

Mini Dissertation

The role of public space in the informal realm of urban centres How to support informal trade in African Cities

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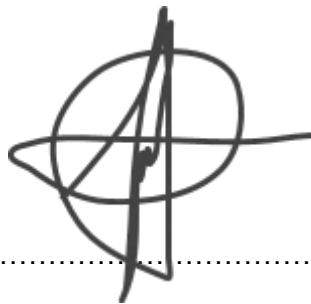
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Declaration Of Originality

I declare that the mini-dissertation, *The role of public space in the informal realm of urban centres*, which has been submitted in fulfilment of part of the requirements for the module of Design Investigation Treatise (DIT 801), at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for any degree at the University of Pretoria or any other tertiary institution.

I declare that I obtained the applicable research ethics approval in order to conduct the research that has been described in this dissertation.

I declare that I have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's ethics code for researchers and have followed the policy guidelines for responsible research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, abstract shape that resembles a sphere or a globe with intersecting lines, positioned above a dotted line for the signature field.

Signature:

Date: **16 Mar 2024**

Abstract

With an emphasis on the connections between informal vendors and formal public spaces, this study examines the critical role that public spaces play in promoting urban expansion within African cities. The study uses a multidisciplinary approach to find creative solutions that use public spaces as catalysts to build sustainable, lively, and egalitarian urban settings. The first part of the study looks at how public spaces have changed historically, emphasising changes towards commercialization as well as the necessity of decolonization and cultural inclusion. After that, it explores the intricacies of urban growth, the significance of religion, the unofficial sector of the economy, and the varied ways in which public spaces are used.

Through involving a broad range of stakeholders, such as vendors, legislators, local communities, and urban planners, the study effectively depicts the intricate dynamics involved in the development, utilisation, and administration of public spaces. The results underscore the necessity of implementing inclusive and contextually sensitive urban planning and design techniques that tackle crucial concerns, including infrastructure, safety, and regulatory assistance. Important discoveries emphasise the need for inclusive, well-kept public areas to sustain street vendors' livelihoods and improve the standard of living in metropolitan areas. For vendors and customers alike, safe and appealing settings require enhanced infrastructure, streamlined regulatory procedures, and aggressive municipal support.

The study emphasises how public spaces may drive urban expansion by promoting social connection, economic opportunity, and cultural expression. By offering practical insights and policy recommendations targeted at converting public spaces into efficient catalysts for sustainable urban growth, the study adds to the larger conversation on urban development. In the end, this study provides a viable route for creating more dynamic, resilient, and equitable urban ecosystems in African cities.

Key words and Ideas

Public space, Informal trade, Urban development, African cities, Socioeconomic inequalities, Decolonization, Cultural inclusion, Urban planning, Infrastructure, Regulatory support, Sustainable economic growth, Social cohesion, Community engagement

Key definitions

Urban economy: the commerce and trade sector of an urban landscape, such as a city

Formal and informal: differentiated by their levels of permanence, support and security in their space

Sustainable development: growth that can be sustained by those impacted for the long term

Abductive reasoning: forming a probable conclusion from known information and observations.

Correlational research: studying relationships between variables without manipulation.

Critical realism paradigm: seeks explanations (causal mechanisms) by focusing on what people can achieve (agency) within their social context.

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1 Introduction and background

Public spaces have long been an important part of urban identity and civic life around the world. They provide places for people to meet, share cultures, and get involved in their communities that go beyond physical borders. As society, the economy, and politics have changed over time, these places, like the busy piazzas of Renaissance Italy and the old agoras of Greece, have changed too. Because modern society is becoming more and more urbanised, it is time to rethink what these places are for and how they work (Toffah, 2024). There is a lot of study behind this project, and its main goal is to explain how public spaces work as important parts of urban growth, with a focus on the role that informal trade plays. It mostly focuses on the "African milieu," which is a lively place where traditional uses of public spaces interact with each other, where informal trade is very important, and where problems that are unique to the area are faced.

As hubs for city life, public places have always been important for bringing people together and helping them form collective identities. But as modernity changes urban environments, these places become more and more at the point where gentrification, commercialization, and privatisation meet, which makes them less democratic and community-based. Because of these changes, we need to go beyond simple historical accounts and rethink and reinterpret how public spaces affect city life by looking more closely at their complicated roles in modern urbanisation, especially when it comes to informal trade (Madanipour, 2020).

The decolonization movement and the need for an African public space design framework are both fundamentally changing the way we think about public places at the same time. This change sees public areas not only as places but also as places where the social fabric of city life is constantly being made and broken (Bodino 2019). Not only are these places necessary for city life, but they also become battlegrounds that show the many disagreements, goals, and problems that city dwellers face. Another important part of this dynamic is informal trade, which keeps public places economically and socially alive. Henri Lefebvre's idea of "the right to the city" shows how important free public spaces are as places where people can meet and make decisions together. It seems that how public spaces are managed, used, and designed can have a big effect on how democratic cities become, which can have an effect on social justice and democracy in cities.

The point is especially important in Africa because of the country's historically high rates of urbanisation and the important role that informal trade plays in cities. Both colonial and post-colonial urban planning left behind a lot of problems that need to be fixed for modern urban development projects to work. Colonialism left behind a lot of control and segregation, which is very different from post-colonial attempts to make public spaces more welcoming and relevant to the many identities and goals of people living in cities. Informal trade is an important part of the economic and social life of African cities, but it is often overlooked in standard urban planning. Millions of people depend on it for a living, and it helps the local economy, so it's an important part of city life.

African cities offer a unique and important lens through which to look at public space discourse. This is especially true when looking at these places through the eyes of those who are most affected by them. The "Here is a Table" paper by Toffa and Malonza (2022) stresses how important it is to understand public spaces in the context of African communities, focusing on how informal trade affects and changes these places.

The study by Toffa and Malonza of how regional governments and groups like the "Centre on African Public Space" work together shows how people are becoming more aware of the benefits that cross-continental collaborations can bring to our understanding of public spaces around the world. The goal of these projects is to challenge and grow the global community's understanding of public space by bringing different African points of view into the global conversation. This will add more complex ideas from Africa. This method, which goes against narrow, essentialist views of African cities on purpose, supports a broader and more inclusive view that takes into account the unique possibilities and problems the continent faces, especially when it comes to illegal trade.

Public places are getting more complicated, especially in cities in Africa. This makes it even more important to plan public spaces in a way that takes into account the situation. These methods should help us learn more about the economic, cultural, and social aspects of public space, with a focus on the informal sector. Informal trade is often a way for many city dwellers to make ends meet. It should be recognised and included in urban planning strategies to make public places more lively and welcoming for everyone. Future research can build on this study's foundations by looking into these areas. It will then be able to give more detailed information and useful tips on how to use public spaces to encourage long-term urban growth while also supporting and legalising the illegal trade that is so important to many city economies.

1.1 Research problem

It becomes evident from the initial readings of Toffa, Madanipour, and Bodino of the roles of African public spaces that public spaces are essential for facilitating the interactions that people have with their urban environment. They represent the struggle between exclusion and inclusion, tradition and modernity, localization and globalisation. Based on contemporary urban concerns and drawing from a vast corpus of academic literature, this research project aims to find new strategies that use public spaces as catalysts for the creation of more dynamic, egalitarian, and sustainable cities, with a focus on those economically vulnerable without them in the informal realm. The purpose of this paper is to further the current debate on the future of the urban economy and how public areas will influence it. This is accomplished by closely analysing the different functions and meanings that public areas have, with a focus on the relationships between the formal and informal domains.

1.2 Research question

How do public spaces and connected elements within the social fabric of our south african cities impact the informal realm of trade within the city.

1.3 Sub questions

What social systems do traders have with each other as well as with the formal realm?

How is the relationship between government entities and street vendors?

What ways are traders supported or limited in achieving future business growth?

What topics are traders and pedestrians concerned about regarding our city public spaces?

1.4 Aims of research

This research project aims to elaborate upon these basic ideas by investigating how public spaces could act as engines for urban development and economic sustainability using a multidisciplinary approach. By means of significant stakeholder involvement, which includes vendors, local

communities, and pedestrians, both formal and informal, this project seeks to document the complex dynamics entailed in the planning, use, and administration of public spaces.

The research will particularly examine how public areas might support informal trading and the relationships between informal vendors and official public areas. The purpose of this study is to look into how these vendors impact urban growth and identify reciprocal advantages between informal activities and formal urban planning to ponder solutions for the urgent problems they have with infrastructure, safety, and regulatory support. This study looks at how public spaces support informal vendors' economic prospects in order to advance our knowledge of how public space initiatives might be used as accelerators for the sustainable urban growth of the informal sector in African cities. This targeted strategy will help to generate practical information to enhance the accessibility and usage of public spaces, therefore advancing social fairness and long-term economic sustainability in metropolitan environments.

1.5 Limitations

Geographical Scope: The study is geographically limited to specific sites within Pretoria (Marabastad, Boom Street; Church Square, Helen Joseph Street; and Sunnyside, Robert Sobukwe Street), which provides variety and also clear boundaries of where to investigate

Temporal Constraints: The research is conducted within a specific timeframe, with data gathering being done over three weeks

Sample Size and Selection: Aiming for a minimum sample size of 15 participants may limit the diversity of perspectives, especially in high-density urban areas where a larger sample might provide a richer understanding.

Data Collection Methods: The reliance on interviews, questionnaires, and observational data may introduce subjective biases, potentially affecting the objectivity and comprehensiveness of the findings.

1.6 Delineation

Focus on Specific Stakeholder Groups: The study specifically targets street vendors, local shop owners, and local residents and pedestrians.

Selection of Sites: The research deliberately focuses on high-density vendor blocks and streets with a mix of residential, corporate, and commercial programmes, delineating the type of public spaces under investigation.

Thematic Focus: The study narrows its thematic focus to the economic, social, and cultural growth that public spaces facilitate, excluding other potential factors like environmental sustainability or technological advancements in public spaces.

1.7 Assumptions

Public Spaces Support Economic Growth: The research assumes that public spaces inherently have the potential to contribute to urban growth in economic, social, and cultural dimensions.

Stakeholders have existing interactions. It assumes that the relationships between formal and informal structures within public spaces are significant and impact urban growth, warranting detailed exploration.

Collaborative design leads to better representation. The research presupposes that collaborative approaches between various stakeholders can effectively address challenges related to informality and urban inequality in public spaces.

Western models of public space are usable: When the Urban Resilience and Sustainability Indicators are used and compared to Western models, it is assumed that these models can be used in Africa with some changes.

Informal trade is facilitated by public space. An assumption is made that public spaces play a crucial role in supporting informal trade and that this support is critical for urban economic vitality.

2 Literature review

2.1 General Overview of African Public Spaces

This literature study provides a comprehensive examination of public spaces in African cities. Madanipour (2020), Waine (2012), and Bodino (2019) offer a comprehensive perspective to analyse the development, difficulties, and possibility for change in public spaces, specifically in the context of fast urbanisation and socioeconomic inequalities in African cities.

In his 2020 analysis titled "A Critique of Public Space," Ali Madanipour explores the complex transformation of public spaces, which have shifted from being community centres of social interaction to becoming heavily influenced by commercialization and gentrification. Madanipour thoroughly describes how this change "poses a threat to the fundamental nature of public spaces as areas intended to represent democratic principles and inclusiveness". Madanipour's analysis reveals that the expansion of privatisation and market-oriented initiatives not only challenges the public nature of these spaces but also raises substantial issues over their accessibility to the general public. The author's study includes an examination of the consequences of these changes for fairness in society. They argue that the transformation of public places into commercial areas worsens socio-economic inequalities by prioritising financial gain above community involvement and social connections.

In "De-Westernising Urban Theory," Waine (2012) emphasises the importance of developing contextualised understandings of urban areas and argues for moving beyond Western-centric forms of urban theory. Waine's criticism is particularly relevant to African urban environments because they have distinctive socioeconomic and cultural characteristics that are very different from those present in Western contexts. Waine argues for a non-Western approach, highlighting the need to include a variety of urban experiences in discussions about public spaces. This will help ensure that urban planning and design strategies take into account and respond to the specific conditions of cities in the Global South.

Bodino (2019) presents a persuasive case for reconsidering the function of public spaces in "Reframing the Role of Public Open Space as a Tool for Urban Restructuring." The author examines how public open spaces might be utilised to address socio-economic inequalities and promote urban resilience. Bodino's approach is especially enlightening when examining African cities, where spatial disparities are clearly apparent. Bodino emphasises the importance of public spaces in urban restructuring and shows their ability to drive beneficial changes in cities. Bodino argues for the implementation of strategic planning and design interventions that give priority to public spaces as platforms for tackling urban difficulties, improving community well-being, and ensuring fair access to urban utilities. In-depth case studies and theoretical analysis support this.

The combination of ideas from Madanipour, Waine, and Bodino offers a convincing account of the current difficulties and possibilities that characterise public spaces in African urban settings. The literature emphasises the importance of reassessing the commercialization trends that weaken the democratic nature of public places. Instead, it advocates for ways that embrace the variety of urban experiences around the continent. The demand to de-Westernise urban theory and the focus on utilising public spaces for urban restructuring converge in emphasising the pivotal role these spaces have in constructing fair, resilient, and lively urban environments.

This not only enhances our comprehension of the intricate dynamics involved in the creation and administration of public places but also lays the groundwork for additional investigation into inventive approaches that can facilitate informal urban expansion. By thoroughly examining the subtle distinctions in each author's contributions, we acquire a more comprehensive viewpoint on the methods for developing public spaces that are both inclusive and responsive to the varied requirements of Africa's urban inhabitants.

2.2 Contemporary Drivers and Challenges

Building on the earlier discussion, the present issues and challenges are the main topic of this part of the literature review. A comprehensive analysis was offered by Förster & Ammann (2018), Forster (2022), Brandt (2002), and Landman (2015), who all offer significant perspectives on the complex nature of urban development, the social and religious facets of urban life, the vibrant informal economy, and the varied uses of public open areas in African cities.

