The ambiguous labour of hope: affective governance and the struggles of displaced street-vendors in Belo Horizonte, Brazil[1]

Keywords | street-vending, governance, displacement, labour of hope

Abstract | This paper focuses on the struggle of a group of street vendors in Belo Horizonte, Brazil – displaced in the run up to the 2014 World Cup – to claim back their traditionally occupied workspace. Their displacement dramatically ruptured their pursuit of dignified livelihoods in the city's informal economy. Using prolonged ethnography between 2014 and 2016, I describe how the workers engaged with an affective governance regime in which narrow avenues of negotiation are opened but promises are never kept, generating a constant state of unpredictability and possibility. This cycle of hope and frustration demobilises their resistance movement while their charismatic leader struggles to produce and maintain the hope that they might achieve relocation. This labour of hope keeps their association alive but also generates frustration and further demobilisation. The paper foregrounds the ambiguous role played by hope in the life of political movements and their everyday relationships with states.

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1. Introduction

In July 2018, I met with Pedro, who is the leader of the Mineirão stallholders, a group of street vendors displaced from the Belo Horizonte's main football stadium in 2010 due to a regeneration project undertaken during the city's preparation to host the 2014 FIFA World Cup. I accompanied him to a meeting with the public defender[2] who has overseen their case since 2012. As the meeting evolved, Pedro laid out his latest efforts to get access to the mayor and his hopes of negotiating their relocation even though eight years had passed since their displacement. In the meantime, the public defender discouraged the vendors from pursuing a lawsuit, reaffirming her scepticism about attaining a favourable outcome via the judiciary. Her advice, which I had heard many times before, was that they should keep searching for a solution through political strategies. For the workers and the public defender, the lawsuit was a last resort, always postponed to a potential future when all the possibilities of negotiating a positive outcome were exhausted.

In this paper, I will argue that despite achieving no resolution, the meeting should be interpreted as an example of the 'labour of hope' or the labour that goes into producing and maintaining hope (Pettit and Lenhard, this issue). Through various efforts – such as attending meetings and organising protests – to sustain the life of their resistance movement, street vendors like Pedro were producing hope of achieving relocation. Moreover, his continuous refusal to enter a lawsuit, encouraged by the public defender's advice, can be seen as way to prolong the wait for what has "not-yet" come (Bloch, 1995). The meeting thus produced a hopeful affect, providing those involved with a sense that something was being done while also creating expectations about an eventual positive outcome. Although hope is essential to political struggles, in this case, I argue that it bounds the vendors' movement to a governance regime that successfully curtailed their rights to the city. This particular meeting is one of the many practices implemented by the workers' movement to sustain hope rather than being a tool of affective governance implemented by the state (Tucker, 2017). Such labour of hope, I argue, is central to reproducing this exclusionary governance regime.

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[2] A public defender is an attorney paid by the state to represent those unable otherwise to afford a lawyer. In Brazil, the Public Defender's Offices was established "by the 1988 Federal Constitution with the aim of guaranteeing access to justice to the less privileged groups in Brazilian society with the public provision of legal assistance" (Madeira, 2014, p. 48)

Through further analysis of the case of the stallholders and their struggles to be relocated, this paper seeks to contribute to debates on the politics of street-vending in Latin America and beyond (Crossa, 2016; Schindler, 2014) by focusing on the interrelations between affect and urban governance (Pettit, 2018; Tucker, 2017). It questions how the labour of hope – the multiple practices that produce and sustain hope – can be operationalized as a technique of governance, restricting access to urban space to marginalised populations. Displaced street vendors in this study are shown to have formal and informal interactions with a variety of state actors. Through this engagement, the constant promise of a future solution is produced, which keeps hope alive while never leading to a resolution. As argued by Auyero (2011), building on Bourdieu (2000), to make people wait while never fully destroying their hope is an integral part of the work of domination. This paper also seeks to demonstrate how the street vendors' association is an arena where the hope is produced as well as contested. I focus on the tireless labour of hope of their leader, which involves regular meetings with different state agents, politicians and agencies, the organisation of protests, the search for alliances and the promotion of periodical meetings of their association where such efforts to secure access to workspace for livelihoods (as well as other routine issues) are discussed by vendors. This labour of hope produces ambiguous effects; while it keeps their association alive it also produces frustration among the stallholders, generating further demobilisation. I thus show how actions intended and experienced as strategies for negotiating access to rights may simultaneously contribute to exclusion. In doing so I add to debates on affective urban governance by emphasising the ambiguous labour of hope, which while central to maintaining political movements can feed into exclusionary regimes that constrain urban livelihoods.

