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Affect and the dialectics of uncertainty: Governing a Paraguayan frontier town

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Abstract
This article discusses the affective politics enabling urban development in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, a young frontier boomtown where the volume of the extralegal transborder trade once exceeded the GDP of the entire nation. Against stereotypes of the city as lawless, I demonstrate how governing practices work through affect and emotion. I argue that local strategies of governing have temporal and spatial dimensions that produce an affective field of uncertainty for hawkers and street vendors. Paradoxically, the legal and spatial ambiguities that produce uncertainty as a disciplining structure of feeling are also the grounds from which vendors make claims to urban space. Yet vendors develop their own registers of need and entitlement through a politics of affective interconnection. This paper contributes to debates on the government of precarity and to geographical studies on emotion and affect by exploring how this dialectics of uncertainty enables exclusionary urban development.

Keywords
Affect, planning practice, governance, uncertainty, informality, street vending

Introduction

This article considers the affective politics of uncertainty for precarious street traders working in one of the largest extralegal border economies in the Americas. I demonstrate how municipal practices of spatial management accentuate lived uncertainties for street traders who claim urban space to make a living. The border trade has long been organized through logics of negotiability. In the street market the emotional valences of uncertainty become part and parcel of an understudied modality of rule. Yet, the legal and spatial ambiguities that produce uncertainty as a structure of feeling for street vendors are also the grounds from which vendors make claims to urban space. I call this dynamic the dialectics of uncertainty, using the term dialectic to indicate a generative tension between interrelated, conflicting forces. However, street vendors engage their own affective politics, practices of constrained agency that underscore the contingencies of municipal enforcement practice.

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The vibrant border trade defining Ciudad del Este, Paraguay circulates consumer goods to the growing Brazilian middle class through a range of extralegal, illicit and informal economic and spatial practices. While the city is stereotyped as a space of lawlessness (Brown, 2009) in fact, local state actors artfully govern through historically specific repertories of regulation (Tucker, 2015). Twenty thousand small-scale vendors, hawkers, and taxi drivers compete with elite traders for Brazilian buyers who re-sell consumer goods in other South American cities. Since the late 1970s, elites and the urban poor alike appropriated public space along Ruta 7, the main thoroughfare leading to the International Friendship Bridge crossing into Brazil. Claims to city space, concentrated in eight square blocks, enable actors to participate in the frontier economy. Today, established networks of large-scale importer/exporters, *contrabandistas* and small-scale urban entrepreneurs work the border trade. The ability of rural migrants and poor Paraguayans to profit from these globalized commodity flows leads some to cite the city as an example of globalization from below (Mathews and Ribeiro, 2012; Rabossi, 2008), even as the gains of the border trade are unevenly divided. Diaspora Chinese, Lebanese, and Korean businessmen own stores or discount shopping galleries, some the size of city blocks. In contrast, small-scale Paraguayan entrepreneurs work from the streets. The border trade shapes the region (Béliveau and Montenegro, 2010) and deprives Paraguayan state coffers of significant tax revenue (Masi, 2006; Ruiz Díaz, 2011).

For this article, I draw from 15 months of participant observation of everyday regulatory encounters between the urban poor and municipal state actors, conducted between 2011 and 2015. Through these relations, political authority is performed, reiterated, and contested. I also conducted more than one hundred open-ended interviews—in Spanish or the indigenous Guaraní[1]—with a range of actors engaged in the border trade, its regulation, or urban space-making practices. Studying affect is necessarily interpretive. My approach focused on two affiliated emotions, uncertainty and hope, investigating the different ways these affects connect with other social forms and relationships, including the spatial and temporal dimensions of governance. To this end, I triangulated observations of body language, informants' statements about emotion, and self-reflection of my own emotional experience. Against the notion that affects exist outside conscious awareness, I argue my interlocutors can make useful statements about their internal, emotive, and affective experiences. Finally, I analyzed the history of affects, situating the rise of uncertainty in relation to the cultivation of fear under the Paraguayan Stroessner dictatorship.

In the first empirical section, I demonstrate how uncertainty is a collective structure of feeling, an experience one street vendor described as a "state of permanent fright" cultivated by municipal officials. In the next section, "Disguised brutality," I show how the affective dimensions of uncertainty are an effect of the state, even if they work through political technologies that differ from Foucault's expectations that state practice seeks to produce intelligible, mapped space or calculable populations. In the final section, "Testifying," I argue that street vendors themselves work on the malleable "emotional betweenness" (Bondi, 2005) present in regulatory encounters with municipal officials, a practice of constrained agency and a particular politics of hope.

The complex relationships between state power and marginalized groups have long concerned the social sciences, largely focusing on moments of rupture and resistance to examine how popular culture shapes—and is shaped by—statecraft (e.g. Joseph and Nugent, 1994). In particular, research on the state and extralegality tends to focus on the magical, spectacular, and extraordinary (Das and Poole, 2004; Folch, 2013; Mbembe, 2001; Taussig, 1997). Yet the dialectic of uncertainty is enacted through commonplace interactions between urban entrepreneurs and local state officials, rather than extraordinary

performances of state power. By demonstrating how the spatial, temporal, and affective dimensions of governing articulate to produce vendors as hopeful subjects of uncertainty, my findings contribute to anthropologies of the everyday state (Gupta, 2012; Ismail, 2006; Krupa and Nugent, 2015). As such, I make a case for the import of affect in the government of precarity. Furthermore, the dialectics of uncertainty clarifies the durability of the hierarchal networks of contingent reciprocity that suture together vendors and municipal officials. In so doing, I offer a response to the perennial question of why the urban poor continue to invest hope in the state, despite the state's litany of failures to support the wellbeing of most vulnerable. While dialectics of uncertainty is particularly evident in Ciudad del Este, it may characterize other urban spaces where livelihood practices commonly transgress the law.

