

# **Claming rights to the street: the role of public space and diversity in governance of the street economy**

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## **Introduction**

Urban public space plays a crucial role in supporting an extraordinary diversity of informal sector enterprises, providing a lifeline both for new migrants and the established urban poor, yet its economic importance is rarely recognised either in national poverty reduction strategies or in city governance initiatives. Instead, the official response to street trading is, too often, harassment of traders, confiscation of goods, or eviction.

This paper explores the concept of urban public space and its relationship to the street economy. It first seeks to define what is meant by urban public space, and then considers briefly the debate on the urbanisation of poverty, arguing that the informal sector and the street economy are no longer marginal or small scale but make a major contribution to the diversity of city economies. The paper then looks at the role of municipal governance, identifying key actors in the process, and explores issues related to the governance of the street economy through case studies of Kathmandu and Dar Es Salaam. The paper concludes with policy recommendations, arguing that pro-poor street management should be adopted to support this fragile economy.

The paper is based on the 3-year DFID-funded research project *Making a Living in the Street: public space as an asset for sustainable livelihoods* and argues the fundamental need for good governance to recognise the importance of urban public space in supporting diversity and social action in the wider urban economy. Throughout the paper, the term “street economy” is used to mean the complex inter-connected economy that benefits from street trade, including not only street traders themselves, but also those who service the street economy – suppliers, moneylenders, renters, porters, importers and a host of others.

## **Urban Public Space**

Urban public space may constitute a quarter to a third of the land area of cities, but its economic role is largely ignored. In Tanzania, for example, it is estimated that 81% of the workforce is employed in the informal sector, many of whose livelihoods depend on access to public space. This section summarises some of the key themes in the literature on *urban public space*, considering how the term is defined, its social and political significance, issues of management and governance, and ownership and use rights of this common property resource, before proposing a working definition for this paper.

There is a significant literature on both *public space* and *urban space*, but little draws examples from the developing world. Urban designers often use the term “public space” to refer to the formal spaces of planned cities, for examples squares, parks, or promenades, in order to see how these can be better designed for leisure and aesthetic purposes or to enhance urban vitality and improve security (Carr et al, 1992, Carmona et al, 2003). Most use the term “urban space” in a physical sense to mean all the space between buildings (Krier, 1984).

A few urban designers recognise the social significance of public space - as the common ground where people carry out the “functional and ritual activities that bind a community” (Carr et al, 1992), that encompasses not only buildings, objects and spaces, but also “the people, events and relationships that occupy them” (Madanipour, 1996). Distinction

is made between “private space”, signified by walls, boundaries or social convention - where strangers may not enter - and “public space” where wider access may be allowed (Madanipour, 1999).

Geographers have also looked at the concept of “social space”, arguing that urban space represents the spatial manifestation of social institutions. Harvey (1973) argued that, to understand cities, it is important to understand how human practices create distinctive conceptualisations of space, and that only by exploring the concept of social justice and its relationship to urban spatial systems, the role of land as a commodity, and the spatial implications of economic production, can we achieve an urbanization that is not built on exploitation of the poor. The extent to which social exclusion affects public space is vividly illustrated by geographers such as Massey (1994), and McDowell (1997), who argue that spaces have symbolic meanings and transmit gendered messages, and that in many cultures women are largely excluded from public space.

Public spaces of the city have always had political significance, symbolising the power of the state. Control of public space is also essential to the power balance of society, as exemplified in military parades or statues of the elite (Madanipour, 1999), and many struggles for democracy and freedom have been played out in public space. The public realm (sometimes referred to as the democratic realm) also symbolises activities important to citizenship and civil society (Carmona et al, 2003). Some writers talk about “civic space” where people of different walks of life can come together without overt government control (Douglass, 2002)

The management of public space is often, although not exclusively, a municipal government role. Common urban management functions include the regulation and management of traffic and pedestrian flow, the collection of waste and litter, the use of urban public space for infrastructure provision such as water mains, and policing of the public realm in order to control crime and vandalism, although the concerns of the ruling elite may conflict with popular use of public space, for festivals, celebrations or trading (Middleton, 2003)

