

STREET VENDORS IN POST-REVOLUTION CAIRO: Victims or Villains?

Nezar A. Kafafy

Faculty of Urban and Regional planning,
Cairo University

Abstract

Since the 25th of January 2011 revolution in Egypt the phenomenon of informal street vendors has increased rapidly and continues to influence the everyday life of citizens. The negative impacts of this practice are numerous, and people continue to ask whether these vendors are victims or villains. This research investigates the phenomenon and addresses how to possibly resolve this issue and its consequences?

Key words: informal street vendors; informal economic activity, informal activities in urban spaces.

المخلص

منذ قيام ثورة الخامس والعشرون من يناير في مصر، أخذت ظاهرة الباعة الجائلين في الشوارع تتزايد وتنتشر، لتؤثر بذلك على الحياة اليومية للمواطنين تأثيراً سلبياً متعدد الجوانب. وتستمر تساؤلات الناس عن ما إذا كان هؤلاء الباعة جناة أم مجني عليهم. هذا البحث يتناول دراسة هذه الظاهرة والتحقيق فيها من خلال إلقاء الضوء على وجهات النظر المختلفة حول هذه القضية، ومحاولة إيجاد الحلول الممكنة لها، وللتنتائج المترتبة على وجودها.

الكلمات الدالة: الباعة الجائلين، النشاط الاقتصادي غير الرسمي، الأنشطة غير الرسمية بالفراغات العمرانية.

1 INTRODUCTION

In December 2010, riots in Tunisia were sparked by the desperation of a street vendor, Mohamed Bu'Azizi, who set himself on fire after his goods were impounded and he was humiliated by the authorities. This horrific event sparked a public outcry for democratic reform in Tunisia that spread throughout North Africa and the Middle East, precipitating the downfall of Presidents Ben Ali of Tunisia, Mubarak of Egypt, and Kaddafi of Libya. Since the dramatic event that rocked these nations, their political and economic structures have nearly collapsed, and those currently in power continue to struggle with rebuilding them.

In pre-revolution in Egypt, the phenomenon of street vendors was common and its existence fluctuated in quantity and location based on the intensity of police crackdown and the concurrent economic environment. Since the revolution the phenomenon flourished exponentially and is clearly visible on almost every street corner, impacting the everyday life of citizens. People continue to debate whether these vendors are victims or villains, and question how will democratic reforms solve street vendors' problems?

The main driver, or root cause, of informal street vending is simply the need for income, which has otherwise been rendered unattainable. The International Labour Organization's (ILO) defines the informal sector¹ as the production of goods and services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned. These activities operate within a small sector, with little division if any between labor and capital as factors of production. Labour relations in these activities are socially determined, rather than formalised with contracts and legal guarantees. They are sometimes supported by documentation only recognized within the informal economy.

Economic informality is established upon two parameters; the lack of legal business registration, taxation and licensing, and the operation on public property, or private property that is not legally appropriated for the practice. This study focuses on the illegal commercial exploitation of public space: squares, streets and station forecourts, and the mediation of the legal and policy frameworks of urban planning, land rights, roadway legislation and urban management to accommodate vending in public space. It is mostly in the informally appropriated public spaces that police crack-down, harassment and brutality are the common response of those in power, as was the case with those before them. The repression of street vending is not unique to North Africa. Totalitarian and democratic governments alike have been antagonistic to the sector. A wide range of laws and regulations make it difficult to work within the law. However, without alternative income, many are forced to resort to such practices. At the heart of this contest over public space is an unspoken belief that the 'untidy' poor and their 'anarchic' occupation of the street have no place in the global city, where the state and capitalist power are demonstrated through control of public space and the 'modernization project'. (Madanipour 2010, Brown et al 2010, Lyons & Msoka 2010)

This research analyses information gathered in September 2012 from: interviews with 26 key individuals of the formal sector including senior figures in national and international agencies, academics, national and municipal officials, politicians and activists; questionnaire-based interviews with 103 street vendors, drawing on a methodology developed in earlier fieldwork on similar practices in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia², and a review of relevant legislation and bylaws, newspaper and gray literature on events preceding and following the revolution, and publicly available statistics.

The research also examines the change in power relations at a unique moment in the history of Cairo. Post-conflict cities where the urban economy has to be rebuilt are

¹ 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), 1993

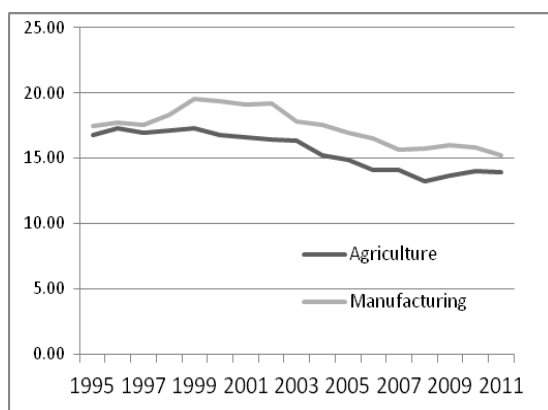
² Vendors were selected from four main market areas: Helwan (the area adjacent to the metro-station and its forecourt); Embaba (Embaba Tunnel and the slightly more up-market area of Ard El Gamiya); Demerdesh and Ramses (outside metro-stations, in front of public buildings and in near-by streets); and Tahrir (the square and near-by Abdel-Monem Riad micro-bus station).

