

– DISPLACING INFORMALITY: Rights and Legitimacy in Belo Horizonte, Brazil

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Abstract

This article compares two cases of displacement suffered by informal workers and informal residents in the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte, both connected to the hosting of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. It asks the following question: considering that the right to work and the right to housing are both enshrined in the Brazilian Constitution, why do claims upon space based on those constitutional rights have different degrees of legitimacy? Two cases are analysed in detail. The first one concerns a group of informal workers displaced from their workspace for the modernization of the local stadium. The second one tells the story of an informal settlement where 90 families were displaced due to the construction of a flyover designed to improve access to the football stadium. This article engages with current postcolonial debates around urban informality, tackling two points that have been absent from these discussions. First, it compares two ways of informally occupying urban space—for work and for housing—revealing the distinct degrees of legitimacy embedded in such practices due to pre-existing institutional arrangements. Second, it emphasizes the connection between work and home through the life strategies and place-making practices of the urban poor.

Introduction

Aparecida is a poor black woman who is over 50 years old.¹ She is part of the group of informal workers—the ‘Mineirão stallholders’—who used to work in the surroundings of Mineirão, Belo Horizonte’s main football stadium, until it closed its doors for modernization works in 2010 in anticipation of the World Cup. She lives in a small *favela* (informal settlement) in the northern region of Belo Horizonte. The land where the settlement is located belongs to a private company and she is facing eviction from her small *barraco* (shack). The location has been chosen by the City Hall to be the site of Belo Horizonte’s new coach station. Aparecida is not sure what will happen in the future and told me that, initially, the government wanted them out without any compensation. However, now, after a group of activists and public defenders intervened, she is positive she is going to get something back in the form of either cash or housing (an apartment). During the interview, she compares the experiences of being displaced from her house and from her workspace:

I compare here and there, in the Mineirão, [it is] like here, right? Those who spent a lot of time [there] ... we had that thing arranged, [we were] working with that for a long time ... [so] it became almost like our home. I compare [the Mineirão] with the situation here, it is just the same (interview with Aparecida, Mineirão stallholder, 21 December 2015).²

Aparecida is legally entitled to compensation for her home being taken from her, but what about the displacement from her workspace she suffered? If both places were

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1 In order to protect the identity of interviewees, all names have been anonymized.

2 Interviews were conducted in Portuguese. All the transcribed extracts were translated by the author.

like 'home' to her, why aren't her rights recognized equally? Accessing urban space for labour can be vital to those struggling for a place in the city but, unlike the right to housing, discussions about the right to work have been largely disassociated from space (Schindler, 2014; Brown, 2015). This article is thus concerned with this gap in the literature and asks the following question: considering that the right to work and the right to housing are both enshrined in the Brazilian Constitution, why do claims upon space based on those constitutional rights have different degrees of legitimacy?

By addressing the above question, this article engages with current postcolonial debates around urban informality (Roy, 2005). I argue that informality is a process which is affected by multiple state and non-state actors (Hackenbroch, 2011; Schindler, 2014). Moreover, I concur with views of the state as a processual and porous entity (T. Mitchell, 2006; Painter, 2006) that not only affects the production of informality, as argued by Roy (2005), but is itself also affected by informal processes. I thus show how the urban informality framework can shed new light on the debate about urban space production in Brazil. Moreover, I explore how discussions about urban informality, which have mainly focused on Southeast Asian and African contexts (Varley, 2013), can benefit from incorporating the realities of Latin American cities. Such an endeavour can broaden the scope of the urban informality approach, aiding the task of theorizing from the South (Robinson, 2006; Watson, 2009).

I intend to contribute by tackling two points that have been absent from these debates. First, I compare two ways of informally occupying urban space—for work and for housing—revealing the different degrees of legitimacy embedded in such practices due to pre-existing institutional arrangements. Second, I emphasize the connection between work and home through the life strategies and place-making practices of the urban poor.

In Brazil, the 'illegal' occupation of land for housing purposes has been partially recognized through the City Statute, a federal law approved in 2001 that regulates the right to housing and the social function of urban property (Fernandes, 2012). Many have already discussed the role of the working classes in the process of building cities from scratch (Fischer *et al.*, 2014) through the practice of autoconstruction in the peripheries (Maricato, 1979; Holston, 1991), which Caldeira (2016) has recently labelled 'peripheral urbanization'. The movement of insurgent citizens emerging from these autoconstructed peripheries and claiming the right to the city they have built was paramount in the development of progressive legislation and institutions (Holston, 2008).

Nonetheless, to date both the academic literature and institutional development have only focused on the informal occupation of space for housing purposes. In this article I contrast the former with another way of building urban space, through the occupation of land for urban livelihoods (Brown, 2015). Through this comparison I intend to show how the struggles of the urban poor involve distinct informal practices that are not given equal legitimacy. In Brazil, the way that peripheral urbanization evolved has partially shaped the state, explaining the differential legitimacy enjoyed by distinct informal practices. Nevertheless, these practices are connected through the survival strategies of marginalized populations and are thus essential for their urban belonging. Ultimately, this shows how the constitutional right to work and right to housing are interrelated, and how their fulfilment is dependent upon access to urban space.

To achieve these aims I analyse qualitative data relating to two cases of displacement in the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte, both connected to Brazil's hosting of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. The data were gathered during five months of fieldwork between July and December 2015. The first case focuses on a group of approximately 150 families of informal workers known as the 'Mineirão Stallholders', displaced from their workspace due to the modernization of the local football stadium. The second case concerns an informal settlement, the 'Vila Recanto UFMG', from which 90 families were evicted and relocated to make way for a flyover project designed to improve public access to the football stadium.

The rest of this article is divided into four parts. The next section presents some of the recent debates in urban informality and the theoretical framework for the article. This is followed by a presentation of the two case studies, discussing the findings from the qualitative research (interviews, field notes and archival documents). First there is a discussion of the families' displacement and their struggle for appropriate compensation. This is followed by an analysis of the stallholders' case, emphasizing the connection between informal spaces, the workspace and the home. The final section concludes with a discussion about the findings in light of the theory on informality.

