Understanding the plight of Informal Economies within City Development Plan; A Case Study of Street Vendors and Hawkers in Fort Portal City.

A Research Paper presented by:

Mwirumubi Walter

(Ugandan)

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Supervisor: Georgina Gomez

Second Reader: Salomey Gyamfi Afrifa

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the International Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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Location:

Table of contents

Contents

List of figures

List of Maps

List of appendices

List of Acronyms

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals.

UGx – Uganda Shillings

UBOS – Uganda Bureau of Statistics

LC – Local Council

MOGLSD – Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development

URA – Uganda Revenue Authority

TIN – Tax Identification Number

NGO – None Government Organisation

UNHS – Uganda National Housing Survey

LG – Local Government

CESCRA – Centre for Economics Social Cultural Rights in Africa

OL – Opinion Leaders

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Abstract

This study aimed at examining urban safe space for informal businesses, specifically street vendors and hawkers in the context of city development agenda within the newly created Fort Portal city in Uganda. As the Uganda government concentrates on urbanization, with the creation of more regional and strategic cities under the decentralization system of governance, where local development is shaped and organized by local governments within their specific jurisdiction.

The elevation of Fort Portal from a municipality to a city status, means it gives it much power as a top independent local government unit to set and drive its own local development agenda. However, these development within local governments' development agendas most times have been found to miss out on key issues and challenges that affect the locals, hence failure to respond to local development realities and lack of community participation to shape them. As means to respond to these, the study understands the social-economic development challenges faced by local entrepreneurs within the informal sector industry (street vendors and hawkers), when it comes to urban space and safety within the city context and how they are or can inform Fort Portal city's development agenda/plan and or future development agendas of Fort Portal city.

Applying one of the core principles of decentralization that aims at bringing services near to the people and giving local communities opportunities to decide and shape their development agenda within their specific communities. This study therefore, while making an in-depth analysis of Fort Portal city's five-year development plan and by engaging a specific category of stakeholders, that is, street vendors and hawkers and the city leaders seeks to understand the notion of urban safe space and local's level of participation in shaping development agendas supposed to create an urban safe space for economic operation and growth within the city in the context of a developing country like Uganda.

Given the fact that the form of work these vendors and hawkers is informally and they operate in a city under a decentralized system of governance, the theoretical concepts of; informal sector, urbanization, and decentralization supports by literature review will form a critical part in understanding and analysing my research findings for this study.

Relevance to Development Studies

Any development to be sustainable, the notion of effective inclusiveness of stakeholders by participation in their own economic growth and development need to be attained. However, some discourses of development tend to privilege some sections of the society while undermining others, hence occurrence of unsustainable development. In this case, the rapid economic development of a city like Fort Portal has to include a better safe space environment for everyone to exploit/create opportunities that come with such developments.

For that matter it is the focus of this study to define the notion of urban safe space within a local development context while using Fort portal city's street vendors and hawkers by gauging their level of participation, in informing the city's development agenda as a case study. However it is of paramount importance to note that as Uganda starts to realise increased urbanisation more than ever, the more the informal sector continues to grow which heavily contributes to economic development just like in all developing countries hence there is no way this study can achieve its objectives without creating a somewhat interlink between the notions of urbanisation, urban safe space and the informal sector. That way we get to understand how those involved in the informal sector get to participate in decision making on issues directly affecting them in local governance. Thusly, the research findings of this study can be critical at forming part of the recommendations to key strategic development practitioners on the need to involve those in the informal sector like street vendors and hawkers in defining, creating and shaping urban safe space, for cities in developing communities like Fort Portal to realize *SDG 11* especially at this pivotal moment as urbanisation takes root increasingly in Africa.

Key Words

City, Urban Safe Space, Local/citizen participation, Informal Sector, Hawkers, Vendors, Local development, Local government/governance, Decentralisation

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Understanding the notions of Urban Safe Space in an Informal Sector

To understand the notion of Urban Safe Space, we first need to appreciate and define the term safe space; Mary Ann (2008), defines the term safe space as "places of safety', in the feminist approach where "discriminatory activities, expressions of intolerance or policies of inequity are barred". Safe space has also been defined as "interdisciplinary development of theories, models, instruments, strategies and impacts that build upon different bodies of knowledge and experience" (Pereira et al, 2015). Basing on these broad definition, for the purpose of this research, when we talk about urban safe space we're talking about an urban area where urban population like street vendors and hawkers efforts are recognized, are able to operate and carry on their social and economic activities freely without any form of harm or fear over insecure space tenure in the city, and do form a critical part of knowledge production building strategies towards urban development, planning and safety.

Urban safe space looks at a state where urban dwellers and the business community's safety is created and guaranteed as stakeholders within the urban development. The need to provide and ensure urban safety for both the formal and informal business community, it's a critical and key enabler towards Uganda's urban development agenda. Urban safe space needs to be created for informal economies especially the street vendors and street hawkers, for their "social-economic security" to operate in the city. Jacobs (1993), quoted in Artur (2020) states that "a well-used city street is apt to be a "safe street". When we talk about urbanization, street vendors and hawkers are key stakeholders of any Uganda's urban development, hence need "a safe operating space". Their unsafety comes, when their leaders and people entrusted with power tend to ignore their voice in informing urban development planning and their interest contradict with those of the street vendors (Austin, 1994 quoted in Forkuor et al, 2017). It should be noted that street vendors and hawkers continue to operate in an environment full of "confrontation with city authorities or regulators over space for business, conditions of work, sanitation, and licensing" (Anjaria, 2006; Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Milgram, 2011; Popke & Ballard, 2004; Skinner, 2008, quoted in Forkuor et al, 2017). Such challenges, faced with non-participation of street vendors with no room for negotiation created a hostile and unsafe business operation in an urban environment. As Laura et al,. (2015), "safe operating space has become a modern imperative. This requires transformative changes in the dominant social norms, behaviours, governance, and management regimes that guide human responses in areas such as urban ecology, public health, resource security (e.g., food, water, energy access), economic development and biodiversity conservation". To realize this, one needs to study and understand the characteristics, capacity size, welfare and social-economic contribution of urban population/dwellers like street vendors and hawkers to any city's strategic development agenda, and their level of participation in informing and guiding these agenda are not ignored.

More than ever, an increase in urbanisation in Uganda is contributed by the large influxes of people migrating from the rural areas to cities and urban centres due to lack of opportunities and lower standards of living in the rural areas. Most of these people moving to settle in urban centres reach unemployed and mostly youthful. It has been noted recently that for the first time in history, the majority of the people live in urban areas. (Tombari, 2019, p. 32) With no available opportunities for employment for many of these people migrating to the urban areas, many are forced to start daily earnings small scale informal businesses for survival like shoe shining, vending and hawking merchandise and food stuff on the streets and many other forms of the same leading to the ever expanding informal sector. This calls for the governments to make sure that such kinds of people in the urban areas are in well organized, protected and safe operating environment for their business growth and with proper facilitation get to be formalised. Hence a need for an inclusive and responsive urban space. However, it should be noted that Uganda's urban space has been characterized with increased insecurity, loss of income for low income earners struggling to find business space and due to urban fires, and increased inequalities between the formal and informal sectors (Twinomuhangi et al (2021), Mary Ann (2008). The struggle for urban safe space especially among informal economies poses development challenges among the many "urban poor". The struggle to secure operating space within informal economies has been the main ground for daily resistance between street vendors and hawkers against law enforcers (Pius, 2021). Daily resistance characterized by harassment, and confiscation of vendors and hawkers' goods in the name of organizing urban centre's by "street-level bureaucrats" as defined by Lipsky (1969), making them more vulnerable within their employment (Pius, 2021). As noted, majority of these vendors struggle on their own to find an easy and affordable space within Uganda's urban characterised with demolishion of their small established semi structures, operating on street roads due to failure having them proper zoned public space causing inconvenience the flow traffic, and even take away customers from formal businesses owners, encroaching wetlands as means of space survival within a limited urban space Gumisiriza, P (2021), Muhimbo, E. (2022). Lack of social security, congestion in an insecure and inaccessible environment, unexpected forceful evictions without proper alternative relocation plan, and bribes to street enforcers makes urban space unsafe for these vendors and hawkers to operate and contribute towards urban development (Graeme Young, 2018; Lindell & Ampaire, 2019). These problems however being well pronounced have not been well curbed and this can be attributed to lack of room for participation and forming a voice of those in the informal sector like street vendors and hawkers in urban planning and setting strategic development agendas.

Research Objectives and Questions

In trying to understand the notion of urban safe space and its interlink with the concept of local participation for street vendors and hawkers in Fort Portal, my research study relied on the following guiding objectives.

Specific Study Objectives

I. To define the term urban safe space in local development context

II. To examine the concept of local participation of street vendors and hawkers in decision making processes within the context of local governance especially in city development plans/strategies.

III. To examine the role(s) of Fort Portal city leadership structure and local development actors in creating urban safe spaces for street vendors and hawkers.

IV. To understand Fort Portal city five-year strategic development plan cycle and how its process and agenda cater for urban safe space while using street vendors and hawkers as a case study.

