Social Inclusion as a Collective Urban Project:

Urban Farm in Lisbon and Street Vendors in Rio de Janeiro

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Abstract: In this paper, we present urban experiences in different contexts as an answer to the complex issue of social inclusion. We provide ideas to achieve a balance where city, urban space and social inclusion integrate migration, cultural diversity and poverty. We propose, using two different but interrelated case studies, 'the urban farms in Lisbon' and the 'informal public markets in Rio de Janeiro', to discuss the question of social inclusion. We see this issue not as a problem that exists and must be solved, but as reality to be integrated into a collective project, which is to live and to work in the city and in society. The urban offer and its accessibility to the population are important aspects to consider, with the participation of citizens crucial from a perspective of collective learning. The proposals presented can provide a range of open and flexible possibilities.

Keywords: social inclusion, urban farm, informal street vending, Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro

Introduction

This paper presents urban experiences in different contexts as an answer to the complex problem of social inclusion. These experiences are cases of informal activities that are performed by people who, for different reasons, are excluded from certain aspects of society, for example, the formal labor market or social interaction.

Informality in the urban context is a topic of great relevance, strongly related to processes of urbanization in developing countries. Nevertheless, informal activities can be observed in all countries, since the informality acts as a buffer of the effects of the socioeconomic crisis or

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appears as a consequence of social exclusion. In general, informal, illegal or clandestine activities can be broadly defined as activities that are carried out in disagreement with the law. According to Komlosy *et al.* (1997), in informality the legal rules are replaced by social networks, their traditions and limits.

Informality has advantages and disadvantages for the society. On one hand, it often implies public or private property misuse as well as tax evasion and potentially unsafe activities. On the other hand, it is an alternative to fulfill the basic needs of individuals when this is not possible in a formal way. Without the buffering effect of informality, these situations could lead to severe social instability problems. The management of informality represents a big challenge for governments because of its polymorphic and ambiguous nature. It is not clear, however, what is the best way to handle this phenomenon. Due to its constant growth and the current economical conjuncture, it is nevertheless urgent to reflect on this issue.

Two different cases of informal activities, which developed in different contexts, are studied. Both cases are activities suffering from a legalization process. The cases are the urban farms in the city of Lisbon and the street vendors in the city of Rio de Janeiro. In the two cases, we analyze the policies employed and discuss their effect on the social inclusion of the people involved.

Urban farms in Lisbon

Nowadays, urban agriculture is on the agenda of many political programs, community requests and speeches of activists of various movements. In cities like Lisbon there is a large dissemination of initiatives related to urban agriculture in the form of urban farms, community gardens, vertical farms and micro-home-farms. However, the motivations for such initiatives vary and may be linked to social inclusion of immigrants or ethnic minorities, measures to supplement the income of disadvantaged households, urban sustainability and resilience and new lifestyles. The locales of the implementation of urban agriculture activities are also diverse, from private plots to areas on the edges of highways, through public or private expectant spaces [3] and small private yards. The occupation may be illegal or not. Urban agriculture is often developed in private spaces by appropriation without the permission of the owners or in public spaces, also illegally occupied.

Urban farms are one of the typological and spatial varieties considered in the field of urban agriculture. Urban farms can be seen as the main type of urban agriculture and that stands out by its economic, ecological and social importance, as well as its relevance for leisure (Matos, 2010). Urban farms are defined as growing food in the urban environment. In general, the growers seek in the urban farms a supplement to the family income or a possibility for leisure. The foods grown are produced for the family, community or for sale. The urban farms are deployed in small private plots, in public space or on private land free of buildings.

According to Cook, Lee and Perez-Vasquez (2005), urban farms can bring social, environmental, human, economic and emotional benefits. Matos (2010) completes the

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[3] *Expectant space* is a void land that is waiting for the implementation of any plan or design. Using the vocabulary of Solà-Morales (2003), 'expectant space' is a 'terrain vague'.

argument in favor of urban farms by pointing out that they provide flexibility and a capacity to adapt to changes in community demands. The author adds that urban farms can contribute to community development, generating social participation and urban regeneration. If urban farms can generate a lot of benefits and are flexible and adaptable to community needs, they can influence the improvement of quality of life. The farms may begin as a complement to economically disadvantaged families in a situation of unemployment. Over time, when the market is able to re-absorb the inactive population, the farms can become community recreation areas and a source of environmental education.

