



Urban Management of Informal Commercial Public Spaces

By
Salma Mohamed Abdel Fattah El-Banna

A Thesis Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
In Architectural Engineering

Faculty of Engineering – Cairo University
Giza - Egypt
2015

Acknowledgements

This is dedicated to my mom, who always supported me and told me I can do anything. I'd also like to thank my father who was there for me step by step to make everything perfect so I could complete this thesis despite of any distractions.

Moreover, I am grateful for Professor Ahmed Ouf who supported my idea from day one and always guided me throughout my research with much valued input. Thank you for your thoughtful insight and innovative thinking, and for letting me run with this topic, I also extend my gratitude to Dr Hosam Mofteh who helped me structure my research and grounded me whenever my plans seemed unreasonable.

To Megawra workshop team, who took the time to help on my research with much valued input, time and effort. –You have inspired me greatly AB, SS, MH, AH, SA and MA

I am so grateful for my friends for their constant faith, support and encouragement, in days I needed most, you were the light that helped me finish. To RT, MH and MF – thank you for your optimism, prayers and constant advice at all times MD.

Finally, my thanks are extended to my family, who has supported me through my travels and academic endeavors. Thank you for your trust and faith, you are a true blessing.

List of Acronyms

CBD – Center Business District

SV – Street Vendors

GDP – Gross domestic product

PPS – Project for Public Spaces

FEDA –Federation for Economic Development Association

LED – Local Economic Development

MTC – Metro Trading Company

CJP – Central Johannesburg Partnership

NASVI – National Association of Street Vendors in India

CFPPS – Citizen Forum for Protection of Public Spaces

List of Figures

Figure 1- Bouazizi's Poster held during protest in Tunis.....	6
Figure 2-Downtown Cairo Congested with street vendors	11
Figure 3- Locating the informal sector	16
Figure 4- Characteristics of the informal sector	18
Figure 5- Painting of the bazaar at Athens, by Edward Dodwell	22
Figure 6- Coppersmiths Market in Cairo 1871 by Edward Angelo Goodall.....	23
Figure 7- Pike Place Public Market Historic District, Seattle Washington.....	26
Figure 8- Public space management and its key dimensions	32
Figure 9- Eight Cross-cutting steps to better practice (Public space: The management dimension)	33
Figure 10 - Market in Moez Street in Old Cairo. Source: Azab, 2013	34
Figure 11- Carpet sellers in Old Cairo. Source: Azab, 2013	36
Figure 12- Street Vendors on the streets of Cairo. Source: Azab, 2013.....	37
Figure 13- Street vendor profile. Source: Thabet, 2005	40
Figure 14- Percentage of Street Vendors in Egypt. Source: Thabet, 2005.....	41
Figure 15- Street Vendors Age Range. Source: Thabet, 2005	41
Figure 16- Products Sold by Vendors. Source: Thabet, 2005	42
Figure 17- Street Vendors Daily Income. Source: Thabet, 2005	42
Figure 18- Opinion of Cairo Inhabitants. Source: Author.....	44
Figure 19- Street Vendors Appropriation of Space. Source: Nagaty & Stryker 2013.....	45
Figure 20- Timeline of street vending on South African streets. Source: Author	48
Figure 21- Kerk Street, Johannesburg. Source: Yvonne Bwalya Bantubonse	49
Figure 22 - Tehran Street vendors continue on selling. Source: The guardian	50
Figure 23- Street Vendors in Tehran	50
Figure 24- Street vendors in the streets of Mumbai. Source: The guardian	54
Figure 25- Public Market in a Street in Paris. Source: Author.....	56
Figure 26 - Public Market services while street is closed off for vendors from 9am to 1pm on a Sunday. Source: Author	57
Figure 27 - Street market organised by government providing stalls and shade. Source: Author	57
Figure 28- Table showing comparison between cities dealing with street vendors. Source: Author.	59
Figure 29 - Timeline - street vending over time in Egypt. Source: Author.....	64
Figure 30- map of Downtown Cairo - El-Ataba and Opera Squares.....	65
Figure 31- Close-by transport modes to El Ataba Market.....	67
Figure 32- Street vendors at peak selling during Eid Al Fitr 2014.....	67
Figure 33 - Electricity being embezzled to showcase merchandise	68
Figure 34- pedestrian activity on the main street	69
Figure 35 - Activity Map in ElAtaba Square.....	70
Figure 36 - Activities and movement visual analysis.....	71