This paper draws mainly from primary data (interviews, field notes and archival research) gathered during nine months of fieldwork conducted between 2014 and 2016 in the city of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. During that period, the stallholders' association was very active and I spent an extended period of time with them. I went to the association meetings, attended demonstrations and accompanied them to meetings with state agents. In those multiple occasions, my presence provided some legitimacy to their movement. Firstly, I was an attentive participant in the association meetings where I was often asked to give opinions and advice. Although I tried not to steer the course of events, I was more than a passive observer. Secondly, I was an ally during demonstrations – performing the role

of an outsider who joined in to manifest support and help promote their claims. Finally, I was an observer during conversations with state actors who recognised that I was a witness to their words. I write this piece from the perspective of an insider-outsider, whose presence had an effect on the production of hope as I will go on to discuss.

The paper is divided into five sections. In the following one, I review the literature on state-society relations focused primarily on Latin America as well as recent discussions on the politics and governance of street-vending. The third section introduces the affective turn in political geography, emphasising recent debates on the role of affect in urban governance, with a focus on uncertainty and hope. The third section presents empirical findings regarding the many interactions between the Mineirão stallholders and multiple state actors. In the fifth section, I present further empirical data about the stallholders' case, showing how hope is produced and contested within the association. Finally, in the conclusion, I will consider how a focus on affect may contribute to debates on everyday state-society relations.

2. Informal politics in Latin America and beyond

Peripheral urbanisation and informal politics

Latin America's peripheral urbanisation (Caldeira, 2016; Maricato, 1979) produced socially segregated cities in which vast populations were excluded from accessing appropriate infrastructure, housing, formal jobs and social rights (Fernandes, 2007). A rich scholarship has explored the variegated state-society relations emerging from the peripheries of different countries (Auyero & Joe, 2001; Eckstein, 1990; Fischer et al., 2014; Holston, 2008; Valladares, 1978). In a region dominated by authoritarian regimes, these studies revealed how practices such as "fiddling" the system (Valadares, 1978) and engaging in clientelism[3] (Ayuero, 2001) were political strategies of the poor to secure restricted gains. This body of work also challenged the myth that the urban poor belonged to a "marginal" class; backward, ill adapted to city life and incapable of political agency (Perlman, 1976).

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[3] Key to understanding poor people's politics is analysing clientage relationships which have historically played a fundamental role in the social and political life of Latin American society (Stokes, 2005).

Although contributing a great deal to our understanding of the often ambiguous relationships between the urban poor and the state, this literature has tended to overlook the political struggles of street vendors to secure access to workspace (Nogueira, 2019).[4] Unlike the "insurgent citizens" emerging from the peripheries to claim their rights to the city (Holston, 2008), workers in the informal economy were often assumed to be apolitical (Fernández-Kelly & Shefner, 2006). Bayat's (2004) work on Middle Eastern cities has challenged such perspectives by introducing the notion of the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary" to describe the everyday politics of non-collective, discreet and prolonged action through which the urban poor, such as street vendors, are able to secure access to public space for livelihoods. Looking at the case of Brazil, Nogueira (2019) has argued that street vendors' "quiet encroachment" is often successful in securing access rather than rights to space. Those gains are thus ephemeral and frequently threatened by the constant changes in the attitude of local authorities towards street vending, which vary from "indifference at best" to "repression at worst", as noted by Cross (1998, p. 41) in his study of Mexico City. In the context of Latin America's neoliberal turn, the informal economy has grown whereas conflicts between vendors and local authorities have become more heightened drawing scholarly attention to the politics and governance of street-vending.

The governance of street-vending

Worldwide, the governance of street vending has been reshaped by "the emergence of a neoliberal urban paradigm of competitive cities and entrepreneurial states" (Rolnik, 2013b, p.54). In this context, urban revitalisation plans aimed at 'reclaiming' public spaces from workers often coupled with restrictive norms against their presence on the streets have proliferated (Yatmo, 2008). Scholars have documented the political struggles and the impacts of such policies on street vendors in different cities, such as Mexico City (Cross, 1998; Crossa, 2016), Bogotá (Donovan, 2008), Cusco (Bromley & Mackie, 2009), Porto Alegre (Kopper, 2019) and Belo Horizonte (Carrieri & Murta, 2011). Nevertheless, despite

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[4] Similar situations have been documented in sub-Saharan Africa (Brown, 2015) and India (Schindler, 2014).

the amount of resources spent by governments to control their presence on the street, studies reveal that vendors continue to conduct their activities by exploiting existing patterns of patronage and clientelism to their advantage (Cross, 1998), bribing state officials (Bhowmik, 2010), negotiating their presence with local authorities (Nogueira, 2019) and other actors (Schindler, 2016), or moving around to avoid getting caught (Meneses-Reyes, 2013). Some studies have also highlighted the emergence of rights-based discourses among street vendors resisting displacement (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2016; Fernández-Álvarez, 2020).

Recently, scholars have argued for the need to look beyond the relationships between street vendors and the state, recognising how other actors engage in street-vending governance (Falla & Valencia, 2019; Schindler, 2016; Taheri Tafti, 2020). Addressing the case of Bogota, Falla and Valencia (2019, p.86) dispute the notion that street vending is chaotic and unregulated by showing "how informal workers self-organise and regulate their work". They thus reveal the everyday workings of an informal governance regime, which often interacts with the state and even becomes part of its control processes. Analysing the disputes of different groups of street vendors for space in Mexico City, Crossa (2016) described how they tend to mobilise the state's negative accounts of informality against one another. She concluded that although the formal/informal split is deployed by the state as a strategic narrative to justify exclusionary practices, "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, p.300).