African Cities and the Development Conundrum (Förster, T., & Ammann, C., 2018) examines the complex terrain of urban growth in African settings. They provide a thorough account of the cities impacted by unplanned growth characterised by informality, as well as the long-lasting effects of colonial urban design. Their thorough investigation goes beyond just pointing out problems; it honestly explores the inventiveness that is arising in African urbanism. They propose that the seemingly intractable problem of African urban development—which is typified by rapid urbanisation without commensurate formal economic growth—may be viewed as a chance for innovative urban design and governance solutions. This reconsideration requires a basic shift in perspective that acknowledges informality as an essential element of the solution to building inclusive and sustainable urban futures rather than as a problem to be eradicated.

In his *African Public Theology?* (2022), Forster examines the meeting point of urbanisation and theology, providing a new angle on the debate around public spaces. According to Forster (2022), combining theological reflections with the actual experiences of urban dwellers can lead to a more profound understanding of the socio-religious elements that underpin communal life in African cities. This point of view is essential to the planning and administration of public spaces that not only meet functional requirements but also profoundly resonate with the spiritual and cultural beliefs of the people who use them. By actively involving themselves with the populations they serve, Forster's work makes a strong case for urban planners and designers to ensure that public spaces become places of spiritual, cultural, and social enrichment.

Brandt (2002) provides a thorough analysis of how the informal economy operates in public spaces, paying particular attention to the Marabastad traders. *Marabastad Informal Traders: A Struggle for Survival's* study reveals the complex network of challenges and flexibility that underlie informal trading. The story of Brandt emphasises how important the unorganised sector is to urban livelihoods and how dynamically it interacts with public spaces. The results of the researcher back up the notion of embracing a fresh viewpoint on urban design that recognises and takes into account the significance of unofficial economies in public spaces. With this strategy, it should be possible to guarantee that these places not only support but also enhance the lives of people who depend on them.

Tshwane's public open space utilisation study by Landman provides a thorough examination of how these spaces meet different community needs, significantly enhancing the city's resilience to adversity. *The nature and use of public open space in the City of Tshwane* (Landman, 2015) emphasises the requirement of inclusive planning and management strategies that, based on

thorough research, faithfully reflect the goals and daily reality of the community. This study emphasises the need to design flexible and welcoming public spaces that can strengthen urban resilience, enhance environmental sustainability, and foster social cohesiveness.

This study of the present problems affecting public places in Africa highlights how urgently creative, inclusive, and contextually aware urban planning and design techniques are needed. Together, Ammann, Forster, Brandt, and Landman offer a vision for African cities in which public areas are redesigned as venues for economic growth, cultural expression, sustainable development, and social welfare. Every author adds to our understanding of the opportunities and difficulties of African urban public spaces by bringing their unique viewpoint.

2.3 Interventions and Actions for Informal Urban Growth

Building on a fundamental understanding of African public spaces and their multifaceted intricacy, we go on to carefully analyse the related initiatives and policies meant to support informal urban growth across the continent. Contributions by Landman & Nel (2021), Landman and Makakavhule (2021), Peres (n.d.), Pan-African public space concepts by Roji (2020), and innovative urban space design methods by Blignaut (2020) all improve this conversation. Each work contributes a unique perspective on how African cities should address their challenges, and together they tell a tale that encourages diversity, inclusion, and adaptability.

The debate around public areas in African cities is complex and characterised by several interactions between informality, quick urbanisation, and the long-lasting effects of colonial spatial planning. The research that Landman and Nel (2021) conducted on the City of Tshwane offers a compelling case study of how to use public spaces to improve urban resilience. Their study shows that proactive public area planning and proactive activities can significantly increase marginalised people's access to economically beneficial sites, hence strengthening urban ecosystems. These fixes, which centre on improving vendors' use of public areas, demonstrate how well-considered urban design may counteract the detrimental effects of unplanned urban growth and spatial inequalities.

The paper explores in more detail how public areas can support informal economies and how important they are to social and economic development. This story relates to Brandt's 2002 thorough analysis of Marabastad's informal traders and emphasises how important public spaces are to maintaining urban livelihoods and boosting the informal sector. These innovations not only make city life more lively but also highlight the need for public areas to create economic chances for impoverished urban dwellers.

Whereas Blignaut (2020) suggests innovative approaches to urban space design, Roji (2020) imagines pan-African public spaces. Both stress the need for accessibility, variety, and community involvement. Roji encourages the development of public areas that respect and welcome the many African cultures, therefore fostering understanding and harmony among people. With his case studies and suggestions for reinventing public places, Blignaut promotes community involvement and the informal sector, hinting at a day when urban areas are designed to meet the demands and preferences of every urban dweller.

This cogent discussion represents a professional and academic vision for resilient, inclusive, and culturally diverse African urban public spaces. By addressing problems associated with informal urban growth, integrating a variety of cultural practices, and encouraging ecological resilience,

these interventions and actions provide chances for the creation of public spaces that not only meet the immediate needs of African urban populations but also contribute to long-lasting and dynamic urban futures. The combined knowledge from these books highlights the need for innovative and flexible urban planning and design approaches that guarantee public spaces will always be essential to the advancement of African cities and prioritise the welfare and participation of all city inhabitants.

2.4 Collaborative Approaches

Recent studies and projects have revealed strategies to improve public spaces in African cities and promote equitable urban development. These strategies include innovative partnerships, tactical urbanism, and deliberate interventions. The Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (2021) highlights the significant impact that collaborative endeavours including communities, civil society, and governments can have in creating inclusive and conveniently reachable public places. This collaborative approach demonstrates how diverse stakeholders may work together to build urban spaces that meet the needs of all residents, thereby tackling issues of urban inequality and informality.

Kamana et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the obstacles and strategic measures necessary for attaining sustainable urban development in African cities. Their work highlights the need for utilising public areas as platforms for fostering informal growth, demonstrating efficient approaches, and identifying regions that are ready for further investigation. This comprehensive analysis highlights the significance of comprehensive policies that include all aspects of urban development and incorporate public spaces into broader urban planning and economic development frameworks.

Integration and Spatial Transformation of South African Cities (McKenna, 2019) examines the process of integrating and altering public spaces in South Africa, with a particular emphasis on legislation that promotes inclusivity and equity in spatial matters. McKenna's research emphasises the crucial role of public spaces in promoting fair urban settings by analysing techniques that facilitate unauthorised urban expansion. In order to encourage social and economic inclusion, this study suggests that policy-driven approaches should inform the administration and design of public spaces. Their focus on inclusivity, adaptability, and strategic interventions contributes to the development of vibrant and fair urban settings that promote organic expansion and community engagement.

2.5 Conclusion

The literature study examines the historical development, current difficulties, creative partnerships, and deliberate actions related to public spaces in African urban environments, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of their complex characteristics. According to Madanipour (2020), Waine (2012), and Bodino (2019), the initial analysis examines the fundamental understanding of the transformation of public spaces with a focus on the growing commercialization tendency and the necessity for decolonization and cultural inclusivity. According to Förster & Ammann (2018), Forster (2022), Brandt (2002), and Landman (2015), the book examines the complexities of urban growth, the influence of religion, the informal economy, and the use of public spaces.

Expanding on these discoveries, the research delved deeper into cooperative frameworks, tactical urbanism strategies, and intentional initiatives aimed at enhancing the sustainability, accessibility, and inclusivity of urban public places. Research by McKenna (2019), Kamana et al. (2024), and the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (2021) served as a foundation for this. This collection of works emphasises the pressing need for innovative, comprehensive, and culturally sensitive urban planning and design strategies to tackle the challenges and opportunities arising from informal urban growth, socio-religious dynamics, and the changing requirements for public spaces in African cities.

Ultimately, the literature emphasises the significance of public spaces in facilitating the intricate interactions among individuals and the urban setting, with particular emphasis on their capacity to facilitate informal commerce and exchanges between informal vendors and official public locations. These spaces must be constructed and preserved through a multidisciplinary strategy that prioritises efficacy and promotes creativity, inclusivity, and teamwork. Public spaces provide significant sociocultural value and serve as catalysts for economic development, urban adaptability, and community engagement. The objective of this study is to explore methods for enhancing the capacity of public spaces to promote social justice, economic prosperity, and urban development. The ultimate goal is to transform these areas into effective catalysts for sustainable urban growth. One promising approach to establishing equitable, robust, and vibrant urban environments is by redefining public spaces in African cities.

3 Research methodology

This research aims to thoroughly investigate the diverse aspects of African public spaces, using the valuable insights gathered from the literature. The study actively involves a wide range of stakeholders to understand and analyse the complex and ever-changing relationships between formal and informal structures in urban public spaces. This encompasses street vendors, who contribute to the liveliness of our streets; local shop owners, who establish a stable economic foundation in these communal areas; residents, whose daily routines are intertwined with these public spaces; community organisations, which advocate for the collective well-being; and government city development departments, which establish the policies and infrastructure that shape urban life. This study aims to collect a wide range of viewpoints and construct a detailed account of how public spaces are used and how they influence urban development in African cities, using in-depth interviews.

These thoughtfully selected discussions are intended not only for gathering information but also as an active process to create a comprehensive and diverse understanding of the public space ecosystem. This study aims to analyse the complex interaction between formal and informal forces in the city. It focuses on how planned, built, and regulated aspects of the city interact with the spontaneous, adaptive, and grassroots elements that bring vibrancy to public spaces. This holds the potential to uncover the intricate and complex story of how people live together, clash, and work together in public areas in African cities.

The objective is to create a lively mosaic that accurately represents the energy, difficulties, and possibilities found within these shared spaces. By comprehending the strategies employed by street vendors to navigate through regulatory frameworks, the perspectives and contributions of local shop owners towards the liveliness of public spaces, the ways in which residents utilise and adapt these areas as extensions of their homes, the efforts of community organisations to protect and improve public life, and the planning and response of government bodies to the changing needs of urban populations,. The project aims to enhance our understanding of public spaces in African cities by examining specific interactions and transactions. This deep exploration seeks to provide insights into how public spaces might drive urban growth, foster social cohesion, and facilitate cultural expression.

3.1 Research Design Detailing

The research identified particular areas for further investigation that exhibit high vendor concentrations and a mix of residential, corporate, and commercial regions (in the forms of malls due to their high density of potential customers within a centralised space). After doing careful site mapping, three primary places were identified as the main areas of focus for the study: Boom Street in Marabastad, Helen Joseph Street's Church Square, and Robert Sobukwe Street in Sunnyside. The selection of these places was based on their dynamic combination of functions and their importance as centres of public activity and business in the city of Pretoria.



Figure 1: City suburbs of Marabastad (Green), City centre (Red) and Sunnyside (Yellow), with the focus areas of the research in each suburb of Boom street (A), Church street (B), and Robert Sobukwe street (C)

This study utilises abductive reasoning in a correlational research methodology to examine the complex realities of metropolitan public areas, employing a critical realism paradigm. Collecting observational data through methods such as photography and note-taking, done individually over three months of site visits, along with conducting interactive interviews with stakeholders, done as a group with myself and Marks Gwangwa, is crucial for understanding the intricate relationships between the city, its residents, and the business ecosystem. In order to maintain uniformity in the collection of data from various stakeholder groups, questionnaires, accessible in Appendix A, were carefully crafted with a focus on ensuring anonymity and safeguarding personal information, therefore upholding ethical norms in the engagement process.

The approach of conducting direct interviews was selected to ensure widespread participation. By selecting participants at random from public groups, representing both sides of the two focus themes—the formal and the informal—as shop owners and street vendors, as well as the buyer and seller—as the vendor, the pedestrian, and the local resident—we were able to ensure a variety of viewpoints. The research aimed to get a minimum sample size of 15 participants from various stakeholder categories in order to gather a wide range of perspectives on the utilisation and importance of public spaces.

3.2 Data Analysis Methods

Data Collection

Qualitative Methods:

Interviews and Focus Groups: Conduct semi-structured interviews and focus groups with street vendors, community members, municipal officials, and other stakeholders. These interactions will provide in-depth insights into the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of street vendors and community participants.

Observational Studies: Conduct site visits and observational studies to assess the physical conditions of the public spaces, including cleanliness, maintenance, safety measures, and overall usability.

Quantitative Methods:

Surveys: Distribute surveys to a larger population of street vendors and community members to gather quantitative data on their experiences and perceptions. Surveys will cover topics such as safety, infrastructure, regulatory support, and satisfaction with public spaces.

Spatial Analysis: Use GIS tools to map the public spaces, analysing factors such as proximity to key transport nodes, foot traffic patterns, and accessibility.

Instruments:

Interview Guides: Develop detailed interview guides tailored to each participant group, ensuring that key themes such as safety, infrastructure, regulatory support, and community engagement are covered.

Observation Checklists: Create observation checklists to systematically record the physical conditions and usage patterns of the public spaces.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis:

Thematic Analysis: Use thematic analysis to identify and analyse patterns and themes from the interview with the focus group. This will involve coding the data and categorising it into key themes such as safety concerns, infrastructure needs, and regulatory challenges.

Narrative Analysis: Apply narrative analysis to understand the experiences and stories shared by the participants, providing context and depth to the findings.

Quantitative Analysis:

Spatial Analysis: Conduct spatial analysis using GIS tools to visualise the distribution and accessibility of public spaces, identifying areas of focus to the informal trade sector.

Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent: Ensure that all participants provide informed consent before taking part in the study. Participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality: Maintain the confidentiality of all participant data. Personal identifiers will be removed, and data will be stored securely to protect participants' privacy.

Ethical Approval:

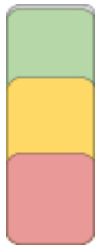
Obtain ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board (IRB) or ethics committee prior to commencing the study.

Evaluation Frameworks

To effectively assess public spaces for the use of street vendors in South African cities, an evaluative tool is necessary. This tool incorporates multiple dimensions to capture the complexity and dynamics of street vending and its interaction with public spaces. The following evaluative framework has been developed, combining key aspects from the literature to identify what on site is important to ensure a thorough and actionable assessment.

1. Safety and Security

Assessment Criteria: Evaluate the level of safety and security in the vending area.



High Success: The area has adequate lighting, regular police patrols, CCTV surveillance, and a low incidence of crime.

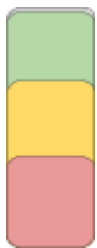
Moderate Success: The area has basic lighting, occasional police patrols, and a moderate incidence of crime.

Low Success: The area is poorly lit, has an infrequent police presence, and has a high incidence of crime.

Data collection methods include surveys with vendors and customers, crime statistics analysis, and observation.