Informality in the context of peripheral urbanization

– Towards a relational approach to urban informality

Recent developments in postcolonial urban theory have called for an understanding of informality as a mode of urbanization, rejecting the standard dichotomy of the formal and the informal as two separate sectors (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004; Roy, 2005; Watson, 2009). Within this perspective, the state plays 'an active role in shaping fluid formal-informal relationships, rather than being absent or a weak background factor' (Lintelo, 2017: 77). Informality is thus regarded not as the exception to planning, or what lies outside the realm of planners' control, but rather as something produced by the state. The latter is described as the 'sovereign' that sits both outside the law and has the monopoly over it (Agamben, 1998). Therefore, the 'exception', or the temporary suspension of the law, is enacted by the state apparatus to (de)legitimize according to the interests at play.

In this context, some forms of informality commonly found in places such as skyscrapers and gated communities are not only permitted but even encouraged, seen as desired urban forms in consonance with the world-class city aesthetics (Ghertner, 2015). Others, such as informal settlements, are perceived as threats to capital accumulation and are therefore prone to constant threats of displacement. For Roy (2005) the distinct legitimacy enjoyed by different forms of informality can be perceived as a direct outcome of the state's action through its planning and legal apparatuses. In her approach, the state is perceived as the holder of the power 'to determine what is informal and what is not, and to determine which forms of informality will thrive and which will disappear' (Roy, 2005: 149). According to this perspective, (in)formality thus emerges through the process by which the state draws the line between what is inside and outside the rule of law.

For the Brazilian case, Telles (2010) proposes a very similar framework. Her work explores the interstices between informal, illegal and illicit practices in the urban spaces of São Paulo, focusing on the power dynamics and negotiations which govern the everyday life of the 'globalized modern city'. She argues that:

[In] its most violent forms, it is not properly about a legal-illegal porosity, neither is it about uncertain frontiers between the informal, the illegal and the illicit. Rather, it is about the suspension of such frontiers to the extent that the difference between the law and its transgression is nullified (Telles, 2010: 117; author's translation).

Such situations characterize what Agamben (1998) has called the states of exception through which some bodies, classified as 'delinquents', are turned into *homo sacer*,³ whose execution is 'authorized' by the suspension of the law. Therefore

3 *Homo sacer* represents bare life and is a term borrowed from the Roman period meaning sacred man or living dead. It is used in relation to 'life that can be killed with impunity, but not sacrificed' (K. Mitchell, 2006: 96). The *homo sacer* therefore constitutes an exception to the divine law—because it cannot be sacrificed—and to juridical law—because it can be killed without punishment.

Telles (2010) reaches a similar conclusion to the one proposed by Roy (2005) in which informality (illegality) operates as a mode of governance.⁴ From her perspective, illegality is not a straightforward category, but rather a tool for the management of bodies that exposes 'the way in which state sovereignty is affected through the power of suspending its own law' (Telles, 2010: 218).

Empirical research engaging with urban informality has focused on how (in) formality emerges as an outcome of never-ending negotiations and struggles among various actors (Kudva, 2009; Hackenbroch, 2011; Schindler, 2014; Crossa, 2016). What is interesting about such perspectives is that they challenge the idea that legitimacy is something that emanates uniquely from the state and its apparatus, as is assumed in the approach of Roy (2005). Research has revealed that other agents, such as the middle-classes, can play an important role in legitimizing informal practices (Schindler, 2016). Others, such as Crossa (2016), have argued that although the formal/informal split is deployed by the state as a strategic narrative to justify displacement, 'it is not only the state who actively participates in the construction of this narrative, but so-called informal people themselves by enacting the formal/informal divide in contexts of displacement and exclusion' (*ibid.*: 300).

Analysing the case of street hawkers struggling against displacement in Delhi, Schindler (2014) explored the struggles and negotiations performed by state and non-state actors, showing how the boundaries of the formal/informal constantly shifted in this process. He concludes that:

power is dispersed across a range of sites, and rests in varying degrees with a host of state and non-state actors, none of whom are able to unilaterally impose their preferred vision of formality. Instead, these interest groups negotiate and struggle to define (in)formality and gain control over, or access to, urban space (Schindler, 2014: 2597).

Also looking at Delhi, Lintelo (2017: 78) uses the concept of 'public authority' to show how 'state fragmentation; informal practices by the state; and horizontal contestations within society and within the state' are key aspects contributing to the (re) production of informality. Hackenbroch (2011) presents a similar analysis for the case of Dhaka, examining the negotiation process that determines the rules of access to public space. Drawing on Lefebvre's (1968) and Soja's (1998) contributions, she argues that statutory (formal, regulated) and informal spheres do not represent the poles of a binary relationship, but rather interlock in a complex process of negotiation. Every space should, thus, be understood as negotiated and ever-shifting due to the changing nature of power structures. Therefore, claims over space are dependent upon the capacity of different agents to legitimize them, which relates to their access to power and power relations.

In tandem, these discussions point to the need to look beyond 'studies that "vertically" juxtapose state and society' (Lintelo, 2017: 78) to produce careful examinations of the uneven distribution of power among the wide range of actors engaging in urban governance. In this article, I argue that the state is not the only institution able to convey legitimacy to informal practices. The state is regarded as 'part of [a] wider constellation of institutions and actors' (*ibid.*) participating in urban governance. I thus follow Roy's (2005) call to abandon rigid separations between the formal and informal, but seek to expand her framework by focusing on the formation and transgression of these boundaries, which involves multiple state and non-state agents. Moreover, I propose an approach inspired by Massey's (2005) concept of relational space, which has two main implications for the understanding of informality.

4 Despite the similarities, in the work of Telles (2010) violence emerges as a central regulatory practice. That is understandable, considering its relevance in the Brazilian context.

First, I foreground the spatial and relational characters of distinct informal practices, emphasizing their connection through the life strategies of the urban poor. This point has been explored by Kudva (2009), who discussed the mutually constitutive political and spatial practices of informality in her study of India. She argues that switching the focus to space allows a holistic approach that emphasizes, for instance, the integration between distinct informal practices. A similar argument has been made by Lago (2011), whose analyses of the lives of precarious workers in the peripheries of Rio de Janeiro points to the need to understand the complex relations between places of work and the home, moving beyond bounded understandings of the fields of economic production and social reproduction.