Urban farms can be seen as a legacy of the past that resists the real estate market. They present themselves as enclaves of residual landscape from the functional and morphological point of view, and can ensure living spaces, economic aid and food to citizens (Pinto, 2007).

Urban farms can be seen as an answer to the complex problem of social inclusion, as well as a reality to be included in the collective project that is living and working in the city and in society. In the case of Lisbon, the creation of horticultural parks, or sets of integrated urban farms in a bounded area, has been promoted by the *Câmara Municipal de Lisboa* (CML), Lisbon City Council. This has been done in response to the existing conditions of the urban farming activities, which were in precarious and disorganized conditions. The initial need for regularization and incentives was the genesis of a set of infrastructures to support citizens in Lisbon, as in many other cities.

 Urban farming appeared spontaneously due to economic needs, as well as for leisure purposes, in expectant empty spaces of the city or in spaces between roads. It has been an activity organized and regulated by CML, although a lot of urban agriculture activity still occurs in precarious conditions (especially along the highways and traffic axes, and land with steep slopes and poor conditions of urbanization).

'Informal' Urban Farms, IC17, CRIL – Lisbon. Source: Archive of Teresa Silva.

In 2009, CML initiated a project to create a set of infrastructure and reorder 40 acres of urban farms. Among them were the horticulture park of *Chelas*, the urban farms at *Quinta da Granja* and *Jardim da Graça*, projects for two farming and gardening lands in *Telheiras*, and the horticultural parks in the *Vale do Rio Seco*, *Ajuda* and *Ameixoeira* (*Diário de Notícias*, 2010). Together with the creation of these infrastructures, a commission to legalize urban farms was responsible for the development of a "Regulation for the Installation and Operation of Urban Agriculture Areas" (Matos, 2010: 210). After the reshaping of land, CML opened

competitions for assigning plots to interested citizens. The regulation, in general, aims to contribute to environmental sustainability, public health, landscape valuation and cultural valuation of handcraft production systems, as well as to demonstrate the nutritional benefits of consuming fresh food and economic benefits of organic agriculture. In the "Regulation for the Installation and Operation of Urban Agriculture Areas", four types of urban farms for Lisbon are defined, each with its own specific objectives: social or community urban farms, leisure urban farms, pedagogical urban farms and dispersed urban farms. For each type of urban farm, the document also defines the areas of implementation such as the use that should be made, what kind of people can grow and the destination of the products to be grown.

Table 1. Regulation for the installation and operation of urban agriculture areas

Urban farms	Objectives	Target population	Implementation area	Products grown
social or community urban farms	. occupational therapy . social interaction	. underprivileged population . inactive ages	. green spaces and urban parks (PDM - urban farming areas) . municipal land with agricultural capability	. own consumption . to sell
leisure urban farms	. contact with nature . leisure	. inactive population (age or physical/mental disablement)		. own consumption
pedagogical urban farms	. environmental education	. population and entities interested in the connection man - land		
dispersed urban farms	. to legitimize the occupation until the temporary occupation agreement . environmental, ecological and landscape valuation	. underprivileged population	. public expectant land	. own consumption . to sell

Source: Matos, 2010: anexo II.

The revision of the *Municipal Master Plan* (*Plano Director Municipal* – PDM) in 2011 strengthens the public policy in favor of urban farms, suggesting that urban agriculture should be encouraged in the city's green spaces. The aim is to increase local food production and consequently the self-sufficiency and resilience of the city, and the cohesion of urban communities (CML, 2011a: 55-56). In the same year, the first calls for the assignment of plots in the horticultural parks of *Quinta da Granja* and *Jardins de Campolide* (CML, 2011b) were opened. At *Quinta da Granja,* plots were assigned to social urban farms in 20 out of 326 applicants (CML, 2011c) and others were granted to people who already practiced farming in the area. The growers have to contribute with an annual fee of 55 euros, plus a payment of the maintenance costs of the park to CML, obtaining in this way, access to water and a place to store tools (CML, 2011b). As for the plots of the *Jardins do Campolide*, 21 were selected from among 169 candidates for the cultivation of leisure urban farms, and the growers must pay fees between 55 and 100 euros as well as maintenance costs (CML, 2011b). Since the number of applicants was much larger than the number of plots available, the proximity between residence and horticultural park and the order of entry were determining factors for selection (CML, 2011c).

In order to provide a means of environmental education, CML organized courses to promote urban agriculture together with the School of Gardening (CML, 2011d) and

independently in the *Jardins do Campolide* (CML, 2012). The themes ranged from the organization of an urban farm to organic agricultural techniques.

