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Cecilie Vindal Ødegaard


ABSTRACT

This article focuses on collective action and leadership in processes of (in)formalizing market work. It examines ways in which semi-legal actors employ 'modes of administration' and suggests that market leaders enact a form of 'state proxy' by drawing on an ethic of collective action rooted in Andean notions of kinship, work, and exchange. The article argues that we need to explore this ethic to understand the uncertainties of informality at the crossroads between state and local modes of administration. While organizational leaders in studies of informality are often absent, the article demonstrates the importance of understanding the market leaders' ambiguous position at the crossroads between a collectivist grassroots ethics and state authority. It explores why vendors often stay loyal to their leaders, despite widespread accusations of corruption, and explains this in terms of the ethic of collective action that are at work in local organizations among urban migrants.

KEYWORDS

Collective action; leadership; (in)formality; state proxy; ownership; Peru

In 2007, the vendors of Santa Anita, a marketplace on the outskirts of Lima, were thrown out by the police because their use of the land was unauthorized. The area was formally owned by an enterprise for wholesalers (Emmsa) but was long left unused, before being occupied by the vendors in 2003. In 2007, four years into the occupation, the municipality of Lima requested that the vendors either formalize their use of the land – by making an arrangement with Emmsa to rent or buy the area – or leave.¹ At that point, the vendors had already prepared the previously deserted area (of 83 hectares) for use and had formed an association of almost 10,000 vendors. In addition to pitches for trading, they had built roads and a parking lot, installed toilets, and constructed small shrines and even shelters for accommodation behind the pitches. They had also arranged for the installation of electricity, even though they lacked the property titles required for such installations. When I arrived in Santa Anita during the most intense debates at the beginning of May 2007, I was struck by the enormous size of the market, and the wide, asphalted streets. On the brick wall surrounding the market, someone had written: 'We are only provincial people defending [ourselves and the land] against Chilean invaders' (author's translation), referring to the Chilean enterprise that had made an offer to buy the land. A few

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days before my visit, the vendors had received a removal notice, and I found the market almost deserted. There were no customers, and, except for the vendors of food, many had removed their merchandise in anticipation of the intervention. The few remaining vendors stood in groups discussing the situation. All were worried about the notice of removal, except for one man, who, convinced that there would soon be a solution and with his child on his arm, said that their leaders simply needed to comply with the authorities' demand that vendors send their children home. But the leaders did not want that, he added, pointing to his child: 'She is my shield. If not, they [the police] will attack us'. This man had clearly decided to comply with his leaders' desire to keep children at the site (as a strategy to limit police interference), despite his own belief that the conflict could be resolved through compromise. His remark can be read as resignation to the leaders' decision, indicating a compelling need for loyalty to the leaders in a precarious situation. The man's reaction stands as an example also of vendors' often mixed feelings vis-à-vis their leaders: on the one hand a sense of dependency on leaders in that they are the only ones who will advocate for them, while at the same time sometimes doubting or resisting their decisions and requirements on the other hand. Hence, the market eviction not only tells a story of the precarity of working in an informal setting but also offers insight into the role of local leaders.

Before the final notice of removal, the message that the vendors might have to leave had led to several demonstrations by the Santa Anita vendors' association. The vendors were obliged by their leaders to participate in these demonstrations, said the vendors, and to remain in the market day and night in order to prevent official interference. When attempting to explain the association's reluctance to formalize their use of land through payment, some vendors maintained that the land was already theirs based on their investment of work and efforts. One food vendor told me that '[i]t is we who have done all the work. God bless the person who gets up early. And now that things have been completed [e.g. infrastructure established] they want to sell!' Along the same lines another vendor said: 'This land has always been deserted; there was only sand here before'. She wondered why the authorities had suddenly decided to interfere, thinking that the vendors had occupied the area for so long as to make it their own. In the national media, however, the vendors were associated with chaos, illegality, and crime. Insinuations were also made that vendors were in the possession of arms (*El Comercio*, 1 June 2007). One particular issue that received media attention was the presence of vendors' children at demonstrations, which was said to put children at risk in a manner punishable by imprisonment (*Perú 21*, 29 May 2007). Eventually, by the end of May 2007, the vendors were evicted by a force of 3800 police and lost their investment and source of income.

The leaders of Santa Anita, in their role as mediators between vendors and the municipality of Lima, were also made the topic of public debate. The leaders were alleged to have cheated the vendors by making them pay for land that had been occupied illegally, and then putting that money to personal use (*El Comercio*, 7 May 2007). Vendors had apparently paid between 3000 and 6000 U.S. dollars for a piece of land to run a market pitch, while the leaders had gained an estimated 20 million US dollars from the illegal sale (*Perú 21*, 29 May 2007). One of the leaders, Herminio Porrás, had, since the 1970s, long experience as a leader of land occupations. He had also been a member of congress under Alberto Fujimori in the 1990s. In 2006, he was given a four-year conditional prison sentence² for illegal land occupation (*Perú 21*, 29 May 2007). After the eviction,

he and other leaders were accused of having produced false receipts for payments of land and taxes (*El Comercio*, 7 May 2007) in an attempt to 'prove' tacit if not legal acknowledgement of their transactions and ownership. Soon after the eviction, the municipality appointed a chief officer to give legal assistance to those interested in denouncing the leaders (who had gone into hiding) for fraud (*El Comercio*, 1 June 2007).

Despite the various accusations, the vendors I spoke with were quite explicit about their intention to continue to support and follow their leaders. Considering their historical dependency on the leaders to create stable conditions for vending, they struggled to see a way in which they could remain on the land without the leaders' continued support. The situation therefore demonstrated more than vendors' skepticism towards state actors, as I have illustrated elsewhere (Ødegaard 2010, 2016). Their unwillingness to formalize was related simultaneously to the authority they ascribed to their leaders, who seemed to represent a source of authority parallel to, or partly overlapping with that of official authorities. However, and remembering that vendors also have certain doubts about their leaders, there is a central question yet to be answered: Why do vendors remain loyal to their leaders, even in situations of widespread accusations and doubt? The article tries to answer this question by unpacking various dimensions of market work; I argue that vendors' loyalty has to do not only with the general precarity of vending, but must be understood in light of a particular ethic of collective action rooted in Andean concepts of kinship, work, exchange, and political organization. More specifically, I suggest that vendors' loyalty can be analyzed in terms of an Andean ethic of collective organization whereby the authority of leaders emerges directly from collective effort. Leadership in this context thus draws legitimacy from long-established ethics of collective effort and ritual kinship in the Andes, which may legitimize acts – both by leaders and by vendors – that might otherwise break laws or other standards.