Main Research Question

In order for me, within this study to have a proper understanding and receive an informed mind on street vending and hawking in Fort Portal city, the researcher was guided by a set main question on; How is the city's five-year strategic development plan creating room for an inclusive urban safe space for street vendors and hawkers in Fort Portal?

Sub-Questions

In addition to the above main question, this research has been guided by the following sub-questions to help question deeper into the research topic and develop unstructured questions during the interview with the targeted population in the field;

I. What do the notions of urban safe space and local/citizen participation in local governance understood by street vendors, hawkers and the local leaders?

II. What are the obstacles/challenges in the realization of urban safe space for the street vendors and hawkers in Fort Portal? What strategy is there to address these obstacles hindering local entrepreneurship development?

To answer the main question and its sub questions, I have reflect on the already existing city five year strategic plan as a development legal guiding document/tool for Fort Portal city. However, as a researcher I do understand that this alone its not enough to answer my set questions, hence individual and key stakeholder group interactions and interviews to examine their understanding of the topic and how they have been forming part of setting and shaping development agenda within the city have been applied. All these have been supported with the already existing literature to come up with a solid stand on the findings.

1.2 Justification

Even though studies and research papers on Uganda's street vending and hawking in general have been conducted, a study on street vending and hawking in Fort Portal city would form another source knowledge and information in the country and could trigger further discussions and studies. I look at how urban safe space is an interdependent of local participation in urban planning and design. As Fort Portal city has been in the process of developing its next five year

strategic development agenda (2020/2021–2024/2025), which has been presented and approved by the city council this year 2022. Like any other growing Uganda's urban town, small-scale informal businesses do dominate the town challenged with service access barriers (Tom, 2021). This study examines the plight of street vendors and hawkers in claiming urban safe space, while focusing on their level of involvement and active participation in setting development agenda within the city five (5) year strategic development plan. Given the fact that the country's population mainly continue to depends on the informal economy with a daily increase in number of street vendors and hawkers is increasing daily in Uganda and Fort Portal in particular, the struggle for urban safe space continues to intensify (Christine & Ilda, 2019). Understanding the meaning of urban safe spaces in urban development context for such population is critical within this study.

I focused on investigating the gaps within the city strategic development document, in relation to ground fact findings from the vendors and hawkers, government technocrats, customers, and political and opinion leaders and make recommendations for strategic intervention to the city development stakeholders on strategic development interventions to create urban safe space for the street vendors and hawkers in Fort Portal. The findings on ground and within the city development agenda inform the research conclusion and recommendations at the end of this paper.

Chapter 2

2.1. Theorizing Decentralization, Urbanization, Informal sector and Street Vendors' Participation in City Governance for Development strategy towards Urban Safety

Introduction

In analyzing, my research findings from the collected data collected from field inter-views. I identified the concepts of decentralization, local governance participation governance while linking them to the notions of participation and power dynamics setting urban development agenda. These concepts have been selected based on the research topic and the field findings, as critical enablers in understanding the plight of street vendors and hawkers in the context of urban development and space.

There are some existing literature by different scholars to back and guide it while taking into account their limitations involved to properly guide the findings herein as expounded in this chapter; To well understand the notion of local/citizen participation and what it means in this study, one would have to first understand the concepts of decentralization and link the notion of participation and decentralization concept to urbanization and the growing informal sector businesses and how they facilitate or hinder urban safe space. Decentralization within this this study refers to the transfer of administrative and political powers from central to regional or sub-national governments. (Roberts, 2008, p. 84). In that regard, decentralization leads to shedding off of governance powers to local authorities at the district or city level to lowest village or zone levels.

2.2. Dimensions of decentralisation

There are three dimensions in which decentralisation unfolds and in each of these types, decentralisation takes on different objectives, degree and means of power namely political and administrative (Mohammad et al, 2016, p. 695). Among the dimensions of decentralisation there is political decentralisation, administrative and fiscal decentralisation.

Administrative decentralisation involves the transfer of authority from a higher level of government to a lower one and entails delegation of decision-making, placement of authority allowing a greatest number of actions to be taken where most of the people reside, removing functions from the centre to the periphery, allowing participation of a wider involvement of people in whole decision making process (ibid, p. 697). For fiscal decentralisation, it involves the assignment of functions and responsibilities regarding revenue collections and spending to sub-national government institutions (ibid, p.696). These funds are in budgetary process passed on from the central government to the local government to be utilised according to the needs arising at the very local level without any form of interference by the central authority. Whereas when we talk about political decentralisation, we're talking about alteration of power structure of the central government to the lower levels of government institutions (ibid at p.695). Under political decentralisation, the local governments are enabled with their own political set up tailored to serve the needs of locals also in a way that is easily approachable for the locals. Therefore it in those three dimensions that decentralisation takes shape to be effective to in its application at the local level of governance.

2.3. Local Governance Participation

In understanding local governance in decentralized local governments like cities, I will first borrow the definition of governance. Governance has been defined as the rules and norms guiding collaborative decision-making (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Going by this definition, local governance means having collaborative local resource management by all actors affected by the decisions to be understood in a specific local government like Fort Portal city. It should be noted that the whole idea of decentralization as discussed above sums up the position of enabling citizens to take the central role, to participate in the political, social, and economic processes by determining how they wish to be governed and development priorities.

When we talk about local/citizen participation in local governance, we're talking about ordinary citizens like *(street vendors and hawkers in this case)* being able to assess their own needs and participating in local development planning and budget monitoring (New Tactics in Human Rights, 2012). In this regard the locals are presented with a blank cheque to determine their own welfare and set when and how it should come to them by making the way clear to the government. This kind of special citizen participation in local governance is important in improving public resource management, and reduce conflicts and discrimination or isolation of others at the expense of developments while reducing corruption among public servants by making them and their leaders accountable to the people (ibid). So, today, citizen participation in local governance has become the bedrock of good governance across the world; the more people can participate freely in the way they are governed right from the local level, to better the governance of society.

However, for this kind of participation to be effective it is important to note that there should be the existence of constitutionalism, that is, rule of law whereby the law is interpreted and implemented as provided. This helps in implementing the provisions of local governance in a country hence facilitating thorough civic participation in the affairs of local government. Arguably, citizen participation in local governance therefore begins at the right of the locals to choose leaders of their choice to govern them, leaders that can listen and that they have studied and know can work and represent their views well as they are. This also applies to choosing leaders that occupy the command posts in the central government. Thus, it is key that freedoms and rights are granted to the people to have a greater say in the choice of their leaders, it is that way that citizen participation in local governance and development is facilitated.

The stakeholders' participation concept forms a critical part of decentralized local governance for any effective local development. When a section of stakeholders (street vendors & hawkers) does not form part of participating in setting development agendas and their voices are heard and respected by those entrusted with power, realizing a safe urban environment becomes hard to realize. However, "as knowledge becomes increasingly specialized and distributed and as institutional infrastructures become more complex and interdependent, the demand for collaboration increases" (Ansell, 2008). Ansell (2008) goes further to elaborate that "collaboration also implies that nonstate stakeholders will have real responsibility for policy outcomes. Therefore, we impose the condition that stakeholders must be *directly engaged* in decision-making" (ibid). However, within the concept of street vendors and hawkers' participation, the challenge of power imbalances between them (vendors) and other stakeholders cannot be ignored when it comes to collaborative governance and participation (Gray 1989; Short & Winter 1999; Susskind & Cruikshank 1987; Tett, Crowther, & O'Hara 2003; Warner 2006, quoted in ibid).

In a Note by World Bank (1996), the subject of local participation is examined and in there it is noted that, citizen participation in the decision making and development activities of local governments can produce more efficient and effective delivery of services by the public sector. This means the notion of local participation is an important one and if well used in any area of local governance, positive results for everyone in terms of better service delivery would be obtained. The Note further explains that by encouraging this local participation, local governments get to act in one of the three roles, that is, as "intermediary", as "creator of an enabling environment" or as "direct provider". (ibid) When playing as intermediary between citizens and central government, local governments help facilitate citizens with access to information, resources and power controlled by the state, bilateral and multilateral donors and others, when playing as creator of an enabling environment, without this kind of environment, local citizens would not be able to participate in their local governance but with it in place, it is explained that opportunities for initiative to be taken by previously marginalised or excluded groups are expanded as they are provided with an opportunity to express their opinions, take responsibility for decision making, implementation and operations and make their voices heard and with local government playing the role of provider, there is great potential with participation of the locals, for local government to provide services directly especially when increasingly some specified responsibilities assigned to local governments can be contracted

out to the private sector, NGOs or community organisations and all this makes participation even easier (ibid). This shows how important and a tool, local participation can be in driving development and streamlining service delivery to the citizens, however this Note rather gives a general overview of local participation and importance of the same and does not link the same to the informal sector as a driver and creator of urban safe space for urban dwellers like street vendors and hawkers as our study seeks to do.