Affects and uncertainties

During my time in Ciudad del Este, a particularly entrepreneurial street vendor, Eugenia, described to me the "psychological weight" (*carga psicológica*) she experienced in regulatory encounters with local municipal officials.[2] In our conversations, Eugenia noted the stressors of economic precarity, but she also suggested that the Municipality had a "strategy" (*una de sus estrategeias*) to create interior, affective states of uncertainty. Generating fear, worry, and confusion, Eugenia hypothesized, made it harder for street vendors to claim rights to livelihood and resist exclusionary urban projects. At the same time, I observed women street vendors engage an affective politics to defend their claims to urban space, targeting the emotional states of municipal officials by displaying their vulnerabilities. Affect demanded study.

The "affective turn" in the humanistic and social sciences sought to analyze bodily life and felt experience as drivers of social action, a response to perceptions that political theory overvalued reason and rationality. Affect is alternately theorized as felt experience, a lived intensity (Massumi, 2002), an "unstructured potential" (Shouse, 2005: 3), or a Spinozan bodily capacity underwriting action (Bennett, 2009). While many scholars argue that affect emerges from a psychic realm beneath or prior to cognition, the sharp delineation between affect and intentionality is contested (Leys, 2011). In practice, many theorists use the term to connote the emotional realm of lived experience ambiguously related to cognitive processing.[3] I follow feminist approaches that consider affect, felt experience and embodied performance as political, without assigning a particular ontological priority to affect (Ahmed, 2013; Berlant, 2011; Hemmings, 2005). I am critical of assuming affect as precognitive excess located outside ideology or structuring, because, as Clare Hemmings argues, this requires a decisive split between epistemology and ontology, rather than situated engagements with the relationship between these dimensions of political lifeworlds (Hemmings, 2012).

Geographers have been instrumental in demonstrating the varied, placed workings—and political stakes—of different affects. Geographers argue that affect produces "thick" places charged by relations of belonging (Duff, 2010), generates passionate attachments to precarious startup labor thereby stabilizing neoliberal economic forms (Cockayne, 2016), or enables positive "reinscriptions of place" by homeless urban residents (Cloke et al., 2008: 241). Ben Anderson's work traces the multivalent capacities of affects as he differentiates between a collective affective state akin to Raymond William's structures of feeling, a Spinozan bodily capacity, and a Foucauldian "object-target", that is, a population level phenomenon through which state actors attempt to govern (Anderson, 2014: 17). I contribute to these debates by demonstrating how uncertainty and its corollary hope are

simultaneously embodied affects, a collective experience, and an emotive field through which municipal officials govern.

This article grounds an analysis of affect in research on precarity. The analytic precarity gestures toward an increasingly common experience of economic insecurity (Standing, 2011), as Fordism is framed as exception rather than the norm (Breman and van der Linden, 2014; Neilson and Rossiter, 2008). Linked to but exceeding the economic register, Judith Butler describes the "precariousness of life" as the ontological condition of vulnerability coextensive with life itself while precarity describes the uneven social distribution of vulnerability (Butler, 2004), often wrought through governing projects (Lorey, 2015). Feminist scholars like Lauren Berlant connect different registers of precarity, linking the political economic distribution of vulnerability to the production of particular affects that, paradoxically, can yield emotional attachments to "compromised conditions of possibility" (Berlant, 2011: 24). I add to these discussions on the affective politics of precarity, arguing that local political technologies intensify the lived economic insecurities of street vendors through a suite of governing strategies. I also describe a different sort of politics of affect than the situated solidarities of recognition that interest Berlant and Bulter. Street vendors themselves engage in "affective orchestration" (Berlant et al., 2010: 3)—a capacity usually attributed to capital or states—as they aim to sidestep eviction by generating favorable emotional states in municipal officials.

In Ciudad del Este precarity affiliates with uncertainty both as embodied emotional experience and as shared structure of feeling. Ethnographers of uncertainty argue that it is a field of intervention engaged by state actors (Devlin, 2011; Rabinow and Samimian-Darash, 2015; Zeiderman, 2015).[4] Examining how state policies predictably concentrate risks in marginalized spaces, Austin Ziederman and colleagues argue that states can "govern through uncertainty" (Zeiderman et al., 2015: 283). My account of the affective politics of precarity adds to these debates by stressing how the emotive, sensorial registers of uncertainty are integral to practices of governing.

A state of permanent fright

Uncertainty is a structure of feeling permeating street vendors' daily lives. Local practices of governing intensify the lived insecurities of poverty, called by some the "tyranny of emergency" (Appadurai, 2002: 29). Fully appreciating the "emotive topographies" (Anderson and Smith, 2001: 8) of everyday enforcement practices requires understanding the multiple ways in which vendors' claims are constructed as contingent. Since the 1970s, street vendor occupations contravened various laws and municipal ordinances, including constitutional restrictions on using public space for commerce. Across Latin America, legal transgression in income generation is common.

Through the early 2000s, the Municipality organized space in the street market through forbearance, that is, the non-enforcement of various use-of-space codes. In addition to constitutional restrictions, since the mid-1980s local ordinances outlined authorization procedures and spatial requirements, like allowable dimensions of vending infrastructure. Street vendors, often through associations, negotiated with municipal officials for *de facto* recognition of vending claims.[5] Yet individuals cannot count on forbearance. Thus vendors deploy a range of tactics to stabilize their claims to space: mobilizing collectively against eviction; affiliating with vendors' associations, attempting to regularize their claims, paying off municipal officials, leveraging political connections to municipal bureaucrats, or engaging in individual practices of "quiet encroachment" (Bayat, 1997). Evicted street vendors are sometimes able to convince an empowered municipal administrator to grant relocation (*reubicación*), temporary authorization to sell from elsewhere in the street market.[6]

In the 2000s, after decades of extralegal occupation, a municipal plan to order the street market offered a pathway for some vendors to regularize their claims though a symbolic payment called the precarious use tax (*el canon del uso precario)*, on the books since the mid-1980s but unenforced. The precarious use tax was designed to align street vendors' occupations with constitutional public space law, although through the 1990s few used it. The politics of the precarious use tax elucidate how legal practice keeps vendors' claims persistently tenuous, creating the conditions for the felt experience of uncertainty. On paper, legalization of irregular claims proceeds when a vendor solicits regularized status, obtains a vending license, and pays the monthly tax. One cornerstone municipal project to formalize vendors—called the Pilot Plan and discussed in the next section—relies on the precarious use tax as the pathway towards regularization. This formalization project threw into question the politics of forbearance, long a key governing practice. In interviews, municipal officials presented the precarious use tax as an example of the power of the local state to order urban space.

