



# SEX WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SPORT MEGA-EVENT

*Examining the  
Impacts of Rio 2016*

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# Vision & Mission

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# Vision & Mission

With support from the Economic and Social Research Council, this research project entitled, “Sex Work in the Context of the Sport Mega-Event” (ES/N018656/1) explored legacies of the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics on host women involved in adult, consensual sexual labour in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Specifically, we were curious to examine the ways that hosting a sports mega-event, including infrastructure and stadia construction, affected the broader sexscape, revised possibilities for economic advancement, and impacted the everyday life of local women. To do so, we worked directly with those involved in sexual commerce to better understand the everyday, lived realities of the global sport spectacle; voices that are so often excluded from the mainstream coverage of the event.

*Specifically, we were curious to examine the ways that hosting a sports mega-event, including infrastructure and stadia construction, affected the broader sexscape, revised possibilities for economic advancement, and impacted the everyday life of local women.*

In Brazil, this project was implemented in partnership with the Prostitution Policy Watch (Observatório da Prostituição) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in the context of their research project, The Impacts of Sporting Events on Sex Markets in Rio de Janeiro. The research is supported by FAPERJ (210.137.2016) and coordinated by the following team in Rio de Janeiro: Ana Paula da Silva, Angela Donini, Cristiane Oliveira, Indianare Siqueira, Laura Murray, Natania Lopes, Thaddeus Blanchette and Soraya Simões.

We believe that the participant-oriented research, collaboratively developed in the course of the mega-event, will come to characterize much of the future research on global cities—especially as former host communities continue to recognize and connect with cities of tomorrow. The event created a microcosm in which to examine the way sex work is shaped by urban development strategies, political priorities, and cultural sensibilities. With this in mind, the stories and analysis shared are not the result of one event alone but reflective of broader processes of development, coupled with the incessant pursuit of modernization, that host cities are able to accelerate through the momentum of a global spectacle.

We anticipate that the experiences in Rio de Janeiro are not unique to Brazil. Through this document and associated discussion, we hope to reveal the common complexities of other host cities—to reveal mega-event realities, establish international allies, further the existent network, and create empirically-driven possibilities for the future. Indeed, this report has been developed through a collaborative process, building from events in both Rio & the United Kingdom with stakeholders (e.g. lawyers, sex workers, academics, support groups, human rights NGOs) from former and future host cities: Rio, Sochi, Los Angeles, Tokyo, London, and Doha, Qatar.

*The event created a microcosm in which to examine the way sex work is shaped by urban development strategies, political priorities, and cultural sensibilities.*

We encourage engagement with this report (and the wider data set and academic publications) which we hope will be of value to a number of organisations. We have written the report to be informative for, and of use and value to, a diversity of stakeholders, including those from future host cities, NGOs, sex workers and associated support groups, media groups, city officials, mega-event security forces and police liaison groups. We encourage engagement with the evidence base in the report and welcome further discussion from across the breadth of potential stakeholders.

Photo Credit: BETE



# Executive Summary

2-0

# Executive Summary

## Event Urbanism

- Often regarded as a commercially-viable and socially-pacifying institution, sport has rationalized development within postindustrial “world-class” cities (*Sánchez & Broudehoux 2013; Kipfer & Keil 2002; Silk 2014*).
- The construction of hypermodern sport stadia or the newest consumerist “playscape” intended to appease tourist classes is known to evoke a “revanchist” appropriation of public space, the re-regulation of neighbourhood space as well as surveillance/strategies of social control which disproportionately target urban poor (*e.g. street prostitution, loitering, disorderly conduct, vagrancy, etc.*) (*see also Freeman 2012; Friedman & Andrews 2010; MacLeod 2002; Silvestre & de Oliveira 2012; Van Wynsberghe, Surborg & Wylly 2013*).

## Sex and the Global Sport Spectacle

- Despite the dominant anti-trafficking discourse that uniformly classifies women and children (*particularly in the Global South*) as vulnerable, more recent scholarship has interrogated the assumption that the involvement of women/children in precarious labour is an unintended consequence of global capitalism (*Agathangelou 2006; Cabeza 2009; Keough 2016; Peterson 2010*).
- This work has revealed the extent to which transactional sex is structured into transnational economies: it is a symptom of capitalist expansion, not an exception or aberration to the rule (*Suchland 2015*).
- The injection of capital cannot be contained within, or used to solely advance, the socio-political-economic agenda of the bourgeois, cos-

mopolitan class—those relegated to the urban shadow also work to create financial opportunities from the influx of transnational tourism (*Sassen 2014*).

## Sex Work and the Law

- Sexual commerce is a permanent, albeit transient, fixture within the urban environment in Rio de Janeiro (*Amar 2009; Caulfield 1997*).
- The exchange of sex for money has never been outlawed yet the activities that surround the sale of sex (*such as operating a brothel or employing a prostitute in any way*) may be illegal depending on the context (*Hubbard & Wilkinson 2015; Hubbard 2016*).
- Sex work in Brazil is a quasi-legal profession, vaguely-defined and contextually-enforced, and most readily influenced by the shifting public discourse, cash flow, and willingness of parties to negotiate with authorities (*Blanchette & da Silva 2011, 2016*).
- Internationally, there is a common call for total decriminalization of sex work with a particular emphasis on the negative impact of colonial criminal law on Indigenous women and women of colour in the sex trade (*Durisin, van der Meulen, Bruckert 2018*).

Photo Credit: AMANDA DE LISIO



## Data Collection

- Data collection took place in conjunction with the Prostitution Policy Watch [Observatório da Prostituição], an extension project of the Metropolitan Ethnographic Lab (*LeMetro/IFCS*) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.
- Ethnographic data was collected from four zonas [zones] of sexual commerce: (i) Balcony Bar in Copacabana; (ii) Vila Mimosa, near Maracanã Stadium; (iii) the Caixa, across the Guanabara Bay in Niterói (municipality within the Greater Rio de Janeiro Area); and (iv) Barra da Tijuca, home to the Olympic Park.

- Interviews (*n=115*) and observations (*>1000-hr*) formed the bulk of the data collected; significant visual data were also collected including a participant inspired and curated photography exhibit.
- General participant profile: Racially-mixed (*identified as mulatta*); from a working-class suburb; attended formal education; majority had at least once child; approx. 25 in age (*ranged 19-40*); supplemented income with other affective/feminized labour; self-managed (*no pimp*); evangelical Christian or povo de santo (*Macumba*); sought prostitution as the most lucrative form of labour; no drug/alcohol use at work.

## Research Objectives

- Determine the (socio-legal) strategies used to mitigate sexual commerce during the sports mega-event.
- Examine the everyday tactics (*material or immaterial*) used to overcome event-related challenges.
- To create opportunities for those involved in sexual commerce to participate in the co-creation of the research design, analysis and outputs.

## Data Sources

- Document analyses of sex work, event and human trafficking-related material released in relation to the event as well as relevant media documentation.
- (*Participant*) observations of sex workers’ rights organizations, volunteers and the working/living conditions of their members.
- Semi-structured interviews conducted with key informants identified through data collection (*i.e., in document analysis and observation*).