2.4. Urbanization

Decentralization as explained above has resulted into creation of local governments, which have resulted into urbanization. We cannot talk about local participation in urban development without a brief definition about urbanization concept. Urbanization has been defined to refer to the steady increase in the number of people living in the cities or urban centres. (Tombari, 2019, p. 32). "More than half of the world's population now live in towns and cities and that figure is projected to rise to 75% by 2050 (United Nations Population Division, 2014), with most of this urban growth concentrated in Africa and Asia" (Awumbila, 2017). This trend of urbanization continues to dominate the global social economic development in our society. Societies being transformed from the traditional rural setting into urban development agenda, has increasingly become very visible of recent in Africa particularly, with accumulated growth rate of cities (ibid). Urbanization in Africa is currently growing at a 3.2% rate annually and is estimated to be at 20% of the global urban population by 2050 (Burak Güneralp et al, 2017). This explains how the notion of urbanization is shaping Africa's development agenda. With an increase in the search for economic opportunities by the urban population, Africa's growing cities provide opportunities for entrepreneurship (Awumbila, 2017), in many areas and sectors including street vendors and hawkers within the informal sector businesses.

2.5. Informal sector/businesses

In this study as we've seen, also a special focus on the informal sector within growing urban setting its very critical given that our selected group of people operate informally hence the need to understand the informal sector. The informal economy refers to a subset of unincorporated enterprises not constituted as separate legal entities independently of their owners thus these enterprises are owned by people, typically operating at low levels of organisation, on a small scale and with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production. (OECD/International Labour Organisation, 2019). While Informal enterprise/economies as per Uganda's definition is any business employing less than 5 people, with no form of legal or formal structures (Abdu et al., 2007). However this definition contradicts Uganda's revenue authority (URA) Act that subjects these types of income earners to legal tax registration with individual tax identification numbers (TINs). With increased urbanisation which is not properly curbed by more employment opportunities for those trekking to cities (Awumbila, 2017), more and more people have been forced to operate small enterprises informally hence leading to the increased growth of the informal sector businesses. International Labor Organization (2018) data, quoted in Petrova (2019), indicated that "close to two billion people world-wide are employed in the informal economy. This constitutes nearly 60 percent of the world's working population". World Bank (2016) research as quoted

in Islam et al (2019), "the informal sector comprises at least 4% to 6% of total GDP in developed countries and more than 50% in those low developing countries". This explains the magnitude of the sector in developing countries. This explain the magnitude the sector has on developing economies in Africa.

2.5.1. Street Vendors and Hawkers

Informal sector has a specific category of street vendors and hawker, which is the primary target population for this study. A hawker is one that moves or offers goods for sale by going from house to house, street to street, etcetera (Hornby, 1989, p. 574) whereas a vendor is one that sells food or other small items from a stall in the open air. (ibid at p. 1414). By those definitions, when we talk about a street hawker, it is that person that hawks/moves around the streets of cities and other urban areas like Fort portal city selling his/her merchandise and for the vendors, they don't move but rather have small stalls and kiosks on streets as their stations of operation to sell their merchandise. World over, street vending in urban areas has been one major contributor to employment and income (Chen, 2004; Donovan, 2008 quoted in Forkuor et al, 2017). However, street vending at some point has been and continue to be regarded as public nuisance by some sections of public (Bhowmik, 2003), resulting into vendors and hawkers being confronted by local authorities over urban space for their business operation ((Anjaria, 2006; Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Milgram, 2011; Popke & Ballard, 2004; Skinner, 2008 quoted in Forkuor et al, 2017). These confrontations have resulted into, contradictions and competing interest between vendors and their local leaders ((Austin, 1994 quoted in Forkuor et al, 2017). These urban conflicts and differences in interest make it hard for street vendors to transact their street businesses, and access to public space sometimes hard. This link us to the concept of local participation in urban planning and governance by street vendors and hawkers as key stakeholders in any urban development.

In summary, Roberts (2008) explains that decentralization promotes and encourage people's participation and democratically giving birth to the notion of local governance participation. In that regard for the purpose of this study, local participation is supposed to be an opportunity for the locals like street vendors and hawkers to participate in city's knowledge production and strategic decision making as far as creation of an urban safe space is concerned for their safe economic operation within Fort portal city. Vendors get involved in the decision making process in which they wish to be governed while setting their needs straight for the local leadership to consider. The literature it indeed appreciates the notion of local participation under decentralisation as key enabler towards improving service delivery to the locals. This gives my study a fertile ground to interlink the notions of urbanisation, informal sector and local participation in key development strategies of urban areas around Uganda in creation of an urban safe space for street vendors and hawkers in Fort Portal City. This chapter primarily has given a general overview selected theory, a detailed Uganda's specific on these notions and concepts of decentralization, local participation, urbanization and informalities in chapter 4, hence link to my field findings in chapter 5 and 6.

Chapter 3

3.1. Research methods and methodological Journey

Introduction

Based on the nature of the case study, this research is dependent on qualitative research, applying the purposive sampling research method. Because qualitative research is flexible for interpretation and depends on the sites of the research reality. Also qualitative research approach is found important to dig out the deep inside problem of the area. The researcher and his team (research assistants) used semi-structured interviews as it "enables participants to present their individual independent understanding and experience" (Nigel King et al, 2019). In-depth face to face interviews, focused group discussions and key informant interviews were be conducted (Steinar & Svend, 2009).

In need to "recognise that different forms of knowledge are valuable" (Gaillard et al, 2016), the application of semi-structured tools interview gave us an opportunity to generate more in-depth questions and create a discussion that reflected the notion of understanding urban safe space, stakeholders' participation in strategic planning for urban safe space. During the interview the researchers introduced the concept of urban safe in Fort portal to be defined by the interviews in their local language (*omwanya murunga gwo'kukoramu mutawuni ya Fort Portal niguya*). In their definitions, key words that came out were; inclusive, space security, leadership, organized zoned places, involvement, access to public services, and development for us all. This formed the base for our interview with the participants as some of the interview questions were generated based on their individual definition of the concept of urban safe space. To have a more understanding of the research topic, the use of secondary source of data has been applied in this study. Sourced of secondary data to support the researchers argument from the findings while applying primary data were mainly from academic publications, journals, national statistics reports, NGOs studies, where the researcher applied "Google search engine portal" as means to get secondary data sources.

3.2. Purposive sampling technique

The researcher applied a sampling technique, "that is representative of the population to be studied" (Nigel King, 2019). Purposive sampling (Etikan et al, 2016), that "represents a group of different non-probability sampling techniques. Also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, purposive sampling relies on the judgement of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (e.g., people, cases/organisations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied" (Rai & Thapa, 2015). The main goal of the researcher to apply purposive sampling was to have participants who are of interest and best positioned to answer the questions (ibid). In the field, I looked at the sample of individuals to be included in the sample size based on willingness, diversity, capacity, work experience for more than one year, influence in urban space, and knowledge about vending and hawking in Fort Portal (ibid). Fort portal being comprised of two city division, north and central divisions, a total of 12 street

vendors, 3 hawkers, 7 political leaders, 3 technocrats, 3 religious and cultural leaders, and 1 customer were interviewed during a 7 days data collection exercise.

3.3. The Research Studied Area

This research, the study took place in the newly created Fort Portal city in the Western part of Uganda, East Africa. Fort portal city was selected because on 1st of July, 2020, Fort Portal was elevated by the government of Uganda from a municipality to a city (ACODE, 2020, p.1) This was made so to drive the economic development of Uganda but also to bring services nearer to the people which otherwise would be hard to achieve at a municipal level. In that regard, Fort Portal City came up with a five year development plan meant to steer and cause serious economic developments within the newly created city.

Fort Portal as one of the fast-growing and developing city in Uganda. The city is surrounded by Kabarole District which neighbours Kasese, Bunyanga and Kamwenge Districts in the South, Bundibugyo and Ntoroko District in the west, Kyenjojo District in the east and Kibale district in the north. The city is well known for its attractive geographic nature of the tropical wet climate, stalagmites, surrounded by over 50 creator lakes, national parks and Rwenzori glaciers mountains (Ismail & Moreen, 2017). Fort Portal city is approximately 297 km by road to Uganda's capital city Kampala (ibid).

An Extracted Diagram Showing the Map of Fort Portal City
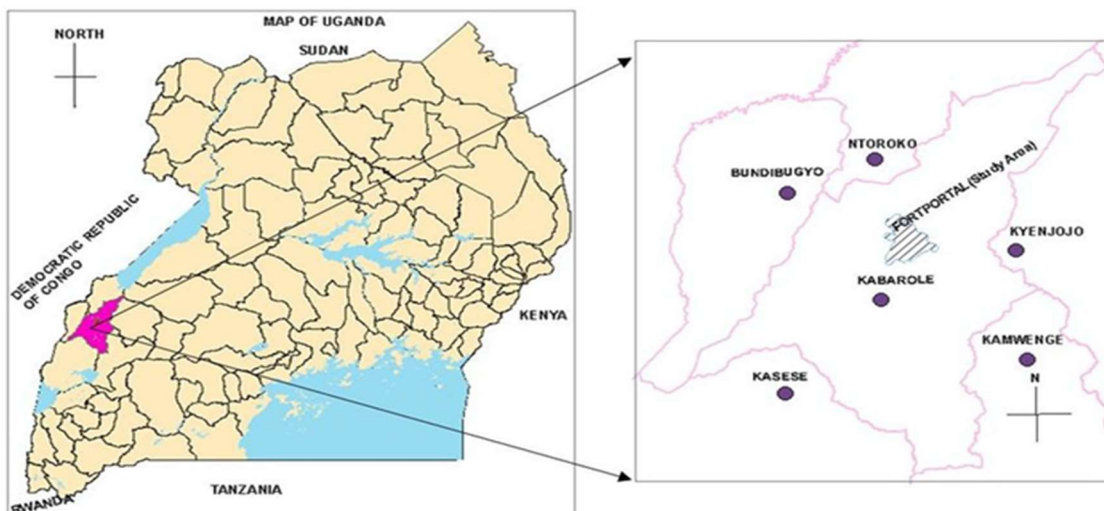
Source: Ismail Wadembere and Kobugabe Moreen. (2017)
https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Location-of-fort-portal-in-Uganda-and-its-neighboring-districts_fig1_320422816

3.4. Data Sources and data collection instruments

In the study, as a researcher I applied both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data collected through the data collection instruments of in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussion, and observation. Whereas secondary data for literature

review, discussion and comparison from existing data sources of research papers, academic instrument, national statistics reports, NGOs studies, where "Google search engine portal" as means to get secondary data sources was applied.