In June 2013, the Municipality organized a rare campaign to enforce use of space codes in the street market. Under pressure to address declines in the border trade, the Municipality focused on the city's image, arguing an orderly city—implicitly a city less visibly marked by the ad hoc infrastructure of vendors—would attract the shopping tourists vital to the frontier economy. Teams of municipal employees methodically walked block by block, issuing warnings to vendors lacking up-to-date payment of the precarious use tax, presenting eviction orders to some established food and fruit vendors, and suddenly enforcing old rules restricting hawking. Everyday enforcement practices became more visible to an outsider, like myself.

Given official pronouncements of the precious use tax as a technology of fairness and formalization, I was surprised when some of the vendors evicted during the June enforcement campaign could demonstrate proof of up-to-date payment of the precarious use tax. Seeking to understand this contradiction, I interviewed Mauricio, the president of a vendors association known for supporting municipal formalization projects. I questioned him about the evictions of officially formalized vendors and he explained the constitutive temporariness of all vendors' claims. Mauricio said,

> "...the right to the fee—or to pay the sidewalk tax—is autonomous to the Municipality. Autonomous means that the Municipality can decide right now to kick you out of your vending space, to speak directly. [The Municipality] is autonomous...While they do accept tax payment, you are legal, but when he doesn't accept payment the next month, then you are *immediately illegal*." (Mauricio, Personal communication, July 2013 [emphasis added])

As expressed by Mauricio, legality is produced via municipal discretion. Even with documentation of regularized status, Mauricio says, municipal officials can unilaterally decide to stop accepting payment of the precarious use tax, producing the vendor as "immediately illegal." In another interview, a street vendor explained that through paying the precious use tax vendors became "less informal." This phrase captures both a shifting gradient of formality/informality and the persistent insecurity for those paying the tax, still unable, in this vendor's experience, to claim clear, legally backed rights to urban space.

In the only other ethnography of Ciudad del Este's street market, Fernando Rabossi describes what he calls the "production of legal precarity," in which incongruence between practical economic activities and the associated legal categories creates insecurity of tenure for vendors (Rabossi, 2011: 84).[7] The logic of immediately illegal and the extent of municipal discretion in enforcement explains the practical basis for vendors' individual worries over the security of their claims. Elsewhere I have described this repertoire of

governance practices as *regulation by ambiguity*, which operates through contingent enforcement of the law and negotiability over the use of urban space (Tucker, 2015).

The affective dimensions of uncertainty are both an individual and collective experience. In his work on structures of feeling, Raymond Williams connects felt experience, operating at the scale of the individual, with collective, historical processes (Williams, 1978). The "difficult" term connotes the connections between "practical consciousness" or "meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt" and the situated ways structures of feeling articulate with other social forms: institutions, ideologies, and the like (Williams, 1978: 132).[8] Structures of feeling can scale up to produce a diverse range of social phenomena, from xenophobic movements to freedom struggles. I follow Ben Anderson, who brings Williams' focus on generational shifts in art and literature to the study of specific affective states as political, historically specific, and culturally mediated (Anderson, 2014).

The emotional experiences of one group of vendors along Avenida Centenario will help clarify the workings of uncertainty as a structure of feeling. Most of these vendors did not pay the precarious use tax. Rather, the Avendia Centenario vendors relied on assurances from municipal officials that their claims would be respected, recounting stories of promises proffered during visits by the mayor during election season. During the enforcement campaign, municipal officials evicted Eugenia and other vendors along a section of Avenida Centenario. Eugenia's bloodshot left eye twitched as she recounted to me the events culminating in her eviction and the subsequent struggles of the block association to advance negotiations with the Municipality. While the term eviction connotes a singular event, eviction unfolded as an extended process for Eugenia and her colleagues, beginning with rumors that their street was slated for clearing, followed by news that the Municipality, without explanation, stopped accepting precarious use tax payments from some vendors on their block. On eviction day, Eugenia resisted, and municipal officials forcibly confiscated her small vending cart in a scuffle that injured Eugenia. Angered by mistreatment during the eviction itself, Eugenia also stressed that the eviction—as process—rendered her dependent on unintelligible, seemingly arbitrary, municipal practices.

The evicted protested, encircling a vendor chained to a signpost, holding signs reading, "We want our vending spaces! We want to work!" (*queremos nuestros puestos de trabajo, queremos trabajar*). Displaying Paraguayan flags and invoking their status as hardworking citizens, the protesters claimed a right to livelihood rooted in national belonging. When I visited, vendors milled in small groups, speculating about pathways towards reclaiming their vending spaces and sharing stories of the hardships precipitated by the eviction. The mood was resigned. Municipal urban plans sparked uncertainty, and the vendors were split on the most expedient pathway forward. Their president counseled a reconciliatory stance toward the Municipality, arguing that securing a meeting with the Mayor required disbanding protest tactics for a non-confrontational politics of negotiation. A competing camp, including Eugenia, worried their president was in cahoots with the Municipality, calling him a fraud ("*presidente gua'u*"). Vendors often grilled me, seeking information about my interviews with municipal officials or small mobilizations elsewhere in the market.

Other vendors also named this structure of feeling, making explicit links to municipal strategies of governance. One vendor among the 40 evicted, Doña Lucia, called it "a state of permanent fright." After the evictions, the fortunes of Avenida Centerairo vendors diverged. The Municipality extended temporary permission to sell from less desirable market locations to some, but not all, vendors. Consequently, some vendors sold on the sly, dodging municipal enforcers known as *fiscales*. Both groups of vendors hoped their association president could successfully negotiate with the Municipality for more secure permission to sell. Doña Lucia chose a more confrontational path, re-occupying her spot along Avendia

Centenario and refusing to leave unless the Municipality paid her a compensation salary for the forfeiture of what she saw as her right to livelihood. In an interview, she explained she had overcome the fear of municipal officials that had driven her colleagues away. Doña Lucia explained why she chose confrontation rather than negotiation.

