragraphs highlight the key points of this loopy path to the recycling entrepreneurship proposition as well as the proposition's significance.

Informal Ethnography in New York City

It is January 1, just a few hours after fireworks have ushered in the New Year 2012 with much boom boom. A middle-aged fellow goes about his business in the still empty streets of this well-off residential patch of Brooklyn, New York. He wears dark pants and a dark coat, lighter-color sneakers, and what look like two scarves, one of which is patterned. Diagonally across his back is strapped a backpack.

Even before I see him, I see two blue large-size shopping carts that are loaded with five or six plastic bags. The bags are clear white and clear sky blue in color. Each of the bags seems to have been filled with aluminum beer cans, aluminum soda cans, plastic soda bottles, and plastic water bottles. The fellow is collecting the empties left from the previous night's partygoers.

I live on this street since some years, but do not feel the way some natives suggest one feels living here. So for a moment I revel in the thought that my explanation for the collector's swift pace would demonstrate to an anthropologist that I do have "native understanding." Namely, I realize that though this would be too early an hour for municipal curbside collection, not to mention that there is no collection on a holiday, the reason why this one fellow is already out in the street is that he competes other collectors of refund value beverage containers who may, at any moment now, appear at the corner. See, for this part of Brooklyn, Park Slope, I could now act an anthropologist's "key informant."

As the fellow walks and pulls, he pays attention to the contents of the plastic bags that have been left hanging the previous night on the one or the other spike of the fences that make up the liminal space between public street and private residence. On this particular street, the private residence part consists of what are called "brownstones," mostly semi-attached three-story town homes mostly built at the start of the 20th century that are nowadays continuously restored to visually convey in ornate reddish brown what the current owners must imagine the grandeur of 19th-century's residential architecture to have looked like. Down on the street the fellow nods hello to a 21st-century dog walker and stops at the crossing. His decisions are quick and firm: this bag with bottles and cans to take, that one to pass.

A scene like this must have unfolded in front of my eyes enough times for me to notice that, at least at this early hour of the day, plastic and aluminum wins over glass: plastic bottles and aluminum cans are collected, glass bottles are passed. Now the thought strikes me that, were a business school graduate to analyze what is going on in terms of the potential of value redemption versus the combined

Fig. 2: Refundable bottles and cans have been informally sorted and collected on a quiet residential street in New York City (© J. Pajo 2012).

pains of handling weight and volume and transportation, plastic and aluminum containers would represent better ratios than glass ones.

For a moment, the collector parks his two carts. One of them rolls on a little, bumping onto one of the cars that are parked bumper-to-bumper: the liability of achieving the desired high-volume lightweight load on this street of brownstones. The fellow pulls the cart back and stabilizes it. Then he walks into the yard of my building. About five seconds pass before he pulls both carts again and takes a right turn at the corner. As he disappears from my sight I realize that the odd thought of the business school graduate running a cost/benefit analysis prompted something I must have not knowingly intended. I start to question my understanding of the informal economy that removes recyclable refund value beverage containers from the waste stream with the kind of efficiency we normally attribute to a business education.

So who was that fellow I just saw? By his looks he would not be confused for a business school graduate. But he clearly did act on the kind of analytical conclusions that a business school graduate would predictably reach. And why was he exerting himself at this early hour of this first day of the year? Because his gear and threads made him appear "poor"?

The Context of the Informal Recycling Economy

Contextually, the bottle and can collectors at the focus of this article are to be understood in light of the environmental policies that have been put in place in a number of wealthier democracies to motivate the prime participants of the formal economy, producers and consumers alike, to recycle more and waste less. As of this writing, 10 US states including New York, nine European Union countries including Germany, all of Canada except for the Nunavut Territory, Australia, Switzerland, South Korea, Norway, Iceland, and others, have in place some form of the refund value beverage container legislation.