### Socio-Spatial Impact

- While the sport mega-event in Rio de Janeiro was envisioned as an inclusive moment in urban regeneration, sex (*work*) appeared to have a limited—somewhat ambiguous—status within the host context.
  - We approached the sport mega-event as a microcosm to examine contemporary development priorities, i.e., privatization, resource extraction, land reform, etc., and sex work as a form of affective-performative labour (*akin to the more celebrated professional athlete*) that is relegated—due to arbitrary legal sanctions—to the informal/shadow sector.
  - Olympic/FIFA families reorganized the informal sector and relegated (*alleged*) sexual deviance to the urban shadow. Yet, to be a sex worker is to recognize the imminence of space/place—to live in a constant state of displacement. The sport mega-event served as little exception to this rule.
- The empirical data set revealed that the event reconfigured the local sexscape yet, also, created new possibilities for those involved in sexual commerce. Whilst communities were bulldozed, access to new technologies increased online contact with clientele. We prioritized urban location in analysis—as it was clear that space/place most influenced the manner in which women encountered/experienced the event. Specifically,
    - In urban spaces more frequented by tourists, sex work persisted as an absent presence—discretionally-allowed and tolerated if done in accordance with the national image of sexual liberation (*as evidenced in Copacabana, Barra da Tijuca*).
    - In urban spaces identified as sites of event-associated redevelopment and heightened land speculation, there was forcible displacement of sex workers (*as evidenced in Niterói*); the project produced evidence submitted to the United Nations relational to the rights of women and gender based violence (<https://www.nswp.org/sites/nswp.org/files/UPR%20Submission%2C%20Davida%20-%202016.pdf>).
    - In urban spaces marked as ‘red-light zones’—where sex work has been traditionally contained—sex work continued without state infringement, although tourists were discouraged from visiting through overt strategies which blocked entrances and (*re*)stigmatized the area and people within as potentially dangerous (*as evidenced in Vila Mimosas*).
    - In urban spaces which are known to attract the local (*working class*) population, sex work was allowed to persist, albeit with limited clientele and continued payment to local law enforcement (*as evidenced in Centro*).

*To be a sex worker is to recognize the imminence of space/place—to live in a constant state of displacement. The sport mega-event served as little exception to this rule.*

Barra da Tijuca

Vila Mimosas

Centro

Copacabana

Niterói

# The Report

3-0

# Introduction

Building upon scholarly work which has addressed the careful orchestration of cities as an arena for market-oriented growth and elite consumption via sporting events or new stadia, tourism, local tax abatements, legal exceptionalism, public-private partnership, and securitization, this report will details the impact of 2014/2016 event construction on those involved in informal, precarious, labour. The focus on sex work is deliberate—worker-driven research on the topic is scant, and moral outrage is extensive (Deering et al. 2012; Matheson & Finkel 2013). Since Athens (2004) and Germany (2006), the figure of the vulnerable woman/child has served the globalization of antitrafficking strategies—which readily conflate forced sexual exploitation/labour with adult, consensual sex work. Given anti-trafficking efforts have characterised sport mega-events for more than a decade, we wanted to know: Does this form of humanitarian aid actually improve the everyday life of women most in need or merely rationalize the cycle of displacement and dispossession prompted by transnational interest in local land? The link between sex work(er) displacement and event urbanism is most obvious in the construction of tourist-oriented communities, as was the case in the removal of (*indigenous*) women involved in sexual commerce from the Downtown Eastside for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic event, the East End of London for the 2012 Olympic event, and the buy-and-bust detainment strategies in 2014/2018 Russia. We document such urban revanchism, yet remain mindful of the subtler manner in which event urbanism materializes: institutionalized violence that becomes normalized in communities marked as degenerate or abject in capitalist expansion. With this in mind, we interrogate the impact of 2014/2016 mega-event construction/realities on women involved in sexual commerce. As we highlight commonalities in event urbanism, we also seek to understand the pre-existent socio-spatial context in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the historical insertion of sex (*work*) in the city.

*With more than a decade of attention directed at anti-trafficking strategies and the sport mega-event, we wanted to know: Does this form of humanitarian aid actually improve the everyday life of women most in need or merely rationalize the cycle of displacement and dispossession prompted by transnational interest in local land?*

Photo Credit: AMANDA DE LISIO



*We worked to document such urban expulsions, but remain mindful of the other ways in which institutional violence becomes normalised in spaces marked as degenerate or immoral.*

# Data Collection

This report was drawn from an integrated methodological approach that included: (i) document analyses of prostitution and/or anti-trafficking informational material; (ii) the collection of in-field observational data; (iii) context-building conversational interview data (both formal and informal) with those befriended in the field (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007); and, (iv) visual data (photography and video) (Pink, 2013). Together, these complimentary approaches offered a robust and rigorous data set for analysis. Observational and interview data were collected in Rio de Janeiro between April 2014 and March 2017. In total, one year was spent in the field, with over 100 women interviewed. Data collection took place in conjunction with the Prostitution Policy Watch [Observatório da Prostituição], an extension project of the Metropolitan Ethnographic Lab (LeMetro/IFCS) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro which consisted of an (inter) national team comprised of academics, including: the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Fluminense Federal University, the Gender Studies Centre at the State University of Campinas, the Mailman School of Public Health and Faculty of Law at Columbia University, and Gender and Sexuality Studies at Williams College. We also worked closely with stakeholders in the broader public, policy and activist sphere (David: Prostitution, Civil Rights, and Health, ABIA: Brazilian Interdisciplinary Association of AIDS, and the Brazilian Network of Prostitutes). This integrative approach allowed purchase on the manner in which the (female-identified) sex worker adapted to the entrepreneurial essence of the event to capitalize on the influx of tourism in the otherwise bleak economic moment.

*Inherent to the discussion of each zone of sexual commerce is an emphasis on the familiar strategies needed to address colonial-capitalist erasure, and the (re)creation of creative entrepreneurialism, approaches to intimacy, and (transnational) desire.*

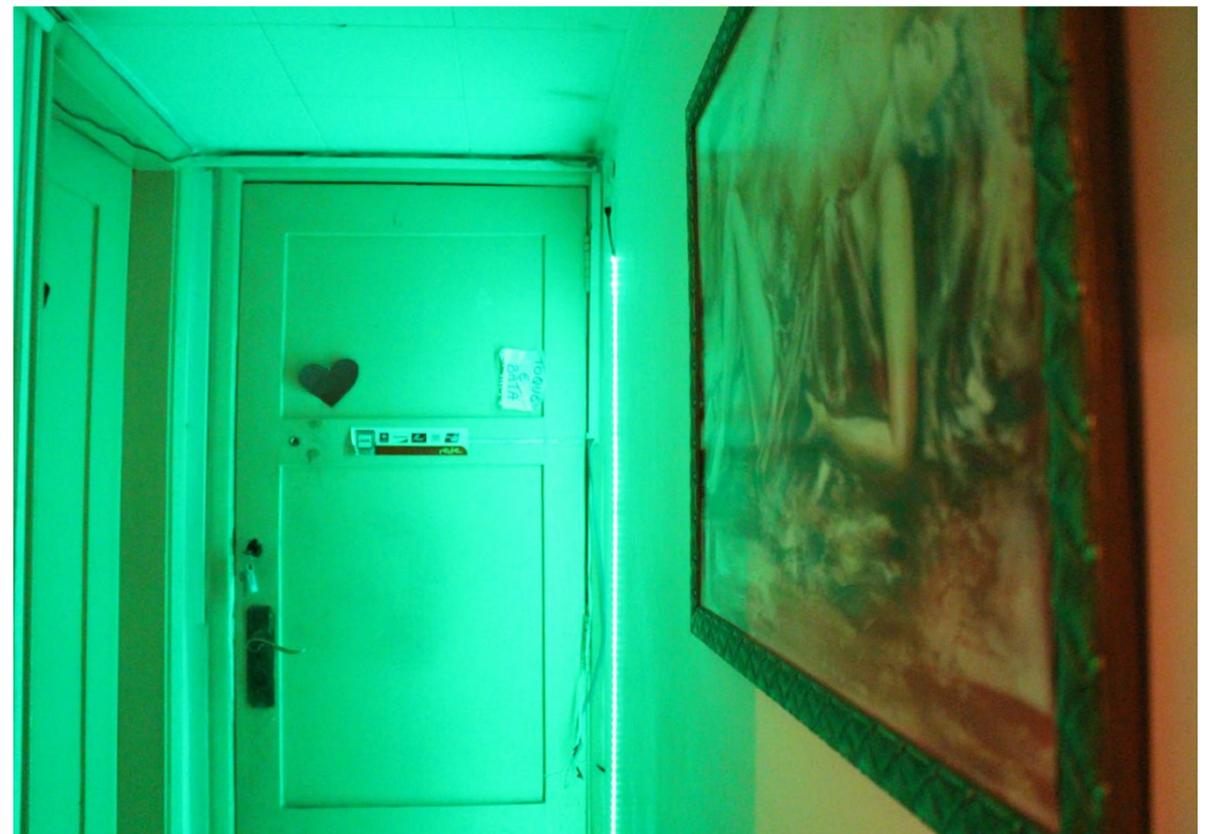
1 – We should note that in data collection, we attended to all sexual economies in Rio de Janeiro, but especially focused on that which formed the bulk of this local commercial sex market. To such an extent, heterosexual men made the bulk of clientele while more feminine sexualities were sold. We realize that this overview of heterosexual sex work is limited in that it does not account for all the diverse sexualities that constitute (in)formal economies as well as the urban realm, even if hardly acknowledged in political discourse or development strategies.