2. Regulatory Support and Permits

Assessment Criteria: Evaluate the ease of obtaining permits and the level of regulatory support.



High Success: a clear and streamlined process for obtaining permits, a supportive regulatory framework, and regular consultation with vendors.

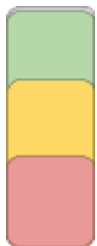
Moderate Success: The process for obtaining permits exists but is cumbersome, with some regulatory support and occasional consultation with vendors.

Low Success: Difficult and unclear process for obtaining permits; lack of regulatory support; no consultation with vendors.

Data collection methods include interviews with vendors, analysis of municipal by-laws and regulatory frameworks, and observation of permit issuance processes.

3. Infrastructure and Resources

Assessment Criteria: Evaluate the availability and quality of infrastructure and resources provided for street vendors.



High Success: well-maintained infrastructure (e.g., designated stalls, water access, sanitation facilities), regular maintenance, adequate waste management.

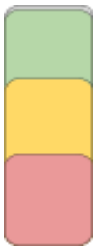
Moderate Success: Basic infrastructure is available, but with irregular maintenance and some waste management issues.

Low Success: Poor or no infrastructure, inadequate maintenance, significant waste management problems.

Data collection methods include surveys with vendors, field observations, and municipal infrastructure reports.

4. Community and Social Interaction

Assess the level of social interaction and community support provided by the vending area.



High Success: The area fosters strong community bonds, high social interaction among vendors and customers, and regular community events.

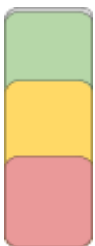
Moderate Success: The area facilitates some community interaction, occasional events, and moderate social bonds.

Low Success: The area lacks community interaction, no events, and weak social bonds among vendors and customers.

Data Collection Methods: include interviews with vendors and customers, observation of social dynamics, and analysis of community engagement records.

5. Economic Viability

Assessment Criteria: Evaluate the economic viability of the vending area for vendors.



High Success: High customer footfall, consistent sales, and diverse product offerings, vendors can sustain and grow their businesses.

Moderate Success: Moderate customer footfall, variable sales, and some product diversity, vendors can sustain but with limited growth.

Low Success: Low customer footfall, poor sales, limited product offerings—vendors struggle to sustain their businesses.

Data Collection Methods: include surveys with vendors, sales data analysis, and observation of customer traffic patterns.

3.3 Methodology Goals

This mixed methodology integration is expected to provide valuable insights into how public spaces in African cities might be created, managed, and modified to maximise their economic, social, and cultural impact. This research aims to analyse the challenges and opportunities of informal urban growth in order to identify successful strategies and gaps in current approaches to designing and managing public spaces for vendors. The study will employ methods such as observational data gathering, participatory interviews, and a targeted questionnaire campaign to comprehensively understand how stakeholders engage within public areas and influence urban environments.

The objective is to create a lively mosaic that accurately represents the energy, difficulties, and possibilities found inside these shared spaces. Understanding the ways that street vendors get around rules and regulations, the views and contributions of local shop owners to making public spaces lively, how people use and change these areas as if they were extensions of their homes, the work of community groups to protect and improve public life, and how government bodies plan for and respond to the changing needs of urban populations are all important. This study aims to grow our understanding of public spaces in African cities by examining their many interactions and transactions. By doing so, it seeks to provide valuable insights into how these spaces might stimulate urban growth, foster social cohesion, and facilitate cultural expression.

4 Data collection

To begin, we will investigate each location in order to identify any correlations that may exist between the activities and location preferences of informal traders in the city. After this, the next step is to identify recurring patterns that were discovered through the interviews and visiting the sites. Following the completion of the interviews, we will finally evaluate the sites by applying the framework that was presented in Section 3.2.

4.1 Mapping

Initial work was done to identify relationships present between informal trader locations and formal trade, looking at proximity and density. This led to drives through the city, identifying the locations of street vendors, noting the streets they were on, and, in cases of high density of street vendors, identifying said street as a high density area. This initial mapping was done to confirm the previously introduced site's importance through direct observation of the city streets

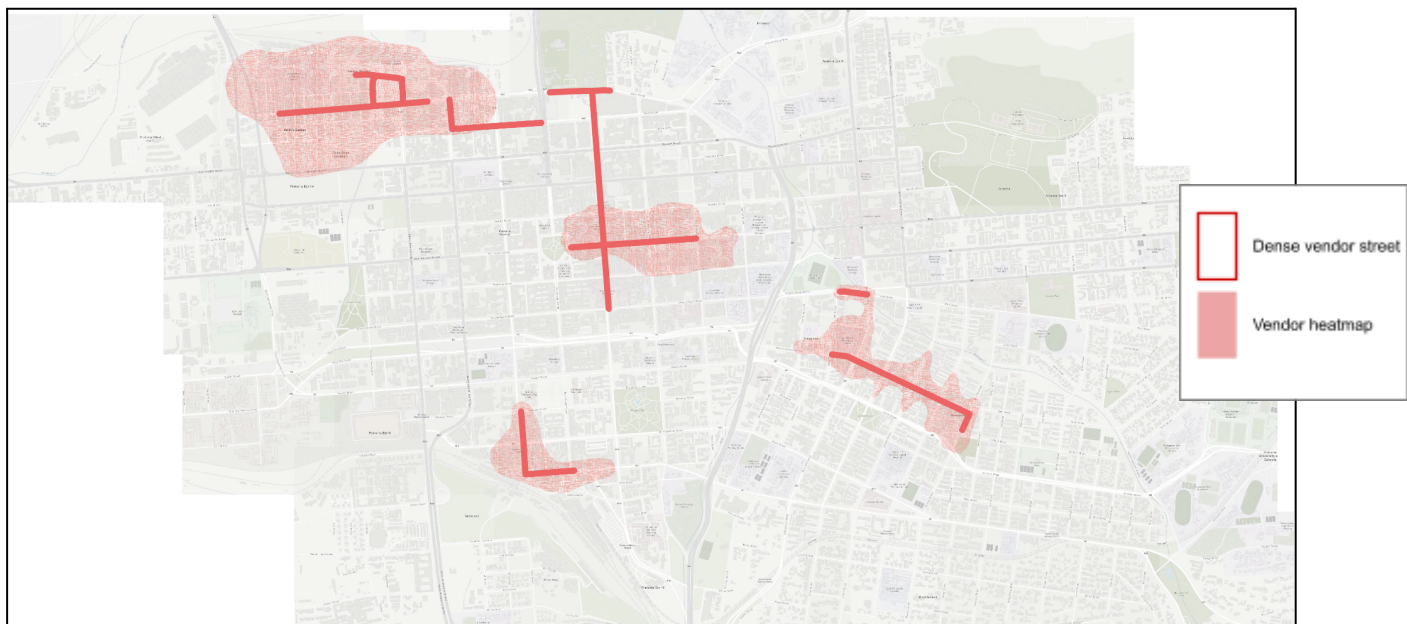


Figure 2: Vendor hotspot mapping

The results of these observations allowed for the identification of distinct locations with a high vendor density. The vendor hotspots of Marabastad are comprised of the following: the hub of street trade that can be found on Boom Street in Marabastad, with Shubert to Kgosi Mampuru streets connected to its right, leading to Bloed Street, which is a slightly detached, dense street. These are listed from top left to bottom right. Following this, you will arrive at Boom Street, which is a short street that is situated close to the Pretoria Zoo and is designated as a vendor selling space and storage area. Together with the perpendicular trading street hub that is located along Church Street and Helen Joseph Street in Church Square, this connects to the longest street of trade that has been observed down Thabo Sehume Street. Along Bosman Street, which is connected to the nearby train stations, there is a hub that is located to the bottom left. On the far right, we have the final large hub, which is located along Robert Sobukwe Street in Sunnyside.

The role of public space in the informal realm of urban centres

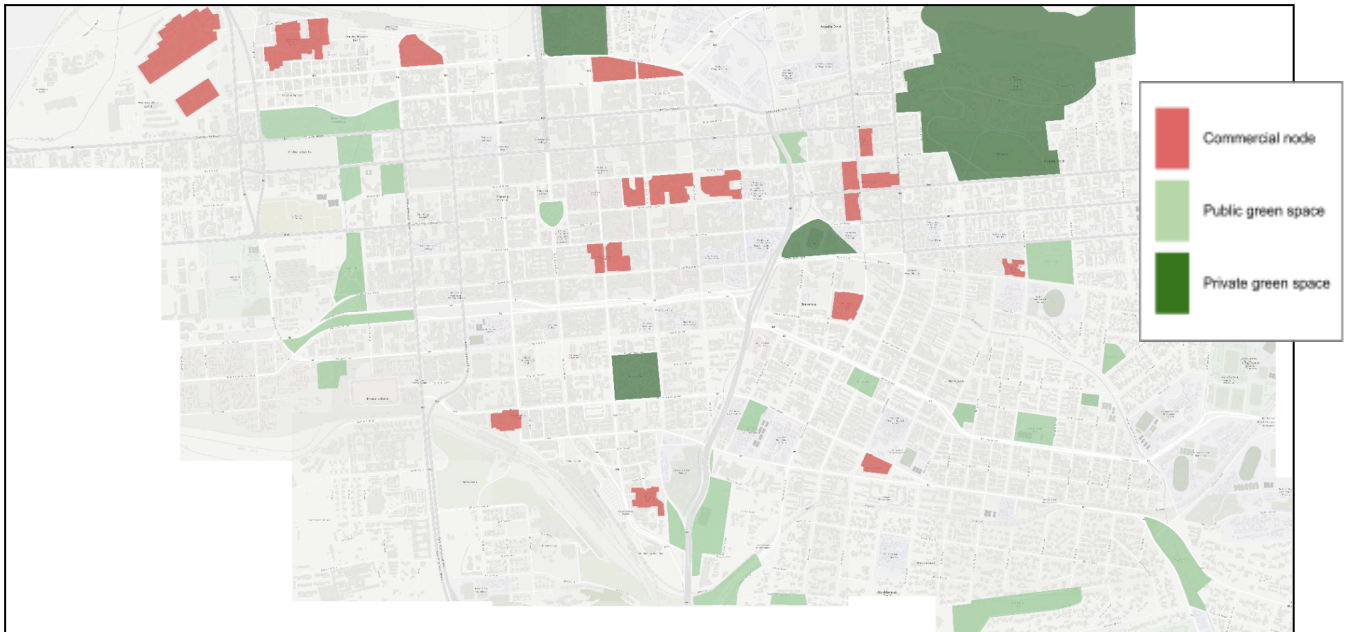


Figure 3: Commercial nodes (in the form of malls/markets) and public spaces mapping

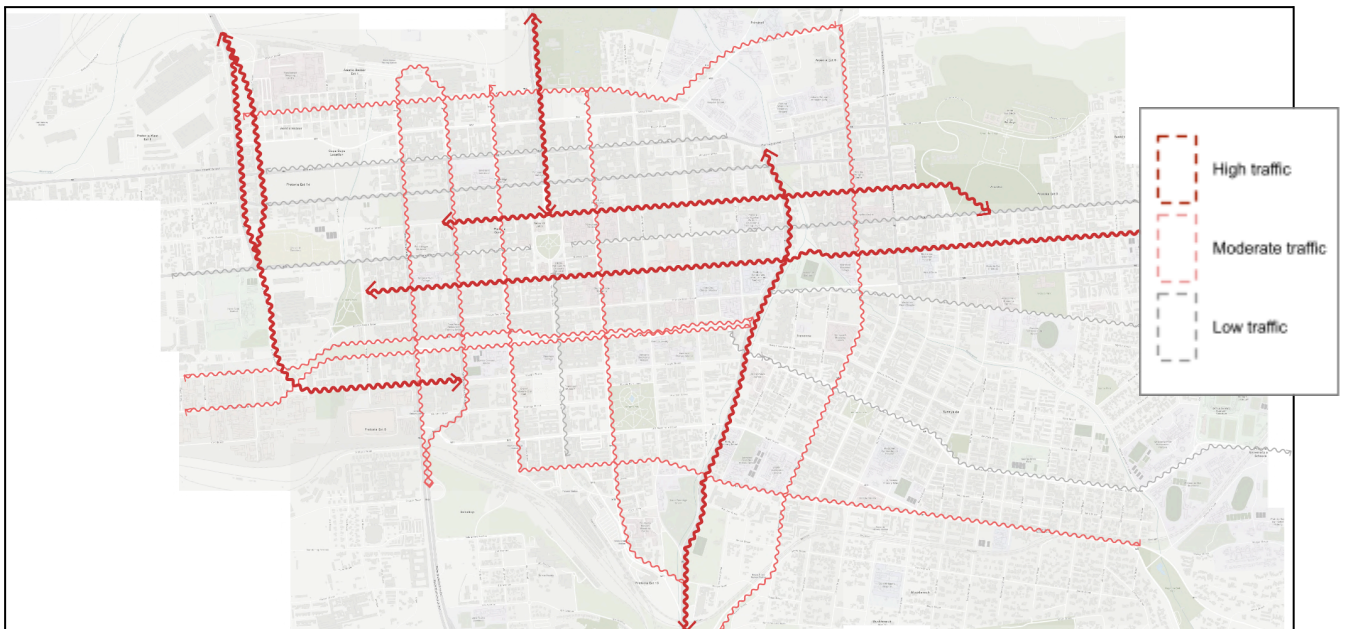


Figure 4: Mapping of high (red), mid (pink) and low (grey) traffic streets

Adjacent to this vendor heatmap, it was necessary to determine the reason for the high concentrations of trade that were present in these areas. In order to accomplish this, a variety of factors, including pedestrian and car traffic, high density commercial hubs in the form of malls or markets, and public green spaces, were mapped in order to establish a correlation (Figures 3, 4, and 5). Here, we can see that at each and every trader hub, there is either a commercial hub, a transportation node (train stations, such as those found in Marabastad and the south city centre, as well as taxi ranks that are located throughout the city), or a large public space adjacent to it. The trader density extends beyond these nodes along streets that have a high volume of pedestrian traffic.



