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Towards a Typology of Hybrid Formalities and Informalities

Abstract: The basic premise of the paper is that the study of formal and informal processes has moved beyond the formality-informality debate. Forms which may be termed as hybrid formalities and hybrid informalities are more and more often encountered in the literature. However, these hybrid types are pretty much under construction, and they occur in a rather disparate manner. So that, there is need of a systematic approach which would conceptualize them within a broader typology. The paper advances such a typology of hybrid formalities and informalities. For the sake of conceptual unity, these are drafted in the same theoretical framework—the structuralist perspective on informal economy. Eventually, the systematization of this typology of hybrids leads to the formulation of some general findings about the manner in which sociologists relate to formality and informality in general.

Keywords: hybrid formalities, hybrid informalities, structuralist perspective, formality-informality debate, economic sociology

Introduction

It is customary for the study of phenomena which are not formal, or go beyond the formal, to mainly focus on the informality domain. This notwithstanding, there is a disparate yet theoretically promising interest in processes which can be considered as hybrid formalities and informalities, and which occur in various combinations. Such hybrids comprise of institutions which are situated between or beyond formality and informality, and which are not one hundred percent formal or informal, not the way formality and informality are commonly conceptualized in sociology, at least. Acknowledgement of such manifestations has the potential to challenge the established assumption that activities are “either formal or informal” (Williams and Padmore 2013: 75; see also Aryeetey 2008). As called upon by Kamrava (2004a: 63, 67; see also Morris, Lobao and Wavamunno 1995: 526) in relation to semi-formality, for instance: “The general dichotomy in developing economies between the ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ economic sectors needs to be refined to account for the ‘semi-formal’ sector: one whose activities appear to be governed by formal rules and procedures but are, in fact, largely unregulated and unrecorded by the state.”

When grasping the state of the art it is noticeable that the notions akin to hybrid formalities and informalities refer to concrete phenomena, which indeed escape traditional definitions of formality and informality. On the other hand, some of these concepts appear pretty much under construction. There is also uncertainty as to whether certain hybrid manifestations will end up being classified in one way or the other. Cox (2002: 29), for example, remarked: “Labeling a source of credit ‘informal’ is arbitrary to some extent. Here,

informality is defined conservatively by including only relatives, friends, and neighbors. Obviously, credit cooperatives, moneylenders, and the like could be counted as informal sources, as well.”

Thus, it is essential to develop a more systematic and integrative approach to these hybrids. There is need of a typology that would begin to order them conceptually and to indicate in what contexts it is opportune to use one particular designation, and in what context some other. The present paper aims to do just that. It advances a categorization of hybrid formalities and informalities that synthesizes the types which were conceptualized recently in various studies, yet were catalogued in a rather disparate manner. The argument proceeds in a few steps. First, the paper makes the case that there is need to work within a coherent and established theoretical framework on formality and informality in order to be able to abstract the hybrid formalities and informalities and to build a typology using unitary language. It picks up the structuralist stream in the informal economy debate, as developed by Alejandro Portes, and the authors associated with him, as the main theoretical angle in this paper. Following, it presents four hybrid formalities and six hybrid informalities, together with a summary of the theoretical or research studies which advanced these types to begin with. Eventually, in the discussion part, it draws the profile of what could be depicted as Hybrid Formality and Hybrid Informality, at large. Upon these findings, it presents some conclusions about the manner in which we, social scientists, perceive Formality and Informality, in general.

The Structuralist Stream in the Informal Economy Debate

Before proceeding with the identification of hybrid formalities and informalities, it is prerequisite to select a theoretical framework that would allow us to formulate the concrete types in the same vocabulary. This requirement sort of imposes itself given the multitude of dimensions which can be taken into account when trying to define formal and informal processes. Just to give some examples, economic sociology starts with the degree of state regulation (Castells and Portes 1991 [1989]); new institutionalism looks at forms of constraint (see North 1990; Nee and Ingram 2001), sociology of law traces the level of abstraction (Stinchcombe 2001), while the more culturally informed theory is interested in the degree of freedom in interpretation of role requirements (Misztal 2015).