A "bottle bill," as such legislation is commonly referred to, is meant to provide economic incentives directly to the consumer to return certain beverage containers for recycling or reuse rather than dispose of them with the waste. Bottle bills mandate that the consumer be charged a deposit when purchasing a bottled beverage, typically in the range of four to 45 cents of the US dollar; the deposit can be refunded in full upon the return of the empty container to the same point of purchase or at a designated alternative redemption point.

While the legislated deposit/redemption values vary among countries, states, and provinces, and while discussions abound about the merits of higher versus lower values, it is a fact that, for one nominal reason or another, better-off consumers are not willing to reclaim at least a portion of the container deposits that they pay. Consequently, a hard-to-quantify share of the bottles and cans for which the refundable deposit has been paid does end up in the consumer waste.

It is here that the informal economy of bottle and can collection enters the picture of recycling and urban sustainability: the trashed refund value containers would remain in the waste were it not for that anonymous collector who swiftly worked the streets of Park Slope in the early hours of New Year's Day 2012, as well as for his numerous competitors and peers who day after day and hour after hour rake the streets of other neighborhoods in all five boroughs of New York City, Berlin, and elsewhere.

How Collectors of Bottles and Cans Are (Mis)Understood

In the US setting, the common word for the anonymous character of this article's prompt is "scavenger." With the scavenger being defined primarily as an animal that feeds on carrion, dead plants, or human refuse, the very word casts the urban collectors of refundable deposit containers into the category of the undesired urban animal: people whose survival lies in other people's garbage. Media reporting substantiates the depth at which this concept is ingrained in our culture. In about 25 reports I read from more than 800 results returned in a search of the ProQuest database of US newspapers published after 1950, "scavengers" are nearly uniformly depicted in terms of the waste they deal with as well as of the broader conditions of urban poverty, deprivation, downward mobility, and related undesirable circumstances.

Reading through such reports reveals that the collectors of refund value containers are conceptually approached from a set of recurring perspectives. I identify eight key perspectives. There are views that

1) scavengers "pick trash" and live "on trash" or "off trash";
2) theirs is a literally putrid version of poverty;
3) scavengers are homeless;
4) they are disconnected individuals;
5) any cash that scavengers get their hands on they use either for securing the most basic of food

calories or alternatively to feed alcohol or drug addictions;
6) the urban scavengers are "unemployed" and passive;
7) scavengers live in unsanitary disorder and that scavenging brings about unsanitary disorder;
8) scavengers steal and destroy.

When these perspectives are thus articulated one notices that, despite being held commonly and jointly, they are often empirically improbable and logically inconsistent. For example, how can scavengers be passive at the same time as they allegedly steal or actively cause disorder? Or, if it is refundable value recyclables that are being collected, then the collectors are not really living off trash. Or, if the collection is for redemption, then it is not for consumption – not to mention that human beings cannot consume empty bottles or cans.

In settings where no bottle bills exist, similar assumptions made about the scavengers can be similarly shown to not accurately represent the facts. In a study of scavengers across countries such as Brazil, India, and Bangladesh, where the object of collection is not redemption for refundable deposit but sale for scrap material, Martín F. Medina debunks what he calls "myths" about the scavengers (2007). A number of those myths overlap with the perspectives I have listed above, and the evidence brought against them is convincing: similar to their peers in the wealthier countries, the scavengers of Brazil, India, and Bangladesh are not universally homeless, they are not the poorest of the poor, and they are not unemployed for they do work to earn their keep.

Reflections on Destruction and Agency

The view that I listed last, however, the common perspective that scavengers steal and destroy, calls for special attention. While scavenging is associated with stealing in certain media reporting, the theme of destruction is present also in scholarship. Sympathizing with the human plight of the scavengers, some scholarly writing turns this angle on its head. Teresa Gowan has developed the theme of destruction as outcome of systemic failure: her urban ethnography finds that the scavengers are unfortunate victims, they are destroyed by our socioeconomic system (2010). Other scholarship can be extrapolated to imply that scavengers do contribute to some destruction after all. Samantha MacBride presents an exceptional combination of breadth of perspective with depth of understanding when illuminating contradictions of recycling that escape not only the lay public but also many concerned environmentalists. She shows that state-level bottle bills and municipal-level curbside collection "siphon tonnage from one another" (2012: 82).