This scholarship demonstrates the nuances and complexities of street-vending governance regimes, which often involve never-ending negotiations and struggles among a myriad of unevenly empowered state and non-state actors (Crossa, 2016; Schindler, 2016; Taheri Tafti, 2020). They also demonstrate how the political practices of marginalised populations often disrupt contestation/compliance binary, simultaneously challenging and reproducing exclusionary discourses (Gago, 2017; Ghertner, 2015). Absent from these debates, however, is the affective dimension of politics. In the following section, I review recent debates on affect with a particular focus on hope, which, as I will go on to argue, can add to our understanding of everyday state-society relations.

3. The politics of affective governance

The recent rise of right-wing populism worldwide has drawn scholarly attention to the fundamental role that emotions and different modalities of feelings play in politics (Amin & Thrift, 2013; Hochschild, 2016). Notably, political geographers have argued for some time that a focus on the spatial politics of affect (Thrift, 2004) can reveal how this "more embodied, unformed and less conscious dimension of feeling" (Hoggett & Thompson, 2012, p. 2) is embedded into relations of power (Anderson, 2014). Recently, studies have revealed the often ambiguous role that collective affects such as fear (Azab & Santoro, 2017), rage (Lloyd, 2019) and hope (Airas, 2019) play in the everyday of political movements. Following this affective turn in politics, urban scholars have explored the affective and emotional dimensions of urban governance systems (Jakimow, 2020; Tucker, 2017).

Jakimov (2020, p.430) has argued that "affective and emotional animations" are overlooked aspects of state-society relations which "shape citizens' [differentiated] access to government services". Analysing the relationships between municipal councillors and residents of Dehradun, India, Jakimov (2020) shows how the uneven capacity of citizens to engender emotions, affects councillors' responses to claims. Her work also reveals the affective dimensions of clientelist relationships, a topic explored by Verón (2019) for the case of Chile. In his study, Verón demonstrates how affects are constantly mobilised to advance demands and appease conflict between state and non-state actors. Such "politics of familiarity", he argues, are often ambiguous and built upon informal social networks where power is unevenly distributed.

Hinging on those debates, Tucker (2017) has analysed the affective politics of urban governance in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, a city on the border with Brazil, which is constituted by a vibrant transnational market where street vendors are in constant negotiation with state authorities to access urban space. Focusing on everyday encounters between street traders and state agents, her work calls attention to the role of affect as both a tool of urban governance and as strategy of vendors to secure workspace. Therefore, her study makes an important contribution by developing an account of the "affective politics of precarity" which focuses on "how the emotive, sensorial registers of uncertainty are integral to practices of governing" (ibid, p.736).

While debates on "uncertainty" reveal how a fearful attitude towards the future might be mobilised as a tool of governance, others have argued that generating and maintaining "hope" can enable and legitimise exclusionary city-making projects. As noted by Ghertner (2015), the making of the "world-class city" often relies on the support of those displaced and excluded in the process. Pettit (2018) argues that such complicit behaviours can be explained by the way the global city imaginary incites urban populations to "hope for a better future" (Boeck, 2011, p. 276). For Anderson and Holden (2008) the creation and maintenance of hope are essential for mobilising support for urban regeneration schemes. These discussions point towards the ambiguous role of "hope" or the "sense that one may become other or more than one presently is or was fated to be" (Jackson, 2011, p. xi) in urban governance regimes.

In the following sections, I build on these debates to demonstrate the dispersive power of hope. I contribute to debates on state-society relations and street-vending governance in Latin America and beyond by foregrounding the ambiguous labour of hope. Worldwide, local governments have increasingly adopted restrictive policies against the presence of street vendors in cities, particularly middle-class areas, tourist destinations and spaces with potential for value creation (Itikawa, 2016). This paper will demonstrate how hope is implicated in this exclusionary governance regime. I examine the different strategies of displaced street vendors to negotiate relocation. These various practices are understood as the labour of hope, in which labour is defined more broadly, extending "beyond the industrial heartlands from which the concept emerged" (P. Harvey & Krohn-Hansen, 2018, p. 24). Such labour is geared towards accessing workspace, which is key for securing future incomes, while simultaneously enabling capital accumulation. I thus demonstrate the ambiguity of the labour of hope, which is crucial to maintain political struggles alive but ends up feeding into a complex governance regime that constrains the rights to the city of workers.