Figure 5: Mapping of transport nodes

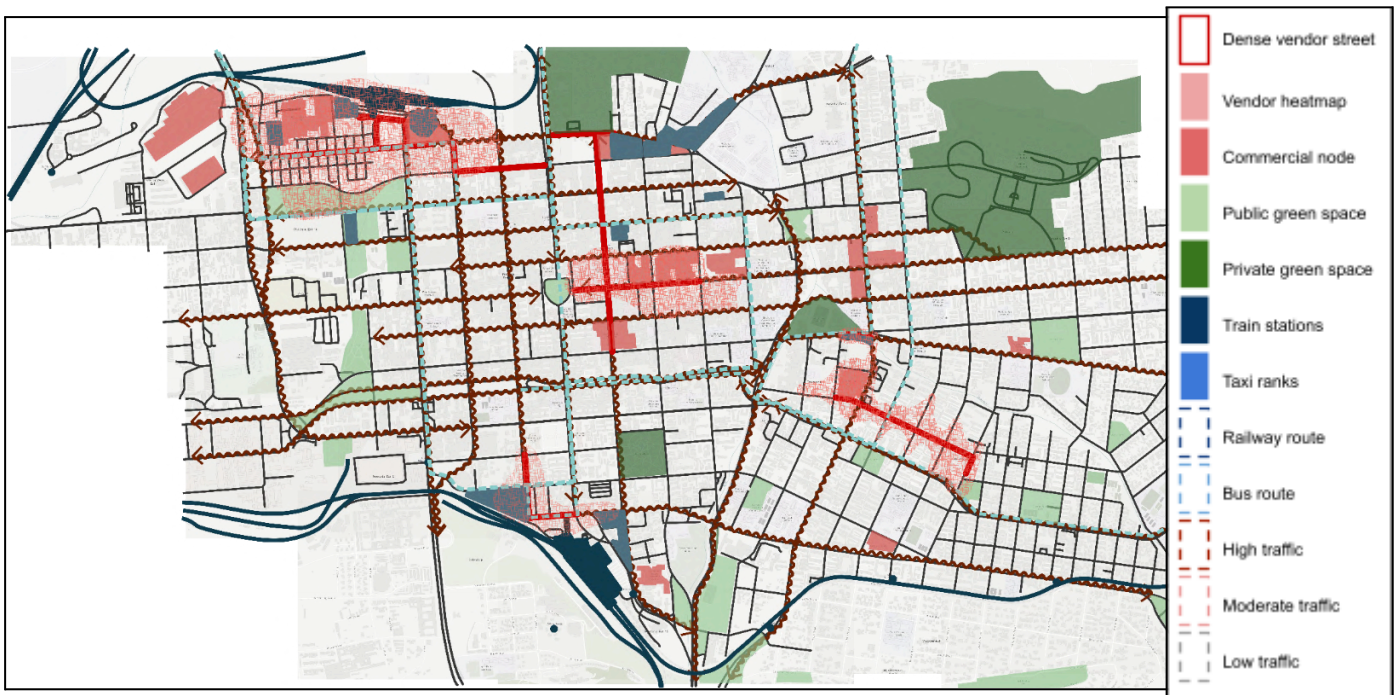


Figure 6: Compiled mapping data

There is a clear relationship that can be seen between the locations of large commercial nodes, transportation hubs, and the public space locations in which informal traders choose to locate themselves. This can be verified by superimposing all of the previous maps onto one another in Figure 6. This suggests that the public spaces that are located in close proximity to these established commercial spaces have an impact on the activities that take place in the informal realm. This demonstrates that there are distinct aspects of the city that provide support for the activities that take place in the informal realm. It would appear that street vendors are able to establish themselves in the formal commerce magnets that are malls, transportation hubs, and regions with dense traffic. This sheds light on the ways in which the informal economy is dependent on the city. From this, moving closer, with site observations in these areas of note, will make the image of the roles of the city and its public spaces in the informal trade more clear.

4.2 Site observations

The site visits demonstrated that there is a city within the city, consisting of features that are interconnected within the informal realms of the locations that we encountered. Direct observations and correlative mapping in Section 4.1 showed how street vendors established themselves in areas with heavy foot traffic, which are typically situated in close proximity to more conventional establishments or economic nodes. Additionally, they positioned themselves in close proximity to transit hubs, such as taxi ranks, as seen in Sunnyside and Marabastad, and bus stations, as seen in Church Square and Marabastad. With the mapping data in place, site visits were made to the three sites of investigation: Boom Street, Church Street/Helen Joseph Street, and Robert Sobukwe Street.



Figure 7: Marabastad street corner

At the majority of informal sale locations, the site conditions are in a state of disorder. The sidewalks and street sides are broken, and the walkways are fractured and elevated, as visible in figure 9. As the distance between the merchants' locations and the formal sale places and transport networks increases, this phenomenon becomes more widespread. The site conditions, on the other hand, are significantly better as we move closer to these formal areas, and the majority of vendors set up shop as close to these spaces as they can, as can be seen a lot in Marabastad, life in figure 7. In addition to this, nighttime lighting is rare, if not non-existent, further away from formal places. This results in informal trade taking place at night, with the participants relying on the lighting from formal spaces at the end of their shifts, as visible in figure 8, right before late night.



Figure 8: Show the formal shop infrastructure lights up street vendors.



Figure 9: Robert Sobukwe sidewalk condition



Figure 10: Marabastad street corner

A large number of refuge areas, such as benches and shaded seatings, are situated in areas that are not next to the spaces designated for street vendors. These areas are also physically separated from the vendors by means of fences, level changes, or guards that are placed in the formal spaces to prevent street vendors from entering these spaces, as visible in figure 11. It is possible to observe and experience a significant sense of separation between the formal and the informal as a result of the informal spaces that are located on the periphery of the public space. Additionally, the walkway itself contributes to this separation by positioning the formal and informal elements on opposite sides of the pedestrian, like in figure 12. This creates the impression that the interaction between the formal and informal elements and the pedestrians is more of a "formal or informal" connection than a "formal AND informal" connection. In Marabastad there is a bit of a change, with the line between the formal and informal much more blurred, like in figures 10 and 13, where visual access to the formal is impossible without also acknowledging the presence of the informal, homogenising them much more than in Sunnyside and Church Square



Figure 11: Fencing separates the street near the vendor spaces and the private formal shops



Figure 12: Sunnyside sidewalk condition



Figure 13: Marabastad street corner

In addition to this, even within the informal setting, there appears to be a degree of differentiation between those selling on the floors and those who are positioned on vendor booths (Figures 14 and 15). Through interviews with the vendors, it has become clear that regulations, not the vendors themselves, are to blame for this visual segregation. Those vendors who have permits are established in the stalls, while those who do not have permits are relegated to the floor. This segregation comes with its own set of problems that are highlighted later in the research. These hints pointed to the existence of inner systems within the informal realms that should be investigated further through the use of questionnaires.



Figure 14: Sunnyside vendor stalls

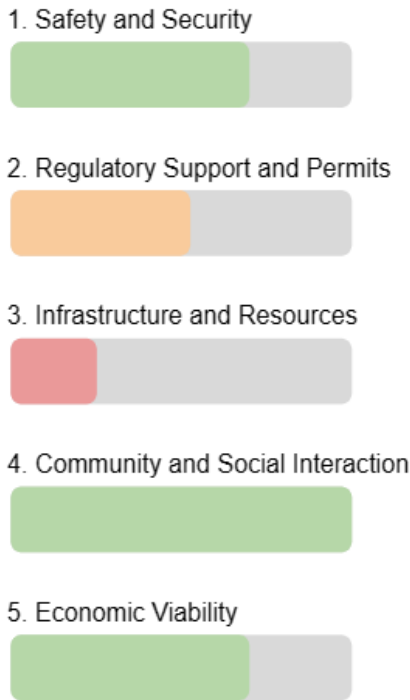


Galaxy S22
29 February 2024 4:55 pm

Figure 15: Church square vendor stalls

4.3 Interviews

Sunnyside

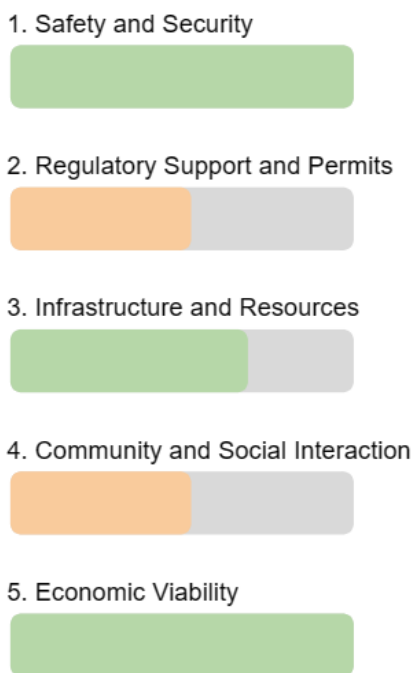


Graph 1: Sunnyside interview analysis

The assessment of Sunnyside's public space using the criteria introduced under 3.2 and its results, found in Appendix D and illustrated in this bar graph, reveals a varied performance across five crucial criteria. The areas of safety and security, as well as community and social engagement, were highly rated, suggesting that they are well-regarded for ensuring a secure atmosphere and promoting strong community relationships. The space's economic viability was also rated highly, indicating that it successfully sustains vendor enterprises and consistently attracts customers.

Nevertheless, the evaluation indicates a modest level of satisfaction with regulatory support and permissions, suggesting that although certain procedures are established, they may be burdensome or not entirely accommodating to vendors' requirements. The infrastructure and resources category has been highlighted as the most vital area, as it obtained a low ranking. This indicates major shortcomings in the availability and quality of key facilities, such as dedicated stalls, water access, and sanitation. These observations emphasise the necessity for focused interventions to strengthen regulatory frameworks and boost infrastructure in order to guarantee the long-term viability and expansion of street vending activities in Sunnyside.

Church Square



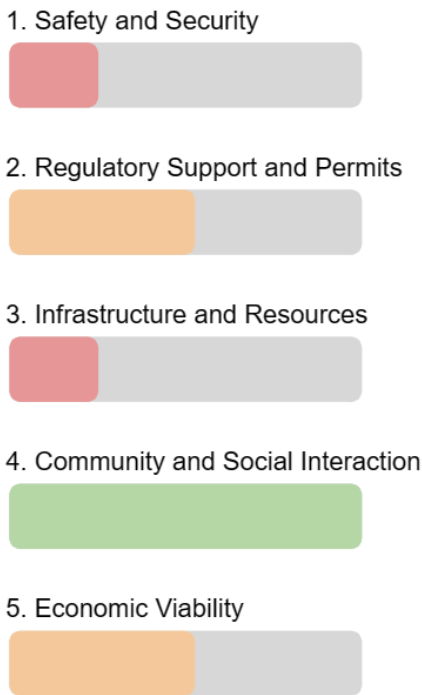
Graph 2: Church square interview analysis

The assessment of Church Square's public space, as depicted in the graphic, indicates a varied performance across five crucial characteristics. The highest rating was given to safety and security, indicating that the atmosphere for merchants and visitors is well-maintained and secure. The high score in economic viability indicates strong support for commercial activity and a stable consumer base.

Regulatory support and permits, as well as community and social engagement, were found to have a moderate level of satisfaction. This indicates the need for optimising permission procedures and improving community involvement. The infrastructure and resources received a rating at the intermediate level, indicating the requirement for additional improvement and upkeep of vital facilities, such as dedicated vending spaces and sanitation services.

The findings emphasise the strong aspects of Church Square in terms of safety and economic assistance, while also indicating areas that need improvement in terms of regulatory frameworks, infrastructure provision, and community participation. These improvements are necessary to better support street vendors and enhance the overall operation of the area.

Marabastad



Graph 3: Marabastad interview analysis

The assessment of Marabastad's public space, as depicted in the chart, underscores certain aspects that require substantial enhancement. The safety and security aspect obtained the lowest grade, showing significant apprehensions regarding the overall safety of the environment for both vendors and visitors. The infrastructure and resources received low scores, indicating a deficiency of necessary facilities such as defined vending spaces and sanitary services.

Regulatory support and permits, as well as economic viability, were found to be moderately satisfactory. This implies that there are already measures in place to assist vendors, but there is still potential for development in simplifying permission procedures and increasing economic prospects. The location was rated well for community and social engagement, indicating that it effectively promotes social relationships and a sense of community among users. These findings highlight the pressing necessity to rectify safety and infrastructure shortcomings in Marabastad while simultaneously enhancing regulatory frameworks and providing economic assistance to establish a more conducive and efficient environment for street sellers.

4.4 Summary of data

Vendor safety and security are significant considerations when working in public settings. A multitude of vendors voiced concerns regarding the potential for theft and violence, highlighting the inadequacy of security measures and the lack of substantial police presence. Participant A specifically discussed the potential danger of crossing the street to get to their vending location, emphasising the overall sense of being at risk. Participant A also expressed a widespread feeling of being ignored and insecure in their locality, emphasising the necessity for improved safety measures and infrastructure to safeguard vendors and their means of earning a living.

The acquisition of vending permits and licences proved to be a substantial obstacle for numerous sellers, requiring regulatory support. Participants I and J expressed their dissatisfaction with the bureaucratic obstacles and delays involved in obtaining the required permits. The absence of regulatory support not only impedes vendors' capacity to operate in accordance with the law but also makes them vulnerable to possible harassment and penalties. The lack of efficient and easily accessible procedures for obtaining permits highlights a crucial aspect that needs to be addressed in policy development to promote the informal economy.

The insufficiency of infrastructure and vital resources was a persistent topic. Vendors repeatedly highlighted the absence of fundamental utilities such as water, sanitation facilities, and waste management systems. Participant B emphasised the inadequate upkeep and lack of adequate amenities, which pose challenges for vendors to operate with optimal efficiency. The limited availability of resources has a negative impact on both the daily functioning of vendors and the overall attractiveness and functionality of public places, discouraging potential customers.

The significance of public spaces in building community and social interaction is substantial. Numerous sellers highly appreciate the social connections established through their everyday

interactions in these areas. Participant H highlighted the significance of well-maintained areas that foster community involvement and facilitate political and social endeavours. These interactions not only improve the vendors' social networks but also promote a sense of belonging and community cohesion, which are crucial for the liveliness of metropolitan areas.