By extrapolation, the sentiments that would arguably arise at municipal bodies charged with sanitation would be that, by way of playing a part in the kind of selective recycling that is mandated by state bottle bills, urban scavenging diminishes the municipal curbside collection enterprise. Especially when municipal curbside collection is to be financed, even if only partially, from revenues generated by selling waste to large commercial recyclers, then the selective removal of aluminum and of recyclable plastic makes waste less commercially valuable and indeed diminishes municipal revenues. And this helps one better understand New York City's position that domestic solid waste is municipal property once the consumer disposes of it, and that unauthorized removal of residential recyclable material constitutes theft, as set out in Title 16, Section 118 of the New York City Health and Administrative Code. Though I have never heard of bottle and can collectors being pursued, scavenging the recyclables and waste in New York City amounts to stealing. The law forbids even provision of transportation to those who collect from the trash: "Except for an authorized employee or agent of the DSNY, it shall be unlawful for any person to disturb, remove, or transport by motor vehicle any amount of recyclable material (placed out at curbside) for collection or removal by the Department" (New York City Department of Sanitation 2009: 27).

The themes of stealing and destruction turn out to be of special importance to understanding the informal economy revolving around redemption value containers and its counterpart in world locales where the incentive lies with scrap materials instead of refundable deposits. Of all the common perspectives on the scavengers that pop up when one looks at the ways in which they are commonly understood, the view that the scavengers are thieves is the only one that assigns them agency. Discussions of theoretical perspectives under the prism of the structure/agency dichotomy may not appear as fashionable today as they were a few decades ago (Giddens 1986; Ortner 1984). But the structure/agency prism casts the common misunderstanding of scavengers in useful light: it appears to me that, with the exception of the view that they are thieves, all the common understanding of scavengers are structure perspectives.

And it is in this very way, as structure perspectives, that these understandings fail to account for the fellow of this article's prompt and for his peers I encountered in Berlin. In other words, while it can

be empirically shown that scrap material scavengers may be not the poorest of the poor, the problem with the "myth" about their dire poverty is more fundamental: it is a matter of a wrong perspective. We can understand what we are missing, and we can understand the collectors better if instead of asking whether they are the poorest of the poor we ask whether all of the poorest of the poor scavenge for scrap materials. More useful than questioning whether all the scavengers in the US or Germany are homeless is to ask: Do all the American homeless and all the German homeless collect and redeem refund value bottles and cans?

When imposing structure understandings upon the collectors, we typically fail to account for their agency. That is why the bulk of the common understandings of "scavengers" end up being misunderstandings: they fail to account for what sets these entrepreneurial individuals apart from other individuals in the various socioeconomic cohorts in which they may otherwise also be categorized. In the most significant ways, the scavengers are not scavengers.

What Makes the Entrepreneur

But what makes the entrepreneur? How can one prove that the urban collectors of refund value containers actually are entrepreneurs?

In order to understand entrepreneurship, I had to start with the most basic of questions. Indeed, first of all, I consulted the dictionaries for what the word "entrepreneur" is usually taken to signify and connote. Not surprisingly, the entrepreneur is normally conceptualized in the context of the business world. In this context, an entrepreneur is someone who starts, or assembles, or organizes a company, then engages in operating it, and ultimately sells it to another business or to investors such as in a public offering. As certain specifics of this understanding have great relevance in the business world, discussions abound on topics such as the proper scope of an entrepreneur's activity. Does the entrepreneur personally do everything from starting a new company to selling it? Or does she or he simply get things started and then mobilize others to do the rest?

Entrepreneurship theory, however, clearly allows for the context of starting and then selling a business to be but the default context of entrepreneurship, not its essential characteristic. Entrepreneurship theory generally conceptualizes entrepreneurship as being essentially about certain features of an activity undertaken rather than about the specifics of its socioeconomic context. There appears to be general acceptance that, in the broadest sense, an entrepreneur is an individual who takes a risk in pursuing an opportunity that he or she has identified and developed, with the aim of achieving something desirable, which typically is economic gain.