4. The case of the Mineirão stallholders: negotiating hope and denying rights

From negotiated legitimacy to displacement

The Governador Magalhães Pinto stadium, popularly known as Mineirão, was inaugurated in 1965 with the capacity for 130 thousand spectators. Football stadia in Brazil were then popular spaces, catering for the working classes and managed by the state (Gaffney, 2013). Since its inauguration, an informal economy formed in the surroundings of Mineirão, which provided a workspace for many types of street vendors. Over time, those workers have quietly encroached on the stadium - to borrow Asef Bayat's (2004) insightful phrase, slowly transforming that space through their activity, while becoming associated with the local football culture. Some of the street vendors started setting up stalls and became known as the *Barraqueiros do Mineirão* (Mineirão stallholders). Their constant presence engendered a relationship between the vendors and the multiple state actors in charge of inspecting (city inspection agents or *fiscais*), policing (military police) and managing the stadium (Minas Gerais state agency). The governance of that space was a result of such quotidian multiple encounters between state and non-state actors, resembling the negotiated (im)permanence described by Schindler (2014a) for the case of street hawking in Delhi.

Over time, the relationship between the Mineirão stallholders and the local and regional states was shaped by different contextual forces. In the 1990s, for instance, following a prolonged crisis of unemployment in the country, the increasing presence of street vendors in Belo Horizonte led the local government to search for ways to regulate their activity. The Mineirão stallholders had to be registered and started paying a fee for the use of the space. According to one of the oldest stallholders, Rodrigo, "We paid a fee to the City Hall so we could work. (…) First, it was a monthly fee; then they started charging per match" (Interview, 04/08/15). However, the City Hall decided to abandon the management of the stadium area around the early 2000s. The absence of state regulation was perceived negatively by the stallholders. Looking at street vending governance in Ciudad del Este (Paraguay), Tucker (2017) observed how ordinary encounters between vendors and state agents produced an atmosphere of permanent fear of eviction. In that case, she demonstrated how the affective politics of uncertainty was deployed as a technique of state governance. Contrary to expectations of state power being exerted through calculability and legibility as argued by Scott (1998), she showed how the state sought to manage space by accentuating the "lived uncertainties for street traders who claim urban space to make

a living" (Tucker, 2017, p.733). In the case of the Mineirão stallholders, it was the absence of everyday interactions with state agents that created similar effects, as described by Manuel: "The license was a guaranty. After they [the inspection agents] abandoned us, we lost that assurance. We no longer had a right to anything. Or did we? I am not sure. I know that nobody knew their rights anymore" (Interview, 04/08/2015). The ambiguity described by Manuel increased the uncertainty of their activity, thus, provoking fear of displacement.

The reaction of the stallholders to the atmosphere of uncertainty created by the absence of regulation was to create the Association of the Mineirão Stallholders (hereafter association). According to Bayat (2004, p.92): "a key attribute of quiet encroachment is that while advances are made quietly, individually, and gradually, defence of these gains is often (although not always) collective and audible." Talking about the association meetings back then, Fernanda, one of the displaced Mineirão stallholders, describes the hovering threat of displacement: "We talked a lot about the situation of the market. It was a recurring subject: the fact that the local government wanted to evict us. We always discussed the eviction subject" (Interview, 03/12/15). The creation of the association was thus a response to increased uncertainty regarding the future viability of their activity, an organised attempt to secure access to workspace against a perceived threat of eviction.

In 2003, the unlicensed use of public spaces for street vending was prohibited by Municipal Law 8,616/2003, known as the Code of Placements (*Código de Posturas*). This legislation was coupled with a policy to revitalise the city centre that entailed the relocation of street vendors from the streets to indoor popular shopping malls.[5] In part, both initiatives were a response to pressures arising from shop owners and middle-class city dwellers for an adequate response to the "disorder" and "dirtiness" caused by the "irregular" activity of street vendors, as noted by Carrieri & Murta (2011).

Although the area occupied by the stallholders had been regulated by City Hall in the 1990s, it was considered part of the stadium and, therefore, under the jurisdiction of the Minas Gerais state. According to Manuel, "That was the dilemma. The City Hall was responsible only for the municipality area so they [the city inspection agents] could not enter the area of the regional state. It was like a

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[5] See Nogueira and Shin (2020) for a discussion about the implementation of these policies and recent political struggles against the criminalization of street-vending in Belo Horizonte.

frontier" (Interview, 04/08/2015). The supervision of the stallholders was then passed on to the ADEMG (*Administração de Estádios do Estado de Minas Gerais*), the public company managing the stadium. In this context, the overlapping jurisdictions between regional and local states created a regulatory gap, exploited by the vendors to their advantage. Unlike street vendors in the city centre who were removed from public areas (Nogueira and Shin, 2020), the stallholders were allowed to remain in place.

Between 2000 and 2010, the association held regular meetings, collected fees from its associates and constantly negotiated with the police, city inspection agents and others to guarantee the permanence of the stallholders in the stadium, to maintain well-functioning working conditions, and to regulate the allocation of spaces to its associates. Pedro, the stallholder introduced in the opening vignette, was one of the founding members of the association and the key force behind its successful operations. This well-functioning governance regime was later disrupted by the choice of Belo Horizonte as a host city for the 2014 Football World Cup. In 2010, the modernisation works at Mineirão stadium started and all the street vendors were displaced with no plans for relocation. The renovation plans were implemented by Minas Arena, a private consortium[6] that signed a public–private partnership (hereafter PPP) contract with the Minas Gerais state to manage the stadium until 2037. When the stadium reopened in 2013, the area where the informal market had once been located was fenced in and private.