Migration from the Andean highlands has steadily increased since the 1940s, and occupation of land in Peruvian cities has become widespread. The migrants brought with them a common understanding from the Andes that defines access to land through use and communal labour and arrangements. This understanding coexists with a broader national liberal ideology that upholds an individual's right to private property through formal ownership titles (Lund Skar 1994, 187). In Peruvian cities, therefore, there is generally a moral and legal ambivalence towards the nature of land ownership and squatting. This ambivalence is reflected in a rhetorical ambiguity as to whether ownership rights should be based on active use and necessity or as a product of formal property titles (see also Skrabut [2018] and Ødegaard [2010]). Such ambiguities also informed the controversy around Santa Anita. On the one hand, occupants were seen as people in need of an income while, on the other hand, they and particularly the leaders were suspected of organizing collective land occupation for the purpose of speculation. Indeed, once the formalization of an area has been achieved through the mobilization of collective efforts, there can be high returns for those who sell their pieces of land. These factors create a backdrop for the suspicions that some leaders seek leadership positions only to get access to cash or even take part in several occupations simultaneously (Lund Skar 1994; Ødegaard 2010). While it is of course difficult to assess, not least generalize about, the role and intentions of market leaders, their position as mediators between informal marketplaces and the state is worth exploring further.

This article focuses on collective action, leadership, and ownership in processes of (in)formalizing market work. It discusses the uncertainties experienced at the intersections between local 'modes of administration' and official requirements of formalization in a historical and political context where discourses on formality are expanding. In particular, I am interested in questions of leadership in cases when semi-legal actors employ modes of administration, and how dilemmas regarding formalization are reproduced for vendors who find themselves caught between state actors and the authority of organizational leaders. I use the notion 'mode of administration' to describe the different ethics, politics, and forms of organization – i.e. state rule and governance or other forms of beyond-statal authority that are based on ethics and organizational structures – that can create a basis for authority.

While studies of 'informality' abound, less attention has been directed to political organization within 'informal' locales (Vega 2012, 205). By focusing on the ethics of collective effort and leadership in informal locales, I argue that the negotiation of (in)formality is socially and historically embedded in ways that both diffuse and polarize different modes of administration: that of the authorities and that of organizational leaders. I suggest that in order to understand 'informal economies', we must examine the local ethics that constitute and define social relations at the margins of the formal. In so doing, I demonstrate how marketplaces in Peru are constituted by and through an ethic of collective action, mutuality, and exchange informed by vendors' backgrounds in the Andean highlands.

The article builds upon several periods of fieldwork, in Arequipa and Lima in 1997, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2016. My fieldworks involved open-ended interviews with vendors and *contrabandistas*, leaders, and public functionaries, in addition to participant observation at one of the marketplaces in Arequipa, La Feria Altiplano.³ The opening vignette concerns the Santa Anita market, while the pages following will focus on the Feria in Arequipa. My strategy is to trace in more detail the issues about leadership and formality that were raised during the controversy around Santa Anita, and to explore the relationships involved in organizing a marketplace. While, in contrast to Santa Anita, the Feria is still functioning, vendors at the Feria fear that something similar could happen to them due to the market's semi-legal status. As at Santa Anita, most vendors at the Feria have migrated from the Andean highlands and are bilingual Quechua-Spanish or Aymara-Spanish speakers. The vendors in the Feria association first started occupying land for purposes of vending in the 1980s but were repeatedly fined or removed by the police. As a result, they frequently had to relocate. These difficulties resulted in their founding of an association of vendors; in 1999, the association bought and acquired formal titles for the land where the Feria is currently located, providing space for approximately 1500 members. At the Feria, vendors sell agricultural products, textiles and artisan crafts, counterfeit CDs and computer software, as well as industrial and electronic articles smuggled from Bolivia. Although the term 'Feria' generally refers to periodic rural produce markets, the Feria Altiplano operates all week, offering a variety of goods beyond foodstuffs. Santa Anita was named 'Mercado' indicating more permanent opening hours despite its clearly more informal status relative to the Feria. Despite their differences, there are many similarities in their organization; while Santa Anita illustrates what appears to have been a more direct misuse of leadership positions, both marketplaces actualize questions of leadership, (in)formality, and collective action common to

markets operating at the margins of the formal in Peru. Although varying in their degrees of formalization, such markets have become increasingly important in Latin America in recent decades not only by absorbing population pressure from the countryside but also by representing a particular domain for issues of formalization. They actualize a specific political-economic dynamic that several property-legislation initiatives, as discussed below, are being introduced to manage.

The tensions of formalization

The establishment of the Feria and other markets is part of a wider process – initiated by economic downturn, structural adjustment programmes, and privatization of the public sector – in which, during the 1980s and 1990s, the significance of self-employment and vending in Peru increased. Since then, involvement in small-scale trade and production has also been promoted by the state, NGOs, and commercial actors in the form of micro-credit arrangements and training programmes. Policies for the formalization of unauthorized economic activities and use of land were introduced concurrently with these developments, especially during the authoritarian government of Fujimori in the 1990s, and include institutions for the formalization of informal businesses and occupied land (COFOPRI: Commission for the formalization of informal property), later expanded by succeeding governments to include projects for the formalization of rural ownership, PETT (Special Land Titling and Cadastre Project). Since the 1990s, several countries in Latin America have undertaken land-titling projects, aiming to provide security for owners and a more effective land market. Such policies are promoted in response partly to the recommendations of economists, such as Hernando de Soto (1989, 2001), who argue for the necessity of formal ownership among the poor to promote development and to integrate pre-existing, unauthorized economic activities into the economy at large. This reflects how a worldwide market liberalization is accompanied by an increasing significance ascribed to formality and the legal (Sieder, Schjolden, and Angell 2005). The issue of formalization thus feeds the controversy around the term ‘neoliberal’ and reflects the often contradictory policies and effects associated with the term (Li 2001; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Ong 2006; Kipnis 2007; Hilgers 2010).

Formalization is part of the state’s capacity for surveillance, or of ‘making society legible’ (Scott 1998, 2–3), which represents a hallmark of modern statehood for purposes of registration, taxation, etc. While formalization can thus accommodate for increased tax revenues and improved welfare services, de Soto’s concern with formalization is, however, related primarily to its ‘property effects’: a way to promote economic activities and development based on property ownership. Formalization may indeed enable people to legally use and protect their resources, but if understood in terms of ‘property effects’, the benefits of formalization are not necessarily as unambiguous as they may appear, especially for the poor and discriminated against. This is particularly so if formalization comes unaccompanied by other social reforms to solve the fundamental conditions of exclusion. Indeed, the terms and conditions of formalization can also (re)create other mechanisms of exclusion by further excluding those already excluded (Mitchell 2002).