In the field, having access, a well-informed audience, grounded and detailed explained data sources, prompted me to have two gatekeepers, with one connecting the research team to the street vendors and another to the political system and technocrats within the city. Data collection was done by the researcher himself assisted by two research assistants to help in the easy, fast, and smooth process of collecting data. Am from the area with the local knowledge and experience, but for the last ten years have spent most of my time in Kampala, hence the gatekeepers were of much importance for me to have direct access to the primary targeted population. The research assistants were voluntarily provided to me by my former employers on the basis that they have vast knowledge and experience in data collection and also for cost-effective because they provided unpaid labour, my role was to cater for their movements in the field and accommodation. Stevano et al, (2017) argued that "once it is established that one or more research assistants are needed to carry out primary data collection, then researchers need to find suitable candidates for the job". With the role of the research, assistants are increasingly being expected to gather high-quality data for the study topic (ibid). Research assistants were selected based on their educational level and "length of service" (Hilal & Feyza, 2017), to help me have a team that would conduct informed interviews in the field. Their vast experience was critical in preparation for the field during our pre-departure meetings, with semi-structured interview instruments to use in the field developed together and shared amongst us. In the field, as a team, we would compare notice of our findings and individual observations during interviews, as observation was one of the key data collection methods applied. As means to follow COVID-19 protocol, each member in the field was equipped with protective gear (face masks and hand sanitizer) as per the national policy to contain the spread of COVID-19.

3.5. Data analysis

The collected data through induvial interviews, key informant interviews, and focused groud discussions (FGD), observation was analysed through qualitative thematic data analysis techniques (Jessica et al, 2020, Mojtaba et al, 2016). First, the collected audio data through the recorder were transcribed into textual form, then coded based on their similarity (Jessica T. Decuir-Gunby et al, 2011). At this level, the coded data was translated into the English language, as the research paper is written in English. Second, based on their similarity, the coded data was categorized under similar categories and then the researcher developed the theme and sub-theme from the data.

3.6. Positionality

In a research study, positionality it's a very critical consideration element for a researcher to have non-biased findings. Berger (2015) defines positionality as the "researcher's position in various relations of power" based on nationality, gender, age, personal experience, social status, or beliefs. Theorist Jurgen Habermas (1979,1987, cited in Angel, 2015) provides an excellent "differentiates between three primary kinds of human interest that drive research and

generate knowledge. He calls these knowledge-constitutive interests because they provide the categories and criteria (or ontological and epistemological assumptions) to formulate answers to questions like: What counts as knowledge? How can knowledge claims be warranted? How is the researcher positioned in relation to the researched?"

My interest to undertake this research study is driven by my inspiration from my master's degree core courses have undertaken on local development and development policy. This has been the motivating factor that links with my attachment to the ongoing developments within my home town Fort Portal. Raised by a family that mainly depended on informal earnings as means of economic survival to support my education and my siblings, I understand the value and importance of earning from the street. A safe space to operate in, it's the greatest asset that many street vendors and hawkers like my family can be offered to contribute towards local development. Even though am a native of the area with person experience on the topic, which would make me an insider in this research, I understand this study mainly remains for academic purposes, and for that reason, I played and applied the outsider role (Emmanuel Akwesi & Adams, 2019) to have non-biased findings and errors in knowledge production.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

I understand ethics is a major factor in any research to ensure that participants in the study do not get any harm before, during, and after the study. In the field, mobilization was arranged and done through "gatekeepers" and during the interviews, participants received a briefing from the research team, and were assured that shared was be used for academic purposes and also form part of policy recommendations to relevant development stakeholders within the city. Informed consent from each individual participant was obtained, and any anonymity was kept confidential. Participants were assured that they were free to withdraw themselves at any stage of the process when they feel unconformable continuing to share their information. All the voice recordings were done after receiving verbal consent from each participant interviewed and recorded.

Knowing the issue of time and what it means to the targeted participants, to ensure that they provide information with a settled mind, participants determined their best time for the interviews, and they agreed to evening and night ours during place of work for street vendors, while the other targeted audience agree to office working hours. Final findings will be shared with the participants at their request, to ensure confidentiality of the information shared.

As part of ethics and to ensure future confidentiality in the information provided by the respondents, even though they gave me consent to use their names. A deductive disclosure (Kaiser, 2009) will be applied, using an identifier of numbering for the four categories of; vendors, hawkers, leaders/politicians and technocrats/civil servants.

3.8. Limitations

The researchers' major limitation was the language barrier faced by the two research assistants, provided to the researcher by the Centre for Economic Social Cultural Rights in Africa (CESCRA) to volunteer in the data collection process. Though it was easy during interviews with the Key informants, opinion leaders (OL), and street vendors in the central division of the city as English and Luganda were the common means of communication during interview. It became challenging during interviews with the street vendors in the Northern division of the city as most of them were familiar and comfortable speaking in their local language 'Rutooro'. Though the research assistant would speak 'Ruganda' which is somehow similar to 'Rutooro', some of the words are not clear between the two languages and as a researcher who happens to be native of the area and familiar with 'Rutooro' had to conduct a majority of these interviews and the research assistants help with the recording verbally consented interviews by the interviewees. During the data collection exercise, they researcher had travelled back home on family related emergency which would have negatively affected the exercise, but thank God the team was able to effectively collect the data from the field.

Also, the researchers faced the challenge of getting the city technical team as they were in the city validation exercise and were only willing to give us a very limited time for the interview yet they were key informants for the researchers' findings. In finding the best solution for this limitation, the researcher adjusted and agreed with the technocrats' team to have these interviews conducted online via WhatsApp video calls when the interviewees are ready to provide enough uninterrupted time to the researcher. The issue of time to meet the street vendors was also challenging as these vendors have a specific time they're required to be conducting their businesses, a big concern raised by the vendor which l will talk about later in the findings. Hence the research team was forced to have these interviews with vendors start evening hours and extend to late at night as that was the only best free hours provided by the vendors to the researcher.

Therefore, regardless of the limitations involved in the research with such an elaborate research methodology as verified to be effective, the researcher was able to conduct the study in Fort Portal. Using the tools involved, applying them to the research purpose and the research questions involved was able to reach informed positions/results that are well informed by real life experience of the people the researcher interacted with. It those results that were analysed and used to come up with this written study.

Chapter 4

4.1. Uganda's local Participation, Decentralization, Urbanization and Informal sector

Introduction

This study is specifically about Uganda's decentralization, local governance participation, urbanization and informalities. For that reason, this chapter builds on chapter 2, theories to critically give and overview of Uganda and Fort Portal in particular.
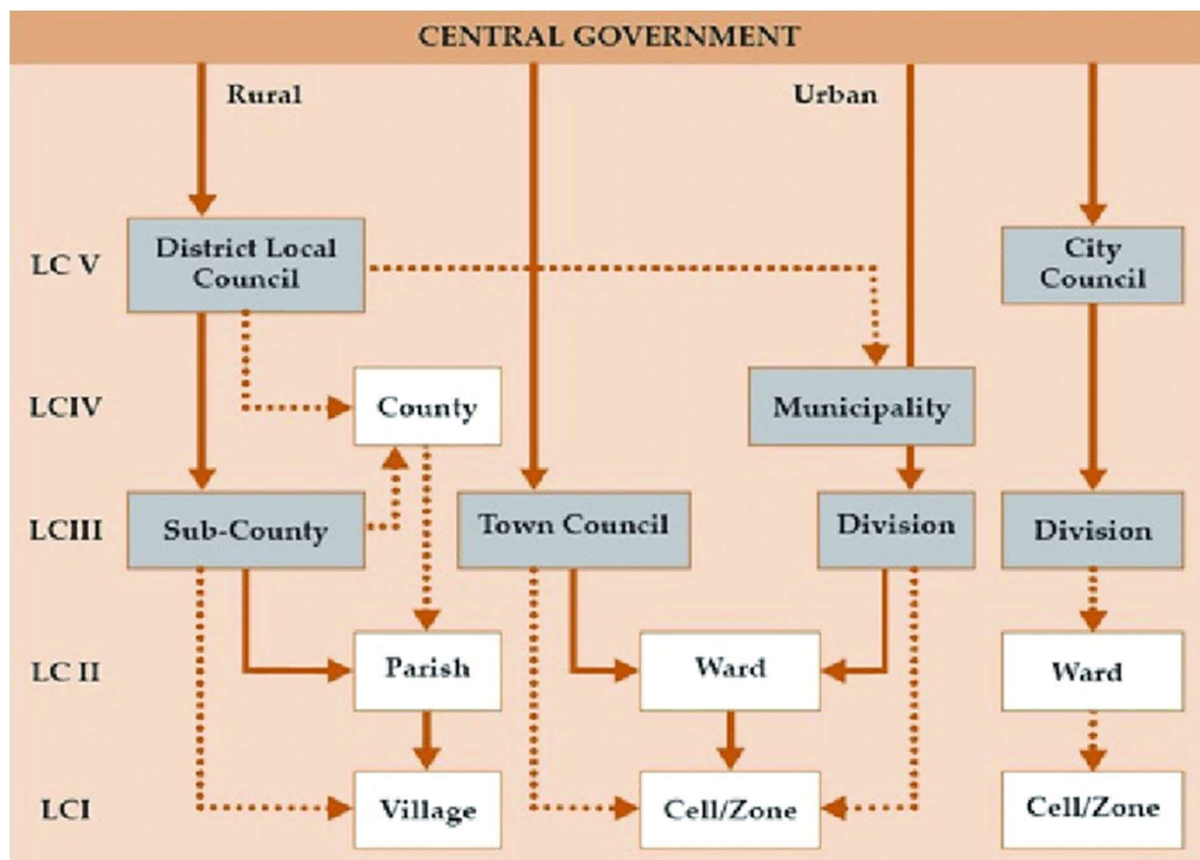
4.1.1. Uganda's Decentralisation