Which of these perspectives should we choose? Given that the hybrid formalities and informalities were frequently spotted in the economic area, we suggest to apply a framework that is used to look at economic activities. This does not mean that we disregard the work on hybrid manifestations in connection to other research sites. With regard to the political systems and institutions, for instance, we could always invoke Lauth and Sehring's (2009) and Lauth's (2015) categorization of competing legal systems (“hybrid legal system” and “deficient rule of law”) or Myint's (2014) “legal hybridity.” Yet, we should also impose some limits on the resulting typology in order to be able to better discuss the findings and to advance some hypotheses for further research. The proliferation of hybrid manifestation in relation to the economic activities makes the usage of a sociological perspective that is used to look at such activities occur as “natural.” And, for various reasons, the structuralist

school in the broader informal economy debate seems to be the obvious choice in this regard (see [Castells and Portes 1991 \[1989\]](#); [Portes and Schauffler 1993](#); [Portes and Haller 2005](#); [Portes 2010](#); see also [Feige 1990](#)).

Together with dualism ([ILO 1972](#); [Hart 1973](#)), legalism ([de Soto 1989](#)) and, the more recently developed voluntarism ([Maloney 2004](#)), the structuralist stream emerged as one of the dominant schools of thought on informal economy in social sciences. Important for the purposes of this study is also the fact that this is a theory that was formulated with the tools of sociology, and economic sociology in particular, and that is quite acknowledged within economic sociology, as well as in related disciplines.

In a nutshell, structuralism advanced a perspective on the informal sector which reveals the complex network of relationships between formality and informality. It introduced an angle which—as [de Soto \(1989\)](#), the legalist perspective—emphasized the state-informal economy nexus, and—as [Hart \(1973\)](#), the dualist framing—underlined the dynamism and ingenuity of informal activities ([Portes and Schauffler 1993: 48](#)). This stream defined *formality* as the condition when activities are governed by state regulation (and subjected to registration and state scrutiny). While, it depicted *informality* as the domain comprising of “income-earning activities unregulated by the state in contexts where similar activities are so regulated” ([Portes and Schauffler 1993: 48](#); see [Portes and Sassen-Koob 1987: 31](#); [Castells and Portes 1991](#); [Feige 1990](#); [Portes and Haller 2005](#); [Portes 2010: 130–161](#)).

What are the problematic elements or limits of such a definition of formality and informality? First, there is the issue that in addition to regulation, informality can also be defined in relation to other dimensions, such as registration and state scrutiny. Thus, we have to ask ourselves how far are we willing to go with the definition of informality in order to be able to capture its multidimensional and gradual character. [Adriaenssens, Verhaest and Hendrickx \(2015\)](#) experimented recently with a methodology devised to capture this multidimensional character of informal activities, which led them to a binary depiction of informality in relation to labor regulation and taxation. Certainly, this is something else than defining informality as violation and lack of protection by regulatory structure solely.

Second, there is non-negligible evidence that considerable part of the informal economy also comprises of a voluntary exit dimension, and that this aspect should be, perhaps, more explicitly conceptualized (see [Maloney 2004](#)). Although [Portes](#) and his associates made a point about the dynamism and entrepreneurialism of the informal sector, according to the standards proposed by the more recently emerged voluntarist school at least, this is still somehow linked with the “marginality thesis” ([Williams 2004: 15–17](#)) or with a “more generous” version of the “defensive evasion and exclusion” perspective ([Maloney and Saavedra-Chanduvi 2007: 23–24](#)). Though the voluntarists may be biased toward the voluntary dimension, this does not exclude the fact that the structuralist school may somehow lag behind when it comes to treating this aspect.