Second, I adopt a nuanced view of the state that highlights the blurriness of state/society relations (Painter, 2006). I thus explore how informal practices may also affect the state, revealing how urban space and the state are mutually constituted processes. This discussion will be contextualized in relation to the process of peripheral urbanization in Brazil, which I analyse in the next section, paying attention to how the state has been modified by the struggles of insurgent citizens (Holston, 2008).

– Informal urban space production and institutional change in Brazil

It has been argued that the social production of urban space in Brazil is increasingly promoted through informal processes (Fernandes, 2007). Caldeira (2016) uses the term ‘peripheral urbanization’ to describe the process through which residents informally build their own houses and neighbourhoods, becoming themselves agents of urbanization. In this account, residents are not passive consumers of space, regulated by others, but are building cities themselves from scratch (Fischer *et al.*, 2014). In doing so, these citizens ‘also propose a city with a different order of citizenship’ (Holston, 2009: 246). For Holston (2009), the entanglement of urbanization and democracy has produced the ‘insurgent citizenship’ phenomenon, that is, a crowd of marginalized citizens who contest their exclusion, claiming their right to the city that they have built.

During the 1980s, the re-democratization process in Brazil opened a new window for popular participation (Caldeira and Holston, 2015). In 1987, the National Constituent Assembly was formed to draw up the country’s new democratic constitution. The possibility of submitting popular amendments involved several sections of society in the process. This was the case with the Urban Reform Proposal, which was drafted by urban popular movements from different regions of the country (Maricato, 1988; Costa, 1989). As a direct result of such mobilizations, the 1988 constitution included a chapter dedicated to urban policy (Fernandes, 1995).

The City Statute, which came into effect as a federal law in 2001, regulates the original constitutional chapter on urban policy. It was the result of more than ten years of discussion ‘within and beyond the National Congress’ (Fernandes, 2007: 212). The legislation, which was considered very progressive, explicitly recognizes the ‘right to the city’ (Lefebvre, 1968) as a collective right; this was a major change in the ‘long-standing, individualistic tradition of civil law’ (Fernandes, 2007: 212). However, the debates surrounding the City Statute were also influenced by the emergent neoliberal urban paradigm. As a result, some of its instruments⁵ have been co-opted by urban ‘growth machines’ (Molotch, 1976; Rolnik, 2013). Nonetheless, despite all the critiques, it is undeniable that the City Statute made progress in meeting the demands of the urban

5 For instance, the ‘urban operations consortium’ (UOC) is an instrument that, although potentially redistributive, has been used to fuel real-estate speculation. The City Statute establishes the possibility of the government issuing bonds in the form of Certificates of Additional Construction Potential (CEPAC) to fund UOCs. The CEPACs are bonds that give their holder the right to build above permitted limits. The advantage for the government is the possibility of collecting resources in advance. However, recent experience has shown that in practice the CEPACs engender financialization and real-estate speculation (Maricato and Ferreira, 2002; Sánchez and Broudehoux, 2013).

reform agenda, which was mainly focused on guaranteeing the right to participation in the planning process and access to secure land tenure.

Research focusing on the landless workers movement in Brazil shows how social movements have learned how to employ strategies that exploit the contradictory nature of the Brazilian law as far as land is concerned: 'This involves not only making use of the legal tools available, but also the construction of alternative interpretations of the law in an attempt to generate jurisprudential solutions that are favourable to the struggle for land and social justice' (Sousa Santos and Carlet, 2009: 69). It also reveals how informal spaces are not unregulated voids, and that informal practices are also conditioned by state law (Chiodelli, 2016; Boamah and Walker, 2017; Rosa, 2017).

According to Varley (2013), moving beyond the binary understanding of formal/informal requires not only recognizing that informality is present in elite spaces, but also that the law is present in informal spaces. The practices of those inhabiting informal spaces, she argues, are shaped by their perceptions of the law. A similar argument is developed by Chiodelli and Moroni (2014), who contend that unauthorized settlements do not exist outside the law, but rather are influenced by it. Their approach rejects the compliance/non-compliance binary as the only possible reaction to the law. They argue instead for a broader understanding that also considers the unintentional effects of legislation, that is, actions that do not adhere to the prescriptions of the rules but somehow take them into account.

In this article, I explore how informal spaces produce new interpretations of the law that might, in some circumstances, later become institutionalized state practices. For the Brazilian case, the legal developments that culminated with the adoption of the City Statute reveal how urban space production and the state are mutually constituted processes. The implementation of this new legal apparatus thus represents both the result of accumulated struggles of the past and a new arena for contestation. This institutional environment enables social movements for housing and informal settlements facing displacement to contest evictions through a legal process or, if those take place, at least to negotiate around legally guaranteed entitlements to compensation.

However, despite such advances, the theoretical debates and legal developments mentioned above have been solely focused on the production of urban space for housing. While a growing share of the population takes part in the so-called informal economy, not much has been written—either in Brazil or globally—about the struggles of the marginalized urban poor to secure their right to work space (Brown, 2015). Although access to housing is unquestionably important, for many, guaranteeing permanence in the city is also a matter of accessing work space (Schindler, 2014). Brown (2015) has noted that:

While the need for secure tenure for housing land has been widely recognized, land for urban livelihoods has received limited attention although the informal economy provides the majority of jobs in many developing country cities; meanwhile land in the public domain is excluded from land debates despite its central role in accommodating street vending and other urban work (Brown, 2015: 239).

In Brazil, like all Latin American countries, the weight of the informal economy is considerable and the debates regarding this phenomenon are almost as old as the urbanization process itself.⁶ Nonetheless, many cities have strict rules against the activities of informal workers in the urban space.⁷ Some scholars have analysed how

6 In Brazil, according to the latest data available, 51.1% of total non-agricultural employment is informal (OECD, 2009).