2 – We would like to acknowledge that this report is a snapshot of a much larger project interested in the extent to which, by accelerating processes of urbanization through strategies akin to neoliberal acupuncture, the SME created the condition in which an individual deprived of social, economic, or political power is further motivated to cultivate a view of her body as a value-producing resource material.

*This integrative approach allowed purchase on the manner in which the (female-identified) sex worker adapted to the entrepreneurial essence of the event to capitalize on the influx of tourism in the otherwise bleak economic moment.*

Data was analyzed and organized based on geographic location—as space/place in the urban environment impacted the manner in which women experienced event processes and tourism. Furthermore, the data demonstrated the incorporation of the event into historical processes of displacement/dispossession through which those deprived of social, economic, or political opportunities cultivate a view of bodies as a needed resource material. Inherent to the discussion of each zone of sexual commerce was an emphasis on the voices of sex workers, an apparent aberration in much public, policy and academic debate on sex work.

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# Sport in the City

Often regarded as a commercially viable and socially pacifying institution, sport (*often in the form of hosting an internationally-recognized event*) has rationalized and legitimated development within post-industrial “world class” cities, promising the injection of global-tourism capital, increased access to health and wellness facilities, and added opportunities for active, more environmentally sustainable transit (Silk & Manley, 2012; Silk, 2014). The existent literature has alluded to the establishment of a “competitive city model” (Kipfer & Keil, 2002) or rendition of this kind to describe the reconstruction of the urban environment in the vision of ultramodern sanctuaries for bourgeois bodies (Belanger, 2000; Friedman & Andrews, 2011; Silk, 2013). FIFA and the IOC offer an avenue through which cities can realize an entrepreneurial (re)development scheme (Surborg, VanWynsberghe, & Wyly, 2008; Roche, 1994, 2006). Andranovich, Burbank, and Heying (2001) have labeled this the “mega-event strategy,” as it is said to allow “the powerful interests in cities to attach their agendas to the Olympic process, creating the perfect policy mechanism for ensuring a growth agenda” (p. 127).

Photo Credit: AMANDA DE LISIO



*Often regarded as a commercially viable and socially pacifying institution, sport... has rationalized and legitimated development within post-industrial “world class” cities.*

*The vision for mega-event-driven urbanization has more often than not failed to reconcile the extreme inequalities that increasingly afflict supposedly global cities.*

The effort to secure/stage/host the (*sport*) mega-event is often rationalized in the perceived regional, national, and international media exposure, generated at a low cost, which is said to increase tourism (*and associated foreign investment*) and offer a clear timeline for urban redevelopment. As Hall (2006) articulated:

*Imaging a city through the organization of spectacular urban space by, for example, hosting a mega-event, is therefore a mechanism for attracting mobile capital and people (of the right sort) in a period of intense interurban competition and urban entrepreneurialism in which neoliberalism has become one of the major frameworks by which the experience of urban development is understood. (63)*

The vision for mega-event-driven urbanization has more often than not failed to reconcile the extreme inequalities that increasingly afflict supposedly global cities; in fact, the literature has shown the extent to which a sport mega-event has hindered access to public space, elevated (*exposure to*) environmental risk, and naturalized an autocratic form of governance (Boykoff, 2011; Broudehoux, 2010; Cornelissen, 2012; Gaffney, 2010). Important to this research is the manner in which the sport mega-event has been studied with respect to (a) displacement/dispossession and (b) labour/employment. We briefly overview some of this relevant research—as related to our broader interest in sexual economies and the 2014/2016 sport mega-event.

### Homelessness: Displaced and Dispossessed

- The heightened amount of displacement experienced in host cities is consistently cited in the mega-event literature—the evidence of rapid urbanization and forced eviction within host communities has made these processes a foreknown outcome or “unknown known” of event construction (see also, Horne, 2007). The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) uncovered some of the devastating inequalities exacerbated in former host cities (see www.cohre.org). For example, in 1992 Olympic Barcelona (Spain), housing complexes reserved for low-income families were demolished to make room for event construction (see Hughes, 1992; Vázquez Montalbán, 1992).
- The influx of tourism/foreign investment is also known to threaten low-income rental properties—especially evident in the demand for single room occupancies (SRO), which is most felt across the lowest income bracket. In the case of the 2000 Olympics in Sydney (Australia), there was a drastic increase in rent for low-income properties situated next to the newly-constructed Olympic Park (Lenskyj, 2012).
- Since the beginning of the millennium there has been an upsurge in research on terrorism and the sport mega-event. Atkinson and Young (2012) illustrate (in)securities at the mega-event parallel the fear of terrorism. The notion of “foreigner” is extended to those most marginalized within host communities, who are often criminalized and policed via event-related risk management strategies (see Silk & Manley, 2013). Lenskyj (2000) found activities otherwise deemed basic human necessities (sleeping, eating, excreting) were barred from host cities via newly-imposed anti-homelessness policies enacted around the internationally-recognized event that increasingly place those most vulnerable at increased risk of harassment and unfair arrest.
- This is made possible with the intensified investment in surveillance technologies and personnel. Furthermore, urban architecture is (re)constructed to reflect Olympic/FIFA legalization—i.e., park benches are shortened to hinder excessive loitering, retail doorways are gated, and public toilets are removed (Mitchell, 1997). In 1996 Olympic Atlanta (USA), over 9000 homeless people, most of African-American descent, were arrested for activities such as sleeping in park space or on the street of newly-privatized (formerly public) space. In 2004 Olympic Athens (Greece), local authorities established a law that would allow land to be seized from host communities for Olympic-related construction. This law worked to demolish slum settlements in Aspropyrgos and Ano Liosia to displace/dispossess families for a mere 100,000 drachmas (US\$266) as compensation. New facilities were never built on these sites nor was the housing restored (COHRE, 2007).

