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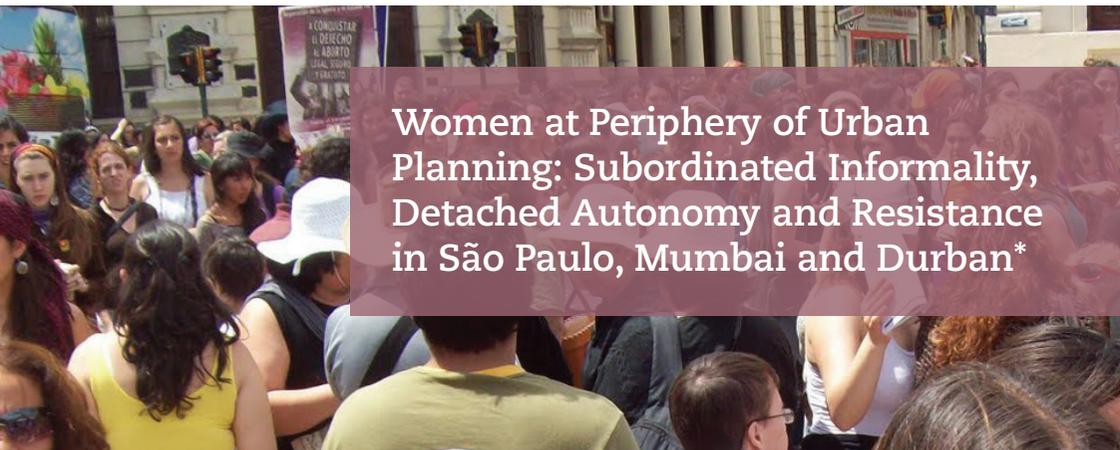


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## POLICY BRIEF - CLACSO SOUTH-SOUTH COLLECTION

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### Women at Periphery of Urban Planning: Subordinated Informality, Detached Autonomy and Resistance in São Paulo, Mumbai and Durban\*

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### ❖ Presentation

Unique format of the labor market in these three countries is not disconnected from the concentrated real estate structure that systematically maintains a considerable share of the urban population on the margins of access to land and formal employment.

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## ◆ KEYWORDS

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- Gender

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- Urban Space

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- Informal Work

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- Autonomy

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- Subordination



During their colonial histories, each of the three republics had patterns of social exclusion that were maintained by the local elite through a blend of exclusionary regulatory framework and access to labor markets and land. This paper analyses two emblematic labor conditions of the conjugated exclusion in the land-labor binomial, subcontracting and autonomy<sup>1</sup>, in two work environments, at home and on the streets (street vendors). Objective is to verify if there is maintenance of subordination or detachment in questions of gender, work relations, and urban spaces within this informality, or if there exist any examples of policies or actions that contradict this pattern. The heterodox labor markets of Brazil, India and South Africa are differentiated from the full employment matrices by their unique aspects of segregation and segmentation by gender, race and caste criteria. Rapid urbanization in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the systematic exclusion of a large portion of workers on the margins

1. These concepts will be further developed in the section Notes on the Labor Market in the Three Countries.



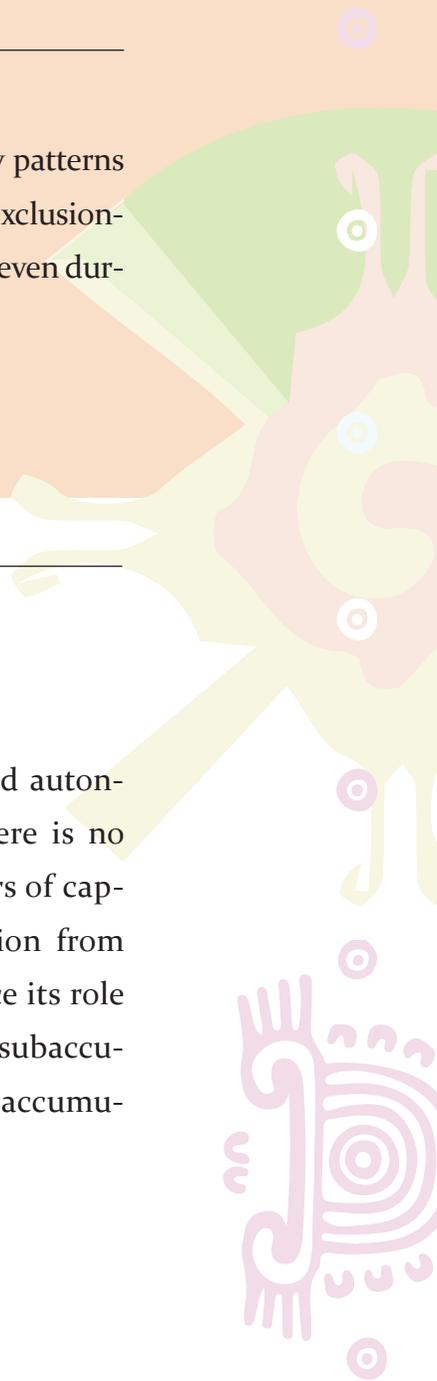
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of regimental real estate regimes and salary patterns have caused a renewal of the repository of exclusionary, patriarchal and authoritarian practices, even during periods of economic growth.