Although urban public space can be considered as a common property resource, there is an increasing trend towards its commodification. Commodification can be formal, as in the enclosure of public space for gated housing communities, shopping malls or markets. Less commonly explored is the informal commodification of urban public space either for shelter or urban livelihoods. In this context it is useful to consider the means by which use rights are conferred. Property rights are usually considered as a “bundles” of rights. *Ownership* (either held in perpetuity, freehold, or leasehold) confers a bundle of rights to bequeath, develop etc. *Use rights* (exclusive or shared) imply another bundle of rights which are usually more limited (Rakodi & Leduka, 2003). Even where countries have a formal land registration system, much urban land is traded through informal exchange, and it is therefore not surprising that informal use rights extend beyond the private realm into urban public space.

Drawing on these debates, the term *urban public space* is used in this paper to mean all space that is not clearly delineated as private, where there is at least a degree of accepted and legitimate public or community use. The term also recognises that urban public space and its use is a manifestation of social and cultural norms and political practice, that both results from and determines concepts of social order and land use promoted by the dominant political elite. Despite the fact that urban public space constitutes perhaps a quarter or a third of all space in cities, very little of the literature discusses urban public space in developing cities, either its potential importance in the poverty reduction agenda, or the role of municipal government in facilitating or hindering use of this asset. Both ideas are discussed briefly in the next section.

## Urbanisation, Poverty and Governance

At the start of the millennium, it was estimated that 220 million urban dwellers, or about 13% of the world's urban population did not have access to safe drinking water, and twice this number lacked access to basic sanitation (UNCHS, 2001). The urbanisation of poverty would have been much greater without the informal sector, and in poor cities it is common for up to 60% of the workforce to be employed in informal sector activities (UNCHS, 2001). The debate on the urbanisation of poverty and the relationship between municipal governance and poverty have been explored in depth elsewhere, but some of the key arguments relevant to the use of urban public space are highlighted here.

The characteristics of urban poverty are complex, and it is generally agreed that poverty should be conceptualised in different ways, for example relating to lack of secure shelter and livelihoods, or lack of physical necessities, assets or income. Poverty includes exposure to preventable diseases, and contaminated or threatening environments (UNDP, 1999). Being poor also means a lack of opportunities and meaningful participation, and the vulnerability that leads to poverty is usually a result of social exclusion (UNCHS, 2001).

In the absence of reliable measures of poverty, proxy measures have been sought. The concept of "housing poverty" was introduced to estimate the number of people living in housing or neighbourhoods that lack basic infrastructure. It was estimated that at least 600 million people lived in life- and health-threatening homes, probably a more realistic estimate of urban poverty than focussing purely on access to water and sanitation. Often people cannot get housing because it is too expensive or not available, because of inappropriate government controls, or lack of development focus (UNCHS, 1996). Poor people often lack of adequate space within the home so their activities spill over into the street.

The 'livelihoods framework' gives another tool for understanding and addressing the causes of poverty, the vulnerabilities of poor people, and their multiple and resourceful efforts to survive based on a mix of strategies including employment, savings, loans, asset pooling and social networks. In this context it is useful to consider urban public space as a physical livelihood asset, and how conflicts with other uses can be resolved. The livelihoods analysis emphasises the importance of political institutions and processes in framing the vulnerability context of the poor, both official *structures and organisations* in the government and private sector, and *processes* defined by laws, policies, culture and institutions (Rakodi, 2002).

Understanding the role of municipal government in exacerbating or alleviating the vulnerabilities of the urban poor, and in promoting or inhibiting diversity and social action, is thus a vital starting point for poverty reduction policies. A recent DFID research project argued that it is necessary to understand the key actors in municipal government and to ensure that 'bad' governance does not undermine the poor. The key actors include: politicians and political parties; public sector agencies; NGOs; trade unions; enterprises; associations; and residents. Aspects of 'bad' governance that undermine the poor may include, for example, oppressive regulation of the informal sector, as it is much easier to destroy jobs and communities than it is to create them. The following were among the policy implications of the study: the urgent need for better information on urban poverty; the importance of city political structures; the need to understand the constraints faced by city governments, and the difference that dynamic civic leaders can make (DFID, 2001).