perhaps an extreme example of the wider impacts of structural adjustments. Postneoliberal reforms, which have been transforming the economy of Egypt since the late 1980's, have been met with a sharp reduction in formal jobs, and have led to a shift of middle and lower-income workers into micro-enterprises and informal work. Cairo, however, remains in conflict as the burgeoning growth of informal forms of livelihood are met with a new recognition and dynamic attributed to the power of public voice that carries authentic claims for economic inclusion. The front lines of policing and security of the vendors is an ongoing battle that fluctuates as those in power struggle with superficially remedying the symptoms while still unable to address the reality of the root cause. In the meantime, order and access to the public arena of the city is being lost.

2 MACRO-ECONOMIC AND LEGAL CONTEXT OF INFORMAL TRADE IN CAIRO

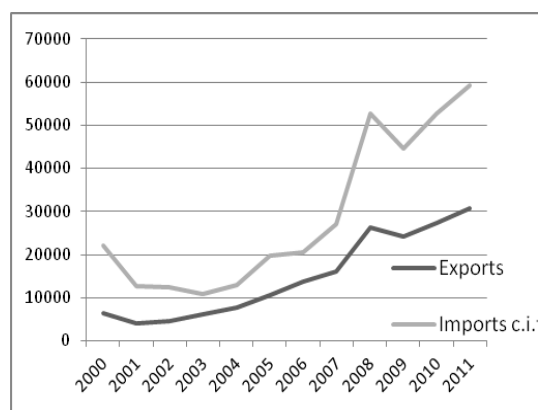
Since the mid-1990's the value added of manufacturing and agriculture, as a percentage of the GDP of Egypt, have steadily declined. Services have been the largest growing sector of the economy, particularly commerce [Figure 1]. Within the commercial sector, the increasing disparity between imports and exports has meant that retail distribution of imported goods continues to be a key livelihood opportunity [Figure 2]. Unemployment, which had dropped between 2006 and 2008, increased by nearly 50% from 2008 to 2011 and reached 12%. Consumer price inflation continues to rise faster than job opportunities. Accordingly, the Egyptian economy has been on an unsustainable trajectory of utilising the existing labour force since before the revolution.

Figure (1) Manufacturing and Agriculture, Value Added by Year (% contribution to GDP)



WB statistics (www.tradingeconomic.com, 25.10.12)

Figure (2) Imports and Exports 2000-2011, Egypt (million US\$, all partners)



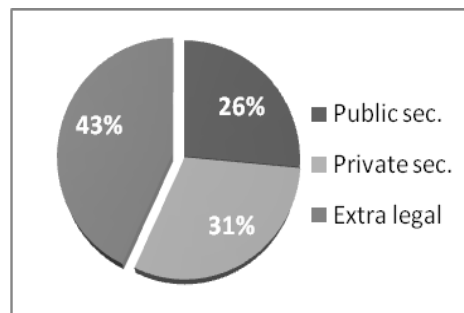
IMF Direction of Trade Statistics (5.10.12)

These trends, exaggerated by the recent political turmoil, clearly indicate structural macro-economic issues that cannot be rapidly corrected. Egypt is one of many countries whose workforce has responded to the job losses associated with structural

adjustment programmes with significant growth in the number of small and microenterprises. (El-Mahdi & Rashed 2009) GDP growth and investment trends have been accompanied by declining employment in the productive sectors. The current growth in exports is largely capital-intensive while unemployment figures have risen.(ECES 2012) The decrease of manufacturing and formal service jobs in the overall economy is linked to global economic and trade policy and cannot be easily reversed at the local level. What needs to be addressed is the accommodation of viable livelihood strategies for the poor in the absence of other employment.

Writing in the Wall Street Journal last year (2011), Hernando de Soto summarized key findings from his analysis conducted in 2003 of Egypt's informal (what he called 'extra-legal') economy, which was presented to the Egyptian Cabinet in 2004, [Figure 3]:

Figure (3) Distribution of Employment in Egypt (De Soto, 2011)



- *Egypt's underground economy was the nation's biggest employer. The legal private sector employed 6.8 million-people and the public sector employed 5.9 million, while 9.6 million people worked in the extralegal sector.*
- *As far as real estate is concerned, 92% of Egyptians hold their property without normal legal title.*
- *We estimated the value of all these extralegal businesses and property, rural as well as urban, to be \$248-billion—30 times greater than the market value of the companies registered on the Cairo Stock Exchange and 55-times greater than the value of foreign direct investment in Egypt since Napoleon invaded, including the financing of the Suez Canal and the Aswan Dam. (Those same extralegal assets would be worth more than \$400-billion in today's dollars.)” (De Soto 2011)*

The UNDP Egypt Human Development Report published in 2010 focused on the economic and social inclusion of the country's youth, identified street vending as the second-fastest growing occupation amongst this sector of the population (from 2000 to2007), following construction work. These occupations grew more than five percent per annum; adding more than 20,000 workers-per year. Although the report noted that the growth of street vending had slowed during the second half of the investigated period, it speculated that, as a long-term trend and along with some marginal farming

occupations, street-vending is likely to grow whenever unemployment rises, absorbing frustrated job seekers. (UNDP 2010:160)