Third, with the incorporation of types of informal employment, entrepreneurship, and social networks in the definition of informal economy (see [Chen 2006](#)), the theoretical exchange between sociology and other disciplines also moved in the direction of streams other than this structuralist perspective. Theories such as [Zelizer’s \(2005\)](#) “circuits of commerce” and [Sassen’s \(2007\)](#) deregulation/informalization gained significance outside sociology as well (see [Coletto 2010: 33–42](#)). Thus, sociological studies of interactions, transactions and

relations between the formal and informal parts of the economy became relevant. This development created a certain theoretical expectations from the sociologies of formality and informality to formulate ideal types that would more visibly capture the dynamism of formal and informal processes, their entanglement, and the emergence of new forms.

If the structuralist perspective on more or less formal and informal processes is in need of redefinition, then the bringing in of a systematic approach to the hybrid formalities and informalities might do for the theory just this. In the case of informality, as observed by Beckert and Wehinger (2013), the analytical focus traditionally dwells on “how economically vulnerable groups of the population secure a livelihood also by circumvention of certain legal stipulations.” Reading between the lines allows us to infer that the studies of the informal sector have built on the opinion that the exit from the regulated domain was sort of imposed upon these actors. Whereas, in the case of the hybrid processes, the voluntary exit dimension is more apparent, it is practically suggesting itself. Thus, the study of hybrid formalities and informalities is beneficial not only for the understanding of these forms, but for the refreshing of the perspective on formality and informality as well.

Towards a Typology of Hybrid Formalities and Informalities

As visible in *table 1*, it is possible to identify as much as four hybrid formalities and six hybrid informalities. Certainly, further research, especially in related frameworks on formality and informality may lead to the discovery of other types as well. So that, the categorization should not be taken as exhaustive. It should, however, be taken as representative for a generic Hybrid Formality and Hybrid Informality. In the sense that the categorization should reveal some characteristics of the formal and informal hybrid institutions, and the manner we perceive these.

The types of hybrid formality and hybrid informality comprised in this table got abstracted from the literature review and given a similar logic in their formulation. This logic conforms to the view of the structuralist school on the informal sector, as this was developed by Portes and authors associated with him. This means that all hybrid formalities and informalities are defined in relation with the state regulation. The definitions in *table 1* may be extended as to include the aspects of registration and scrutiny as well, but the issue still remains that these are mainly capturing the extent to which the activities fell under the realm of state regulation, record-keeping and control. As the reader will notice immediately, formality, informality, hybrid formalities and informalities are depicted as specific conditions of action and interaction. These are neither depicted as sectors, nor as domains. This was a conscious move that was meant to avoid getting into the theoretical intricacies associated with the usage of words such as “sector,” in sociology of formality and informality, nowadays.

Hybrid formalities

To recapitulate, formality is the condition when activities are governed by state regulation (and subjected to registration and state scrutiny). The literature review allows to point to at