Vendors have voiced a significant need for enhanced conditions and increased cooperation from local authorities in order to achieve their future aspirations and improvements. Their aspirations include witnessing enhanced maintenance practices, improved security measures, and more conducive regulatory frameworks. Participant I emphasised the necessity of regular maintenance to ensure cleanliness and safety. Additionally, other participants emphasised the significance of improved access to permits and enhanced infrastructure. The vendors' objectives demonstrate their dedication to their profession and their desire for a more friendly and conducive atmosphere that promotes their growth and success.

5 Data analysis

5.1 Matters of safety

The interviews with City of Tshwane street vendors always focus on safety issues. Participants sometimes felt vulnerable and uneasy because of how many people passed by their booths and the lack of adequate security measures. This problem affects more than just their daily work; it also impacts their mental health and their desire to keep running their businesses in these areas.

Participant A brought up a very important safety issue: crossing the street to get to the agreed-upon drop-off spot could be dangerous. This simple but risky action shows that places with a lot of car traffic do not have enough infrastructure or safety measures for pedestrians. These are infrastructural issues that would be solved with things like road crossings, signs, and robots, especially in Marabastad. During rush hour, when traffic is the worst, accidents and injuries are more likely to happen.

Regarding Participant G's observation of a general feeling of fear and neglect in the area, this brings to light a larger issue of cities falling apart and not having enough municipal oversight. Poorly maintained urban areas can quickly become hubs for crime and antisocial behaviour. Issues with lighting, trash left behind, and infrastructure that is falling apart make it uncomfortable for both sellers and buyers. The obvious lack of police or security staff makes vendors feel even more ignored and leaves them open to theft, harassment, and other illegal activities. The situation that Participant G described is not unique; it is a problem that many street vendors in the city face.

5.2 Implications of insecurity for trade activities

There is no doubt that the general feeling of insecurity affects the business that street vendors do. If someone is worried about crime and possible self-harm, the length of business hours may be cut short because vendors may choose to close their booths earlier to avoid the risks of the night. In turn, this makes it harder for them to make money and threatens their financial security. Furthermore, because theft and vandalism are always a possibility, formal merchants have to spend extra money on security measures like cameras, fencing, or hiring private security guards, which drives up their costs of doing business.

5.3 Municipal authorities

Local governments are mostly responsible for keeping street vendors safe. Despite this, the interviews show that the policy and the way things are in the real world are not the same. It is important for the vendors to make it clear that they think the local government is not doing enough to protect them.

Sellers often go to their own informal community for safety when there is no municipal support. Participant D said that “merchants help each other, which builds a sense of community and support”. For example, merchants save and secure each other's selling space and help each other by giving advice and spare change. Even though neighbourhood projects are valuable, they cannot take the place of official safety precautions.

There may be major benefits from putting in place initiatives that teach merchants safety knowledge and knowledge on accessing support systems, both within and outside the informal space.

5.4 Help with laws and obtaining permits

Tshwane street sellers face a significant challenge in obtaining the necessary licences and permissions to operate legally. The interviews revealed that this issue seriously impacts vendors and makes it more difficult for them to run their businesses safely and efficiently.

Participant I expressed a great deal of frustration at the bureaucratic roadblocks encountered in obtaining permits. The participant has tried several times to collect the necessary paperwork but has not been successful. This continuing issue exposes a fundamental flaw in the regulatory structure of the city. The several failed attempts to obtain permissions point to a lack of efficacy, openness, and clarity in the process of issuing permits. Vendors that are unable to navigate these inefficient processes run the danger of legal repercussions, fines, and maybe having their goods seized.

The experience of participant J emphasises the drawn-out and difficult procedure of getting permission to start a business. The process causes the vendors additional costs and worry, in addition to delaying the start of business. Requesting approvals all the time takes up important time and money that the vendors could be using elsewhere. The uneven and unpredictable way that permits are approved exacerbates this problem. The uncertainty around getting permissions can deter potential sellers from joining the market, therefore limiting their economic opportunities and reducing the diversity of the market.

The absence of regulatory support immediately affects vendors' ability to operate safely and legally. Since unlicensed vendors run the risk of incurring fines and having to leave the premises by force, there is always fear and uncertainty. This adds to the issues of safety, as the police, who should be seen as the go-to for safety and justice, are now affiliated with asset seizure and removal from vending sites. Lack of confidence could cause one to be reluctant to spend money on improving or growing the company, which would impede development.

The challenges street vendors have getting licences emphasise how important it is to restructure policies. Improving accessibility and simplifying the regulatory structure can help to reduce the challenges that unorganised businesses encounter when trying to enter the market. This can mean lowering the amount of paperwork required, shortening processing times, and changing the criteria for issuing licences. Furthermore, providing municipal staff with information and training on the need to support the unorganised sector may change viewpoints and improve service delivery. Dealing with vendors to understand their unique needs and challenges can also help create more effective and all-encompassing policies.

5.5 Advocates and the community

Street vendors and municipal officials may be able to communicate through community organisations and advocacy groups. Through encouraging the enactment of more advantageous regulations and offering merchants assistance in acquiring permits, these groups can successfully guarantee that vendors' needs are satisfied and their viewpoints are recognised.

The idea stresses how important it is for Tshwane street vendors to be part of the community and socialise. Regularly participating in political and community events, Participant F emphasised the need for well-kept spaces to support these relationships. Well-kept public areas not only make the

area more visually appealing but also provide a safe and friendly environment for vendors and their customers.

The way Participant F participates in neighbourhood gatherings emphasises how these locations can serve as hubs for social cohesiveness. Through facilitating contacts between merchants, customers, and community members, these places can foster a sense of community and mutual support. The capacity of informal economic activity to survive and grow over time depends critically on the existence of this social structure. But the state of disdain and poor maintenance of vending spaces today is a major barrier to effective social and community involvement. People may be discouraged from using these sites by the state of the infrastructure and the lack of basic amenities like public restrooms and seating areas. Participant G noted that the general feeling of neglect adds to a hazardous environment, which deters vendors and patrons from visiting these locations.

5.6 Hope for Better Conditions

The participants expressed a strong need for better circumstances and more city support. Particularly stressed by participant H was the need for consistent, regular maintenance and assistance to guarantee the environment's safety and cleanliness. This feeling conveys a more general need for effectively controlled public spaces that can support street vendors' commercial endeavours and raise the bar for urban living in general.

The need for routine maintenance and help highlights how much the vendors depend on municipal services to create a positive business environment. According to feedback from participant H, the current level of municipal assistance is insufficient, which leads to deteriorating conditions that negatively impact the operations of vendors.

The participants emphasised the need for better infrastructure. This includes the supply of basic utilities like water and electricity, in addition to physical buildings like stalls and shelters. Participant E underlined the need for significant infrastructure development and the challenges they have in keeping their neighbourhood clean due to a lack of services. A better infrastructure can make vending places more efficient and appealing, which attracts more clients and brings in more money for the vendors.

5.7 Outlook Objectives

The long-term goals of vendors for their companies and communities go beyond making quick fixes. The participants were optimistic about a future that would see the issuance of secure permits and improved economic circumstances. These expectations show a desire for stability and growth, so vendors may make investments in their businesses with confidence that the city will provide the infrastructure and assistance they need.

6 Discussion

Safety Concerns

From the data, a clear image of the state of the public realm in relation to the informal is generated. A common problem in Pretoria's public areas, safety worries have a big impact on the lives and means of subsistence of street sellers. Interviews and site visits in important locations, including Marabastad, Sunnyside, and Church Square, turned up a recurrent theme of vendor discomfort. Citing the heavy traffic, poor security, and overall neglect in their vending areas, many participants expressed concerns about their own safety as well as the security of their products. Participant A mentioned the dangers of crossing busy roads to reach drop-off locations, a common need made worse by the lack of pedestrian infrastructure and safety measures. In a similar vein, Participant G talked of a generalised atmosphere of anxiety in her vending area and blamed it on major problems with urban deterioration and inadequate municipal supervision.

Mapping data backs these on-the-ground observations and shows the spatial dynamics causing these safety issues. In Marabastad, the large volume of both car and pedestrian traffic produces dangerous circumstances that prevent effective and safe business. The area feels dangerous and unfriendly because of Sunnyside and Marabastad's inadequate lighting and deteriorated sidewalks. The literature, which emphasises how the perception of risk in public spaces can discourage both sellers and customers and jeopardise the profitability of street vending, supports these findings. In order to avoid evening hazards, merchants are likely to cut back on their hours of operation, which affects their income and lessens the liveliness of these areas, therefore limiting their potential as hubs of social and economic activity (Madanipour, 2020).

Addressing these safety concerns requires the cooperation of law enforcement and infrastructure. According to observations that show safer places are those with better lighting and obvious surveillance, prioritising safety and security in public places is essential for fostering social cohesion and economic growth. But vendors said that in many areas of Pretoria, police patrols are uncommon and frequently lead to the seizure of items rather than provide protection. Vendors feel alone and vulnerable since they are discouraged from getting assistance by this hostile relationship with law enforcement. Continual, non-confrontational patrols that guarantee safety without bothering businesses are essential to effective law enforcement. Improving relations and raising general safety could be achieved by teaching police officers the value of street vending to the local economy and by taking a supportive tack.

Another essential element of raising public space safety is infrastructure improvement. According to field observations, well-illuminated, watched locations are more used by vendors, who feel more comfortable buying in. Participant C brought out that putting in closed-circuit television (CCTV) and street lights will greatly reduce crime and give vendors and consumers a better sense of security. Municipalities and urban planners have to give safety top priority when they include these components in their design and upkeep standards. The security of vending zones can be greatly improved by designating properly defined zones with enough illumination, security, and routine police patrols. Emergency response systems can also make suppliers and consumers feel more secure by including panic buttons placed strategically and police stations close by.

There are serious economic ramifications for safety issues. People who perceive risk are less likely to walk, which reduces the potential clientele and immediately affects the revenue of vendors. This starts a vicious circle whereby lower income means less money spent on upkeep and

enhancement of the stalls, which further lowers client interest and attraction. Local businesses and community organisations can break this pattern, greatly improving safety. Programmes for community watch, which involve local businesses and citizens working with law enforcement, can monitor and report any unusual activity, therefore encouraging a feeling of shared accountability and security. Local companies can also help finance lighting and security upgrades, which boost foot traffic and economic activity in addition to improving safety.

More is involved in public space safety investments than merely infrastructure upgrades. It means establishing a setting where clients and vendors feel safe and appreciated. Resolving more general problems with urban deterioration, such as keeping public areas tidy and orderly, can deter antisocial behaviour and promote community pride and ownership, therefore improving safety even more. One should not undervalue the psychological effects of a well-kept environment since it fosters a feeling of security and belonging, which makes public areas lively and energetic hubs of urban life.

Regulatory Support and Permits

Getting the licences and permits required for street sellers in Pretoria is a difficult and frustrating procedure. Participant J called the bureaucratic labyrinth they had to negotiate a significant obstacle to their operations. Many others expressed the same opinion, bemoaning the ongoing but fruitless attempts to obtain permits, which frequently end in penalties, harassment, or even the loss of their source of income. In addition to impeding vendors' capacity to operate legally and safely, the onerous regulatory procedures also keep them vulnerable and out of the official economy.

Observations and conversations made in places like Sunnyside and Marabastad vividly illustrate the difficulties. Many times, vendors say they feel overburdened by the complex and ambiguous legal obligations. This is consistent with the conclusions of Landman (2018), who show how intricate and opaque regulatory systems can seriously impede the formalisation of unofficial economic activities, maintaining street vendors in a precarious and unlawful position. Street vendors cannot survive and expand without a regulatory environment that is favourable to their integration into the official economy.

Increasing support for street sellers means simplifying the process of obtaining permits and improving the clarity and accessibility of regulatory requirements. Vendor administrative overhead may be greatly reduced by streamlining these procedures. A clear, centralised system for permit applications, for example, might lessen misunderstandings and wait times. This strategy would reduce vendor hassle by giving clear instructions, deadlines, and application status updates in real-time. Furthermore, the procedure might be made more effective and less intimidating by specialist support centres helping suppliers with applications and troubleshooting any problems.

Municipalities should take a more adaptable regulatory stance that recognises the particular requirements of street vending. Making certain zones or locations where street vending is allowed could guarantee that sellers have access to the resources and infrastructure they need to run their businesses lawfully and securely. This strategy would make the legal criteria more in line with the real circumstances of street vending, therefore promoting a more welcoming and encouraging atmosphere for unofficial economic activity. These kinds of regulatory changes would help vendors as well as improve public space management and liveliness.

The broader effects of the absence of regulatory backing are felt in the social and economic dynamics of public areas. Frequently subjected to fines and harassment, unlicensed merchants' vulnerability and poverty are made worse. Without a well-defined regulatory structure, public areas may become chaotic and generally devoid of respect for the law, which discourages visitors and lessens the charm and vibrancy of these areas. The environment that this chaos can create, which makes both vendors and customers feel unwanted and uneasy, may further complicate street vending's financial prospects.

These problems need all-encompassing answers that go beyond granting licences. Municipalities should aggressively include street vendors and other stakeholders to learn about their requirements and difficulties and to create regulatory measures that successfully handle them. As part of this, forums for regular contact and cooperation between vendors and local authorities are created, as are training and capacity-building initiatives to assist vendors in meeting regulatory obligations. Municipalities can support the development of a regulatory environment that promotes the sustainability and growth of street vending by promoting cooperative relationships.

Enhancing street vendor regulatory assistance can also help to further more general urban development objectives. Municipalities can enhance public space management and governance generally by formalising and incorporating informal economic activity into the legal economy. Better infrastructure, services, and a livelier, friendlier urban setting can all result from this. Formalising street vending also gives sellers access to social security, financial services, and other advantages, which improves their social and economic inclusion. Such regulation changes are in line with the long-term development and growth goals of the city and not only help street vendors remain financially viable but also add to the vibrancy and inclusion of urban public areas.

Infrastructure and Resources

Inadequate infrastructure and resources present several difficulties for informal sellers in Pretoria, as respondents who underlined the lack of and bad state of these basic components pointed out. Recurrent topics in the conversations were the absence of specific vending areas, inadequate sanitary facilities, and poor maintenance of the current infrastructure. Participants C, for example, emphasised how urgently vending structures and formalised spaces, as well as essential amenities like water and restrooms, are needed. These shortcomings not only make it more difficult for merchants to survive and for customers to feel comfortable, but they also negatively impact the general attractiveness and usefulness of public areas.