As with the national picture, it seems likely that unemployment in tourism and productive industries will take several years to address. In the meantime, self-generated livelihoods may indeed be the only short-term strategy to combat increasing poverty and deprivation. The macro-economic conditions in the country in general, and in Cairo in particular, provide the necessary stimuli for the development of informal economic activity as identified by The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies in a 2012 study. (Abd el-Fattah 2012:3) This exceptionally relevant study of 180 employees and 90 employers in micro-businesses in Manshiyat Nasr, noted that trade stands out from both manufacturing and services in its incentives for informal engagement. Difficulties of finding alternative jobs among employees of informal trade were 80%, compared with 70% and 71% of employees in manufacturing and services respectively.

At the same time, the legal framework relevant to formal retail and trade is seen as a more complex barrier than in other sectors. 42.9% of employers attributed their preference for informal trade due to the bureaucratic and legal difficulties involved in formalisation; compared with 30.1% and 26.8% of employers in manufacturing and services respectively. (Abd el-Fattah 2012:11) This reinforces the understanding that the legal and economic factors driving people into informal vending are more influential for this group, in other words, street vendors are more likely than employees in informal services or manufacturing to have a realistic alternative livelihood.

3 INFORMAL TRADE AND URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

Like most developing and transitional countries Egypt continues to urbanize, with Cairo being the principal magnet for rural-urban migration. Of Egypt's nearly 90 million residents, it is estimated that 22 to 25 million live in Greater Cairo (up from an estimated 16 million in 2000). Estimates suggest that nearly half live in informal settlements, over a total area of about 94 square miles. In addition to the pressure on local labor markets from migration and population growth, there are some specific economic constraints. Post-revolution losses in foreign direct investment and the near collapse of tourism, particularly in Cairo, have further reduced employment opportunities in the metropolitan area. Urban development on agricultural land along the Nile is driving up real estate prices in that area while decreasing agriculture and work opportunities.

This requires the resolution of certain conflicting interests: The National Organisation for Urban Harmony, concerned with the preservation of historic Cairo and its urban forms and traditions, has highlighted the importance of physical solutions which reverse – and do not renew – damage to historic buildings and building fronts, without compromising the 'dignity' of public spaces. The value it places on this is evident also

in the design of projects they espouse which set out to accommodate vending without compromising these principles.

Starting from that premise, it is a question of resolving congestion issues and reappropriation of public space, rather than of demonizing vendors and clearing them. Forced evictions and relocation to sites not commercially viable for vendors to use, as has been done on several occasions, are dysfunctional solutions. The new locations are not based on the same strategic reasoning of the original locations selected by vendors, primarily selected to capitalize on foot traffic. Relocation of vendors to designated locations in relatively deserted areas has ultimately led to their abandonment of the new venues and return to their old places. As a result, public funds are lost on the constructed deserted markets.

4 POLICY AND DEBATE OVER INFORMAL STREET-VENDING IN CAIRO

Senior figures in most agencies understand the macroeconomic conditions forcing the growth of street vending and accept that a sustainable solution for Cairo's streets should strategically accommodate the historically prevalent and increasing trend. However, implementation of such an understanding is yet to take place.

A study by the UNDP considers that developing informal markets is very important. The UNDP estimates that at least 48% of trading passes through informal means. The UN-Habitat considers that street vending provides employment for poor people, but the current government continues to handle the issue in the same manner of their predecessors. It places street vending as the cause of congestion, an untidy urban form, and increased security issues, rather than accepting that it is a symptom of the deeper rooted economic issues. At one stage there was a move to implement one-day markets in Giza (i.e. weekly markets), but this does not adequately provide the same financial returns for the vendors, and accordingly does nothing to address the issue.

The interviews conducted revealed ambivalence on the understanding of the dynamics of the street vendor issue, and on its mitigation. There was consensus on the fact that the informal economy is critically important to the livelihoods of the poor; and that the way forward lies in incorporating the informal economy within the formal. Although many view the negative impacts, such as the widespread encroachments it has made on public space, as creating significant obstacles to formalization. The proposed steps to formalization included; training and education, inclusive and visionary planning, and licensing.

Street vendors are frequently viewed as a major cause of traffic congestion. Although they do add to traffic congestion by consuming pedestrian sidewalks and often encroaching on to the street and parked cars, statistics show that they are not of the primary causes of congestion along highways and arterial routes. The Cairo Traffic Congestion Study Phase 1 (WB 2010:xii) noted the high frequency of vehicle breakdown, accidents, security checks, random microbus stops, over flowing bus stops

and random pedestrian crossings as the key obstacles to free flow on arterial routes and highways. While certain notable spots on highways have more recently been taken over by vendors, this is localized, occurs in small numbers, and would be easy to control.