Table 1

Categorization of Hybrid Formalities and Hybrid Informalities

Type	Definition	Character	Research site
Formality	The condition when activities are governed by state regulation (and subjected to registration and state scrutiny)		Multidimensionality (Adriaenssens, Verhaest and Hendrickx, 2015); Formal, informal and semi-formal sectors in Turkey; characteristics, interaction with other state agencies (Kamrava 2004a); Formal, informal and semi-formal financial markets in Uganda (Morris, Lobao and Wavamunno 1995)
Informality	The condition when activities are not governed by state regulation (and are not subjected to registration and state scrutiny), in the context where similar activities are		Informal sector (Feige 1990; Portes and Haller 2005; Portes 2010); Formal, informal and semi-formal sectors in Turkey (Kamrava 2004a); Formal, informal and semi-formal financial markets in Uganda (Morris, Lobao and Wavamunno 1995)
<i>Hybrid formalities:</i>			
1. Meta-formality	The condition when activities are governed by competing systems of regulation (even autonomous regulation may be included), flowing out of competing dominating authorities	Processes which deviate from the traditional definition of formality	Trans-informality and meta-formality within UK "better regulation" discourses (Eccles 2015)
2. Semi-formality via partial state regulation	The condition when activities conducted by formally established actors and organizations, which appear to be governed by state regulation, are only partially or episodically governed by this	Processes which are situated between formality and informality	Formal, informal and semi-formal sectors in Turkey; Interaction with state agencies ("mutually beneficial relationship of mutual neglect"); Semi-formal autonomy; Oppositional pragmatism, Inter-sectoral competition (Kamrava 2004a); Limited state-capacities and semi-formal enterprises in the Middle East and North Africa (Kamrava 2002, 2004b); Islamic investment companies in Egypt (Kamrava 2004b).
3. Semi-formality via subsidiary state regulation/ Paraformality	The condition when activities conducted by formally established actors and organizations are (indeed) governed by state regulation, yet by regulation which differs from the one customarily governing similar activities in the formal domain	Processes which belong to formality, but are stretched in, somehow devalued	Formal, informal and semi-formal financial sectors; non-bank financial institutions (non-government organization); regulatory activism (Chipeta and Mkandawire 1992; Morris, Lobao and Wavamunno 1995; Guirkinger 2008; Pham and Lensink 2008; Czura and Klonner 2010)

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Table 1 (Continued)

Type	Definition	Character	Research site
4. Quasi-formality	The condition when activities conducted by formally established actors and organizations are governed by state regulation, but also contain illegitimate practices	Processes which belong to formality, but are stretched in, somehow devalued	Quasi-formal employment structures (Williams and Padmore 2013); Informal sector in Cordoba (Sanchez, Palmiero and Ferrero 1981)
<i>Hybrid informalities:</i>			
1. Second economy/Not planned economy	The condition when economic activities are relatively independent from direct exposure to plan commands by the socialist state	Processes which deviate from the traditional definition of informality	Second economy, as sector (Böröcz 1992; see also discussion in Grossman 1991)
2. Second-to-informal economy	The condition when some of the previous second economy activities are metamorphosed and integrated into the informal economy during the shift towards capitalism	Transformative processes	“Second-to-informal economy,” as transformation (Sik 1994, 2012)
3. Beyond the law informality	The condition when activities are governed by regulation operating outside the framework of the state (e.g. social networks)	Processes which deviate from the traditional definition of informality	“Beyond the law” informality (Hart 2006); “Part of the state itself” informality (Elyachar 2005); Social networks as competing regulating actor (Guha-Khasnobis et al. 2006; Meagher 2010)
4. Trans-informality	The condition when informal activities, that are deemed appropriate to the requirements of regulating competence in terms of skills (means) and output (ends), move towards formality, and adopt the rational-legal approach	Transformative processes	Trans-informality and metaformality within UK “better regulation” discourses (Eccles 2015)
5. Formalized informality (rule bound informality)	The condition when informal activities conform to state mandated regulation, and these may be used as strategy to ensure and intensify control	Transformative processes/Processes which belong to informality, but are somehow devalued	Configurations of formality and informality (Miształ 2015)
6. Instrumental informality	The condition when informal activities become instrumental or rent-seeking, and are not confined to moral obligations and emotional attachments	Processes which belong to informality, but are somehow devalued	Configurations of formality and informality (Qi 2013; Castells in Miształ 2015).

least four conditions in which other types of elements (informal, illegal etc.) get involved to the extent that the depiction of the phenomenon as formal gets problematic: (1) metaformality, (2) semi-formality via partial state regulation, (3) semi-formality via subsidiary state regulation/paraformality, and (4) quasi-formality. The following discussion depicts these types in more detail.