Figure 37-Providing continuous shade by Street Vendors	72
Figure 38 - traffic congestion due to street vending. Source: Ahmed Hayman	72
Figure 39- Video - shopper experience	73
Figure 40 - Vendors mid street.....	74
Figure 41- Shops and street vendors taking up space.....	74
Figure 42- Unloading merchandise at empty slot area	75
Figure 43- Storage empty slot	75
Figure 44- Elements of Street Vending in El Ataba Square.....	76
Figure 45- Innovative displays of products at AlAtaba Market.....	77
Figure 46- layout of street vendor display of merchandise	78
Figure 47- ATABA Square JULY 2014.....	78
Figure 48- Figure 40- Talaat Harb Street mid-day	79
Figure 49- Spaces for shopping on the street of Taalat Harb	80
Figure 50- Talaat harb street vending at noon.....	80
Figure 51- Talaat Harb Street June 2013	81
Figure 52- Turguman Garage Proposed Area.....	82
Figure 53- Turguman Selling Slots for Vendors	83
Figure 54- Talaat Harb Street After street vendors evacuation	84
Figure 55- Vending Activity in El Ataba and Moski Area.....	85
Figure 56- Comparison table with Cairo in retrospect. Source: Author.....	91

Abstract

Urban Management is the act of taking sustainable action to reach a certain goal. The core objectives of urban management are seen as understanding dynamic urban processes and developing effective interventions that contribute to the sustainability of urban development.

In many cities all over the world, urban public space has become the place of work of the urban poor. In these places of work, a set of processes arise due to a need for a hierarchy to organize and sustain the urging needs of the urban poor. As chaotic as these processes may seem at first glance, they are planned and are constantly modified according to needs and repeated mistakes. Through some studying and monitoring to these places one can find some concepts from urban management being applied, with further modification and effort, this thesis suggests room for improvement.

This thesis seeks to examine how street vendors use public space for their livelihood. The research is carried out in the Cairo metropolis, a nodal commercial center, with proliferation of street vending activities. The study employs a variety of research methodologies in gathering the data, including personal observation, focus groups, surveys of different stakeholders, and a field survey with a sample of street vendors.

This is an attempt to understand the current state of informal commercial public spaces, the typology of street vendors and compile a series of similar case studies from cities around the world in reflection with the case of Cairo.

Keywords: Urban Public Space; Street Vending; Urban Management; Livelihood Strategy.

Introduction

This thesis is an effort to find an unambiguous understanding of informal market spaces in Cairo that can aid decision-makers, urban designers and planners alike in proposing solutions for a pulsating problem that is currently expanding at such enormous measures. If in fact, the way governments deal with the problem, not nearing any practical solution to at least minimize the speed at which markets are spreading, we might as well decide to study in depth who street vendors are, how they affect the spaces they resort selling in and the reasons behind conflict between street vendors & government planning.

What has recently shed light to this phenomenon in the middle east is the spark of the entire “Arab Spring” in 2011; one street vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi, 26, a Tunisian young man who didn't have a college degree, having only reached the baccalaureate level, which is roughly equivalent to high school, set himself on fire in front of the headquarter of state in Sidi Bouzid in protest to the confiscation of his cart



Figure 1- Bouazizi's Poster held during protest in Tunis

which was his only means for a living and all that he'd had for seven years by selling vegetables, after severe negligence to his complaints filed to the state against one police officer who allegedly slapped Bou Azizi in public and told him “dégage” which is French for leave (which later became the call of the spring revolutions calling

presidents to leave) This lead to a Tunisian revolution that lasted for a month until Tunisian President Zein El Abedin fled from the country, meanwhile Bou Azizi died almost 18 days after setting fire to himself.¹

¹ Bouazizi: The Man Who Set Himself and Tunisia on Fire- TIME magazine 2011

The fact that one street vendor led to a humongous wave of change throughout the Middle East speaks volumes of the way these governments deal with public space management and is worth looking into the basis to why street vendors are claiming space in the urban realm. The events of the Arab Spring that took place in 2011 represent an “urban revolution” as Omar Nagaty and Beth Stryker have termed it; they claim that the revolution is seemingly rooted in unjust urban conditions and has been demonstrated in the public spaces of large cities across Egypt. (Nagaty & Stryker, 2013) The implications of unjust urban conditions continue to change the face of streets and neighborhoods where shifting local and national politics are contested on a daily basis.