Press articles suggest that local opinion of residents and merchants within residential and commercial areas is not favourable to vendors. There are complaints about overcrowding of pedestrian and vehicle routes; blocking streets, harassments of females, violence, drug dealing, reduction in property values in neighbouring areas; and about social status. "These vendors take to the street, and they drag everything down to their level They're there and in your way, and as a resident, you can't do anything about it." (Egypt Independent 2012a). There is also resentment from formal shopkeepers, although evidence suggests that some proportion of shopkeepers are using street vendors to extend their contact with pedestrians and survive this form of competition. Key-informant interviews support this conclusion: "Tahrir is so bad! There is a sense of encroachment on space, as well as people", while another person says: "They (vendors) are colonizing more space everyday and crossing all boundaries, they ought to respect the space they are in, and actually they violate our privacy and humanity" (KI interviews).

Another public debate associates the increase in street vending with an increase in the harassment of women on the street. It should be noted in this connection that harassment of women in Cairo's streets is by no means new. Near the end of 2005 the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (ECWR) launched a campaign to tackle sexual harassment in streets and public places. To document the status they released a report in 2008, based on interviews with 1000 Egyptian and 109 foreign women, as well as with 1000 Egyptian men. Their sample suggested that 83% of Egyptian women and 98% of foreign women had experienced some form of harassment, while over 60% of the Egyptian men admitted to harassing women, mostly verbally (Rizzo 2012).

During the revolution, there was significantly less or even no harassment of women in Tahrir Square, although this would have been unthinkable only days before. Yet shortly afterwards harassment resumed. It is at least conceivable that this phenomenon may arise from the sense of economic and political disempowerment by young men. In turn this raises the question of whether a post-revolution society in which livelihood opportunities are respected and informal livelihoods incorporated rather than harassed and repressed, might lead to a reduction of sexual aggression and the renegotiation of a better gender contract.

To whom should public space provide a canvas? Who should determine the identity, content, use and control of public space? This debate is eloquently summarized by Sahar Attia³ (2012) who argues that public space should be an organic expression of gradually changing social norms and attitudes. Our research suggests that there is a great deal of contestation within society over the control and role of space. Neighbours,

³ Professor of Urban Planning in Cairo University's Engineering School.

near-by businesses, passers-by and vendors have differing perspectives on the question. People interested primarily in the socio-political value of Tahrir Square for example, have different objectives and demands. In turn this suggests that management proposals need to take into account a wide range of needs and consult fully with stake-holders. The dissatisfaction of neighbouring residents and businesses are flared by the rather militant attitude adopted by the Cairo and Giza governorates, as their approach seems to be that the provision of orderly solutions to the accommodation of vending can only come after a clean sweep of the streets. This is demonstrated in both aggressive action and aggressive public statement.

The policies proposed in the Governorate of Cairo are potentially very problematic in terms of their ability to provide sufficient livelihood opportunity for vendors and therefore in terms of their potential for sustainability. Stage One calls for one-day markets; however, the idea that people working close to the poverty line while working more than 70-hour a week [see below Sec 5] will be able to make ends meet on that basis is unrealistic. Stage Two involves the installation of municipal markets for registered vendors where they will not pose 'an obstacle.' This is dependent on the relocation of business to sufficiently pedestrian-rich areas, creating a significant planning challenge that would require stakeholder engagement to successfully accomplish. (Egypt Independent 2012a) While in the Giza governorate, the determined eviction of vendors by police resulted in outright clashes, injuries and fatalities. (Egypt Independent 2012b)

Concurrently, the adoption of zero-tolerance policing has led to contestation. The family of the 'slain vendor' reported in Al Ahram newspaper on October 16th, 2012 have refused to bury him before the police have given an undertaking to prosecute the officer involved in his death. Egyptian vendors are not unionized in any formal sense. Nevertheless, they do have some collective power to resist the state and in effect negotiate the terms on which they are, or are not, accommodated. Thus it is timely to discuss the future of street vending in Cairo, understand the nature of the phenomenon and its role in supporting the poor and their networks. Sustainable policies need to be devised, which allow the poor to survive this economic hiatus and allow them, and their children, to participate in the jobs created by macroeconomic policy in the country over the next few years.

5 PROFILE OF VENDORS

The vendors interviewed for this study were generally male (only 10 females interviewed among 103 respondents), and all female respondents were in Embaba, although a few were observed vending in each of the other market areas.

Very few respondents were under 18. The largest group was aged 19-34 (53%). Over a third percent were aged 35-54 and only nine percent of respondents were over 55. Two-thirds were married (63%) and one-third single (33%). Divorce or separation

existed in only 3 cases among respondents, while one female was a widow, and had been forced into vending by widowhood.

Education levels witnessed interesting findings as 28 respondents (27%) were in education for more than 14 years, moreover 6 of them were university degree holders, where 2 of them got masters degree, the first in international law, and the second in commerce. On the other hand 39 respondents were illiterate (can neither read nor write), where those mostly are migrants governorates especially the Upper Egypt neglected and poor governorates. The rest of respondents were 17 respondents had less than six years of education, but can read and write, while only 7 had the six years of education (primary level education), beside 12 respondent (12%) entered secondary schools, got education for 12 years.

Despite the small size of their businesses, 80 percent of respondents were the main earners in their household and a considerable majority were the sole earners (72%). They have dependents outside their household too. 37 of the vendors were born outside of Cairo (first-generation migrants), of which 22 sent remittances to the rural areas. Cairo-born vendors also have financial responsibilities to relatives outside the city, with 29% sending remittances to relatives in rural areas.