> "I turned myself into a lion, I became a street tiger for my vending space . . . They can no longer keep tricking us, *keeping us on alert, in a state of permanent fright*, (*nderembotavyveima ha ne'ẽveima la ¡chake!*) . . . hiding in the side streets where supposedly no one can see us. Isn't this true? Tell me if I am not speaking the truth." (Doña Lucia, personal communication, August 2015, [emphasis added])

In Guaraní the exclamation ¡*chake*! indicates a warning of impending danger or future harm. One translator suggested "a state of permanent fright" best captured the figurative meaning. The base verb of the construction *ne'ẽveima,* to speak or create (*ne'ẽ*), attributes the force of conjuring ¡*chake*! to "they," the Municipality. Doña Lucia curtailed that force, declaring it over through conjugating "*ne'ẽ"* in the negative and past tense, the rough equivalent of adding "not anymore" (*veima*) alongside the root verb. Doña Lucia thus explicitly linked the generalized condition of ¡*chake*! to municipal strategies of governing, which I interpret as a generalized, affective condition of uncertainty. By invoking lyrical metaphors of her lion-like strength, she asserted her own distance from this state of permanent fright.

Thus regulation by ambiguity has a collective structure of feeling. During the enforcement campaign, uncertainty as a structure of feeling eddied and swirled, occasionally drawing me into its tow. I felt disoriented, unable to reconcile official municipal statements that they recognized the claims of "legitimate vendors" (*verdaderos mesiteros*) with my observations of sporadic evictions.[9] As I chatted with vendors, I often fielded questions about my research, especially my attempts to meet with the mayor. During the enforcement campaign, the tenor of these visits changed. With the old relationship of forbearance thrown into question by new municipal actions, vendors began to see me as a potential source of information as they sought to make sense of evictions and other ominous omens, like the appearance of spray paint on the street seeming to mark off smaller vending spaces. Vendors turned to me as a source of information, as if to highlight the extent of uncertainty surrounding municipal plans.

I also observed the collectivity of affective uncertainties as moods swelled from hesitant worry to rebellious anger during the June enforcement campaign. At several points worry spilled over into something else, taking observable, collective shape. A series of small street rebellions erupted, and groups of vendors shouted down municipal officials attempting to deliver warnings or eviction notices. At these moments of rupture collective worry turned into collective anger. Once, a crowd ran municipal *fiscales* out of the street market, chanting *"mondaha*," Guaraní for thieves. As armed police officers protected the fleeing *fiscales,* excitement flashed in the eyes of onlookers. Momentarily, vendors reclaimed the streets as theirs. Several other times during the enforcement campaign, crowds spontaneously coalesced, alchemic moments when collective worry transmuted into outrage. Local organizers sought to capture the momentum, but the emotion of outrage seemed to quickly dissipate back into uncertainty and worry.

Disguised brutality

Obdulio, a long-time vendor and ex-association president, also described the production of uncertainty as a municipal strategy of governance. I asked Obdulio about organizing street

vendors today compared to his experience under the fearsome authoritarian rule of Alfredo Stroessner (1954–1989).

> The difference? For me the difference is that then there was a lot of physical brutality, right, and *now there isn't overt brutality but rather disguised brutality,* today it's turned around. Physically, right, looking physically there isn't brutality, but if we look inwardly we see it's calamitous, it's even worse [than under Stroessner] because physical wounds are temporary . . . now we are worse off, ok; our interior experience makes up our reality. (Obdulio, personal communication, October 2013, [emphasis added])

Obdulio stressed current municipal management of the street market as a kind of "disguised brutality" operating through "interior experience" and producing "calamitous" harms. Obdulio goes further than Doña Lucia's "state of permanent fright" by situating these "disguised brutalities" in Paraguay's legacy of authoritarian rule. Obdulio thus marks a shift from the authoritarian tactics of physical violence under Stroessner to a new era of covert governance strategies aimed toward inner experience. In contrast to what Obdulio suggests, the fear of authoritarian state violence also worked on the interior spaces of Paraguayan selves, in addition to physically marking the bodies of the tortured and disappeared. Yet, we do not need to accept Obdulio's suggestion of an epochal shift from physical violence to disguised brutality to take seriously his analysis of the impacts of municipal practices which work, as he says, "inwardly."

This section interrogates how emotional life becomes a site of government, arguing that affective uncertainty is an effect of the state. Two key experiences of street vendors—one spatial and one temporal—reveal how uncertainty in enforcement encounters predictably transmutes into an emotive state that then, itself, becomes swept up into practices of governing. First, a municipal plan to "formalize" the street market, a decidedly spatial strategy, increases tenure uncertainty for some vendors. Second, enforcement encounters are temporally stretched, producing vendors as waiting subjects. These spatial and temporal dimensions of governing articulate with a productive affective realm. Yet street vendors ground their claims to urban space in the very legal and spatial ambiguities that produce uncertainty as a structure of feeling. Thus, the dialectic of uncertainty is a mode of governing precarity.

If classical liberal political theory sees statecraft as invested in repressing or educating away the unruly dispositions of the masses, critical social theorists consider power's productivity. Feelings, attachments, sensibilities, and aspirations are "dense transfer points of power" (Foucault, 1978: 103). Demonstrating this, Ann Stoler argued that colonial statecraft produced the categories of imperial racial hierarchy through the "distribution of sentiment" (Stoler, 2004: 7). Thus the state, not just the nation (c.f. Anderson, 1983) invests in the cultivation of useful emotions. With Foucault's notion of the "object-target" Anderson argues that affects become a realm of governance when state projects target, channel, and measure them (Anderson, 2014). For instance, consumer confidence is both an enabling affective condition of economic growth as well as an object of calculation and intervention. In what follows, I parse out how practices of government mobilize affective uncertainties without the techniques of calculation that interest Foucault (2009), Ben Anderson, and others (Scott, 1998). For clarity, I pull apart the spatialities and temporalities of governing practice, even though time and space are interwoven as dimensions of lived experience (Massey, 2005).

