



Figure 65. Tree recently used to claim trading space

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LEARNING FROM THE STATION PRECINCT

Station Precinct- City of Tshwane, 2010

INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to further come to terms with the needs of street traders, a study was conducted at the station precinct. This study was conducted by means of passive observation as well as interviews with a few traders in order to understand their basic needs as well as the nature of their day-to-day operations and activities. This study was the first step in formulating a framework of functional and formal requirements of traders in the precinct.

It was found that there are five distinct trader types in the city of Tshwane, four of which are present in the station precinct. Each of these trader types is typified by their relationship to the urban environment – dependence on fixed facilities, space-making, use of urban furniture as well as their degree of permanence in the urban environment.

The trader types range from lower to higher order traders. Lower order traders are presently the most informal. They are not legitimate in the urban environment, and have no licence. They are on site to sell a specific type of product to a specific client base. They rely heavily on found objects for urban furniture and do not have a designated area from which to trade. They are subject to heavy fines and mistreatment by police. Higher order traders are more legitimate, they must adhere to regulations, trading from a designated space or built structures. They pay monthly rental and storage fees and are dependent on support from the built environment for shelter and services such as water and electricity. Higher order traders are only a step or two removed from the formal realm.



Figure 66. Traders using street sign to claim trading space



TYPE 1

- This trader's actions and activities respond to their immediate needs
- Sells and carries only what can be carried on public transport
- Sells one type of product for only a few hours a day
- Urban furniture components are lightweight and easily assembled (if assembly required)
- Components are compact enough to be easily carried from site and around the city
- Minimal sun and weather protection
- Least restricted selling zones
- Product sold is geared to respond to the needs of a specific time of day

Current status in urban environment

- No vendor licence and no on-site storage

Figure 67. Typical trader Type 1



TYPE 2

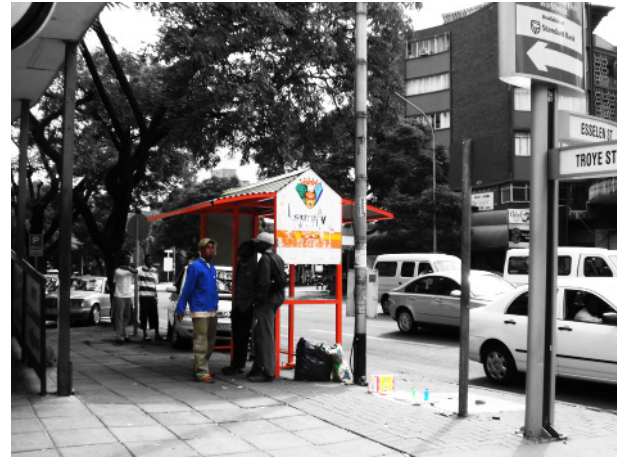
- More bulk than TYPE 1
- Storage unit doubles up as display, may be reconfigured
- Items must be sold on the same day or within a few hours
- On-site delivery of goods is possible
- Lightweight components
- Components carried quickly and easily assembled on-site
- Weather protection depends on where the individual stands
- Selling zones same as TYPE 1
- Products sold are geared to respond to the needs of a specific time of day
- On-site storage

Figure 68. Typical trader Type 2



TYPE 3

- More bulk and variety than previous types
- Has a daily full day presence in a designated area
- On-site delivery of goods is possible
- Light, medium and heavyweight components
- Components and goods pushed by trolley from storage area to a specific demarcated site
- Marquee creates sun and weather protection whilst enabling visibility
- Restricted selling zones
- On-site storage R20 per week
- Vendor licence R98 per month



TYPE 4

City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality's attempt to legitimise informal traders by giving them fixed stalls with municipality branding. Specific areas were identified for permanent vendors based on sufficient pavement width. They were placed on specific routes termed 'market streets'. These were streets that were low in profile containing few to no government buildings. If government buildings were present they were low profile government buildings. These street pavements were also deemed wide enough to accommodate informal traders without causing congestion conflict with pedestrians.