While the number and the extent of marketplaces increased with rural-urban migration and structural adjustment from the 1980s onwards, the existence of marketplaces in the Andes stretches back to the colonial period. There is indeed wide agreement in the

literature that indigenous peoples have engaged in commercial activities since colonial times, often by their own initiative (Harris 2000, 57; Langer 2018). In fact, Andean engagement in the market economy has, at times, been a way to avoid other exploitative conditions and even to maintain indigenous forms of sociality, including political and economic organization (Saignes 1995, 190; Stern 1995, 90). Historically, indigenous people's involvement in commerce has taken place through rural seasonal produce markets, extending to the cities as indigenous people became temporary migrants or permanent urban residents by working as artisans or domestic servants, by selling food commercially, or by transporting food (Harris 1995; Ikemura Amaral 2018). In this process, markets constituted central inlets for indigenous people, particularly indigenous women, to the cities. These markets became arenas for mediating relations between the apparently segregated indigenous population and urban mestizos. My main concern here is to show the role of political organization and leadership in these marketplaces on the margins of the formal: the 'formality of informality', so to speak. I am interested in the ethics of leadership and the requirements for participation beyond those that are officially required or recognized; I wish to explore especially the dilemmas and uncertainties that arise when vendors get caught between formal state requirements and the authority of market leaders.

In a study from highland Ecuador, Christopher Krupa (2010) raises similar concerns in a discussion of the relationship between the state and hacienda owners, where he explores how different modes of administration can overlap and their boundaries become diffused. He suggests the term 'state proxy' in reference to how emergent power blocs justify their command over local populations by intervening in the material relations of everyday life and substituting themselves in the role of 'state'. While hacienda owners block governmental intrusion on their land on the one hand, they also reproduce dominant conventions of state rule in their productive relations with workers on the other. In practice, then, Krupa argues that the distinction made between *para* or *quasi* state formations and official state institutions is often fundamentally blurred (Krupa 2010, 320; see also Navaro-Yashin [2007]). By thus stressing the blurring between legitimate and illegitimate modes of rule, Krupa notes that we should be careful not to reproduce the state's claim of political exceptionalism. Similar to Krupa's findings in Ecuador, competing claims to political exceptionalism are made in the mobilization of collective efforts by market leaders, as I illustrate in this article. More specifically, and by focusing on the role of leaders as sometimes ambiguous and unpredictable mediators between the association's interests and the power of formal authorities, I discuss vendors' resultant feelings of threat and of guarantee vis-à-vis market leaders. By thus drawing on Krupa's idea of 'state proxy' and paraphrasing Poole's (2004) notion of the state as both guarantee and threat, I suggest that leaders are for vendors at once their sole guarantee (for acquiring stable conditions for trade) and a threat (in that failure to secure the interests of vendors may cause a market initiative to collapse). This is not meant to imply that the role of leaders vis-à-vis vendors can be equalled to that which Poole describes as the fundamentally arbitrary quality of the state from the perspective of Peruvian farmers. In Poole's study, farmers experience the authority and moral project of the state as both disinterested and corrupt, just and coercive, participatory and removed. Even though vendors may indeed experience their relationship to leaders as entailing both guarantee and threat, the authority of market leaders differs from that of the state in that market leaders' power and

authority is neither wholly unconstrained nor completely authoritarian. Rather, the authority of market leaders emerges from the body of members and is constrained by their loyalty or lack thereof. The power of market leaders is therefore constrained by the ethics of leadership and collective action, depending on members' loyalty and support (see also Lazar [2008] and Bjork-James [2018]). Nonetheless, and especially at the crossroads of this local organizational mode of administration and that of the state, the power of market leaders can be experienced as ambiguous and unpredictable: as entailing both guarantee and threat.

Cultures of informality?

Land occupations in Latin American cities have been seen to involve new claims for citizenship among the urban poor (Roberts 1995) leading to a form of 'insurgent citizenship' that affects their terms and conditions for citizenship (Holston 2008). James Holston (2008) argues that, while today's land occupations to a certain extent repeat old patterns of clientelism and the disciplining of a certain kind of labour force, there is also an important difference. Exploring residential illegalities in Brazil, he illustrates how the urban poor have learned to use the law to legitimate their land claims in legal arenas from which they were previously excluded, although the result is often charges and countercharges that circulate in the legal system for years (2008, 214). In Peru, Matos Mar (1984) analyzed land occupations as involving a new era of contestation of the legal and institutional apparatus, as producing what is often referred to as 'cultures of informality'. He argued that these essentially transgressive forms of action represented a response to people's disenfranchisement – an alternative to conventional forms of political activism. One of my points in this article is that while the land occupations certainly represent a transgressive and alternative form of political activism, we should not overlook how statecraft and 'informality' can also be mutually constitutive, albeit in rather complex and contradictory ways.

Referring to economic activities which take place outside the framework of public and authorized private sector establishments, the term 'informal economy' has increasingly come under criticism since it was coined by Keith Hart in 1973. The criticism has focused on the many intersections and interdependencies between formalized and unauthorized economic activities as well as the continual blurring of boundaries between legal, simply irregular, or explicitly illegal aspects of commodity flows (Hart 2001; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Gandolfo 2009; Mathews, Ribeiro, and Vega 2012). In an attempt to capture the economic flows and trade networks that are different from those recognized by states and transnational institutions, and following different patterns and rules, Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (2009) suggests the term 'non-hegemonic globalization'. With this term, however, we may easily underestimate the ways in which economic activities at the margins of the formal may also be entangled with hegemonic economic forms. For instance, while stressing the importance of understanding global flows beyond the radar of state and multinational institutions, Mathews, Ribeiro, and Vega (2012) argue that the underrepresentation of this 'globalization from below' is a matter of perspective and not simply of being part of a different domain (see also Rabossi [2012]). This argument reflects Holston's (2008, 275) point that, while paradigms of citizenship may be contrary, their development is seldom dichotomous as the in/civilities of citizenship become

entangled and mixed. Similarly in Lima, Daniella Gandolfo (2009, 223) notes that some sectors of the economy are completely dependent on 'informal' businesses, to the extent that 'informality' and not 'formality' is the norm. She argues that especially since the 1990s, 'informality' has changed even the face of institutionalized politics in Peru and created a new basis for political parties (2009, 9). Along similar lines, and considering the political dynamics inscribed in informal and illegal markets in Brazil, Michel Misse (2006) suggests the term 'political merchandise' to underline the links of illicit commodity flows to legal-official apparatuses. This 'political merchandise' consists of political devices and services (i.e. bribes, protection) to circumvent or skirt legal obstacles, indicating how informality can be intertwined with different relations among authorities. The connection of Santa Anita's president, Herminio Porras, to Peru's political establishment as congress member under Fujimori is a case in point.