Affect and spatialized governing practices

The Pilot Plan is an example of how spatialized practices of governing articulate with lived uncertainties. Seeking to upgrade Ciudad del Este's image as a competitive global city, the

Municipality proposed the Pilot Plan to order urban space and regularize street claims. The formalization project extended state-owned, standardized vending stalls in one zone of the street market although vendors in the Pilot Plan zone, like all vendors, gain and maintain regularized status by paying the monthly precarious use tax. Side streets surrounding the central artery remain informalized. The Pilot Plan emerged as a negotiated deal forged between a key vendors' association and the Municipality in the early 2000s. Conceived as a temporary solution, the Pilot Plan was to improve working conditions for vendors until a permanent facility could be constructed.[10] Planners proposed an incremental roll out of four "stages" (*etapas*). At the time of writing, 15 years after the plan's conception, the final, forth 'stage' (*cuarta etapa*) remains unfinished.

In interviews and public statements, municipal planners emphasized the Pilot Plan as a successful example of state capacity to regulate space through the rational application of standardized rules, a view that aligns with dominant understandings of formalization (Maloney, 2004; World Bank, 2007). Through this legalistic perspective, the goal is to align individual or firm actions with the law. Municipal planners insisted that formalization displaced old practices of forbearance and dealmaking. These official narratives of progress equated urban development with a particular aesthetic of orderly spaces of commerce, linking forward historical momentum to eradicating the disorderly spatial habits of the poor. Thus one municipal director said, "Who creates this disorder? They do [vendors]... because of them there is no urbanistic relationship" (Municipal director, personal communication, June 2013). Others have documented how this aesthetic delineation of urban belonging constructs the poor as outside urban citizenship (Ghertner, 2015; Watson, 2009).

I interpret the stakes of the Pilot Plan's spatiality through Kregg Hetherington's concept of the "temporality of infrastructure," that is, as the materialization of a future-oriented development promise, imagined through narratives of linear progress (Hetherington, 2014). Analyzing rural land conflicts, Hetherington argues that the incomplete transition from Paraguayan populism to neoliberal governmental practice is wrought through new modes of the "infrastructural pitch," the ways that state programs of improvement enroll peasants as political subjects (Hetherington, 2014: 209).[11] The Pilot Plan's pitch is convoluted. On the one hand, the Pilot Plan's standardized vending infrastructure replaces the ad hoc infrastructure of vendors with the urban forms associated with the globally competitive, commercial city. Thus the Pilot Plan hails vendors as small-scale entrepreneurs, renting urban space from the local state for commercial purposes. Part of the Pilot Plan's infrastructural pitch is this aesthetic address. At the same time, inclusion in the Pilot Plan requires vendors engage in dealmaking and negotiation, the populist political practices supposedly banished by the formalized city. Regulation by ambiguity and the politics of the precarious use tax produce vendors as "concurrently tolerated and condemned," (Yiftachel, 2009: 89), only tenuously belonging to the economic life of Ciudad del Este.

Some vendors concur that the Pilot Plan and aesthetic upgrading correlates with progress. However, competing narratives of the Pilot Plan, and its stakes, also circulate. Fierce legal and street battles preceded each segment of the Pilot Plan's construction, which required demolishing the self-built infrastructure of thousands of vendors. Some vendors lost large, brick, and mortal stalls, opposing the plan as downsizing their claims. Others worried about the fairness of distributing the vending upgrades, or feared it paved the way for future evictions. A vending association president, Marcelo Sosa, specified the political productivity of municipal formalization projects. Describing Ciudad del Este as "a provisional city" (*una ciudad provisoria*), Sosa argued that the Pilot Plan offered a zone of relative tenure security compared to the approximately 2,500 vendors working outside the

Pilot Plan. Thus the spatiality of the Pilot Plan splits the street market into a corridor of 'upgraded' space in the midst of eight square blocks of informalized, self-built vending infrastructure. Sosa highlighted another register of spatial differentiation: high-end riverfront development that concentrates commercial activity in a small, elite zone of the city center to the detriment of most street vendors.

The Pilot Plan exemplifies how status differentiation *within* the field of the so-called informal unevenly distributes livelihood possibilities, a well-studied phenomenon (Meagher, 1995; Portes et al., 1989; Roy, 2005). However, more is at stake here. The Pilot Plan's corridor of semi-regularized space unsettles the old equilibrium of forbearance punctuated by protest. With each phase of the Pilot Plan, the boundaries of inclusion are redrawn, raising again the questions of who will be included, and who will be cast out. Spatialized practices of governing thus work through interminable negotiations for inclusion, producing uncertainty about tenure status that precipitates out into a structure of feeling. Further, during the post-authoritarian transition the affective dimensions of governmental practice have been reordered. The fear cultivated during the long authoritarian winter is now oriented toward the production of uncertainty. Seeing the Pilot Plan as a spatialized practice of government helps reveal how regulatory practice produces uncertainty as a collective affective state for street vendors, that is, how interior experience, as Obduilo says, becomes a site of governing.

Affect and the temporalities of rule

If the spatial dynamics of the Pilot Plan produce uncertainty over the boundaries of inclusion, different forms of waiting characterize the temporalities of municipal management of the street market. Waiting through extended negotiation is a collective and individual experience. Collectively, vendors have been waiting since 1994 for the Municipality to build permanent relocation facilities for street vendors on land expropriated expressly for that purpose. Others wait for the Municipality to make good on promises of relocation after an eviction. Still others wait for promised spaces in the Pilot Plan upgrades. The *possibility* a vendor may stabilize a current claim or secure relocation after eviction is a key condition rendering the city governable, keeping many vendors in a state of permanent mobilization.