This initiative was driven by the need to:

- control tidiness of streets
- control congestion
- structure was envisioned as a complete product therefore no additional 'stolen' components would be required
- sun and weather protection
- vendors would only require R20 per week to store their unsold goods at a nearby storage facility

Figure 69. Typical trader Type 3

Figure 70. Typical trader Type 4



TYPE 5

- Permanent fixtures supported by built fabric
- Organisation of trade formally and legally
- Use of built structures to support informal realm
- Shop R200 per month
- Vendor licence R98 per month

INTERVIEW WITH INFORMAL TRADERS WORKING COMMITTEE (TITWC)

In a communication with Mr Setene Ketelele, Secretary of the Tshwane Informal Traders Working Committee (TITWC) (2010), it was found that there is currently no policy in place that governs the location of traders on the street pavement. The municipality currently does, however, grant informal trading licenses to traders that trade on street pavements. It is the view of the traders that the trading licence they pay for in order to trade should pay for municipality approved trading facilities and specialised equipment that will make them recognisable thus, giving them a sense of legitimacy in the urban environment. Currently the rental paid by traders does not entitle them to services such as water and electricity or any form of equipment. The traders are merely expected to have the licence on their person so that it may be shown to hawker patrol when they do inspections.

According to the (TITWC), there should be portions of the street pavement that are provided with services that are specifically allocated to street trade, allowing the traders to 'rent' that portion of the street. Along with that, traders would like to have:

- design and branding that makes traders that are compliant to regulations identifiable
- regulation with regard to types of foods sold, to adhere to safety standards
- advertising
- Appropriate clothing.

In their view, provision of the abovementioned services would aid them in being viewed as legitimate force in the city of Tshwane, which currently contributes 23% to the city of Tshwane's economy (Ketelele 2010). The provision of the abovementioned services would also help to differentiate traders who are regulated from those that are not. Through this it is hoped that the public would also recognise compliant traders and would support their businesses.

Figure 71. Typical trader Type 5

SOCIO-SPATIAL DIALECT/ RATIONALE

ENCLOSURE IMPLIES DOMINATION

As mentioned in Chapter 1, many traders prefer to locate themselves on the street pavement in order to take advantage of potential customers along these routes. In projects that house traders within built structures the street pavement surrounding these buildings remains populated with street traders attempting to ply their wares. This is so despite the availability of space within built structures that not only provides trading space but also a sense of legitimacy. However, within these built structures the trader is inevitably dominated by the agent in control of the enclosure (Habraken 1998:56). As found previously, in the Warwick Junction Project (Chapter 4 Case Study 2) traders require space that is flexible enough to accommodate variations in quantities and types of products sold on a daily, weekly and monthly basis, as well as enclosures and selling structures that can be adjusted to accommodate changing needs throughout the day and variations in the trading locations to best display products.

THE POST

Traders do not reject all forms of control. Even at their most basic type, where they do not have any form of enclosing infrastructure of their own, traders position themselves next to a vertical element or post. Claiming this as a selling space for the duration of their selling activity, this element aids in reinforcing their presence in the urban environment.

According to both Habraken (1998:57) and Ching (1996:121), enclosures are not the only forms that claim space. A vertical element claims space, dominating the space surrounding it generating a field of space about itself. When approaching a freestanding vertical element, at a certain point we seem to cross a boundary that defines the realm of space of the post. According to Habraken this is because vertical elements have an anthropomorphic presence that lend them power. These elements act as though one were encountering an individual who occupies space by force of personality and thus a personal domain. Trees, municipal poles, street lights and columns all convey a similar spatial presence (fig 72 & 74).



Figure 72. Trader claiming space between two posts



Figure 73. Trader claiming space in the vicinity of a post



Figure 74. Wall defining space on which it fronts

In summary, vertical elements are details which help to establish stopping zones in public spaces. If spaces appear empty and without trees and columns, users find it very difficult to find places to stop at. Good cities for staying out in have irregular supports in their outdoor spaces (Gehl 1987:155).