The sidewalks of Cairo are for much more than transport; they are dedicated for other uses such as being a marketplace, a workshop, a billboard, a parking lot, an extended space for coffee shops or a range of other uses one may witness while commuting on the sidewalks of the city. Cairo visitors who are not accustomed to this constant circus of multidisciplinary events are constantly intrigued and overwhelmed when witnessing tens of pedestrians in Cairo embark on a vibrant obstacle course during their commute in the city center. This thesis focuses on the informal commercial activity in the streets of Cairo.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
List of Acronyms.....	2
List of Figures	3
Abstract	5
Introduction	6
I. Overview.....	11
II. Research Problem.....	11
III. Research purpose and objectives	12
IV. Research questions	12
V. Methodology.....	12
Chapter 1: Informal Economy in Public Spaces.....	14
1.1 Informal Markets	14
1.1.1 Size of Informal Economy.....	15
1.1.2 Locating the Informal Sector.....	15
1.1.3 Urban Revitalization.....	17
1.1.4 Dissecting the Informal Sector	18
1.2 Definitions of Street Vendors.....	19
1.2.1 Cultural Aspects of Street Vending.....	20
1.3 Historical study.....	21
1.3.1 The first commercial capitals	21
1.3.1.1 The Greek City	22
1.3.1.4 The Islamic City	22
1.4 Public Space Usage	23
1.4.1 Activity in Public Spaces.....	24
1.4.2 Commercial Spaces	26
1.5 Conclusion.....	28
Chapter 2: Urban Management	29
2.1 Urban Management	29
2.1.1 Management	30

2.2	Dimensions of Public Space Management	31
		32
2.2.1	Processes of Urban Management	32
2.3	Management Model – Commercial Spaces in the Islamic City	34
2.3.1	Geographical Distribution	35
2.3.2	Specialization	35
2.3.3	Neighboring	36
2.3.4	Rules of Neighboring	36
2.3.5	Street Vendors	37
2.3.6	Market Manners.....	38
2.4	Street Vending Management	38
2.4.1	Informality on the Streets of Cairo	39
2.5	Street Vendors’ Profile	40
2.6	Solution Measures	43
2.6.1	Relocation.....	43
2.6.2	Policy and Regulations	43
2.6.3	Governance.....	44
2.7	Street Vendor Typology	44
2.8	Conclusion.....	46
	Chapter 3: Case Studies.....	47
3.1	South Africa, Johannesburg.....	47
3.1.1	Definition of Informal Trading.....	47
3.1.2	Street Trading Regulations	48
3.2	Iran – Tehran, the Politics of Street Vending	50
3.3	India.....	53
3.3.1	Mumbai	53
3.3.2	Urban Responsibility	55
3.4	France	56
3.5	Street vendor similarities	58
3.7	Management Models	58
k		59
3.6	Strategies for commercial spaces	60
3.7	Sustainable urban management	60

3.7 Conclusion.....	61
Chapter 4: Public Markets in Cairo	62
4.1 Chapter's Approach.....	62
4.2 Overview on Street Vending in Egypt.....	62
4.3 The Case of El Ataba.....	65
4.3.1 Recent History of El Ataba.....	65
4.3.2 Street Vending Management	66
4.3.3 The shopping experience	73
4.3.4 Furniture of Street Vendors	76
4.3.5 Good's Display	77
4.4 The Case of Talaat Harb	79
.....	81
4.4.1 Relocation to Turguman	82
4.5 Relocation of El Ataba Vendors.....	85
4.5.1 Human Socio-cultural Needs.....	86
4.6 Conclusion.....	87
Chapter 5: Conclusion	89
5.1 Summary	89
5.2 Potential for Improvement.....	89
5.3 Critical Consideration.....	90
5.3.1 Comparison Table	92
5.3.2 Recommendations	92
5.4 Public Markets as the future	93
5.5 Suggestions for Future Research	93
Appendix A Observation Report.....	94
Appendix B Questionnaire	95
Image Credits	100
References	100
ملخص البحث	104

I. Overview

In recent years, academic research has shed a spot light on people's use of public space and has demonstrated a unique interest in the role of public spaces in urban life. This thesis acts as a compilation of ideas, case studies, theory and models of how informal commercial² public spaces can be dealt with, specifically in the case of Cairo. The work involved within this thesis is towards a unique approach for these spaces out of a belief that no two commercial public spaces are the same, each has its own problems, advantages and disadvantages that need to be approached individually. Also, one of the pillars of this thesis is the human component; street vendors, buyers, residents, pedestrians among other significant stakeholders.

In order to have a better understanding of our use of public spaces, the substance of urban management must be clearly identified, if its responsibilities are to be accepted or assigned and if they are to be carried out. A principal cause of weak management of urban areas in developing countries may be this lack of awareness of what urban management is what it entails, and who then must do it or might benefit from doing it. (Mattingly, 1995)

II. Research Problem

The research problem is; the threat informal commercial public space poses on the public realm due to poor urban management.



Figure 2-Downtown Cairo Congested with street vendors

² Commercial Public Space: a public space which is used for commercial reasons such as; selling of merchandise on public property.