To demonstrate how the embodied experience of waiting produces a felt sense of uncertainty, I trace one vendor's negotiations with municipal authorities as she tried to secure relocation after eviction. I met Magdalena in a municipal lobby where she and several other women were waiting to meet with an official. Magdalena and her associates sold *tereré*, a popular cold tea. *Tereré* vendors, nearly always women, are among the most marginalized sellers in the street market. The group lacked documentation of their claims, strips of street between parked taxis and the makeshift stalls of street vendors. However, during the eviction they secured a verbal promise for relocation from a key municipal official, although the when and where of the relocation was uncertain. Magdalena and her associates thus began a campaign of waiting, visiting the Municipality each morning at seven, hoping to catch a municipal official disposed to honor the promise. Magdalena called her insistent waiting being "*hovyhata*" or hard-headed, so persistent that the Municipality would eventually grant her the relocation.

Magdalena spent hours leaning against a wall of the Division of Urban Development or standing in the rickety hallway outside the office of an important Director. Yet Magdalena's waiting was active, involving constant calculations of how she might manufacture an encounter with the right municipal official, of strategizing the right combination of words and emotion to

elicit the desired response. The uncertainty stretched over months. As her debts mounted, Magdalena took out another loan to rent space in an undesirable, low traffic zone of the street market. Magdalena spoke to me often of her worry; without income from *tereré* sales she would be unable to pay for basic necessities: food and school fees for her children.

During one episode of waiting, Magdalena sought information from a stout municipal employee who wore a red suit jacket announcing her affiliation with the ruling Colorado party. Magdalena recounted the financial hardship engendered by the eviction, crying as she invoked her responsibilities as a Catholic, god-fearing mother. The employee counseled prayers beseeching God to put care in the heart of Santiago Torres, an important municipal director. Magdalena retorted, ''We have rights!,'' naming the promise, accusing municipal officials of treating her like a fool. The employee replied Magdalena was wrong to invoke rights, but then seemed to think better of it as she glanced at me. The official said, ''We all have rights, but they take time.'' As the employee hedged about rights, she invoked a specific temporality, one marked by deferment. That same morning, I asked Torres about the process for someone like Magdalena to secure actionable permission to relocate. Torres replied, ''They must wait.'' Through deferring completion of the Pilot Plan, the Municipality holds open possibilities for inclusion. Enrolling vendors in ongoing negotiations contains the threat, somewhat, that the excluded and dispossessed will organize blockades, occupations, and protests, as they have sporadically over the decades.

Through Magdalena's story, we can sense the outlines of the felt experience of uncertainty. Temporally stretched regulatory engagements and the unintelligibility of future municipal actions produce persistent worry. From Marx (1867) to Foucault (1977), social theorists have argued that time is a medium of discipline. Noting that making others wait is ''an integral part of the exercise of power,'' Pierre Bourdieu argues that ''waiting implies submission . . . delaying without destroying hope . . . adjourning without totally disappointing, which would have the effect of killing the waiting itself (Bourdieu, 2000: 228, cited in Auyero, 2012: 25). Juxtaposed against action-oriented movement, waiting is feminized as passive, as are those who wait (Conlon, 2011). In an ethnography of an Argentine welfare office, Javier Auyero demonstrates that poor people come to know themselves as subordinated political subjects through waiting, addressed by the state as ''compliant clients'' rather than rights-bearing citizens (Auyero, 2012: 21). Indeed, waiting can define the experience of entire poor communities, as for residents waiting for relocation out of their toxic Argentine shantytown (Auyero and Swistun, 2009). However, the embodied experience of waiting has spatial and affective dimensions, in addition to temporal ones. The affective dimensions of the space-times of governmental practice wed interior felt experience to collective structures of feeling.

In sum, the Pilot Plan produces a differentiated micro-geography of stability and risk in the street market. Temporally, vendors wait for inclusion in the Pilot Plan or, like Magdalena, for relocation after an eviction. Thus, the spatial and temporal practices of governing the street market produce affective uncertainty as an effect of the state. Waiting and the Pilot Plan's infrastructural pitch enroll vendors as incompletely belonging to the economic life of the city, as subordinated beneficiaries rather than rights-bearing citizens. Further vendors' claims to urban space rely on temporal and spatial ambiguities, thus producing a dialectics of uncertainty as a mode of governing precarity.

Testifying

The most marginalized women street vendors, like Magdalena, engage in their own affective politics. I observed vendors defending their claims to urban space by targeting the emotional

field of municipal officials. In charged confrontations women vendors displayed the stresses of poverty and the vulnerability of the body in order to activate an affective response from municipal bureaucrats. Women also invoked their responsibilities to their dependent children, legitimating their claims to space by stressing family vulnerability. I call these interactions "testifying" because of the ways that emotional intensity provides proof of embodied need.

Inciting the emotion of care in the right municipal heart sometimes worked. As Santiago Torres explained, sometimes a vendor "touches your heart," (*te toca el corazon*) and so he would respond by extralegally extending provisional vending authorization. I saw municipal authorities abandon evictions when confronted by testifying women. During one encounter, an elderly food vendor confronted the police commissioner. Desperation cracked her voice as she invoked her decades-long history selling cheap lunches. A crowd gathered, watching her wring her hands, narrating the vulnerability of her grandchildren, dependent on her small income. A young woman came to her aid, confronting the municipal official, attesting to the longevity of the older woman's tenure, corroborating her frail health. And suddenly, the police commissioner called off the eviction.

Another vendor, Celia, helped me see the politics of testifying. I met Celia at a community assembly of the dispossessed. I sat at a white plastic table with the guests of honor, lawyers, and several association presidents. After the official speeches, mostly men with degrees and salaries, Celia insisted on speaking. She turned toward the news camera, saying

> I am a jacket-vendor, a very honest Paraguayan woman. I've never had to rob anyone, not even an egg . . . And we each buy [our jackets for sale] through hard work and sweat. And I'm totally exhausted. What am I to do? Must I rob? Will I have to go to jail in order to feed my family? . . . And me, what will I give to my son? My son is five months old, I have him on my breast; I am breast-feeding him. I have to put diapers on him. And what am I going to say to my son? No, I can't change my son's diaper because Doña Sandra [the mayor] is going to clean up the city. (Celia, personal communication, June 2013)

Text cannot represent Celia's performance. Celia demands an emotional response; her body shakes, her voice quivers, tears fall. Celia called those present into her emotional field, a mix of intense worry about her children's wellbeing and outrage at the damage to her livelihood wrought by the eviction. Meeting participants shouted affirmations like "*cierto*!" (that's right) as a collective emotional wave rippled through the assembled, circling back, and encouraging Celia to continue. I often sensed Celia sussing out how she might engage me in ways useful to her cause. In a conversation after the community meeting, Celia drew my hand to her breast, heavy with milk, insisting I confirm she was a breastfeeding mother. Celia's dependencies marked her body, evidence she was a woman with crucial care-taking responsibilities. If Celia's mothering obligations legitimated her street appropriations, the affective intensity of Celia's testifying served as further proof of her embodied need.