7 For an overview, see Bhowmik (2012).

street vendors are constantly threatened with forced eviction (Crossa, 2009; Schindler, 2014; Itikawa, 2016). They have weak arrangements with the local states that do not guarantee any kind of social protection or secure access to space (Itikawa, 2016). Street vendors are also able to resist, however, challenging and subverting neoliberal entrepreneurial strategies aimed at suppressing their presence in the urban environment (Crossa, 2009). Nonetheless, at least in the case of Brazil, their struggles have not yet been translated into greater social protection, which is still attached to formal forms of employment.⁸ Moreover, the right to work is not conceptualized in relation to space, and the production of urban space through labour does not translate into a right to work space. In this article, I argue for the need to understand the connections between working, housing and the city, showing how, for the urban poor, guaranteeing access to the full entitlements of citizenship is often dependent upon accessing urban space for multiple purposes.

In the next section, I explore how past struggles have distinctively shaped the institutional channels available for informal workers and informal residents to have their claims to space validated. These topics are explored through the analysis of two 'informal' groups displaced in the context of preparation for the 2014 FIFA World Cup. I am interested in how the urban poor's claims upon space are affected by spatial restructuring. Mega-events—as moments of intense urban change in which 'growth machine' (Molotch, 1976) alliances are at full operation—provide an interesting lens through which to interrogate issues of social justice. In both the cases studied, citizens claim their rights through the occupation and production of urban space. Nonetheless, once displaced, their likelihood of being compensated or relocated by the state varies, shaped by historically embedded relationships. Such arrangements influence how struggles unravel and ultimately which claims are legitimized.

Displacing informality: mega-events, spatial restructuring and the urban poor

– Displacing work informality: the case of the Mineirão stallholders

Belo Horizonte's main football stadium, 'Estádio Governador Magalhães Pinto', popularly known as 'Mineirão', was founded in 1965 and was managed by the state of Minas Gerais until 2010, when it was closed for renovation in anticipation of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. The modernization was completed through a public-private partnership (PPP) between the state and the Minas Arena consortium.⁹ The latter was to be responsible for managing the new multipurpose arena until 2037. The total cost of renovation was BRL 666 million (GBP 213 million). Of this, BRL 400 million (GBP 128 million) was funded by the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) through a special subsidized credit line created exclusively for funding the construction/renovation of the 12 World Cup host stadia.¹⁰ The modernization of Mineirão followed the same trend described by Gaffney (2010) for the case of Maracanã in Rio de Janeiro. That is, it entailed the reduction of overall capacity, especially by eliminating popular seats (the '*geral*'¹¹). The new stadium therefore caters for supporters with higher disposable income

8 It is interesting to note that both the housing movement and the labour movement are at the root of the foundation of the Workers' Party (PT). Lula, the former president of Brazil and most prominent politician from the PT, emerged from the movement of unionized workers in São Paulo.

9 The Minas Arena consortium is formed by 'HAP—Engenharia LTDA', 'EGESA Engenharia S/A' and 'CONSTRUCAP—CCPS Engenharia e Comércio S/A'. Various irregularities have been pointed out in the PPP contract signed. For two years there were political negotiations in the state assembly to set up a parliamentary inquiry, but in the end this did not come about.

10 Values in pounds sterling (GBP) are calculated using the official exchange rate of 3 February 2013 (GBP 1.00/BRL 3.13), the date of the stadium's re-inauguration.

11 The '*geral*' was a section of the stands with low ticket prices and unreserved seats. According to Gaffney (2010: 13): 'The *geral* was a low-lying area of concrete that encircled the field. This "populist heart" of the stadium was a functional and symbolic space that allowed for the inclusion of all social sectors in public life because of the low ticket prices'.

and symbolizes the exclusionary character of the world-class aesthetics associated with mega-events (Shin, 2012; Shin and Li, 2013; Ghertner, 2015).

Before the renovation, the stadium was surrounded by an open space, and on match days several informal street vendors would sell food and beverages for football fans. When the stadium was closed in 2010, this informal local economy was dismantled, and after the stadium was re-opened in 2013, the 80,000 m² space became privatized and enclosed. Within this process, a group of approximately 150 families that had historically occupied the space—some of them since the stadium's initial inauguration—were displaced.

These workers, known as the 'Mineirão stallholders', remained 'informal' during the entire period of their activity. However, before their displacement they had been able to claim the urban space for over 50 years through a process similar to what Bayat (2004) has described as the 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary', defined as the 'non-collective, but prolonged, direct action by individuals and families to acquire the basic necessities of life (land for shelter, urban collective consumption, informal work, business opportunities, and public space) in a quiet and unassuming, yet illegal, fashion' (*ibid.*: 81). The Mineirão stallholders enjoyed the legitimacy that emanated from the culture embedded in that space and from a weak and non-confrontational relation with the state. Their presence was 'institutionalized' through their constant negotiation with multiple state authorities, including the stadium managers, the local inspection agents and the police.

After the stadium was closed for renovation, the stallholders were displaced without any plans for relocation. Although they did not fight against the displacement itself, since 2010 they have been demanding their right to resume their activities in the stadium. During the stadium modernization process, they were identified as an affected group in the environmental impact report which is a legal requirement for large impact projects.¹² From the stallholders' perspective, however, the mitigation initiative included in the PPP contract is inadequate: it only required the company to provide training in order for them to join the labour market, with no rights to compensation and/or relocation.¹³ Nevertheless, although the stadium was often crowded with informal traders, the stallholders were the only group recognized by the state. This points to a complex 'differentiation within informality' (Roy, 2005: 149) and to a politics of difference among informal traders (Crossa, 2016).

Municipal law No. 8,616 (2003), known as the Code of Placements (*Código de Posturas*), prohibits the activities of street vendors in public spaces without an appropriate licence. The law has been deployed by the municipal government as justification for denying the stallholders the right of relocation to streets near the stadium, while the PPP contract hinders their chances of resuming their activities in the same place as before. Therefore, in the absence of a clear 'legal' basis for their demands, the stallholders have deployed many different strategies and discourses to legitimize their claim. Nonetheless, their efforts proved unsuccessful and they have been 'replaced' by a new group of licensed stallholders selected through a public tender process which was launched by the local government at the end of 2015. Tendering was open to all those interested and contracts were awarded to those who made the highest bids. In my interviews with local state officials, they argued that they were unable to give the displaced stallholders an 'advantage', as that would be unfair to other potential bidders.