For over 40 years, the stallholders were able to claim workspace in non-confrontational ways, exploiting the fractured nature of the state and jurisdictional ambiguities to negotiate the boundaries of (in)formality. Although successful in enabling access to workspace, those arrangements were circumstantial and insufficient to overcome the criminalisation of street vending. Moreover, the privatisation of the stadium represented a major shift in the governance regime as well the commodification of the space once occupied by the vendors. After the displacement, the stallholders were unable to get relocated or to receive a proper compensation for the loss of their livelihoods (Nogueira, 2019). Although their activity was regulated and legitimised by different levels of government over time, in Brazil – as in many other countries, as noted by Brown (2015) – the right of street vendors to workspace is not recognised in the legislation. After being displaced, they were thus

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[6] Minas Arena is a private consortium formed by three contractors: HAP, Egesa e Construcap.

unable to get their rights to occupy urban space recognised. In the following section, I explore the stallholders' labour to negotiate relocation through engagements with different state actors.

Hope and frustration: affective governance as a political technology of state power

In the absence of a clear "legal" basis for their demands, the stallholders deployed many different strategies and discourses to legitimise their claims. One of their main arguments came from the fact that they were identified as an affected group in the environmental impact report that was legally required for the stadium renovation project.[7] In this report the impacts in questions were paired with proposals for their mitigation. This document discussed the "disruption of economic activities in the area surrounding the stadium" and recommended "measures to incorporate these economic activities (stalls selling food and beverages) into the new setting of the stadium" (DEOP-MG, Gustavo Pena and Práxis, 2010: 202-203). The report also led to a restrictive covenant being included in the PPP contract signed between Minas Arena and the Minas Gerais state. Environmental Restriction no. 18 required periodic reports describing the actions taken to provide the Mineirão stallholders with appropriate training programmes to promote their inclusion in "the formal trade and/or fair trade" sector. The training offered by a local NGO (Rede Cidadã) lasted from approximately November 2012 to March 2013.

The stallholders I interviewed expressed a widely shared belief that completing the programme was a prerequisite to be eligible to return to the stadium. In the following quote, Pedro describes his feelings regarding the training programme.

> The people at Rede Cidadã used to say "Look, these are the stallholders who are doing the training. They are the only ones who will go back to the [stadium's] esplanade. They are the only ones who will get stalls at Mineirão". Although we seriously doubted their promises, we wanted to pressure them (*colocar eles contra a parede*). We wanted to finish the training so we could link our [resistance] movement to the Minas Gerais state, to strengthen the government's commitment to the workers. (Interview, 16/11/2015)

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[7] The renovation project was considered as a large impact project by the Municipal Secretary of Environment (DOP-MG et al., 2010). In these cases, Belo Horizonte's municipal legislation requires a compulsory impact study before issuing an environmental license that authorises the project.

Pedro thus admitted that he believed the promises were false but that taking part in the training was also part of the stallholders' strategy to force the regional state into making a commitment. While it lasted, the programme became the central piece of their strategy to seek relocation. Taking part in the course created hope for a different future, with the stallholders enabled to return to the stadium or to find employment elsewhere. Nevertheless, the PPP contract did not require the Minas Arena to relocate the stallholders back to the stadium or elsewhere, but only to provide training. The mismatch between the stallholders' expectations and the reality produced frustration; going through the training did not guarantee a right of return, which was the main aim of everyone. As noted by Rosa, one of the participants in the course: "Everyone took the courses. It was just a minority of people that didn't. (…) Everyone did, but what then? Were we able to return? That is the issue" (Interview, 11/09/15). The recognition as an "affected group", grounded on the environment report, created the hope of being relocated which was subsequently frustrated. The regional state had opened a channel for dialogue that led nowhere. For Pedro, that was part of the strategy.

> The people at Rede Cidadã never told us anything about when we would return [to the stadium]. Whenever we asked "when?" they replied that we had to finish the training first. However, the World Cup was getting closer. Their strategy was to postpone everything until the World Cup. (Interview, 16/11/2015)

The workers eventually lost trust in the training programme and started searching for other alternatives to exert political pressure. The massive wave of protests that started in June 2013 all over Brazil provided a good opportunity.[8] In Belo Horizonte, the protests coincided with the FIFA Confederation Cup, creating a global stage for the demonstrations. The members of the association were part of Belo Horizonte's Local Committee for a People's World Cup (hereafter COPAC), which played a key role during the 2013 demonstrations in the city.[9] They were actively engaged in the demonstrations, bringing their demands to the streets. As a result of the pressure rising from the protests, the governor of Minas Gerais invited the COPAC members for a meeting. As a result of this meeting,

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[8] What started as a small scale protest in São Paulo against the raise of transportation fares, quickly spread to other Brazilian urban centers and it has been described as the most important political event in the recent history of the country (D. Harvey et al., 2015).
[9] The COPAC was a movement created to raise awareness regarding the impacts of mega-events. Each host city has organised its own local committee.

the stallholders were again promised relocation, but the pressure engendered by the protests eventually vanished with the end of the demonstrations, and the governor did not keep his promise.

