

Queering the (In)Formal Economy: Spatial Recovery and Anti-vending Local Policies in the Global South

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Abstract : Since the 1990s cities in the global south have implemented revanchist neoliberal urban regeneration policies that cater to urban elites based on “recovering” public space for capital accumulation purposes. These policies often work to reify street vending as survival strategies of ‘last resort’ for marginalized people and as an unorganized, unsystematic economic activities that needs to be disciplined, incorporated and institutionalized into the formal economy. This paper suggests, that by moving away from frameworks that reify formal/informal spheres of the economy, we are able to disrupt and rethink normative understandings of economic practices categorized as ‘informal’. Through queering economies, informal workers center their own understandings of self-value and legitimacy informing their economic lives and contributions to urban life. As such, queering the economy opens up possibilities of rethinking urban redevelopment policies that incorporate rather than remove street vendors, as their economic practices are incorporated into the everyday fabric and aesthetic of urban life.

Keywords : queering economies, street vendors, immigrant economies, race and nationality

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