Work and Livelihood Strategies in Johannesburg and Mumbai: The struggle for urban space

Street Vendors: Securing Access to Urban Public Space. A Comparative study between Mumbai and Johannesburg
December 4, 2010
Introduction: The concept of Urban Public Space

• Urban Public Space (UPS) is “defined as all physical spaces and social relations that use that space within the non-private realm of the city.” (Bhowmik, 2010)

• “Public space” refers to the formal spaces of planned cities, for eg: squares, parks, or promenades, for urban designers for leisure and aesthetic purposes. (Carr et al, 1992, Carmona et al, 2003).

• Some urban designers recognize the social significance of public space – to carry out the “functional and ritual activities that bind a community” (Carr et al, 1992), that encompasses not only buildings, objects and spaces, but also “the people, events and relationships that occupy them” (Madanipour, 1996).
UPS and the Informal Economy

- The workforce employed in the informal sector, many of whose livelihoods depend only on access to public space. (Brown, 2004).
- UPS is a resource to the urban poor.
- The urban public space question is central to the debates over street trading.
- Commodification of UPS – formal & in formal.
- “Culture of Control”
The Stakeholders

- The various stakeholders in relation to UPS-
  - The State (various agencies).
  - The Upper Class
  - Urban Working Class
  - Street Vendors
  - NGO’s & Civil Societies
  - Established Retailers.

Space is contested by different stake holders hence sustainability of street trading is depended on the legitimate access to urban public space & fixed tenure
Control over Urban Public Space: The South African context

• Colonialism and Apartheid

• Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP)- 1980s-1990s.

• After home-working, street trading is estimated to account for the larger share of these (informal sector) jobs. (Charemes, 2000) – 60% of Urban jobs in Informal sector.

• Urban vending is not only a source of employment but provides ‘affordable’ services to the urban poor.
Street Vending trends in S.A

• International migration

• Issues of citizenship – doubly vulnerable.

• Gender profile & Gender issues - ‘feminisation of labour’

• Organisational structures

• Sectoral retailing
Street Vending In Johannesburg

• **Sites:**
  1. Kerk Street – CBD.
  2. Park Station Taxi Ranks.

• **Structure of the markets:**
  1. Linear market
  2. Open air market

• **Challenges faced:**
  1. Storage,
  2. Health care - sanitation,
  3. Security,
  4. Child care etc.
Food Vending

Johannesburg Development Agency. (JDA)


• Licenses to be obtained for Food Vending:
  1. Certificate for Quality food (R 165- 1 Year)
  2. Vending License- 1991 (R 50 per month) *subject to availability of site to vend.

• Special Event License for Food Vendors:
  1. Environment & Hygiene Certificate (R25 to R 50 - Single event)
Street Vending in the Soccer city, 2010

- **Article 4.7.2.** of the FIFA by-laws state: No Person may undertake any event at a Public Open Space or in its surrounding vicinity, .....unless specifically authorized by the Municipality.

- Exclusivity for Corporate sponsors and FIFA affiliates .

- FIFA replacing the government structures !?

- “Giving voice to the voiceless"

- Behind every strong stadium is a strong woman.

- Wide open spaces
Issues for further deliberation and Conclusions

• The need of the hour: Providing security to SVs with regard to access to UPS and tenure.

• If the above is provided then Street Vendors can: 1) invest in better in livelihood methods, 2) voluntarily take responsibility of cleaning and security.

• For this to happen, unions, NGOs and civil society organizations need to step in to assist with upgrading their skills, training and accessing institutional credit.
• In fact, Duneier (1999) has specifically focused on the way street vendors in New York, produce safe public spaces and enhance the quality of life in the neighborhoods.
Conclusions (cont…)

- Street vending can be portrayed as a vivid example of grass-roots entrepreneurship, individualism and the exercise of civil liberties.
- UPS as a poverty resource has largely been ignored and security to use this resource is one of the key priorities as viewed by those working in the street economy will identify.
- Hence, urban planners and designers/urban policy makers need to include Street Vendors in their decision-making to make it more inclusive and equitable.
Thank you!