A critical problem in applying this analysis to the street economy, is the lack of almost any reliable information on either its scale, or its economic contribution to city development. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the street economy is no longer small scale or marginal, but in some cities is a major employment sector catering for diverse and mobile city populations.

## **Governance of the street economy – comparative studies of two cities**

This section explores the influence of the three themes of urban public space, poverty and municipal governance, through comparative case studies of the emerging street economy in Kathmandu and Dar Es Salaam. The work includes some initial findings from the DFID research, although this is as yet incomplete.

### *Kathmandu City*

Kathmandu is a dense, Asian city, with an historic tradition of urban public space, which ranges from the central processional squares of the ancient cities of Kathmandu Valley to the semi-private family square, often the focus of a small temple, run by *guthi*, or religious family trusts (Shrestha, 2004). There is an historic tradition of *haat* (weekly markets) selling agricultural produce and crafts, and *banjja* (itinerant hawkers) (Shrestha, 2004).

Kathmandu is Nepal's only major city which, according to the 2001 census, had a population of around 1.6 million and a growth rate of 6% a year. The metropolitan area is divided into three administrative districts - Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) north of the Bagmati River with 1.1 million people, Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City south of the river with 0.3 million people, and Bhaktapur Municipality with 0.2 million people (HMGN, 2002). At US\$ 230, Nepal has one of the lowest per capita incomes in the world, and 22-23% of the urban population is regarded as poor (NSAC, 1998, HMGN, 2003, WB, 2004), although current civil unrest in the country may have exacerbated the poverty profile.

The modern economy of the Kathmandu Valley is dominated by small-scale manufacturing and tourism. Industry was largely developed from the 1960s, and the main sectors now include carpet weaving, garment manufacture and the brick industries. Both carpet-making and brick manufacture cause considerable environmental problems. Other sectors include cement, breweries, high-tech industries and handicrafts. Kathmandu Valley is a major tourist destination, with seven designated World Heritage sites, and innumerable smaller temples and historic buildings (HMGN, 1999). It is thought that the informal sector may employ around 40-60% of the urban workforce (ILO, 1998), although how much of this is street-related is not known.

In KMC the administration is run by a Municipal Council that consists of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Ward Members, and 6 to 20 nominated staff, which meets twice a year. A smaller Municipality committee meets twice a month. There are 35 wards which are run by five committee members who deal with local development issues (Shrestha, 2004). There is no coordinating authority for the metropolitan region.

National ministries with key responsibility for the urban sector are the Ministry of Local Development, Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, and the National Planning Commission (HMGN, 2001). The Nepalese government has long promoted decentralisation, from 1960 to 1990 through the Panchayat system of non-elected district and local administrations, and from 1990 as elected District Development Committees and Village Development Committees, formalised by the Local Self-Governance Act, 1999.

Current political unrest in Kathmandu and the suspension of democratic elections is considerably hindering the operation of transparent local government. Democracy was introduced by King Birendra to Nepal in 1991, following pro-democracy demonstrations in 1990, but progress during the 1990s was uneasy with nine changes of government in the next ten years. In April 2001 a national strike was called by Maoist insurgents, loosely coordinated dissidents protesting against the lack of open government and economic progress.

Following his assassination in June 2001, King Birendra was succeeded by his brother

King Gyanendra, with a state of emergency declared in November 2001. The new King has been gradually centralising power – the 2002 elections were deferred and the last two prime ministers have been appointed (BBC, 2004). Until recently much of the rebel activity was confined to the countryside, but at least 80% of the country is now under rebel control and in August 2004, Maoist rebels blockaded Kathmandu for a week (Brown, M, & McGirk, 2004).