A few days before the World Cup started, they were once more promised their immediate return after the mega-event was over. The commitment this time was made by the Regional Secretary of the Pampulha Region – the borough where the stadium is located – during a public hearing on June 9, 2014. Once the World Cup ended, however, the municipal government did not follow through with the promise, arguing that the only possible way of having a market on public space would be through a public tender open to the whole population.

The political mobilisation of the stallholders was enough to give them access to the regional and municipal governments. However, the relocation promises made by the governor and the Pampulha secretary were not kept, leading again to frustration and, consequently, demobilisation. As explored in the previous section, before the stadium's renovation, the confusion regarding who was in charge of managing their workspace created an advantage for the stallholders. After the displacement, however, those juxtaposing jurisdictions as well as the privatisation of the stadium's management allowed for the representatives of the local state to deny their own responsibility while attributing them to the regional state or the private company, and vice-versa. This can be illustrated by this quote in which the Secretary of Urban Regulation, Luciano, blames the Minas Gerais government and the company managing the stadium for the lack of resolution:

> If an appropriate space for the stalls was provided inside the stadium's esplanade, the City Hall would manage it. We would provide licenses and get all the procedures done. But there was no progress in that course of action. It didn't progress because of Minas Arena and also because of the Minas Gerais state. (Interview, 04/12/15)

Feelings of frustration among the workers were then enhanced by the constant back and forth in negotiations with different state actors and spheres, with many promises made and no action taken. Those feelings were discussed by Jonas, Rosa's son, who also worked in the stadium helping his mother. He said:

> It is with the mayor, it is with the regional state, it is with I don't know who. Then you go, six more months. There is another meeting, you call everybody. Then you have a meeting with everybody, but someone doesn't come. Then you have to reschedule, and nothing gets resolved. It is because of that that everyone is angry, people are furious. (...)

> Then you see people giving up. People becoming hopeless. Then you see that many gave up. At least two or three people even died while waiting. Then you get discouraged every day more and more… people cannot take it anymore. (Interview, 11/09/15)

The moments of hope followed by frustration and hopelessness have thus engendered political demobilisation weakening the capacity of the stallholders' movement to achieve their goals. Hope was not evenly distributed among the stallholders nor present at all times. It grew at certain moments in response to new promises being made or new avenues of negotiation appearing while turning into feelings of anger and frustration when they led nowhere. The combined effect of such multiple actions by different state agents and politicians was to delay a resolution until the World Cup was over and the political claim of being recognised as an "affected group" lost its strength. Those feelings were expressed by Pedro:

> I think the idea was to hold the social movements until the World Cup, do you understand? To see how much power the movements would be able to gather until the World Cup only to say afterwards "Listen, we cannot actually do anything". (Interview, 16/11/15)

The promises and invitations for meetings without concrete actions have kept the workers waiting without ever completely destroying their hope. In this case, therefore, the actions of multiple state actors invited the workers to remain hopeful while controlling their time and diluting their bargaining power. As argued by Bourdieu (2000), such state of suspension is part of the work of domination, which in this case is engendered through the production of hope. Similarly, to what Tucker (2017, p.747) described for the case of Paraguay, these actions cannot be understood as "the practices of calculation, measurement, and mapping often described as enabling state power through particular modes of 'seeing,' of rendering space and subjects knowable through measurement" but rather as "affective governance" which is "a political technology of state power".

In what follows, I describe how hope was created, maintained and contested within the association of the stallholders. I focus on the labour of hope of their leader and his tireless efforts to keep alive the stallholders' struggle for the right to relocation.

5. The Mineirão stallholders and the ambiguous labour of hope

As previously discussed, after its foundation, the association became an important player in the regulation of the Mineirão space. After the stallholders' displacement, the association's function changed. It then became a forum where the stallholders organised their struggles for relocation. They held regular meetings in which the main purpose was to plan their next steps in the fight to return to the stadium. In those occasions, hope would manifest mainly as hypothetical discussions about this potential future. This is illustrated by Rodrigo in an interview conducted while we waited for a meeting to start: "We have to organise well to return with our feet on the ground. Once we are back we cannot make any mistakes. If we do we are out and we will never be able to return" (Interview, 04/08/2015).

After going to several meetings of the association, I realised that they always followed a very similar format. The extract from my fieldnote below describes the key role played by the association leader, Pedro:

> The meeting follows the same usual dynamic. It was scheduled for 3 pm and Pedro arrived a little after 5 pm. Everybody was waiting for him to start the meeting. Once there, Pedro complained that nobody had taken the initiative to organise anything. Nivea, one of the members of the association, was about to put the desk in a certain position but was stopped by Borges because "Pedro likes the desk to be placed in a different way" (Fieldnote – 24/08/2015).