The first condition, *meta-formality*, is more of a formal-formal hybrid, than a formal-informal one. In this case, various competing, authorities act in a rational-legal manner, though we cannot talk of a dominant peak. Meta-formality, along the pair concept of *trans-informality*, was introduced by Eccles (2015) in a study of the processes of the construction and deconstruction of formality in the context of deregulation of building control in the UK—that is, fragmentation of authority in the field. Eccles showed that transformation or lack of authority does not equal informalization, or a move away from formality. In the UK case-study, the generation of meta-formality implied “command-and-control, but within a number of competing authorities, in this case professional associations.” Hence, in generic terms, meta-formality is the condition when activities are governed by competing systems of regulation (even autonomous regulation may be included), that flow out of competing dominating authorities. The notion is a hybrid because it challenges the way we are used to think about formality as an origin-state myth. There may be more than one just path-setter, producer of formality.

The second condition, *semi-formality via partial state regulation*, occurs when the activities conducted by formally established actors and organizations which appear to be governed by state regulation are only partially or episodically governed by this. A quite comprehensive study of this phenomenon was conducted by Kamrava. This author studied semi-formality in the larger context of the political economy of non-oil rich states in the Middle East (see Kamrava 2002), of the structural impediments to economic globalization in the Middle East and North Africa (Kamrava 2004b); and of the political economy in Turkey (Kamrava 2004a). From theoretical point of view, his research proved tremendously revealing. Kamrava showed that semi-formality is not simply the effect of entrepreneurs’ tendency to avoid regulation—see the voluntary exit dimension (Maloney 2004) discussed above. But this phenomenon is linked with the uneven enforcement of regulative tasks and with the so-called “mutually beneficial relationship of mutual neglect” between state and the semi-formal sector, and to a certain extent also between state and society (Kamrava 2004a: 81).

The third condition is superficially similar to semi-formality via partial state regulation, yet has distinct implications. *Semi-formality via subsidiary state regulation* occurs when activities conducted by formally established actors and organizations are (indeed) governed by state regulation, yet by regulation which differs from the one customarily governing similar activities in the formal domain. This is the terrain of financial institutions which are “[l]egally registered, but not licensed as financial institution by central bank”—such as rural banks, post bank, savings and loan companies, and deposit-taking microfinance banks in Sub-Saharan Africa (see Aryeetey 2008; see also Chipeta and Mkandawire 1992; Morris, Lobao and Wavamunno 1995; Guirkingier 2008; Pham and Lensink 2008; Czura and Klonner 2010). We could also include here the activities which are subsidized by NGOs and government for targeted groups of borrowers.

Clearly, the action area of semi-formality via subsidiary state regulation overlaps to some extent with the one of semi-formality via partial state regulation and even with the one of meta-formality. It was not by coincidence, after all, that Kamrava’s (2002: 45) paper on semi-formality mentioned informal credit markets such as Islamic investment companies, rotating savings and credit associations in Egypt, and similar semi-formal services in the Middle East. While the link with meta-formality emerges in that in this type of semi-

formality there are various competing formalities, emerging from various authorities. Still, in the case of semi-formality via subsidiary regulation the state authority further seems to be the dominant—formally legitimate—source, whereas the other formalities are mixed with some informal elements.

Thus, semi-formality can be employed to depict various phenomena. Kamrava's (2002, 2004a, 2004b) semi-formality as partial state regulation is something else than semi-formality as subsidiary state regulation. So that, in order to avoid terminological confusion, it may be indicated to use another concept to depict this second phenomenon. For semi-formality via subsidiary regulation let's substitute *paraformality*. The usage of notions and concepts that were built around the prefix *para* is proliferating for quite some time. *Para*- has been used to depict para-formal education programmes for instance. These are "activities in between the formal programmes that follow the highly-organized, structured and full-time educational ladder and the array of loosely-structured, part-time out-of-school provisions" (Hoppers 2006: 23). These "second chance" programmes consist of evening classes, distance education possibilities etc. (Carron and Carr-Hill 1991). Besides this education sector, the prefix *para*- was also used in the construction of the Polish term for shadow banking system, *parabank*. This is the local variant for non-bank financial institutions and financial intermediaries which provide activities similar to traditional banks, yet without being licensed or monitored by these (eg., hedge funds, money market funds, credit unions, savings and loan associations, pawn shops, payday lending, currency exchanges and microloan organizations)—see also Srokosz (2011); Masiukiewicz (2012); Kotliński and Waliszewski (2012).