CLAIM A SPACE IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

As described previously, external vertical elements allow users to claim space in the public realm. This element provides a sense of security for traders and claims a unit of space as their territory. Traders in the middle of the order, typified by TYPE 3 use a sheltering device to claim a space (fig 76 & 78). The marquee tent demarcates the claimed space with its four vertical supports. A unit of space is established by the four posts, and in some instances an umbrella with a single support. These sheltering devices claim space and do not require a larger spatial context for

definition, but relate freely to it.

The four vertical elements of the widely-used marquee tent define the edges and corners of a 'claimed' space, marking the limits of the unit of space whilst maintaining visual and spatial continuity with the surrounding environment (Ching 1996:122) (fig 79). These four vertical elements have a strong presence in the visual field and are thus instrumental in defining a discrete volume of space and enclosure for the trader within it. At each spatial plane two posts establish a transparent spatial membrane caused by the visual tension between the posts (Ching 1996:120).



Figure 75. Single vertical element defining a spatial zone about itself

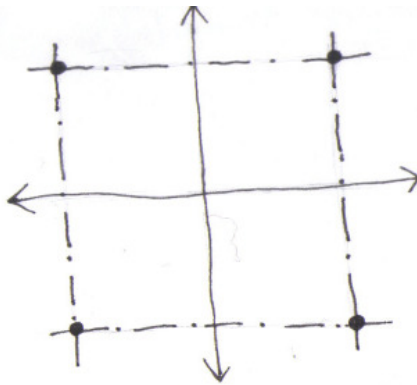


Figure 76. Four vertical linear elements defining the perpendicular edges of a volume of space

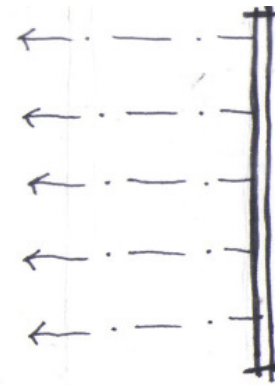


Figure 77. Single vertical plane articulating the space on which it fronts



Figure 78. Typical marquee tent supports define the edges of a volume of space

"A repetitive series of 'post' elements along the perimeter of a unit of space strengthen the definition of the volume of space." Ching 1996:123



Figure 79. Typical marquee tent establishes a private zone within a larger spatial context

PUBLIC/PRIVATE REALMS

The unit of space claimed by the trader in relation to the surrounding environment becomes a private space but can also act as an intermediate zone between 'private' and 'public realms', particularly when the space doubles as a social space as is the case when pedestrians gather to socialise with the trader.

Along the street pavement the street side is treated as the private side in relation to the selling space. This is because the trader is 'anonymous' on that side. The side of pedestrian traffic, where the trader may interact with the passerby, is treated as the public side.

In areas where there is no vertical element available and/or there is a high volume of pedestrian traffic, particularly when the pavement width is narrow, traders put their trading surface closer to the ground plane.

The space between the selling surface, the ground plane and the trader becomes the private space where the trader is able to conceal personal belongings and cash.

In this way, the trader establishes a 'semi-private' space close to the ground, whilst his goods are also safe from thieves who might steal merchandise as they pass by. In this instance, the height of the selling surface is +/- 430mm high or seat height. At this height the selling surface acts as an edge between the trader and potential customer. It does not, however, provide a sense of enclosure for the trader (Ching 1996:131).

In areas where the trader feels less vulnerable, for instance where the trading space is well defined by one or more vertical elements, traders will typically raise the surface height of the selling surface to about +/- 860mm (waist high) (fig 82). Without the vertical post/s defining a unit of space, the trader would be vulnerable to theft in high traffic areas as a private realm would not have been established. The waist high selling surface reinforces a sense of enclosure of the trader's domain as well as between the trader and potential customers, whilst allowing visual continuity with the adjoining space (Ching 1996:131).