Every meeting began with Pedro providing a summary of the association's activities in the past week (e.g. meetings with politicians or allies, visits to the public defender's office, the city council or state assembly, etc.). Usually, those activities were carried out by him, either alone or with me or a couple of other members. In those accounts, Pedro normally exaggerated the relevance of those activities. I remember going to one of those meetings in November 2015 in the office of a regional deputy where we were supposed to meet a representative of the Minas Gerais government that had promised to help. Apart from myself, Pedro and two other stallholders, the public defender was also present. We were made to wait for more than one hour, at which time the public defender had to leave. The meeting itself consisted of the representative talking about a vague plan to negotiate with the local federal university to let the stallholders occupy an area close to the Mineirão stadium that belonged to the school. It was clear from her narrative, that this was only an idea and that no concrete action whatsoever had been taken to set the plan into motion. However, later when Pedro recounted the details

of the meeting in a subsequent association assembly, the plan was metamorphosed into a possibility, or what Miyazaki (2004, p. 4) calls a 'prospective momentum', engendering the perception of motion in contrast with their reality of being stuck. As such the meetings can be interpreted as what Zigon (2018) has described as 'active waiting',[10] an instance in which hope ceases to be passive and entails generative action, keeping what is anticipated open. In this sense, Pedro's labour of hope was akin to the actions of the state, working to create expectations that did not materialise and thus producing feelings of frustration among the stallholders.

Another topic regularly discussed during the meetings was the regularisation of the association with the notary's office, pending due to issues with taxation and the need to register a new board of directors. Additionally, they recurrently discussed the situation of the association's small office, in need of cleaning and better organisation. Those topics were examined in every single meeting, but no practical actions were ever taken to solve them.

The repetition of these routines can be understood as a way to give the association a purpose for being and as such also served to produce hope. After the stadium closed, the association lost the prime reason for its existence, that is, the regulation of the informal market at Mineirão. Moreover, the incapacity of the stallholders to achieve the rights to relocation slowly eroded the political relevance of the association. The meetings became mostly a place where the stallholders could revisit their lost community. It also served as a space for the vendors to share their frustrations with the increasing difficulty of accessing workspace and making a living. This routine worked as an attempt to keep the hope of relocation alive, while the unsolved issues kept the association itself alive. As long as there were problems to be solved, there was a reason to meet.

The meetings were also a nostalgic place for the stallholders to reminisce about the past, narrating stories from the old Mineirão, where they belonged. In that regard, my own presence in that space as a researcher interested in their situation both triggered those collective acts of remembrance and provided a form legitimacy for their persistence. As long as someone was interested and willing to

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[10] Zigon's (2018) work seeks to disrupt binary temporal understandings of hope as either passive or active, building on ethnographic research conducted in Moscow with groups of artists and Russian Orthodox Christians.

listen to their stories, those routines were rendered meaningful. During one of these gatherings, Pedro commented: "Mara is a researcher that studies in London. She is doing a well-elaborated study based on all the association documents" (association meeting, 30/09/2015). In this sense, my own research became part of the labour of hope, creating the expectation that the outcomes of my study would enhance their chances of succeeding.

While those meetings were part of their political strategies, they were not effective in engendering concrete actions or in changing the odds in their favour. Pedro's obstinate character, however, was a key contributor to their persistence. After years of frustrated plans, he was still unwilling to give up hope and was optimistic about their potential as the following quote shows:

> I believe this movement is still going to go very far. We have many things to achieve if we have enough health and the group sticks together. (…) [However], for the movement to move forward we have much work ahead. We will face many fights, until things get settled and we find out to where they will relocate us. Because we will be relocated. We are sure about that. We will get access to some space. (Interview, 16/11/2015)

Therefore, if uncertainty about the future was the primary motive for the creation of their association, hope was the reason for its prolonged existence. Nevertheless, its political strength had long been lost, slowly eroded by the state's willingness to negotiate and fabricate hope, while denying their rightful claims to relocation.

After multiple defeats, many of the stallholders slowly abandoned the association and the meetings' attendance decreased. This situation is mentioned by Alfredo, who is one of the oldest stallholders: "We have been fighting for almost six years for our return, for our work, our right to work and to survive from our work there. It is tiring, we are giving up. Many are giving up because we cannot just hope. We need to work in order to survive" (Interview, 15/12/15). As noted by Alfredo, although hope was somehow alive, active participation in the association was disregarded by many due to the need to maintain livelihoods. Pedro blamed the lack of mobilisation for their failure. This issue was revisited by him in every meeting in the form of complains about individualistic behaviours that overshadowed the interests of the collective. In one meeting, he added that "the comrades that are not participating, will not get in" (Fieldnote, 30/09/2015). Meaning that once they returned, only the active members would be allowed to work. The comment expresses both his belief in a future positive outcome

and his decision-making power within the group. The association was then presided by Regina but Pedro was the *de facto* leader and the force behind most of the political action. His leadership was not without contestation as expressed by Luisa: "Nowadays I don't go to Pedro's meetings as much as I used to. (…) Last time I went, I had a big fight with him. (…) And I am not the only one. Some of the guys were really upset at him" (Interview, 23/11/2015).