In some contexts there is also a widespread acceptance of unauthorized economic activities, a fact that Olivia Harris (1996, 2) has related to the sometimes contradictory claims made by state laws and local morality, in that laws may forbid actions which in a local moral codex are completely acceptable. This does not mean that state law and local morality are necessarily defined by contrast, as noted, since illegal actors may also seek legality and state actors may also overlook or accommodate illegal activities (Holston 2008; Ødegaard 2010). Regarding illegal trade in the Chad basin, Janet Roitman (2006, 264) suggests the term 'ethics of illegality' to refer to the values ascribed to trade that are seen by local actors as both economically strategic and socially productive. Similarly, in political struggles for land in Peru, Gavin Smith (1989) argues that the political aspects of these struggles are inseparable not only from people's daily struggle for a livelihood but also from the production and reproduction of social relationships. Among vendors too, the struggle for land and livelihood is underpinned by, and dependent on, social relations. This includes an ethic of collective effort and mutual obligation that serves to legitimize the semi-legal dimensions of their activities (Ødegaard 2008, 2016).

There has indeed been a growing interest among anthropologists in the relationship between state power and other ethical or legal regimes, especially concerning the establishment or reinforcement of parallel sources of authority and sovereignty (Nugent 1999; Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Nordstrom 2004; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Ong 2006; Navaro-Yasin 2007; Krupa 2010). In some of these studies, what appears as a rise in illicit practices worldwide is linked to market liberalization and the effects of structural adjustment (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Vega 2012). In this regard, and stressing the gradual erasure of lines between the legal and the illegal that accompanies market fundamentalism, Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2006) argue that the increase in illicit economic practices worldwide is not simply a response to poverty and joblessness or other effects of global capitalism. Rather, it involves a dialectic of law and dis/order framed by neoliberal mechanisms of deregulation, where illicit behaviours appropriate the forms of licit operations through a 'simulacra of social order'. Central to this dynamic is the creation of parallel modes of production and profiteering, sometimes even of governance and taxation (2006, 5). Similarly, Jose Matos Mar (1984) demonstrated that land occupations in Peru, despite the impression of violence and chaos, are often carefully planned in advance with plots of land set aside for future schools and churches. Indeed, the very process of occupying land involves specific modes of administration, in the

sense that these initiatives follow a particular form of leadership and organizational structure, including arrangements and rules for work contribution, and fines for absence. Against this backdrop, the occupations of land in Peruvian cities must be understood in light of community organization more generally in the Andes.

In her study from El Alto, Bolivia, Sian Lazar (2008) explores how individual citizenship among the predominantly Aymara-speaking population in the city is mediated through membership in collective entities such as the neighbourhood association and trade unions. While substituting the state in some cases, she illustrates how these entities also mediate between citizens and the state. Along similar lines, Bjork-James (2018) argues that Bolivia's social movement organizations are bound together by an ethic and worldview that separates an enduring, morally legitimate world of community organization (the *organic*) from what is considered a corrupt world of political parties and self-advancing politicians. These community organizations are characterized by a hierarchical organizational structure and a countervailing ethic that subordinates leaders to the grassroots bases from which they emerge. According to Bjork-James, this organic grassroots ethic, by constructing itself as the heir to both the *ayllu* (Andean rural community⁴) and the worker-led revolution, generates a deeply felt moral economy that both mobilizes mass participation and guides leadership (ibid., 368). This moral economy creates the backdrop for a widespread notion in Andean countries that community leaders must serve and prioritize the interests of the community over their personal interests (see also Lazar [2008], Abercrombie [1998], Gose [1994]). However, even though an organization may emerge from organic grassroots ethics, the leaders are not always bound by its strictures (see also Bjork-James [2018] and Grisaffi [2013]). Based on a similar study of coca growers' unions in the Chapare Province, Bolivia, Thomas Grisaffi (2013) argues that, while the coca growers practice a form of radical democracy (i.e. open elections, consensus-driven processes), this form of organization also entails a strong drive towards conformity. The apparent 'one-mindedness' of the syndicate is also the result of 'enforced conformity' rather than simply a question of leaders bending to the will of their base. Grisaffi notes that the drive towards conformity in some cases entailed that challengers to the status quo were intimidated by sanctions (ibid., 54). In the following, I explore how related issues of leadership and grassroots ethics are organized, negotiated, and continually evaluated at the Feria in Arequipa.

Leadership and collective obligation

The Feria is divided into different sections for different kinds of merchandise; each section has a separate committee of leaders who are elected for two-year terms in addition to the position of president, vice-president, secretary, etc. on the general market committee. A written document, *Del Tribunal de Honor*, further outlines the association's rules and guidelines for leadership, elections, sanctions, etc. These factors indicate a mode of administration that mimics state rather than indigenous systems of authority. On the other hand, leaders receive no wages and leadership is supposed to rotate – there is an expectation that everyone should take their turn. This is similar to long-established leadership arrangements in the rural Andes, where positions rotate between households and where the prestige and duty of leadership is expected to prevail over personal and material interest (Gose 1994; Abercrombie 1998; Lazar 2008). Similarly in migrant

organizations in the city, people expect their leaders to work hard for the benefit of the group, and, at the Feria, members continually evaluate the leaders' performance (e.g. whether or not they promote the interests of the group). The leaders themselves put emphasis on motivating members to carry out communal obligations, such as collective work and the payment of fees, by evoking notions of community and referring to the ability of people from the highlands to work hard. In this regard, the Feria and similar marketplaces often rely on the performance of *faenas*, that is, collective work parties. Such work parties have historical roots both in pre-colonial and colonial arrangements in the Andes where local populations contributed with collective labour to authorities and community leaders (Platt 1982; Lazar 2008; Ødegaard 2010; Bjork-James 2018). Participation in such collective work is fundamental for membership at the Feria, as is illustrated in the following.