Celia's testifying clarifies how women vendors target the affective field as a malleable "betweenness" (Bondi, 2005: 443). Affective politics work because of the contingency inherent in regulation by ambiguity, a source of worry and also a condition of possibility for the most marginalized vendors to make claims to urban space for livelihood. Like Celia's testifying, Erica James finds that Haitian victims of human rights violations perform their suffering to gain redress as "trauma portfolios" become currency in an economy of humanitarian aid (James, 2010). Testifying is highly gendered. Celia's first words "I am a jacket vendor, a very honest Paraguayan woman," indexed both gender and nation as positions that legitimated her speech. As she testified, Celia rooted the dignity of her work in the morality of motherhood, and expressed pride in the embodied experience of

familial labor. Rather than challenging dominant notions of femininity, testifying women seek improved conditions for their families, like women elsewhere lamenting the "failures of patriarchy" to adequately provision their families, but without challenging gendered hierarchies (Ray and Qayum, 2009).

Testifying aims to reactivate relationships of dependence between street vendors and municipal officials. James Ferguson calls such expressed desires for dependence "pursuits of subordination" (2013: 224). Indeed, I saw testifying turn to supplication when the latter emotive position seemed more likely to elicit the desired responsiveness. Ferguson notes that pursuits of subordination pose problems for the foundational assumptions of liberal conceptions of agency that assume a universal desire for liberty, imagining autonomously formed desire as a natural outgrowth of objectify-identifiable interests. Yet these two modalities of politics—rights-claims and pursuits of subordination—are not mutually exclusive. Magdalena invoked her rights with one municipal official as she also tried to "touch the heart" of Santiago Torres. Further, testifying's political imaginary still insists the state has obligations to the poor, even if they are to respond to a subject of needs rather than empower a subject of rights.

These regulatory relationships instantiate vendors like Magdalena as subjects of a fickle state that rarely bends in their favor but which maintains the possibility that it might. Constantly enrolled in municipal negotiations and deferrals, I was surprised to note how often vendors spoke of hope. After a month of waiting, Magdalena sought out Javier Zacarías at a ribbon-cutting event, the powerful ex-mayor and husband of the current mayor, Sandra McLeod de Zacarías; just the man to help her transform her waiting into actionable permission to reoccupy her vending space. As she recounted her encounter to me, she described Zacarías as someone who listened, with kind eyes. With a hopeful voice, she described how Zacarías made a phone call in front of her, calling the municipal director Santiago Torres. Zacarías shouted, demanding that Torres resolve Magdalena's problem. Yet, Magdalena suspected the call was little more than a cheap way for Zacarías to demonstrate his populist chops. As a performative crafting of hopefulness, Zacarías' phone call kept Magdalena suspended in negotiation. After six more weeks of waiting, the Municipality neither fulfilled nor revoked the promise of relocation. She had become, like countless other vendors, a hopeful subject of uncertainty. When I visited her 18 months later, she had reoccupied her old vending space, aware another eviction could come at any time.

Similarly, another evicted vendor, Ricardo, described hope as a necessary political resource. As he carefully arranged rows of prescription eyeglasses for display, he explained the status of his legal case against the Municipality. In 2011, the courts found the Municipality improperly evicted Ricardo's group of vendors ordering the Municipality to recognize the vendors' rights to occupy sidewalk space. In 2015 the Municipality still refused to comply with the court order. When we spoke, Ricardo and his associates provisionally occupied undesirable sidewalk space in another market zone. Yet, Ricardo used the imperative form to say, "one must never lose hope" (*siempre hay que tener esperanza*).

Others also expressed hope in the face of difficulty. Fabiana hoped for a spot in the final phase of the Pilot Plan. We spoke in March 2015, amidst rubble and sewage fumes, nine months after the Municipality demolished her self-built stall and well into interminable negotiations over a municipal census and other lists naming the vendors to be included. Fabiana explained how a vendors association leader asked for $200 USD to include her name on a list of authorized vendors; controversial, shifting lists, which may—or may not—influence the future distribution of upgraded vending stalls. When Fabiana could not pay the $200 the president vigorously struck her name from the registry of associated

vendors, saying, "you are not approved!," a threat to her livelihood. Angry and unsure of the actual power of the association's list, Fabiana joined with a different vendors association that sought to maintain a more distant relationship with the Municipality. Fabiana speculated that the honesty and bureaucratic dexterity of the new association president could counter the back room politics of pay-to-play lists. "But one must have hope" (*Pero hay que tener esperanza*) she commented.

I do not read Ricardo's and Fabiana's hope as naiveté. Rather, Ricardo spoke of his hope as a cautious openness to the possibility that contingency might align in his favor. Hope kept open lines of connection to municipal officials and other power brokers, crucial resources that might become useful in a constantly shifting political landscape. In the flux of uncertainty, the crucial thing, Ricardo said, was to stay engaged and connected, poised for a possible opening during elections or other moments of conflict. Thus hope existed as part of an unstable assemblage, able affect the relationship among elements in a constantly re-organizing social field. Following Ben Anderson's triparte typology, here hope is a Spinozan bodily capacity enabling action and also, perhaps, an epistemological orientation enabling future-oriented action (Miyazaki, 2006), even though, as noted by Ernst Bloch, hope always contains the seeds of own disappointment (Bloch, 1954). In this reading, hope was more than a survival strategy amidst clientelistic relationships but itself a crucial force with the power to affect the relationship among elements. However, these affective politics encourage vendors to cultivate themselves as hopeful subjects of uncertainty.