The Decision of Vending: are there Realistic Alternatives?

Vendors believe that there are no viable livelihood alternatives for them. 21 percent of the 103 informal vendors interviewed had previously worked a sales job. 41 percent had previously been employed; working for private and public enterprises, which had shut down, and a few had lost their businesses as a direct result of the turmoil such as one merchant whose warehouse had burned down. All claimed to have been involuntarily dismissed from their previous job. 28.2% were previously unemployed and nearly 8 percent were students. A very small fraction had been farmers (2%). Overall this suggests that, as is common in many countries, informal street vending provides jobs on a large scale for people vulnerable to a weak job market, and has done so for a long time. (Lyons and Brown 2010, 2011; UNDP 2010)

The Management of Public Space

Although the details vary from one market locality to another, the management systems of vending sites have a lot in common. There is a direct relationship between individual vendors, the municipality and the police. A few vendors are licensed but they are a minority. The overwhelming majority are vulnerable to enforcement or extortion. Vendors reported that most extortion is carried out by low-ranking police officers because the more senior people change every three years, so they don't have a chance to build up complicated bribery networks, but the low-ranking officers don't change, which is the level at which most bribery takes place.

An important element of the management of the space utilized by the vendors is the relationships among vendors on the site. There are two patterns: 1. A vendor starts individually, after working long enough he becomes a boss and calls relatives to come

and join, which increase his wealth and power; 2. Vendors arrive as a group, one of which among them is the boss. The group supports him working under his supervision. These are often people from Upper Egypt who come as big families. Vendor interviews suggest that migrants have a stronger tendency to use this system.

Cairo natives, on the other hand, are generally deprived of this support system; "people in Cairo don't know each other." (Vendor: Ahmed Ramadan)

Neighbourhood bonds can also form a basis for strong networks and social organisation among vendors. For example, vendors in one of the market areas surveyed in Embaba voluntarily move their trading area out of the way of commuters during the morning rush hour. During those times, they sell only to people who have gone out of their way to shop. They also pay a weekly fee to their elected leader, who negotiates with police on behalf of the group as a whole. Similar collaborations for maintaining the flow of traffic, avoiding conflict with neighbours and police, are evidenced in Helwan. Vendors there argue that there are unwritten laws which govern their behaviour and that newcomers quickly learn and are able to abide by them. Vendors from every site reported that dispute resolution is also carried out among vendors by their leaders. Additionally, much of the responsibility for cleaning and organising is undertaken by the vendors themselves, or by occasionally paying someone or by tipping municipal cleaners.

These examples suggest that vendors are capable of drawing on a range of shared interests and negotiating with local shareholders. Through this dialogue, they are able to develop their own management structures and to negotiate the use of space and the right of way. The hierarchal structure of leaders of the vendor groups can be utilized as representatives for dialogue with broader scale planning groups to tackle the perceived and real negative impacts of street vending.

Increasing Number of Vendors?

The number of newcomers to informal street vending sites in this study shows a clear increase over time. Figure 4 summarizes the trend, showing the number of vendors beginning to trade in their current market area since one respondent's arrival in 1967. It is evident from the chart that the percentage of new arrivals has progressively increased over the years, and more significantly in 2011 and 2012. Nonetheless, the new arrivals remain a relatively small proportion of respondents. However the investigation was primarily conducted in already well-established market areas; except Tahrir. Newcomers to the profession of street vending are spread along many streets throughout the city.

Growth trends were generally similar across all four markets studied, although there were some local variations as shown on Figure 5. The common pattern of certain years/periods exhibiting higher influx of new vendors reflects the direct response to more global economic conditions existent in the country at the time. With each surge, it appears that a new location would appear or be informally appropriated by the vendors.

Vendors were split on whether their vending areas had attracted many new vendors since the revolution. All 103 respondents answered this question. The majority, (59%), said “many” had come. In contrast, eight percent had noticed “few” and 30 percent responded “none.” Four others noted that “[new vendors had] tried but failed”, or that there had been only a temporary influx that later left the area.