Thus, the notion of paraformality can be said to be in the "air" or even to be practically suggesting itself in relation to activities which are formal, but are outside the more formal areas that are conventionally being used.

The potential of the paraformality concept notwithstanding, there is the downside that the prefix *para* is depreciatory and even suggestive of "illegal undertakings" to a certain extent. Noticeably, when we use the prefix *semi*-, we imply that we refer to processes which are situated between formality and informality. While, with the prefix *para*- we suggest phenomena which belong to formality, but are stretched in, somehow devalued, for the reason that the source of formality is not the traditional authority. It is implied here by the observer that the activities just appear to be formal, yet they are not entirely so. These pretend that they are formal, but may even turned out to be illegal.

The fourth condition, *quasi-formality*, has to do with activities which are nearly formal but not quite due to the presence of some illegitimate elements (see Williams and Padmore 2013). These practices may range from undeclared tasks to illegal undertakings, or even point to activities conducted by self-employed actors which bring substantial capital input, either because of advanced skills, because of high capital intensity, or because of oligarchical market environment (see Sanchez, Palmiero, Ferrero 1981: 144–145). Thus quasi-formality is the condition when activities conducted by formally established actors and organizations are governed by state regulation, but also contain undeclared, illegitimate practices. Depending on the nature of the non-formal elements, the hybrid takes various forms. In case the practices are rather informal, quasi-formality looks more like semi-formality, as understood by Kamrava (2002, 2004a, 2004b).

Nevertheless, as with *para-*, the usage of the prefix *quasi-* is clearly aimed to underline that these activities are “not quite formal,” though they appear to be. The hybrid depicts processes which belong to formality and informality but are somehow devalued. The difference between *para-formality* and *quasi-formality* is that in the case of the former the perceived lack of legitimacy stems from a lower position of the source of formality, while in the case of the latter this indicates the presence of the illegitimate practices.

Hybrid informalities

From a structuralist angle, informality is the condition when activities are not governed by state regulation (and are not subjected to registration and state scrutiny), in the context where similar activities are. We can point to six conditions in which other types of elements (formal mainly) get involved to the extent that the depiction of the phenomenon as informal is not so obvious anymore: (1) second economy/not planned economy, (2) second-to-informal economy, (3) beyond the law informality, (4) trans-informality, (5) formalized informality (rule bound informality) and (6) instrumental informality. The following discussion presents these types in more detail.

The first condition, *second economy*, is linked with “a sector of the economy relatively independent from direct exposure to plan commands by the ‘socialist’ state” (Böröcz 1992: 4; see also discussion in Grossman 1991: 150–151, 168). Worthy of note, the notion of second economy was elaborated in reference to the structuralist paradigm. Stark (1989), for instance, distinguished between *informal economy* in relation to regulative bureaucratization, on the one hand, and *second economy* as response to redistributive bureaucratization, on the other hand. He showed that these are not “functional equivalents or structural counterparts.” Further, Böröcz (1992: 1), who also worked in the same paradigm, showed that it is problematic to apply this definition of informality to state socialism. He argued that under this regime the regulation, record-keeping, and taxation institutions are not clearly separated from those of proprietorship, management, and profit-taking. Böröcz differentiated between informal economy under “regulated capitalism” and the second economy under “state socialism” (see Böröcz 1992: 18).