Saba Mahmood insists that "the sense and meaning of agency cannot be fixed in advance" (Mahmood, 2011: 14). Instead of starting from (authentic or deluded) expressions of individual will and desire, Mahmood starts from the bodily forms of action to then turn to the kind of subjects those actions produce. Mahmood's project centers on how Islamic women use the body as a "developable means" (Mahmood, 2011: 166) in projects to cultivate the pious self. I do not claim that street vendors are engaged in similar acts of conscious self-cultivation. Rather I suggest that starting from bodily practice offers an important vantage from which to view the intersubjective relations performing, reiterating, and contesting governance and rule. Thus, while testifying is an individualized act, it is also relational and ethical. It is an act of constrained agency, drawing on available discursive and affective resources in order to effect changes in the relationships between elements in the social field. Studies of urban politics that focus on collective action as the litmus test for legitimate agency miss the import of these tactics.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to debates about governing precarity, detailing a situated account of how emotive lifeworlds become a site of government. I have argued that local political techniques intensify the lived economic insecurities of precarious street vendors in Ciudad del Este. In the last decade and a half, urban planning in Ciudad del Este has promoted high-end frontier shopping malls and upgraded vending stalls, gestures in urban form towards the globally competitive commercial city. Yet regulation by ambiguity, deferral, and dealmaking—practices of politics supposedly banished by the formalized city—remain key domains of politics for street vendors defending claims to urban space. The spatial and temporal dimensions of governing explain how uncertainty and hope swirl into a collective affective field through which municipal officials govern.

Through quotidian encounters with state agents—seeking a vending permit from a municipal bureaucrat or hearing the mayor promise tenure security at a rally—ordinary urban residents come to understand what the state is supposed to be and who they are in

relation to it. Indeed, formalization projects in Ciudad del Este produced vendors as hopeful subjects of uncertainty, as subordinated beneficiaries rather than rights-bearing citizens. Affective governance is thus a situated example of the productive nature of power, in the Foucauldian sense. However, governing here proceeds through uncertainty, arbitrary decision, and confusion. These practices are not an abstract sovereign capacity to activate a state of exception (c.f. Agamben, 2005). Nor are they 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 (c.f. Mitchell, 1999; Scott, 1998). Rather, affective governance is a political technology of state power.

The dialectics of uncertainty provides an explanation as to why the urban poor continue to invest hope in the state, despite its ongoing failures to support meet the most basic needs of the poor. Thus this view of affect and the space-times of governance helps explains the durability of hierarchical relationships of contingent reciprocity—nearly three decades into the democratic transition. Looking to the government of precarity through affect also shines a spotlight on the political repertoires of the most marginalized women vendors as they target the affective states of municipal officials by displaying their embodied vulnerabilities and moral maternal responsibilities. As practices of constrained agency, testifying underscores the contingencies of municipal enforcement practice and is thus a means to see the interworkings of everyday practices of power.

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Notes

1. Throughout Paraguay, Guaraní is widely spoken as the language of family and friends for the popular classes while Spanish is the language of bureaucracy and power. Most mestizo Guaraní speakers do not identify as indigenous, indexing a complex politics of language, indigeneity and national belonging.
2. I follow standard ethnographic practices of anonymization, using pseudonyms and changing identifying details for all interlocutors, with the exception of elected public officials.

3. A common, though contested, approach within affect theory defines affect as pre-cognitive and emotions as available for cognitive processing. Scholars concerned with the ontological grounds of the political, in particular, consider affect to be non-cognitive, inter-personal, and non-representational. For instance, Brian Massumi defines affect as "irreducibly bodily and automatic" (Massumi, 2002: 28). However, others critique the ontological approach as neglecting feminist scholarship on the body (Hemmings, 2005); resting on a binary between biology and culture or rationality and emotion (Leys, 2011); or eliding the necessary project of giving reasons for promoting select affective states over others (Barnett, 2008: 187). Even Ben Anderson, a strong advocate for definitional differentiation, argues that affect theory out of cultural studies tends to celebrate affect precisely because of an assumption of it as pre-cognitive and outside of representational possibility (Anderson, 2014).
4. Recent critical scholarship also considers uncertainty a constitutive condition of the contemporary mega-city (Simone, 2013) or a new epochal phase marked by the hyper-fast re-organization of social structures (Bauman, 2013). In spaces of poverty, the urban poor capitalize on uncertainties, forming temporary alliances, connecting to unstable economic flows, or harnessing relational potentialities "between" elements in the urban milieu (Simone, 2013: 243).
5. The complex landscape involves dozens of associations. Some aim to limit competition by restricting new entrants while others take an inclusive stance toward hawkers and other marginalized vendors.
6. The politics of reubicación resonate with what anthropologist Caroline Schuster has called "solidarity without obligation" in her analysis of municipal community aid programs which unpredictably circulate favors and public services to poor peri-urban neighborhoods in Ciudad del Este (Schuster, 2012: 128).
7. In Portuguese, Rabossi's term is "*produção legal da precariedade*."
8. Emphasizing the dynamism of the social—often thought of as "formed wholes" but actually "forming and formative processes"—structures of feeling include "the specificity of present being, the inalienable physical . . . alive, active, 'subjective'" (Williams, 1978: 128). Hegemony and culture are also "continually formative processes" such that binaries like resistance/acquiesce or alterity/integration are always themselves unstable (Lagos, 1993: 65).
9. The discursive, socially constructed category of "legitimate vendors" has its own contentious politics.
10. In 1994, the state expropriated two parcels of riverfront property expressly to relocate street vendors, a major victory for vendors associations in the early post-Stroessner era. Amid contestation, these plans failed. Today high-end shopping mall development signals the tenuousness of vendors' place in current urban plans.
11. Mid-century land reform enrolled campesinos as key to imaginaries of national development but yet still as outside modernity and, therefore, full citizenship. However, a neoliberal, World Bank-funded land information system rendered campesinos as redundant "impediments to progress" (Hetherington, 2014: 209, 2011).

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