

Summaries

Erhard Berner: ‘The Housing Question’ in the 21st Century: Market Failure, Hapless Policies and the Global Proliferation of Slums. In large cities in the developing world, only a privileged minority of the population has access to land and housing through the commercial market. Mushrooming ‘irregular’ settlements are filling the gap but are beset by deficiencies and insecurity. This article argues that the failure of formal markets is systemic and structural, and that attempts to open them up to the poor have fallen short of overcoming these inherent limitations. In order to mitigate the widening gap between gated communities and ghettos, government intervention needs to rediscover the ‘enabling approach’ and become much smarter than the present mix of negligent tolerance, brutal eviction, market-fundamentalist privatisation, and populist titling.

Paul Schweizer & Paula Gil Larruscahim: Pixação – Difference, Cleansing Policies and Resistance in ‘Global City’ São Paulo. In recent years, Brazil has been discussed as an emergent or booming economy. São Paulo plays a central role in these development narratives, being presented as the country’s economic powerhouse and an island of modernity within Brazil and Latin America. Policies aiming to consolidate São Paulo’s global or world city-ness deepen inequalities and exclusions. Nevertheless, these policies are confronted with visual intervention practices in public spaces that do not fit modern Euro-American business capital imaginaries and standards. Pixação is a typical style of graffiti found in Brazilian cities, originally practiced by youth in São Paulo in the 1980s. Though the signatures, spread across Brazilian cities’ façades, generally do not contain any explicit political content, we discuss pixação as an everyday practice of resistance in the context of spatial segregation and the repressive policing of public space. Furthermore, we refer to recent cases of pixadores getting involved in broader social struggles, making their techniques and knowledge prolific instruments for social movements. Finally, we show that practitioners in European cities have recently adopted these techniques. Thus, we argue that the multidirectional knowledge exchange claimed by post-colonial urban theory is being practiced in the field of visual interventions in public space.

Julia Haß: Women’s Amateur Football in Rio de Janeiro – A Contested Urban Sport Space. This article offers a discussion on the role of sport as an everyday practice for the (re)negotiation of gendered spatial relations in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. As the national sport, football spaces dominate the urban architecture and everyday life in Rio de Janeiro. Due to a history of exclusion and discrimination, women only started to use football spaces in the last decades of 20th century. Through focusing on women’s amateur football in Rio de Janeiro, the article analyses unequal gender relations in sport and in urban space. In the last few years, women’s amateur football has become more popular and new clubs, teams, and competitions have been created. Yet while today men share football spaces with women, women’s teams and

football related social projects still struggle to make more sporting space for women and girls in Rio de Janeiro.

Frank Müller & Markus-Michael Müller: (Re)Importing Counterinsurgency: From Rio de Janeiro to Port-au-Prince and Back Again. This paper addresses the global re emergence of counterinsurgency in the Urban South by focusing on Brazil's pacification experience in the context of the MINUSTAH (United Nations Mission in Haiti) and its ongoing application in Rio de Janeiro's marginalized areas, the favelas. We argue that the transnational export-import of 'favela-pacification experience' is closely connected to Brazil's geopolitical aspirations. By empirically grounding our argument in the perspectives of local actors on the implementation of this pacification strategy in two marginalized areas of Rio de Janeiro, Maré and Alemão, we trace the strategy's modifications and local adaptations and demonstrate that the colonial project of pacification, which is central to urban counterinsurgency, extends the domestic competences of the Brazilian military. In developing these arguments, this paper contributes to the largely neglected role of states from the Global South as central actors in the making of global counterinsurgency.

Gregor Dobler: Towns as Frontiers: Contesting the Urban in Northern Namibia, 1950-1980. This article traces the development of towns as a spatial form, a concept, and as a practice in northern Namibia. During pre-colonial times northern Namibia was characterised by scattered homesteads, with towns only first starting to emerge in the 1950s. From the start, planning from above and lived practice from below intersected and mutually influenced each other. The emergence of northern Namibian towns is inseparable from the migrant labour system and from oppressive apartheid policies, but towns were also spaces of relative autonomy and freedom from societal control; they constituted frontier spaces, in the sense outlined by Kopytoff, in which people could experiment with new social forms, resulting in conflicts surrounding power and control. Conflict over the rights to the city, the article concludes, is not new; it is an essential part of the urban condition.