12 The renovation project was considered as a large impact project by the Municipal Secretary of the Environment (DOP-MG, Gustavo Penna and Práxis, 2010). In these cases, Belo Horizonte's municipal legislation requires a compulsory impact study, which is required for the issuing of the 'environmental licence' for construction. See Araújo (2009) for a discussion of environmental impact studies on urban spaces in the context of Belo Horizonte.

13 Environment restriction No. 18 of the PPP contract requires the submission of periodic reports regarding the actions taken to provide the Mineirão stallholders with appropriate capacitation and training programmes to promote their inclusion in the formal trade and/or fair trade sector.

– Displacing house informality: the case of the Vila Recanto UFMG

In January 2010, also following the announcement of Belo Horizonte as a host city for the FIFA event, a series of investments in the city's infrastructure were announced. Originally, eight interventions in urban mobility were foreseen, amounting to a total spending of BRL 1.5 billion (GBP 530 million).¹⁴ The 'BRT: Antônio Carlos/Pedro I' project envisioned widening the avenues connecting the city centre to the airport and the installation of a bus rapid transit (BRT) system along their length. The total investment of BRL 688 million (GBP 242.5 million) was divided between the municipal (44.4%) and federal governments (55.6%), the latter using funding from Caixa, a federal public bank. A large majority of the municipal resources—BRL 300 million (GBP 106 million)—was designated to pay for land expropriation. One of the targeted areas was a piece of land located across the street from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), where the City Hall intended to build a flyover to improve public access to the stadium. On this land there was an *ocupação*¹⁵ known as 'Vila Recanto UFMG' where 90 families were residing.

The Vila Recanto UFMG was an informal settlement formed in the mid-1990s by a group of squatters who occupied a vacant lot—7070 Antônio Carlos Avenue—after a car shop declared bankruptcy and abandoned the building. The Pampulha region, where the settlement was located, is comprised of mostly middle-class neighbourhoods, and it is well-provided with infrastructure and access to services. In April 2010, municipal decree No. 13,955 listed the land where Vila Recanto was located as the property of a private company—BH Imóveis—while also declaring the land expropriated for public utility reasons. In this process, the company was compensated because of its ownership of the land while a new round of negotiations started regarding the displacement of the residents by the local government. Eventually, in 2011, all 90 families residing in the space were displaced.

Similarly to the case of the informal stallholders, the residents of Vila Recanto UFMG did not fight against their displacement. At the beginning of the process, there was some suggestion of doing so, but such views were eventually discouraged. Residents were instead convinced to accept the compensation to which they were legally entitled. In Belo Horizonte, the Municipal Housing Policy (PMH)—established in 1993 as a result of years of struggle by the housing movement—regulates displacements in informal settlements caused by public construction or environmental risk.¹⁶ The Urbanizing Company of Belo Horizonte (URBEL) was the municipal institution in charge of managing the displacement of the *ocupação*, being the organization responsible for handling evictions in the so-called 'informal city', in accordance with municipal law.¹⁷ The URBEL's work with the residents lasted for roughly one year from the first meeting in May 2010 until the demolition of the settlement in May 2011.

In the end, all of the families received compensation either in cash or in land. The latter involved relocation to houses within Belo Horizonte's metropolitan region or to the social housing apartments provided—see Table 1 for a summary. The compensation was calculated by considering only the value of the buildings and not the value of the land, as regulated by law. Those who opted for social housing were relocated to apartments on the border between Santo André neighbourhood and one of Belo Horizonte's *favelas*, Pedreira Prado Lopes. The estate is located closer to the city

14 Values in pounds sterling (GBP) are calculated using the official exchange rate of 13 January 2010 (GBP 1.00/BRL 2.84), the date on which the investments were announced.

15 The term *ocupação*, which literally translates as 'occupation', is used in this article as a synonym for informal settlement. This choice intends to highlight the political meaning of the term, which is used by social movements 'to refer to an area of private or public land that does not fulfil its social function as property and is occupied by poor residents (mostly organized by militant housing movements)' (Nascimento, 2016: 1).

16 For a discussion of the PMH in Belo Horizonte and the policy's trajectory, see Bedé (2005).

17 Another organ, SUDECAP, manages displacements in formal areas, that is, where residents own property titles.

TABLE 1 Summary of the project: works on the Antônio Carlos Avenue/Abraão Caran Avenue intersection

Modality	Concluded	New address	Total expenditure with all resettlements and compensations	Average compensation
Social housing	28	'Vila Viva Residential' in Pedreira Prado Lopes district, Belo Horizonte	-	-
Assisted resettlement	9	Diverse	BRL 1,874,849	BRL 30,735
Cash compensation	53	-	GBP 713,440	GBP 11,696

NOTE: Values in pounds sterling (GBP) calculated using the official exchange rate of 1 May 2011 (GBP1.00/BRL2.63), the approximate date on which compensations were paid.

SOURCE: The Urbanizing Company of Belo Horizonte (URBEL)

centre and within 10 km of the original occupation site. Moreover, all those relocated to apartments now live in the same building.

Most of the residents who opted for cash compensation or assisted resettlement (PROAS)¹⁸ now live in the peripheries of the metropolitan region, as the in-cash compensation was inadequate for them to purchase a house in a location with similar conditions to those found at Pampulha. Regarding those who opted for social housing apartments, some then sold them and moved to houses in the peripheries, closer to family, or into other occupations. Those who remained in the social housing building are often unhappy about living in apartments where they cannot grow anything or renovate the interior to accommodate family necessities.

Several pertinent criticisms could be made of the displacement/resettlement process. One could debate the peripheralization of poverty, the denial of residents' legal right to receive compensation for the land as well (at least as regards the older residents), and the denial of their right to the city. However, municipal (and federal) law did partially recognize the residents' rights and no-one left without some form of compensation.