Trying to be included in the association while still working as an *ambulante* (vendor working on foot), one of my contacts, Angelina,⁵ stressed that she had to perform a great number of tasks requested by the leaders before being accepted as a member. They made her participate in *faenas* for the construction of infrastructure and to cook and clean during festivals, yet members accused her of stealing and harassed her for being poor and lazy – of 'only watching her feet'. She was later accepted into the association after proving her commitment through hard (and non-reciprocal) labour and by enduring humiliating treatment. Willingness to invest time and energy in the space, the infrastructure, and in the group is thus important for inclusion in such cooperative initiatives (see also Grisaffi [2013, 53]). Such work efforts are orchestrated by and through a mode of administration that is hierarchically structured, while simultaneously relying on a grassroots ethic committing leaders to secure the interests of the group and an ethic of collective effort.

During meetings and festivals, leaders often give long and passionate speeches in which they express their visions for the association, their collective efforts and the future. On Mother's Day, 2007, a big party was organized and held in the association's parking lot: food and alcohol were shared and consumed, lotteries were organized, and speeches were held. Among a range of other speeches, it was the secretary of the general assembly who gave the best received speech, one in which he stressed the hard work of women members for the benefit of all: 'We all have to continue fighting and working to leave poverty and ignorance behind, to achieve the well-being and progress of our Feria. We thank all you suffering and hard-working mothers!' This and similar speeches indicate the emphasis on work and collective obligation as central to the organizational ethos of the Feria. As noted by Bjork-James (2018, 364), both participants and observers compare the labour of mobilization in urban contexts with the forms of collective work that underlie Andean village life: the obligatory collective labour system (*faena* and *mita*) and the more symmetrical exchange of delayed reciprocity and labour exchange between equals (*ayni*; see also Allen [1981, 165]). As in rural areas then, symmetrical kinds of reciprocal exchange co-exist with a system of compulsory communal labour, political leadership, and the distributive 'generosity' of leaders (Stern 1995, 76; see also Lazar [2008] and Ødegaard [2010]). With the emphasis on collective work efforts within urban associations, Bjork-James further argues that the obligations of an organic grassroots ethic have been made into ethical maxims, enabling them to be transposed from the highlands to less traditional, urban contexts (ibid., 374). Organizational

leaders are central to these mobilizing efforts – compelled by members to advance their interests and expected in turn to mobilize the members effectively.

The speeches given by market leaders give an air of both authority and formality to the leadership and to the association. Indeed, members often comment on the quality of speeches, and, as Angelina formulated it, leaders are continually evaluated for ‘knowing how to speak’ or not. While ‘regular’ members often describe themselves as humble and ignorant, leaders are associated with education and knowledge of the law, albeit in ways that can also enable them to manipulate the law, as was the case in Santa Anita. The emphasis on leaders’ education is related to their responsibility for communicating with municipal authorities and for mediating the relationship between vendors and authorities. As a result, and similar to the forms of power exercised by hacienda owners as described by Krupa (2010), the forms of power exercised by market leaders cannot simply be defined in opposition to the state but also, simultaneously, as being experienced as closely connected to the state as state proxy (Krupa 2010). This is due to leaders’ role of providing for people’s basic need of an income on the one hand, and the way in which leadership is associated with education and knowledge of the law on the other hand. Indeed, market leaders generally have a background of several years of schooling and some have attended University, while it is not uncommon for vendors, especially women, to lack basic reading and writing skills. There are thus often huge gaps in the level of education among members and their leaders, providing part of the reason why more men than women become leaders, despite the majority of women among vendors.⁶ The requirement that leaders must deal with all sorts of paperwork has prevented many vendors from taking leadership positions, and people often explained this as due to ‘a lack of knowledge’. At one point, for instance, when it became clear that a woman suggested for the position as accountant was not able to read and write, the issue was solved by making her husband the accountant in his wife’s place. This illustrates not only an emphasis on leaders’ education but also, as I return to, the significance of kin relations in market work.

While leaders are associated with education and knowledge of the law, they also walk a fine line with respect to the law. For instance, when the authorities organize fiscal controls in search of contraband goods, notice has reached the Feria before the controllers. In such cases, leaders have ordered the vendors to stay at the market overnight and to block entrances in order to prevent confiscations. On one such occasion, I assisted Rosaria in bringing her contraband goods to her house. This was so as to avoid confiscation, as had been recommended by leaders. Leaders thus represent a form of power associated with education, the state, and law on the one hand, while simultaneously representing an extrajudicial form of power on the other. The process of (in)formalization is thus socially embedded in complex ways: Like hacienda owners, market leaders secure people’s basic needs, and their authority partly overlaps and partly competes with the provision and authority associated with the state. There are, nonetheless, some important differences between hacienda owners and market leaders: While both are positioned within a hierarchical organizational structure parallel to the state, the authority of market leaders is more ambiguous and unpredictable than that of hacienda owners in that the market leaders’ position is reliant on an ability to pursue the interests of the organization to the extent that inability to do so may cause vendors to remove leaders from office. The operations of market associations at the margins of the formal can potentially also make leaders

more vulnerable to state interference, as was the case at Santa Anita. What is more, market leaders rely on compliance within a grassroots ethic of mutual effort and exchange. This is an issue I return to, but first I will illustrate how the position in between different modes of administration creates uncertainty and doubt among vendors.

Ownership titles, investments and uncertainties

While, in contrast to Santa Anita, the Feria in Arequipa is still functioning, their situations are nonetheless similar. Although the Feria acquired ownership titles to the area as a whole in 1999, separate titles for individual pitches have not been granted. Among other reasons, demands made by the municipality for sanitation and parking have not been met, and the money collected for the purpose has apparently disappeared. According to rumours, leaders have apparently stolen this money. There are also rumours that the municipality is reluctant to grant the final titles in any case because they have plans to use the area for other purposes. During general market assemblies, however, leaders argued that the titles are delayed because some members refuse to pay the fees. For vendors, the uncertainty surrounding receipt of the final titles imbues such documents with a arbitrary quality as they are continually made present through absence. The lack of individual titles has not, however, prevented members from making great efforts to secure development and infrastructure in the market.

For instance, the vendors have contributed their own labour to install toilets, electricity, and a small parking lot through work parties, absence from which is fined. Despite the lack of individual land titles, members of the Feria have thus made a considerable investment in the space, having paid for the land where their pitches are functioning as well as fees for infrastructure and maintenance, and having invested their work effort in constructing infrastructure. There are also still frequent collections of quotas to cover expenses related to electricity bills, salaries for guards and lawyers etc.