In addition to the previously mentioned benefits, such as providing food and financial income for citizens, other benefits can be obtained from these activities: social (recreation, therapy for individuals with special needs, rehabilitation of youth in risk), environmental (renewal of abandoned urban spaces, diversity of urban land uses, increase of biodiversity, preservation of the water, soil and air cycles, reducing the ecological footprint), human (promotion of sociability, social contact, health benefits through physical exercise, greater diversity in diet), economic (stimulus to local economies) and emotional (break in daily routine) (Matos, 2010: 205).

'Formal' urban farms, Campolide – Lisbon. Source: Archive of Teresa Silva.

At the time of the divulgation of the reorganization project of urban farms in Lisbon, Ribeiro Telles, a landscape architect and a great defender of urban agriculture, declared in an interview with the *Diário de Notícias* that the inclusion of agriculture in urban policies for green spaces in Lisbon is justified to ensure the food supply and reduce the reliance on national or European food supply policies. Ribeiro Telles argues that the supply of fresh food should be interrelated with the plan of the city, defending the idea of sustainability corridors in the city where meat, milk and vegetables are produced (*Diário de Notícias*, 2010).

Beyond these benefits at the territorial scale of the city, the urban farms contribute to the development of the communities where they operate, generating social participation and regeneration of urban spaces, many of them expectant. According to Rute Sousa Matos, the creation of more open spaces built with vegetation in urban areas will also create more educational opportunities, more pedagogical information on the production of food and animals (including school visits and educational activities), integration of people with learning difficulties and/or other special needs, and the development of practices of community enterprises such as cafes, garden centers and/or community business. These are among the activities directly related to the development of urban farms (Matos, 2010: 206).

The political measures that have been applied to legalize and promote urban farms in Lisbon are top-down policies. However, the necessity, viability and benefits of some farms in the urban territory have been identified by the population itself, when some citizens appropriated expectant land to grow food within the city. Growing food in the form of urban farms is born spontaneously by the need to ensure food for the family or for leisure. Thus, it is possible that when the policies employed are bottom-up, they could create even more benefits and be more inclusive.

It can be noted that the process of selection of growers for the new stands does not take into account socioeconomic factors that could give the urban farms a more inclusive character. Only the proximity to the residence is taken into account when choosing among candidates for the new plots created by CML. Factors such as labor inactivity (unemployment or retirement), family income, number of family members and physical or mental disabilities could be included for the selection of candidates, making the urban farms more inclusive and with more economic benefits for communities.

Street vendors in Rio de Janeiro

Like the urban farms in Lisbon, the situation of the street vendors in Rio de Janeiro is also an opportunity to address the issue of social inclusion.

Dealing with informal street vending, the most visible part of the informal market, is a challenge for governments because this activity has potential benefits for the society. Its proper management can be beneficial for the vendors involved, for the general population and even for government itself. An informal market in the public space is a reflection of some social problems such as a lack of employment and social exclusion. It is comprised of an economic activity outside the legal rules and the illegal occupation of public space, and generates urban problems. However, informal street vending can also be seen as job creator, a motor of vitality in the public space and a creator of commerce and supply of services (Bromley, 2000: 1).

The government has many responsibilities in the management of informal street vending. It is responsible for law enforcement, tax collection, consumer protection, control of public space, promotion of employment opportunities and ensuring supply of goods and services (Bromley, 2000: 16, 17). Although the roles of government are clear, the policies implemented can be divergent. Persecution, regularization, promotion and tolerance policies are commonly used (Bromley, 2000: 22). The way that governments deal with informal street vending depends on many factors such as interest of influential groups and the ideology of the ruling political party.

An extreme case of persecution is the policy of 'Zero Tolerance', which is the repression of any sign of disorder, including informal street vending, to keep the city clean. Such a policy was promoted by Mayor Giulliani in the city of New York, which eradicated the informal vendors from the streets. Extreme cases of persecution of informal vendors are typical when a city is the future host of a big international event, when the government sees itself obliged to clean the image of the city to sell it to foreign visitors (Bromley, 2000: 30).

There is no ideal solution, but in general the idea of regulating and promoting simultaneous economic, social and urban planning approaches can produce the best result, minimizing the negative aspects and highlighting the positive. On the impossibility of creating formal jobs, the government should see street vending as an escape valve for a surplus labor force, which needs to generate income. However, the regulation of economic activity is necessary to enforce health and safety rules, for the benefit of vendors and consumers, to ensure tax collection, to include social security benefits and to control the occupation of public space.