– The partial recognition of rights versus an institutional void

Previous struggles in social movements for the right to housing have engendered the creation of institutions and laws that partly recognize the rights of informal residents such as those in Vila Recanto UFMG (Holston, 2008; Rolnik, 2013). On the other hand, the informal stallholders did not enjoy any rights to compensation and/or relocation. In Belo Horizonte, as in many other places where informal housing is widespread, the movement for housing has succeeded, albeit partially, in modifying the state and creating mechanisms that encompass the rights of the urban poor to urban land for housing.

Belo Horizonte was one of the first Brazilian cities to implement policies of *favela* upgrading. The Pro-*favela* programme, instituted by a 1983 municipal law¹⁹ (Fernandes, 1995), allowed for partial recognition of the rights of *favela* dwellers to basic services. In 1986, the URBEL was created to be in charge of the regularization and improvement of informal settlements. From 1993 onwards, evictions in informal settlements were regulated by the local law and compensation schemes were established. In this context, however, displaced residents are often unable to fight for better levels of compensation or for their right to stay put. Since the law sets out the rightful compensation, affected populations must accept these conditions without any room for further negotiation.

18 PROAS is the municipal programme for assisted resettlement that targets families evicted from informal houses due to public construction projects or geological risk. Assisted families can choose a house located in non-risk areas within the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte up to a value of BRL 40,000.

19 The Pro-*favela* programme was instituted through municipal law No. 3,532/1983, which benefited from the legal opening engendered by federal law No. 6,766/1979 to regulate urban land division.

In comparison, despite the centrality of the so-called informal economy for the survival strategies of the urban poor, there has been little debate regarding informal workers' right to work space, let alone any institutional development in this direction. The situation for street vendors is quite the opposite to that of informal residents. Following the creation of a municipal law that explicitly prohibits the activity of street vendors, the local government has often persecuted workers, apprehending their products and blocking their access to urban space. Moreover, the local government has recently attempted to regulate all the existing local street markets, launching several public tenders that, similarly to the Mineirão case, always use the highest offer criterion to select the beneficiaries. This initiative has been highly criticized for promoting the *higienização* (hygienization) of such spaces, by excluding those in the most precarious situations who are unable to compete.

Once displaced, therefore, the trajectory of the two groups analysed above diverge. Spatial restructuring unevenly affects their ability to claim the right to access urban space. In most of the literature regarding peripheral urbanization (Caldeira, 2016), the role of excluded citizens in building the city through autoconstruction is emphasized, whereas the informal economy has mostly been analysed in a separate body of literature. Nevertheless, some authors (Kudva, 2009; Lago, 2011; Schindler, 2014) have been highlighting the importance of accessing urban space for informal workers who struggle to guarantee their permanence in the city.

The comparison between the two cases reveals not only how different informal spaces are treated differently by the state, but also how informal spaces can affect the state in varying ways. While the struggles of insurgent citizens created institutional channels for displaced informal residents to claim their rights, the encroachment of informal street vendors on urban space has led to the increasing criminalization of their activities without any recognition of their rights.

I therefore argue for the need to understand the informal economy beyond dualistic assumptions that have long dominated analyses of informality and the periphery in Latin America. This article aims to emphasize the importance of accessing work space for the fulfilment of citizenship, foregrounding the relations between spaces of work and the home. It is through the informal economy that a large number of workers from the periphery make a living. In the next section, therefore, I explore the connections between work and housing informality, focusing on the case of the Mineirão stallholders.

The interrelations between access to work space and urban belonging

– Accessing work space: making a living and making a home

The Mineirão stadium was inaugurated in 1965 with the capacity for 130,000 spectators. At that time, football stadia in Brazil were largely built by regional or federal states, with a clear political and populist objective. They were popular spaces, catering for the working classes and managed by the state. Since its inauguration, Mineirão was also characterized by the presence of informal street vendors in the stadium's surroundings. This informal economy was as popular as the stadium itself, becoming a space for many disadvantaged workers looking for a place to make a living. In its early days, the situation was precarious, as told by Rodrigo, who started working in the stadium in that period:

So, I started working as an employee with the popcorn cart. ... [In that period] there were only popcorn carts around the Mineirão, there was nothing more. By the way, there was not even asphalt there yet. The first games there ... it was all gravel (interview with Rodrigo, Mineirão stallholder, 4 August 2015).

In the beginning, the occupation of the space was disorganized and the informal vendors would use improvised ways to prepare and commercialize their goods. Vilma

also started working at Mineirão in this period. She and her siblings—all children—would accompany their mother to sell home-made ice-pops for the football fans. She recounts her recollections of those early days at the stadium:

When my mum started working at the Mineirão, the stadium was already there, but the people there were selling what? Skewers made in cans (*churrasco na lata*), for instance, right? ... We were very young still. We used to make a huge box [full of ice-pops], just like the one you saw outside [her house] and we took it there by bus (interview with Vilma, Mineirão stallholder, 19 November 2015).

At that time, Vilma and her siblings were all living with her mother and their stepfather. Her mother worked to bring money into the household and raise her children with almost no help from her partner. The informal trading at the stadium thus became a source of income for the whole family:

The first car my mum had was a beige Volkswagen (*fusquinha*). She bought the car with ice-pop money. Can you believe it? She saved all the coins, and saved all the ice-pop money, and then she bought a brand-new Volkswagen! (interview with Vilma, Mineirão stallholder, 19 November 2015).

Vilma's family was hence totally dependent on their work at the stadium. The income they were able to get from the ice-pop sales was used to pay the bills and the rent. Vilma's mother was uneducated, but she was able to raise all her children through her work at the stadium. The Mineirão was therefore a popular space where disadvantaged workers were able to make a living.

The case of Lucia exemplifies how being a stallholder at Mineirão allowed her family to guarantee not only their subsistence, but also some degree of social mobility. Through her activity as a street vendor, Lucia was able to build her house and give her children access to education, something she was only able to accomplish for herself later in life. She particularly recalls a certain period in the mid-2000s when the local football clubs were attracting many supporters to the stadium, which had a positive impact on her income:

It was 2007, 2006, something like that. It was a very good period for everybody ... Then I started building this house that was only a shack before. I was living here with my three kids ... Then I called the mason, he made the budget for me and I said 'Now I'll knock down this thing'. Then we stayed here and, in a little while, he built this. In the blink of an eye, I did this, two floors. Then I moved the bedroom to the upstairs and made this big living room (interview with Lucia, Mineirão stallholder, 2 December 2015).