The literature on second economy revealed two things. First, it indicated the presence of informality both within the first economy (subject to planning) and the second (not planned) one (Böröcz 1992, 2000). Second, it highlighted the metamorphosis and integration of some of the previous second economy activities into the informal economy during the shift towards capitalism in the region. This latter note leads us to the second condition listed in table 1, the “transformation-specific form of informal economy, the so-called ‘*second-to-informal economy*’” (Sik 2012: 53, see 1994). Both second economy/not planned economy and second-to-informal economy are hybrids, yet of a different kind. The former depicts processes which are not one hundred percent formal or informal, at least, not the way we think of formality and informality. While the latter is of the transformative processes type.

The third condition, *beyond the law informality*, is illustrated by recent phenomena of deregulation, and of state and economic collapse in many developing countries “which led to the whole economy being informal” (Hart 2006: 27). These new empirical phenomena urged researchers to look for regulators of informal economy in addition, or as alternatives,

to the state ones. Thus, we may conclude, *the state matters, but other regulators matter to* (see discussion in Lindell 2010). In this context of expanding “beyond the law” informality (Hart 2006: 33), as well as “part of the state itself” informality (see Elyachar 2005: 73), a certain trend emerged by mid 1990s pointing to social networks as a competing regulating actor—“Rather than constituting a *lack* of regulation, informality has been reconceptualized as an *alternative terrain* of regulation operating outside the framework of the state” (Meagher 2010: 16; see also Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur and Ostrom 2006). Defined this way, beyond the law informality resembles some kind of meta-formality taken to the extremes where informal authorities also appear as dominant ones. This manifestation is a hybrid because it depicts processes which are not hundred percent informal, at least, not the way we think of informality.

The fourth condition, *trans-informality*, occurs when informality operates within the framework of the state, that got somehow coopted. Thus, it operates within, and not outside the terrain of the state, as we saw it is the case with the beyond the law informality. This notion was introduced by Eccles (2015), also the author of the meta-formality mentioned above, to depict the condition when informal activities, that are deemed appropriate to the requirements of regulating competence in terms of skills (means) and output (ends), move towards formality, and adopt the rational-legal approach. In the context of deregulation of building control in the UK, “Where the informal has been transformed is that professional associations have endorsed such previously unacceptable indicators of competence and given them status and a degree of formality” (Eccles 2015). The process was termed *trans-* and not *meta-*, because Eccles saw it as emerging from the bottom up, and as not being driven by the formal authoritative processes of the associations themselves.

The fifth condition, *formalized informality*, also depicts some kind of rule bound informality and a transformative process. Misztal (2015) analyzed changes in the relationship of informality and formality in the contemporary setting, and the consequences of these developments in terms of the emergence of new types of informality, and of the sustainment of cooperation and the exercise of social control. She pointed to formalized informality in relation to as a prozaic situation as “informal Fridays” and the “new expectation to dress informally but correctly.” Misztal (2015: 111) argued that “the informalisation of standards of socially sanctioned behaviour” is an effective tactics of ensuring control.

Similar strategies, though more in the direction of assurance and sustaining cooperation, are also akin to *instrumental formality*—another Misztal term. This is the condition when informal activities become instrumental or rent-seeking, and are not confined to moral obligations and emotional attachments. She discussed the emergence of rent-seeking type of *Guanxi* (Qi 2013) and of the instrumental dealings between major groups in the network society, in the global economic system (see discussion of Castells in Misztal 2015).

Discussion and Conclusions

As visible in *table 1*, we were able to identify four forms under the heading of “hybrid formalities” and six forms under the heading of “hybrid informalities.” The table further reveals what kind of hybrids are these. As such, we seem to be dealing with processes which

may be termed as hybrid either because they deviate from the standard definition of formality and informality; because they are situated between formality and informality; because they are transformative processes; or because, although they may be stated to belong to formality or informality, these are somehow devalued in everyday or more specialized parlance. We can use these findings in order to draw a general profile of the Hybrid Formality and Hybrid Informality respectively.