As a case study, we consider the city of Rio de Janeiro, which has a quite inclusive law regulating street vending. First, the rules that regulate the street vending, described in the law, will be presented. This will be followed by two examples of the formalization of informal street vending, which were studied over the years 2009 and 2010. Finally, the public policies

put in place in Rio de Janeiro starting from 2009 will be discussed. These policies aim to prepare the city to host the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016.

Informal street vending has been present in the public space of Rio de Janeiro for a very a long time. The first reference dates back to the beginning of the nineteenth century (Lopes, 1996: 37). Since then, the informal street vendors, *camelôs* as they are known in Brazil, have been the subject of many, often contradictory, policies.

The informal street vending phenomenon in Rio is characterized by its diversity. This can be observed in the variety of vending places, in all neighborhoods of Rio from streets to public transportation; in the many ways that the sales are done, using different equipment to expose and carry their products; in the wide range of working times – they can be found 24 hours a day during the whole year; and in the heterogeneity of the vendors. Many people unable to find a formal job become informal street vendors and remain in the informality either due to the continuous lack of formal opportunities or their adaptation to being self-employed informal street vendors (Monte, 2010).

'Informal' street vendors – Rio de Janeiro. Source: G1.

In Rio de Janeiro, street vending is not necessarily an illegal activity; the vendors have the possibility to become formal and work inside the law. The legal rules that regulate the street vending are a frequent matter of discussion due to the relevance of the street vendors in the urban space and in the economy. Changes in the legal rules usually reflect politicians' perceptions about the informal street vending phenomenon (Monte, 2010). The main rules in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro are currently presented in *Lei do Ambulante* (Municipal Law 1876, of June 29, 1992). This municipal legal rule regulates multiple aspects of street vending in Rio, defines who can be a street vendor, which products can be sold, where the street vendors can work, and how they can exercise this activity.

The law defines street vending as a temporary professional activity, which is exercised by a person in the public space at his own risk as self-employed. To be a 'formal' street vendor, the person should have a license issued by the municipality, but not everyone is eligible for such authorizations. The candidate must belong to one of the following categories:

- Being a disabled person
- Being more than 45 years old
- Have been employed as a street vendor before the law change of 1992
- Have been unemployed for more than one year or being an ex-convict (allowed for a maximum of 2 years)

Even if someone falls into one of these categories, it is possible to not obtain a license because its number is limited. To assign those licenses, a system of points is used, which takes into account the social conditions of the candidate. Aspects as age, the existence of

dependent relatives, and time of unemployment are relevant. Those who obtain a license are insured by the public social security and pay taxes for their insurance and the use of public space. The authorized street vendor is also allowed to have one assistant by paying a payroll tax; in the case the assistant is a relative, the tax is exempted.

The license lists the name of the vendor, the assistant's name, the kind of products sold and the vehicle's license, if used. This license is not definitive, it can be canceled or confiscated and the vending location can be changed. All authorized street vendors have one established place to work, which can be a specific location of the public space for the vendors with a fixed point or an area of a neighborhood for the wandering vendors. The violation of rules can be punished by a fine or a license cancellation, and products or equipment outside the rules can be seized.

Observing the *Lei do Ambulante,* street vending is still perceived as a transitory phenomena that temporarily provides work to individuals who will return sooner or later to the formal marketplace. Despite this, many workers become trapped in this way of life.

As examples of intent to observe compliance with the legal rules, two examples of street vending formalization in Popular Markets, *Camelódromo da Uruguaiana* and *Mercado Popular da Rocinha,* were studied. The Popular Market, or *Mercado Popular* in Portuguese, is a program that was created by the municipality with the objective of constructing organized and standardized spaces for street vending (Secretaria de Obras, n.d.) in areas of the city with high demand for this activity.

The *Camelódromo da Uruguaiana* was founded in a plot, a property of the metro offered by the municipality but without any additional infrastructures like electric and water supply, toilets and storing facilities. The foundation of the *Camelódromo* in 1994 originated with the transference of the *camelôs* operating in the center of Rio, spread throughout busy streets of the city center, to the empty space in *Uruguaiana* Street. *Camelódromo da Uruguaiana* was the first experience to promote a street vendor concentration in a delimited area of the public space. The results were very positive and the idea was applied in other areas of the city (Lopes, 1996: 67).