Research confirms these findings and emphasises how important resources and infrastructure are to enabling commercial activity in public spaces. Within efforts at urban restructuring, Bodino (2019) highlights the need for creating appropriate infrastructure to support informal economic activities. Street vending and other unorganised economic activities are only as successful as well-run infrastructure and resources. Municipalities can improve the financial sustainability of street vendors and benefit urban economies by making infrastructure-related investments.

Several important elements are involved in an investment in street vendor infrastructure development. Creating special vending zones is essential since they offer areas that maximise accessibility and exposure for both sellers and customers while introducing elements of stability to the sector. Public areas can be better arranged, traffic can be lessened, and the visual appeal of these zones can improve. Sales zones with increased stalls, safe storage, and amenities that let

merchants present their products well are examples of well-designed vending locations. Furthermore, sanitary amenities are necessary. Many times, participants brought out the inadequate handwashing stations and bathrooms, which not only compromised their health and hygiene but also discouraged patrons. Vendor working conditions as well as the whole customer experience can be greatly improved by having easily accessible sanitary facilities.

Continuous infrastructure maintenance is just as crucial. Even the finest-designed infrastructure can swiftly deteriorate without routine maintenance, creating hazardous and filthy situations. To maintain vending areas, municipalities must create maintenance plans and set aside money for things like trash management, facility cleaning, and stall repairs. Encouraging more use by vendors and consumers, proactive upkeep guarantees that public areas stay attractive and functioning.

Bodino (2019) makes the case for including infrastructure development into all-encompassing urban planning and growth plans. This strategy guarantees that vending spaces are part of a coherent urban fabric that facilitates a range of social and economic activities. Placement of vending stations strategically around markets, public transportation hubs, and other busy areas can increase foot traffic and improve vendor economic prospects. Moreover, the various requirements of various vendors should be taken into account while planning infrastructure development to guarantee fair access to appropriate facilities for all.

Effectively satisfying the needs of vendors requires including them in infrastructure planning and development. Vendors can participate in participatory planning procedures that result in more effective and well-liked infrastructure solutions. Vendors may make sure the infrastructure created is appropriate for their purposes by offering insightful information about the practical difficulties they encounter and possible solutions. Because of this inclusive strategy, sellers feel more ownership and accountability and are more likely to actively contribute to the upkeep and preservation of their vending areas.

Cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector can also facilitate infrastructure development and maintenance. As part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives, companies close to vending zones may be eager to help with infrastructure upgrades. Construction of waste management systems, sanitary facilities, and other vital infrastructure can be facilitated financially and with the help of NGOs. Vendors and the larger community can gain from these alliances as they improve the standard and sustainability of infrastructure.

The availability and calibre of the resources and infrastructure are critical to the success of street vending as well as the general usefulness of public areas. By funding the development and upkeep of specific vending spaces, sanitary amenities, and waste management systems, municipalities can enhance the street vending experience. These enhancements help street vending remain economically viable while also advancing the community's social welfare and larger urban growth. Achieving sustainable and lively public places requires incorporating infrastructure development into more extensive urban planning initiatives, including vendors in decision-making processes, and establishing alliances with companies and NGOs.

Community and Social Interaction

One common thread that came up throughout the interviews was how important neighbourhood and social contacts are to street vendors. Participants often emphasised how encouraging these connections depends on keeping public areas in good shape. The need to improve these areas in

order to facilitate social and community events is something that Participant F, who is very involved in political and community activities, emphasises particularly. Research that shows how important well-planned and maintained public areas are for promoting social cohesiveness and community involvement supports this opinion. As Forster (2022) emphasises, public areas are essential for promoting social contact, community gatherings, and artistic expression, which improves the social fabric of metropolitan regions.

Everyday gathering places and public areas, and ensuring they are not separated from the vending space, let people feel a part of the community and belong. These places facilitate contacts between members of various social classes, therefore promoting the development of community networks and social links. These neighbourhoods are made more active and enticing by the street sellers, who provide colour and vitality. Therefore, by encouraging vendors, you not only help their business but also enhance the social and cultural dynamics of these public areas, which promotes deep relationships among the people of the neighbourhood.

The need for public areas to give street vendors a feeling of identity and connection is emphasised in the literature. Within the confines of the city, vendors flourish in well-kept public areas that are open to anyone and seem safe and important. These areas turn from being only commercial centres to being essential to the social and cultural lives of the sellers. The everyday contacts with clients, the building of connections, and the involvement in neighbourhood activities all play a major role in vendors' sense of identity and belonging. Urban places cannot better resist and bounce back from adversity without a strong sense of community.

Promoting social interactions and community involvement mostly depends on the creation of inclusive and accessible public areas. In their discussion of the value of inclusive urban development, Rawhani and Middelman (2023) promote areas that meet the many demands of urban dwellers. Equitable community involvement depends on public areas being made easy to use and access by everyone, but notably by vulnerable or excluded groups. By uniting people from many origins and promoting understanding and respect between them, this inclusivity promotes social cohesiveness.

Furthermore, public areas are essential to community activity and cultural expression. These locations are able to hold festivals, performances, and cultural events. Such occasions provide vendors with chances to present their goods and interact with a wider audience, therefore raising their profile and potential for success. Public cultural events also help community members feel more proud and at home, which makes the city a livelier place overall.

Fostering social connections and community involvement requires funding public space upkeep and enhancement. Local governments must ensure the availability of the necessary amenities—seating, lighting, and restrooms—as well as their cleanliness, security, and provision. Good use of public areas encourages people to come, take part in events, and interact with their neighbourhood. Along with helping street sellers, this investment raises the standard of living in cities for all citizens.

Public places that satisfy community requirements must be created via participatory planning techniques. Public area planning and development that includes street sellers, locals, and community organisations guarantees that these places represent the needs and preferences of the community. The sense of ownership and responsibility that such participatory planning instils in community members encourages active involvement in the maintenance and upkeep of public

areas. This cooperative approach increases the long-term viability and effectiveness of public space projects..

Public locations that foster social interaction and community help to make cities resilient. They provide forums for social networks where people may exchange resources, get help, and fortify ties to their communities. These social networks come in very handy during emergencies, such as natural catastrophes or economic downturns (like COVID-19), when they offer vulnerable groups like street sellers vital support. Public space usability and inclusion are intimately related to a city's capacity for recovery and adaptation.

The vendors' emphasis on community and social contact highlights the significance of carefully designed and maintained public spaces. Communities can be engaged, social harmony promoted, and cultural expression encouraged by municipalities by providing friendly and accessible settings. Vibrant urban areas that improve resilience and quality of life require these kinds of activities to be created. Research confirms these results and emphasises the value of public areas in fostering social ties, local cohesiveness, and cultural life. Cities may develop into more vibrant and robust locations where people can meet and do business by making public space investments and including the community in their development.

Economic Viability

Locations close to transportation hubs and marketplaces, which showed significant increases during peak hours and sharp drops during off-peak hours, severely challenged the consistency and predictability of vendor revenues. This supports Madanipour's (2020) criticism of the commercialization of public areas, where the shift from communal hubs to zones driven by market dynamics frequently makes it more difficult for smaller, unorganised merchants to get excellent places. This change not only marginalises these sellers but also supports more established companies with easier access to busy places, therefore sustaining socioeconomic disparities.

Participant D also brought up the important problem of the competitive pressure from these well-established companies. Our mapping work exposed blatant spatial segregation, with street sellers frequently forced to the periphery, away from the busy hubs controlled by bigger businesses. Urban studies has long been concerned with this spatial marginalisation, as Waine (2012) points out. He underlines the need for urban theories and planning methods that acknowledge and address the particular socioeconomic and cultural conditions of African cities. Here in particular, Waine's need for a de-Westernised viewpoint is pertinent since it emphasises the requirement of inclusive urban design that takes into account the variety of informal and frequently unofficial economic activities that characterise African urban settings.

Access to financial services turned out to be yet another major obstacle to these sellers' capacity to make a living. Many, with restricted access to official credit and banking services, depend on unofficial lending networks or personal savings. They are hampered in their capacity to invest in and expand their companies by this lack of financial inclusion. It is well known how important it is to include financial services in the support systems for street sellers; Förster & Ammann (2018), for example, promote creative financial solutions catered to the requirements of the informal economies that are common in African cities. Their efforts demonstrate how microfinance and digital financial instruments can close this gap and give the merchants the security and capital they need to increase their economic resilience and sustainability.

Enhancing the financial prospects of street vendors was also shown to require promoting greater market links. Our findings indicated that planned market days or events are effective in increasing foot traffic and sales. According to Landman (2015), who examines how public open spaces can meet a variety of community needs and improve urban resilience, these kinds of activities not only raise vendor awareness but also promote a supportive community atmosphere. Cities may encourage thriving and inclusive economic activity in their public areas by planning frequent market events and giving vendors venues to reach large audiences.

Additionally, becoming more and more important in assisting street vendors is digital infrastructure. As vendors become more interested in using technology to improve their business operations, they are adopting digital payment systems and marketing tools to simplify transactions, lessen cash dependence, and improve security. Peres' (n.d.) talk on how to incorporate technology and ecological resilience into urban public space architecture supports this tendency by highlighting how crucial digital tools may be in maintaining and upgrading unofficial economic activity.

The research continuously emphasises how transformative public spaces can be in promoting resilience and economic viability in metropolitan environments. Bodino (2019) makes the case that public open spaces should be strategically used as instruments for urban reorganisation, especially to reduce socioeconomic inequality and advance inclusive growth. Public areas can be accelerators for more general urban economic development and social cohesiveness by creating settings that encourage both formal and informal economic activity.

Municipal policies and practices play a significant role in shaping these dynamics. The protection and assistance sellers need to run their businesses sustainably might come from policies that acknowledge and include informal trading in the urban fabric. In her investigation of how equitable and inclusive policies may help South Africa integrate and develop its public spaces, McKenna (2019) highlights the necessity of regulatory frameworks that safeguard and improve the financial prospects for street sellers. On the other hand, stringent or punitive laws might suppress these endeavours, therefore impeding the possibility of economic variety and inclusion in public areas of cities.

A multidimensional strategy including inclusive legislative frameworks, targeted infrastructure improvements, and smart urban planning is necessary to guarantee the economic sustainability of street vendors in African urban contexts. Building on the research of Madanipour (2020), Waine (2012), and Bodino (2019), among others, we show how important public areas are to promoting economic resilience. Municipalities can improve the conditions for street sellers by tackling issues such as geographical marginalisation, financial services accessibility, and infrastructure shortcomings, as well as by encouraging digital and market connections. In order to turn public areas into thriving centres of community involvement, cultural expression, and economic activity—and so support the equitable and sustainable growth of African cities—these initiatives are imperative.

7 Conclusion

The results of this study, taken together, shed light on the intricate role that public spaces play in encouraging sustainable urban expansion in African cities. It emphasises as well how important public areas are as stimulants for the growth of social, economic, and environmental elements. After examining many various factors in detail, it is evident that public spaces are crucial for raising urban quality of life, especially by guaranteeing the financial security of street vendors and encouraging social cohesiveness.

One of the most significant recommendations provided by the report is that the infrastructure should be significantly upgraded. Among these upgrades ought to be the installation of waste management systems, sanitary facilities, and enough lighting. The development of safe and enticing environments for both salespeople and customers depends on the application of these improvements. Moreover, I wish to emphasise the need for the simplification of regulatory processes, which often stand in the way of informal traders' efficient use of public spaces. Communities may develop an urban economy that is more inclusive for all by simplifying these processes.

The study also emphasises the need to collaborate with the municipality and take an active role in the upkeep and enhancement of public areas. This covers not just giving vendors administrative and financial help but also taking care of the physical environment. This might help the economic activity of the vendors become more structured and stable. Local governments must be very important in guaranteeing that public areas are efficiently run and open to all sections of the community in order to promote justice and inclusivity.

Another significant finding is that public spaces are essential to the growth of communities and the social interactions they enable. These areas are the settings for cultural exchange, leisure pursuits, and community gatherings, and they host all of these activities that enhance the social connectedness and general well-being of metropolitan people. The study's results indicate that participatory planning techniques that actively include local stakeholders in the process of creating and maintaining public spaces are desperately needed. As it ensures that these locations meet the various needs and preferences of the community, adopting such a strategy helps to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility among the people.

Notably, street vendors' environment reflects the commercial element of public areas. The results of the study indicate that vendors' economic prospects can be enhanced by strengthening market relations and giving them the chance to take part in organised social systems within the city. Apart from the immediate financial benefits, these endeavours also help to include unofficial traders in the greater urban economy, which strengthens the local community's economy as a whole. Furthermore, the research results show that it is worthwhile to make investments in physical infrastructure to improve the accessibility and usefulness of public spaces in the informal trade realm.

To advance the understanding of public spaces and their role in sustainable urban growth, several key areas warrant further exploration. One critical area is the need for in-depth case studies of African urban spaces. While this research has highlighted the unique challenges and opportunities within the African context, more detailed case studies across a diverse range of cities are essential. These studies should examine how different cultural, socioeconomic, and political contexts influence the design, use, and perception of public spaces. Additionally, future research

should investigate the impact of evolving urban policies and governance structures on public space development. Understanding how policy changes at the local, national, and international levels affect public spaces will provide valuable insights into creating more inclusive and sustainable urban environments. Lastly, interdisciplinary research that brings together urban planners, sociologists, environmental scientists, and community stakeholders is vital. Collaborative efforts can provide a holistic understanding of public spaces' multifaceted roles and contribute to developing innovative solutions that address complex urban challenges. By focusing on these areas, future research can build on the foundations laid by this study, offering deeper insights and practical strategies for harnessing public spaces to foster sustainable urban growth.

Ultimately, the study finds that by promoting social cohesiveness, economic opportunities, and environmental sustainability, public areas in African cities have the potential to propel urban expansion. Including public spaces in thorough urban planning and economic development plans allows municipalities to create vibrant, inclusive, and resilient urban environments. These settings might be able to meet the different needs of city dwellers. Taking a comprehensive approach to urban development, it is possible to guarantee that African cities are not only livable but also dynamic and sustainable, prepared to meet the opportunities and issues of the twenty-first century.