The lack of individual titles has created a sense of uncertainty among vendors. 'I still do not feel like an owner', my contact Rosaria said, worrying that vendors can be expelled if the municipality decides to use the area for other purposes even though Rosaria, like others, has invested hundreds of dollars not only to pay for her pitch but also in fees collected for infrastructure and maintenance. During my fieldwork in 2011, Rosaria was ill and had to close her pitch, having too little merchandise to hire an assistant and keep it open. She could not rent it out either since, without a title, she would risk losing it to the person renting it. In such cases where vendors lack individual ownership title, ownership needs to be maintained through use of the land, and thus reflects the rhetorical ambiguity of ownership in Peru: ownership rights should be based on active use and necessity, or be recognized by formal title. While she was ill, it was better for Rosaria to close her pitch than risk someone else taking it over, considering that she still lacked the formal property title.

Like other vendors, Rosaria has taken many loans from both the bank and kin to manage the expenses. Surrounding the Feria, loan agents and banks abound, frequently coming to offer vendors a loan. She gets loans by giving her house or pitch as guarantee, and she sometimes borrows merchandise from other vendors to give loan agents the impression that she has plenty. 'I have to cheat', she said, since 'stupid people always die', referring to the help she receives from other vendors to keep the loan agents at bay. While status as member of the Feria makes vendors credit-worthy from the

perspective of loan agents, the interest rates are often high, and many vendors struggle constantly to cover the next payment. 'The bank does not forgive you', people said, pointing to the nonnegotiable demands for repayment in contrast to the more negotiable conditions of loans from colleagues or kin. Vendors therefore seek to combine and mediate between formal requirements on the one hand, and the more negotiable modality of mutual help and obligation on the other. Meanwhile, the uncertain whereabouts of the final land titles contributes to vendors' doubts regarding the accountability of leaders.

In contrast to the situation at Santa Anita, there is willingness among vendors at the Feria to finalize formalization, and lawyers have been hired to work on their case vis-à-vis the municipality and neighbouring land owners, particularly with respect to the issue of parking. While the infrastructural achievements at Santa Anita were more significant than those at the Feria, there had been no legal purchase of the land at Santa Anita, and members there were not willing (or able) to formalize. Nonetheless, the vendors made claims to the land based on their labour efforts as well as the unauthorized transactions already made with leaders, thus demonstrating the rhetorical ambiguity of ownership in Peru. At the Feria, vendors were worried since they had not obtained individual ownership titles despite their efforts and were questioning the accountability of leaders. There was even controversy about whether leaders had actually worked to acquire the final land titles at all. Rosaria herself suspected that the leaders might have acquired the final titles for the Feria already, but that they have kept them, with intentions of taking advantage of vendors' work efforts and their dependence on the leaders. As we were talking about this situation and the distrust of leaders and the lawyers they hire, Rosaria remarked that 'since we do not have any knowledge of these things, they should not try to fool us'. Besides illustrating members' doubts regarding the accountability of leaders, the situation reflects the often semi-legal status of urban development (Roberts 1995, 174); people may have acquired legal land titles but may not have the infrastructure required by law or vice versa. The absence of individual land titles at the Feria, as well as vendors' doubts regarding the accountability of leaders, demonstrate the dilemmas and uncertainties created at the crossroads between formal requirements on the one hand and a mode of administration guided by an ethic of collective effort on the other. In the following, I illustrate how vendors deal with issues of corruption and compensation among leaders, and then go on to explore vendors' recognition of these factors through a form of complicity.

Rumour and compensation

During my fieldwork in 2007, one of the leaders at the Feria suddenly disappeared, and rumour had it that he was escaping from accusations that his new house had been acquired with money stolen from the association. Such accusations are common. In her study from El Alto, Lazar (2008) discusses how rumours about corruption show a struggle between the concern that personal material gain may be the most important motivation for leaders and the perception that leaders should prioritize their obligation to the community. According to Lazar, corruption thus becomes a trope through which people use gossip to evaluate and express their expectations of leaders. Bjork-James (2018) similarly observes instances of what he calls 'ethical failure': leaders who absconded with money from collective accounts, who did not listen to the base, and who were disinterested in collective mobilization. In one such case, he describes how a neighbourhood general

assembly served as a counterbalance to unethical leaders and acted by denouncing them, replacing them, or re-forming the association (*ibid.*, 379; see also Grisaffi [2013]).

While accusations of corruption sometimes result in the removal of leaders from office, it is not uncommon that they continue as leaders. As I illustrate below, leaders under suspicion are sometimes allowed to continue through a re-organization or expansion of the association, or are helped by members' recognition that leaders should at least receive some recompense (see also Lazar [2008]). As underscored by Rosaria, leaders have less time than other vendors to actually work and, therefore, 'they eat from this money' (that is, money from the association). In this way, members can also accept that leaders may need some compensation for their efforts, that is, so long as they manage to achieve something for the association. If not, what a leader might see as material compensation would be seen by vendors as undue appropriation and corruption. Herein lies an important aspect of the ethics of these informally operating marketplaces: the moral acceptance of acts that break laws and regulations, on the condition that the result is considered socially or organizationally fair. In many ways, leaders become specialists in collective mobilization and land claims (see also Grisaffi [2013]), and their well-managed leadership constitutes an overlapping or parallel source of authority – illustrating the position of leaders as 'state proxy'. I suggest that this position, however, cannot be understood without recognizing how leaders are positioned as providers similar to those of kin. In what follows, I illustrate how the cases of 'ethical breakdown' in social organizations are not always clear-cut. More specifically, I demonstrate the importance of recognizing the ambiguous and unpredictable role of leaders in collective action and between different modes of administration.

Provision, complicity, and kin

For a period in the 1990s when the FERIA was functioning on occupied land further away from the centre, several vendors had given money to the leaders as payment for land where they could set up their pitches. The land that the vendors thus paid for was still the property of the municipality, however, so the land they 'bought' was nothing more than part of a public street. Although some vendors had been led to believe that the payment would imply formal ownership, others told me they had made the payment knowing that the land use was not authorized. They did so despite the risk of being expelled and losing their investment, expecting that the payment would enable leaders to acquire land titles in time. As previously mentioned, similar transactions for unauthorized pieces of land had taken place at Santa Anita.