The impact of national politics on local government in Kathmandu has been profound. During the state of emergency in 2001, local elections were suspended. In November 2002, the King appointed an executive Mayor, who had served as elected Mayor for seven years during the 1990s but who resigned from his party in order to take up the new post, giving him considerable personal power. An new statute, the Metropolitan Self-Governance Act 2004, has just been introduced that extends the area of jurisdiction of KMC and increases the municipality's powers.

In Kathmandu, several aid-funded initiatives have had considerable local impact, in particular the EU-funded Kathmandu Valley Mapping Programme (KVMP) which was wound up in 2003. KVMP's main remit was to improve the mapping, street naming and information base in order improve property taxation. KVMP also coordinated a number of strategic planning initiatives that have now been absorbed by the relevant local governments, including Integrated Action Planning (IAP) promoted by GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH), a participatory planning process used to guide physical development and infrastructure investment. The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI) has supported a pilot project to improve the environmental management capacity of the city, especially the monitoring and improvement of water and air quality (KMC, 2004). As a result of these programmes, there are committed professionals in government, well-versed with current thinking on poverty reduction and urban management, but they are working in an extremely difficult political climate.

Urban public space clearly forms an important resource for a diverse street economy, but a problem is the lack of reliable estimates on its size and scope. Street trading in Kathmandu is highly differentiated, with some established on- and off-street areas with permanent structures, and others where traders have invaded unoccupied urban space and play cat-and-mouse with the urban authorities to claim their territory. The designated fruit and vegetable markets include the municipality-operated New Road with around 1,000 vendors, and privately run Naya Baneshwor, with around 1,300 vendors, and there are street markets selling cooked food and offerings near the main temples (Shrestha, 2004).

One use of open space is the large Bhrikuti Mandap market with 1,500 traders, selling clothes, electrical goods and imported consumer items. The market was established on a park owned by Bhrikuti Manadap, an NGO which runs a national social welfare organisation financed by property income. Traders were relocated there from a central site some 12 years ago, and now pay a monthly fee. The market has permanent stalls, plastic sheet roofing and basic toilets.

Pavements and thoroughfares provide less secure trading space, for example at Dharahara, near the main "tempo" (mini-bus) stop, trading is only allowed from 5-8pm in the evening, ostensibly to avoid causing pedestrian congestion. Most people trade off plastic mats or boxes that can be moved quickly, and there is an uneasy relationship with the municipal police, who at times evict and at other times demand payment or cut-price goods. Traders are particularly vulnerable to theft during an eviction. In Kathmandu, much more needs to be understood about the role of the municipal police – to what extent is the apparent harassment an institutional policy or a livelihood strategy for under-paid officials? In Dharahara, significant numbers of the traders are seasonal migrants from rural areas - some

doubtless escaping rural conflict, but there is a long-standing tradition in Nepal of expatriate working. Street trading in urban areas can thus be considered as a *rural* livelihood strategy (Shrestha, 2004).

An interesting phenomenon in this dense city is the sharing of street space by time, with a succession of activities during the day – for example, temple offerings are sold in the early morning, vegetables later in the day, and handicrafts at night. Also interesting is the privatisation of public space: a night market in Durbar Square, one of the main tourist attractions, is operated by a middle man who collects rent for the municipality although neither traders nor the municipality trust this arrangement.

The municipal government is largely unhelpful to street traders. Harassment by municipal police was a universal source of concern in the pavement area studied, and income levels were much lower in insecure areas than in the established markets. KMC has now set up a street-trading working party with proposals to shift traders to weekly markets on space created through temporary road closures. Little consultation has taken place on this idea.

Trade organisations have limited influence. Nepal has no tradition of trading organisations, although some of the historic city and temple squares are managed the *guthi* religious family trusts, these have not adapted to represent the modern street economy. Bhrikuti Mandap is well-respected, and two new recent organisations have formed - the Kathmandu Valley Small-Scale Traders Organisation, and the National Street Vendors Union of Nepal.