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## ✦ Political analysis

Subordinated informality and detached autonomy are two sides of the same coin: there is no neutrality of being informal at the borders of capitalism. Therefore, an automatic transition from informal to formal seems impossible, once its role is being a reserve of arms and lands by subaccumulation and superaccumulation. Subaccumu-



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lation because it is left only compulsory survival work. Superaccumulation because it is extracted not only labor rights, but also all social reproduction of labor force system, including workers territories. There is great decision and assets asymmetry, as a result of unequal arrangements of power and subordination, such as gender, race, caste and class discrimination at the three cities. Informally occupied lands by informal workers become captured territories for future real estate production. Their arms, as work force surplus, act with great pressure towards earnings reduction and formal job turnover. Three countries' exclusionary regimes of land and labor market have been crucial in order to maintain a rationed citizenship that allows of a two-fold exit: one, virtuous, through progressive sectors linkages with great or little accomplishments; other, vicious, with a complex citizenship market, through bridges in order to have rights access. This exception management has been built by sociability networks at the periphery in order to guarantee minimum survival issues, through not only specific own internal hierarchical arrangements, but also through State and NGOs role.

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## \* Proposals

Proposals are divided in: a) public policies, b) informal workers' organization. Each one are conceptualized according to goals, stakeholders that take forward actions and, finally, regarding chronological order: at short and long term.

Among public policies, first feature to be observed is the great gap between regulation and reality. In the three investigated cities, there are indeed progressive legislation, nevertheless, informal workers do not benefit from the legally settled rights.

Mumbai and Durban experiences are representative because show a gap between urban planning incorporation of entire informal workers, however, approximately 50% of street vendors, for example, in these two cities could not have permission to perform legally their activities. In Sao Paulo is worse: 1,4% are legalized.

Hence, it follows that, public policies conceiving towards informal activities, detached from the entire urban and economic planning as a whole are not effective once urban wealth concentration, as



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well as labor market segregation and segmentation still keep working.

Therefore, the main inclusive public policies characteristic to be considered is creation of wealth redistribution tools through surplus capture of urban land valorization and apply in informal workers' projects (State initiative, medium term).

Among public policies proposals: **1)** creation of quadripartite bargaining channels (State, enterprises, workers and civil society). Guarantee that those channels have autonomy and freedom not only of expression, but also denouncement (State initiative, medium term); **2)** inclusion of informal workers in bargaining channels of building, monitoring and assessment of public policies (State initiative, medium term); **3)** support and uphold informal workers sustainability of activities through management and products trade support, as well as, technic, business, architectural and law advisement (State, workers, civil society initiative, medium term); **4)** specific credit and insurance system towards infor-



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mal workers that covers since work environment and equipment adjustment up to access to financial system of formal housing programmes (State initiative, short and medium term); 5) decriminalization and relieve reclaiming legitimacy of social movements, hardly criminalized by local public officials and explored by contractors. Creation of public policies that advocates and defend freedom of union association (State initiative, short term); 6) superposition of Decent Work Agenda (ILO) and Habitat Agenda (UN-Habitat) that guarantees spaces of individual and collective income generation in environmentally adequate settlements and value chains, with forward position of and linkages among workers, as well as local culture respect (ILO, UN-Habitat State, workers and civil society initiatives, long term).

Regarding informal workers' organization actions: 1) linkages with other urban social initiatives of rights reclaiming (network of workers, social movements and civil society initiatives, medium term); 2) field survey of types and geometries of



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membership-based organization that is already working and verify what would be the features that community-based actions strengthen themselves, regarding democratic principles and respect of race, caste, gender and ethny rights (network of workers, social movements and civil society initiative, short term); 3) collective building of knowledge, engagement, and politization of informal workers (network of State, workers and social movements initiatives, medium term).



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