Of the key contributors to entrepreneurship theory that Anders Kjellman and Mikael Ehrsten list in their comprehensive review, "A Theory of Homo Entreprenaurus," it is only the early theorists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo who emphasize the "capitalist" aspect of the entrepreneur (2005). Most of the later theorizing of entrepreneurship focuses on entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors, motivation and decision-making, opportunity and innovation. There seems to be implicit consensus in the field that, whereas economic gain is desirable for many entrepreneurs, the most important aspects of entrepreneurship are the identification of opportunity or the development of opportunity, and the assumption of risk. For example, Richard Cantillon, Jean-Baptiste Say, and Frank Knight have focused on the entrepreneur as risk taker and Joseph Schumpeter and more recently William Baumol have viewed innovation as the key aspect of entrepreneurship (Kjellman and Ehrsten 2005).

I reflect that the two aspects are closely related. Entrepreneurs do not do what is normally done or what one is normally expected to do. Identifying and developing opportunity therefore imply creativity. Given that entrepreneurial activity is not the most heavily beaten path, identifying and developing opportunity also imply assumption of risk: the chance for success cannot be known in the path that has not been beaten, the chance of failure is considerable.

It is these very patterns of creative pursuit of opportunity and of assumption of risk that characterize the collection of refund value bottles and cans in New York and in Berlin and elsewhere. The bottle and can collectors I encountered in Berlin took things in their own hands. The opportunity they pursued certainly had an economic dimension in the refund value they claimed. But they showed creativity also in the sense of charting out paths of earning their keep outside of the heavily beaten paths of charity. Likewise, the risks involved in their undertaking surpassed the practical risks of physical efforts that could go unrewarded. The greater risk they took was for their entrepreneurship to be misunderstood and, therefore, to lead to social denigration. The pursuit of the greater opportunity of dignity carried the greater risk that, in the process, dignity would be lost.

Old Fieldnotes Cobbler: Three Fellows at the Bahnhofsmission

Three fellows are conversing. "If you sell newspapers, you are a professional beggar," says one. "I could never stick my hand inside a garbage container and pull out a bottle," comes the reply from the apparent addressee of the remark. Even though the third fellow does not contribute words, a grimace indicates that he too participates in the interchange.

This all takes place at one of Berlin's three "Bahnhofsmissionen," a charity that occupies rooms in all three of Berlin's train stations. Literally translating into "Train Station Mission," the Bahnhofsmission pursues its calling of aiding people in need, specifically by aiding those on the move, including migrants. The Berlin homeless who collect redemption bottles and cans are among the recyclers that I am here to study. And it is well known that they come to this venue for free meals, showers, and toilets, and distributions of clothing. So I made my way to the Bahnhofsmission this freezing winter morning with a plan of observations and to interview the venue's director and some of the visitors.

After a bit of waiting, which I spend on my feet, occasionally looking at but not sitting on the green chair with metal legs that I was offered upon arrival, the director appears and invites me to a cup of tea. With tea in hand, I get a chance to speak with the three fellows.