In Uganda, it's argued that it was among the very first countries to take on decentralisation very seriously within its political structures to help run government aim of alleviation of people from poverty, bringing services close to the people and locals' participation in solving their problems and shaping local development. It is all believed to have begun in 1986 with the coming into power of the National Resistance Movement which for the first time aimed at promoting democracy and local participation (Roberts, 2008, p 83). Roberts (2008) goes on to point that this system of decentralization having been put in place it came along with financial decentralization. (ibid). This means that decentralisation enabled distribution of resources from the national level to the local level, close to the people to boost their ways of living and giving them a mouthpiece to determine how those resources could be used according to their priorities. Saito in this regard refers to decentralisation in Uganda as having been a pillar of policy reform having been essential in creating a collaborative mechanism between the state and the people. Fumihiko (1999) in that regard decentralisation in its establishment became a bridge that connected Ugandans to the central government through its collaborative efforts which was critical given that at that time of its establishment, Uganda was trying to recover from a long political strife that had been characterised by civil wars, abuse of people's rights, untold levels of poverty and citizens exclusion in governance systems. To make decentralisation possible the National Resistance Movement had to come up with political structures to implement its style of political service to Ugandans guided by the 1995 Uganda constitution and the 1997 local government Act. This was through an institution of a five-layer hierarchy of councils and committees from the village to district level which was renamed as the Local council in 1995 (Fumihiko, 2001, p.4).

To cement the idea of decentralisation into the governance system in Uganda, the 1995 constitution of the Republic of Uganda and then the Local Government Act of 1997, all set in motion the process of decentralization. Chapter 11 of the Constitution (1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda) provides indeed elaborately the principles and structures of local government whereby first and key it was designed system, that the decentralization system was to ensure that functions, powers and responsibilities of the central government are devolved and transferred systematically to local government units in a manner that was coordinated and hence decentralisation became the chief principle applying to all levels of local government

from higher to lower local government units to ensure people's participation and democratic control in decision making. This way the 1995 Constitution of Uganda became the chief architect of the system of decentralisation in Uganda, setting and paving way for the Local Government Act in 1997. This Local Government made the provisions of the Constitution complete by putting in place local administrative structures at the district or city level and how they were to function and carry out their activities. In a nutshell the Local Government Act, showed the established local administrative units how they were to utilise the resources got from the central government while being accountable to the locals these units were set. So, that way five levels of local government, that is, district/city, county/municipality, sub-county/division, parish/ward and village/zone were established with political authority and financial autonomy (Roberts, 2008, p.89). In doing so, decentralisation became double faceted providing both financial and political decentralisation to which "Roberts" submits were all efforts with specific goals of improving service delivery in Uganda (Roberts, 2008, p.89). Financial decentralisation was to facilitate access to resources by local governments involving devolving budgetary and spending powers to districts while political decentralisation was to involve more people in the decision making and planning processes to respond to local needs (ibid). In that way the decentralisation process was set complete in Uganda, a government in its own close to the people more than ever before.

Diagram Showing Uganda's Decentralized Local Government Structural

Source: https://www.researchgate.net

15

In understanding the above Uganda's local governance structure and level of participation, Roberts (2008) made a study regarding local participation. In his study, he sought to answer the questions; "to what extent does decentralisation increase service delivery?" "to what extent does decentralisation increase efficiency, participation accountability and effectiveness?". "What are the challenges of implementing decentralisation in Uganda?". In attempting to answer those questions, decentralisation is defined as the transfer of authority from central governments to local governments to perform certain duties to increase service delivery. (Roberts, 2008, p. 83) In that study, to better understand local participation, the notion of decentralisation is discussed as a policy for delivering services in Uganda. (ibid at p. 85) In that regard, Roberts argues that decentralisation offers two main benefits to the people, that is, freedom to access and freedom to decide; people are enabled to voice their needs and access certain resources through their representatives and at the same time people are enabled to take autonomous decisions without influence from the central government (ibid, p. 87) all that sums up into local participation. Therefore, from that study we're informed that local participation is enabled by the structures and implementation of decentralisation which as we shall discuss later is already visible in Uganda. However, Roberts in his study does not explore specifically address the question of urban space in a participatory decentralized system of governance in Uganda

Rose has also made a study on the Local Governance in Uganda in the areas of Iganga, Gulu, Masaka and Kampala. In that study, she examines and explores the levels of people participation in processes of the local governments including rule making and decision making (Rose, 2020 p.6) In doing so, she juxtapositions the periods of pre independence and post-independence in Uganda, while examining how local governance and local participation was and is practiced. Key in her findings on people participation was that a number of people did not know that after choosing their leaders for various local offices remained with a role to play, they rather presumed that the leaders were the only ones to engage in the roles of decision making and rulemaking and even some of the leaders did not know that they were supposed to regularly consult with the local people every time before making key decisions in their leadership capacities (ibid, p.35). This study is important as reveals the ignorance and misinformation among both the people/citizens and local leaders about their various roles to be played in local participation for development when it comes to decision and rulemaking in local governance. However, Rose's study is limited as it does not cover and interlink our areas of study that is local participation, urbanisation, and urban safe space in consideration of street vendors and hawkers.

Another piece of literature to consider in this study is Michael's (2017). In the study, Michael provides an overview of the theoretical debate on the relationship between decentralisation and governance while examining the rationale behind decentralisation and the various mechanisms through which it is postulated to enhance public accountability and provision of public goods and services (Michael, 2017). By using a case study of local counties in Kenya, a more similar system of governance in Uganda. It is revealed in that study that positive effects of decentralisation are contingent on several preconditions such as inclusive and participatory

systems that enable citizens to express their opinions and influence decision making processes and that this fosters mutual trust and solves collective action problems (ibid). It is revealed further in the findings that the argument that decentralisation enhances the incentives of local public officials to tailor provision of public services to the preferences of the local citizens partly hinges on the extent to which local citizens can participate in and influence local decisions and budgetary allocations (Ibid, p. 11). Michael's study is significant to our study as it explores the efficiency of local participation of local citizens in local governance. It shows with authority that local participation when enhanced under the system of decentralisation can be very effective in improving service delivery for the locals. In the case of our study, it would mean that with involvement of urban dwellers and operators in the informal sector like street vendors and hawkers in formulation of strategic development agendas an urban safe space can be created, tailored to the needs of the people in the urban areas. However, Michael's study is not informative enough to our study given it does not specifically consider the notions of urbanisation, urban safe space and local participation while interlinking the same to fit our research objectives.

Salmon, Stephen, Rose and Edward (2020) have made a study on Uganda's informal sector. In their study, using primary data collected from business, they examined the nature and obstacles in the informal sector of Uganda (ibid). Key in their findings was that access to finance, crime rate, theft and disorder, electricity, water taxes, burdensome inspections and informal gifts are robust and significant obstacles to the operations of the informal sector in Uganda (ibid). In their detailed study they propose that policies should focus on regulatory framework that supports the sector to create livelihoods which includes improving access to finance, providing regular power and water supply and improving the tax regime and that that way the obstacles faced in the informal sector would be mitigated leading to possible formalisation and that these businesses in the informal sector should not be perceived as illegal per se but rather as a contemporary effort by an increasingly enterprising population in the country (ibid at pp.1-2). Their study is important too to our study given its uniqueness as it explores the informal sector of Uganda and makes recommendations which are tailored to creating a safe space for the operations of those operating informally in informal sector of Uganda. With their study and recommendations therein, the perception of those in leadership about operators in the informal sector changes and those operators are rather viewed as disadvantaged enterprising business operators and that can provoke the leadership to consider them in decision making processes meant to improve their operations thereby creating a safe operating space for them. However, their study is limited as it does not explore the notions of local participation and urbanisation to make recommendations that provide specifically an urban safe space for the urban dweller and operators like street vendors and hawkers.