*The notion of “foreigner” is extended to those most marginalized within host communities, who are often criminalized and policed via event-related risk management strategies.*

*If employment is popularly heralded as the panacea for social inequalities, only a certain kind of labour/entrepreneurialism is tolerated in globally-celebrated cities.*

### Employment: Entrepreneurialism

- In the context of 2010 Olympic Vancouver (Canada), the event leveraged policies that shifted public responsibilities to the private sector. One such initiative worked to address social inclusion through a market-based intervention: “Building Opportunities with Business” (BOB) was created to add labour opportunities in the Downtown Eastside (DTES)—a neighbourhood located on unceded Coast Salish territory, popularized as a zone of degeneracy consolidated in race, class, and gender inequalities. The work of VanWynsberghe et al. (2013) demonstrated the failure of this initiative as a mere relinquishment of public responsibilities and profiteer of miseries at the margin.
- During the Rio 2016 Olympics and the 2014 FIFA World Cup, official vendors were contained in specially created Olympic event zones that sought to transform visitor flows and circulations across the city. As with previous Olympics, public space was reimagined (at least that which displayed the desired tourist aesthetic) and subject to increased regulation and securitisation to facilitate an exclusive zone that could maximise commercial exploitation by the family of Olympic sponsors, supporters and suppliers. The work of Michael Duignan and colleagues (2019) shows, despite the careful design and management of secure and exclusive commercial enclaves, Rio simultaneously emerged disorganised, open and fluid in places. This (temporary) break in the (neoliberal) economic logic of mega-event cities allowed for closer connectivity between event visitor economies and host communities as vendors found innovative ways to sell unofficial produce (see also <https://riozones.wordpress.com>). Like sex

Photo Credit: AMANDA DE LISIO



[riozones.wordpress.com](https://riozones.wordpress.com)

- workers, local vendors found effective ways to circumvent official narratives, spaces and zones of exclusion, demonstrating that the Olympic host city need not only serve corporate interests.
- As sport is harnessed as colonial-capitalist expansion, the endorsement of entrepreneurialism of a certain kind is exerted. At the same time, the entrepreneurialism of those at the proverbial margin—often within the informal sector—are popularly constructed as criminal and/or a threat to event enthusiasm. If employment is popularly heralded as the panacea for social inequalities, only a certain kind of labour/entrepreneurialism is tolerated in globally-celebrated cities. Neoliberal policies dictate/regulate the type of entrepreneurialism of the urban poor. This is not to denounce capitalism—and the individualistic, entrepreneurial qualities it has sought to accentuate—but recognize the strategies introduced in the face of the event (re)produce dominant ideologies and cultural sensibilities of acceptability. Capitalism did not create the event, but it does harness sport in expansion. In this report we attempt to emphasize the manner in which these processes trickle down from the institutional level onto the everyday, individual citizen.

# Key Findings

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# City as (Global) Spectacle/Rio De Janeiro

Host to the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympic event, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, provided the geographic focus for this research. As one of the most visited cities in the Southern Hemisphere, it is sandwiched between world-renowned beaches and mountainous terrain: the so-called city of the future was imagined without a past or present. The bid to host the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) was predicated on the magnificent local landscape—one mythologised as free from crime and environmental concern. As described within the Strategic Plan of the City of Rio de Janeiro (*Plano Estratégico da Cidade de Rio de Janeiro*), the sport mega-event was envisioned as a needed catalysis to restore tourism and attract foreign as well as domestic investment. Whilst it is common for the sport mega-event to encourage fantasies of (global) capitalism, these fantasies remain reliant upon certain imaginaries of nation which demand the strategic erasure of sovereign bodies of land and people.

In the advertisement of the 2014 FIFA and 2016 Olympic event, Brazil was celebrated as a haven for warm weather and wild parties. This enthusiasm was populated with the figure of the mulata—a homogenously-conceived, overly-exotic, and sexually-liberated woman. This figure—embedded in historical narrative—has continued to inform nationalist sensibilities and approaches to Brazil as a land of sexual liberation; despite direct contrast to current (neo)conservative realities. The tension (between sexual liberation and repression) is not new. It was historically highlighted in the description of Brazil via the diaries of those involved in the first colonial conquest. European imaginaries classified the land and bodies as an exotic paradise—yet inhospitable, derelict, and uninhabitable (Schwarcz, 2006). These imaginaries have existed for centuries and informed the creation of supposedly modern—or more accurately racial—policies that celebrate and encourage miscegenation. The search for international recognition historically resulted in the construction of race as a (social) problem, which could be resolved with the arrival of European communities that would whiten the populace. Racial

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3 — To review the 2016 Olympic Bid Book, submitted in support of the Rio de Janeiro candidacy, see link: <http://www.gamesbids.com/english/bids/rio2016.shtml> (Last Visited November 8, 2018). To preview a version of the Host City Contract, which will detail the operational requirements of the International Olympic Committee, please see: <https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/Documents/Host-City-Elections/XXXIII-Olympiad-2024/Host-City-Contract-2024-Operational-Requirements.pdf>

*These activities mirror the punitive processes undertaken in other host cities, in which those involved in sex work (particularly women of colour and Indigenous women) report a heightened amount of police harassment without arrest, decreased availability of clientele, and increased difficulty in meeting clientele.*

hierarchies continue to be cemented in colonial-capitalist conquest, such as that evidenced in the mega-event moment.

Prior to the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, sex-related businesses faced heightened harassment from municipal authorities across a range of host communities. Between 2008-2015, 802 transgendered people were murdered in Brazil, most often in the course of street-based sex work—the highest reported number in the world (*TvT research project, 2016*). In May 2014, police raided a brothel in Niterói, which subsequently involved the displacement of more than 300 racialized women involved in adult, consensual sex work. Additionally, there were allegations of rape, theft, extortion, and police violence (see also, Murray, 2014). In June 2014, the bar most frequented in Copacabana for sexual commerce, located next to the FIFA Fan Zone, was closed by local law enforcement due to (alleged) child sexual exploitation. There exists no evidence that an arrest was ever made, or formal charge filed. Such action further displaced racialized, sexualized bodies from more celebrated host communities. These activities mirror the punitive processes undertaken in other host cities, in which those involved in sex work (particularly women of colour and Indigenous women) report a heightened amount of police harassment without arrest, decreased availability of clientele, and increased difficulty in meeting clientele. In the next section, we zoom into the specific zones (zonas) of sex work in the 2014/2016 host city.

Photo Credit: AMANDA DE LISIO



# Sexspaces in the City/Rio De Janeiro

The spatial organization of commercial sex in a host city is underpinned by a “moral geography” that can only be understood in the context of entrepreneurial governance and the formation of a (*oft predatory*) coalition between city authorities, those involved in real estate development, and corporate entities alike (*Hubbard, 2016*). To understand the varied geographies of sexual commerce in Rio de Janeiro—as with any host city—is to acknowledge that local law enforcement has never fully repressed this underground economy but sought to contain it in the urban pseudo-shadow: often barred from the popular eye but never effectively eliminated. As Blanchette and Silva (*2011*) have explained: “Rio de Janeiro, by any definition, is not just a singular and homogeneous sexscape ... but is better conceived of as a series of overlapping and intertwining commercial sex scenes of almost bewildering variety and complexity” (*132*). Thus, and whilst it is difficult to observe each zone in isolation (*as sex work is highly transient and sometimes accidental*), we focus on zones in Niterói, Centro [Downtown], Vila Mimosa, and Copacabana in order to understand the manner in which strategies of urban renewal—even if imagined as highly localized—influence the broader landscape of commercial sex. The emphasis on geographies of sexual commerce is intended to demonstrate the political and legal possibilities affiliated to urban property and land, which in turn, influence collective ideologies and imaginaries related to people. In the discussion of each zone we remain mindful of the synchronicity of (*oft violent*) state inhibition and the sex worker’s (*quiet*) determination to endure. Following the advice of Loopmans and Van den Broecke (*2011*), we zoom in on spatially-realized political complexities created in the clash between urban fantasies and everyday lived realities to trace the moment in which sexual entrepreneurialism is made to symbolize contention, forced to either conform or be relegated further into the urban shadow. In so doing, we are able to attend to the simultaneous moment in which local women harness agentic propensities to respond, (*re*)shape, and (*re*)form more “respectable” cultural ideologies as well as the attendant, and more celebrated “manmade” cityscape.