The one to whom the professional beggar remark was addressed presents himself as a West German not originally from Berlin. Some 13 years ago, then at the age of 20, he had a motorcycle accident that left him disabled. He shows me proof of that status: his disability card. When he moved to Berlin shortly after the accident, he was already not able to work. He is a friendly fellow and he wants to show me the contents of his canvas handbag: a bunch of copies of the *Straßenfeger*, literally "*The Street Sweepers*," a weekly that is printed by a non-profit organization for Berlin's homeless. The papers are protected in a plastic sleeve. I notice that the logo of an environmental organization that the canvas bag bears remains recognizable despite the bag's heavy wear and color fade. While fussing with his baseball cap, which matches his canvas bag in both wear and fade, the fellow explains that he buys a few copies of the *Straßenfeger* every morning, at 0.40 € per copy, to sell for 1.20 €. The reason why he arrives at the train station very early in the morning is to avoid competition. There are many who peddle the *Straßenfeger*, he explains, but they cannot rise as early as he does because they drink and because they do drugs. He takes pride in typically being done for the day by the time that his competitors show up. It takes him no more than about four hours a day to earn a living, he estimates. He can be that efficient because he knows the arrival times of long-distance trains. And he also knows that it is more rewarding to sell papers to the managerial types. He dislikes the way in which the people in suits and ties drink their coffee and eat their sandwiches and their bakery pastries. Such people would throw away a cup of coffee after sipping just one sip, he explains; or they would throw a perfect bakery bun after taking just one bite out of it, when someone should drink it all and eat that all! However, these people also buy the *Straßenfeger*. And they do not pay just the cover price for it. Often this fellow would receive 2 € for the paper instead of just 1.20 €. Sometimes people even give 5 €. According to the rules set by the publishers of the *Straßenfeger*, he is not supposed to accept such bounty. But how could he not? It would be a waste! The money he earns by selling the papers buys him everything that he needs. Because what he needs is not much, he comments. Shelter costs 8 € per night. Shelter means a basement room that he shares with two other homeless men. Those two also happen to be the other reason for him to get out to work very early in the morning. It is not easy to share a room with two people who smell, he confines. To ensure that I understand what he means he emphasizes that his roommates do not work. By contrast, he showers frequently. He cannot stand smelling to his own self, not to mention that if he were to smell, he would not be able to sell as many papers. Then he pulls out of his canvas bag a copy of the *Straßenfeger* and opens the cover to reveal the second page. This column, he explains, about the new welfare law, contains advice on the procedures for claiming the benefits. He believes that this column is what is really selling the *Straßenfeger* these days: there is no work for people.

Not surprisingly, the fellow who uttered the professional beggar remark earns his money by collecting and redeeming recyclable bottles and cans. It is often from the trash that he collects the refundables, he admits, but he does not have to beg to earn a living. And his words may not sound too friendly sometimes, but that is because he is a straightforward person. Indeed, he does seem like a comradely fellow. Also originally not from Berlin, he moved to the city from his East German town after the country's reunification. He moved here upon losing his employment. He was in his 40s then and did not smoke or drink. And he took good care of himself from the beginning, because he did not want to appear homeless. I already had noticed his clean

shave. But now he opens his brand-name backpack, received from the Red Cross he explains, to show me his several items of personal hygiene that he carries with him at all times: a razor, a toothbrush, a tube of toothpaste, a bar of soap, as well as new socks and clean and neatly folded underwear. Socks and underwear are in short supply at the recycled clothing bank, he explains. Not to mention that they are usually heavily worn and even have holes. He is a human being, so he has to feel human underneath. So he gets his socks and underwear from the Kaufhof, an originally Western department store that now has numerous branches throughout Berlin. His preferred Kaufhof store is the one on Alexanderplatz, a large new store in a prominent plaza of the former East Berlin. Not only does he buy his own socks and underwear, he also washes them. That is another way in which he is different from the other homeless that he knows, he says. The other homeless throw away their soiled socks and soiled underwear. That kind of behavior is wasteful, whereas one should not be wasteful. Another way in which this fellow embodies the opposite of wastefulness is by not paying for shelter. Instead, he sleeps outdoors, in the park. Only on a day like today, when it is extremely cold, only in the winter does he sleep indoors. But even then he still does not pay for shelter. He shows me his brand-name gloves and hat. With these on he can sleep in the subway stations that the City of Berlin keeps open on such cold nights. With gloves and hat on he is warm. The only cash he gets is from collecting bottles and cans from the streets and returning them to supermarkets for cash. The reason why he cannot claim welfare, he says, is that he does not have an address. He is well aware that he would be eligible for per diem payments, but in order to claim such support he would have to take the subway to Potsdam each day. He feels he does not have the money for such trips and also does not want to ride the train for free; because he does not want to steal. He is the kind of fellow who wants to earn his money and pay for what he needs. He wants not only to be a human being but a respected member of the society.