After the reallocation of the street vendors in the *Camelódromo*, the municipality did not offer any assistance or infrastructure. Initially sales decreased because the *Camelódromo* was not in the main route of people flow, which made them lose lots of customers. However, the low prices eventually brought the customers back over the time, making the *Camelódromo da Uruguaiana* a famous place. The overall infrastructure constructed in the *Camelódromo* was done by the vendors' association, while each *camelô* remained responsible for his own stand.[4]

The strengthening of the *Camelódromo* also increased the value of the stands, which led some vendors to rent or even to sell their stands. This was against the rules established by the municipality since the vendors do not have ownership of the stands plot, but only the license to work in the area. The original purpose was to offer a place to those working as street vendors.

The original *camelôs* who founded the market are not easily found vending in the stands any more. Some of them have sold the stands and others rent them, but most of them have more than one stand and work in the administration of their employees. Usually the stands

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[4] Interview conducted in 2009 with an administrative member of *Associação do Mercado Popular da Uruguaiana* (Monte, 2010).

have two vendors who are informal workers, while the 'owner' of the stand is a formal micro-entrepreneur.

Camelódromo da Uruguaiana. **Source: Arbex/O Globo Online.**

The *Mercado Popular da Rocinha* is located at the entrances of the Rocinha's *favela*. The market was implemented in 2004 in the same area of the public space where the informal street vendors already worked. The infrastructure of the market was completely constructed by the municipality under the architecture design of *Azevedo Arquitetos Associados.* The design of the market assigns regularity to it and includes it in the formal urban design of the city. Nowadays there are some changes with respect to the original design made by the vendors to improve the stands.
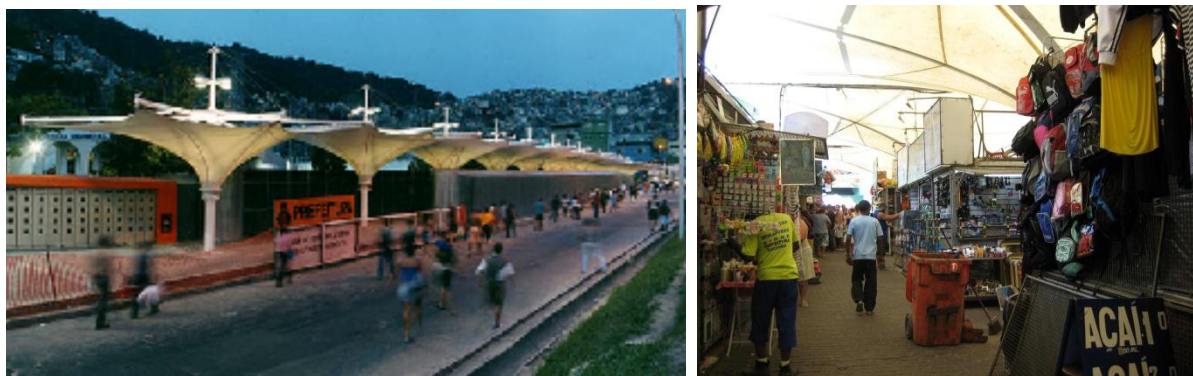
Mercado Popular da Rocinha. **Source: Arcoweb/Archive of Marianna Monte.**

The formalization of the market under a well-done infrastructure increased the sales, but, similar to the cases of the *Camelódromo,* some of the street vendors who worked on the original informal street vending activities sold their stands. In the case of *Rocinha,* this has led to a single individual possessing more than one stand, sometimes joining them together in a double stand. While the number of stand 'owners' has decreased, the total number of people working in the market is now bigger. Almost all stands have more than one person selling products. There are stands where the 'owner' works together with an assistant and there are also stands where various assistants work in different turns for an 'owner'. All the people who work in the market live in the *Rocinha favela.*

In these two examples of street vending formalization, it was observed that the social measures applied by the law do not last long. Some formalized vendors cannot afford the

taxes and leave the market; in contrast, others do so well that employ more than one assistant, but informally.