*To understand the varied geographies of sexual commerce in Rio de Janeiro—as with any host city—is to acknowledge that local law enforcement has never fully repressed this underground economy but sought to contain it in the urban pseudo-shadow: often barred from the popular eye but never effectively eliminated.*



Photo Credit: AMANDA DE LISIO

*Situated nearby a block from the Caixa, stood the 76th Civil Police Precinct. The data suggested that police served as “regular” clientele, and the precinct collected a generous monthly stipend.*

## **Niterói—Backdrop to Porto Maravilha**

First, we zoom in on the municipality directly across from the contested, newly-privatized, port area of Rio de Janeiro (*Porto Maravilha*). The data here spoke to the eviction that prompted the exodus of women into 2014/2016 host communities. If the entrepreneurial strategies which resource local land are celebrated in “competitive” cities, Niterói is a clear demonstration of the imposed limit to capitalist expansion. Slated for an expansive urban facelift, with a Federal Bank on the ground floor of the 11-storey building, the Caixa (*as it was known*) stood as the largest sex zone in the municipality since it emerged in the aftermath of the second dictatorship (*1964-1985*). In 2014, there were 85 small apartments (*occupying the first 4 floors*) rented and owned by women to service clientele during the busy business day. Women worked largely autonomously, albeit with the aid of local militia, some pocketed R\$8,000 (*approximately USD\$4,000*) a month, but most made well over minimum wage (*R\$880/month or USD\$228/month*). Situated nearby a block from the Caixa, stood the 76th Civil Police Precinct. The data suggested that police served as “regular” clientele, and the precinct collected a generous monthly stipend. However, this collegial relationship started to wane with the induction of a new chief of police in March 2014, and the launch of Olympic urbanism (*Gravari-Barbas, 2013*) across the Guanabara Bay.

On April 1, 2014, the police raided the residential apartment building/commercial sex venue. Eleven women were arrested and two (*accused of sexually exploiting each other*) were taken to Bangu Penitentiary Complex, a maximum-security prison situated in the West Zone of Rio de Janeiro. On April 16, 2014, more than 200 women protested the arrest. In response to sex worker dissent as well as the territorial war between militia and state authorities, on May 23, 2014, heavily armed forces in military armor raided the Caixa. Less than one month before the World Cup, approximately 120 women were violently evicted from the well-known commercial sex venue. The Public Defender assigned to the case declared at the State Public Assembly that the raid was “completely illegal” but the local authorities were never held accountable despite apparent illegalities, and reported rape, theft, extortion, and violence. In the aftermath of the FIFA and IOC mega-moment, women from the Caixa resettled within the never-idle local sexscape – those interviewed remained nostalgic of the autonomy, collegiality, and shared sense of existence remembered of the Caixa. Still involved in sexual commerce, despite momentary collapse and permanent removal, these same women continue to survive, even thrive, in the shadow of FIFA/IOC event led-urbanism: albeit in a newfound urban corner.

#### Centro/Downtown—Carioca/Local Sex Scene

Visible from the newly-erected construction site in Niterói is the (*in*)famous heart of Rio de Janeiro. Once home to the historic red-light district (*the Manguê, or “Marsh”, renamed and relocated to Vila Mimosa*), Centro [downtown] serves as habitat for love, lust, and (trans)national desire. Prior to 1920, and the highly anticipated visit from King and Queen Albert of Belgium, extralegal policies established the Manguê in order to regulate (*predominately black*) bodies and illicit desire through spatial containment. The tolerance of prostitution in this area cemented the profession as an informal form of labour within the urban environment. Subject to the discretionary control of local law enforcement, women were periodically free to work in the heavily-policed urban enclave. However, local authorities intermittently introduced a new wave of urban renewal and moral hygienization. In time, the desire to showcase “Order and Progress” [“Ordem e Progresso” emblazoned on the national flag] of the Brazilian nation influenced political action and forced local women (*mostly of colour*) further into the shadows. Despite the eventual and violent erasure of the Manguê (*see also Caulfield, 1997*), heterosexual sex businesses have remained interwoven within the fabric of the financial core: from “*terma*” (*sauna, complete with bar and discotheque*), brothel, erotic theatre, and love hotel, to “*privé*” (*massage parlour operating in rented, high-*

*Less than one month before the World Cup, approximately 120 women were violently evicted from the well-known commercial sex venue.*

*Post-event interview data confirmed the decline in (sex) work, spurred by the diminished presence of (foreign and domestic) clientele.*

4 — Bangu Penitentiary Complex is popularly referenced as one of the most feared penitentiary complexes in Brazil — a federal prison system chastised internationally for the known level of torture, ill-treatment, and overall destitute state. In 2016, Bangu Penitentiary Complex also housed the President of the Olympic Council of Ireland, Pat Hickey, and is now home to the former Governor of Rio de Janeiro, Sérgio Cabral.



Photo Credit: GABI

*rise apartment space*) or “fast foda” (*“fast fuck” in English*). The seemingly demure downtown has never ceased to be a hub for sexual commerce. Sex businesses have continued to co-exist amidst the more “respectable” middle class. For the duration of the 2014 FIFA World Cup (*June 12 to July 13, 2014*), formal businesses in the area closed for holiday, and likewise forced the closure of several sex-related businesses in the area.

The closure of businesses located downtown mimicked realities for women in Vancouver 2010 whom observed diminished clientele due to event construction, road closure and traffic, increased police presence (*and harassment*), and irregular weekday parties (*see also Deering et al., 2013*). Unlike Vancouver, however, the data are suggestive of a mass exodus from downtown which made it unsafe, and advisable for the middle-class tourist to avoid. Post-event interview data confirmed the decline in (*sex*) work, spurred by the diminished presence of (*foreign and domestic*) clientele. Nevertheless, construction of the Olympic Boulevard, near Praça Mauá, and the adjacent Olympic Fan Zone, created new optimism in the area. With more bodies downtown, those involved in the research felt it was safer to travel to/from work, indeed, even outside the normal workday. As a result, women reported “business as usual” for the duration of the 2016 event: not noticeably better or worse for the winter “low” season, and with no new threat of closure. This likewise mimicked the business realities of women in 2010 FIFA (South Africa), 2010 Olympic (Vancouver), and 2012 Olympic (London) host communities. This, however, differed from the experience across host communities in 2014/2018 Russia. So, despite the well-known eviction in Niterói, and the associated migration of local women into the downtown sex scene, women in Centro showed little concern over the familiar talk of removal. Without guarantee, women continued to do their best to attract clientele.

#### Vila Mimosa—Red Light District

After a decade of demolition and devastation (*1970-1980*), the Manguê resurfaced near Praça da Bandeira, less than a kilometer from Maracanã Stadium in the West Zone of Rio de Janeiro, before it was resurrected in an abandoned warehouse on Rua Sotero dos Reis. West of the downtown core, outside of the touristic South Zone, Vila Mimosa (*as it still known now*) has served as a vital zona in the local sex scene despite constant threat of erasure. For both the 2014 FIFA and 2016 Olympic event, local law enforcement enclosed the area so to secure dissonance and avert “accidental” tourism—lost men and women that were advised to not roam the less-tourist attractive North Zone. Indeed, the entire area would interrupt the modern, more marketable, tourist oriented, aesthetic of