Thus Hybrid Formality seems to be dominated by instances which can be stated to belong with formality, but which are somehow devalued in every day parlance or sociological phraseology (para-formality; quasi-formality). Further, there is one type which deviates from the traditional definition of formality (meta-formality) and one case which is situated between formality and informality (semi-formality via partial state regulation). Notably, there are no transformative processes in this category. So that, the general profile of Hybrid Formality is linked with activities which appear to be formal, yet are not quite. Why does Hybrid Formality fell short of Formality? This occurs either because the distribution of legal legitimacy is decentralized and we need some time and additional theoretical tools to apprehend the situation when there is more than one dominant authority; or because we have the feeling that the actors skillfully manipulate with various sources of formal legitimacy. If we were to generalize Kamrava's (2002) findings on the social autonomy of semi-formality (as partial regulation), we would also see the Hybrid Formality as having earned a certain degree of autonomy from Formality and Informality. Though this is surely an intriguing hypothesis, we mainly base our intuition on Kamrava's study of semi-formality and we do not have a clear perspective on whether Hybrid Formality does lack the "instinct" to acquire legal legitimacy through formalization proper, or not.

In comparison with Hybrid Formality, the Hybrid Informality comprises of two instances of processes which deviate from the traditional definition of informality (second economy; beyond the law informality); two manifestations of transformative processes (second-to-informal economy; trans-informality) and two cases of processes which belong to informality, but are somehow devalued (formalized informality; instrumental informality). Also, there are no processes which are situated between formality and informality in this category. Thus, the general profile of Hybrid Formality is linked with activities which transgress the boundary of what we traditionally understand as Informality, which are formally embedded and interacting with Formality, and which are instrumental in supporting various forms of entrepreneurship. Hybrid Informality helps build and promote networks, and it does not pose the naivety and innocence that we customarily grant to Informality.

All these observations prompt the question: How could we account for such differences between the general profile of Hybrid Formality and the one of Hybrid Informality? Though it is too soon to give an answer to this question, we have to be aware that the categorization of various types of hybrids, see *table 1*, not only reveals elements in relation to the hybrids themselves, but it also says something about the manner in which we, sociologists, perceive Formality and Informality more generally. The hybrid formalities may appear as lacking legitimacy and as somehow decoupled from formality because we ourselves, as pointed by Stinchcombe (2001: 1), have come to view formality as a fraud—as to be “purely a matter of myth, ceremony and ritual” (see Dingwall 2015). Do we, by our selection and definition

of formal hybrids, further indulge this theoretical bias? Even if the answer is no, we have to be aware that we might.

In a similar vein, the underlining of the transformative tendency in the Hybrid Informality may be linked with our tendency to look for rational approaches, structure and formal embeddedness in Informality (see paradoxes of informal sector in [Portes and Haller 2005](#); [Portes 2010](#); see “dissemination of modernist vocabulary without architects” in favelas or other Brazilian informal neighborhoods in [Lara 2012](#); [van Gelder 2013](#)). Do we depict the Hybrid Informality in transformative phases because we have a certain theoretical expectation for Informality to move in this direction? Then again, even if the answer is no, we have to be aware that we might.

Now that we realize that there is the inevitable risk that the framing of Hybrid Formality and Hybrid Informality becomes a sequel of how we view Formality and Informality generally, we should come back to a more optimistic topic: the theoretical gain of studying the hybrid processes. First, as we saw, the voluntary exit dimension that Maloney (2004) thought to be missing in the structural depiction of informality is much more evident in these hybrids. Most of the types depicted in [table 1](#) may be viewed as advancing their own agenda, as being instrumental toward certain ends. Second, the perspective on intersectoral interaction gains balance if we add any of the hybrids to the traditional formality-informality pair. There is also the element that three elements is better than two if it comes to build a sociological theory. In this way we avoid the problem that the discussion becomes a contrast, and that formality or informality may be used as a kind of fall guy, set up in order for the other element to appear more authentic.

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