### *Dar Es Salaam*

Dar Es Salaam is, by contrast, a loosely developed African city, and it is significant that nationally about a third of the urban workforce is employed in urban agriculture which, even in Dar Es Salaam, is extensive. Dar Es Salaam is the commercial and administrative centre of Tanzania, and its largest city with an estimated population of 2.5-3.0 million, and an annual growth rate of 7-10% a year (DDC, 1999). An estimated 70% of the population lives in informal settlements, comprising about 350,000 households (Kyessi, 2002). Tanzania has a GDP per head of US\$290 (WB, 2004), and nationally 36% of the population are estimated to be below the poverty line (URT, 2003). In Dar Es Salaam, 17% of the population lived below the basic needs poverty line and 7.5% below the food poverty line (2001 estimates) (URT, 2003, URT, 2004).

The city's formal economy is based on agricultural processing and light manufacturing; it is also the rail head for the Tanzam Railway linking Tanzania to Zambia and Malawi (Nnkya, 2004), and a major East African port with a strong fishing industry. The informal sector is a significant element of the local labour market, and the 2001 labour force survey estimated that 34% of male and 30% of female household heads in Dar Es Salaam worked in the informal economy (Lerise & Kyessi, 2002),. Only 19% of the workforce is employed in formal sector occupations, while self-employment including urban agriculture accounts for about 55% of the urban population. The main sectors of the informal economy in Dar Es Salaam include: urban agriculture and fishing; manufacture; construction; trade, restaurants and hotels; transport, community and personal services; petty trading; *mama lishe* (cooked food selling); fish selling; water vending; charcoal selling; tailoring and internet cafes (Lerise & Kyessi, 2002). There is also a local specialism of furniture manufacture.

Local government in Tanzania has gone through a number of changes in the last two decades. The Local Government Act, 1982, heralded the reintroduction of local government to Tanzania in 1984, with the aim of decentralising local government functions and improving service delivery, also coinciding with the introduction of the structural adjustment programme

in 1982. Councils were elected for each ward by direct, popular ballot with a 25% quota of seats for women appointed in proportion to seats held by the main political parties. The smallest administrative unit was the *Mtaa* or neighbourhood council, run by eight elected members. Reforms were undertaken in the mid-1990s to strengthen the decentralisation process (Baker and Wallevik, 2002).

Street trading in Dar Es Salaam dominates the city's retail sector. The Central Market at Kongo Street includes a large municipal market with street trading in all the adjoining streets. In the CBD street trading is prevalent but largely controlled, with many traders using metal stands, or trading on designated sites. Manzese is a large market which serves several low income housing areas, and most neighbourhoods have their own smaller trading areas. There is trading along most arterial roads with convenience items sold at major road junctions and bus termini. There are several specialised areas, such as Keko Magumburasi and Biafra for furniture manufacture, Gerezani for metal work and building supplies, and Samora Avenue for electronic goods. The relocation of the US Embassy, following the 1998 bombing, displaced street traders selling second hand clothes (Nnkya, 2004).

Tanzania has adopted an innovative approach to the informal sector. As early as the 1980s, the government was considering the potential of the informal sector, and a programme supported by the ILO resulted in the enactment of the Human Resources Deployment Act, 1983, which required every able-bodied person to be engaged in productive activities, thus conferring an effective "right to work". The Act set up Human Resources Deployment Committees which could allocate short-term (*nguvu kazi*) licences to those who wanted to set up businesses in urban areas. Various directives of the ruling party discouraged harassment, and a bylaw for Dar Es Salaam in 1991 specified fees for different activities (Nnkya, 2004).

In Dar Es Salaam, two exceptional events shaped the official stance towards the street economy. The first was the inception of the Sustainable Dar Es Salaam Project in 1992 (also the year in which multi-party politics was introduced). Limited investment in city infrastructure over a period of about 15 years had created a critical situation, so the Ministry of Lands and Urban Development (now Ministry of Lands and Human Settlements) approached UNHabitat for technical support to update the 1979 Master Plan. Instead, UNHabitat proposed a stakeholder driven planning process, based on cross-sectoral coordination and the application of the Environmental Planning and Management approach (EPM) (DCC, 1999, Burian, 2000).