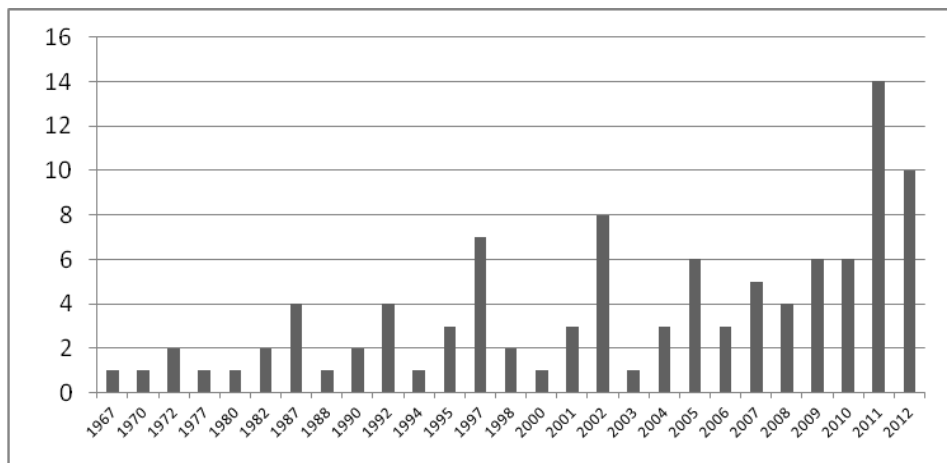
Vending and the State

The revolution has had a profound impact on the policing environment for street vending. Table 1 summarizes vendor experiences of policing and order problems; before and after the revolution. The general pattern of policing is consistent. Police impingement on vending activities has radically decreased since the revolution. For example, 76 percent of vendors said that they had experienced police harassment before the revolution, but only 33 percent following the revolution. Of course we must remember that the 76 percent may well have accumulated over a longer period, but nevertheless the consistent answers with regard to police actions against vendors must be taken seriously and all those highlighted with an asterisk are significant at 5%. In qualitative questions it was also repeatedly stated that the police made far less frequent appearances on the street since the revolution.

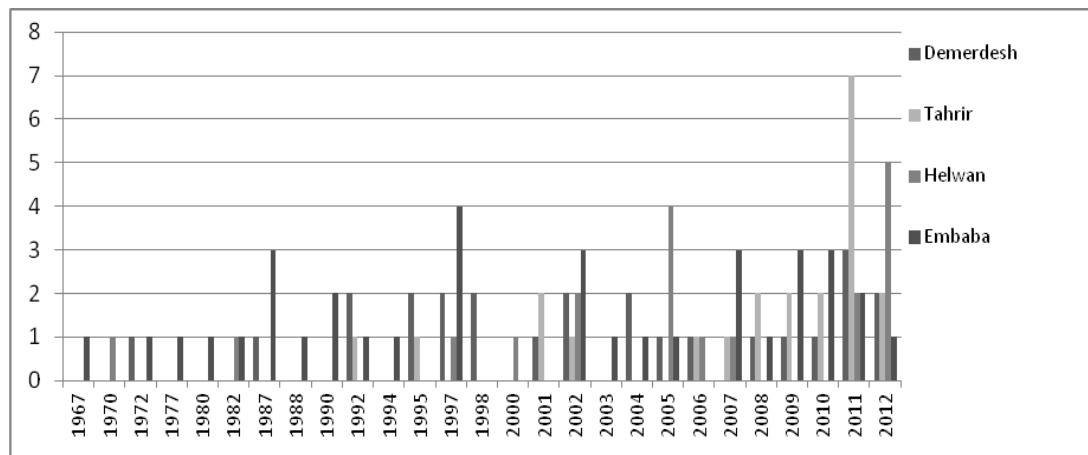
The picture with civil order conflicts, more related to neighbourhood residents or other street vendors seems to have remained the same or increased, although violence has been reported to have drastically been reduced. Violence had been experienced by 21 percent prior to the revolution, and dropped to only eight percent post, despite the greater crowding among vendors and the reduced police presence.

There is however mounting evidence that the tide is turning and that municipal authorities are aiming to regain control of public space. The focus so far has been on key public spaces: Tahrir Square in Cairo and Embaba market in Giza. The vendors are well aware of the significance of this drive, both short-term and long-term.

Figure (4) Vendors by year of arrival in current vending area



Extracted from vendor interviews 17-25 Sep, 2012

Figure (5) Vendors by market and year of entry (n)

Extracted from vendor interviews 17-25 Sep, 2012

Table (1) Order before and after the revolution

	Pre		Post	
	%	n	%	n
Police				
Harassment*	76%	72	33%	31
Confiscations*	65%	62	9%	9
Fines*	57%	54	15%	14
Evictions*	54%	51	28%	27
prosecutions	14%	13	1%	1
relocations	100%	95	1%	1
Civil order (non-police actions)				
Harassment	4%	4	6%	6
confiscations	5%	5	1%	1
violence	21%	20	8%	8
thefts	5%	5	9%	9

N (100%) =95

Extracted from vendor interviews 17-25 Sep, 2012

6 CONCLUSIONS

The study set out to investigate the influence of Egypt's revolution on the informal urban economy and street vending. Focusing on Cairo, the research followed key debates around street vending, identified its importance to the country's economy and the drivers for its growth, analyzed the profiles of vendors and their businesses, and analyzed the impacts of revolution on business, attitudes and prospects. As in many other countries, in Egypt the growth of informal livelihoods in general and street-vending in particular is not a response to changing policing patterns or idiosyncratic livelihood decisions, but rather a direct outcome of macro-economic trends and policy.

Understanding it is therefore pivotal to understanding the opportunities and constraints governing the livelihoods of the poor.

Key findings emerging from this study are as follows:

Macro-Economic

- a) In Egypt, the industries of manufacturing and agriculture are growing more slowly than GDP,
- b) Commerce, particularly the import sector, is growing faster than GDP;
- c) Since the revolution, tourism has suffered and the country has experienced capital flight;
- d) Unemployment remains widespread and growing particularly among those with poor educational attainments; and
- e) Distribution of food and imported consumer goods is a growth sector.

Role of Street Vending

- a) Most informal street-vendors are the main earners of their household, most of which are also the sole earners;
- b) Most remit money to their families in rural areas;
- c) Street vendors work long hours and some remain very poor;
- d) Most vendors have no other employment options;
- e) Most have low educational attainments; however some university graduates and post graduates have been interviewed in this research.