In the interview, Lucia explained that once she heard rumours about the closing of Mineirão, she decided to invest the stall's income into building her house. Her home is an example of the autoconstructed houses discussed in the peripheral urbanization literature (Caldeira, 2016).

Lucia's story reveals how the practices of living and working informally are connected through the livelihood strategies of the urban poor (Kudva, 2009) and how spaces of living and working are mutually constituted (Lago, 2011). The informal residents of the periphery often depend on access to a workspace to build their houses and, consequently, the city. Hence, for the Mineirão workers, having access to a fixed workspace at the stadium gave them a source of steady income that allowed them to build their houses, build their lives and make a living.

Vilma, who became a stallholder herself as an adult after working in the stadium as a child, told me how she decided to start selling *Feijão tropeiro*²⁰ once she found out that Mineirão was about to close. She recalled seeking help from another worker, who taught her how to prepare the dish. Although it has not been possible to find out who started selling *tropeiro* at Mineirão or when, there is no doubt that the dish became intrinsically connected with the stallholders and the stadium. They were part of the cultural experience of going to the stadium: to arrive early and spend some time at the stalls, drinking and eating the famous *tropeiro do Mineirão*. In their narratives, the stallholders were keen to discuss their particular ways of preparing the recipe and its origins. They also often associated the *tropeiro* with their material possessions. This is the case for Vilma, who told me the story of how she managed to build her house, while showing pictures of the construction at different points in time:

This was all a ravine, look, there was no sewerage, there was nothing. Look how my house used to be without the ceiling. All of this I solved while working at Mineirão ... But then, I got this shack the way it was ... because when I realized that the Mineirão was going to close, my dear, I said: 'What? Where am I going to find the money? Where am I going to work to find the money and build the ceiling (*bater laje*) for a house this size?' Then, thank God, Lourdinha taught me how to make *tropeiro*. I learned how to make the *tropeiro* and before the Mineirão closed I still managed to save some money and buy a sofa set because I did not own even a sofa (interview with Vilma, Mineirão stallholder, 19 November 2015).

For Vilma and Lucia, having access to public space has engendered the capacity for both of them to access the rights to work and to have a house. A similar situation was related by several other workers who used to occupy the area. Over time, they have used the income from their sales to build their lives, while also transforming that space into a meaningful place for themselves and for those attending football matches. In my conversations with these workers, they told me stories about their own conviviality, the feeling of community and solidarity between them, their hardships, but also their relationship with the football fans. Although they were informal from a strictly legal point of view, their presence was associated with that space and constantly (re) negotiated with multiple state agents. They felt that they belonged and it was through their work in that space that they were also able to find their place in the city.

– The multiple effects of workspace displacement

In Brazil, the 1988 constitution extended political, civil and social rights to all. Nonetheless, many are still excluded from the exercise of and access to those rights. In other words, formal citizenship—having rights in theory—and substantive citizenship—actually having access to those rights—are not coincident categories. In the case of the stallholders, accessing the rights to housing and to work is mediated by their capacity to claim work space. In this context, their displacement from the stadium has affected the stallholders' lives negatively in several dimensions, as illustrated by the case of Aparecida, introduced at the outset of this article. Her story further reveals the connection between living and working informally. The displacement from her workspace she suffered has negatively influenced her capacity to afford rent, forcing her to move from her house to a *barraco*, where she is again facing potential displacement. The possibility of being evicted from her current home made her reflect on the differences between her living

20 *Feijão tropeiro* is a typical Brazilian dish associated mainly with Minas Gerais (although also popular in São Paulo and Goiás). It is made with beans, bacon, sausage, collard greens, eggs and manioc (cassava) flour. At the stadium, the dish was served with rice and an egg on top.

and working situation. In the same way that she is entitled to compensation because her home is being taken from her, she believes a similar principle should apply to her working condition, because the time spent working in the Mineirão stadium with the other stallholders created the sense that the space was like home to her. Nonetheless, the city (and federal) legislation only (partially) recognize her rights as an informal dweller, but not as an informal worker.

The institutional apparatus that underpins Aparecida's rights as an informal dweller are inscribed in the Municipal Housing Policy (PMH), the same local legislation that guaranteed partial compensation for the residents of Vila Recanto UFMG. This policy came about as a result of the struggles emerging from the autoconstructed peripheries, where the insurgent citizens claimed their 'rights to the city' which they had built (Holston, 2008; Caldeira, 2016). Those rights have also been incorporated in the City Statute, a federal law which is internationally celebrated for recognizing the 'right to the city' as a collective right (Fernandes, 2007). Despite its importance in meeting the demands of the urban reform agenda, the concept of 'urban space production' that has been incorporated in the City Statute does not account for the contributions of other agents—such as informal workers—in the making of the city.

The story of the Mineirão stallholders challenges such narrow understandings of urban space production, showing how their activity in the stadium has shaped that space while also engendering their capacity to belong to the city. Those workers' attachment to that place can be perceived through their constant association between the stadium and their home. During the interviews they told me about how they had 'raised their children' in that space, how their houses had all been built through their work there, and how the displacement from the stadium had affected their family life in several ways. After the modernization of the stadium, in the absence of any previous legal-institutional developments that would have legitimized their right to relocation, the disarticulation of the space also meant the loss of the arrangement that had guaranteed their access to work space.