The Sustainable Dar Es Salaam Project (SDP) started with a City Consultation in 1992, which identified nine key issues. Thirty Working Groups were set up to address the key issues, and the information was coordinated through the Environmental Management Information System, a mapping exercise to draw together the outputs of the Working Groups. One of the early and most successful initiatives to arise from the SDP was the privatisation of solid waste management, with over 100 NGOs and CBOs involved in the collection of waste (Halla & Majani 1999). The mandate for much of the City Council's work still comes from the SCP process, and the City Council is impressive in the level of staff commitment and openness.

The second key event was the abolition of the City Council in 1996 by the Prime Minister because of inefficiency and near insolvency, which was replaced by a City Commission of 12 people charged with turning round the municipal administration within six years. Finances were restructured and revenue collection improved and, in 2000, the City Council was reorganised into Dar Es Salaam City Commission, the coordinating body for the whole urban area, and three municipalities, Kinondoni, Temeke and Ilala. Elections were reinstated in 2002. At neighbourhood level the *Mtaa* councils are an active force in politics.

The SDP Working Group on *Managing Informal Micro-Trade* has had a considerable impact in raising the profile of the informal sector. The group identified several key constraints to the efficiency of the sector, including: lack of a clear policy framework; insecurity of land tenure and use rights; and lack of skills amongst the operators. The recommendations were wide-ranging, and included:

- development of new micro-trade centres;
- improvement of the city's 68 markets;
- encouragement of site-based associations to run short management contracts;
- encouragement of self-help organisations;
- the design of a variety of metal stands to protect goods and reduce congestion;
- relocation of traders from unsafe sites (eg: under high tension power lines) (DDC, 1999)

The Working Group's recommendations had mixed success – the three trading centres built were not popular because they were poorly located, and only one of the city's established markets has been upgraded. However, the organisation of traders has been extremely successful - two umbrella organisations, VIBINDO (Small-Scale Businesses), and KIWAKU (Clothes Sellers) operate on a city-wide basis, and by 1997 about 240 self-help groups representing about 16,189 members had been formed. Also successful was the design of metal stands for displaying goods, which are widely used in the CBD and other congested areas (DDC, 1999, Nnkya, 2004). Perhaps the group's most important achievement was the priority given to informal trading which, coupled with the right to work established in 1983, gives considerable protection to street traders. In practice relocations and clearances do still occur, but not until alternative trading sites have been made available.

### **Lessons for progress**

The role of urban public space in the street economy is a huge topic on which relatively little is known. Global numbers are hard to find, but it is clear that the urban street economy is no longer craft-based or marginal, but makes a major contribution to the diversity of city economies, often supports poor rural households, and in some instances is global in its reach. However, the paucity of information both on its scale and its economic contribution has left a policy vacuum in many cities. Although our research focussed on small-scale case studies, looking at how people access public space for their livelihoods, what they pay, and their needs and vulnerabilities, several wider issues have emerged as discussed below.

#### *Use of urban public space*

Kathmandu and Dar Es Salaam have very different traditions of urban public space. Kathmandu is a tight-knit and long-established Asian city with a high density of development in the urban core. Urban public space has always had social, cultural and economic significance, but the traditional *guthi* system of management which depended on established family traditions has not been effectively transferred to supervision of the mobile modern street economy. In contrast, Dar Es Salaam is a sprawling, low density African city, established as a port city and administrative centre for 20<sup>th</sup> century politics. The prevalence of urban agriculture and fishing as livelihood strategies illustrates the strong rural tradition of its population.