the carefree Brazilian (*seductive*) vibe. Not found via Google Earth, rendered as industrial wasteland, Vila Mimosa is home to some of the most undercelebrated women and men. On June 6, the Friday before the 2014 World Cup, AMOCAVIM (*neighbourhood resident and business association*) erected a plastic-vinyl billboard in the neighbourhood to welcome event-related clientele. For the first World Cup game played at Maracanã (*June 15, Argentina vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina*) local men were found in Vila Mimosa fixated on the match. For example: After Argentina had won, a cab with gringos (*tourist men in this case, Argentinean*) drove through, but never stopped. The participants that reported the incident suggested that the men were on some kind of “private” sex safari; something that seemed typical in the area ... From inside the car, the men avoided the unmistakable stench of raw sewage and urine that lined the street, and the sound of funk music that ricocheted from the block. Not far from a national icon, it served local men and the most seasoned-veteran sex tourist. It also absorbed some of the non-choreographed movement of women from Niterói and Centro at the time of the 2014 World Cup, which resulted in an influx of new (*cis/trans*) women into Vila Mimosa, and the associated movement of women from Vila Mimosa to Copacabana (*discussed next*). Overall businesses in the area remained relatively stable with no noticeable increase or decrease in revenue. Similar to those who reported on prostitution at the 2008 Beijing Olympic event (*see, for example, Hayes, 2010*), it is estimated that the heavily militarized space, combined with the otherwise destitute state, deterred the influx of (foreign) clientele initially anticipated for both the 2014 and 2016 mega-event. Not slated for any form of event-led investment (*save for a self-funded plastic façade*), Vila Mimosa, and the bodies within, have since been left to rot and decay: the data suggestive of atrophy beyond pardon or repair and of a slow violence the women are meant to endure. Metaphorically and spatially absent from the specificities of ‘preferred’ national celebration, the data suggest that women afflicted by event priorities (*or lack thereof*) needed to decide whether to remain amidst squalor or seek new and unknown possibilities for desire such as those found online or in another urban shadow.

*From inside the car, the men missed the unmistakable stench of raw sewage and urine that lined the street, and the sound of funk music that ricocheted from the block.*

### Copacabana/Barra da Tijuca—Businesses in Tourist Traffic

The world-renowned beachfront of Copacabana — backdrop to British media coverage of FIFA 2014—has served as a (*in*) famous site for sexual commerce, a common home to the Brazilian bikini and extrovert nightlife. For the duration of the 2014 World Cup, it housed the FIFA Fan Fest, nearest the entrance at Princesa Isabel Avenue, and the “FIFA family” at

5 — Prior to the eventual closure, the owner of the bar was made victim to constant police harassment. In 2012, local law enforcement confiscated every computer belonging to the American owner, never to be returned, and routinely visited the bar to observe women and clientele.

6 — During the 2014 FIFA World Cup, an international media tent was located directly in front of the disco-bar while the television broadcast was filmed from a newly-constructed gantry that positioned the old Help! in the immediate background.



Photo Credit: AMANDA DE LISIO

Copacabana Palace. On the morning of June 12 (*opening day*), a bar well-known to attract foreign men and working-women was closed due to an allegation of child sexual exploitation. In the aftermath of the closure, observations and interview data revealed the plaza adjacent to the bar absorbed much of the business, with the informal street market capitalizing on the newly displaced, alcohol-seeking clientele. Youth too occupied the area, free now from bar staff to roam amidst the tourist crowd. Some slept next to the action on a shared, discarded Brazilian flag, while the majority worked the street fair — one child barely tall enough to peer over his trolley made caipirinha after caipirinha (*a Brazilian drink made with cachaça, a distilled spirit made from sugarcane*) for the gringo clientele that trickled out of FIFA Fan Fest. The women continued to attract clientele and used the now vacant patio area to dress, negotiate, and chat over Wi-Fi. In unexceptional fashion, the bar closure mimicked the closure of Help! discotheque in 2010. Help! was (*and despite demolition, still is*) notorious in Copacabana as the hub for adult, consensual, heterosexual sex, which catered predominately to tourist men. Blanchette and Silva (2010) state that Help! illustrated the ubiquity of sex work in middle-class Brazilian sociality. Often intermixed with more “respectable” families and sensibilities, women were free to attract men without much harassment. Both of these businesses were similar in that women could meet men (for the purpose of prostitution or otherwise) but were not “officially” employed and therefore not made to adhere to a schedule, uniform, structure, etc. Furthermore, each closure beckoned a new spatial shift for sex work in the South Zone. Help! is now home to the Museum of Imagery and Sound [Museu da Imagem e do Som]. The other bar has been made into a more upscale middle-class restaurant, with the adjacent plaza now vacant. Since the 2014 FIFA closure, women have moved further down the beachfront to work near the intersection of Avenida Atlântica and Avenida Prado Júnior, previously better known for travesti [transgendered] sexual commerce. Whilst the data suggest that the sale of sex has continued in abundance within the neighbourhood globally-renowned as sexually liberal, it is not an example as dramatic as Artemis in Berlin, a four-floor multimedia brothel built in time for the 2006 FIFA World Cup, and conveniently located next to the stadium subway line. The data are suggestive of an ambivalent tolerance of sex work in the tourist haven of Copacabana whilst staff and venue management refuse to acknowledge their insertion into the local sex scene despite financial benefit. For participants involved in the research, such ambivalence served as the latest rendition of the same-old repressive inclusion of sexual entrepreneurial in their “globally-oriented” city.

*Since the mega-events departed, women have moved further down the beachfront to work near the intersection of Avenida Atlântica and Avenida Prado Júnior, previously better known for travesti [transgendered] sexual commerce.*

# Resistance in the City/Rio De Janeiro

Despite the efforts of local law enforcement to contain and/or suppress sexual commerce, the data collected within the project do not simply retell stories about the repressive nature of mega-event construction. Rather, the evidence-base offered via the participants instead demonstrate the manner in which the sport mega-event created a newly contestable terrain in which those discursively constructed as vulnerable and/or deviant shapeshifted (Cox 2015) new and/or previously unreliable possibilities for economic salvation. As those involved in informal-shadow economies have forever done. We understand that while the reconstruction of urban space does fit the familiar colonial-capitalist mold, it would be far too convenient to represent an assumption that only the elite realize imaginaries and (re)invent the cityscape via event-led urbanism. Inevitably, an urban intervention such as the sport mega-event will create possibilities as unique as the urban populace. The data suggest that the benefits cannot be entirely contained within the proverbial bourgeoisie. In the excerpts below, and in the form of puta-tactics (*tactics derived by sex workers as evidenced in the empirical data gathered*), we show how sex workers negotiated neoliberal event-led urbanism to create opportunities for commerce, love, survival.

**puta-tactic (1) migrated/dispersed throughout the Rio de Janeiro sexscape, sex workers remained active at work despite heightened surveillance from local law enforcement, and found new opportunities to secure transnational love.**

## Describe a “typical” Olympic day

Annabelle, Barra da Tijuca: *“Ah, gringos! People from other countries, some important people, the nightclub was full. There wasn’t much time to sleep or eat. I didn’t only work here, I’d move with the clientele. We had to make the most of the opportunity, we had to take advantage, build our dreams in the middle of all the chaos.”*

*Instead, an urban intervention such as the sport mega-event will create possibilities as unique as the urban populace. The data suggest that the benefits cannot be entirely contained within the proverbial bourgeoisie.*

7 – Important to note that Tinder was not accessible in Brazil until 2013. Usage in the nation doubled during the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Available at <http://time.com/2923517/world-cup-sex-tinder-grindr/> (Last Accessed November 8, 2018). See also this informative piece on social media usage in Brazil by Julie Ruvolo. Available at <https://www.buzzfeed.com/jruv/why-brazil-is-actually-winning-the-internet> (Last Accessed November 8, 2018).