4.1.2. Uganda's Urbanization

In this study as noted above, urbanization it's a key concept that is very much applicable and important to understand, on that note here I focus on Uganda's urbanization and Fort portal a fast-urbanizing Uganda's town. In Uganda, urbanization is one of the current key development agendas drivers for the country's specific strategic development intervention. With an

estimated 24.36% of the country's total population living in cities and urban areas, and at an annual urban population growth rate estimated at 3.3% (UBOS, 2013 quoted in Japheth et al,. 2021). While according to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the urban population growth in Uganda is estimated at 5.1% per annum (Michael, 2014). This explains the trend of how urbanization is shaping Uganda's development trend.

As a result, the country in the recent past has experienced a shift from the traditional development practices where development from the central government was much focused at the district level as the top administrative unit of local government and spread down to lower local governments at the county level, then sub-county, to parish and village as the lowest level of local government. Now with a shift to urbanization, development programs of the central government flow from the city council, to municipalities/city divisions, municipal divisions, town councils, and ward, to cell/zone.

This focus on urbanization and urban development in Uganda has attracted the creation of new urban cities that have been elevated from municipalities to city status, in addition to the traditional capital Kampala which has been the only city in the country since Uganda's 1962 independence. In 2019, Uganda's parliament approved the creation and operationalization of seven cities (Fort-Portal, Mbarara, Gulu, Mbale, Hoima, and Jinja) effective July 1, 2020, with other three more (Lira, Masaka & Entebbe) also operationalized July 1, 2022. Such advancement and developments in a country like Uganda are key to improve standards of living, infrastructure, and access to social-economic services and goods to the population.

However, it should be noted that urbanization comes with its own urban development challenges especially in developing countries like Uganda (Keiner, 2016). Taking the example of Uganda's capital city Kampala, it should be noted that urbanization has resulted into increased insecurity attributed to urban youth unemployment (Pletscher, 2015), loss of income in hands of street level bureaucrats, and inequalities (Twinomuhangi et al, 2021). Such challenges if not planned and handled properly result in an unsafe and unhealthy urban environment as a response to the fear of exclusion, distress, and suffering from humans' unsatisfied needs (Oksan & Bige Simsek, 2016). The fact that Uganda's economy is pre-dominantly dominated by informal economies, raises the question of the realization of sustainable cities and communities as stated within SDG 11, as informal economies tend to be left out in such developments (Twinomuhangi et al, 2021). Hence a need to ensure such development are inclusive in nature, both at the development planning and implementation phase. As quoted in Lloyd and Redin (2017), "for cities in Africa to become engines of growth the urban economic continuum as a whole must be strengthened, promoting a form of growth that is increasingly socially inclusive and economically resilient". To have an in-depth understanding of these urban developments in Uganda's new cities, studies, and research mainly in informal sector business operations need to be undertaken to understand the social and economic situation, needs, and best practices to be undertaken in creating an inclusive safe space for urban development.

4.1.3. Uganda's Informal Sector

Uganda like another growing economy in Africa, with rapid urbanization growth due to increase in rural urban migration, with a population economically challenged "to create livelihoods, engage in entrepreneurship and accumulate assets" (Awumbila, 2017). This faced with rapid urban informal sector growth. Increased dominance of informal businesses in Uganda's economy, also has been attributed to the failure of the formal economy to accommodate the daily increasing working population seeking employment (Abdu et al., 2007). As a result, majority of Ugandans find it easy to form and be employed in the informal sector as means of economic survival. In 2007, the informal sector in Uganda constituted 150,138 businesses which is 87 percent of the total 160,883 businesses (ibid). The sector by 2015, comprised 90% of the working population in the country (MOGLSD (2015, quoted in Mary et al, 2018). With 90% working population in the sector lacking access to social protection in their working environment, pose a high vulnerability to the majority population (Mary et al, 2018, p70). Caroline et al., (2021) study "Market fires and the urban intimacies of disaster colonialism" on Uganda Park yard market vendors indicates how the informal sector and specifically the vendors operate in an environment characterized by low income, structural violence, and disaster, social insecurity, deliberate neglect by government and high levels of vulnerability.

Further findings in the 2018/2019 Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS), reveal that of the 16.3million persons (62%) in the employment form of work, 56.8 percent of the employed persons aged 14-64 years were in vulnerable employment. These are mainly employed within the informal economies and predominant within the growing urban settings. With majority of the urban population considered to be urban poor, about 60% of the urban population living in slums and informal settlements ((UBOS, 2013 quoted in Japheth et al,. 2021). These areas are prone to a hostile environment with insecurity, yet the majority operate within such a hostile environment. Making the struggle for urban safe space a critical issue within the informal economy. It is in that category of informal economy that we find street vendors and hawkers that this study focuses on as a case study in Fort Portal city.

4.1.4. Street Vendors and Hawkers in Fort Portal

Street vendors and hawkers of Fort Portal city mainly deal in food produce, soft drinks, and other small items like appliances for home use, clothes etcetera, selling on streets and moving around from home to home around the streets. Their business is small with a capital value of maximally UgShs. 200,000 which is about 53 euros as per current exchange rate, and their businesses are unregistered with city authorities and normally a sole run business or employs 1 to 2 employees maximum hence falling into the category of the informal sector. Quoting **vendor 1**;

'Am a food vendor dealing in rolex food business here on street. A business l started alone with a capital of 100,000 UgShs and a free space provided by my brother who had a retail shop then in 2017'

In summary, there is a great interlink between the notions of Uganda's urbanisation, urban safe space, local participation and the informal sector and it is that interlink that this study explore to properly understand in chapter 5 and chapter 6. How the locals in this case the street vendors and hawkers within Fort Portal City informal sector been engaged strategically in the city development agenda and how that inform or create an urban safe space for them.

Chapter 5

5.1. The Struggle for Urban Space in Fort Portal

Introduction

In this chapter, I will analyse and contextualize the collected data from the interviews, to make an understanding of how street vendors and hawkers operate in their day-to-day social economic activities. How do they acquire the street space they currently operate in within Fort Portal. This chapter will be based on individual feedbacks, the city five year development plan and personal observation experience, as observation method formed part of my data collection methodology.

5.1.1. City Vending Space

In Fort Portal as noted by Gumisiriza (2021) & Mitullah (2003) street vending and hawking is conducted on main streets and major city roads. These places form a critical part in their social economic urban life within the city. These spaces are not provided or negotiated for by Fort Portal city council or local leaders but by the vendors themselves on private arrangements with landlords or owners of shops alone the city streets. In an interview with the street vendors, they narrated to me the process of acquiring space within the city. Where negotiations for city space involve landlords, shop owners, fellow vendors and the social norms, acceptable and unacceptable use of such use of such places is agreed (Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Drummond, 2000 quoted in Forkuor et al, 2017).

City space its personal struggle and your good understanding with people in town. To get a space here, one you must be known by the people around or you have a relative who has secured the space for you. Once its secured it comes yours and no one can take it unless the boss (referring to landlord) decides that you should leave, which is normally hard to happen" (Vendor 2)

Even though most vendors continue to view these already identified urban spaces as permanent places, this practice makes them more temporary to operate in and any time they can be forced to relocate by city authorities Gumisiriza (2021) & Mitullah (2003), to pave way for other city infrastructural developments such as road expansions, electricity, drainage systems and other individual landlord's permanent structures. Also, it should be noted that street vendors who gets space arrangements with shop owners, their operations depend on the mercy and longevity of these shop owners staying in business or not relocating other different places. It was also noted that these vendors, do not make or have any formal contracts or evidence of the acquired

spaces, but rather their relationships with their individual landlords on space is based on word of mouth and good understanding. In other words, they do not have urban space security. This was noted during the interview at 19hours on 01/08/2022 with **Vendor 3** and **Vendor 4** respectively, street vendors working along Kibooga road-

'We are at risk and surviving on our own, just last year when the city was upgrading this road, we were forced to vacate this place for over 5 months without any alternative place provided for by the city. Yet personally I had paid my landlady 3 months of rent for this place. Had she not been a good lady to allow me to come back and pay half of 3 months' rent as l recover from the crisis, l would have been out of business and lost my space now'

'How can you really ask for a rent contract even, yet the people whom you have found none of them have any. Our business is based on good relationships and how you negotiate and agree with your landlord, because they're our saver and are the reason we're here'

This practice puts them on crossroad of operating at the mercies of their landlords, and the concept who offers the best offer for the space take it all is applied, given the fact that there is no determined standards or rates at which such spaces should be provided and charged for within the city to the vendors. Access and negotiation for urban and public space, urban economic opportunities should be a stakeholders collective initiative that involves city council leaders, general public, vendors and landlords/shop owners (Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah, 2008 quoted in Forkuor et al, 2017). This creates a culture of urban dweller and leadership responsibility and social security. Local authorities within the city instead of providing guiding polices and guideline of providing and acquiring urban space for the vending sector, they have instead provided specific regulated time over which street vendors should operate on their own acquired, provided and paid for spaces. Even though "provision for hawking need to be made in urban plans and existing street vendors need to be settled" (Bhowmik, 2003). The practice continues to face resistance, and "confrontation with city authorities" over business time to access space. (Anjaria, 2006; Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Milgram, 2011; Popke & Ballard, 2004; Skinner, 2008 quoted in Forkuor et al, 2017). Local authorities enforce the practice on grounds that, it reduces congestion in the city during busy day hours, create room for form business community to sale and not compete with the vendors because of the high town rates they pay, city sanitation (ibid) as they city can easily be cleaned in the morning hours after street vendors finished their evening and night businesses.