At the FERIA, Rosaria was among the vendors who had bought a piece of land like this. In retrospect, she said she knew she was being deceived but that she paid nonetheless: 'I knowingly let myself get fooled', she said. Rosaria did so thinking that it was the only way she could sell her goods since, without a pitch, the police or other vendors would throw her out. This illustrates the risks people are willing to take in order to have a place to sell from, and how formalization becomes a process defined by the terms and conditions negotiated with and by leaders. Rosaria's case further indicates that people can be more or less aware of the (il)legal status of land ownership and even acknowledge these uncertainties through a form of complicity. In this complicity, vendors relate to

leaders as providers and kin-like figures; thus, they create an expectation of reciprocating loyalty.

Juan, who was president of the association during the transactions of land mentioned above, is a middle-aged man who does not work as a vendor himself but is considered to be an experienced leader and as having more education than most vendors. Accused of corruption, Juan was replaced by a new president in 2002, but soon became president for an initiative by members of the Feria to establish a new market in Cono Norte, the Northern part of Arequipa. Although Juan had made vendors pay for land that was still the property of the municipality, Rosaria often spoke in his (and other leaders') support. She argued that Juan – after all – had greatly helped the vendors by providing them with the opportunity to do business. Despite everything, Rosaria said that Juan is a good leader, because he always knows how to speak nicely to people and to sit down to share a meal. Rosaria even addressed this man as *papa*, and said that, without him, they would all still be working in the streets. While leaders at the Feria do not carry out other social and welfare functions by, for instance, establishing nurseries as described by Vega (2012, 212) in Mexico City, they do provide land and other forms of help and protection. This role as providers helps to legitimize their leadership and countervail doubts or suspicion about misuse of their positions. It is a personalized source of power, as expressed in Rosaria's views on the role of providing and her use of kinship terms. So, although members sometimes suspect leaders of tailoring their own interests, it is not uncommon that the same leaders are re-elected or given other positions of confidence, as in the case of Juan. What is more, and as illustrated by Rosaria's comments above, the extent to which leaders pursue their own interests is less important so long as they succeed in pursuing the interests of the group as well. Emphasizing that vendors are all *gente humilde* (humble people) from the highlands, not knowing how to read and write, Rosaria said that, without leaders like Juan, they would never have acquired stable conditions for trade. Similarly at Santa Anita, vendors continued supporting their leaders despite the accusations made against them. At the Feria, I asked Rosaria how people could still trust Juan, and she responded that 'he cheats, but he also gives. There are others who only cheat and then just leave'. Rosaria thus recognizes that Juan is a trickster of the law as well as of the members' trust, at the same time as she defines him as a person who provides, referring to him in kinship terms. In this manner, Rosaria and others cope with the ambiguities of leadership by relating to leaders as kin.

In general, an intense cultivation of social relationships characterizes everyday life at the Feria, and people invest not only in land and infrastructure but also in social relationships, for instance through relations to *caseras*⁷ and *comadres* (ritual co-parents) (see Seligmann [2001] and Ødegaard [2010]). Vendors often ask leaders of the association to act as god-parents for their children's baptism, or for the roof of a new house. Rosaria commented: '*Compadres* are like the authorities – they give you advice and can ask you to work for them'. In this and other ways, ritual kin and authorities represent similar, partly overlapping sources of authority in the market context, both actualized in the enactment of leadership. That said, the *compadrazgo* relations established between vendors and their leaders are often more limited both in time and space compared to other *compadrazgo* relationships. For instance, the significance and reach of the relationship is often limited to the marketplace, in the sense that a leader would rarely visit a vendor's home (except for the ritual initiation of the relationship); the relation would be relevant

mainly for a limited period of time, and the relationship would not be maintained by the leader asking a vendor to be godparent in return. The latter typically characterizes compadrazgo relations among the vendors themselves, in contrast, in a way that will henceforth balance the relationship. In such cases, the respect and authority that must be shown a godparent will be reciprocal, including the work help often entailed in compadrazgo relations. In vendors' compadrazgo relations with leaders, in contrast, the association between godparents and authority will be maintained and not balanced. As a result, the vendor would be careful to always address a leader who is also a godparent using the polite form, would be sure to offer food or other signs of respect and gratitude when they meet, and would contribute with non-reciprocal labour. A sense of respect and authority is thus facilitated by unbalanced compadrazgo relations between vendors and leaders and contributes towards the sense of obligation drawn upon for the realization of collective action: A relationship in which a leader is also your compadre reinforces your sense of obligation to follow his/her lead and may compel the leader to fulfil collective commitments. Collective action and leadership at these marketplaces is thus legitimized and socially embedded through relations of ritual kinship and exchange.

In Arequipa, some unauthorized marketplaces have continued for years without particular interference, and many *contrabandistas* have brought goods across the borders throughout their careers – in many cases, thanks to bribery. Many vendors have thus relied on the involvement of public functionaries, who often receive bribes in return for letting people keep their merchandise and continue trading without interference. In this way, the relational character of vending constitutes a means by which state officials at different levels also tap into and profit from the extra-legal activities of vendors and shows how informality is practiced even by the very representatives of the state. These exchanges are called bribes (*coima*) and not gifts, although vendors often draw a parallel between *coima* and gift and see it as lack of respect when public functionaries refuse to accept a *coima*. After having her contraband goods confiscated, my contact Aurelia, for instance, exclaimed: 'Now they [the authorities] do not even want to accept bribes. They don't know how to respect people!' I suggest that these and similar exchanges, as well as vendors' conditional acceptance of leaders' use of their positions, point to an 'ethic of illegality' – or an ethic of mutual obligation and exchange – that contributes to legitimize and socially 'embed' economic practices at the margins of the formal. It is a moral ethos related to the emphasis and value ascribed to mutual exchange and circulation.

Expansion, sacrifice, threat, and guarantee

At the new market in Cono Norte, vendors organized themselves differently than they had at the Feria. They formally bought the land (0.63 hectares) with a loan from the bank Caja Municipal (56,000 US dollars), and, this time, they wanted to complete construction of the infrastructure before opening for trade, so the initial expenses were high. The new area is part of the desert on the very outskirts of Arequipa and, during my fieldwork in 2003, the area was in the process of being cleared, divvied up, and prepared for the installation of water and electricity. Once a month, members had to attend meetings and participate in *faenas*, and were fined if absent. In addition to her pitch at the Feria, Angelina acquired a new pitch by joining the new market initiative. She wished to expand her business and to

have an extra pitch to give to her youngest son if he were unable to find work. Part of her motivation was also what she considers the uncertain situation of the Feria, since the vendors still lack individual titles. The uncertain legal status of the old Feria motivated not only Rosaria but other vendors as well to expand their enterprises to the new market. This is common among semi-formal entrepreneurs because it makes them less liable to government regulation and the failure of one enterprise will not necessarily affect the others (Roberts 1995, 127). Family and kin relationships are important for this logic of expansion: vendors acquire new land with younger relatives in mind, or they register pitches in the name of younger kin.