Photo Credit: AMANDA DE LISIO

*“[...] Even to this day, we still chat on Facebook. We are still in contact. So, he is someone that made a mark on me, who I was so interested to know and now, know more.”*

## When you think of the Olympics, what’s the first thing that comes to mind?

Aline, Barra da Tijuca: *“First, of course, the money I made. Second, the Korean guy I stayed with for a week. He treated me so well and made it possible for me to stay with him during the day before I went to work at night. I would leave work and go back to his hotel. Even to this day, we still chat on Facebook. We are still in contact. So, he is someone that made a mark on me, who I was so interested to know and now, know more.”*

**puta-tactic (2) sought online technologies to find/meet clientele. These virtual technologies continue to be perceived as “riskier” because sex work is moved from the more public sphere into the private realm. It is important to also note that “riskier” business opportunities were warranted due to the broader economic crisis, which was further exaggerated with a bloated event budget.**

Josy, Copacabana/Ipanema: *“I met a Paralympian-client on Happn [geolocator dating app]. We chatted, and he invited me to his hotel. Balcony [Bar] might be closed but the Wi-Fi is still working!”*

Amanda, Centro: *“I use Badoo [free dating app] to meet a lot of men. It’s like Facebook. You post photos. Most of the men on Badoo have more money. They come from the South Zone, West Zone, and Barra [richer, more tourist-friendly communities of Rio de Janeiro]. I’ll look at their profile, and then check their Facebook, Twitter, everything [Laughter]. Then I decide the place where we meet. Somewhere busy, with a lot of people around.”*

Bella, Centro: *“I don’t speak English so a lot of us downloaded a translator app so it was easier to communicate. Like, he would write a sentence in English, and I could write a response. It took longer but it worked really well.”*

Heloá, Centro: *“The biggest barrier [faced at work during the Olympic Games] was not being able to speak English but I got over that with Google Translate.”*

**puta-tactic (3) negotiated with local law enforcement to remain in business despite semi-legal state of operation—also linked to broader economic crisis, worsened with event budget.**

Bia, Centro: *“What makes me uncomfortable isn’t being here prostituting myself, it’s having to pay the police. Everyone here works for themselves. There is no boss running our show. We don’t have that here! But this has been going on for years. It’s an old problem. If you don’t pay [the police], they close you down. They’re the real pimps.”*

Leticia, Centro: *“The Madame of the house will pay the police. There are two or three or four of them. They come, say they’re offering security, but there’s no security. They only come to collect money. And if anything actually happened to us, if they actually did show up, we’d already*

*Most of the men on Badoo have more money. They come from the South Zone, West Zone, and Barra [richer, more tourist-friendly communities of Rio de Janeiro].*

*“[...] Of course, I can feel dirty sometimes, but I bet you feel dirty too. I think, better to fuck a guy for an hour than be fucked by some soul-sucking company for a decade, pretending to be so superior, so moral.”*

*be dead. Because they don’t actually stay around here... There are some who insinuate things but mostly they don’t even look at us. They just want our money. Some like us, joke around with us, but then they think they can get a “complimentary” service on the house. It is rare but that does happen.”*

**puta-tactic (4) refused to participate in the “formal” system and relatedly, refused to obtain formal debt as a concrete demonstration of resistance that is more about everyday survival than revolutionary uprising.**

Gabriela, Vila Mimosa: *“The thing is, with the skill set I have, I am not going to get paid much in any career. You really have to work, really exploit yourself to make any money. I do informal jobs, and I don’t have a credit card. I have a bank account for savings. I don’t like to pay taxes, but I obviously do, based on whatever salary I make that year. I’m informal.”*

Talia, Copacabana: *“Why would I sell ... a purse, a shirt? I don’t believe you need it. Plus, I don’t know where it came from. I don’t know who made it or the material, and under what kind of condition. So, it is not for me to sell. Of course, I can feel dirty sometimes, but I bet you feel dirty too. I think, better to fuck a guy for an hour than be fucked by some soul-sucking company for a decade, pretending to be so superior, so moral.”*

Photo Credit: EVELYM GUTIERREZ



# A Letter to Future Host Cities

## 1. Create an evidence base to contribute to discussions around the decriminalization of urban sex work and related activities.

Former (and selected-future) host cities have ranged from those that are completely opposed to sex work to those partially tolerant (through partial decriminalization) and even open/supportive. FIFA/IOC families have selected countries with divergent legal approaches. The ambiguities of prostitution legislation and enforcement, has mobilized a growth coalition of local elite, eager to reconfigure urban life in the “consistent image of a safe, fun and sanitary city” (Kennelly and Watt, 2011: 768). Due to the evidence base collected in Brazil, which appears to mirror former host cities, it appears that punitive policies are self-defeating. They fail on their own grounds, do not remove populations deemed to be problematic, exacerbate problems within sex worker communities, and create risk due to the movement of sex work from the public to the private sphere.

*Due to the evidence base collected in Brazil, which appears to mirror former host cities, it appears that punitive policies are self-defeating. They fail on their own grounds, do not remove populations deemed to be problematic, exacerbated problems within sex worker communities, and created risk due to the movement of sex work from the public to the private sphere.*

## 2. Stop the conflation between prostitution, trafficking, and sexual exploitation in law, public policies, and popular discourse.

Data collected in Rio de Janeiro detailed a new—if uneven—wave of anti-prostitution-punitive strategies, justified in an unfounded fear of (child) sexual exploitation and trafficking for the purpose of forced prostitution, that were not dissimilar from other host cities. To be clear, we found no evidence of rising sexual exploitation associated to mega-event tourism in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; rather (cis/trans) women involved in this research were vocal about the consequence of such fear. Bipartisan moral panic and intensified sensationalist stories of sex trafficking and slavery across host cities (i.e., Athens, Beijing, Vancouver, London) have, overall, worked to promote