However, it should be noted that these street vendors and hawkers are also taxpayers to the city council just like those in form and well secured and organized places. From the interviews, these street vendors have been imposed to daily tax dues to the city of 1000 UGx (less than a Euro), which was later dropped this year in June after the presidential directive to stop the practice on these low-income earners. However an new form of tax (annual vending tax) was introduced, charged and is paid based on individual vendor/hawker stock and business dealings. Conducting vending businesses on temporary spaces not only make it hard to have an organized city but also comes with a lot of unhealthy related issues as there are no visibility and environmental impact studies conducted before by experts to ensure and determine that the planed place is free and safe for vending. It should be noted that these vendors deal in some direct consumable items such as foodstuff, which requires a lot of care and a healthy

environment. Also vending in Fort Portal involves night businesses, with the sum of money transactions, women, and children in business all these, need proper guidance and protection when identifying a business space.

Based on the above field findings, I was forced to go deeper into understanding the city five-year development plan as a legal development guiding document to make an understanding of how it recognized street vending as a sector. Within the city 5-year development plan, specific identified and budgeted for sectors with include Farming, Tourism, Education, Health and Infrastructure on page 32, 53, 56, 57 and 158 of the city strategic plan, while informal sector not specifically identified and budgeted for. However, one would argue that it's recognized under the highlighted Trade/commerce and strengthening of private sector capacities. It not so specific with not proper detailed information what they mean by this, and not specific resources allocated for it. This prompted me, as a researcher to have an interview with the city top technocrats responsible for city planning specifically on this issue.

'We may also construct markets specifically for them so that we have them operating in such gazetted palaces and not on the streets. As we talk now, we're planning to construct a market in Kiculeeta for the street vendors dealing mainly in agro-produce and that way we shall continue, building markets and zoning them. We are also in the process to organize them in associations to help them win tenders in their groupings and in their categories of tendering we don't allow anybody else to put in competing tenders to boost them. Here humanity is a survival given this an African developing nation and the street vendors who are children on the streets cannot be denied that chance to hustle and survive; those children most are orphans with no parents or anybody to take care of them'. ***(Technocrat 1)***

'We are widening the tax base so that we can reduce the tax amount required of each street vendor from UGx. 70,000 to at least UGx. 30,000 so that they are not weighed down by heavy taxes in their operations. We are also trying to identify specific places for the street vendors to operate in because to my understanding there is already a problem of lack of a safe space for the street vendors. As city leadership we've encouraged the street vendors to make associations for them to be able to deal with city leadership in a way that is organised. We are planning to have in place 160 streetlights to help those vendors that operate in the night. All these are within our 5-year development plan, we have developed in consultation with the leaders and central government'. ***(Technocrat 2)***

From their responses, it seems like the leaders have a clear plan for the vendors, however their responses could not be backed by what is stated within the city 5-year development plan. Even though the city strategic development plan acknowledges and align itself with the "five-year National Development Plan III", which envision to "propel the country to Sustainable Industrialization for inclusive growth, employment and wealth creation and the Vision 2040". Employment and growth within Fort Portal become difficult to attain without a clear and detailed strategy on a sector that continues to be dominated by the youthful labour force. A sector like street vending continues to be an economic power horse of income and employment to many Fort Portal urban dwellers like any other developing society (Chen, 2004; Donovan,

2008 Forkuor et al, 2017). Such a sector just like health, education and infrastructure would have a clear strategy within the city plan and not hidden/indirectly catered for within other sectors.

5.2. Conclusion

Based on the finding, even though street vending and hawking remains a major source of income and employment, the city still lack specific recognition, strategy and budgeted resources for street vending and informal sector business operations, with no specific plans of recognizing it within its next five-year city development plan. However, within the infrastructural sector, business informalities in this case street vending are indirectly affected by development, an initiative that could indirectly boost their businesses within the city. The provision of streetlights, paved roads facilitate the running of street vending businesses within the city. However, they do not address the challenge of access to urban spaces and its tenure security for vending hence realization of urban safe space remains in balance. The struggle for urban space and safety in Fort Portal is real and depends on individual vendor and hawker to find the best means to survive and earn a living. This leads us to the discussion on the notion of local urban governance participation and its realization to urban safe space, on chapter 6 of the paper.

Chapter 6

6.1. Participated for; in Creating Urban Safe Space in Fort Portal

Introduction

This chapter discusses the responses obtained from interviews with Fort Portal Street vendors, hawkers and city local leaders to identify their inter-links and differences based on their experience within city planning and ongoing developments. Understanding that Fort Portal city as a decentralized independent local government (Alper, 2014), with powers to provide public services to the local people within the city and provide a functioning platform opportunity for locals like street vendors to participate more actively in decision making process of the city local policies and development activities or plans (Fumihiko, 2001, p.1).

The chapter its building on chapter 5 to analyse response that this study will rely on to gauge and reach an informed conclusion on whether the street vendors in Fort Portal city are actively participating and involved by the city leadership in the decision-making process or the vendors and hawkers are participated for on their behalf by their local leaders to plan, organize and create urban safe space for them. Through these responses the study must be able to understand whether or not there has been platforms of ensuring street vending and hawking urban safe space in Fort Portal city and if not, how possibly it has been hindered by the non-participation of the city's street vendors and hawkers in the development of the city's development plans or

agenda. I will argue on filed responses from the interviewees in this chapter with a reflection of the city five-year development plan.

6.2. 'We leaders' participated in for Vendors and Hawkers

The Fort Portal, Five Year City Development Plan was supposed to have been completed and adopted in 2020 to run and dictate the city's development path and strategy for the financial years beginning 2020/21 to 2024/25, however due to delays in its development it's been approved and adopted in 2022. This plan is meant to improve the city status quo by introducing several improvements to the city and boost an economic development of the city. It is also meant in a way to improve the living standards in the city, and this is well inscribed in the plan's vision which is "*To Be A Liveable, Resilient, And Prosperous City For By 2040.*" (Fort Portal City plan, 2020)

In the planning process, the plan claims consultations to have been made to inform the strategic development agenda of the plan. About the mentioned consultations, the plan explains to have involved; data collection through questionnaires shared with different stakeholders and these were electronically and physically delivered to known addresses. (ibid) However much it is appreciated that the consultations were made in drafting up the plan, the mentioned process is not detailed enough as to show how and who was consulted and what kind of input the consultees gave and whether that input was ever considered or how it influenced the plan to take the direction it took. For instance, it is mentioned that questionnaires were delivered to the addresses of key stake holders, however the urban dwellers in our case study, the street vendors and hawkers who happen to be more in a way affected by the new development processes do not have clear addresses and so begs the question of whether they were ever consulted and if yes, how when most of them are illiterate as to receive and give feedbacks to the mentioned questionnaires. Therefore, it is easy for one to conclude that the participation of locals, urban dwellers; street vendors and hawkers is unclear in the formulation of the city five-year development plan. How as a research, l didn't make a conclusion based on this, I had to engage with the framers of the development plan to make understanding how these consultations were conducted to guide the development of city development agenda. In the response, one of the political leaders stated-

*'As within our strategic development plan, we plan for the public, we plan for the street vendors as well, for instance we are planning washing bays, we are planning markets and with such facilities vendors can transform and enter into other opportunities that would take them off the street and even help them set up their own businesses off the street. We plan these things through the counsel as leaders are their representatives on their behalf, and put in mind our budget is still limited and controlled at the centre which makes it hard for us to conduct regular development consultations with the vendors' **(Leader 1)** Note that (we .... referring to leaders)*

After this response, one could make a conclusion how the development plan lacked local people like vendors and hawkers' participation, however I had to have further discussion with my target population (vendors and hawkers). To make an understanding how leaders consult or

engage them in deciding how they would want to see their city develop and take shape. In response **vendor 5**, interviewed at 17 hours on 02/08/2022 -

'To be honest the city doesn't care about us. Now for example l pay UGx. 150,000 (about 40 euros) per month rent to the owner of the shop behind me for the space am occupying and at the same time pay UGX. 60,000 (16 euros) as a license to the city. To remind you, just last financial year before the president directed that low-income earners, we be removed from daily dues (tax), we would pay UGX. 1,000, if you calculate for me that would be UGX. 360,000. We never receive accountability from the city on how this money helps us. Here we don't have access to public water or toilet, yet we pay taxes. We want a fair city that recognizes and includes us vendors. The city has never consulted us, to know about our challenges and needs as vendors in the city'. He added. Note exchange rate 1 euro = 3,700 UGX.