III. Research purpose and objectives

This thesis aims to look at urban management as one of the most important aspects to ensure that a public market design works on a day-to-day basis.

- Focusing on the importance of urban management and shedding light on how improving this aspect can change the way pedestrians interact with spaces effectively specifically for Egyptian city climate, culture and space usage.
- Analyze current conditions and criticize current management aspects concerning the policies made towards informal commercial public space usage.

IV. Research questions

To which extent could public markets be used as a component in the broader civic agenda in Cairo; in terms of planning & economic added value?

- How Urban Management could help redefine the way government considers public markets in the 21st century?

V. Methodology

The methodology of this research is divided into three main sections; a) Justification, b) Informal Management, and c) Learning from Experience.

- Justification, a validation of the existence of informal commercial public spaces, and what they add to the city (economically, socially, and urban)
- Informal Management defines what urban management is, how informal commercial spaces are managed – how public space is managed, and their justification for maintaining their informality.
- Learning from experience brings forward ideas from similar conditions and from relevant experiences in the city throughout the past few years that can be translated into a means to deal with these spaces.

In order to understand the existing system of sidewalk uses, this thesis analyzes official reports and policies, uses the tools of interviewing and mapping fieldwork done in Cairo with street vendors around the city. The research was based on extensive theoretical background, from urban design science as well as management dimension. Also, the thesis benefited from studies of; human behavior and an empirical study based on analyzing data from observations.

Added to that, the research includes a few examples from similar cities dealing with these commercial spaces “formally” through organized governance which does not affect prices to cater for the marginalized citizens.

Furthermore, this thesis utilized primary data such as conducting a focus group, and a 6-day workshop with a team of undergrad and postgrad architecture & urban design students to examine the urban management of public markets in Cairo; their effects on city neighborhoods, how street vendors use public space for their livelihood, and to creatively seek participatory solutions to common problems these informally managed markets contribute with in the community. The workshop was carried out in the Cairo metropolis, a nodal commercial center. Firstly observing 3 different markets in Cairo, and later on choosing one of the three to further examine and study in terms of; day-to-day activities, movement pathways, critical points. From this process a few conclusions were gathered on the current management system; a) From the status quo of these spaces and b) the governance of these spaces. Added to that, observations were made on a range of different months in order to get a realistic perspective on the use of space and its management. A survey was utilized and photo analysis was used along with videos in order to understand the maneuvering of customers inside informal public markets.

Finally, the research will conclude some theoretical concepts that can be implemented locally and suggesting a few open-ended ideas for future researchers interested to take on a completion to this research.

Chapter 1: Informal Economy in Public Spaces

The first chapter introduces informal economy and seeks to give an overview of the complexity of public space, its use and users. The chapter is divided into two main sections; first section discusses related literature as an overview of the background of the thesis, public space uses with a focus on commercial activities, their history and uses. This is done as a means to understand the physical and human components of urban public space, the key subjects of management. The second section later on tackles the broad lines of certain theories that contribute as a strong factor in the research problem. Initially introduces the first commercial capitals, with a strictly economic and urban stance, and then discussing commerce in the Islamic city.

1.1 Informal Markets

The informal markets phenomenon is like any other phenomenon; widely spread in different parts of the world and increasingly in developing countries. Low employment rates, and high levels of poverty contribute to the high share of informal sector to some economies; such as in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco, where it reaches a percentage of around 40% GDP-according to World Bank. (Alter Chen, 2000)

Selling on the streets informally began to grow in Egypt under Abdel Nasser's rule in the fifties and sixties, and later widespread in the decades that followed, significantly rising after the Jan 25th revolution of 2011. (Qotb, 2013) What remains unchanged throughout the years is severe ignorance of the problem. Random raids are held to prove the government's vigilance, with minimal planning or means for a solution.

Street vendors have long been blamed for causing traffic congestion. Road's congestion is one significant and well-documented problem of the informal sector. According to a study conducted by the World Bank on Cairo Traffic Congestion in 2010, it costs the city 13-14 billion EGP (\$2.1-2.3 billion USD) (Nakat & Herrera, 2010) annually in wasted fuel and time: Bearing in mind that this was before the outburst of street vendors taking the streets which has occurred after the 2011 revolution. To allow traffic to flow more easily, the government constantly attempts to relocate street vendors to side streets or enclosed marketplaces. However, vendors, inevitably gravitate back toward the busiest and most profitable thoroughfares, where some would be willing to pay a fee for the right to do business, which causes it to spread due to widespread poverty, corrupt micro & small scale business environment, licensing complications, and the multiplicity of laws and legislation that hold a tight grip on those projects, the latest of which was the