The third fellow does not like to use too many words. He describes himself as an old time Berliner. He is now in his mid-50s and he has lived all of his life in Berlin. He is unemployed and says that he has been on welfare for as long as he can remember. He also considers himself to be an expert in the new welfare law. It is the new welfare rules that forced him out of his old apartment. No, the reason was that the energy prices were rising. And, that the water was shut off one day. And, that he forgot his key to his apartment when he went to pee outside. He was told that the gas boiler in his old place had grown into too large a cost. So he was to move into a smaller dwelling, just one and one half rooms. But even with a home, he says, the welfare check is not enough for leading a decent life. So what is he then to do when he finds refund bottles and cans in the streets? This rhetorical question turns out to require re-wording, repetition, and grimaces. Is he to let the euros stand out there in the street? Is he to let discarded bottles and cans pollute the environment? He admits that he does not hesitate reaching into garbage cans for the refundables. However, the fact is that often people place the recyclables not inside but on the side of garbage containers. It is not that people mean to pollute the streets, he concludes, they are in fact donating the refunds to collectors such as he. So what is he to do?

Urban Sustainability, Human Dignity, Public Policy

I would like to highlight what I believe are the key points of significance to the proposition that the collectors of refund value beverage containers are entrepreneurs: one, their activity contributes to urban environmental sustainability; two, with the right policy support, it can do so even more; three, there is human dignity in this entrepreneurship.

At present, substantial if not quantifiable amounts of recyclable materials that would otherwise end up in landfills or incinerators are recycled simply because the entrepreneurial collectors of the informal economy selectively remove them from the consumer waste stream. It is clear that such diversion would not happen in the absence of an economic incentive. Whereas in New York and in Berlin the incentive consists of the refundable deposit that relatively wealthier consumers pay for the bottles of their bottled drinks but are not willing to redeem, the incentive may not necessarily need to be in the form of higher refundable values, or even come from bottle bills. In less wealthy world locales, the incentive provided by the market demands for scrap metal is shown to attract similar entrepreneurial activity that effectively removes metal from the waste stream. In either context, policy can help. With a positive rather than negative understanding of such entrepreneurial activity, the informal economy of collection can be better supported and possibly even be encouraged to emerge from informality and integrate in the formal economy.

But is the environmental contribution of the recycling entrepreneurs really that special? Could that same diversion and recycling not take place through curbside collection programs with enhanced pow-

ers? The answers to such questions can be only speculative. What appears plausible is that such alternative ways of achieving similar diversion and recycling outcomes would come likely at a higher cost to taxpayers and not likely at a similarly efficient use of energy resources. For policy, encouraging and supporting this entrepreneurship may be the economic winner and almost certainly the environmental winner.

Understanding the recycling entrepreneurs of the informal economy as agents who advance the cause of urban environmental sustainability opens up possibilities for legislation and policy that do not pitch economic interests against environmental interests. Recycling entrepreneurship in the informal economy shows that we may be able to enhance the sustainability of urban environments while at the same time possibly integrating this one sector of the informal economy into the formal economy.

Last but not least, recognizing the currently misunderstood collectors of refundable value beverage containers of the informal economy for the recycling entrepreneurs that their actions suggest they really are promises to benefit general social well-being without adding to the costs of social welfare: When we recognize that the recycling entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs, we will have restored dignity to their economic activity.

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History of Migration and Contributions of Indian Women in Zambia

Comparison with South African Indian Women

Kamini Krishna

Introduction

The history of Indian women's participation in Zambian economy, from their inception, has somehow received no attention from scholars. It is important to note that researchers and historians who wrote on the Indian Diaspora in Africa either neglected or overlooked an important part of the diaspora history. Women who gradually joined contributed in economic sectors first indirectly and then directly. As such, it can be argued that the Indian women in the economic sectors of Zambia have been largely ignored. Hence, this article looks into Indian women's contribution in Zambia from the beginning and the growth through time of their contribution in the economic sectors both directly and indirectly. Due to the absence of written records, this article is based