In both cities, very different concepts of use rights and property ownership pertain to the street economy. In Kathmandu, the system of property rates for buildings is new and not universally applied and there are no separate commercial rates for shops and businesses. There is therefore no expectation that people should pay for use rights. The only instance

where payment occurs, seems to be in established markets where market fees are paid to the management agency. Security is, however, a key concern for street traders who have indicated that they would be willing to pay for security; this is obviously a potential source of government revenue, so establishing a bundle of use rights that could confer added security in exchange for payments could benefit both government and street traders.

In Dar Es Salaam, a wide range of rights have been established. In the most visible areas, traders may pay both business tax, and the *nguvu kazi* licence collected by the district authorities. Elsewhere a variety of informal arrangements pertains, where traders may pay to a local association or to private property owners. An interesting variation is where property owners permit traders to occupy land in front of the property, which may or may not be privately owned, in exchange for keeping the forecourt clean and protecting it from theft.

### *Governance and the street economy*

The relationship of the street economy to municipal governments is critical to its success. In Kathmandu, it is clear that municipal management cannot be divorced from its political context, while in Dar Es Salaam, the real attempts to reform government have benefited the informal sector and street traders.

The cities illustrate different response strategies by vulnerable traders, who in Kathmandu have limited lobbying power and, vulnerable to the predatory municipal police, are forced to respond by fleeing or constantly shifting their operations. The lack of any real understanding about the scale of the street economy is a major drawback in promoting an understanding of the needs and rights of traders – they are effectively invisible. In Dar Es Salaam the “right to work” enshrined in legislation, means that traders cannot be shifted without being provided with an alternative trading location, and local trade associations are fairly effective in gaining access to local decision-makers and the media.

The role of trade associations appears to be crucial in providing street traders with an effective voice, without which they have little political influence. In Kathmandu, with the exception of Bhrikuti Mandap whose role is social welfare rather than protecting street workers, the trade associations are fragile and newly formed, and their protests are being obscured in the wider political unrest. In Dar Es Salaam, trade associations appear to have achieved an effective city-wide voice, and small-scale and local representation although coverage at this scale is doubtless patchy.

### *Role of international agencies*

International agencies have influenced governance in both cities, although less so in Kathmandu, where the lessons appear as isolated experiments that have not been fully absorbed into the governance culture. In Dar Es Salaam, the Sustainable Dar project has fostered an impressive culture of openness and participatory government, but the original city consultation is now 12 years old, and it is arguable the extent to which this approach has filtered down to the under-funded Municipality level. The *Mtaa* councils, however, perform a useful function, both as local watchdogs and in representing the needs of their communities to higher tiers of government.

In both countries poverty reduction strategies have been promoted by the international agencies, and it is interesting to look at these through the lens of the debate in this paper. In neither country is there an urban focus. In Tanzania, urban poverty is discussed briefly in the second PRSP review (URT, 2003, URT2004), but there is no funding allocation for urban

development in the priority sectors. In Nepal's *Tenth Plan* a much higher incidence of rural poverty means that urban poverty is largely dismissed (HMGN, 2003).

### *Toward pro-poor street management*

Urban public space is an asset, both for the livelihoods of the urban poor and as a resource for the urban economy. There has been widespread debate on the need for security, services and shelter for housing on the private land of cities, but urban public space as a poverty resource has largely been ignored. Yet needs are similar, and security of use rights is one of the key priorities that those working in the street economy will identify. Progress will not be made unless there is transparency of decision-making and traders themselves are given a voice. This is unlikely to happen without adequate advocacy and representation. Dar Es Salaam is probably an exceptional example of efforts in open government to support the street economy – in most other cities, conflict is the norm. The street economy is not the only user of urban public space, but the role of government should be to mediate conflict, to recognise the needs of the diversity of the urban poor, and to promote the potential of the street economy.

Particular thanks to my colleagues Dr Tumsifu Nnkya, University College of Lands and Surveys, University of Dar Es Salaam, and Sudha Shrestha, Department of Architecture, Institute of Engineering, Tribhuvan University, for their major contributions in leading the research in Kathmandu and Dar Es Salaam. Research publications are forthcoming.

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