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8 Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire/Interview template

DIT 801: Ethical Clearance Interview Outline

As a group we will be conducting semi structured interviews for data collection for the research topic of Considering contemporary African public spaces under the supervision of Tariq Toffah.

All researchers are students from the Department of Architecture at the University of Pretoria: Lesedi Dlamini, 0823100504, u19111292@tuks.co.za & Marks Gwangwa, 0747334629, u14231132@tuks.co.za.

Introduction

This questionnaire forms a key part of a broader research initiative aimed at delving into the complex roles that public spaces play within urban settings. Our study seeks to unpack how these spaces influence social equity, boost cultural vibrancy, drive economic growth, and enhance the overall well-being of the community. By soliciting detailed input from a wide array of stakeholders—including residents who live near these spaces, vendors who operate within them, pedestrians who navigate them, and business owners who rely on them—we hope to paint a comprehensive picture of the current state of urban public spaces.

The questions within this questionnaire are crafted to align with our overarching research objectives, touching on various aspects such as the daily management of these spaces, personal and collective perceptions, the economic interplay between public spaces and local commerce, and the degree of personal engagement with these areas. We recognize the diverse experiences of our participants and, as such, do not expect all questions to be relevant to everyone. This approach allows participants to skip questions that do not resonate with their experiences, ensuring that the feedback collected is both relevant and meaningful.

In appreciation of the time and insights shared by participants, we have included a section at the end of the questionnaire for any additional thoughts, experiences, or suggestions related to public spaces that participants wish to share. This open-ended section is intended to capture any important aspects that might not have been directly addressed through the structured questions.

Your participation is not only valuable — it's vital. The insights gathered from this questionnaire will directly inform strategies aimed at making public spaces more inclusive, accessible, and enriching for every member of the urban tapestry. Thank you for contributing your perspectives and helping us work towards creating more engaging and vibrant public spaces.

Shop Owners/tenants

Management:

What brought you to set up shop here

How long have you been selling here? Have you always been in the specific spot or have you moved to different storefronts in this area? (if so, why)

What does the day to day running of this shop look like?

How sustainable is the economy of your location?

What do you do to manage the area directly in front of your shop?

How is access to your establishment managed and controlled? How does that work with the surrounding residential buildings?

Perceptions of the Site:

Are you involved in the regular maintenance/repair of your business surroundings?

The role of public space in the informal realm of urban centres

How would you evaluate waste management systems at your location?
How do the activities of vendors/car guards impact your business and its appeal?
Does the presence of vendors, car guards, and taxis influence your customer flow and the overall business environment? Is there any drawback?
Have developments done by government and/or independent organisations to improve the public space or vendor space impacted your business? In what ways?
Have the structures placed to facilitate the informal vendors had any impact on your business?
What is the nature of interactions between your business, vendors, and car guards?
What security measures do you have, or observed, in the area of your business?
How do you perceive the public space immediately in front of your establishment in terms of its benefits or drawbacks to your business?
Is there any assistance or collaboration between your business and the vendors or car guards?
Do you believe the presence of these stakeholders contributes to the security and surveillance around your business?
Would you prefer any changes to the current setup of the public space surrounding your business?

Perceptions of Development/Commerce:

How do you view the role of your business in community development within this area?
Were you consulted or involved in any development initiatives affecting the site?
What limitations do you face in optimising your business's potential at this location?
Where do you see opportunities for enhancement or improvement?
How do you manage the presence of vendors near your business? Is it a welcoming or deterrent approach?
How has the relocation of formal shops to malls impacted your business operations and customer base?
What is your stance on the informal character of the street and vendor structures in relation to your business?

Pedestrians

Background Questions:

What brings you to this site?
Could you share where you're coming from and how you arrived here?
How often do you come here?
If often, how connected to this place are you? Any social connections to people who live and work here? Any formal and/or informal connections?
What do you do for a living?

Perceptions of the Site:

What is your opinion on the feeling of this space? How does being here and doing what you came here to do make you feel? Inviting? uncomfortable?
Do you find this space welcoming and suitable for leisure or gatherings?
Does the presence of vendors and shopkeepers influence your perception of safety or comfort in this area?
How do you feel about the structures used to create the vendor spaces?
How do you feel about the seats, shading or any other structures placed for the pedestrian in this public space?
What are your thoughts on the waste management practices observed here?
How does the busyness of the site affect your experience as a pedestrian?
How do you compare vendors who have a fixed structure versus those without?
Do you feel the fencing is good or bad in this space? Why
Do you feel the space is more for pedestrians or not? What makes it feel that way?
Are taxis a problem here? Are they a good thing here?
How do you view the maintenance of this site? Is it kept in good condition?
What are your thoughts on noise levels within this area?
How do you perceive the cultural and nationality diversity present on this site?

Use of Space:

Do you feel that public spaces here are inclusive and accessible to everyone, including pedestrians?

Do you feel like you can express your culture in this space without judgement? Does this space feel safe for self expression?

Do you see opportunities to use this space for leisure or gatherings? If not, why?

Where do you typically make purchases when you visit this area? Does it vary between weekdays and weekends?

As someone who might be passing through, how do you feel about the space from a non-user perspective?

Vendors

Background Questions:

From where do you originate, and are you a local resident or commute from outside?

How long have you been operating at this site, and what has been your journey to choosing this specific location for your business?

Can you discuss the sustainability of this site for your business and whether you've seen growth opportunities here?

Do you have a personal vehicle, and if so, how do you manage parking on a daily basis?

Organisation and Site Engagement:

How is the vendor community organised within this site? Is there a formal or informal structure that facilitates vendor placement and operations?

How does the vendor community address the integration of new vendors or changes among shopfront owners?

In what ways do you connect with other vendors or commerce spaces similar to this site? Are there networks or associations you're part of?

For those who have been at this site longer, how have you observed changes over time?

Site-Specific Questions & Impact:

What motivated your choice to set up shop in this particular space? Was it a strategic decision or more opportunistic?

How do you envision expanding or altering your setup to better serve your needs and the needs of your customers?

How do you contribute to maintaining the cleanliness and orderliness of the site?

What are your future plans for your business at this location? Do you have long-term goals for remaining or expanding?

How do you address security concerns on site? Are there measures you personally take or collaborate on with others to ensure safety?

When you're not present, how is your space managed? Is there a community approach to overseeing each other's stalls or products?

Are there any fees or permissions required for you to operate in this specific spot? Were you involved in discussions or decisions regarding any recent site improvements or restructuring?

How has the introduction of infrastructure, like fencing or vendor stalls, affected your business?

Are there any other changes/additions to the space by the government that would make this space work better for you?

How do you store your merchandise or supplies, and what are your logistical arrangements for receiving stock?

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Residents

Background Questions:

What is your nationality and race?

What prompts your presence at this site? Are you here for work, leisure, or residential purposes?

Could you share a bit about your background, including where you're travelling from, your mode of transportation, and how long you've been frequenting this site?

Do you rent in the area or own housing in the area? If renting, do you flat share?

Are you living in the apartments here, or in a house outside of here?

What is your occupation, and how does this site fit into your daily or weekly routine?

Perceptions of the Site:

How do you feel about the site's atmosphere and your interactions with businesses, vendors, and other stakeholders here?

Do you consider the space welcoming and suitable for leisure, gatherings, and community activities?

How does the presence of vendors, shopkeepers, and security personnel affect your sense of safety or inclusion in this area?

Can you comment on the site's maintenance, waste management, and the general state of upkeep?

What are your thoughts on the site's busyness and how it impacts your use and enjoyment of the space?

How do you perceive the diversity of cultures and nationalities represented on the site?

Have you noticed any significant changes in the site over the time you've been visiting?

Use of Space:

Do you feel that public spaces within this site are inclusive and accessible to you and others in the community?

Are there areas or aspects of the site that you feel could be improved for leisure or community use?

Where do you typically make purchases or spend time when you're on the site, and does this change between weekdays and weekends?

Do you feel a sense of ownership or community connection with this space?

How do your interactions with vendors and other stakeholders on the site affect your experience and perception of the space?

Appendix B: Informed consent form



Faculty of Engineering,
Built Environment and
Information Technology

Fakulteit Ingenieurswese, Bou-omgewing en
Inligtingtegnologie / Lefapha la Boetšenera,
Tikologo ya Kago le Theknolotsi ya Tshedimošo

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET & INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of the Study: Considering contemporary African public spaces

Masters Research Team: Lesedi Dlamini and Marks Gwangwa are Masters students from the Department of Architecture in the Engineering, Built environment, and technology faculty of the University of Pretoria

Introduction: You are being invited to participate in a research study focused on understanding the transformative power of public spaces in urban settings. Our team, composed of researchers from the University of Pretoria, is conducting this study to explore how public spaces can act as pivotal platforms for enhancing social equity, empowering vendors and informal sectors, fostering cultural expression, and stimulating local economies.

Objective: This study seeks to engage a diverse group of stakeholders, including property organizations, shop owners, residents, pedestrians, vendors, car guards, and community development agencies, to gather a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted roles public spaces play in our communities. Your participation will involve completing a questionnaire or participating in a quick interview to delve deeper into your experiences and perspectives related to public spaces. The aim of this research is to Investigate how public spaces can serve as catalysts for economic empowerment, particularly for informal vendors and small-scale entrepreneurs; understand the impact of public spaces on fostering cultural representation and enhancing community engagement, assess the economic effects of vibrant public spaces on surrounding local businesses and the broader community, and explore strategies for ensuring that the development and management of public spaces are inclusive and accessible to all community members, thus promoting social equity.

What Participation Involves: If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to

- Complete a questionnaire that will take approximately 5 minutes to fill out (dependent on writing time and further engagement)

OR

- Participate in an interview to discuss your questionnaire responses and provide further insights. The interview is expected to last, at most, 20 minutes.

Potential Benefits and risks: Participating in the study offers valuable insights into enhancing public spaces for social equity, economic empowerment, cultural expression, and community engagement. The minimal risks involved include potential emotional discomfort from reflective questions. Participation requires a manageable time commitment, with the assurance that individuals can withdraw at any time without consequence.

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. All responses will be kept confidential, and any information collected will be used solely for the purposes of this research. Findings will be reported in a manner that does not identify any individual participant.

Ethics Approval: This study has been reviewed and received ethics approval from the Faculty of EBIT Research Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria, ethics code EBIT/58/2024. Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, you may contact Ebit-Ethics@up.ac.za.

Further Information: If you have any questions or require further information about the study, please feel free to contact Lesedi Dlamini at u19111292@tuks.co.za / 0827731010 and Marks Gwangwa at u14231132@tuks.co.za / 0747334629.

Consent to Participate: By signing below and proceeding with the questionnaire, you are indicating your informed consent to participate in this study, acknowledging that you have understood the information provided above and agree to participate on a voluntary basis. You are acknowledging that the research team has clearly described to you safety/risk implications and that you are aware that the results of the investigation may be used for the purposes of publication.

Participant's name

Participant's signature

Date

Witness name

Witness signature

Date

Researcher's name

Researcher's signature

Date

Appendix C: Ethics Approval



Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

Fakulteit Ingenieurswese, Bou-omgewing en
Inligtingtegnologie / Lefapha la Boetšhenere,
Tikologo ya Kago le Theknolotši ya Tshedimošo

7 June 2024

Reference number: EBIT/58/2024

Mr MM Gwangwa
Department: Architecture
University of Pretoria
Pretoria
0083

Dear Mr MM Gwangwa,

FACULTY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Your recent application to the EBIT Research Ethics Committee refers.

Conditional approval is granted.

This means that the research project entitled "Considering contemporary African public spaces" is approved under the strict conditions indicated below. If these conditions are not met, approval is withdrawn automatically.

Conditions for approval:

Where applicable, the permission(s) from owner(s) of the case location(s) needs to be obtained before the researcher conducts the intercept surveys/interviews. The name(s) of the case location(s) cannot be revealed unless the permission from the owner is obtained.

When conducting intercept surveys, the researcher needs to avoid intrusive or confrontational approaches.

Contacts of the participants are to be sourced with compliance to POPIA.

This approval does not imply that the researcher, student or lecturer is relieved of any accountability in terms of the Code of Ethics for Scholarly Activities of the University of Pretoria, or the Policy and Procedures for Responsible Research of the University of Pretoria. These documents are available on the website of the EBIT Ethics Committee.

If action is taken beyond the approved application, approval is withdrawn automatically.

According to the regulations, any relevant problem arising from the study or research methodology as well as any amendments or changes, must be brought to the attention of the EBIT Research Ethics Office.

The Committee must be notified on completion of the project.

The Committee wishes you every success with the research project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kai-Ying'.

Prof K.-Y. Chan

Appendix D: Interview Transcript summaries

Participant A summary:

Participant A became a street vendor out of necessity after losing their job due to COVID-19. Despite having the correct documents, they struggle to obtain permits, leading to frustration and insecurity. Selling goods is essential for providing for their family's needs. There is a strong sense of community among vendors, who respect and support each other. However, frequent disruptions by the police create a sense of fear and insecurity. Business has become tougher over time due to political complications. They are uncertain about the future, believing it is in "God's hands." Post-COVID fencing has changed the selling environment, but they remain neutral about it. Interaction with nearby shop owners is minimal, limited to small favours like getting change. They start their day early and prioritise keeping their stall clean for both business and health reasons.

Participant B summary:

Participant B became a street vendor at their current site because it was the available option after a lengthy three-year application process. This spot has moderate foot traffic, mainly from nearby government departments and schools. P lives nearby and transports goods using a trolley. They emphasise the importance of cleanliness, taking personal responsibility for their area despite city efforts. Safety is not a significant concern, but P wishes for better facilities like storage for vendors. Interactions with nearby store owners are minimal, mostly for small favours. P feels limited by regulations, especially regarding selling cooked food, which hampers business growth. They see the need for more supportive measures from city authorities to enable better business operations and expansion.

Participant C and D summary:

Participants C and D were interviewed together about their use of a public space for political activities. Participant C (P1) visits once or twice a week for political campaigns and finds the space vibrant but suggests improvements like adding greenery and a fountain. Participant D (P2) agrees with the frequency of visits. They appreciate the convenience of nearby malls and informal markets, recognising their roles in job creation and accessibility. Both believe the space serves a purpose but could benefit from better maintenance, including waste management and vendor safety. They feel the presence of fast-food chains isn't exclusionary and understand the need for fencing for safety. Public transport could be more accessible, but they acknowledge this is a town planning issue. Overall, they see potential for better utilisation and maintenance of the space to enhance its usefulness for the community.