Since their eviction, the Mineirão stallholders have been fighting for the right to resume their activities. In July 2015, the stallholders' association (ABAEM) was still very active, even though five years had passed since their displacement from the stadium. The ABAEM members met regularly at the Mineirinho, a sports arena located across the street from the Mineirão, where the association has a small office. The main purpose of those gatherings was to plan their next steps in the fight to return to the stadium, but they also functioned as a place of encounter where the stallholders could revisit their lost community. During meetings, the ABAEM workers would constantly talk about the past, recounting stories from the old Mineirão, where they belonged. One can thus conclude that in addition to impairing the workers' capacity to make a living, the displacement suffered has also engendered the same feelings of grieving and mourning described in the literature about home displacement. Atkinson (2015: 382), for instance, argues that displacement from one's neighbourhood often disrupts people's social networks while generating 'major practical problems, emotionally charged feelings of loss and a sense of trauma among those ... affected'. Investigating the consequences of gentrification, he further argues that the process often 'brought feelings of isolation and alienation as well as a deeper sense of nostalgia for changing social relations and lost connections' (*ibid.*: 382).

Although the stallholders' activity has been regulated and legitimized over time by different levels of government, in Brazil—as in many other countries—the right of street vendors to work space is not recognized in legislation. Commenting on the stallholders' situation, Juliana—the public defender in charge of the case—talks about the relationship between informality and rights:

Then I think that, in this aspect, the fact that the regional state has treated this so informally, that was prejudicial. Because afterwards, you see how life works,

right? Afterwards, you try to negotiate through a dialogue. But the right is on which side? Where are those conflicts settled? In the justice system. And what does the judiciary require? Documents, facts, data. And they are informal. You see what I mean? And that is why I believe that ... in this point, they have lost (interview with Juliana, public defender, 21 September 2015).

In the stallholders' case, therefore, the spatial restructuring caused by the World Cup represented the loss of their legitimacy, which emanated from the social arrangements embedded in that particular place which no longer existed. Displacement emerges as the loss of place—not only as a meaningful space, but also as the product of 'socially, politically and economically interconnected interactions among people, institutions and systems' (Pierce *et al.*, 2011: 59). That place, transformed by the stallholders through their activity, no longer exists, and the workers are told that they do not belong in the new stadium anymore.

Concluding remarks

Debates about urban informality are back on the international agenda following claims of the arrival of an 'urban age' (Burdett and Sudjic, 2007; Brenner and Schmid, 2014) and the 'planet of slums' (Davis, 2006). In the past, informality has been mainly understood as the absence of the state or its failure, a product of disjointed modernization (Fox, 2014). Recent developments in postcolonial urban studies have sought to challenge such binary views, arguing instead for an understanding of informality as a mode of urban governance reproduced by the state (Roy, 2005; Watson, 2009; Yiftachel, 2009). This article has sought to contribute to this debate, particularly to the recent attempts to challenge vertical accounts of state/society relations (Lintelo, 2017), showing instead that (in)formality arises as the result of many state and non-state agents being in negotiation (Hackenbroch, 2011; Schindler, 2014). I propose then a relational approach (Massey, 2005) to urban informality that incorporates an account of the state as a processual and porous entity (T. Mitchell, 2006; Painter, 2006). Building on this framework, I have sought to make two main points. First, I have used the case of Brazil to show not only how the state affects the (re)production of informality, but also how informal spaces affect the state. Second, I have foregrounded the connection between distinct informal practices, revealing how the urban poor's struggle for rights is dependent on their capacity to access urban space for multiple purposes.

The main aim of the article, then, was to compare the displacement suffered by informal workers and informal residents. Two main conclusions can be drawn. First, although both the right to work and to have a house are recognized by the Brazilian Constitution, claims upon space based on those constitutional rights hold different degrees of legitimacy. Informal housing is thus treated differently from informal street vending by the state. In the Brazilian context, the historical struggle of the social movements for housing has engendered the creation of institutions that can manage the displacement of informal settlements with the guarantee of minimum rights. On the other hand, informal occupation for work purposes, despite being a widespread practice, does not enjoy the same institutional support. The result, therefore, is that informal workers are often unable to claim their rights to work space.

Second, both practices—living informally and working informally—are connected through the survival strategies of the urban poor. This has been shown by focusing on the lives of informal workers, revealing how their rights to housing and to work are mediated by their ability to access urban space, which becomes endangered by their displacement from their workspace. My argument is based on a relational approach to urban informality that foregrounds the ways in which workspaces and the home are built in relation to one another (Kudva, 2009; Lago, 2011). In this context, accessing urban space for labour can be vital for those struggling for a place in the

city, but unlike the right to housing, discussions about the right to work have been disassociated from space.

The advances of urban reform in Brazil have been sustained by a theoretical framework that conflates the 'right to the city' with the right to housing and participatory urban planning. Underpinning this framework is the idea that urban space is produced either through the construction of houses or through planning. Despite the centrality of accessing work space for their livelihood by marginalized urban populations, the right of informal workers to access urban space has been mostly ignored, both in Brazil and around the world (Schindler, 2014; Brown, 2015).

I argue that informal vendors, much like the insurgent citizens arising from the autoconstructed peripheries (Holston, 2008), are also building the city, which is also rightfully theirs. First, they make places by attaching meaning to space and forming community ties to each other in that place through their work. Second, access to work space is fundamental to urban livelihoods, allowing marginalized groups to belong to the city. Third, income from informal labour is often utilized in the process of autoconstructing the home. Considering the Mineirão stallholders, a fourth aspect can be added: in their case, place also embeds the socio-political arrangements that allow the workers to claim access to work space in non-confrontational ways.

The findings show that displacement from the home and from the workspace have similar consequences. First, displacement causes a sentiment of frustration associated with the loss of the home and the community (Fried, 2000; Davidson, 2009; Atkinson, 2015). Second, the disarrangement of social networks often impacts negatively on the life strategies of marginalized citizens (Yntiso, 2008). These features reveal the need to think about articulations between the right to work and the right to dwell and their connection to urban space.

Debates about work informality have so far remained disassociated from spatial considerations, and the literature on displacement is mostly concerned with home evictions. Although the latter is a traumatic experience that engenders a variety of negative consequences which need careful scrutiny, this article has argued that displacement from work space can generate similar consequences. Around the world, marginalized populations depend on informal employment to survive. Accessing work space can thus be fundamental to the urban poor. Moreover, informal spaces are normally connected, and urban populations are dependent on incomes from informal occupations to build houses and pay the costs of living. In order to understand the everyday experiences of the urban poor in the city, more attention to such connections is needed from researchers.

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