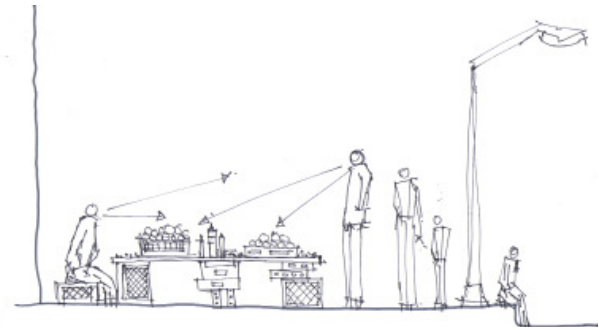


Figure 80. Low selling surface in a high traffic area - surface acts as an edge

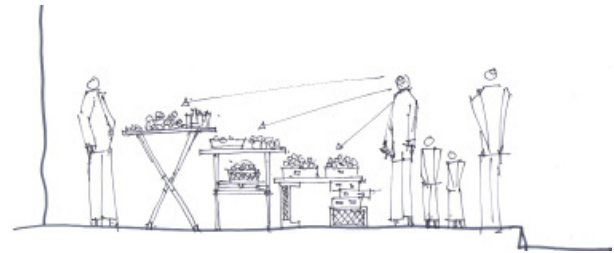


Figure 81. Staggered selling surface

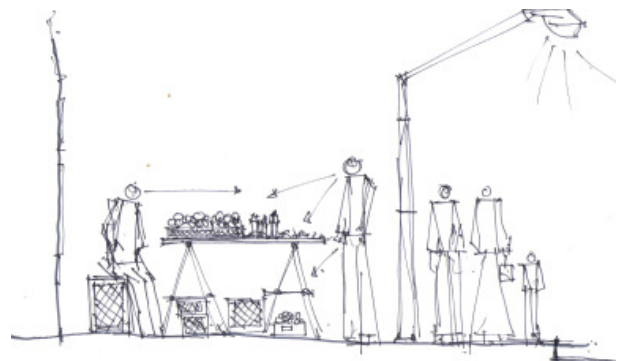


Figure 82. Waist high selling surface in a well articulated context acts as a boundary

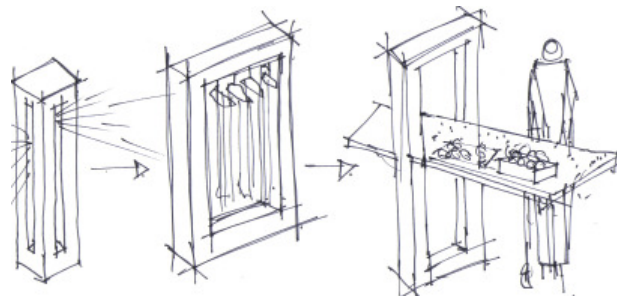


Figure 83. Exploring the possible variations of the post

CONCLUSION

The use of the urban environment by the informal traders relates to the way in which they are able to define their claimed space and make their presence known as well as their ability to establish zones of privacy in relation to potential customers. In essence, the privacy of the informal traders is defined relative to the ground plane and the availability of a post.

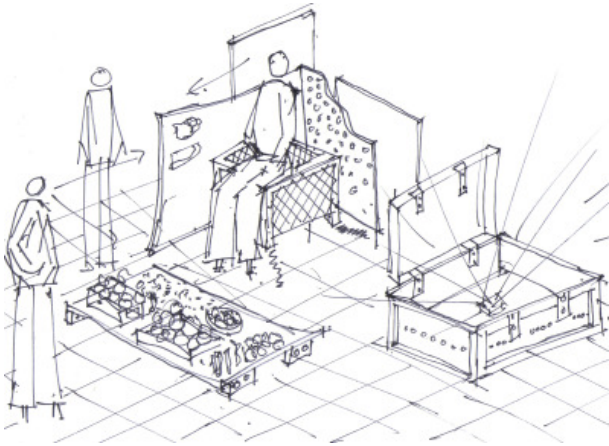


Figure 84. Concept sketch - trader using all belongings to claim and define space



Figure 85. Traders claiming space within the spatial realm of a post



Figure 86. Typical non user friendly bulky storage unit used in the Pretoria Tshwane CBD



Figure 87. Trader using compact storage unit in Newtown Johannesburg