Dynamic of Street Vending

- a) Many street vendors have been in business in the same area since well before the revolution;
- b) Newcomers tend to gather in one place and are likely working with relatives in the same area. The majority depend on friends, family, or other contacts, for access to space;
- c) Access to space is mediated through some form of patronage. Only 20 percent had simply settled in their spot;
- d) Contest over space is largely managed informally among traders; and
- e) Chiefs or bosses collect money from vendors, regulate disputes and mediate conflicts.

The continual organic growth of informal street vending clearly has several negative implications on the city, nation and economy. The consumption of public space and reduced public provision for the necessary functions and flow of the people will inevitably impact everyone's livelihood. Efforts to mitigate the phenomenon within the context of national transition to address the core issue of a suffering economy are necessary. Police harassment has considerably reduced since the revolution, but is coming back in more visible, particularly in landmark areas such as Tahrir. In the

meantime harassment from civil sources appears to have increased, indicating discontent amongst stakeholders and residents. Understanding how street vending can be managed productively will help move forward these key issues of debate:

- a) The sharing of public space among pedestrians, vehicle traffic and commercial exploitation;
- b) The management and maintenance of historic spaces and buildings;
- c) Public respect and behavior, particularly gender relations in public space, which appear to have significantly deteriorated again; and perhaps most critically
- d) The new relationship between the police and the public, between monitors of the laws on public space and those who infringe them.

The eradication of informal street vending is not an achievable feat, particularly in light of the ongoing circumstances in the nation which will take years, if not decades to improve to the point where such practices will not be resorted to. In the short and medium term, sustainable planning and solutions which center on encompassing formal and informal development and working them together into a collaborated form would be the most practical approach. The models of collective management and collaboration that exist among the street vendors is the key element with which authorities need to engage. Through utilizing the representative structure among vendors, organization could be expanded and formalized as a medium for the management of public space. The strong home-town bonds among the families and migrants among the vendors develops a strong group ethos, which may explain the drop in violence among them after the revolution, in spite of increased numbers and decreased police presence. It is this ethos that the authorities need to learn from when dealing with the phenomenon of informal street vending.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Further investigation and research is necessary to develop sustainable solutions to this taunting issue. Institutional research, doctoral thesis and master's thesis could provide channels of solution development. The following are some recommendations:

1. Establish a national initiative for setting up a national street vendor's policy
2. Background research on international approaches to tackling street vending a. National policies.

For an example see India's National Policy on Urban Street Vendors; the 2004 draft is a better read than the 2009 draft.
<http://www.nasvinet.org/userfiles/file/National%20Policy-2004.pdf>

- b. Legal review to explore laws and regulations affecting street-vending. This should identify sections that make street vending illegal and sections that are impossible for street vendors to comply with. The following areas of legislation are relevant:
 - Constitutional rights

- Roadway/Highway laws: sections prohibiting obstruction of the roadway
 - Urban planning laws: sections governing land use, open space, and public space
 - Business legislation: registration, licensing, accounting and tax requirements
 - Municipal laws: sections governing maintenance of public order, local policing, market management, fee collection, licensing kiosks, powers of eviction, hygiene, etc.
 - Police powers for eviction and prosecution
- c. Economic contribution of informal economy and street vending; use of macroeconomic statistics combined with labor force surveys to provide estimates
 - d. Censuses of street vendor
 - For general resources see; <http://wiego.org/wiego/wiego-briefs#technical>
 - For specific notes on planning a street vendor census see;
 - http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Roever_WIEGO_TB2.pdf
3. Exploring different design approaches such as;
 - a. Working in Warwick. Durban, South Africa (book – available from www.wiego.org)
 - b. Inclusive Urban Planning, India (under production)
 - c. Universities student design studio
 4. Develop a pilot project with Municipal and University support, with the objectives of:
 - a. Establishing a small contained locality for the pilot;
 - b. Identifying key local street vendors organizations or representatives who can lead the initiative, and invite street vendors to form an organization;
 - c. Supporting street vendors in taking their own census;
 - d. Design proposals for improved street organization;
 5. Set up a cross-agencies advisory group that includes:
 - a. Representatives from key ministries,
 - b. Local government officers,
 - c. Parliament members,
 - d. University representatives (particularly from urban planning and economics)
 - e. NGO representatives from organizations working with street vendors
 - f. Street vendor representatives
 6. Encourage development of Syndicate or Association representing street vendors.

Acknowledgements

The author is indebted to Professor Michal Lyons professor of Urban Development at London South Bank University and Professor Alison Brown, professor of Urban Planning and International Development; the initiators of this research undertaken in September 2012. Their generosity is greatly appreciated. The author has collaborated with them in this project, which was funded by the British Academy. As well, I am

grateful to Arch. Fady ElSadek's advice, proofreading, fruitful discussions and encouragement.