Without the participation of the locals, urban dwellers, street vendors and hawkers, it is hard to believe despite the good vision of the plan that an urban safe place, tailored to the needs and aspirations of street vendors and hawkers can be achieved by the city leadership. In fact, nowhere in that five year development plan are the street vendors and hawkers mentioned which goes so far as to show how far removed they are from city development's plans.

On the other hand, however, the five-year development plan of Fort Portal city puts in place major policy programs and institutional adjustments meant to; provide effective and efficient access to quality basic services and infrastructure and to create a high quality sustainable urban environment. (ibid) These pre-requisites somewhat can lead to creation of an urban safe place almost by default for the street vendors and hawkers, but it would not be tailored to their specific needs within the city given their lack of input and participation in the city development planning processes. In his response on 01/08/2022, **vender 6** operating businesses at Bazaar Street noted that-

'A safe space in Fort Portal, l would need to see is a city where there are street lights as we operate at night, access to public toilets, built places for us to be prevented from the rain and good drainage system'

On the same date, **vendor 7** dealing in street vending of second-hand clothes at Fuelex street also noted that-

'These days, they give us specific times for operation, the City Council, for instance, they tell us to start selling in the evening hours and sometimes it is late to get customers'.

Such concerns and needs may be hard to be fulfilled and catered for by the city leadership or incorporated within the city development agendas when such categories of local views are not engaged by their leaders, but rather receive and consume already decided plans and directives by their local leaders on their behalf. Even though the leaders do understand the concept of urban safe space and its importance to street vendors, based on their responses-

'When we talk about street vendors, those people operating on the street. Street vendors are people that we cannot say are not allowed to operate because they also must survive and thrive. So, we have street vendors down town and we have deliberately allowed them to operate but we are also talking to them that the places where they are operating now may keep on changing as we plan to do some zoning; allowing them on only given areas. what we can do as a city council is to regulate them to make sure that their operate within the ambits of the law. This includes zoning, whereby in some places they would be allowed and in others not for instance in places with shops they may not be allowed so as not conflict with shop owners' **(Leader 2)**.

'I understand urban safe space in terms of street vending as a way of planning for street vendors and getting them a place where they can be safe. We have places set for as markets like in Kabundaire with toilets and security and that would be safe operation for them, though as city we charge a fee for revenue and also maintenance of the place. We would love to have many markets that would be cheap and accessible for everyone, but we're limited by resources because we would love to have places like Kabundaire specifically for the vendors, however our resource envelop it's still limited. It is risky for the street vendors operating on streets, they may for instance get accidents so it risky for their lives and that is why we have got to get a place for them for their safe operation' **(Leader 3)**.

"To ensure that places are safe, we as their leaders have planned to ensure that the street vendors are operating in spaces that are safe and free from any kind of thing likely to cause harm to them. This also includes safety for their property by providing proper lighting at night for instance all aimed at creating a conducive space for them to operate. That's why within our 5 year development plan, as council we're going to install some street lights, provide more public toilets within the city". As leaders it's our role to identify such problems, now like that the problem of darkness in the city l don't need to first ask anyone but observe and identify such a problem, that why we are called leaders. Me and you, we all know that vendors at night do needs street lights to transact their businesses" **(Leader 4)**.

In final summary of this chapter, Fort Portal leaders understanding of urban safe space needs to be informed by the aspirations and needs raised by the locals (in this case vendors & hawkers), through negotiations and consultative platforms to have a clear development agenda that speaks to the mind of such population and cater their space and safety needs.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

In summation of the findings obtained from interacting with the street vendors, hawkers, and Fort Portal City Council authorities in key and strategic city leadership positions, it is clear there is some form of local governance in general; a decentralised government at a lower level is visibly in place to serve the locals to champion the development process of the city.

However, it is crucial to note that from the interview responses, there doesn't seem to be that ideal form of local governance where local people (vendors and hawkers) participate and inform development processes, on how they should be governed by their leaders entrusted with power. There is nothing significant to show that people are consulted before any development plans are implemented. This can be seen in development projects already on going that are affecting the vendors and hawkers in serious ways as they go about their order of business yet there is nothing concrete to show how involved in those planning processes they are. For instance, the city leadership talked about zoning; consisting of getting rid of street vendors from some streets within the city and relocating them to markets and other specific public areas. From interacting with street vendors, even thou they would love to have specific public space or street gazetted and under entrust and control by they city council as they pay subsided space rent and their annual taxes. Zoning remains something they're hearing about, and no leader is reaching out to consult them about how they feel about it and what best options can be done for their case. Also, it shows be noted that such developments (street vendor zoning) have to be informed by a development strategy, in this case the city five year development plan, however within the city's next five year development plan there is nothing mentioned about zoning of street vendors, hence making it an ideas limited evidence and hard to realize for now. For that matter as earlier hinted, there is limited clear consultative process that involves city authorities consulting with the vendors and hawkers before reaching decisions likely to affect them directly or indirectly.

Therefore, in such an environment of operation for street vendors and hawkers where they do not directly inform development agenda, we cannot say that there is an existence of an urban safe space specifically tailored for the safe operation of the street vendors and hawker. Yes, the leadership seems to have a fair picture of what urban safe space is and agrees with it being put into force, but it is not yet availed. This shows and speaks a clear discussion about the subject of urban safe space within Fort portal city local leadership circles. This is even made more evident by lack of an ordinance by the city about street vendors and hawkers because there at least some fair provisions would be in place to help them operate and make sure they are protected in one way or another. Vendors operating on private negotiated and provided spaces with insecure tenure of operation, it's a clear indication how they city continues to give limited attention towards having a well-structured, organized, and safe city vending environment.

Despite the existing structures of decentralisation which signify the prevalence of local governance, participation of the locals, in this case the street vendors and hawkers has been largely ignored. The plight of these people is dire as they operate at the mercy of other forces other than their leadership and have not been empowered to voice out their concerns. With that,

urban safe space will and would remain an ideal that is yet to be realised especially when they are not directly catered for in the five-year strategic development plan of the city. There is need for a street vendors and hawkers' platform to negotiate with the city leadership needs to be created among themselves to claim their voice and demands to inform policies and development interventions within the city as a form of local participation.

The city five-year development primary focus specifically remains onto Farming, Tourism, Education, Health, and Infrastructural sectors and remind silent on informal business as a sector. A reason that was justified by **leader 1**, response on limited resources by the city as its budget is controlled at the central government. However, organizing and creating urban safe spaces for vendors can't only be limited to monetary terms from the city only, if proper consultative meetings are conducted with these street vendors and hawkers, other best means can generate. Take an example, within the city five-year development plan, there is a clear plan for creating city green belts under the infrastructural sector. Yes, green the city it's a good initiative for environmental conservation, however its sustainability in a space struggling street vending population it's becomes hard to realize as they would be forced to encroach such spaces or pollute them with waste. To avoid statements of referring street vendors as "public nuisance" Bhowmik (2003). Some of such public spaces can be provided to and developed by street vendors themselves from the would-be money paid for renting individual spaces, hence giving them a sense of belonging in an urban growing society. Leaders to vendors and hawkers' development consultations needs to be a major focus in a growing city like Fort Portal, best alternative ideas of proper development planning and creating an inclusive city safe space can be best generated to inform the next city five-year development agenda.

Such a population of street vendors and hawker's views and understanding of the notion of urban safe space in terms of inclusivity, space security, leadership, organized places, involvement, access to public services, and development for us all as defined by themselves above, if not put into development agenda. Such population remains at risk of vulnerability at the expense of development as they struggle to fit on their own into development. Even though historically the term safe space has been used for feminist discourses in referring "to the physical and metaphorical safety of separatist female spaces and cultures" (Ardener, 1993 quoted in Hunter, 2008). It should be noted that "safe space has multiple connotations in a number of disciplines" (ibid), hence its application on street vendors and hawkers as on of the continued marginalized population in urban development needs a much more focus. Given the fact that street vending and hawking contributes greatly to social economic development of developing countries like Uganda as noted above, country specific studies on urban space for these population need a much focus and national street vending and hawking policy guide be considered by government for a safe and inclusive economic development within the sector.

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Appendix 1

Interview Guide for the key informants

Date: ....

Category of Respondent (Street vendor/hawker, community leader, government official) ....

Title..

City and Division..

Duty station/address..

1. What do you understand by the concept of urban safe space?
2. What do you understand by the notions of local participation and decentralisation?
3. As a community leader what are you doing or have done to help the street vendors and hawkers feel safe in their daily activities?
4. As a street vendor or hawker, do you feel catered for by your leaders?
5. As a street vendor or hawker do you feel safe while carrying out your businesses on the street?
6. As a street vendor or hawker whet challenges/problems do you face while going about your business on the street?
7. As a street vendor or hawker do you know the 5 year strategic development plan of Fort-Portal City?
8. If as a street vendor or hawker you know about the five year strategic development plan, do you feel catered for in that plan?
9. As a street vendor or hawker do you feel involved or have you been involved in any way in that 5 year development plan for the city?
10. As a community leader, how does the five year strategic development plan of the city cater for street vendors and hawkers?
11. As a community leader how are you involving street vendors or hawkers in your planning for the city?