Both markets presented here, as well as many other clusters of street vendors, are organized into associations. These associations are responsible not only for the administration of the common areas and maintenance fees, but also for the protection of the group. The leaders of the associations represent the interests of street vendors with the government on occasions of discussion of new policies involving street vendors. The associations deal with the public institutions and politicians to ensure the continuation of the markets and they use their electoral power, through the high number of voters involved in each association, to make political pressure in defense of their interests. Thus, even in top-down policies the vendors have their interests defended by some politician that they support.[5]

In 2009 urban policies were created for the city of Rio de Janeiro to prepare it for international sporting events to be held in 2014 and 2016. Part of the attention was focused on the elimination of urban disorder and the minimization of informality. The measures regarding street vending are specified in the 'Operation to Combat Urban Disorder', a plan to restore public order. Regarding the street vending, a set of programs, operations and tools to persecute, promote and regulate street vendors were put into place. Different measures are used in different ways in different localities of the city, depending on the characteristics of each locality as well as the interests of stakeholders. The program also aimed to ensure that the already established rules were respected again.

Persecution occurred from 2009 to 2010 by the *Choque de Ordem* (Shock of Order), which controlled the compliance with legal rules, confiscated and demolished irregular equipment and confiscated prohibited products. Regulation involved the formulation of *C.U.C.A. – Cadastro Único do Comércio Ambulante* (Single Cadastre of Street Vendors) in 2009 based on the Municipal Law 1876, of June 29, 1992. With the C.U.C.A., the municipality aimed to reduce frauds in the promotion policies, and ensure the compulsory taxes payment and the guarantee of social insurance (Secretaria Especial de Ordem Pública, n.d.). The promotion policies are based on the program *Empresa Bacana* (Nice Enterprise), which stimulates the formalization of street vending into micro-enterprises, guarantees that the micro-entrepreneurs have access to credit and special taxation, creates new work opportunities to people not included in C.U.C.A. and determines new locations for authorized street vendors (Paes, 2009). Other measures to promote street vending are the program *Mercado Popular* and the insertion of urban furniture for street vending in urban design projects in the city. The program *Mercado Popular* creates and maintains popular markets around the city. The use of urban furniture for street vending defines patrons, standardized uses[6], upgrades the vending activities and promotes new activities, and facilitates control over the street vendors (Monte, 2010).

However, the formalized popular markets are not outside of the municipal policy of persecution and regulation of informality. The municipality carries out control operations in the market, searching mainly for irregular products, usually pirated media, clothes and fashion accessories (*Notícias Rio*, 2009).

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[5] Interview conducted in 2009 with an administrative member of *Associação do Mercado Popular da Uruguaiana.*

[6] Interview with a Manager of Secretariat of Urban Furniture and Landscape of *Instituto Municipal de Urbanismo Pereira Passos.*

Conclusion

By reflecting about urban farms in Lisbon and street vending in Rio de Janeiro, it can be concluded that both are urban products accessible to people of low incomes who otherwise would not have access to the labor market. As we have explained, the presence of citizens is crucial from the perspective of collective learning, as well as the measures implemented by the respective public powers.

The growth of cities is due in large part to migration from rural areas to cities. This is particularly important in current times when cities face new challenges such as a shortage of jobs and infrastructure, as well as the planning and maintenance of open space for healthy recreation (as opposed to supermarkets and shopping centers). Food also forms a substantial part of the budget expenditure of each household (many with low incomes). Given these facts, the informal market and urban agriculture may thus constitute an alternative to improve the living conditions of many families and alleviate the effects of a depressed economy.

The cities are capable of providing a range of open and flexible opportunities, taking into account each case and each urban context, in the case of Rio through the informal markets and in the formalization of street vendors, and in the case of Lisbon through urban agriculture and the implementation of different types of urban farm.

In the case of urban farms, they offer to the society a set of opportunities to exchange experiences, based on collective living. In urban areas and in inhospitable places of the cities, new urban spaces can arise where the diversity of experiences contributes to a better society.

In the case of informal markets, the strategies and stakeholders involved differ from case to case. The aim of the popular markets is the creation of a place where street vendors can work formally in better conditions and with a better infrastructure. The real consequences of the popular market are positive for some and negative for others. While some vendors thrive on sales and expand their business with the purchase of other stands and hire new workers in an informal way, others cannot afford the costs of formalization and have to sell their stands. Both cases are out of the legal rules and pose difficulty in terms of the social inclusion proposed by them. However, as in other cities, perhaps after the full implementation of new policies currently taking place in Brazil, these situations can be minimized. With access to a micro-credit company presented through *Empresa Bacana*, pioneer vendors maybe can keep their stands. C.U.C.A. can also facilitate the control of licensed vendors. However, these actions could be in part prevented by participatory policies that take into account the needs and priorities of the suppliers.

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