Participant E summary:

Participant E, interviewed about their use of a public space, mentioned they visit occasionally for job security and job seeking. They find the space welcoming and a place for forming friendships, especially compared to the streets. While they appreciate the seating, they believe it could be improved, particularly in terms of cleanliness and maintenance, as some areas are deteriorating. The participant expressed concern over the government's neglect of maintenance issues like loose bricks, which affect movement and safety. They suggested investing in maintaining and improving the space for better safety and functionality. Although they feel the space can be unsafe due to poor maintenance and lighting, they find the nearby mall inviting and accessible.

Participant F summary:

Participant F, who has been selling clothes in their spot for five years, explained that they chose the area due to its high foot traffic, which benefits their business. They occasionally use transport to bring in their goods. While they worry about security, they have measures to identify and protect their items. The participant expressed frustration with the government, noting it has been more of a hindrance than a help in their business growth. They acknowledged the importance of their location in building a loyal customer base. Despite occasional security concerns, the participant feels a strong sense of community and mutual support among vendors. They disapproved of the fence erected, as it blocked access and complicated their operations.

Participant G summary:

Participant G, who has been selling fruits and vegetables for five years, chose their spot due to its high foot traffic and proximity to their home, which is convenient for transporting goods. They face significant challenges with authorities, who frequently disrupt their operations, making it necessary to stay alert and sometimes move quickly to avoid losing goods. Despite these disruptions, they appreciate the strong sense of community and mutual support among vendors. Their typical day starts at six in the morning and involves setting up, selling throughout the day, and packing up around seven or eight at night. They have a mix of regular and new customers. Over the years, competition has increased, making it harder to make a profit. Looking to the future, they hope to get a proper permit and expand their stall. Maintaining cleanliness is crucial for both business and health reasons. While safety is a concern due to the risk of theft and harassment, they rely on support from fellow vendors. They also have mutual respect and occasional interactions with nearby shop owners for small favours.

Participant H summary:

Participant H, who has been working at their current site for nearly three years, usually arrives between 11:00 and 11:30 AM as they live nearby. Initially working elsewhere, they moved to this spot due to the Corona pandemic. They walk to the site and have a good relationship with other vendors, many of whom are from their country. They support each other and have an understanding of their spots. Even if they are absent for two weeks, their spot remains theirs, thanks to mutual respect among vendors. Although the space condition is not ideal, Participant H cleans their spot daily and sometimes even before city cleaners arrive. They feel the government could do more to maintain the space, which could attract more customers and improve business. The fencing on the other side does not affect them, and while structures provided are helpful, the overall situation remains challenging. New vendors find open spots themselves, and there is no need for permission from other vendors, though setting up shade requires a permit. Relationships with nearby stores are positive, allowing for exchanges like getting change. Participant H usually leaves around 7:00 PM

Participant I summary:

Participant I, who travels daily and uses transportation to reach the site, expressed mixed feelings about the setup. While the area is generally fine, there are concerns about litter from vendors and the need for cleanliness, especially after people go clubbing and drinking. Despite this, the community environment is positive, and there is a sense of security in their spot, although conflicts over space can arise. They appreciate the structures provided by the government but are frustrated with the slow process of obtaining licences and permits, having applied in 2015 without success. Safety is a concern due to disturbances from metro police and immigration officials, but they feel protected by faith. Looking to the future, Participant I hopes to eventually secure a shop to avoid the hardships of working in the open, facing weather conditions. They feel resigned to their current setup but would be very happy to have a better place to stay and work.

Participant J summary:

Participant J visited Sunny Park today primarily to buy something. They describe the space as crowded but generally fine, although they come here only occasionally. Reflecting on the past, Participant J notes that the place used to be inviting, secure, and well-maintained but now suffers from neglect and lack of control. Security has deteriorated, making the area feel unsafe compared to previous years. They also compared the space to the West Side, which feels different and requires more caution. Regarding the vendors, Participant J believes they lack sufficient support from the government, observing that the police seem more focused on personal interests than addressing the needs of the vendors. Nepotism and personal relationships are seen as major issues affecting the management of public spaces. If given the authority to make changes, Participant J would focus on understanding and working psychologically with the people to foster a sense of collective responsibility and maintain the space effectively. They feel that changing the mentality from "this is not your place" to a more communal approach is crucial for improvement. Despite being in Sunny Park, Participant J feels more like a passerby than someone who belongs to or feels connected to the space. Their visit is out of necessity rather than out of a sense of ownership or attachment to the place.

Participant K summary:

Participant K starts working at nine in the morning. They note that the site used to be busier, but competition has decreased. They manage the space in front of their shop with some help from Akina, a company that assists with cleaning. The parking lot near their shop is open to everyone, not just clients. Participant K has a good relationship with street vendors and the people who help with parking, describing it as a community where everyone supports each other. They mention that on busy days, the public space and parking can become crowded, and they sometimes use the outside space to accommodate customers and attract more business. The building management provides security, which aids in ensuring safety. Participant K wishes for improvements in the area, particularly better maintenance, as some people leave their business items around. They are generally open to others starting businesses in front of their shop, as long as it doesn't lead to direct competition. They appreciate the research effort to understand and improve the space and are grateful for the opportunity to share their insights.

Participant L summary:

Participant L has been working on a street that has been consistently busy for the past 11 years. The street remains active throughout the day and night, with people constantly moving, eating, and socialising. Despite the high activity, business has been affected post-COVID, with a noticeable decline due to the economic impact and increased crime in Sunnyside. Many people lost their jobs, reducing their buying power, yet Participant L remains grateful, noting they are still better off than many others and emphasising the importance of helping those in need. Regarding the relationship between formal shops and street vendors, Participant L describes it as generally good, though they note a sense of separation, as many vendors are not local. However, they maintain friendly and supportive interactions, helping each other whenever needed.

Participant M summary:

Participant M has been working at the site for almost 10 years and emphasises the collaborative spirit among vendors and shop owners. They highlight that whether inside or outside, the business mindset is similar, focusing on doing good work and supporting families. There is a clear distinction in the types of goods sold, with Participant M's business dealing with essentials while others might sell different items like fruits. New vendors do not need explicit permission from existing ones to start their business. Participant M mentioned that although they pay for their designated space, they cooperate to ensure customers can access shops without obstruction. They acknowledged occasional disputes over space but stressed that the relationship among vendors is generally good. Security is a concern, as incidents involving guns have occurred. While everyone tries to maintain safety, there is only so much they can do without police intervention. The presence of people outside does offer some level of security, but it remains a 50/50 situation. Expanding their business beyond their designated space is not possible due to boundaries and regulations. However, inside their shop, they have more freedom to operate. The relationship with others, including those helping with tasks like parking, is positive and supportive. They often assist each other, reinforcing a sense of community. Participant M believes that reducing crime is essential for business growth and safety. They also mention issues related to paperwork for overseas vendors, which often leads to shortcuts being taken. Improving this process could result in a better environment for everyone. Overall, Participant M values peace and safety as the main factors that can enhance business and create more job opportunities. They hope for continued improvements and better conditions for all vendors and shop owners.

Participant N summary:

Participant N frequents the area three to four times a week for shopping and errands due to its convenience and offerings. They appreciate the street vendors for their fresh produce, reasonable prices, and the unique character they bring to the community. They find the area generally clean and feel relatively safe during the day, though they avoid it late at night. Participant N interacts with the vendors often and enjoys the friendly relationships that develop over time. They believe that while law enforcement is necessary, it sometimes feels too harsh on the vendors. They advocate for more balanced interactions where vendors are supported rather than harassed. Improvements suggested by Participant N include more support for street vendors, such as better facilities or

designated selling areas, and additional trash bins to maintain cleanliness. They see the vendors as crucial to the local economy, providing jobs and affordable goods, and attracting people to the area. The variety of goods offered by the vendors is a significant positive for Participant N, making shopping convenient. They feel that small businesses and vendors could benefit from more support and opportunities. The vibrant atmosphere and strong sense of community are what they enjoy most about the area.

Participant O summary:

Participant O discussed their long-standing shop, established for over a decade, which sees varying levels of activity, peaking at the start of the month. Managing the bustling street outside is challenging due to the many vendors and businesses. Deliveries from nearby businesses and educational institutions influence access to the store not only from the busiest road but also through various routes. Cleaners occasionally handle waste management, but they are not involved in street maintenance. The presence of vendors and car guards outside doesn't significantly affect customer flow, as each person focuses on their business. Government and Metro interventions frequently regulate the vendors, many of whom are non-compliant. Despite this, there's a mutual benefit, with vendors and the shop drawing customers to each other. Police patrols and surveillance help to increase security, but there is still the issue of occasional theft. The nearby police station helps in reporting incidents. Participant O suggests relocating street vendors to safer, designated areas to reduce congestion. The building's management enforces strict rules against unauthorised vending. The shop contributes significantly to the community, supporting local students and residents, particularly those from nearby flats who use its services for laundry.

Participant P summary:

Participant P discussed several key aspects regarding the challenges and dynamics of their business environment. They highlighted a significant security concern where car thieves operate covertly, often targeting vehicles when the owners are momentarily distracted. Despite these challenges, they indicated a strong sense of community among neighbouring businesses, where mutual care and support are prevalent. Security measures include surveillance cameras and security personnel who patrol the area, contributing to a safer environment. Participant P expressed a preference for clearing away disruptive street boys, which would enhance the safety and orderliness of the area. Regarding the impact of government and private developments, Participant P acknowledged that these interventions, such as fencing, help control movement and enhance safety, especially at night. The use of public space outside the shop is managed, requiring permission to use it and ensuring that it's organised and maintained.

Participant Q summary:

Participant Q shared their experience working as a vendor in Sunnyside for six years. They described the area as bustling with activity and a good spot for business due to its high population density. However, they also face challenges, such as demands for protection fees from the police. The vendor community in Sunnyside is well-organised and supportive, with vendors respecting each other's designated spaces. The sense of community is strong, with diverse customers, including both locals and people from various backgrounds, frequenting the businesses. Participant Q mentioned improvements in relations with authorities, noting that vendors are now less frequently harassed thanks to many obtaining licences. Despite these advancements, not all vendors are licensed, leading to occasional issues. The vendors in Sunnyside jointly manage security, addressing thefts and other issues, making the neighbourhood relatively safe. They also rely on basic infrastructure to support their operations, though they manage their equipment daily by transporting it to and from their store. Regarding fees, Participant Q acknowledged that while they sometimes have to pay unofficial protection fees to the police, these are not formal charges for operating in the space. Despite these obstacles, Participant Q remains positive and committed to their business, hoping to expand into a more formal setting in the future.

Participant R summary:

Participant R shared their experiences and views on the Sunnyside area, where they travel daily from California Heights to attend school. They find the area suitable for business but express

concerns about safety and congestion. While they feel comfortable enough to conduct business and believe Sunnyside is bustling with potential, they are wary of the chaotic environment and high density of people, which can make them feel unsafe. Regarding the street vendors, Participant R holds a mixed view. They acknowledge the vendors' role in the community but are critical of their presence, noting that many do not pay taxes and some engage in illegal activities. This contributes to a perception of disorder and an unsafe atmosphere. They also believe that the vendors often contribute to litter on the streets and advocate for better waste management practices, suggesting more bins and cleaner operations. Participant R discusses the impact of street vendors on pedestrian experiences, describing the area as congested and challenging to navigate. They suggest that changes are needed to improve the flow of foot traffic and reduce clutter. On the topic of maintenance and infrastructure, Participant R sees room for improvement, particularly in areas like street lighting and cleanliness. They feel that better maintenance and more proactive measures by the government could enhance the overall safety and appearance of the space. Despite these criticisms, Participant R acknowledges the vibrancy of Sunnyside and sees opportunities for leisure and community gatherings, though they primarily refer to the more controlled environment of the mall rather than the open streets. They conclude with a call for a balance between the bustling market life and the need for a safer, more organised space.

Participant S summary:

Participant S owns a small convenience store that sells a variety of items, ranging from groceries and snacks to household essentials. They have been running this store for about ten years. Reflecting on the street vendor set up right in front of their shop, Participant S feels neutral. They recognise that the vendors are just trying to earn a living, and, in their view, the vendors don't significantly interfere with their business. Their customer base is slightly different, with people coming to the store often seeking a wider variety or specific products that the street vendors don't provide. Interactions with the street vendor are polite but limited to small exchanges like giving change. While cleanliness can be a challenge due to the proximity of the vendors, most keep their areas tidy, and both parties strive to maintain a clean environment to attract customers. When it comes to the way authorities handle street vendors, Participant S believes a better balance is needed. There should be regulations to maintain order without overly disrupting the vendors' livelihoods. Participant S thinks having designated areas for street vendors could provide a more organised and controlled environment, beneficial for both vendors and shop owners. Customers generally appreciate the presence of street vendors for their convenience and the fresh produce they offer, which enhances the local shopping experience. Over the years, Participant S has noticed an increase in competition from both other shops and more street vendors, leading to a busier and more vibrant area. Looking to the future, Participant S would like to see better support for both shop owners and street vendors, including more trash bins, regular cleaning, and a more streamlined process for obtaining permits. They also see potential for collaboration between shop owners and street vendors to create a more cohesive shopping environment, possibly through coordinated promotions or events to attract more customers to the area.

Participant T summary:

Participant T discussed their interactions and perceptions of a specific urban space. Participant T visits the area primarily for shopping, work, and communication, coming from outside the space, specifically Sunnyside. Due to the business opportunities and interactions with various people, they visit the area about three days per week. While Participant T appreciates the dynamic and educational environment, they express a cautious attitude towards safety, acknowledging it as a working space with potential risks. They find the area welcoming and conducive to business, but they highlight the challenges posed by private ownership of spaces. Despite the presence of waste, they applaud the cleanliness that regular waste management efforts have managed to maintain. Participant T describes street vendors as both convenient and challenging, recognising their right to earn a living while noting the potential competition they pose to formal businesses. They advocate for more municipal support and space for vendors to reduce unemployment and enhance safety, emphasising the importance of community support and shared opportunities.