One of these guys was Leandro, who was a constant presence in the meetings during most of my fieldwork. Like Luisa, he withdrew from the group after a disagreement with Pedro regarding his leadership style. During an interview, he commented on how he believed that, among them, "the pessimists were doing better than everyone else" (Interview, 02/12/15). He also mentioned how he regretted having spent so much time in all those direct actions and negotiations that "led nowhere". He was questioning the labour of hope and expressing his disbelief in a positive outcome in the future. Nevertheless, instead of blaming the state actors and politicians who had denied their claims, Leandro channelled his frustration towards Pedro, the leader of their movement, whose stubbornness and unwillingness to accept others' opinions were considered as the main reasons for their lack of success.

While Pedro's labour of hope kept the association alive even in the face of multiple defeats, discontentment with his constant lack of success was also a source of frustration to members who disagreed with his strategies. For Vilma, who was the closest to him, the relationships between the stallholders were deteriorating quickly. She told me: "Sometimes I would say to him: 'For God sake, Pedro! The time will come when you will fall out with everyone! You have to understand that people are desperate because they don't have work'". Vilma described the increasing difficulties of working as a street vendor in the face of the state's criminalisation of their activity and the growing numbers of new vendors on the streets due to economic crisis and rising unemployment in Brazil. She then added: "While there's life, there's hope. But this profession is getting too hard for me" (Interview, 19/11/15).

The long wait without resolution combined with the difficulty to sustain livelihoods created an atmosphere of tension and stress among the stallholders. The fights and disagreements between them also worked to divert the blame from the state to Pedro, further demobilising their political movement. In my multiple interactions with Pedro, his hopeful tenacity was expressed through stories of the heyday of the association, a period when they were legitimised and recognised as part of the stadium. He also

manifested a profound belief in the stallholder's rights and in their capacity to achieve a positive outcome, which was predicated on their previous success. Through his efforts, the stallholders were able to access the state as they did in the past but encountered a different environment, made more hostile by the stadium's privatisation and the changes in local laws that criminalised street vending. Perhaps paradoxically, the labour of hope performed by Pedro then led the stallholders to search for recognition within an exclusionary regime, insisting on the route of political negotiation while it was no longer effective. As noted in the previous section, the hope and frustration engendered by the actions of multiple state agents and politicians had the power of dispersing the stallholders' movement. This discussion has showed how hope was produced, maintained and contested within the association, further revealing its ambiguous role.

6. Conclusion

Recent debates have drawn attention to the role of affect in urban governance regimes (Jakimov, 2020; Tucker, 2017). In this paper, I have joined those efforts by discussing how a focus on the labour of hope can add to our understanding of everyday state-society relations in Latin America and beyond. In order to do so, I have explored the case of the Mineirão stallholders, a group of street vendors displaced from their historically occupied workspace due to the modernisation of Belo Horizonte's local stadium in the context of the preparation of the city to host the 2014 World Cup. Through the analysis of their case I have made three main points. Firstly, I showed that the lack of state regulation has engendered uncertainty and fear of displacement among workers whose political organisation and exploitation of regulatory gaps were crucial factors in securing access (but not rights) to workspace. Secondly, I also demonstrated how state power is performed through affective politics (Jakimov, 2020; Tucker, 2017). After the workers' displacement, they have engaged with multiple state agents and politicians in their struggles for relocation. The combined actions of multiple actors led to cycles of hope and frustration, which dispersed and demobilised their association. Thirdly, I described how the workers' association was an arena where hope was produced, maintained and contested. I showed how after displacement the association's leader employed different strategies to claim relocation. While his

labour of hope served to maintain the association alive it also attached the street vendors to an exclusionary regime, transformed by changes in local laws and the stadium's privatisation. In tandem, these findings reveal the affective geographies of this street-vending governance regime.

Worldwide, precarity and informality are on the rise and nowhere is this trend more visible than on the streets of large cities where disadvantaged workers strive to make a living as vendors. Access to space, which is key for livelihoods, is increasingly restricted by local states seeking to revitalise and reclaim urban space in response to middle-class concerns and pressures to stimulate more profitable uses of space. In different parts of the world, insurgency against displacement and organised struggle for the rights of street vendors to occupy urban space for livelihoods are multiplying. Hope for more just urban futures is often an important element animating such organised political actions. Nevertheless, in this study, I showed that hope can also bound workers to exclusionary urban governance regimes acting to disperse rather than stimulate organised struggle. I have focused on the ambiguous labour of hope which blurs the lines between domination and contestation by revealing how practices experienced as insurgency can contribute to the reproduction of exclusion. Thinking in that direction help us understand why exclusionary systems are so persistent and draw our attention to the mundane ways in which they are reproduced.

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