References

- Abd El-Fattah, M (2012) A Survey-based exploration of satisfaction and profitability in Egypt's informal sector, ECES Working Paper no. 169.
- Al Ahram (2012) Family of slain vendor agree to bury body after police promise trial, 16.10.12, Ahram Online, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/55785/Egypt/Politics-/Family-of-slainstreet-vendor-agree-to-bury-body-a.aspx>, accessed 30.10.12
- Attia, S (2011) Rethinking Public Space in Cairo: The appropriated Tahrir Square, *Dialogue* 108 1/2011, pp 10-15
- Brown, A. (Ed.). (2006) Contested Space: Street trading, public space and livelihoods in developing cities, Urban Management Series, ITDG publishing.
- Brown, A and Lyons, M (2010) Street traders and the emerging spaces for urban voice and citizenship in African cities, *Urban Studies*, vol. 47, issue no. 3, pp 666-683
- De Soto, H (2011) Egypt's Economic Apartheid, *The Wall Street Journal* 03.02.2011, http://relooney.fatcow.com/0_NS4053_1416.pdf, accessed 30.10.12
- Department of Urban Employment & Poverty Alleviation, Ministry of Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation, Government of India (2004) National policy on urban street vending, <http://www.nasvinet.org/userfiles/file/National%20Policy-2004.pdf> , accessed 5.12.2012
- Egypt Independent (2012) <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/govt-poverty-rateincreased-252-percent-population>, accessed 13.10.12
- Egypt Independent (2012a) Cairo's governor is attempting to remove street vendors — again <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/cairo-s-governor-attempting-removestreet-vendors-%E2%80%94-again> , accessed 13.10.12
- Egypt Independent (2012b) Police shoot street vendor dead , <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/police-shoot-street-vendor-dead>, accessed 13.10.12
- Egypt Centre for Economic Studies (2012) Job Creation in Egypt: A short and medium-term outlook, ECES, Policy Viewpoint April 2012
- El-Mahdi, A and Rashed, A (2009) The Changing Economic Environment and the Development of Micro-and Small-Enterprises in Egypt in 2006, Chapter 3 in Ragui Assaad, ed., *The Egyptian Labour Market Revisited*, pp. 87 – 112, Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, online at <http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=H7zDZRfxJlQC&oi=fnd&pg=PA87&dq=Alia+Al+Mahdi+informal&ots=FK5IBZ5ofF&sig=8BSianoMk8IYbGQyiWIOEQzxKU4#v=onepage&q=Alia%20Al%20Mahdi%20informal&f=false>, accessed 30.10.12
- Gerges, D (2012) The Egyptian Moral Turmoil and Women's Rights; an Exploratory Research on the Phenomenon of Sexual Harassment, thesis completed at the University of Helsinki, <http://hdl.handle.net/10138/34038>
- Index Mundi (2012) Egypt: Imports by goods chapter, Source: United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database, <http://www.indexmundi.com/trade/imports/?country=eg§ion=1>, accessed

27.10.12

Lyons, M and Msoka, C (2010) The World Bank and the Street: (How) Do 'Doing Business' Reforms Affect Tanzania's Micro-traders?, *Urban Studies*, vol. 47, issue no. 5, pp 10791097

Madanipour, A. (Ed.). (2010) *Whose Public Space?: International Case Studies in Urban Design and Development*, first edition, Routledge

Rizzo, H (2012) , Creating Community around Women's Rights : the anti-sexual harassment campaign in Egypt « La création d'une communauté mobilisée pour les droits des femmes : la campagne contre le harcèlement sexuel en Égypte », *Égypte/Monde arabe*, Troisième série, Gouvernance locale dans le monde arabe et en Méditerranée : Quel rôle pour les femmes ?, [En ligne], mis en ligne le 31 décembre 2012. URL : <http://ema.revues.org/index3024.html>. Consulté le 15 octobre 2012.

Roever, S (2011) How to Plan a Street Trader Census, WIEGO Technical Brief (Urban Policies) No 2, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Roever_WIEGO_TB2.pdf, accessed 6.12.2012

Suad, J (1994) Brother/Sister Relationships: Connectivity, Love, and Power in the Reproduction of Patriarchy in Lebanon, *American Ethnologist* 21(1):50–73.

Trading Economics, trading and sector statistics by year, www.tradingeconomics.com, accessed 25.10.12

UNDP (2010) Egypt Human Development Report 2010: Youth in Egypt, building our future; Cairo: United Nations Development Programme and the Institute of National Planning Egypt

UNDP (2008) Egypt Human Development Report 2008: Egypt's social contract, the role of civil society; Cairo: United nations Development Programme and the Institute of National Planning Egypt

UNHCR (2012) Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), Egypt's presidential candidates vow to tackle poverty, 15 June 2012, accessed 13.10.12 at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4fe067082.html> [accessed 13 October 2012],

World Bank (2012) Reshaping Egypt's Economic Geography: Domestic integration as a development platform, World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department, MENA, 79241V1 http://www.wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/07/18/000356161_20120718014822/Rendered/PDF/712490ESW0v10P0nt0Platform0Volume01.pdf, accessed 13.10.12

World Bank (2010) Cairo Traffic Congestion Study: Phase 1 Final Report, , ECORYS Nederland BV and SETS Lebanon, Nov. 2010, 71845, http://www.wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/08/14/000112742_20120814112100/Rendered/PDF/718450ESW0Whit0ing0Annexes00PUBLIC0.pdf, accessed 13.10.12