At meetings in Cono Norte, Angelina asked leaders how many pitches would be left to sell to people from outside the association. She was eager to know since members were, at that point, covering expenses for electricity and infrastructure for empty pitches as well. When leaders responded that they did not know as yet, Angelina suspected that they wanted to keep it a secret in order to earn money for themselves. So, while the new market illustrates how formalization can sometimes emerge from unauthorized economic initiatives, members continued to assess the accountability of leaders.

In contrast to Angelina, who has refused to take up leadership positions due to her inability to read and write, her colleague and *comadre* Camila soon became involved as a leader in Cono Norte. Camila has had several years of schooling and attended University before starting full-time as a vendor and leader: first as an accountant for the central committee of the Feria in 2007, and later as one of the leaders in Cono Norte. In her enthusiasm for the new market, Camila convinced her less-experienced *comadre* Angelina to invest in the new project. Angelina's decision to join the new market initiative was frowned upon by her adult children, however, who were afraid that she was being fooled into buying a pitch, that in reality this land was not worth anything, and that no market would function there for any length of time. They also worried about their mother's contact with Camila; they suspected that Camila was speculating in land by misusing the trust of market vendors and that their mother could easily be cheated by her more knowledgeable and powerful colleagues.

The leaders themselves emphasized all their effort in leading the association and the sacrifice it requires. For instance, as responsible for security issues at the Feria and secretary for urbanization issues at the new market, my contact Gloria underscored how much leaders struggled to establish the new market, but that people consistently suspected them of stealing instead of showing gratitude: 'They think that everything is about stealing, but it is not like that'. Before the final payment for the land in Cono Norte, there had also been many other expenses involved, according to Gloria, which the leaders had to cover with their own money. She, herself, had also sacrificed a lot, and even taken out personal loans in order to raise enough money, using her house as guarantee. In addition, she sold one of her pitches, one which she originally had planned to give to one of her children. At one point, she had taken out so many loans that she was investigated by the fiscal authorities. She therefore found it unreasonable that the vendors raise questions about leaders' accomplishments: 'People do not understand that the money comes from the land. If it were not for the land, the vendors would not have had money, nor would they have had customers or loans from the bank'. Since leaders provide vendors access to land, Gloria argued, the leaders also

provide them the opportunity to earn money. This equation between land and money reflects the perception of leadership in terms of provision.

In this way, the emphasis on leaders as important providers on the one hand and as potential speculators on the other is central to the predicament of vendors: Finding themselves in between different modes of administration, vendors continually need to assess the leaders' accomplishments. Indeed, leaders are at once the only guarantee that vendors can do business from permanent pitches and a threat – their failure to fulfil their obligations can cause a market to collapse and cause people to lose their investments. With rising land prices in the region and recent governments' emphasis on formality and the legal, these ambiguous and unpredictable dimensions of market leadership are likely to intensify, despite the more general resonance of such market initiatives with the discourse of neoliberal agendas (i.e. state reductionism, privatization, and decentralized government).

Conclusions

Focusing on the establishment of markets in a historical and political context where discourses on formality are expanding, this article has explored informal economies at the crossroads between different modes of administration. Rather than seeing the 'informal economy' as a separate or simply intersecting domain, the article argues that we must understand the parallel modes of administration of state and organizational leaders and the ethics of collective action that guide such markets. Providing vendors with access to land, the authority of leaders rests on reproducing a kind of state-like alternative and, at the same time, a personalized source of power. They constitute a state proxy seeking legitimacy through claims similar to those made by the state but drawing legitimacy from the ethics of collective effort and ritual kinship that simultaneously may legitimize acts that break the law. It is not a 'delegated sovereignty' as in the case of hacienda owners, but a form of authority that emerges from collective effort.

The article argues that we need, therefore, to analyze the local ethics that constitute and define social relations at the margins of the formal. At the Feria, this is an ethic of collective action, mutuality, and exchange – an ethic that is socially and historically embedded and informed by vendors' background in the Andes. Hence, this ethic is based on the importance of collective action, participation, and mutual obligation, entailing that the entitlement to membership and ownership of land is seen to depend on participation and the fulfilment of mutual responsibilities. Accordingly, the position and authority of leaders depend on their ability to promote the interests of the group. So long as they can account for their accomplishments, vendors accept, to a certain extent, that leaders use their position for material gain. Vendors thus acknowledge the ambiguous and unpredictable position of leaders through a form of complicity. They deal with this ambiguity and uncertainty by relating to leaders as providers and kin. Herein lies an important aspect of what constitutes the ethics of these informally operating marketplaces: the moral acceptance of acts that break laws and other standards, under the condition that such acts are considered socially and organizationally fair, that is, that they contribute to material exchange and redistribution. The fact that vendors often stay loyal to their leaders, despite widespread accusations and doubts, can therefore be understood in

terms of the ethics of collective action and mutual obligation, which imbues a sense of loyalty to vendors as well as leaders.

While organizational leaders in studies of informality are often absent, and other studies of collective action tend to represent them as somewhat unambiguous, collectivist figures, the article has demonstrated the importance of understanding the market leaders' ambiguous position at the crossroads between a collectivist grassroots ethics and state authority. These ambiguous and unpredictable dimensions are intensified by the semi-formal dimensions of these markets; the markets operate partly outside the law in a context of increased official emphasis on formalization while at the same time depending on a mode of administration that is built upon a different ethic altogether.

Notes

1. The role of Emmsa in relation to the municipality's request that the vendors should rent or buy the area was not clear. Nor was it clear what relationship there might have been between Emmsa and the leaders of Santa Anita, or why it took four years before attempts were made by the municipality to interfere.
2. With a conditional prison sentence at the time of the eviction, Porras soon went into hiding, but was caught by the police a few months later in November 2007.
3. Altiplano refers to the presence of vendors and goods from the highlands.
4. The *ayllu* is a form of socio-spatial organization based on kin and fictive-kin relations and productive complementarity (Klein 2011, 22).
5. I have given all my contacts pseudonyms, as well as taken measures to skew some of the information about them in order to protect their identities.
6. Limitations of space do not allow me to discuss gender issues here, but see Ødegaard 2010.
7. Referring to people with whom a vendor cooperates, or to customers.

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