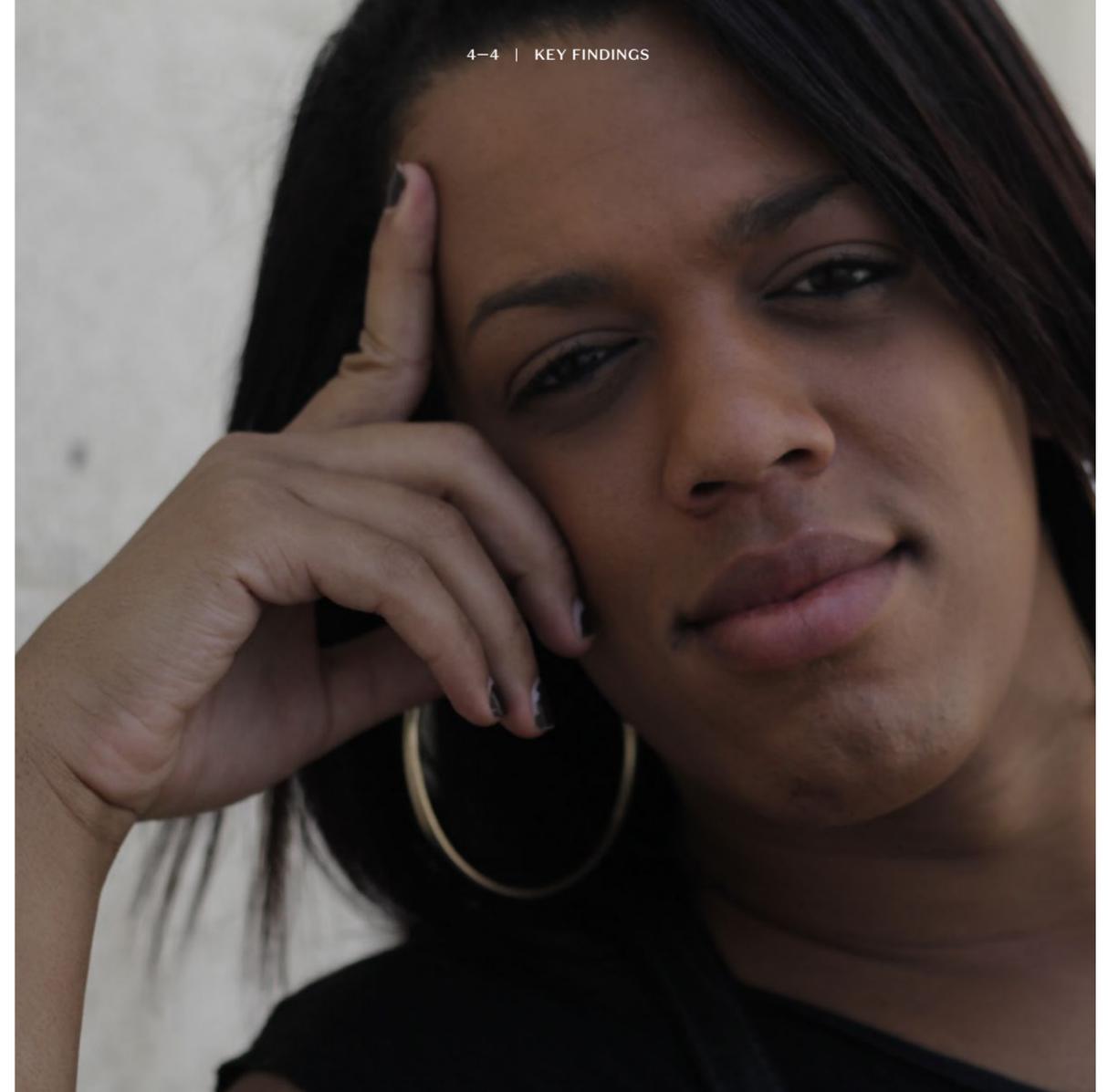


Photo Credit: FLAVIA VIANA

anti-prostitution policies, and abolitionist sensibilities. In the context of Rio de Janeiro, moral entrepreneurialism pursued by religious-affiliated agencies targeted (violently) those involved in sexual labour (see also, Blanchette & Silva, 2016; Mitchell, 2016). Concomitantly, media (both national and international) published sensationalist stories of sex trafficking and slavery aimed at promoting anti-prostitution sensibilities and endorsing abolitionist strategies while police remained a permanent fixture within tourist-friendlier South Zone.

 [whatyoudontsee.hotglue.me](https://whatyoudontsee.hotglue.me)

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfVVGtgewcl>

### 3. Create opportunities for those involved in sexual commerce to add to the mega-event narrative. Research design and dissemination should be worker-driven.

In Rio de Janeiro, women were interested to create an online network/chat to discuss event activities amidst the 2016 Olympic moment. To facilitate this effort, we offered a workshop with a professional photographer. Audio/visual data shared through the online chat was then curated into a worker-authored exhibition (available at <https://whatyoudontsee.hotglue.me>). To realize the virtual exhibition, women also met with a graphic/web designer to create an online, personalized profile. Throughout each stage, worker voice drove action. Collaboration took time, but it made the effort more worthwhile in the end. We also created a video to document and share this process with future/interested host cities (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfVVGtgewcl>).

*To facilitate this effort, we offered a workshop with a professional photographer. Audio/visual data shared through the online chat was then curated into a worker-authored exhibition.*

*We should question our arrival at this geopolitical moment in which the sport mega-event—once celebrated as a model for friendship, fairness, and solidarity—is now harnessed as a tool for global capitalism and accumulation by dispossession.*

### 4. Enforce the accountability of urban elite, and develop strategies to recognize and act against state-sanctioned violence faced by sexual minorities—and guarantee social and spatial justice, particularly for those most marginalized in development processes.

Whilst we hope the evidence from this project can inspire new strategies of combating the complex assemblage of urban elite in their pursuit of legal exceptionalism, we hope, at a minimum, we can strengthen the effort to protect those involved in shadow/precarious economies. We should consider the way in which the event can be harnessed as an opportunity to better critique these broader geopolitical and economic processes: not those working to maintain a living on the ground. Specifically, we should question our arrival at this stage in sport mega-event realization. Once celebrated as a model for friendship, fairness, and solidarity, the event is now clearly harnessed as a tool for global capitalism and accumulation by dispossession.

### 5. Enable authentic democratic collaboration in the mega-event, above the concentration of wealth.

The collection, analysis, and dissemination of this research was completed in conjunction with a 30-year old sex worker movement in Brazil. That movement coincided with the sport mega-event, which is temporary, and does little to maintain context-specific realities. Ethnographic-qualitative research has an obligation to contextualize local realities. The suggested strategies above reflect local expertise but will need to be (re)appropriated/(re)purposed within future host communities. Future work could further examine the extent to which local, informal economies harness the mega-moment to either attract global business opportunities or mobilize radically different cultural sensibilities among their populations.

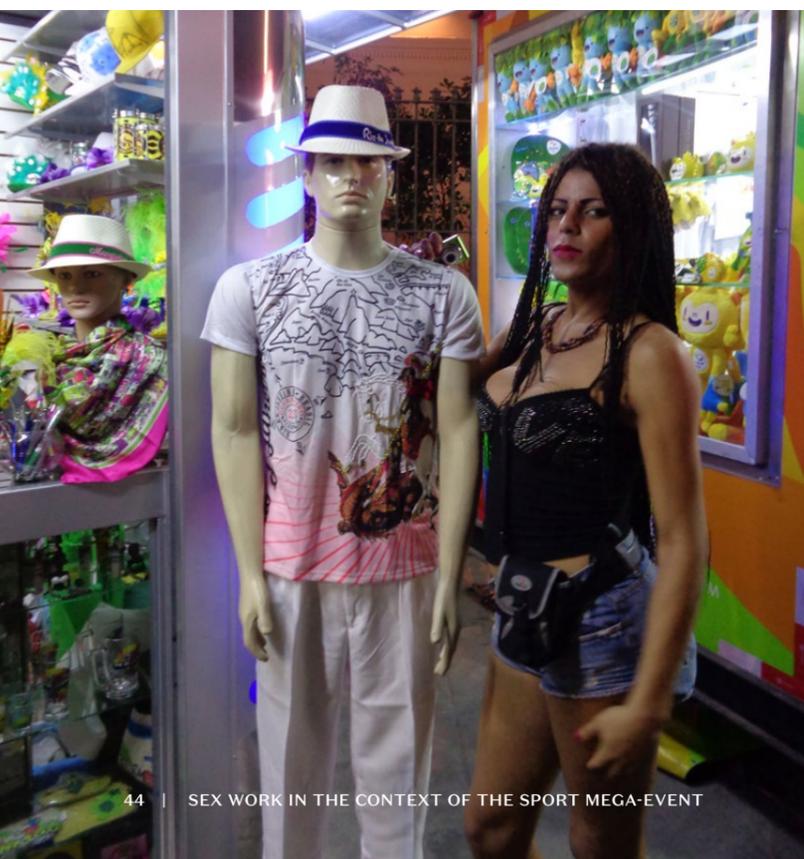


Photo Credit: EVELYM GUTIERREZ

## Conclusion

Photo Credit: BETE



While this work could be used to illustrate an exclusionary moment in urban regeneration, a more intimate look at the mixed discursive, material, and spatial strategies (*including the eviction of sex work from rapidly gentrifying “host” communities*), revealed the manner in which urban reform has reconfigured and channeled sexual commerce according to certain urban imaginaries. Repeated in stories from those involved in post-industrial economies not unique to sexual commerce, event-prompted urban development involves a wide-sweeping reallocation of urban space for mostly white, privileged tourist classes via a process of spatial governmentality in which urban space (*rather than individual bodies*) are targeted for reform. So rather than retell simple stories about the repression of sex work, future work could further examine how—by accelerating processes of urbanization through strategies akin to neoliberal acupuncture—the sport mega-event has created the moment in which those deprived of social, economic, or political power (*occasionally*) cultivate a renewed sense of optimism with respect to labour, love, and (*trans*)national migration. In this way, we can better understand the manner in which globally-targeted processes of urban reform inextricably strike local bodies to (*re*) make host realities—and maintain (*rather than eliminate*) labour exploitation.

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